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# **The Essence of Prayer**

**#1329-A**

**Series: Prayer: God's "Secret" Weapon**

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# The Essence of Prayer

*Our Father and our God,*

*Quiet our hearts and sensitize our spirits. Cause us as we pray, Heavenly Father, to lift our focus heavenward and to lay aside the pressures and the trials and fears that the enemy has allowed to settle on our spirits. May we receive the engrafted Word, which is able to transform our souls. Because of Your Holy Spirit, may we learn from You this morning.*

*May Your Word be the Sword of the Spirit it was intended to be. Open our eyes, we pray, that we may “behold wondrous things out of Thy law”. And teach us, we pray, as we study about prayer. Teach us how to pray that we might become truly men and women of prayer for the rest of our days.*

*We thank You, Father, for those in our midst who are visiting. We pray for those who will be listening on tape. We pray that what Your spirit would have done in their lives will be done.*

*In Jesus’ name, Amen*

To pray or not to pray. That is no longer the question. We learned by looking at those sleepy saints in the garden and by searching the New Testament to view the life of Christ and the life of the apostles, that prayer is not an option in the believer’s life. It is, rather, the vehicle through which the Christian enters into the heart of God and thus finds the will of God and is energized with the power of God.

Prayer is the doorway through which we enter the Holy of Holies. It is the gateway to His very being. It is the place where man and God meet heart to heart and where the real business of the Kingdom takes place. What took place on Calvary that fateful day 2,000 years ago took place because of what happened in that garden a few brief days before. What happened in that garden was an encounter between God and His Son that ought to be a mirror-like reflection of our times of prayer with the Father. Unfortunately, many times, we do not approach the throne as Jesus did. One reason is we haven’t been living at the throne as Jesus did.

As a reminder of the events of that moment, let’s review once more the passages that depict that incredible encounter. We are reading, you’ll remember, from a harmony of the Gospels entitled,

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### The Life of Christ in Stereo. It reads like this:

Then came Jesus with them across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, a place called Gethsemane, into which He and his disciples entered. And when He had arrived at the place, He said to them, “Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.”

And taking with Him, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, He began to be sorrowful and amazed, and deeply distressed. Then said He to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; remain here, and watch with me. Pray, that you enter not into temptation.”

And going forward from them a little farther, about a stone’s throw, He knelt down on the ground, and fell on His face and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him, And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee, my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as *Thou wilt.*”

And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you *asleep*? So you could not watch with me *one hour!* Watch and *pray*, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is *weak.*”

And again, a second time He went off and prayed, saying, “My Father, if thou art willing, take away this cup from me: nevertheless, if this cannot pass from me unless I drink it, *not my will, but Thine, be done.*” And there appeared unto Him an angel from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly, and His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

And when He rose up from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping again for sorrow, for their eyes were heavy; and He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise up and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation!” And they knew not what to answer Him. So He left them and went off again, and prayed a third time, saying the same thing as before.

Then came He to the disciples the third time, and said to them, “Are you sleeping *even now*, and taking your rest? It is enough! Behold, the hour has come, and the Son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. Lo, my betrayer is at hand!”

Matthew 26:36-46

Mark 14:32-42

Luke 22:40-46

John 18:1b

(The Life of Christ in Stereo)

And immediately, while He was yet speaking, behold, a great

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crowd drew near, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. Now Judas, who was betraying Him, also knew the place, for Jesus often had resorted there with His disciples.

Matthew 26:47-56

Mark 14:43-52

Luke 22:47-53

John 18:2-11

(The Life of Christ in Stereo)

We have looked at that passage from the vantage point of the disciples and what they missed by missing the point of The Master's instructions. We now enter quietly again into that garden and stand just behind the Savior as He prayed. We want to ask Him why He prayed the way He prayed. It may seem strange in the light of how so many describe prayer in this 21st century. He could have called legions of angels to deliver Him had He chosen. He could have. We know that because He said so in Matthew 26:53. And surely you and I would have. The disciples expected Him to. Human nature would demand it. It would be the only way that the God who spoke the worlds into being could possibly save face and avoid the humiliation that was about to follow.

