

**English Transcript**  
**Worship-based Prayer**  
**Lesson 4 - A Life of Great Influence in Prayer**

Welcome back to *Worship-based Prayer: Everything Changes When You Seek God's Face*. We are continuing with lesson 4 and this begins on page 17.

The title of this lesson is A Life of Great Influence in Prayer.

In this lesson we will discuss a few principles that are needed in the life of a pastor and others who have a passion for developing a worship-based prayer culture in their church. Success in leading a movement like this cannot be delegated. Pastoral leadership will set the tone for others to be equipped to also share these same convictions.

What kinds of convictions should a pastor have if he is to lead the church to higher ground? What kind of people are we looking for to help advance a dynamic prayer ministry? There are five convictions we will discuss in this lesson.

1. An uncompromising conviction about the priority of prayer.
2. An extraordinary commitment towards the ministry of corporate prayer.
3. An enduring captivation with God's worthiness.
4. An abiding concern for the glory of God in the church.
5. A firm conclusion regarding the supernatural nature of the church.

Someone once told me that *prayerlessness is our declaration of independence from God*. Let me repeat that.

*Our prayerlessness is our declaration of independence from God.*

Because we can think of prayer as one of the greatest demonstrations of our faith. It is a demonstration of our dependence on God. Often, we think we can do things on our own and when we have a lack of prayer in our lives, we are declaring independence from God. Instead, we should be declaring that we are fully dependent on God. Our relationship with God should be reflected in the words of that old hymn,

*I need Thee, O I need Thee  
Every hour I need Thee  
O Bless me now my Savior  
I come to Thee.*

Let us look at these five principles as essential to establishing a foundation for a life of great influence in prayer.

## **1. An Uncompromising Conviction about the Priority of Prayer**

Prayer in its simplest definition is depending on God. When we do not pray, we are saying, *“Lord, I think I can live the Christian life on my own.”* There are many examples in the Bible showing this uncompromising conviction in prayer.

### **First, we can look at the life of Jesus.**

Jesus spent 40 days in prayer and fasting to launch his public ministry (Matthew 4). He had the discipline of rising early to pray (Mark 1:35). Jesus often slipped away to remote places to pray amid the busyness of His three years of public ministry (Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16). There was a time he prayed all night before a major decision (Luke 6:12). Jesus modeled prayer with his disciples continually (Luke 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 22:39-40). Someone once told me Jesus was the only person who did not need to pray but did, to help those who do need to pray but do not, learn how to do it. Let me repeat that again. Jesus was the only person who did not need to pray but did, to help those who do need to pray but do not, learn how to do it. To have a life of great influence in prayer, we can follow the example of Jesus.

### **We can also look at the example of the early church.**

The church was birthed in prayer at Pentecost. The church was nurtured in prayer. The church was preserved and protected by prayer. And the church was directed by extraordinary seasons of prayer. A number of prayer passages are included in your handout from the book of Acts. Take time to read these passages on your own. When there were issues, the church prayed. When they were going into new areas, the church prayed. In the face of persecution, the church prayed. When direction or guidance was needed, the church prayed. When God accomplished miracles, the church prayed.

References that provide just a taste of how the early church had a conviction for the priority of prayer: Acts 1:13-14,24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:24-31; 6:4; 9:11, 40; 10:9; 12:5,12; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:16,25; Colossians 4:12; James 5:13-18

### **The life of the Apostle Paul also provides us with examples of his conviction to the priority of prayer.**

Paul was on his knees from his conversion on the road to Damascus to his execution. He was continually on his knees, praying for others, praying for himself, praying for the kingdom, praying for God to be glorified. Some of the most glorious prayers ever recorded were written by Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As we begin to learn to pray, a great place to start is simply to begin praying the prayers that God has given us in His Word. I have included just a few passages that illustrate Paul’s conviction to the priority of prayer in his life and ministry.

Ephesians 1:15-16

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your*

*heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms ...*

Ephesians 3:14-19

*For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Philippians 1:9-11

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

Colossians 1:9-14

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Colossians 4:2-6

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

1 Thessalonian 5:16-18

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Additional references are included in your handout that you may read on your own.

*“Prayer is not a preface or an addendum to the work of ministry. Prayer is the work of ministry. When I work, I work. But when I pray, God works.” – Daniel Henderson*

*“Prayer cannot be retired as a secondary force in this world. To do so is to retire God from the movement. It is to make God secondary. The prayer ministry is an all-engaging force. It must be so to be a force at all. The estimate and place of prayer is the estimate and place of God. To give prayer secondary place is to make God secondary in life’s affairs.”*

- E.M. Bounds

## **2. An Extraordinary Commitment to the Ministry of Corporate Prayer**

Leaders in prayer must be fully convinced that Jesus desires the church to pray together. It is easy to get excited about the possibilities of creating a prayer culture in your church, only to see that initial spark quickly fades in the face of opposition and discouragement because others may not share the same passion.

