

SALVATIONISM 301

Captain Danielle Strickland

INTRODUCTION PRAYER

Captain Danielle Strickland:
Together with her husband
Stephen, Danielle serves as
Corps Officer of the Williams Lake
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Columbia. Danielle has a gift of
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**This gift is now being offered on
City winning, pro-life interests,
and the AWAKEN THE GIANT
prayer project fronts, among
others. Danielle contributes our
chapter on PRAYER.**

What is Prayer?

It is a lifestyle. Perhaps you are one of the many Christians that struggle with making your life a life of prayer.

In an American Study on the life of pastors it was deduced that only 10 percent of pastors spent more than 15 minutes a day in personal prayer. Well if that's the professional Christian crowd we are in trouble!

Let's get over our fears and inhibitions and embrace knowing Jesus through prayer like never before.

Hang on to your socks—here we go.

RESOURCES:

BOOKS:

- Dutch Sheets. INTERCESSORY PRAYER.
Christian Services Association (manuals by Pat Cocking on prayer);
PO BOX 3218 Mission, BC V2V 4J4 CANADA.
Richard Foster. CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE. PRAYER: FINDING THE HEART'S TRUE HOME.
Bill Bright. THE COMING REVIVAL.
Paul (David) Yonggi Cho. PRAYER: THE KEY TO REVIVAL.
Peter Wagner. PRAYING WITH POWER.
George Otis Jr. INFORMED INTERCESSION.

MOVIES:

THE APOSTLE (good intimacy and fervent praying)

ONLINE:

- World Prayer Center: <http://www.wpccs.org>
International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church: <http://www.persecutedchurch.org>
Friends Of The Bridegroom: <http://www.fotb.com>
International House Of Prayer: <http://www.ihopkc.com>

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Prayer One

Captain Danielle Strickland



"As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning" (Luke 9:29).



"Prayer is a puzzle to unbelievers but a sweet privilege to us"
(Samuel Logan Brengle, THE WAY OF HOLINESS).

Transforming Prayer

Perhaps your vision of prayer has been something like mine was. Chewing bricks. That's right. Chewing bricks. You know the scene, a small crowd (usually filled with old people) taking turns praying one after the other... it's hard to pay attention... it's so quiet that people can hear you breathing... you assume the shampoo position (with your hands through your hair, head down) and dream of other things, wishing you were anywhere but here. Yikes.

Or maybe you are really excited about personal prayer, you assume the kneeling position (because that's what hard-core Christians do) and before you can comprehend it you've awakened to find drool on your Bible! Nuts.

The enemy has been making prayer a boring thing. It's a good strategy to stop the lifeblood of the Body and your soul dead in it's tracks. If we are going to be effective with God we've got change our whole mindsets about prayer. You read the scripture. I'm talking about prayer that changes you from the inside out - glowworm style. The actual radiating glory of God radiating from you! And you can't keep it in... you are so in love with Jesus and so close to Him that He fills you with supernatural life and light! You talk with Him like lovers do. You tell Him your secrets and He responds with the desires of His heart for you. You fall into this intimate encounter with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and you not only call Him, master, you call Him friend. You lose the Christian lingo and cultural habits and let loose with Him. You share your heart - everything in it. You call out His promises. You wait and listen. You answer. You change. It's the bomb.

That's what prayer is all about. It's meant to transform you into the image of God. Jesus gets on the inside of you and His thoughts become your thoughts, and His ways your will. You spend time with the Creator of all and He invades you and causes you to be absolutely transformed just by being in His presence. Does this sound like your prayer experience? Stop chewing bricks. Suck the drool back in. Take your thoughts about prayer captive for Christ and get a new mindset. Choose to love the opportunity of hanging out with your God. Choose to speak with Him intimately about the things on your heart. Be a lover. Get giddy. Go glowworm style. Why not? Moses and Jesus did. Need some help? Hang in there. We are going to explore some transforming prayer.

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Prayer One



Ready. Set. Glow.

"Ok, ok, I'm motivated!" (that IS what you're saying isn't it?). But you've been motivated before. You've sold out to the concept that you must pray! But the 'how to' stuff is the missing link. Ok. Let's get practical...