He could have. But, of course, He didn't. And we now know He wouldn't, because we have seen Him in that garden, and we have heard that secret, intimate conversation that took place between the Word made flesh and Jehovah, His Father. That conversation will be the focus of this study.

Jesus was facing certain death. Prior to His execution there would be betrayal, humiliation, grief, and shame. He would be physically beaten, emotionally abused, and spiritually He would encounter the greatest single thrust of Satan's spear ever to be cast at God or man. It was to be the devil's last hurrah. Every ounce of evil energy available to the host of hell was being garnered for this, what Satan construed to be his ultimate triumph. If Jesus were to turn the tables and cast the enemy down, He would have to not only taste humiliation, He would have to face the ultimate pain the Holy One could experience. He would have to *taste sin*.

He would have to leave for a season His place in the Father's arms where sin had never touched the Precious One. He would have to not only be separated from His Father God; He would have to bear the weight of sin, though He had never sinned, and thus His holiness would have to be marred by the presence of that which destroys holiness. He would have to bear the weight of the sins of all mankind: past, present, and future.

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We cannot totally understand that. The angels in Heaven did not understand it at all. Never had they sinned, so never had they felt its ugly tentacles about their holy hearts. We have not been without sin, for we were born in sin, so we cannot grasp the price He paid. Here was the only one who had never left God's holy place bearing the brunt of all sin for all time. That is what He was facing as He faced His Father in the corner of that garden that fateful evening.

As He entered the garden, His heart was so heavy He cried out to His friends in agony so that they could enter into the fellowship of His sufferings with Him. This is what prayer partners are for. Jesus, our prayer partner never fails us as the disciples failed Him. The Scripture says He is even now "seated at the right hand of the Father" (Romans 8:34) and that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7:25b).

He wasn't complaining, nor was He afraid. But He was hurting. His heart was broken; His spirit grieved. He was, as Scripture records, "*sorrowful, amazed, and deeply distressed.*" So He turned to those with whom He had shared the blessings of the Kingdom. He became vulnerable to the very ones who, on that Mount of Transfiguration, saw the very glory of God and wanted to just remain there and call that home. They wanted to revel in the experience and live off the fumes. Jesus knew that the very moment of spiritual victory they reveled in would now become a stumblingblock to their spiritual progress. So enamored were they with the emotional high God had allowed them to have, *they missed the point of how God reveals His glory to His children.*

It wouldn't just be the mountaintops that would allow His grace to overwhelm them with an evidence of what He could do. It would be the valleys of humiliation, death and despair that would reveal not only what He could do, but rather who He is. Man still has yet to learn that secret. They entered that garden with their guard down, and so do we. Had they been listening to His Word as He spoke to them, they would have known. They heard the "Hosanna to the Son of David" as He entered the city to cries of triumphant acceptance; they somehow didn't hear "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners" as He uttered those words of caution and prophecy in the garden.

They heard what they wanted to hear, and so do we. We claim promises of deliverance, promises of healing, and promises of

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transformation, but seldom do we claim the promise: “In this world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). None of us seems to want to come into God’s holy place and ask for patience, because we know that the “testing of our faith produces patience” (see James 1:3). We ask God for joy, but seldom claim “Count it all joy when you fall into various trials”. We want the joy in a gift-wrapped package of convenient circumstances. We want the peace without the pain, the promises without the persecution, the endurance without the testing. We want the results without the process.

Jesus knew better. He wanted His Kingdom to come about on earth as it was in Heaven. For that to happen, there would have to be a Cross—a huge, ugly, wooden Cross. There would have to be a mocking, sarcastic, crowd: taunting Jews, gambling soldiers, faithless disciples. Virtually all of life’s disappointments rolled into one grievous week of apparent failure and humiliation.

