

PRAYING FOR LEADERS

by Arthur Burk

Introduction -

The Problem

Praying for our leaders is one of the most sensitive areas of the Christian community, because we run the risk of moving out of intercession into either witchcraft prayer or meaningless prayer simply because we who are praying for our leaders have our own agenda. We are all thinking people. We have a pretty good idea of where our leaders need to grow, where they need to mature, where they need to be better leaders so they can lead us in a better way. We also bring our own woundedness. We bring our own wish list. We bring our own perception of what the call of God is upon our leaders' life to the table. Many times that clutters our prayers, at best rendering them ineffective, at worst making them dangerous and damaging.

This is particularly true in group prayer meetings for pastors. I find those to be fairly dangerous. I personally recommend that pastors not structure group prayer for themselves, unless they are present, rather letting the prayer for the pastor be done individually by intercessors in their prayer closet. This discourse is intended to be a tool to defuse many of the problems that have been associated with control, witchcraft, or manipulative prayers, which are all divisive prayers for leadership. Very simply I see intercession as praying God's will into reality. So when we are praying God's will we know there's no manipulation; we know there's no control; and we know we are on safe ground. The best way to know what God's will is in a situation is to pray Scripture.

A Solution

In Colossians 1:9-11, I find seven core concepts that are applicable for all leaders at all times, especially leaders who are going through difficult times. If you are in a situation where the church is profoundly divided over what the leader ought to do, you can pray this prayer either in private or corporately with absolute conviction that you are praying God's will. You know you will not do any damage to the situation.

I recommend that leaders have their armor bearers, a group of people that are committed to pray for them take these seven items and apply one each day of the week. Pray them on an ongoing basis when there are and when there aren't problems, because the majority of these prayers are designed to be proactive. The majority of these prayers are designed to grow an individual into the fullness of whom God has called them to *be*, rather than merely responding to the need of the hour.

There are times when we are aware of our neediness because the task at hand overwhelms us. There are other times when God does not even give us an opportunity that He might otherwise have, because we are too small for the task. We don't even know that we've missed an opportunity because God did not put it before us. These prayers are not just safe prayers on a biblical foundation to avoid either division or witchcraft praying in the Church. More than anything else, they are proactive prayers designed to bring the fullness of God's will to bear here on earth because God's will in heaven is done in its fullness.



When we pray “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” there are a vast number of lessons we can draw from those phrases. In heaven God’s will is done in its completeness. There are no partially-done jobs in heaven. They’re all done completely and that is what we should desire to see in the lives of our leaders. Intercessors can pray this for their pastors and for the directors of para-church ministries. Husbands should have their wives and children praying this for them. Children can pray for parents and grandparents. Employees can pray these same things for their secular bosses. These are universally applicable, life-transforming prayer requests.

The Seven Prayers

The Passage

Colossians 1:9-12 (NIV), reads: “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may 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, in joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

It’s interesting to look at the historical context and realize that in all probability Paul did not know these believers in Colosse. Colosse was one of the cities down the road from Ephesus. Several daughter churches were established there, but as far as it is known historically, he was not personally acquainted with the believers at Colosse. So he was writing to strangers, but he was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, based upon Epaphras’ word that reported the church’s problems to him. He is bringing these Spirit-inspired prayers that are universally applicable to a Church that was in a state of upheaval over doctrinal differences and leadership issues.

Sunday’s Prayer

Beginning on Sunday, the first day of the prayers is in verse nine. Asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. There are three components to this passage that need to be examined. First of all, look at “the knowledge of God’s will.” This is a classic prayer to be prayed in case of division within a church.

Suppose the pastor is planning to propose to the congregation that John Doe become the next associate pastor. Some of the intercessors are absolutely convinced that John Doe is a wonderful gift from God to the church while another portion of the intercessory group are equally convinced that this man is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. You could easily divide the church over that issue. You could easily turn the church’s whole intercessory group into a war zone and discredit the whole intercessory ministry over who has heard correctly from God, whether John Doe ought to be the new associate pastor or not. However, both sides (those who think he’s good and those who are sure he’s not) can pray that the pastor would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will so that whatever is done is God’s will. If intercessors are not committed to God’s will, they’re on shaky ground to begin with and need to be pulled from the intercessory team. Every intercessor in any situation can pray the prayer that never fails which is “Lord, Thy will be done.”