We can and should pray in private, yet most of the commands in the New Testament are in the plural. The community nature of the church is represented throughout the Bible. This is true for spiritual transformation, the one another commands in the Bible that describe the life of the church, and even the prayer life of the church. If I were to ask you which is more important, the right wing or the left wing of an airplane, you would say they are both equally important. Which leg is more important, your right or your left leg? They are both important. In the same way, which is more important, private prayer or corporate prayer? Both are essential aspects of prayer.

As leaders in the church, we must develop a vision to die on our knees, to die praying. The prophet Jeremiah had the nickname old camel knees, because he was continually on his knees crying out to God. There is no greater commitment than to lead the people in your churches into the presence of our Savior in prayer. Creating a culture within the church to have a passion for seeking God’s face together is not a short-term program, but rather a lifestyle to be developed. An authentic prayer life, and the vision for a praying church, is a marathon, not a sprint.

## **3. An Enduring Captivation with God’s Worthiness**

The prayer model that Jesus gives us in Matthew 6 in its simplest form has two parts. Part 1: God is Worthy. Part 2: We are needy.

The only enduring motivation to pray is that God is worthy to be sought. It does not matter how many people come to pray. It does not matter how tired you are. It does not matter how well the church is getting along. It does not matter how you feel. The only thing that truly matters is that God is worthy!

Moses understood this truth. We see in Exodus 33:8-11 that he continued to meet with God in the tent of meeting. And when he met with God, the pillar of cloud descended on the Tent and the Lord would speak to Moses. All the people would observe this from their own tents and stand and worship. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Paul understood this truth. In Romans 15:30 he prays, “I appeal to you brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf. The worthiness of the Lord Jesus and the love of the Spirit were the enduring motivation for Paul to pray continually.

In Revelation 4 the angels, the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four elders all bow down before Him who is seated on the throne in heaven and worship Him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne saying,

*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.”*

God is worthy to be sought!

We often do the right things for the wrong reasons. We can have wrong motives for praying. Because prayer is expected and commanded, we can feel obligated to pray. Guilt though or a sense of obligation is never an enduring motivation for prayer.

Sometimes we seek approval from others. If they see us praying, we may feel more accepted or important in their eyes. We may also think that God loves us more when we pray as we seek His acceptance. This is the wrong motivation for prayer.

If we think that our church will grow because we pray, because often we think that bigger is better, this is the wrong motivation for prayer. This motivation for prayer is focused on a human strategy for growth instead of the motivation to first seek God’s face because He alone is worthy to be sought.

What is your motivation to pray? In James 4 we learn that having self-centered motives for prayer will hinder our prayers. Selfish motives and self-glorification are wrong motivations for prayer. The only enduring motivation for prayer is that God is worthy to be sought!

#### **4. An Abiding Concern for the Glory of God in the Church**

*“The glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of prayer.”*

-- Andrew Murray.

The glory of God is the manifestation of the presence of God among His people. The glory of God is not an attribute of God. God is holy. God is love. God is truth. God is all knowing, all powerful and ever present. God is wise and just and peace. These are examples of some of the attributes of God. God is unified in His being, meaning that he is 100% holy all the time and 100% love all the time. That is true for all His attributes. He is not divided, meaning that He is part holy, part love, part just, etc.

We can think of the glory of God as the manifest presence of God representing the fullness of His being and attributes. In the Bible, this glory of God is represented by a great light that is referred to as the *Shekinah* of God.

We see this when God's manifest presence filled the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacles with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This was the symbol of God's presence and supernatural provision in the midst of His people.

In Exodus 32-34 we read about God removing his presence because of Israel's idolatry with the golden calf. God told Moses that he should still lead the people into the Promised Land under God's protection, but God's presence would not go with them. Moses intercedes for the nation before God and says that they can not move forward without God's presence.

Daniel Henderson defines God's glory as the ***manifestation of Christ's presence*** among His people and the ***magnification of His person*** by His people. This is the passion and desired focus of prayer.

The apostle Paul writes, *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen"* (Ephesians 3:20-21). This is our focus. To Him be the glory in the church because we are praying, and He is doing the unimaginable.

In Acts 4:13, the Jewish religious leaders looked at Peter and John and saw ordinary, uneducated fishermen. But they also took note of the fact that these men had an uncommon passion for Jesus, and they could see that they were having an unimaginable impact on the world. The passage states that the leaders took note that *"these men had been with Jesus."* This is the glory of God!

This emphasis on the glory of God fills the prayer of Jesus in His High Priestly prayer recorded in John 17. This is the "real" Lord's prayer as Jesus prays for Himself, for His disciples, and for the future church. In verses 1-5, Jesus references "glory" five times.