But His eyes were on the glory which would be accrued to His Father once the victory was won. So He “endured the Cross, despising the shame” according to Hebrews 12:2. With His eyes focused on the Father’s glory rather than on His own circumstances, He went into that garden to pray. And in that garden, we can learn the very essence of prayer. We can learn a lesson so deep, so rich that it can change the very attitude with which we approach God’s throne from this time forth.

Let’s look carefully at this experience and at the lessons we can learn. We’ll look at the people, the posture, the prelude, the praise, the petition, the principle, and finally, the passion involved in this, perhaps the most vital, real-life time of instruction ever given on the subject of prayer.

It really happened. Of course it did. But it was not recorded in such detail just because it happened. We are supposed to look beyond the story to what God was saying to us about how to pray. What He was saying could well change our whole understanding of communicating with God.

### THE PEOPLE

First, let’s look at the people. We tend to think in terms of only the Master, because He is the only one who prayed, but He had taken with Him, and not by accident (for nothing He did was accidental), His three closest friends. Several principles seem to emerge about prayer partners and prayer requests.

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1- He didn't share His heart with everybody, not even with the eleven. Though they were part of His team, they did not own a part of His heart in the same way the three did. He took the other eight with Him into the garden but had them wait a long way off, watching the entrance. Nothing is recorded which indicates He shared His great burden of grief with them.

2- These three were His spiritual "Timothys". These were those He had taken to the Mount of Transfiguration. These had been with Him in His most intimate times, spiritually. They had shared His moments of triumph and His moments of sorrow. These were His prayer partners. To them He opened His heart.

3- He didn't complain to them or share needless details. He simply told them His heart was breaking and why. So often, in sharing prayer requests, we needlessly share information that might hurt others or cause others to draw wrong conclusions. Those three didn't need to know all of the details; they only needed to know He was facing the most difficult time of His life and that a spiritual battle was about to take place. It would affect Him. It would affect them. It would affect all of mankind from that moment on. So He shared His burden with them.

4- Having shared that burden, He had certain expectations. He expected them to stay awake, pay attention, and pray. Those expectations were reasonable. They were partners together in the kingdom's work. He had taken them with Him to the heights. Now they had the privilege of going with Him to the depths. Isn't it strange how often we want our friendships to be one-way journeys? He expected them to pray. He had a right to. But what does that say about His expectations of us? We want to walk with Him to the mounts, don't we? Does He not have the right to expect us to walk with Him into the valleys as well?

5- His concern for them was that "they enter not into temptation". What kind of temptation? The temptation that would be just on the horizon when the hour of testing would see their Lord and Savior taken from them, ridiculed, tried and sentenced to death. The temptation to deny Him; to lose trust in Him; to lose heart that every word He said would come true. They didn't watch. They didn't pray. And when temptation came, they fell. All three of them fell. Peter, the one Jesus addressed personally, fell the farthest. He cursed and denied that He ever even knew His Lord.

So Jesus did not go alone. There were many reasons. He wanted

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His prayer partners to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. They refused. He wanted them to pray so that they would escape the temptation to lose heart when the heat was on. They didn't. He wanted them to know that God's plan includes deep valleys, wooden crosses, unjust authorities, unfair decisions. They missed it. But it wasn't because the Master didn't try to teach them. Even in His hour of greatest pain, He took the time to try to show His slow-learning disciples what prayer was all about and what walking with God was all about. At this stage, they missed both. Dear God, are we any different than they?

### THE POSTURE

Having left the three to pray, or should I say to sleep, He went a few yards away and began to pray. He didn't stand, lifting His hands to Heaven, though He could have. He didn't sit on a rock with His head bowed, though He could have. On this occasion, He needed to be in absolute humility and submission before his Father, so He fell on His face before God. He fell down on the ground, and without so much as lifting His head, He demonstrated *by the way He prayed, what His attitude was to be as He prayed*. The posture with which we pray is not crucial. The Bible illustrates many different ways to pray. But there are times when the burdens are so heavy and our hearts so desirous of finding His will, that to be standing casually or even sitting bowed does not illustrate to God or say to our own hearts how serious the matter is. Sometimes we simply need to fall on our faces before God and stay there.

