

## Some Thoughts on Prayer

### Don't pray about, Pray For

Some of my friends say this is only a silly word game I am playing, but I wish to challenge you not to pray about going to Uganda but to **pray for** God to take you to Uganda. So many say "I will pray about it" which is usually followed by a prayer like this. "*Lord, if you really want me to go, have the Ugandan ambassador to the Untied States call me on the phone and personally invite me.*" You know I am exaggerating here, but not much. When you pray "**for**," the attitude becomes, "*Lord, I am ready to go to Uganda to serve you. Please open the doors necessary and provide all I need. If it is not your will, close this door.*" To close this door does not take a call from the Ugandan ambassador. The everyday providence of God will be clear.

*For example, you are praying for a trip that takes place in three months. Suddenly a coworker becomes ill, requires surgery, and will out or on limited schedule for several months and you must work extra to cover their absence. God has closed the Uganda door. That door may open again in the future, but right now you can see God's providence has closed this door. You had not asked God for some extraordinary manifestation before you were willing to go. You made yourself ready, and God's providence guided you.*

God's providence surrounds and guides us every day. We continually have opportunities open and close and we respond accordingly, almost without stopping to understand God's hand is always upon us.

The story of Gideon and his fleece in Judges 6 clearly shows God's power to provide signs. But most students of the Bible understand Gideon's repeated call for signs to rather show a weakness of his faith.

### Kingdom Focused Prayer...

Another aspect of prayer we need to consider is what is the focus of our prayers.

A great deal of the prayer life of the typical believer is spent in prayer that is intensely focused on self. "God bless me, my family, my health, my bank account, my happiness and my pleasure." Certainly God can and does bless us in all these areas and more, but when this is the exclusive focus of our prayers, it reflects that we have lost sight of some very valuable targets of prayer.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught His disciples to pray "Your kingdom Come," and "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" Matthew 6:10 & 33

These are the targets that are often missed today, His kingdom and His righteousness. This is kingdom focused prayer. Its end in not my success and happiness, but the building of God's kingdom and the power of His righteousness in the lives of His children. Jesus said that such prayer, such seeking, would produce a wonderful byproduct in God's adding to us "all these things." But many have lost sight of this God given hierarchy. We have changed the priority and ask God for things while ignoring the work of His kingdom and righteousness or telling ourselves we will do that later.

Those of us in the western world, the benefactors of western (Christian) civilization, have become a generation that has everything, but enjoys nothing. We marvel that the kingdom of God has little or no influence in our culture. Effective prayer is KINGDOM FOCUSED PRAYER and sadly there is very little effective prayer these days. We have also lost sight of the fact that we are at war, that our greatest weapon is prayer, and that while we may not technically be AWOL, we have left our primary weapon at home.

We must change this and you can start by seeking those who will not spend their prayer hours while you are in Uganda praying that you will sleep well, and be safe, and have fun, and not get sick, etc. Instead, recruit those who will pray that the lost will be converted, the powers of darkness will be overcome by the light, that hard hearts will be broken, that believers would be faithful unto death, that God will pour you out whenever, wherever, and however He pleases for His own glory. When God answers this type prayer, you will find you are not concerned with whether you are safe or sleep soundly, or have fun. You will understand this is God's trip and not yours and how He manages it will be just fine with you.

Paul said it this way I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12-13

## Who Should Go?

The qualities that one would look for in a team member are as follows. We know no one has achieved perfection in these areas, but a good team member is one who is striving to grow these areas.

- A growing Christian who can articulate what knowing Christ means to them
- One who has a systematic devotional life of regular Bible reading, study, and prayer
- One who can share the gospel with non-believers or is willing to learn
- One who can share examples of Christ's working in his or her life
- One who has a demonstrated ability to be a team player who follows the leader, even if they would be a better leader
- One who can explain these "key concepts" of the faith: the inspiration, sufficiency, and authority of the Bible; faith, sin, repentance, justification, sanctification, discipleship, the church, the Trinity, the sovereignty of God, and evangelism or is ready to learn of these
- One who is willing to make the necessary preparation for such a ministry which includes not only spiritual topics, but learning about Uganda and her people as well
- One who can win the encouragement of their pastor and other believers who will pray for them and help support them financially
- One who has a servant's heart, with a desire to serve God and His people

### The type people God has used in the past...

- Noah once was a drunk
- Abraham was old
- Isaac was a daydreamer
- Jacob was sometimes a liar
- Leah was not attractive
- Joseph had been abused
- Moses had a stuttering problem
- Gideon was sometimes afraid
- Samson was a womanizer
- Rahab once was a prostitute
- Jeremiah and Timothy were young
- David was adulterous and a murderer
- Elijah doubted the value of life
- Isaiah once preached naked
- Jonah tried to run from God
- Naomi was a widow
- Job went bankrupt
- Peter denied Christ three times
- The Disciples fell asleep while praying
- Martha worried about everything
- Mary Magdalene was...
- The Samaritan woman had multiple divorces
- Zaccheus was small
- Paul once persecuted the church
- Timothy had an ulcer and
- Lazarus was dead!

### Why would God not be able to use you?

### Christians - By Maya Angelou

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."  
I'm whispering "I was lost,  
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble  
and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak  
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed  
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not claiming to be perfect,  
My flaws are far too visible  
But, God thinks I am worth it.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches  
So I call upon His name.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not holier than thou,  
I'm just a simple sinner  
Who received God's good grace!