1. **Find a spot that you can be alone.** Really alone. (I've created a room where I can shut the door – put on my Discman full blast and get into the presence of God). You've got to do it.
2. **Open your Bible.** That's right. Prayer is a two-way exchange – you talk, you listen (you got it?). I start by reading passages (Psalms, Apostolic Prayers, Revelations) out loud back to God as prayers, while I walk in circles.
3. **Stand up, roll around, walk in circles, get excited with God.** Don't just sit there. Have you ever seen the Jews at the Wailing Wall praying to God... oh yeah- they get it! They are animated. They are rocking back and forth, crying and stuffing written prayers in the cracks of the walls... move around with God, get free in your worship, shout, laugh, cry, sing... get it out!
4. **Use whatever means necessary to spice up your routine.** I run & walk in isolated places (usually very beautiful nature spots where God is all over) and just pray my guts out at the same time. I use worship music to help in my prayer times (I blast it!). If you have the gift of tongues, use it- tongues really help!



1. What do you think of going to prayer meetings?
2. How much time do you spend praying daily?
3. How much time do you think you should spend?
4. Why is it so hard to pray?
5. What would make it easier?
6. Do you think Jesus wants to manifest Himself through you? (glowworm)
7. What stops that from happening?
8. Do you want to pray about transforming prayer being real in you right now?



Write out a plan for personal prayer. Pick a time, place, setting and draw out your plan. Then covenant with a partner to keep you accountable for one month! Just one month.

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Prayer Two



"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land"

(2 Chronicles 7:14).

"And I will do whatever you ask in My name" (John 14:13,14).



"The salvation soldier must ever bear in mind that prayer is the chief means of keeping contact with God in which His life fills the human soul and the Holy Spirit makes the presence of Christ living and real"

(CHOSEN TO BE A SOLDIER).

"Four hundred devils cannot stand before the man who makes it the rule of his life to get up early to praise the Lord and plead for God's blessing on his own soul, and on the world. They will flee away"

(Samuel Logan Brengle, HELPS TO HOLINESS).

So if God is all-powerful and all knowing, then the whole prayer thing doesn't make much sense! If He knows before we ask what we need than why do we have to ask? Sound familiar? You ask these questions too? Phew! I feel better already... **Why Pray?**

1. God tells us to pray (that ought to be enough to make us do it!).
2. God needs us to pray (Ezekiel 22:30,31).
3. God exemplified prayer in the life of Jesus (all the gospels).
4. The 33AD Salvos prayed and worked in power (Acts 12:5-17).
5. God chooses to work through the prayers of His people. We are co-operators with God by His grace.

Some examples of God's work through the prayers of His people:

- Elijah. In 1 Kings 18 God uses Elijah's prayers to accomplish His will. God wanted it to rain. He wanted to bless His people and reveal His power. But God has chosen to work through His people. God asks Elijah to pray and Elijah does and guess what? You guessed it – it pours! That sounds like a great formula for success!
- Daniel. In chapter 9 of the book of Daniel we read that he discovers the promises of God in the scriptures – he reads that Israel was to be freed! Then he does exactly the opposite of what I would have. I would have run out into the streets proclaiming freedom and causing the biggest fuss ever (you can relate, can't you?). Daniel gives his attention to God in prayer (9:3). God hears Daniel's prayers, dispatches a warrior angel to answer the prayer (wow) and Daniel keeps praying until his prayers are answered (10:12). Imagine God's delight at the willingness of Daniel to partner with Him to free His people. And imagine the brilliancy of Daniel to recognize that the way to get God's plan into the here and now is through prayer!

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Prayer Two



Ok, ok, I'm convinced- not only by **ALL** the scripture but also by all the contemporary evidence that God desires to work in partnership with us through prayer! I remember being on a mission trip, building a church in Africa and we ran out of bricks. Everyone sat around the fire that night and we simply prayed that God would provide more. I laughed inside and out at the absolute ridiculousness of that kind of prayer. The next morning we all awoke to the sound of a dump truck, dumping 3 huge loads of bricks (even the same colour) on our church lot! I learned a few things in one moment - most of all to stop laughing and start praying – all the time. Let's wake up to God's power through prayer!

Let's get practical...

1. **Choose to believe the scriptures.** That's right – take God at His Word.
2. If it's so important why don't you do it? **Yeah, just do it.** Get together a couple of friends and start praying for your unsaved friends, your Corps, your community and join with God in unleashing His power through your prayers!
3. Challenge yourself to bring your needs and the needs of others around you to God first! **Resist the temptation to solve everything in the natural** and join the supernatural fight against rulers and powers in the spiritual realm – you will be amazed at what God can do that you could never even dream!