### THE PRELUDE

Jesus begins by saying, "Abba, Father". The word "Abba" is the Aramaic word for father. It was only used by Jews where both parents of a real son were Jews, or of a proselyte of the covenant. It was a term of great endearment and recognition of the role of honor and authority His Father held. It was His way of saying, "My Father who art in Heaven, *hallowed be Thy name.*"

Don't rush into God's presence and simply begin to throw your problems at Him. Come first and honor Him. First, acknowledge who He is and what place He plays in the scheme of things. He is God. He is omnipotent. There is nothing He cannot do. He is omniscient. There is nothing He does not know. He is God. Honor Him. You would not even come into the office of the President without first saying, "Mr. President". Dare you come into God's



presence without first honoring His Holy Name?

### THE PRAISE

Listen to how Jesus begins His prayer. He says, “*Abba, Father, all things are possible with Thee.*” This is so crucial. He began, not by putting God to the test, indicating that *if He were able, and if He were willing, this is what needed to be done.* We so often pray that way. No, Jesus began by acknowledging that what God *could* do was not the issue. There was nothing He could not do. The issue was not His power, but his will. And sometimes, when we come to God with seemingly impossible or seemingly hopeless situations, we ought to begin our prayers that way. “Dear God, the issue is not whether or not you can move that mountain. You can but whisper, and this earth will cease to be. You can but blink an eye, and the planets as we know them will all disappear. Dear God, you can do anything. Please hear my prayer.”

A good verse to claim as you begin to pray might be this:

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. (Psalm 46:6)

Before you approach what appears to be impossible, remind yourself and worship God that the impossible is God’s greatest joy. No one can share His glory when He parts seas, brings water out of rocks, or sends down fire from Heaven. The more difficult your situation, the more delighted God would be to intervene. So before you ask, acknowledge who it is you are asking. You are petitioning the eternal, omnipotent, almighty God who spoke the worlds into being. We need to remind ourselves of that every time we begin to pray.

### THE PETITION

Jesus did not beat around the bush. Having honored God for who He is and having addressed God with the dignity due His Holy name, Jesus got straight to the point. He said, “Father, about what I’m facing. I’d really like to know if there is any other way than this to bring to you the glory you are due, and to bring about the results only you know are best. So I’m going to ask you, *if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.*”

You might argue that Jesus knew there was no other way; that He was only praying this prayer so we could learn from him *how to pray*. We have no way of knowing. Either way, the lessons we learn are the same. His heart was breaking. The prospect of being

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separated from His Father was what was doing the breaking. The prospect of tasting sin was bringing to Him a grief not known to Him before. Not to talk about it with His Father would be unforgivable. You want your children to tell you all their hurts and all their concerns. You want them to be real and honest and vulnerable. God wants us to do the same.

Sure, He already knows what we have need of before we ask. But again and again He says “Keep on asking and you shall receive; keep on knocking and it shall be opened.” (Matthew 7:7; Acts 12:16) The process is part of the plan. And Jesus didn’t ask the Father once. Three times He repeated the same prayer. It was not because He wasn’t creative; He created the world. It was not because He was afraid the Father didn’t hear Him; He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. No, He asked three times because He wanted to walk through the process with the Father until He had tasted everything emotionally and spiritually God wanted Him to experience.

Many times we pray about something once and a peace settles on our hearts, and *we know that God has heard us and that the issue is settled*. But many other times, God does not grant us that peace so quickly, lest we begin to think that God is some kind of computer program and if we punch the right button, out comes our answer. God often remains silent to test our faith. And the deeper the trial, often the longer He waits. Jesus was demonstrating that you don’t send off a prayer to God, pack up and say, “Lord you’ve had your chance. Didn’t you hear me?” He was showing us that there are times when we go back again and again to let God know how deeply we care and how desperately we want His will to be done.

