

the prayer of faith shall save the sick." James 5:14, 15. It is a great mistake to let physicians and nurses, treatments and sanitariums, rob us of our sense of the need of God and of prayer for the sick. God has given us means to aid nature in the restoration of the sick, but they were never intended to come between us and our Healer.

So if we are ever sick, or have friends who are sick, it is another reason why we should pray.

God has made us His ambassadors to our fellow men. As such we urge His claims upon them, and then as Christ's own representatives we plead the cases of these men at the throne of grace, and urge the merits of our Master in their behalf. There is surely no greater privilege or joy than that of intercession for those who are dear to us, but who are unsaved. It is our solemn duty to represent those who are bound to us by the ties of affection or influence before the heavenly mercy seat. And in God's great plan He has promised to do for them what He could not do if we did not pray.

So we might go over an almost endless list of reasons for prayer. Paul thus embraces them all: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4: 6, 7.

When, Where, and How to Pray

At one time Paul pointed out two fundamental human weaknesses, one characteristic of women and one of men. The former [women] are warned against the adornment of the external and physical, in contrast to the inner, spiritual being. The latter [men] he exhorts to "pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." 1Tim 2:8.

It is inherent in the nature of man to trust himself; and to trust self is to doubt God. The more abundant a man's supply of health, education, wealth, or talent, the greater his temptation to trust in his own endowments or possessions, and close his eyes to his need of God.

No man can truly pray who is self-sufficient, for real prayer springs from the consciousness of the soul that it is weak, inadequate, and incomplete, apart from God. God has all that man needs, and longs to supply his needs. But He can do this only on condition that man will be His friend and not His enemy. The basis of prayer, therefore, is friendship between God and man, springing from God's love to man and man's consciousness of his utter need of God, and his willingness to yield to and obey God.

In view of these facts, when should a man pray? Christ taught that men should "pray always." Some men have noticed this teaching, and it is interesting to observe the result.

Daniel was a great statesman, a prime minister, standing next to the ruler of an empire embracing the known world. He started as a humble student, chosen from a group of war captives brought from a far country. Only a few years elapsed until he was second in authority over the whole empire. "Praying always," was one of the unalterable principles of his life. The prospect of loss of friends, of position, or of life itself, never caused him to waver a moment. This fellowship with God in constant prayer imparted to him such wisdom and ability and unerring judgments, that keen, unscrupulous, intriguing political enemies could find no fault with his life nor with his administration of vast responsibilities. His was a model life for every humble captive as well as for every great statesman.

Moses was another leader who figures as a giant character in the history of the world. Notice some illustrations of WHEN he prayed:

When only three days' journey from Sinai, the people complained, and God sent a plague among them, so that they died. Moses prayed, and the fire was quenched. Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses, especially over domestic matters, as they did not like his wife, and they were also envious of his position. Under these circumstances Moses prayed, and his sister, who had been stricken with leprosy as a judgment for her presumption, was healed.

When the twelve spies returned from Canaan with their discouraging report, the people wept and complained; but Moses prayed. The disaffection and murmuring grew worse, and God threatened to disinherit and destroy Israel; but Moses prayed the more earnestly, and his prayers prevailed.

Then there arose a rebellion of two hundred and fifty princes, "famous in the congregation, men of renown." They determined to depose Moses as leader. Moses immediately resorted to prayer. God visited His judgments upon the leaders of the rebellion, and they were all destroyed.

The next day the whole nation rose up against Moses, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Numbers 16:41. Again God punished the people, and again they were spared in answer to Moses' prayers. His whole life is a record of masterful leadership and noble, successful service, because he prayed always. Only three times in his career is it recorded that he acted without prayer, and each time he made a grievous mistake.

Surely one who is lacking in almost every Christian grace may well pray; but these illustrations serve to show that even one who has intellect, opportunity,

power, genius, may make the most of these gifts only by being always instant in prayer.

The Bible commends public prayer in the house of God, family prayer, the united petitions of two of Christ's disciples, but above all, the unceasing prayer of the individual.

Prayer is not something to turn to only in case of danger, emergency, or crisis; it is the means of constant communication between a loving and mighty God and His needy and responsive children. Prayer is the secret door to that channel through which petitions ascend to God and help and blessing descent to men. At God's end the channel is always open. How much of the time do you keep it open at this end? When do you pray?

"I will therefore that men pray EVERYWHERE." 1Tim. 2:8.

Some people never think of praying except at the bedside, when retiring for the night. Others pray only at family worship, and still others confine their praying to the church.

I was riding along the road with a stalwart young farmer in the West. He spoke feelingly of his father, who had recently died. Pointing to the right, he said, "Do you see that field? Many a time while hoeing corn in that field with my father, he would say, 'John, let's kneel down here and pray.' And over on this side I can remember again and again, when hauling hay, he would say, 'John, I want you to be a good Christian boy and work for God. Kneel down with me while I ask the Lord to bless and keep you.'"

Tears were coursing down his cheeks as he continued, "My father was the most godly, consistent Christian I ever knew. He was always praying out in the field, in the barn, in the house, and wherever he went."

The Scripture says, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere." Are not our conception of God and our relation to Him indicated by WHERE we pray? If a person is conscious of God only when he is going to bed, how much genuine religion has he? But if a person is conscious of God as his Father, his Saviour, his personal Friend, wherever he goes, then he will pray accordingly.

A person may say a prayer once a day at his bedside, and that prayer be a meaningless form. But one can hardly conceive of a person's praying EVERYWHERE unless the presence of God is to him a vital reality.

