

PWORDS

PRAISE • PEACE • PRAYER

3. PRAYER 2 CHRONICLES 20

Although the following is an old adage, it is none the less true: "The family that prays together, stays together." This is true not only for an individual family, but also for the church family.

This is an important time in the life of our nation and ministry. I need strength, wisdom, priority and vision.

2 Chronicles 20 is a familiar chapter and story for some, but it is also a vivid picture of today and lessons we need to learn concerning prayer.

Effective Prayer Warriors...

Make Prayer Their First Choice and Not Their Last Resort

"And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah" (2 Chronicles 20:3 NKJV).

Prayer is not a punctuation, but a priority. Prayer should not be seen as a bail out, but as a partnership shared on an ongoing basis.

Surrender to the Authority of God in All Things

"O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?" (2 Chronicles 20:6 NKJV).

• We must approach God rightly.

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:1-4 NKJV).

There are three things God will not empower:

1. Selfish Desire
"Have *my* own way, Lord. Have *my* own way."

Prayer can become a cloak of selfish desire. Many who would not use a prayer cloth would use prayer as a cloak.

2. Sinful Pride
Disciples: "Who is the greatest?"
Corinthians: "We are of Paul and Cephas and Apollos..."
James 2 spoke of class and race wars in that community
Ps. 133:1: "How pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity."

3. Stubborn Defiance
You must get on praying ground.
Unconfessed sin grounds prayer.

When you turn on the light switch and there is no light, you do not assume the electricity has failed, but that there is some transgression.

• We must honor God supremely.

"You are Lord and I surrender my will, my comfort, my desire and my all to You. I rely on Your authority."

Yes, honor the Lord through confession, but also through discipline. Fasting is a discipline. What is fasting?

"Fasting unto our Lord is therefore feasting... It is feasting on Him and on doing His will." —Dallas Willard

Focus on God's Character and Not Life's Circumstances

⁶... "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? ⁷Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? ⁸And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ⁹If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' ¹⁰And

now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—¹¹here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. ¹²O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You” (2 Chronicles 20:6-12 NKJV).

God’s Power - verse 6
God’s Faithfulness - verses 7-8
God’s Forgiveness - verse 9
God’s Sufficiency - verse 12

“God does not need us to help Him interpret the circumstances that we face, but He wants us to turn our face toward Him so that we will interpret the circumstances in light of who He is and what He can and will do.”

Let your gaze be on God and your glance be on your request. (verse 12) The direction of your eyes has a lot to do with what you see and experience in prayer.

Unite with Others to Strengthen Their Faith and to Experience the Power of God

Jehoshaphat gathered the people (families) together and they sought God together.

Understand That Prayer is Warfare

2 Chronicles 20:12-16

There was a battle to be fought and to be won.

Ephesians 6:10-18

We are not called to win the battles of life, but we are called to fervent and faithful prayer.

Wait on God with Patience, Confidence and Persistence

2 Chronicles 20:17-20

What incredible qualities these are in the life of prayer!

Just Add Praise

Prayer is not groaning before God; it is giving God the praise and the honor that is due Him. Life is not always good, circumstances do not always change, but God is always Good.

“Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated” (2 Chronicles 20:22 NKJV).

Praise is faith turned inside out.

“Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies” (2 Chronicles 20:27 NKJV).

There were results to this prayer—big results!

God answers prayer. He hears, He knows, He answers!

“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4 NKJV).

The power of God was unleashed!

Have we not seen in our day the power of God in government! God hears and answers. We must stop praying prayers of comfort and convenience, and lay hold of the power of God in our nation, in our church, in our homes and in our hearts.

Let this day be a starting point for learning again on the power of God in prayer.

Have you prayed this most important prayer? “Lord Jesus, come in.”