This is a beginning place, but it’s not just to know God’s will, but to know God’s will *through spiritual wisdom and understanding*. There’s a basic human dynamic in most American churches: The pastors generally prefer not to be taught by their sheep. Now I realize there are godly, humble men who listen to the words of counsel from their sheep. Hopefully every pastor has some sort of framework of men and women around him who can speak into his life. But generally there is tension in churches when intercessors begin to hear the voice of God and go to the pastor, telling him how he ought to be running the church. It creates no end of tension and division. Many, many times the intercessors have accurately heard the will of God but they’ve heard it in part, hearing it long before it’s ready to be

incarnated. They share it with the pastor before the spiritual leadership of the church is ready to receive it and implement it. Chaos ensues.

On the other hand, almost every pastor is hugely predisposed to receive direct instruction from God. That is how they'd rather receive it than in any other way. A pastor feels incredibly confident when he steps into the pulpit or steps into a leadership meeting, knowing that he knows that he knows that he has heard from God--God has spoken and given him a revelation. So instead of the intercessors seeking God to find out what the mind of God is in the situation, they should pray that the pastor would be filled with the knowledge of God's will... through what? "Through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Not through the counsel of other pastors. Not through a process of democracy where feelers are put out to find out where everybody in the congregation stands. Not through politics of evaluating the number of people in the church leadership team that are going to support him, but that he would have the knowledge of God's will through spiritual wisdom and understanding. In other words the intercessors can pray that God would reveal His will directly to the pastor. They are absolutely on solid ground there. There is no question that God wants His will to be known and God is willing to make His will known.

Go from here to John 16:12-13a (NIV) where the Lord says, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth." We know that we are on solid ground asking God to use spiritual revelation, wisdom, and understanding to communicate His will to our pastor, leader, husband, or whomever it may be. But there's a third aspect to this verse, which is the word *fill*. To fill the pastor with the knowledge of God's will. So many times we are in the presence of the Lord, hearing Him, but as soon as we hear something, we become so excited that we rush out to do other things without getting the rest of the message. We may know what the objective is, but have completely missed some of the details in terms of timing, process, the staffing, or of the provisions. And so while we are on Sunday, praying for God to make the knowledge of His will

plain to our pastor, don't forget the first word, to pray that he will be filled. Not just satisfied, but that God would tell him perhaps even more than he wants to know, more than he is looking to know. Pray that God would fill him with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Monday's Prayer

This positions us for the second day, Monday. Colossians 1:10 reads, "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way...." It is one thing to know God's will and it is another thing to incarnate God's will. It's one thing to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. It's another to live that way all day long. This prayer is for an internal transformation in the pastor for him to be able to live according to his calling, to live worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I read a story years ago during the height of the feminist movement where a man saw a lady with her hands full coming towards a glass door. He immediately rose from his chair, went and held the door open for her. As she went through she snapped at him, "You don't have to open the door for me just because I'm a woman!"

He graciously responded to her saying, "Ma'am, I didn't open the door for you because you're a woman. I opened the door for you because I am a gentleman."

In other words he was internally driven to do what he did. He was not controlled by the social culture of the day. Similarly all of our churches have cultural expectations. You can do this. You can't do that. In some churches you have to preach in a suit and tie. Other churches you can preach in your shirtsleeves. Every country, church, and denomination has its own culture as to what is proper. This prayer is a prayer to lift your pastor, leader, husband, or father far beyond the cultural norms. Praying he will be driven by heavenly cultural norms so that he is internally motivated to act out, walk out, and implement the knowledge of God's will that he received based on the prayers on the first day.

Tuesday's Prayer

This takes us then to the third day, Tuesday. The next part of verse ten says: "...bearing fruit in every good work..." There are two parts to this; first being the bearing of fruit, and secondly, bearing fruit in every good work. I am frustrated with the theology of faithfulness in the body of Christ today. There is altogether too much teaching that we only need to be faithful and not worry about being fruitful. I understand that there are areas where we have to sow longer before we reap. Look at the apostle Paul. He had a very simple, church-planting technique. It was called *three weeks and a riot; go on to the next city*. When he arrived in Corinth that would not work for him, yet he was so committed to his *three weeks and a riot*, church-planting model that God had to appear to him. This occasion, one of the handful of times that the Lord Jesus appeared to him, was not for a profound theological revelation. It was for a methodological revelation saying: You need to stay here in this city. I have many people in this city. *Three weeks and a riot* won't get it. You're going to have to spend two years here.

