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**For All
Those in
Authority**

#1337-A

Series: Prayer: God's "Secret" Weapon

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For All Those in Authority

We come this morning to worship and to adore You, to acknowledge Thy greatness, Thy mercy, Thy grace, and Thy love. We come to worship You in spirit and in truth.

We've come together, Father, from many different places and from many different circumstances, but all of us have one thing in common, a desperate need to be filled and flooded with Your life.

And so this morning, Father, we come to You, open our hearts and to lay aside those things which crowd into our lives and crowd out our consciousness of Your presence and ask You simply to quietly settle upon our spirits, open our hearts and teach us.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Make no mistake about it. It is one of the most difficult subjects in the world to approach or discuss. The very mention of the word causes children to rebel, employees to complain, wives to become angry and citizens to revolt.

It is the first concept of God ever challenged by man, and Satan has made it one of life's great sources of strife. It is the subject of authority. Think about it for a moment. Doesn't the very mention of the principle flood your mind with anxious thoughts? Nobody likes to be under authority. Children think it is unfair. Wives think it is discriminatory. Citizens think it stifles their freedom. All believe they are deprived of their rights.

Eve did. She listened to the voice of the enemy as he whispered, "What right does God have to tell you what to do?" Satan did. "I want to be like the most high," he shouted. And he is still shouting the same lies into the hearts of all mankind. Authority strikes at the very heart of man's desire to be independent. And not only does the concept cause a struggle in the heart of man,

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the application becomes even more difficult, because God seeks submission to the office, and man sees it as submission to the person.

This has helped Satan to sell his lies. Why should you obey a boss with a reputation like that? Why submit to a husband as lazy as he? Why be in subjection to parents who don't seem to care? Why obey a law you think is wrong? Why obey a president you didn't vote for? Why? Because God said to.

With that somewhat painful beginning, we move on in our look at *who God told us to pray for*. We have no problem praying for Aunt Bessie's bad back or for Junior to pass fifth grade math. We have no problem praying for our husbands or wives or friends who are passing through the troubled waters of sickness or disease or disappointment or despair. But God has some prayer priorities in Scripture that many of us simply choose to overlook. We have chosen to take the more difficult ones first, lest we become so focused on what we enjoy doing, that we forget what we have been instructed to do.

That's why in our study last week, we took on the very difficult subject of God's unusual command to pray for enemies. We defined who they are, and we found that most of us have plenty to pray for. We found that there's one basic enemy whose name is Satan and he is behind all of our other enemies. We found that there are at least three kinds of enemies in each Christian's life: 1) those from our past we've never forgiven who hurt us or caused anger to come into our lives, 2) those in the present who are at the present time making our lives either miserable or less enjoyable because of some kind of conflict, and 3) those who passed through our lives—the one that runs a red light and crushes your car, with no insurance, leaving in the wake the rubble of experiences that seem to be unnecessary disruptions or despair in our lives. Enemies. And we asked you last week to begin a systematic program of praying for your enemies. I won't ask, don't worry.

If you have started praying for your enemies, for some of you at least, this will seem like a logical progression, because for many, the greatest enemies they have are those God places over them—those whose authority or personality make being under them a difficult task. The issue of authority, Beloved, goes far beyond our immediate circle of relationships and it reaches into

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the confines of the capitol building, into the mayor's office, into the Supreme Court, into the Houses of Justice and government where kings, presidents, chancellors, judges, and prime ministers rule and reign. You see, like the Great Commission, it begins in your Jerusalem and stretches into the hallowed halls of leadership around the world. And God has called you and God has called me to play a part in the process of governing through an incredible gift He calls prayer.

There is more than one word in the New Testament translated "authority" or "authorities." There is the word "*exousia*" which is the one most prominently used. In most places, it stands for the right to exercise power, such as in government. It often applies to a magistrate or ruler who has been set above others, either to legislate or control those placed under them. It is used in Mark 13:34, however, of those given household responsibilities and in John 19:10 of one with judicial authority. It was used of the apostolic authority in II Corinthians 10:8 and is used of spiritual authority in Ephesians 3:10, Colossians 1:16, and I Peter 3:22.

