

# Wake Up To the Power of Prayer

Dear Friends,

The time has come for us to stop sleep walking through life. We need to wake up and repent for our indifferences and powerlessness, and start praying! Effective and powerful prayers are needed at this time because when God looks at our world, He weeps. He weeps because He loves this world. God weeps because the lust for power has blinded and corrupted the human spirit. As a result, instead of gratitude there is resentment, instead of praise there is criticism, instead of forgiveness there is revenge and instead of healing there is wounding. It is time that as members of the Body of Christ we wake up and pray because in our lives instead of compassion there is competition, instead of cooperation there is violence and instead of love there is fear, particularly when it comes to helping the homeless and hurting.

God weeps when He sees the destruction that the lust for power has brought and the prayerlessness of His people. His heart is broken as He sees those He loves going into a Christ-less eternity, because of the lack of prayer that the lost will be saved. God's love causes Him to weep among the homeless, the hungry and the hurting who are not prayed for. This happens as many who claim to be Christians, sleep walk through life as they are indifferent to the needs of others.

I have a nephew in his early twenties who is very intelligent and is often asked to speak at major conferences throughout the United States. A few weeks ago when he was in New Orleans my nephew discovered he had a problem he didn't know he had. He walked in his sleep. He discovered this at 3 am after getting out of bed at a major hotel and walking into the hall way. Wearing only his briefs my nephew woke up and discovered he had locked himself out of his room. He proceeded to beat on his hotel room door to no avail. His roommate wouldn't wake up. Finally he had no choice but run down to the lobby in his underwear and ask the lady at the desk for a key to his room. Only then was he able to return to his bed and go back to sleep.

Even though my nephew's sleep walking proved to be very embarrassing, it is even more tragic that so many continue to sleep walk through life totally indifferent to the human suffering around them. It is a fact that God has called each of us to wake up and be prayer warriors. As prayer warriors, we will knock on the doors of heaven with the power and promises of scripture. Prayer provides the key to unlock an alternative future to one that often seems out of control. Prayer breathes the life of the Spirit into the present culture of death. Those who have sold out to the status quo and made peace with injustice, benefiting economically from social injustices, will have neither the desire nor the ability to be powerful prayer warriors.

When believers wake up to the power of prayer, thunder and lightning starts taking place. Revelations 8: 4-5 illustrates this fact. “The smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on earth; and there were peals of thunder, voices, flashes of lightening and an earthquake.” This scene reverses what usually happens with heaven making decisions that are acted out on earth. The prayer warriors referred to as the saints have intervened. The uninterrupted flow of events has ceased. The unexpected has become suddenly possible because prayer warriors like you have prayed in faith. Two or three have agreed together. “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them” (Matt.18: 19, 20).

History belongs to prayer warriors who wake up and believe, agree and stand on the promises of God. They are people who persevere for justice in spite of the obstacles and the odds. They know what is right according to Scripture and as a result, will engage in prayer that brings forth actions of hope and help.

Prayer warriors who are awakened to the power of prayer know that prayer is never a private act. It is not vocalized worry. True prayer comes from the heart where a victory has resulted from an interior battlefield in which Christ now reigns supreme. In such a life, inner liberty results where the prayer warrior is free to act in obedience to God’s Word and not the expectations of others. The status quo is rendered obsolete as obedience to Christ reigns supreme.

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Without a life immersed in prayer, our social activism and acts of charity will only result in self-justifying good works. Unless the rivers of living waters, resulting from a relationship with the Divine, perpetuated by prayer without ceasing, unfold, the wells of love in our lives will run dry. As a result we will take on the likeness of the beasts of self-centeredness that are destroying the wonders of God’s creation.

Prayer in the life of a prayer warrior becomes the theater where one experiences the healing needed as he or she battles the principalities and power of this world. It is prayer that awakens us to the fact that Jesus paid the price and we get the change. He gives us more than a new start. He gives us a new heart.