So there are places like Corinth where we have to sow longer for a greater period of time before we see results. However, I stand on the truth of John 15:16 (NIV), where the Lord said: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." We are called to be fruitful and if a pastor is not fruitful over the long run, there is a problem. If there is a difficulty, we need to address that in prayer not in gossip, criticism, or backbiting. Without bringing our personal woundedness to the table, or our own hobby-horses, or going to the Lord explaining to Him exactly where the pastor ought to be fruitful in the short-term, we can go with simple intercession crying out to God.

We can ask Him to make the pastor fruitful, allowing his ministry to change in whatever way is necessary. If it needs cleansing and sanctification so he is a fit vessel for the holiness of God, then let God determine that. If it is chastening or pruning to bear more fruit, let God determine that. If it is more training, equipping, or more anointing, let God determine that. If it is a change in methodology, let God determine that also. If it's a change of place, as in he needs to

leave this church and go somewhere else, let God determine that. If he is in the wrong place, (he is in the ministry and belongs in the marketplace or in the marketplace and belongs in the ministry), let God determine that. Let's go very easy on telling God how to solve the problem, but rather directly pray the objective that God has given: that your pastor, leader, husband, or father will bear fruit.

Then pray that he not just bear fruit but bear fruit in every good work. One of the greatest traps of the enemy is success. At the point of our success it is easy for us to settle down, remaining in that place, working in that area of success rather than going on to be, and do, everything that God has called us to do.

It is not just easy, it is almost a cultural norm, and I am fighting that vigorously at this point in my own life. The revelation that God has given me that I have shared with the body in terms of the redemptive gifts of individuals and cities has been hugely popular. In human terms it has been successful. Because of the benefit that message has brought to many people, there is an inordinate amount of pressure on me to camp out there, spending the rest of my life as the resident expert on redemptive gifts. I could easily make tapes and videos, write books, give seminars and conferences, and spend the rest of my life traveling the world being very famous, popular, and much loved, having a great deal of fruit in this area.

I could do that in this particular area, but God has called me to far more than the redemptive gifts. I refuse to be freeze-framed by the Body of Christ into this particular area of good works, so I have to fight the religious culture. I have to fight the pressure of the people who desperately want me to camp here as I leave that behind. I push on to do the other good things, every good work that God has called me to do.

As a pastor begins to hear and be filled with the knowledge of God's will, he begins to walk it out, begins to be effective in bearing fruit, walking worthy of the calling. There is the trap of the enemy: Bearing fruit one-dimensionally. This prayer is the antidote to the trap of success. Namely, pray that he

would not just bear fruit, but bear fruit in every good work that God has designed him to do.

I would segue from here to Ephesians 2:10. It says that we are uniquely designed for good works. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” One *specific* set of good works that God prepared in advance for us to do. In that sense each person is a unique tool.

I use the illustration of a shovel and a paintbrush. If you were to go to Home Depot and spend forty dollars on a paintbrush, you would be getting a really elite, high-end, executive paintbrush. If you spent forty dollars on a shovel, it would be about as high end as you can get on a shovel. Yet the value in those tools does not lie in their price. The value lies in the tool being matched to the proper job. If you try to dig a ditch with a paintbrush, or paint a wall with a shovel, you’re going to have a very difficult time. No matter how expensive the shovel is, it was not made to paint the wall.

Every one of us is a tool uniquely designed to do a particular set of good works in the Body of Christ. There is absolutely nobody like you and there never will be. There is a set of good works that you can do, doing them better even than the Apostle Paul, better than I could, and better than anybody else could. God has designed you as a one-of-a-kind person to fit a one-of-a-kind set of situations throughout the length and breadth of your life. To the degree that you do not do the good works that God has designed, made, and equipped you to do, to that degree either that work will not be done or somebody else will have to do it. And he will do it not as well, taking more effort to get it done.