The second word, "*huperoche*" is the word used in the first passage we'll discuss, I Timothy 2:2, as well as I Corinthians 2:1. The meaning is the same, but it seems to refer more to the office itself rather than to the one holding it, and seems to point first to the highest offices in the land. It is used also of the highest of anything, such as a mountain peak, or anything that is considered to be of preeminence or superiority. It is close to the word for excellence.

A third word is "*dunastes*," a word akin to dynamite or power. It signifies a potentate or high officer. It is used in one place of God Himself as potentate (I Timothy 6:16). The fourth word is "*epitage*," which comes from two words meaning "to order upon, or to command." It is used in Titus 2:15.

All of these words, however, have a basically common root. They speak of someone or of an office someone holds placed over another for the sake of rule or control. The reason for this detail is that before we can understand God's commandment to pray, we must understand *the reasons for authority and the principles behind those reasons*. Otherwise, we will not pray aright, and we will resist the very commandment itself.

The Bible is a book about authority. It begins with a story

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of God creating a world of order where a theocracy existed and a loving God ruled over His creation. There were very few limits placed upon them. They had the freedom to live and serve with almost no parameters. But there was one. There was one tree, and the One in authority knew that this tree held nothing good for those in His keeping. So He gave them the world's first law. "Eat anything you want, but nothing from that one tree. Apart from that, you have no rules."

That was too much for Adam and Eve. Satan knew just how to appeal to their natural resistance to authority. He questioned what right God had to tell them what to do, and whether or not His exercise of that authority was in their best interest. They bought the lie, and mankind has been in rebellion to the very concept of authority ever since.

The Bible ends with another picture. A wonderful King will be on the throne. We read about it in Revelation 21:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

(Revelation 21:1-6)

Satan will be gone. The rebellion will be over. Mankind will have raised its fist in the face of God one last time, and a patient, loving God will have put down the final rebellion of man once

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and for all. A new order will have come into being. And the King of kings will rule at last, and those under His authority will all worship Him and adore Him forever and forever and forever.

Unfortunately, in between Genesis and Revelation and in between Adam and eternity, lies the deceitful, wicked heart of man. He simply hates to have anyone or anything rule over him. Thus, all of Scripture is about the heart of God drawing the heart of man back under authority.

We were created in His image. In His likeness. Like the image in a mirror, we were created to do exactly what the source of the image does. We were created to obey. We were not the originator of that which is good. We would only have the capacity to do that which is good when, by obedience, we allowed the God who is good to live through us.

We are, however, slow learners. We are constantly in rebellion to our mates, to our bosses, to our government, to our spiritual leaders, or to *anybody who dares to tell us what to do*. And strangely enough, we who are believers, those who have supposedly come back under authority by choice, often seem to still struggle with the concept itself. Though we may champion it in our theology, we still cannot make it work in the inner chambers of the heart.

We do not seem to understand that *the powers that be are ordained of God*. We still shake our fist at the people, rather than accepting that the *people are only there because a sovereign God put them there or allowed man to place them there*. Scripture is clear, and most of us who struggle with the very idea can quote it for you from memory. It says,

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," saith the Lord.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Romans 12:19-21)

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers [authority]. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

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Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good [right], and thou shalt have praise of the same:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honour to whom honour.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:1-8)

Believe it or not, Romans 12:19 is probably the key to that passage. It begins,

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord.

Granted, the Spirit is directly addressing the subject of enemies. But as we mentioned, there is a natural progression in the heart of unregenerate man from the matter of enemies to the matter of authority. To the natural man, *those in authority are the enemy*. Anyone who wants to *tell us what to do* is in opposition to our control of our lives, and thus becomes our enemy. But beyond that, the passage has a natural progression. It has to do with verses 19, 21, and 22.