Hardly a day passes that does not record some great catastrophe in which human lives are lost. In the face of some awful peril, almost all intelligent people cry to

God. It may be audibly or inaudibly, but there is an instinctive appeal to the only One who has omnipotent power to save.

But how different must be the cry of those whose previous prayer has been mere form, from that of one who has known and communed with God everywhere. It is like a blind man groping in the dark for something of which he is not certain.

In the Scripture we have an interesting picture of men of God praying "everywhere." Isaac prayed in the field. Elijah prayed on the top of Mt. Carmel. Elisha prayed in the chamber alone with the dead child. David prayed in his bed at night. Jonah prayed in the bowels of the great fish. Daniel prayed alone in his room. Jesus withdrew into a solitary place, and prayed; He prayed in Gethsemane, and on the cross. The disciples prayed in the upper room until Pentecost came. Peter prayed on the housetop and in the chamber of death. Paul prayed in the Philippian jail at midnight. He kneeled down with the brethren at Miletus on the seashore, and prayed. He prayed in the temple, on the sea, and in his Roman prison.

How many places on this sin-cursed and blood-stained earth have been consecrated by the prayers of saints and martyrs, -the catacombs of Rome; the rocky peaks and caves and mountain fastness of the Alps; the rack and the dungeon and the blazing pile; the dark jungles in the heart of Africa, where Livingstone died on his knees; the mysterious fastness of Madagascar and the dark habitations of the cruelty and cannibalism in the islands of the sea, -all these have witnessed the prayers of heroic men and women who prayed EVERYWHERE to a God who is EVERYWHERE, and whose ear is open and His mighty hand ready to respond to the cry of sorrow and distress and need.

Though the call of the Master take us to the ends of the earth, or no farther than the circle of our own home, let us learn the precious lesson of praying everywhere.

HOW do you pray? How little do we discriminate between saying our prayers and really praying! How often do we say our prayers, and in ten minutes do not even remember what we said!

Is it any wonder that when a crisis or a calamity comes, and we really want help from God, we pray, and then cry in distress, "My prayers are in vain! They do not go higher than my head! God does not hear or answer me"?

Here is a prayer by a devout servant of God that we may well analyze and endeavor to make the spirit of our hearts:

"Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul." - Christ's Object Lessons, page 159.

Reader, if you are alone, will you not get down on your knees now and begin: "Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it"? Repeat it till the solemn truth of what you are saying is borne into your soul by the Holy Spirit. Many a time you have said, "Lord, I give you my heart," and yet you have gone on cherishing selfishness and pride in that heart which you never really gave to Him. No, my friend, your faculties are too benumbed and intoxicated by sin, your eyes are too blind, your will too weak, to really give your heart to God. Oh, implore Him now to take what you are too sinful and helpless to give. Tell Him it is your choice.

"It is Thy property." It is His because you are His; because He has given you existence, and has redeemed you from death by the sacrifice of His own life. It is dishonest, it is a crime against God and your own soul, not to let Him have that which rightfully belongs to Him, and which He values more than His life.

"Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee." Are you not convinced that you cannot keep it after your long record of desperate and heart-breaking but utterly futile efforts? Do you not know from sad experience that your heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"?

And would you know the unutterable peace and rest of a heart kept as pure and holy as the mighty Keeper who dwells within it? Then do not try longer to keep it for Him; let Him keep it for Himself.

"Save me in spite of myself, my way, unchristlike self." I struggle, I resolve, I determine, but "I am carnal, sold under sin." "To will is present in me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." So, Lord, I find that I am the greatest obstacle. "Save me in spite of myself-this weak, unchristlike self."

Pray on, friend, the way is growing brighter. "Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul." Is not this where your life has failed to stand the test? It did not bear the stamp of the divine workmanship. IT LACKED PRAYER.

"By beholding we become changed." Now, as you pray, the work is going on. As you cry to Him, He stands by your side. He is looking down upon your bowed head and tear-stained face. He is raising you up into that pure and holy atmosphere. Just be yielding. Keep the door open wide. Let the rich current of His love flow through your soul.

Oh, how sweet it is really to kneel at the feet of Jesus and pray!

Abiding in Christ

We can think of no more appropriate word to conclude our study of the victorious life than that of the Master Himself,

"Abide IN Me, and I IN YOU."

The gracious promises of pardon and victory are all conditional on being IN CHRIST. Our very life depends on our entering into this relationship with the living and life-giving One.

"If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2Cor. 5:17. One who has this experience, the Saviour says, "hate everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. This corresponds also to the words of Paul, "As IN ADAM all die, even so IN CHRIST shall all be made alive." 1Cor. 15:22. Life comes to us as a result of entering into Christ, and this life is His own pure and victorious life. On the other hand, the Saviour said emphatically, "If a man abide not IN ME, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." 1Cor. 15:6. These words imply that a man might accept Christ as his Saviour, and be IN HIM, but not abide or continue in Him, and so be cast away and lost. This is also stated in the second verse: "Every branch IN ME that beareth not fruit He taketh away."

This experience of being IN CHRIST is not one which we can gain by any effort of our own, but is the work of our heavenly Father in response to our obedience and faith. "He which stablisheth us with you IN CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is God." 2Cor. 1:21. This very anointing of God teaches us the way, and enables us, day by day and hour by hour, to abide in Christ. "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall ABIDE IN HIM." 1John 2:27.

This wonderful experience is beautifully and forcefully expressed by Dr. A. B. Simpson when he sings, "I have learned the wondrous secret of abiding in the Lord."

"I am crucified with Jesus,

And He lives and dwells in me;

I have ceased from all my struggling,