That is the pressure that we experience. That is the battle that we are up against. All of us are called to do a specific set of good works and in doing those good works we find our greatest fulfillment, our greatest satisfaction, the greatest release of our identity and we also do the greatest good for the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God. This is not legalism. This is simply the way God has designed mankind, for us to experience our fulfillment doing

what God has designed us to do. If the enemy cannot send us to hell, at the very least he is going to try to get us to do things that we were not designed to do. Consequently, we do these things poorly and do not experience fulfillment. If he cannot do that, he will at least try to get us to be satisfied with some good work, having us fall short of the fullness that God has called us to walk in. So as your pastor, leader, husband, or boss begins to know God’s will and begins to walk worthy of Him, press in every Tuesday that he would bear fruit, and bear fruit in *every* good work.

Wednesday’s Prayer

Then we come to Wednesday. Wednesday is by far my favorite day. The final part of Colossians 1:10 says, “growing in the knowledge of God.” There is a world of difference between being filled with the knowledge of God’s will and growing in the knowledge of God. So much of the time we know *about* God, but we don’t know *Him*. There are a huge number of people that know a lot about me because as I teach, I teach with incarnated truth. I use a lot of illustrations, using stories of me, my children, my wife, my work habits, even my recreational habits. You know a great deal *about* me, but there are very few people that know *me*.

We can study theology the same way. We can know about God; we can explain God; we can talk about the things that God did and the things that God is going to do, but that is not the same as knowing God. There are a handful of people throughout Scripture who have had profound encounters with God and every single one of them has been hugely changed. Isaiah, Daniel, the Apostles, John on Patmos, Paul on the road to Damascus, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Ezekiel, Moses. Each one of these people had an encounter with God, knew God, and was transformed. As we pray this verse we are not necessarily seeking a dramatic knowing of God. We are not necessarily seeking an electric, violent, overwhelming encounter with God. Knowing God does not necessarily mean that it is going to happen in a church service, with laying on of hands, with impartation, or any dramatic move of the Holy Spirit. It can be just as much an incremental growing and recognizing the presence of God in our midst.

Consider Romans 12:1-2 (NIV). “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

When we know somebody, we are more able to test and approve of his or her plans, sight unseen. There is one person who gave me a gift recently. I opened the gift with a great deal of caution and cynicism because I strongly suspected that it was yet another cat joke. I’m not really into cats, dead, alive, or in the humor category. This person frequently uses cat humor on me. So because of what I know about the person I was predisposed to dislike the gift before I even saw it. As it turned out it was a very elegant, tasteful, appropriate, and expensive gift, but from what I knew, I was predisposed to dislike it.

On the other hand, there are people who call me infrequently. The only time they call me is when they have a dramatic glory story to share. So as soon as I hear their voice I am predisposed to approve of whatever it is they are going to tell me. I’m excited about it because of what I know about them. The more we know *God*, not *about* God, the more we are able to embrace His good, perfect, and pleasing will without flinching or drawing back, without saying “Oh, no, this is something that I can’t do. It doesn’t appear good to me.” We need to know God.

We need to know God profoundly and that is not something that we can acquire through our own act of will. Rather it is God who reveals Himself to us. That is what He sent the Holy Spirit to do. Mere study alone can produce tremendous information about God but it does not guarantee that God is going to reveal Himself in an epiphany. We are not going to experience the knowing of who God is unless He chooses to reveal Himself. Knowledge about God is different from knowing God.

When the intercessors begin to pray in a sustained way for God to reveal Himself to the leader, husband, father, boss, or pastor, things will begin to change.

What previously was knowledge about God will begin to be the knowledge of God. People can know God but it is up to the intercessors to pray that into reality. It is God’s will to reveal Himself, but it takes the work of the Spirit to prepare man’s heart for man to be able to receive the revelation of God which God desires to give.

We cannot get to Wednesday without the previous days. We cannot grow in the knowledge of God when we don’t know God’s will and we are not walking worthy of Him. It is in the process of bearing fruit that God so frequently reveals Himself to us. It is in the process of partnering with Him that we learn to know His heart, His methods, His humor, and we learn to anticipate which way He is going to go. It is like a partnership in sports or in any other arena. You may have great talent as a tight end and you may also have a highly talented quarterback on the team. No matter how many individual talents you have as you work together on a football team, as the ball is thrown time and time again in practice and in real play, that is when you begin to know how the other person is going to function.