True prayer is not just talking to God with our mouths, but it also involves the use of our ears and central nervous system to hear and experience what God desires to say to us at this time and place. God created us to live in an interactive relationship with the Trinity. This relationship, made possible through Jesus Christ, enables us to be connected with God in every area of our being.

“When we wake up to the power of prayer,” we will behold God’s glory of creation with our eyes. We will hear the wonders of His presence in the singing of the birds and feel His wind embrace us. We will breathe prayer into our lungs with each breath of fresh air and thank God for it.

When I go on my prayer walks I love to pray using my senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. It adds so much more to praying than just speaking words. Such praying challenges me to focus on God and the wonders of His creation. As I pray I want my ears to hear the birds and other sounds of creation. I will frequently smell the flowers and even taste a leaf or a flower. Then as I pray I touch a tree and let the touch of the wind embrace me. Then my eyes are used to observe that squirrel, deer and other forms of wildlife as well as the beauty of the flowers, tree leaves, sunsets and much more. Praying with the senses causes me to praise God and literally rise above my troubling thoughts and see that God is bigger than every problem.

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To pray means to breathe in the life of the Spirit of God by exhaling fear and unbelief and inhaling God’s grace and goodness. The prayer warrior not only speaks, hears, tastes, and smells God’s goodness in prayer, but, like the woman who was bleeding in Luke 8:43-48, touches the very hem of Jesus’ garment. This touch involves grasping the impossible, knowing that with God all things are possible. Touching the hem of His garment means refusing to believe the lies and accusations of Satan and instead receive the promises of Scripture and make them our own. After all, as the very temple of the Holy Spirit, can we not grasp the certainty of the pillars of His presence?

Prayer sharpens our vision, it wakes us up to the presence, power and purpose God has for our lives. As we pray, He opens the eyes of our hearts to those things that really matter.

Prayer makes the prayer warrior a better listener when it comes to hearing and responding to the needs of the poor, sick, fatherless, widowed, hurting and homeless. “Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble” (Ps.41:1).

God commands us to pray constantly (1Thess.5:17). “We pray to obey God, not to play God” as Peter Kreeft stated. He goes on to say, “We pray to ‘let God be God.’ Prayer is our obedience to God even when it asks God for things, for God has commanded us to ask (Matt. 7:7). Prayer gives truth to our mind, goodness to our will, and beauty to our heart.”

Our prayer should be, “Dear God, show us how to reach those who are hurting and do not know your love. Show us how to help them.” Let us pray for the lost and lonely. May we pray for that innocent man who is the victim of a media lynching and now has a life in prison because of a set up. How we need to remember those who are hurting like the little child in that cold unheated home where mom’s gas is shut off because her daddy ran off to leave mother with the kids. May the Holy Spirit lead us as to how we can share the love of Jesus Christ with those who do not know His love, grace and mercy.

Where are the people of God? Where are you when it comes to praying? Micah 6:8 declares, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” No matter what problem our community may be having as we pray God will show us the answer. I have seen this happen over and over during the past 43 years. Through prayer I have witnessed Dollar Help come forth, Missouri Renewable Energy and many other programs come into existence that help the hurting, hungry and poor.

It is tragic so much time is wasted pursuing money and fame. This is time we could have spent praying and showing our love for God by reaching out to the poor, the fatherless, the widowed, the homeless and the hurting.

It’s time to wake up - our stay on earth is temporary. Every day we live could be our last. How long are we going to laugh it off and sleep it off? Isn’t our hope greater than our hang-ups?

It’s time we wake up and pray until we can see that this country, which is in a pigpen surrounded by a church that too often is a playpen, can change. It’s time to leave the prayer breakfasts for the battlefields of prayer. We have feasted long enough. Now is the time to fast and fight through intercessory prayer. We have clapped our hands long enough. Now is the time to let those hands grasp the sharp 2-edged sword of God’s word and fight those principalities and powers which hold the people of God in bondage or fear.

It took 10 plagues to shake Pharaoh’s grip on Israel. What 10 plagues will it take to wake up God’s people to the need for prayer at this hour? Time is running out –Liberties are drying up. We would be better off living six months with a heart aflame from prayer, devouring sin in high and low places, turning this nation back to God rather than die after 90 years loaded with theological degrees and every honor of man.