1. Why should we pray?
2. What difference do our prayers make?
3. Can you share an example of answered prayer?
4. How did answered prayer change your attitude about praying?
5. Do you pray as God wants you to?
6. What could you do differently or better to pray as God would like?
7. Would your situation, your family and friends, and your community be different if you prayed as God would like? If so, how?
8. Do you want to pray right now that God will create a desire for prayer and use you to bring about His purposes?



- Keep a prayer journal. Record answers and celebrate with Jesus as you write them in.
- Challenge your faith in what God can do. Get a partner or small group and ask each person to present a request that is outside of their 'faith level' and begin to 'believe' God as you pray.

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Prayer Three



"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

"Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).



"Real prayer is something more than a form of words, or a hasty address to God just after breakfast, before the meeting, or before going to bed at night. It is an intense, intelligent, persistent council with the Lord, in which we wait on Him, and reason and argue and plead our cause, and listen for His reply, and will not let Him go till He blesses us" (Samuel Logan Brengle, LOVE-SLAVES).

"In prayer our weakness is linked to Almightyness, our ignorance to infinite wisdom, our need with the channel of unseen sources"
(Frederick Coutts, THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE).



Jesus was a powerful man. We all know that He was God – but He was also a powerful man. The disciples were catching on to this as well, when they started to see Jesus praying to God and then speaking things into being (healings, deliverance, truth). They were captivated by this power and when they asked Jesus how He did what He did Jesus told them that He just did everything the Father told Him too!

1 John 5:14 says, "If we ask for anything, according to His will, it will be given to us." Now many of us have hid behind that verse and added on a little statement at the end of our prayers, "if it be your will". I'm convinced through scripture that the only thing that statement does is negate what you've just prayed. Jesus said the secret to power is *knowing* the will of God. You never hear Jesus praying a fervent prayer and then adding on that little clause do you? Of course not. Actually the only time He ever did anything similar to that was in the garden of Gethsemane. He was praying and knew God's will and asked that God take it from Him. Then He resigned His will to the Father's with this statement, "not my will but yours be done". The power of that prayer is that Jesus knew the heart of the Father meant His own death. I think I might have prayed a different prayer had I known that the heart of God was for me to die! But Jesus had power in His prayers because He knew God's heart. How can we know the heart of God?

First of all praying the heart of God is work. It is hard work. Get rid of weak prayers. You know the kind? Yeah, God bless mommy and daddy and my baby toe hurts. They are all me, me, me prayers. They are self centered and small. God desires bigger things. His heart is full of emotion for the lost – get into the heart of God. How do we do this?

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Prayer Three



Let's get practical:

- **Learn to press in to God.** (Stay with Him and desire His presence. Spend quality time with Him. Warning: this might actually take longer than 15 minutes!)
- **Pray Fervently.** That's right, (James says the fervent [which means heated to boiling over] prayers of a righteous person...) enough of the yawner prayers... stir yourself up. I don't mean with *just* emotion but I do mean with emotion. How can we pray for those who are lost and on their way to hell without any emotion? Jesus looked over Jerusalem and wept. When he was praying in Gethsemane He was sweating drops of blood and the word for the kind of prayer He was doing was 'overwhelmed'... He was crying and screaming and probably shouting out to God! Get fervent with God in your requests... call down the fire! In South Korea (where 40% of the nation is now saved through an outbreak of fervent prayer!) people join together at five am in the morning before anything else to pray. When they come to pray it is the most exciting thing – all of them pray fervently out loud at the same time. No one is just sitting there not participating but everyone is praying – some even climb up mountains to intercede over the cities... it's no wonder the Korean Church is moving in power.
- **Finally we need to hear the voice of God.** We've got to get into conversation with God. We are going to explore this in detail in the next session.



1. How do you know if what you pray is according to God's will?
2. Have you ever been so upset or thrilled that you felt it hard to describe your emotion?
3. Have you ever felt something that you thought God felt in His heart too?
4. Why do we find it so hard to pray fervently?
5. What pops into your mind when you hear the word *fervent prayer*?
6. Do you have any negative images of prayer?
7. Have you had any positive experiences of powerful prayer times? Share one.
8. Are you ready to pray that God will help unleash His power through you in prayer?