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. **Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.** For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. <sup>3</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> **I have brought you glory** on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, **glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.**

What is it that makes Christians distinctive in the world today? Is it the cross some may wear around their neck? Is it the fish symbol they may have on their car? Is it the political party they align with? Or maybe it is the moral standard they claim to live by? These are all external distinctives. What should make followers of Jesus different from the world is the undeniable sense of the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives and in our midst in the church.

In 2 Corinthians chapters 3 and 4, we read about the fading glory that Moses had and how that does not compare with the unfading glory that lives in every follower of Jesus today through the indwelling Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18 confirms that we have the unfading glory of God and we are being transformed day by day with ever increasing glory. As we

continue to seek God's face together in prayer, God works in our lives to shape and refine us to His image.

"God among you is this aim and ambition of a praying church. We do not impress people with our clever preaching, entertaining dramas, excellent music, comfortable seats, outstanding programs, or even our friendly atmosphere. These are fine and good. But the praying church looks far beyond these temporal things. We long for the glory of God. Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else." - Daniel Handerson, *Fresh Encounter*

It is not our methodologies, personality, size of our church or ministry, but the manifestation of God's glory in Jesus Christ through a praying church that will impact and change the world. As a leader, your call is to simply lead people to seek God together. You are not seeking God to get things from Him; you are seeking Him simply because He is worthy to be sought.

## **5. A Firm Conclusion to the Supernatural Nature of the Church.**

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not overcome it.

The early church grew as a result of people walking in step with the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is not about words but rather the power and glory of God.

The church grew from 3,000 to 5,000 believers. The more it was persecuted, the more it grew. In Acts 8, the church was persecuted and the church continued to grow and spread throughout all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

In Acts 4:31, Peter and John returned after being persecuted, and they explained what was happening. The gathered church lifted their voices together in prayer asking God to do what only He can do and to fill them with the Holy Spirit and speak the Word of God boldly. In response, God shook the room where they were praying. They were all filled with the Spirit, and they went out and spoke the word of God boldly. They knew that they were part of a supernatural work of God.

We already mentioned the spiritual transformation that is taking place within the church from glory to glory that is referenced in 2 Corinthians 3:18. This is the glory of God within us through the indwelling Holy Spirit. And we are to reflect His glory to the world around us.

We have this treasure, the supernatural power of God, in jars of clay. We are simple vessels being used for the supernatural glory of God.

You can see two pictures at the bottom of page 18. A picture of a sailboat and a picture of a motorboat.

We can make observations of these pictures. Where does the power come from for each boat?

The power for the motorboat, is within the boat. There is a large engine that is attached to the back of the boat. This is a man-made engine but there is a limit to its power. At some point it will run out of gas and must be refilled. The motorboat looks good. It looks powerful. Other people might be impressed by it.

The sailboat has no motor. The power that will propel the boat to move forward comes from the wind. The power will come from outside of the boat.

May we be more like the simple sailboat, only able to move by an unseen supernatural force.

The motorboat advances at the hands of the driver, propelled by man-made fuel. A sailboat is at the mercy of the powerful wind. This illustration represents two different approaches to life and ministry. We must resolve to be simple sailboats. Apart from the Spirit of God's moving, we are dead in the water. When the Spirit moves, our only goal is to bring glory to God who propels our lives.

God is calling us to be continually drawing near to him, approaching the throne of grace, seeking His face, abiding in Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit. We never attempt to do things in our strength and for our glory, but rather to join God in the work that He is doing.

#### **How may we live a life of great influence in prayer?**

- We must have an **uncompromising conviction about the priority of prayer**. As we look at the life of Jesus, look at the life of the early church, look at the life of the Apostle Paul.
- We must have an **extraordinary commitment towards the ministry of corporate prayer**, not just private prayer, but praying together, praying in community with others. Both private and corporate prayer are essential.
- We must have an **enduring captivation with God's worthiness**. The only enduring motivation for prayer is that God is worthy to be sought.
- We must have an **abiding concern for the glory of God in the church**. The glory of the Father must be the aim and end the very soul and life of our prayer life. The manifest presence of Christ in the church will lead to opportunities to magnify Christ in the world around us.
- We must have a **firm conclusion about the supernatural nature of the church**. Desire to be more like the sailboat in our life and ministry. We will position ourselves to be ready to move with God as he moves. We are filled with the Spirit. We trust that Jesus is going to build his church and nothing can stop it. We participate with Him in the work of expanding His Kingdom.



We are being transformed from glory to glory. We have this treasure in jars of clay. Prayer is the gift from God to see God's power come down from heaven to earth to see His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

What an amazing privilege to be used of God and see our life bring Him glory as we influence others to pray and seek His face together. All by God's grace and for His glory!

We will continue with Lesson 5 titled, Jesus said, "Pray this way and not that way".