Verse 19 builds the platform of the sovereignty of God. He is in charge. What some enemy does to you is not your problem; it is God's, because He will repay, *according to His standard of justice, not yours*. Verse 21, then, explains how that ought to affect our daily lives. We are not to attempt, *not ever*, to overcome the evil one in our own power or to repay the evil things he has done to us. That, in essence, is not so hard to hear, but it is hard to apply. But God takes one more step: He tells us to actually

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overcome evil with good. He tells us to turn the other cheek, to go the second mile, to love, to pray for, to bless, and to do good to our enemies. That's the incredibly supernatural principle we looked at in our last lesson.

Then, in verse 22, He applies the “overcome evil with good” principle to the most disruptive bunch of people in our lives: those over us who tell us what to do, or who make the rules we have to live by that seem to so disrupt our lives or destroy our freedom.

While the word authority in the New Testament, as we have already noted, has a broad perspective, ranging from household authority to spiritual authority, in this particular passage, the emphasis seems to be on the authorities God places over you and over me in the realm of government. It makes application, not only to the laws that govern us, but to those placed there by an omniscient God to apply those laws, pass those laws, and enforce those laws.

The key to the passage is the sovereignty of God. Unless you can believe that *the powers that be are ordained of God*, you will not be able to be subject to those higher powers. If you judge the integrity of the office by the integrity of the one holding the office, you will always be able to negate this commandment. If you judge the right of those enforcing the law by their standard of moral excellence, you will, in this fallen world, always have a reason not to obey the law, and even to resist the authorities.

If you assume that posture, you will never understand how to pray for those in authority over you. You will pray judgmentally, condescendingly, or vengefully. You will pray *from your perspective*. We don't have that right. We have been instructed by God as to how to pray for those He places over us, and that instruction *assumes that we understand that He placed them there, and that the office they hold is worthy of our respect, whether or not the person in the office seems worthy of our respect.*

You pray for your enemies, and if they are hungry, you give them something to eat. They're thirsty? These are the ones you want to get even with? You give them something to drink. The meaning of that phrase, “in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on their head,” is subject to more than one interpretation; but in either case, it leads to giving God a chance to do something

supernatural through a response that is *exactly the opposite of the world's response*.

The breaks in the chapters of Scripture are not in the original text, so we don't need to assume that the subject is changing because we go from 12:22 to 13:1. The subject is being amplified. It now deals with the issue of how to respond to another kind of intrusion. First, enemies; now, authorities. As in I Peter 2 and 3, the portrait of submission runs throughout the entire discourse as it does here.

What do you do when you think those who are running a certain part of the government are unfair? Wasteful? Inefficient? Downright dishonest? You do two things. The first one is found in this chapter.

ISSUE 1: YOU STAY IN SUBJECTION TO AUTHORITY.

Why? Because *the powers that be are ordained of God*. God put those people there to govern you. Maybe you voted, maybe you didn't. Maybe God is letting you reap what you sowed, if you didn't vote. But either way, in eternity past, He selected or allowed that person who would violate moral principles, become self-serving, vacillate in his or her policies, even do things that would dishonor the very office to be placed where they are.

Why? For a myriad of reasons. Read the Old Testament. See how God both placed and allowed wicked rulers in power to judge or discipline His people. See how He allowed the people to reap the fruits of their own poor judgment when they demanded a kind of leadership God did not want them to have. See how He allowed wicked kings to take them into wars and lead them into alliances that were not of Him. Then see how He used even those conflicts to draw His people back to Him.

Never at any time was God not in control. His Word makes it plain:

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

(Proverbs 21:1)

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

(Psalm 75:6,7)

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God makes the decisions as to who will be in control and when. Those who are in control can be controlled by the hand of our God whenever He chooses. Mark these two principles well.

a-God places those in authority who He deems appropriate, and He does it when He deems it appropriate,

b-Once there, God can cause their hearts to respond.

Jesus made it plain that while He was on this earth, He never did anything other than what the Father, His authority, wanted done. He never spoke but that the Father spoke through Him. That's why His authority was so evident. He was under authority.