Read excerpts of Jesus' ministry on earth. Hunger for the amazing results of prayer He had.

Read Acts and some descriptions of the 33AD Salvos moving in power. Think about the difference between your life and the lives of them.

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Prayer Four



"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word (*rhema*) of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

"For nothing (*rhema*) is impossible with God'. 'I am the Lord's servant', Mary answered. 'May it be to me as you have said'" (Luke 1:37,38).

"Take the... sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*rhema*) of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests... Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the... Gospel" (Ephesians 6:17,18).



"There is no conceivable difficulty that will not vanish before the man who prays to God" (Samuel Logan Brengle, HELPS TO HOLINESS).



Distinguishing the voice of God from all the other voices in our lives is difficult. Many of us understand hearing the voice of God through scripture (known as the *logos* word). It is much harder to hear the spoken voice of God that He deposits in our spirits (known as the *rhema* word). The problem exists because if we can't hear God's voice we won't know His will and then how do we pray with power? So hearing God is an essential part of praying effectively. How can we hear the voice of God? First of all we must realize that God wants us to know His will. It's not a matter of spying on the Father until we can uncover a secret plan. The scriptures tell us that Christ *has* and the Spirit *is* making known to us the mystery of the Father. We *can* know His will and hear His voice through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in and through us when we ask Him to, in order to help us pray as we ought (Romans 8:26,27). How does this process work?

1. **Confess any sin** (repent of it immediately). Sin is the number one cause of 'disharmony' with the will of God. If you have sin in your life, you cannot effectively hear the voice of God or know His will. God is very interested in your character. You cannot minister effectively (even in prayer) if your character is not exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. Ask God to fill you and mold you.
2. **Make sure your heart's motive is pure.** Search your heart, ask God to help you, to see if there is any wicked way in you (Psalm 35).
3. **Know the Word.** Get intimate with the written and living Word (the Bible and Jesus). Have your Bible ready and have your spirit tuned into the Son Jesus for the spoken word.
4. **Listen.** That's right – this is the hard stuff. Listen. Allow the Spirit to speak to you. God's will is often revealed progressively. If you think you hear Him, follow the word through. Ask Him for more details. Ask Him for confirmation. Listen again. Keep listening. Avoid the temptation to talk all the time (this is especially hard for me).
5. **Obey.** Obedience is a big part of hearing God. If you do not obey what He tells you, why would He speak to you again? He is a gracious God and doesn't want you to be held accountable for His words if you won't obey them. You must choose to obey God before He speaks no matter what. If you think this is easy ask Jonah about it.

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Prayer Four



As we pray we know that God will reveal His purposes to us and we can call them into being through Jesus. What a wonderful system God has planned and we can participate in the Kingdom of Heaven coming to earth! If we ever really learn to tune in to the Holy Spirit we wouldn't be stopped – the gates of hell themselves could not stop the Army that is living the will of the Father. Now we can understand why Paul called the spoken Word (*rhema*) of God the sword of the Spirit – it is the way to defeat all the powers and principalities of the dark world – with God's will.

Let's pray: Lord Jesus, we need desperately Your character to be burned into our hearts and lives so we can truly say, like You did, "not my will but Yours be done." Help us Holy Spirit to hear You and to be ready to obey You and speak Your will into being, at any cost. Thank you Father for revealing Your will to us. Thank You for graciously allowing us to partner with You in bringing Your Kingdom to earth. Amen.



Go on a **prayer walk** (in silence) where you just listen to and for God.



1. Have you ever heard God through the Bible? When and How?
2. How do you know when God is speaking to you?
3. Have you ever heard the voice of God? In what ways?
4. Do you ever pray, "If it's in Your will"? How do you think you can know the will of God before you pray?
5. What is the loudest voice in your life?
6. What other voices compete with God's voice in your life?
7. How do you or can you silence them to allow God to speak?
8. Will you pray for someone else right now and ask God to reveal His voice to him or her?

Prophetic prayer. This is a beginner exercise for learning to listen to God. Have a small group gather in a circle. Have one person in the middle and everyone lay hands on them and one person ask God to speak to them through everyone there. Then just listen. God may give someone a picture (like a meadow of flowers or a mountain stream), a Scripture verse, a thought or phrase, anything at all. The person shares what he or she heard (provided it is uplifting) and then prays for the person regarding the word from the Lord.