There’s a popular slogan these days, “What would Jesus do?” and many times we try to answer that question according to right and wrong. There are very obvious things that Jesus would not do or would do based on right and wrong. However the majority of the time, there are very difficult situations in our world that are not spelled out word-for-word in Scripture. It is as we know God that we will have the wisdom to be able to make those decisions that are not spelled out.

To me one of the most dramatic episodes of this was in Acts 15. For those of you who have occasionally had to make a difficult decision and God was absolutely silent, consider this principle. In Acts 15, the Church had to deal with the biggest decision ever in the history of the Church. Namely, do Gentiles have to become Jews before they become Christians? If the Church made the wrong decision on that issue God had a real mess on His hands and He had no back-up plan. It was the Church or nothing else.

With my micro-management techniques I probably

would have jumped into the middle of that situation doing everything possible to assure ahead of time that the conference produced the right response. What is absolutely stunning to me is that God did not do that. You had all of the apostles there. You had all of the spiritual intelligencia of the first century Church present in Jerusalem. The movers and shakers and thinkers were all there. Or to say it a different way, you had prophets stacked up like cord wood on that particular day in Jerusalem. What is fascinating to me is that God was absolutely, completely, totally silent. Not one single prophet was able to speak with revelation from God saying, “Thus sayeth the Lord. This is the way we’re supposed to resolve this situation.” Rather God required them to reason from principle and from their knowledge of the nature of God.

After everybody had said his piece and presented his argument, it was James the elder of the Jerusalem congregation who went to Scripture. He said, “Here is the verse. Here is the principle that I extract from the verse. Here is the application that I am going to make to the situation.” One of the greatest decisions made in the history of the Church was made based on Biblical principle and not on a prophetic word spoken by God.

Right alongside a Biblical principle is the knowledge of the ways of God. The knowledge of the ways of God is to be able to say, “What would God do in this situation?” and to know what He would do. Jesus Christ spoke of that when He said, “I’m always busy doing My Father’s work. I do what I see My Father doing. I only say what my Father wants me to say.” I don’t believe He was speaking about having a full-time DSL connection to heaven where He was able to carry on a conversation with the Father at all times, running every question by the Father, walking only in specific words and knowledge of what the Father told Him to do. I believe He was so in tune with the nature of the Father that for the most part He intuitively knew what the Father would do in that kind of a situation because He knew the Father.

There is a time and a place for verse nine where God fills the pastor with the knowledge of His will through spiritual wisdom and understanding. That is

right. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. That is an entry level. That is where all believers ought to walk. But it is a far finer thing for a man to know his God so well that he can say with a quiet confidence that Jesus Christ says, “This is what the Father would do in this situation even though the Holy Spirit has been silent on this issue. This is what God would do.”

That should be normal, not exceptional. That should be where our leaders walk. Yet the majority of us as leaders do not walk there and it is because our followers, intercessors, and/or support base of prayer have not prayed into us that level of growth, that level of dominion. But it is not too late to start. If our intercessors were praying for us on a sustained basis every single Wednesday that we would know God, at the end of a year there would be a substantial difference in the way we solved our problems because we would know how God would do a lot of those things. Wednesday.... growing in the knowledge of God.... ever growing in the knowledge of God, no matter how much knowledge we have, growing in the knowledge of God so we have more.

Thursday’s Prayer

For Thursday, Colossians 1:11a (NIV) states, “Being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might.” By the time a person is bearing fruit in every good work and he is growing in the knowledge of God, it is an absolutely, positively, guaranteed result that he’s going to get in a jam very quickly because God specializes in problem situations. In fact, God is looking over the world for people whom He can put in problem situations.

We get this out of Ephesians 3:10, which says, “[God’s] intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose....” That phrase “the manifold wisdom of God” is something that Paul invented. The word *manifold* really means poly-variegated. *Variegated* means all sorts of different colors. For those of you who are from my generation, it is what we called *psychedelic art*. Just a whole bunch of different colors all together on one canvas. And *poly* means many. So Paul was saying there are shades and shades of God’s wisdom that we

haven't seen yet.