Now carefully listening to this principle is the key to this lesson. Jesus was under authority. And the more faithfully you live under the authority God places you, the more people will sense the authority with which you speak and act. It was said of Jesus in Matthew 7,

For He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:29 NAS)

“But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” — then He said to the paralytic — “Rise, take up your bed, and go home.”

(Matthew 9:6 NAS)

But when the multitudes saw this they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

(Matthew 9:8 NAS)

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down, on My own initiative, I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father. (John 10:18 NAS)

Jesus stayed under authority the entire time He was on planet earth. Because He did, He spoke, acted, and moved as one who *had authority*. Ultimately, He had it because He obeyed. He never questioned the Father's wisdom or the Father's will, even when it meant a Cross. You demonstrate authority when you remain under that authority.

When Jesus walked this earth, His people were under the authority of a wicked government. They were in captivity. They

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were unjustly treated. At no time, however, did Jesus advocate the overthrow of the wicked Roman Empire. He could have. He could have called ten thousand angels and wiped it off the face of the earth. He could have installed only believers in places of authority, and He could have set up a kingdom where injustice and corruption were no more. One day He shall, but this was not the kingdom He had come to introduce. He chose, rather, to use the very acts of oppression of the wicked ones who were in power to chastise, humble, teach, and train His own. He used their pain to lead them to a need for redemption. Then He provided that redemption.

Jesus trusted His Father. If His Father thought Rome was good for the Jew, then so be it. His concern was that men and women come to experience His Father's love and eternal rest, even if it meant persecution, oppression, and unjust laws in the meantime. God knew that we needed to understand that principle, so He clearly articulated it. He said,

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (Romans 13:2)

Strong words. When you resist the authorities God has placed over you, *even Rome*, you are, in essence, resisting God Himself. And when you do, divine judgment is your reward. Are you afraid of those in authority? God says, "Don't be." They were put there to accomplish His divine will. Obey them, and God will be responsible for the outcome. That is the message of Romans 13.

There is, however, a much deeper message here. Once we understand God's perspective of authority, we can have a part in the exercise of that authority through prayer. We can, if we realize why we are doing it. So often when you hear Christians say they are praying for the president or the governor, it is because they don't like what he or she stands for; and they are praying that God will wake up, realize what a mistake He made, and do something about it.

He put them there. He knows how crooked or deceptive or incompetent they are. Relax and pray, but not for their demise. Then how should we pray? I Timothy 2 tells us:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

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For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus:

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (I Timothy 2:1-6)

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good. (Romans 12:9)

God has clearly made His point. He expects us to pray for all men. That means that there is no limitation given by God as to whom we should pray for. We can and must pray for everyone God puts in our path or on our minds. Isn't it strange how we pray for a few minutes, come to the end of our prayer lists, and wonder what to do next?

The Holy Spirit has told us to pray without ceasing. This means you pray for the guy in the car in front of you who is driving recklessly. That may be why God had him cross your path (or your lane, as the case may be). Pray for that despicable person on the television commercial who is behaving in such an ungodly manner. Pray for that beggar on the side of the road. Pray for the pharmacist who is filling your prescription. Pray for the cashier who is adding up your ticket. Pray for the cab driver who is cursing and complaining. Pray for that co-worker who seems so depressed. Pray for your children's teachers, their friends, their enemies.

Scripture places no limits on who you should pray for. You pray for every missionary your church supports, every teacher who teaches your loved ones, every person in the choir. You pray for the nurse in the emergency room. That may be why you're there. You pray for the policeman giving you a ticket you think you don't deserve. You pray for the clerk in the store as you wait patiently for them to wait on you. You pray for the woman in the parking lot who looks so down and out, for the children crossing the street as they get off the school bus, for the bus driver, for the parents, for their siblings. You never stop praying. That's

what verse one says.