### THE PRINCIPLE

Which brings us to the prayer itself. Jesus had a great burden and a great need. He had, basically, three choices. He could have claimed God’s power *wrongfully* and twisted God’s Word to use it to deliver Himself. That was choice number one. He could have claimed “whatsoever ye ask believing, ye shall receive” and dared His Father not to crush Satan’s attack and free Him from the clutches of Pilate or His angry accusers. He could have, as He claimed, called down 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set Him free.

His second choice would have been a kind of unrealistic,

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fatalistic resignation to whatever was going to happen. He could have just prayed, “Father, you’re going to do what you’re going to do; so do it.” That’s the way many of us pray, though we never would admit it to ourselves or to other Christians. It is a “let’s go through the motions of praying, knowing that God already has His mind made up, and He just wants to hear us pray because it makes Him happy” syndrome. It is the basis for much of the “God never answers anyway” theology of this age.

His third choice was to enter into God’s presence in total humility, seeking to find the Father’s will so he could joyfully enter into it. This would require vulnerability, honesty, openness, and finally submission. It would mean that Jesus would need to tell His Father how badly He hurt, how He dreaded that Cross, how His heart broke at the prospect of being separated from His Father, and how He longed for another solution, *provided that solution would not compromise the Father’s spiritual plans one iota.*

Then Jesus lifted His eyes into the realm of the Spirit, and a totally different scenario unfolded. He prayed to His Father,” but should that Cross be a necessary ingredient in the recipe of eternity,” Jesus whispered to the Father, “I want nothing more than that Cross.” Now the Cross becomes a blessing. The pain would be no less, the persecution no less severe. But what a privilege it would become. He would be entering into the glorious joy of seeing the Father’s will being done. Nothing could be more wonderful than that.

Satan did not want Jesus to reach that conclusion, so he unloaded every round of ammunition he owned. He fired every fiery dart in his ruthless bag of tricks. The oppression became so severe that Jesus, seeking His Father’s mind above all, began to pray with a kind of surrender and intensity so severe that His sweat became drops of blood. His whole body, soul, and spirit became wrapped up in one all-encompassing goal: to find and do His Father’s will.

Guess what? His Father’s will would turn out to be the one thing He had asked the Father not to do, should that be possible. It often is, Beloved. It often is. And often in our heart of hearts we know that. So we don’t know how to pray. Or at least, we don’t think we do. Afraid to become vulnerable, we shrink back from praying aright. Either we demand that God do it our way, or we assume that fatalistic posture of “What difference does it make if I pray?” And sure enough, nothing happens. What we want doesn’t

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happen, *nor do we get changed in the process.*

Our understanding of answered prayer is that God has answered if what we asked for is the answer. That makes prayer a one-way instructional dialogue between us and God with us doing the instructing. God help us. No wonder there is so little answered prayer in our day. We aren't seeking to bring our wills into harmony with God's; we are seeking to bring God's will into harmony with ours.

Often we don't want to face the possibility that God would allow what we so dread in order to accomplish His ultimate purpose on earth which is for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven. So we don't stay on our knees in God's presence asking Him to reveal His plan and allowing Him the freedom to let that plan be whatever it takes. Instead, we shoot missiles of requests in His direction, either daring Him not to agree, or never expecting anything to happen. Nothing, of course, is usually what happens, because we have not really prayed.

Jesus, in the garden that evening, was teaching us how to pray. That is why it is recorded in Scripture. He was demonstrating for us what it means to stay before God while the enemy assails us and the future is uncertain. He is showing us, as well, how to approach God when what appears to be facing us does not line up with what we want God to allow in our lives. In reality, this is when we usually pray the most. But it is not when most of us are likely to pray the way Jesus did.