God's intent was that now, through the Church, all these different colors, shades, and variations of God's wisdom should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. This refers to both holy angels (the ones that are in heaven) and unholy angels (the fallen entities). Neither the angels nor the demons fully understand the wisdom of God. Neither the angels nor the demons have seen everything that God is able to do. Yet God is yearning. He is eager to manifest Himself. He is eager to demonstrate to the angels and the demons the colors and flavors of His wisdom that the world has never seen in the history of God's intervention.

In order to pull this off, He wants to do it through the Church. Humans are born with this thing called a survival instinct. We have a natural desire to not get hurt and to not die. No matter how religious we get, that remains. There is a propensity to study every situation and to see how we can come out of it alive. That's humanity, but God did not call us to walk strictly in the level of humanity. He called us to walk on a different level, the level of the supernatural. Almighty God is looking intently for men and women who He can take to a place where nobody has been before, where He can put them in a jam that nobody has ever solved before, where He can create a problem situation for which mankind has never seen a solution.

That is what He is looking for because that place of impossibility is where God can run a brand new play that has never been seen in anybody's play book and for which the devil has absolutely no defense. God absolutely loves the first fruits of the manifestation of a new shade and color of His wisdom. He delights in doing something that the devil has never seen and can't even imagine. It thrills Him. The only thing keeping Him from doing that is people who flinch, who know God's will and know their God, but don't have the staying power in a time of distress.

Let me put it to you a different way. Consider Daniel and the lion's den. Scripture is absolutely clear that God closed the mouths of the lions so they could not bite Daniel. However, Daniel was in the lion's den.

We can say several things about the lion's den. One is that it absolutely stunk, a terrible putrid smell from the rotting of human flesh as well as the excrement of the lions. It was a miserable, stinking, dirty place. There was no queen-size bed, nothing for him to lie down on, and furthermore, Scripture doesn't say that God kept the lions twenty feet away from him. There's no reason to think that God did not have a lion come padding right up to Daniel and sniff his knee. God does not guarantee to keep pain thirty yards away from us. He is looking for people who He can take right up to the edge of disaster and then rescue them in a manner that the world has never seen before.

That is what happened with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. God could have rescued them twenty different ways. God could have changed the king's heart. God could have given the king a stroke when he gave the order. But God allowed them to be thrown into the fire, burning the ropes off, but for them not to be hurt at all. For a man of God to walk out the knowledge of God's will, to bear fruit in every good work, to walk worthy of the Lord, to walk according to the knowledge of the nature of God that he has, will require running risk. In order to run that risk, it means that he must be strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might.

Strengthened with all power, *according* to God's glorious might -- not according to the size of the problem. Not just strengthened enough to get through the day, but strengthened according to God's glorious might. You dare not pray Monday through Wednesday without praying Thursday. Otherwise your pastor, leader, husband, or father will step into the call of God, begin to walk it out, and then will flinch part way along the journey, because of the intensity of the fire that he has to walk through. The fire comes not because of sin in his life, but because God has ordained it. God wants to position this man (who knows His God and who can do great exploits), in an impossible situation so that God can reveal to the angels in heaven and to the demons on earth some new facet of His poly-variegated wisdom.

There was one worship leader who commented on the four living creatures that are before the throne

of God 24/7 bowing down and worshipping Him. His suggestion of what was going on was that they bowed down and worshipped Him for something they knew concerning His power, character, or His deeds. When they looked up, they examined the world and immediately saw some new facet of His wisdom, some new miracle that He had done, some new wonder that He had performed, and they bowed again in worship. It was just an on-going, repeated action of seeing some new manifestation of His ability, of some new work here on earth.

God is looking to the Church to position itself so that God can reveal facets of His wisdom that the four living creatures themselves do not know yet. God knows His own attributes and He is waiting for a believer so He can reveal them. Oh, that the intercessors would pray passionately, vigorously, fervently for their leaders! Praying that their leaders would be strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might, so they may be able to allow God to reveal new facets of His wisdom.