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Prayer Five



"Build yourselves up in the most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

"What shall I do? I will pray with my spirit" (1 Corinthians 14:15).

"We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26,27).



"Prayer is so much more than the saying of words or thinking of thoughts. It is the bringing of man into harmony with the Spirit of God. It is the grand and essential readjustment. That is why it is not easy to pray without the soul being deeply moved, wither by some disturbing circumstances or by the outflowing of affection toward God" (George Carpenter, RELIGION WITH A PUNCH).

"Far be it, my comrades, from me to say one word that would stay the longing of any heart for the extraordinary gifts already mentioned. I long for them myself. I believe in their necessity, and I believe they are already amongst us"
(William Booth, WAR CRY. March 14, 1885).



Now I'm not sure how similar your experience is to mine. But, I grew up thinking tongues were not a good thing. Now, it wasn't actually said with words but I picked up in no uncertain terms that the gift of tongues was not one that I would want. As a matter of fact I believed that tongues were probably much more like a curse than a gift. That prejudice against tongues turned into a prejudice about people who spoke in them and the churches who encouraged it. Then God started to put people and information into my path that caused me to begin to question my prejudice. I remember reading the life story of Jackie Pullinger (CHASING THE DRAGON) and her testimony that after God gifted her with tongues her whole ministry took off and miracles started to occur. I just assumed she was off on the tongues thing and separated that testimony from the rest. After hearing many other testimonies about the greatness and goodness of the gift of tongues in people's prayer lives I began to really seek after ALL the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues. I began to discover that I had a lot of baggage that needed to be unloaded in order to be open and even operate in this gifting. Maybe these lessons will help you understand the gift of tongues, especially as it relates to prayer:

Trusting the giver of the gifts. Jesus told the story about earthly fathers giving to their sons what they ask (Matthew 7:9-11) and then said, "how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to His children." This has really helped heal my prejudice of tongues. There is no such thing as a bad gift. I chose to trust my Father to give only good gifts to His children. He calls tongues a gift. I made up my mind and heart to repent of my attitude about tongues and people who spoke in them.

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Prayer Five



I began to see the usefulness of tongues in prayer (Romans 8:26). I began to really ask people with the gift to tell me about it. Inevitably they all said it helped them to pray. They all used it regularly in their prayer times and said it really helped them stay and keep in contact with God. As I tried to pray with my understanding in my own language, labouring over words and descriptions, with my mind wandering every chance it got, I began to see how tongues would be a useful gift for my own prayer times. **Then I began to pray and ask God for the gift.** I began to eagerly desire the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:1).

I stepped out in faith. This was a big step for me. I had always heard about the heresy of people being taught to pray in tongues and was terrified that I would turn out to be a fake. I would pray and say, "o.k. God. I'm ready!" and hold my tongue out and expect that it would start to move on it's own. Yikes. I began to recall that God calls us into partnership with Him and that we co-operate by His grace. I also know that I have a musical gift, and suddenly God showed me the amount of time I had spent learning to play the piano! So I stepped out and began to form words that I didn't understand. At first I could only say two or three but I would faithfully utter them in my prayer times. After some months I finally had a release in my spirit and began to speak more fluently.

I live now in thankfulness that God has gifted me with tongues. It has helped my prayer life tremendously. My mind wanders much less in prayer and I can sense the presence and hear the voice of God better. He truly is a heavenly Father that knows how to give good gifts to His children.

It is important to distinguish between tongues given publicly and tongues prayed. The key Biblical principle is clear communication. The person or people on the receiving end need to be able to understand what is being said. So, if you are giving a tongue to a group God will give someone an interpretation, so that the clear communication principle is followed. If you are praying in tongues, well, God already understands you (and thus, the clear communication principle is followed)!



1. Have you had a prejudice about tongues? Why?
2. Do you know anyone who has the gift of tongues?
3. What are the good things about the gift of tongues?
4. Do you desire other spiritual gifts? Which ones?
5. Can you see tongues as a helpful gift in your prayer life?
6. Do you believe that God desires to give you this gift?
7. Are you ready to ask God for it in prayer right now?



Find someone you respect with the gift of tongues and ask them to explain the gift and its effects in their life. Ask them to pray with you.

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Prayer Six



"When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16).

"When you fast..." (Matthew 6:17).