But God was even more specific than that. He told us how to pray. He said first of all,

a- Supplications. The word means requests. You ask God to give them what they need. One thing they all need is Jesus. Until they have Him, all other prayer requests are incidental. If they know Him, they need His character in control of their lives. They need to become patient, kind, gentle, honest, holy, and true. They need to be able to share their faith. They need to be able to love their mates, love their children, serve their friends. These are all Scriptural absolutes. You can pray those prayers for all men.

b- Prayers. These are conversations with God. They may be times of reflection, meditation, observation, or worship. But they are far different from supplications. These are times spent seeking to know Him rather than simply listing to Him our needs or the needs of others.

c- Intercessions. This word is similar to supplications, but carries with it more of a pleading mentality. It is not simply asking God to do something in someone's life, but it is taking a particular need that is intense in nature, and pleading with God on that person's behalf. It is supplication with high octane enthusiasm.

d- Giving of thanks. This means that every time you pray, you have something to be thankful for. First of all, you can be thankful for the right to pray itself. Then you can be thankful that if you are praying according to God's will, He is hearing you, and if He is hearing you, you have the petitions that you have desired of Him.

So you have your hands and your hearts full. You have something to do all day long. And the more time you have, the more responsibility you have. "To whom much is given, much shall be required." (Luke 12:48 paraphrased). The less time you have, the more called you are to be creative in using that time. Pray as you drive. Pray as you walk. Pray as you shower. Pray as you wait for someone to answer the phone. Pray as you brush your teeth. Pray as you drift off to sleep. Pray as you awaken in the morning. For all men. For all women. For everyone and anyone God places in your path or on your heart.

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But there is a prioritization of people for whom we are to pray, and Timothy gives us the most important one first. He says:

For kings, and for all that are in authority;
(I Timothy 2:2a)

All of this is to remind us that issue number one is that we are to stay in subjection to authority.

ISSUE 2: YOU PRAY CONTINUALLY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY.

You begin with the highest authority in the land. In the United States, that means the president. In other lands, he or she may be called by a different title. But the one God has allowed to bear the mantle of leadership in the nation is your first priority. Not just in your own nation, either. You are to make a list of the key leaders of other nations in the world, particularly those nations which are in positions of authority in the world system and those where there is evidence of warfare, conflict, or serious distress.

You then follow with the names of others in positions of authority in your own country. In the United States, that would be the vice-president, the Speaker of the House, the Senate Majority Leader, the Supreme Court justices, the congressmen and senators from your district, the governor of your state, the mayor of your city, the chief of police, the district attorney, etc. I know. That's a lot of names. But then, it's a lot of authority. And God told us to pray for them.

Now, *how* do we pray for them? We pray that they might come to know “the one God, and the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

God has a plan for the world.

Who will have all men to be saved and come unto the
knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2:4)

We pray for *spiritual transformation*. That's what the verse means. The result will be

that we may live a quiet and peaceable life...
(I Timothy 2:2b)

The literal meaning is “peace within and without.” That is a result. The cause is the spiritual transformation of the leaders of the nation.

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Even if we pray for those in authority over us, our prayers are often not for the right things. We are to pray for their spiritual transformation if they are not believers, and if they are believers, that they might come to a knowledge of the truth. God may even have put them in office so you and I would pray for their salvation.

Praying for them to be compassionate, wise, discerning, strong, or even moral in their convictions is not the issue. How can they be any of those things without Christ? And what good would it do our country if the people thought any man could be those things *without God*? Would they not worship him or his political party instead of the Living God?

God wants every man and every woman in public office to come to a knowledge of the truth. He wants all men and women to be saved, but He has particularly asked us to pray for the salvation and spiritual maturity of kings and all who are in positions of authority. That means the city council. That means the county commissioners. That means the sheriff. And though the Scriptures don't specify it, we ought to pray for their wives as well. How many people in public office have come to Christ through a believing wife?

There are several reasons we don't do this.