Friday's Prayer

Friday prayer is from Colossians 1:11b. "So that you may have great endurance and patience..." There is an endurance necessary apart from crisis. I call this part of *lurch theology*. Life would be so much simpler for us from a human point of view if we grew in some sort of a predictable, linear fashion. Whether it was fast or slow growth, we would always be growing, and we could see that we were making progress. Yet that rarely is how believers grow. Instead we seem to wander along on a plateau for days, weeks, months, or even years on end. It doesn't seem like we are going anywhere. We are doing our disciplines. We are walking out the things we know how to do. There is no major obstacle in our way yet it seems like we are in the same place that we were in a year ago, a month ago, or five years ago.

Then suddenly, unpredictably, without warning, there is this lurch forward. There is an abrupt lunge to a higher level that we didn't see coming. We are not quite sure how we got there, but all of a sudden, lo and behold, God has done a work in our lives and we are operating at a level that we have never

operated at before. It takes endurance to keep on walking across that plateau. It takes the endurance to keep on aggressively doing our daily exercises and spiritual disciplines, even when we don't see that we are close to the edge of the next higher level.

There is another area of endurance though, and that is endurance when we are facing the acute pressure of birthing a new work. In Isaiah 37:3, Hezekiah says, "This is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them." It has been my grievous portion over the years to see different ministries that have had a high call of God on their lives. I have seen individual leaders or entire churches, even cities that have received the vision and begun to walk it out. They have embraced it and they have paid a price up to a certain point.

Yet at some point in time, the price became too high and they stopped short, just short of birthing the vision to reality. They did not understand that the birthing pains become more and more intense just before the child is born. They looked at the darkness of the hours; they looked at all people who were suffering, seeing people who were dying, and ones who were receiving all kinds of demonic backlash. They felt that they had taken on more than they could handle, more than they were supposed to, and so they devised some theology of failure, reasoning a way to back out on the call of God on their lives.

It was a day of disgrace when they came to the point of birth and were not able to deliver the thing that God wanted birthed. Intercessors, you dare not pray for your pastor to be filled with the knowledge of God's will unless you are also praying Friday's prayer -- praying that he would have all the endurance necessary. The intercessors must pray in the patience and the endurance needed to walk out all of the preparatory work so that in the fullness of time God's vision for him can be birthed.

Let me camp one more time on the issue of God's timing and also touch briefly on Psalm 1:3 which says, "[The man God blesses] is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season." I studied that passage years ago and asked the Lord,

“What is the season of fruit-bearing for a tree?”

The Lord answered me very abruptly. He said, “What is the tree?”

I understood that, because in my teenage years after I finished high school, I went back to the jungles of the Amazon for three years, (actually it was the Guama River a tributary to the Amazon). There, as a teenager full of energy with nothing to do because we couldn't even see our nearest neighbor's home, I planted fruit trees. I planted an orchard of over four hundred trees, with seventy different varieties of tropical fruits. I understood that a cashew tree was going to bear fruit in five years; an orange tree in three years; a papaya tree bears fruit in about seven months; and a Brazil nut tree would bear fruit for the first time after seventy-five years.

There are different people with different fruit-bearing seasons. There are people like Samuel who begin bearing fruit very early in their life. There are people like Moses who don't bear fruit until late in their life. It takes endurance for a husband, leader, pastor, or for a father to walk out year after year without seeing fruit in his life but knowing that he is doing the thing that God has called him to, and that he will bear fruit in his season. It takes great endurance. His followers can criticize, pray against him, or bless him to have great endurance and patience.

Saturday's Prayer

Then it all comes together Saturday after the birthing of this thing through the supernatural wisdom of God. This thing that came from knowing God, from bearing fruit in every good work, and from walking worthy of our calling in a way that pleases God produces great joy. Colossians 1:12 (NIV) reads, “Joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the Kingdom of light.” Joy should be the natural fruit. Joy should also be something that we pray as a blessing for our leaders.

Think of it this way. Imagine a wedding day. You are all dressed up, you are there in the church, you know the bride, but you don't know the groom. The groom is somebody that she met in another state and they got engaged. You haven't seen the bride for

two years but finally she is there on the wedding day. The groom comes out. You glance at him briefly and then you hear the wedding march and everybody stands. You turn to look at the bride coming in and you notice that she looks extremely sad. In fact, it looks as though she has been crying and that the whole day is going to be a day of torment for her.