Jesus went before the Father in utter submission and total honesty. He told His friends and His Father how deeply He was hurting. He offered His Father the privilege of demonstrating His power and His love in one of two ways. Either He could demonstrate His power by crushing Satan under His feet and thus vindicating the Lord of Glory, or He could allow His precious Son to endure the humiliation of a Roman Cross and, in the process, set mankind free for all eternity. All Jesus wanted was for His Father's will to be done. All the Father wanted was for His love to be made manifest to all the world. The problem was there needed to be a sin-bearer for the plan to work. That sin-bearer had to be sinless. There was in all the universe, only one person who qualified. That meant God the Father had no other choice.

Jesus never blinked an eye. If that was the best way, then He was willing to walk toward that Cross without even so much as a

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second thought. All He needed from the Father was His word that this was His will. Jesus had to linger before the Father until the issue was settled.

Prayer is not badgering God to do things your way. Prayer is becoming so intimately acquainted with God's heart that the only way is His way. It is the process of communicating heart to heart with your God until His heart becomes yours. In the process, you become so enamored with His love that you *know* His plan is best. You may suggest alternatives. You may even plead with Him to consider them, but *never do you demand your way at the expense of His higher ways*. That would rob Him of His glory and rob you of the work He wants to do in your life.

So as you plead, you surrender. You tell Him how much you hurt. You share your grief. You appropriate His comfort. But all the while, you ask him to change your perspective until, if the worst case scenario, from a human perspective, should be His best choice, you reach the place where you not only accept it; but you reach the place where you leap for joy at the prospect of it, knowing it is His will. That is prayer in its highest form.

### THE PASSION

Finally, look at the passion with which Jesus sought the Father's heart. I don't know how to explain it. I can only get a fleeting glimpse of it and my heart begins to break. He prayed until He was soaked with sweat. He prayed until His sweat turned to blood. Every fiber of His being was being poured out. The reason was He was in a fierce conflict with Satan. It was Satan's desire that Jesus do anything but this. Satan had no problem with Jesus being made a king. He encouraged that. Kingship without that Cross would have meant Jesus won the battle, but lost the war.

Satan had no problem with Jesus being hailed a great teacher. Great teachers eventually die and are forgotten. Satan had no problem with Jesus' preaching. Great preachers come and go. The only thing Satan had a problem with was sin. So long as Jesus preached, taught, even became king without paying the price for sin, *ultimately Satan would win the battle*.

But should Jesus somehow stay on His knees until that Cross became a joy, Satan would be finished. Sin would be atoned for. Man would be forever set free from its curse. And that is exactly what happened. Jesus paid the price and set us free. But it didn't

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really happen on that Cross. Oh, of course it did. No, it really happened in the garden, when the oppression of the evil one and the will of the Father collided in one final battle for the heart of the Son of God.

Jesus was being “tempted in all points like as we are.” (Hebrews 4:15) He was undergoing the supreme test. The sin would be to accept anything less than God’s perfect will. The temptation would be, not to overtly deny God’s best, but just to rationalize that because of how unlikely and abnormal it seemed for God to die, there had to be another way.

And that, Beloved, is the same line Satan uses today. It cannot be God’s will for our loved one to die. It cannot be God’s will for that economic disaster to overtake us. It cannot be God’s will for us to be humiliated, misunderstood, even forsaken. That is our logic. So we pray. At least, we call it prayer. We ask God to remove the problem so He can be glorified. Yet the problem is there *so he can be glorified*. In a moment of prayer, we won’t see the difference.

So God often let’s the storm clouds gather overhead with such intensity that we have no choice but to fall on our faces in utter abandonment and seek His comfort and His love. Only then, as the forces of Satanic opposition press down upon us, are we likely to finally cry out, “If it be possible, Lord, let this pass from me. Nevertheless, thy will be done.”