1- We don't think it will work. That's right, we think these politicians are all so self-centered they have no need of Christ. We develop mental images based on their lifestyles and would prefer to grumble about them or even campaign against them than we would to pray for them. The most despicable man or woman in office just might be a candidate for the most usable if he or she came to Christ. I often share your cynicism. But *does God ever ask us to do anything without a reason? And is it our job to determine the odds, or rather is it our job to obey?*

2- It all seems so far removed. They are in Washington or the state capitol or somewhere else. We've never met them. We only know what we've read in the press. Why pray for someone you will never even meet? Answer: God said to.

3- We're not sure Christ will make the difference. Sometimes, if we really analyze our hearts, we will realize that we do not pray for those who are so despicable in our eyes because we do not believe *even Christ could change them*. Oh, really. But has

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He changed you? Has He changed me? How foolish we are.

4- We are not used to obeying just because God said to. Unfortunately, we don't usually just come across Scriptural commandments and obey them because they are there. Either we have to have some proof of a need or some proof of an answer before we get excited. Too bad. God is wanting us to obey *just because He said to.*

Imagine what the salvation of one or two supreme court judges could do. Imagine what a spiritually mature leader could do to influence legislation in Congress. We are big on calling radio talk shows and complaining or even taking a bold stand on the issues. That's okay. However, the real issue is not the issues. There is, remember, a war going on in the heavenlies for control of this nation and of its destiny. That war is not between the Democrats and the Republicans. It is between Satan and God. God's goal is that all men might be saved. Satan's goal is to see a nation without God and without godly leaders. That's where the battlefield is taking shape. It is why electing believers to office is so crucial. But once we elect them, *do we fast and pray on their behalf that they will be able to apply the truth they know in the crucible of governmental pressures?*

When was the last time you prayed for the evil leaders of militant nations who despise the name of God? Do you have a list of them? What if one of them came to Christ? Impossible? Oh, Beloved, read the Bible. Is that not what you would have said about the Apostle Paul? He was a terrorist. His goal was to annihilate the church. He *hated Christians*, until that incredible day on the Damascus road when God called his name.

There may well be some Sauls out there waiting to become Pauls in the halls of government around the world. And like wildfire, the *testimony of one godly transformed saint* can impact an entire world. We just don't believe God can still do what once He could, and yet we are living proof that He can and He does.

What kind of prayer list do you have for those in authority over you? Do you pray regularly for the pastors and elders who minister to you spiritually? Do you pray regularly for the president, the leaders of Congress, the Supreme Court judges, the other judges who influence the course of justice, the senators, the representatives, the mayors and governors of our land? Remember, God put them there, and one reason He did is

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so we would pray for them.

And when last did you pray for a Fidel Castro or a Bin Laden or even the ruling monarch of an Iran or an Iraq? Why not? God said to. And for good reason. He will

...have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge
of the truth. (I Timothy 2:4)

Even them? Oh, Beloved, *especially them*. Their transformation could open the door for the gospel to flood the hearts and lives of hundreds of thousands of hungry souls.

God wants us to obey those in authority over us because He placed them there, and we are obeying the office, not the man. In so doing, we are obeying God. God wants us to pray without ceasing for the *men and women who hold those offices that they might come to a knowledge of the truth*. His goal? He desires that they and those under them might be saved. What a goal. What a God. What a challenge.

Let's begin!

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Our Father and our God,

We're glory stealers. Don't mean to be, don't want to be, shouldn't be, but we steal Your glory.

We give You dirty vessels that cannot be filled, or You fill us and we bottle it up and try to store it up and keep it. We don't understand what glory is.

Teach us, Father, to so receive Your nature that we can literally let it flow back to Thee in adoration and praise, and out to the world about us in a demonstration of the Light of the world, even Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, grant us in this next week or so to come, to contemplate Your glory, to rejoice in it, and to learn in ever-increasing splendor, to go from one degree of glory to another, to learn to glorify You. And, Father, as things come into our lives even this week, and we begin to pray, "Father, save me from this hour," somehow whisper in our ears, "But if for this cause came you to this hour, what are you going to pray?" And then may we shout triumphantly, "Oh Father, just glorify Your Name!" — that wonderful Name — Jesus.

Amen.

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