Preachers make pulpits famous through earnest prayer. Prophets make prisons famous through intercessory prayer. God knows we need a generation of prayer warriors who awakened, are burdened, bent and broken under the vision of impending judgement and the doom of never ending hell.

Today almost everything detestable in the scriptures has become morally acceptable. Right and wrong is determined by political correctness. May God awaken us and make us fearless prayer warriors who are too bold for the system to hold and too hard to be heard. Prayer warriors who know in the depths of their being that the intercessor's prayer can change the course of history and see the miraculous unfold.

Intercession is defined as believing, persevering prayer where the intercessor identifies with the need, not only agonizing as a result of this need, but also going before the very throne of God and standing on the authority of the Risen Christ.

John Grisham in his book "The Innocent Man," tells the story of Ron Williamson who came within five days of being executed for a murder in Ada, Oklahoma he did not commit. Ron knew he was innocent but instead of praying he would stand at the door of his cell and scream all night, "I'm innocent, I'm innocent, I'm innocent." Then he would trash his cell. All this did was make his situation worse as it encouraged the guards and other inmates to further tease him.

Thank God Ron had two sisters who believed in the power of prayer. They would intercede for Ron hour after hour. As a result, through a miraculous chain of events Ron's life was not only spared but he was released from prison.

I often think of the futility of Ron's efforts when I feel like screaming in the midst of the injustices of life. Then I remember Ron's sisters and the promises of scripture and instead of screaming out in frustration I go to God in intercessory prayer.

It's time for us to wake up and take the limits off God and realize there is a place where we come to the end of ourselves. Then God is free to move in our lives far beyond what we can ask or think. There is no limit to God's plan, purpose and promise for our lives. Intercessory prayer under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit enables us to move into this limitless dimension. Through the power of intercessory prayer, provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can be freed from all that entangles and frustrates our lives, and keeps us from reaching our full potential.

What our ministry needs more now than anything else is fearless intercessory prayer warriors. As the New Testament points out, there is a spiritual battle underway which requires each of us to put on the full armor of God (see Eph. 6:10-18, 2 Tim. 2:1-5, 1 Tim 6:12). Clothed in the full armor of God and equipped with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we are then able to intercede in prayer, assured of victory.

The question is, are your knees dirty? Have you woke up to the power and potential of prayer? Are you spending time in prayer? Prayer is communion with God. It acknowledges the ever-present reality of the Living God. Prayer is a privilege that, as we engage in it, our relationship with God grows. Prayer is not an option, for we are commanded in the scriptures to pray. In I Thess. 5:17 we are told to, "Pray without ceasing." In Col. 4:2 we are told to, "Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful." I Chronicles 16:11, 12 declares, "Look to the Lord and his Strength: seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles, and the judgements He pronounced."

In I Sam. 12:23 we see that prayerlessness is sin. As we study the Scriptures we see that prayer is not vocalized worry. It consists of **adoration, communication, communion, confession, contrition, intercession, mediation, and petition, praying in the Spirit, submission, supplication, thanksgiving, travail, and worship.** Prayer is finite, sinful people coming into the presence of God. It is caring people waking up to the need for earnest prayer and then praying.

Jesus makes it clear that earnest intercessory prayer performs a vital role in destroying the citadels of injustice as He asks, "Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:6-8). Prayer is not an alibi for indifference to the plight of the poor (Is. 58:2, James 2:14-26). As we care for those God cares for, He will take care of our cares as we put our faith in Him.

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God.**

How we need more men and women of faith like Epaphras who woke up and interceded, "Always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured" (Col. 4:12). To wrestle in prayer means to engage in prayer in an agonizing way with an intense desire. New Testament believers awaken to the need for prayer, not only devoted themselves to it, but also agonized in prayer with intense desires. The needs we are facing today are no less significant. Now is the time for us to wake up and pray.

Yours in Christ,



Larry Rice