"We can never stock up a spiritual cupboard full of supplies, then cease to pray or seek God daily, feeling that we have plenty in our reserves to carry us through for a few weeks." (Flora Larsson, FROM MY TREASURE CHEST)

"Many servants of God go away into solitude; but it is not the wilderness, the quiet retreat, that fortifies and reinforces the spirit- although silence itself is a wonderful restorative- but it is prayer in the silence that works the wonder."

(Albert Orsborn, THE SILENCE OF CHRIST)

Are you hungry for God yet? Fasting & Prayer "Fasting is a total or partial abstinence from food. When we fast, we are humbling ourselves so that we might give ourselves to God in prayer to the end that we might help others in a greater way and see God's will accomplished." – Pat Cocking

To get me to actually give up food at all for any purpose is almost a sign and a wonder in itself! I'm very attached to food – perhaps like many of you reading this. I've also struggled with thinking that fasting is for monk types or martyr-like saints who are completely nuts or at least half nuts. But I was amazed to find the call to fast and the example of fasting in the Scriptures (for example, in Acts 13:2; 14:23 God spoke out of their fasting)! In our day God has been renewing His call to this discipline and many millions of people worldwide are learning how to fast and pray.

What's the purpose of a fast?

- To humble yourself (Psalm 35:13)
- To loosen the bonds of wickedness/purify our motives/sensitivity to others (Isaiah 58:6-10)
- To strengthen our 'inner man'/to build faith and minister to others (Matthew 17:21)
- Personal prayer focus/direction from God

What do we fast from? Good question. Fasting helps us die to our own appetites in order to desire the things of heaven more than the things of earth. The most common type of fast is from food (but there are all kinds of varieties, including sex, wealth, power, meat, even water). Food seems to be one of the biggest appetites in our culture. In a fast we deny ourselves that appetite in order to seek after God (Jesus alluded to that when the disciples offered him food at the well outside of Samaria and He said He had food that no one knew of, to do His Father's will). I remember when I first started fasting... I just called out to God to make me hungrier for righteousness than for physical bread. I wanted so much to hear from Him and live on a spiritual level instead of always thinking of and wanting to fulfill my every appetite. It was a wonderful shaping experience and has led me to many times of fasting and prayer.

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Prayer Six



Most people I meet are afraid of fasting. But there are many benefits to the fasting experience.

Positive Physical effects:

- Rids the body of toxins
- Releases new energy
- Clears thinking
- Brings health to body organs

Positive Spiritual Effects:

- Strengthens our spirit ('inner man')
- Releases faith
- Gives us concentrated periods of time to pray instead of to eat

Let's get practical: So you want to try and master your bodily appetites for God's higher purposes? Great. So how to start? Start small. Refer to the books I list as resources for in depth study on the principles process of healthy fasting. Then with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, pick a time and place to start. Try always to spend the time you would have eating by praying and seeking God's will. Declare the purpose for your fast (pray and study lots), recognize that the enemy will try to stop you, keep personal repentance at a maximum, and finally avoid religious ostentation (Matthew: 6:16)! Then you and the Holy Spirit are ready to get fasting and praying with POWER.



1. What comes to your mind when you think of fasting?
2. Have you ever fasted for any reason?
3. Do you think it's healthy or unhealthy? Why?
4. What would be the hardest thing for you in a fast?
5. Do you understand the value of fasting and prayer?
6. Have you a real prayer issue that might need that kind of discipline?
7. Do you feel God is calling you to fasting and prayer?
8. When do you think you will start?
What kind of fast will you do?
What will it look like for you?



Have an all-night session of prayer and fasting. You go 24 hours... instead of eating, pray. Pick a specific issue to pray and fast for and make that a concentrated period of prayer and fasting. Be amazed at how God will move.

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Prayer Seven



"My soul longs, even faints, for the courts of the Lord" (Psalm 84:2, although the whole Psalm is relevant for this session).



"Nothing that is of interest to us is too small to interest Him. Many people do not believe this, but it is true. They think God is interested only in big things, but the same God that made the flaming suns and mighty worlds made the tiny insect, fashioned the lenses of the eye and painted with brightest colours its dainty wings. He is interested in the little quite as much as in the great. Therefore, we may bring everything to Him in prayer."
(Samuel Logan Brengle, THE WAY OF HOLINESS)



So there are many kinds, types, and styles of prayers. We are getting the idea that prayer is inexhaustible in its reality. Good idea. It is true – like any language it is expanding as we learn to love and know God better. But the exhortation of Paul to the Thessalonians was to 'pray without ceasing' and Jesus has told us to 'abide in Him', so how do we take prayer from a discipline of something we do to a lifestyle of someone we are?