That is an incredible insult to the bridegroom that his bride would see her wedding day as a day of torment and of torture. Rather, the norm is that the bride on this day of all days is resplendent with joy, and the joy that fills her being changes the very appearance of her face. She is more beautiful as a bride than on any other day, not because of the clothes, but because of the joy that is bubbling up within her. The same is true of the Bride of Christ. A sad, sourpuss or a permanently grim bride is an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ. “I've told you these things so that your joy may be full,” the Lord said to His apostles. The second fruit of the spirit is joy.

There is a season for grimness. When we are praying on Thursday and Friday, we ask for our leaders to be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that they may have great endurance and patience. Those things relate to hard times. There are seasons in our lives that are very difficult where we have to press through, where we have to pay a price, where we are dead men walking. There are seasons in our lives that are painful where we are not going to manifest or exhibit much joy. But those should be the exception not the norm, especially when the new thing is birthed.

When we have moved to that new plateau, we ought to be able to very quickly leave behind the mantle of sadness and to walk in joy. This radiant joy is an appropriate reflection of somebody who has been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in the Kingdom of Light. There are people whose natural look in repose is sad, and grim. Occasionally they step out of that for a moment of joy. Ah, but the norm is to walk in the fullness of joy at all times. “In His presence is fullness of joy.”

Although occasionally we go through the grimness of a battle where we have to stand and fight, joy

should be the default position. Joy should be the mark of our leaders. Joy should be the result of their being in the ministry. We need to pray specifically that even though being a leader, father, husband, or pastor is a very difficult job with great demands, that still the oil of joy would flow freely to those who have been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints of the Kingdom of Light.

It is not just a joy that comes from the Father but it is a joy that comes from sharing. We have been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints. Leadership is a lonely job. There is so much that you cannot share with those under you. So many times a leader is so busy he doesn't have time to reach out to other peers in the same field for times of sharing. More than that, as you move into a season of radical holiness, it is going to limit the number of people who want to be around you, and limiting even more the number of people who understand what you are going through and how you are going through it.

It is easy for a person who is out there on the cutting edge pursuing God, seeking God with all his heart, seeing and hearing things that nobody else is hearing, to become lonely and for there to be a spirit of isolation that attaches to him in his pursuit of God. While that is a natural consequence within our religious culture, we still must not allow that to be the norm. The intercessors are called to change things not just to analyze them. For our pastor or leader who has already moved into those six areas of intensity, who is already a cut above, and who is already out ahead of the rest, we need to pray this seventh blessing profoundly so that he would have others who can share with him the joy and give thanks with him for the inheritance of the saints.

Pray that God would bring those other radical believers alongside of him. Pray that there could be a community of radical faith, with sharing of joys, sharing of giving thanks, and walking together in that partnership.

Conclusion

Cry out to God for your leaders for these seven things. You will probably not see changes in a day.

However, for any individual or group of individuals who will covenant together to pray these seven things, seven days a week for seven weeks (forty-nine days), they will begin to see measurable, visible, and identifiable changes in their leader. That should be enough to light the fires so that you covenant again for another seven weeks, and another, and another.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your leadership, or if you are in a church where it feels like your pastor has not heard from God for a long time, quit complaining about, cursing and maligning your pastor. Press in with these seven issues.

-Pray first of all that he would be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

- Pray that he would walk worthy of the Lord in every way.
- Pray that he would bear fruit in every good work.
- Pray that he would grow in the knowledge of God.
- Pray that he would be strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might.
- Pray that he would have great endurance and patience.
- Then pray that he would be bathed with joy, because the Father has qualified him to share in the inheritance of the Saints.

Focused, sustained, united, covenant prayer on these seven issues will change your leaders. These things *are* the will of God. We *are* partnering with God. We *are* praying His will into reality. We *are* praying for His Kingdom to come on earth to be done in your leader's life as it is done in heaven.

This is powerful intercession for your leaders.

Arthur Burk

POLICIES FOR USING OUR FREE ARTICLES:

These articles may be downloaded for free, emailed to friends, copied and distributed in any way that is beneficial to the Body of Christ except that **they may not be sold.**

Using this article indicates that you are in agreement with this policy.

Plumblin Ministries, 2367 West La Palma Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92801 - USA