The “nevertheless” often sticks in our throats. It’s unnatural. It’s painful. It conjures up all kinds of scenarios that could come to pass that we cannot imagine we could endure. Beloved, Jesus understands. He knows how you feel. He’s been there. And in His case, there was no reaping and sowing; not even a tiny hint that He deserved the consequences. He was sinless. That is what made the whole thing possible.

The closer you get to God’s heart, the more likely it may be that God will call you to a Golgotha of your own. He will want to prove you, to prove you are His. He will want to purge you to make you even more usable in the days to come. And He will want to demonstrate through you that there is a world to come which will contain treasures far more wonderful than those you might be giving up to do His precious will.

Sweat drops of blood? You probably will never pray like that. But there may well be a degree to which you come much closer to that level of intensity at the throne of grace than you ever have in

times past.

It will depend upon one thing. Do you understand what it means to pray as Jesus did? Do you grasp the freedom that comes when you are honest enough with God to bare your soul and open your heart, yet submissive enough to God that you would rather go through the humiliation of a cross for the crown that awaits you in glory? Such lessons do not come easily. Nor do they come to everyone. But Beloved, they do come to everyone who comes experientially to see prayer for what it is.

Prayer is staying on your face before God until His glory overtakes you and His love overpowers you until the only thing that matters to you is what matters to Him. You may well cry out, "Lord, if it be possible". But then with a sigh, not just of resignation, but rather of victory, "But Lord, if not...whatever it takes..."

#### WHATEVER IT TAKES

Whatever it takes...what a difficult phrase!  
It means giving to God unqualified praise,  
All the while yielding, at whatever the cost,  
To what seems to the flesh a horrible cross.

Yet all the while knowing as your heart becomes still  
That nothing else matters but doing His will.  
So you quietly cry, although your heart breaks,  
Oh, precious Lord, do whatever it takes.

Let's pray.

*Our Father in heaven,*

*We stood behind the Master this morning. We saw sweat drops of blood fall from His brow. We heard the emotion in His voice. We sensed the oppressive clouds of the enemy hovering overhead. And, all the while, He was teaching us how to pray. We tend to get excited that He prayed like that but we somehow forget that He now lives in us and He ever lives to make intercession for us. His heart's desire is that we learn to let Him, in us, pray the way He prays. And, Father, we realize it may mean a cross, but that cross will be victory, it may mean grief, it may mean sorrow, it may mean pain. Whatever it means and whatever it takes may it be to Your glory. Teach us to pray, Father, and help us to pray the way Jesus prayed.*

*In His name we ask it, Amen.*

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### Focus on Application

1- The People: What kind of prayer partner do you have? Is there someone you can literally share your heart with? Do you have the freedom to share a burden without sharing needless details? When they say they will pray for you, are they like the Master's sleepy saints? Or do they keep their word? Are you that kind of prayer partner? Jesus is the ultimate prayer partner. Will He ever cease making intercession for you? How do you know?

2- The Posture: What is your favorite way to pray? Do you notice any difference when you stop and fall to your knees or even on your face before God? Why is that so? Is it because God is more pleased? Or is it because you are more aware of your need to submit in humility? Why do you think Jesus had the disciples stay a few yards away as He prayed? What does that say to you about privacy and prayer?

3- The Prelude: Why is it important to call God by His rightful name as you approach Him? How can He be your best friend and still be the King of Glory? How can you approach Him as both?

4- The Praise: Why do you think Jesus began by acknowledging that there was nothing His Father could not do? How can knowing that help you pray?

5- The Petition: Why did Jesus have to ask three times? Is there a request you have been taking to God again and again? Why do you think He has not yet answered? Should you continue? What good could come of that?

6- The Principle: Can you outline the three choices Jesus had? (The three ways He could approach God) They are the same three choices we have. Can you apply them to a prayer need in your own life? Can you explain them to a friend? Ask God this week to make the options clear to you. Ask Him to teach you to pray as Jesus prayed. Ask Him to show you that it's worth it to pray: "Lord, whatever it takes".

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