The Psalmist had the right idea about dwelling in the presence of God. David understood that the fruit of our lives comes from abiding with Christ (Psalm 84:3). Even the sparrow has found a nest and has a place to have her young. Spiritual babies come from dwelling in the presence of God (84:3). David knew that a doorkeeper was a slave that was assigned that responsibility (84:10). This was a bond-slave, a slave whose servitude had ended but who chose to remain a slave. To identify the bond-slave, a nail was hammered into the door frame through his ear. David would rather being hanging from the door frame in God's presence than to be hanging out anywhere else. That's hungering and thirsting for God's presence if ever I've heard it! The words of Jesus on the Mount are as true today as they were before they were uttered in this realm: 'blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled.' I don't know about you but I can't stand the emptiness that exists in my heart when I'm not aware of God. I desire to be aware of God all the time, to be consciously and unconsciously in the Temple of the Lord (in His presence, basking in His Glory).

Frank Laubach is the classic modern example. On January 1, 1937 he wrote, "God, I want to give you every minute of this year. I shall try to keep You in mind every moment of my waking hours. I shall try to let You be the speaker and direct every word. I shall try to learn Your language." He played 'a game of minutes', recording in his diary the percentage of each hour that he was conscious of God's presence. Three months later, he noted his progress: "I thank Thee... that the habit of constant conversation grows easier each day." I really do believe ALL thought can be conversations with Thee" (in Richard Foster. FREEDOM OF SIMPLICITY). He said it transformed his life. No doubt. This is the same picture we see of Jesus who was aware of God's will at all times, knowing what to do and say and how to act and not to re-act. What a witness of abiding! How can we make prayer a lifestyle rather than a thing we do? How can be so in tune with God that our lives become like sweet smelling incense to His heart?

SALVATIONISM 301

Prayer Seven



Let's Get Practical:

Hunger and thirst for God. Yes, you read me correctly. Hunger and thirst after His presence. Cry out to Him like David did, longing for Him, desiring Him more than any other thing (including television, food, movies, friends).

Make living aware of His presence a reality. Keep a journal or at the end of the day thank God for the various ways you were aware of His presence. Even on the bus going to work Frank Laubach found he could keep conscious of God's presence. Instead of daydreaming out the window he would start to silently pray for everyone on the bus. He said as soon as he directed his attention to God he became instantly aware of His presence and it propelled him to pray more and more.

Use every extra moment for prayer. Driving to work – begin to praise and pray. Doing the dishes? Use the time to thank God for His promises and the cleaning He has done in you that day. Walking the dog? Look around you at the beauty of His creation and thank Him for walking with you.

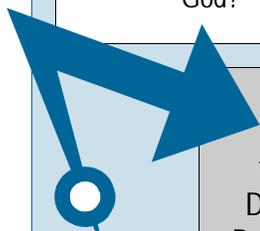
Let Him into the very details of your life. That's right. Instead of living independently of Him in the day-to-day rituals of life – invite Him in. Welcome Him into every situation. Pray without ceasing. He loves us when we live as prayers, abiding in His presence.



1. Have you ever been completely aware of God's presence? How did it feel?
2. How much of your day do you think you spend in prayer?
3. How could you make prayer a lifestyle rather than just a habit?
4. Do you find it easy to live most of your day independently of God's presence? Why?
5. Why is it so hard to live conscious of God?
6. Do you want to make prayer a lifestyle?
7. Do you ask God what He thinks before you make decisions? Give an example?
8. Why not pray with someone right now and commit to begin to redeem the time and days to live 'abiding' in Christ and practicing the presence of God?



Why not try the experiment? Play the 'game of minutes.' Reserve a spot on each page on your personal devotions record and keep track of how much time you personally spend consciously aware of God. Practice His presence today (remember, it is a game)!



GROUP WORK:

Challenge each other to keep a prayer journal for the rest of this course. Set a goal to pray daily, a specific time, and your group will ask you weekly how you are doing. Divide up into partners to develop a prayer schedule that will work for you. Be specific. Be reasonable (set reachable goals). And use some faith.