

Men Ought To Pray

The Late Commissioner S. L. Brengle

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1.

That little "ought" is emphatic. It implies obligation high as Heaven and deep as Hell, and is inescapable. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray," and added, "and not to faint." Men ought to pray. They ought to pray "always," and they ought not to faint or grow faint-hearted and cease praying.

A thousand times that text has encouraged me to pray. I confess I do not always feel like praying. There are times when my feelings are numb, when I do not seem to have access to the Heavenly Father in prayer, when I find it difficult to pray; and, judging by my feelings, there is no one listening to my prayer. And then, these words have stirred me to pray; I ought to pray—I ought always to pray—and I should not grow faint in praying.

Prayer is more than saying words. It is the expression of earnest desire. Sometimes I have felt that my desires were not in earnest, and then I have searched myself and have realized that while emotionally my desires were not earnest, volitionally they were—down in the deeps of my being, deeper probably than my emotions, I desired the things for which I was praying.

I have been helped to pray with this assurance, "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Paul tells us, in Col. 4:12, that Epaphras labored fervently always in prayer for his brethren, that they might stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Prayer, then, is a form of work. In my early years I worked, and worked hard, and often went to my work not feeling a bit like working; but I expected results from my work regardless of my feelings. Often a farmer plows his fields when he doesn't feel like it; but he confidently expects a crop from his labors, and he realizes that he ought to plow his fields. Now, if prayer is a form of work, and our labor is not in vain in the Lord, then we ought to pray regardless of our feelings.

If we can pray fervently with warm emotions, all the better; but if we cannot, we should still pray, and not grow faint-hearted.

Only recently, when I knelt for morning prayers, I felt a sort of deadness in my soul — no fervor, no access in prayer—and just then the "accuser of the brethren" became very busy. He reminded me of things that had long since been under the Blood, and shot fiery darts at me. I could only cry to God for help. Then the blessed Comforter reminded me that the Blood had long since covered my sins and washed me clean from their guilt, and pollution, and reminded me that I must not cast away my confidence, that my great High Priest was pleading my case, and that I must come boldly to the throne of grace. This I did, and the enemy was routed. My emotions were liberated, my spirit was free and oh, what a blessed time of communion I had with my Lord! I found prayer easy. If I had fainted instead of fighting the good fight of faith, the battle would have been lost, gloom would have settled upon me like a thick cloud and enshrouded my soul, and I could not have reaped because I had not sown; I could not have received wages because I had not labored fervently in prayer.

William Bramwell, an early Methodist preacher whose ministry was mightily used in the saving and sanctifying of souls, and who was mighty in prayer, said that he never went to secret prayer without reluctance, with feet that dragged, with a spirit that drooped; but as he labored in prayer his spirit revived and he found it oftentimes difficult to cease praying, and his feet became like hind's feet. LET US PRAY!

The King's Highway

Is Holiness Important?

Rev. A. D. Cann

"Life," said Dr. C. W. Butler, a few years ago at Beulah Camp, "consists of a series of attitudes and adjustments."

It is impossible to have a right attitude toward God and have wrong attitudes toward our fellow men. Perfect attitudes stem from perfect love. Therefore, holiness, or perfect love, is essential to right attitudes.

John the Baptist is a good example. God raised this man up to introduce Jesus. Having done this work, John takes the attitude that all should take toward superiors, namely—"He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30. Such an attitude always requires adjustment. Perfect love makes the adjustment. Holy men think and act in terms of Christ's Kingdom, and not in terms of self-promotion.

Holiness is important because it destroys the big "I". The strength of all Christian character stems from the, "not I, but Christ" attitude. Even after we are sanctified we need be careful lest we get in God's way.

Holiness is important because it makes us conscious of our imperfections. A holy man is a humble man. He recognizes his mistakes. A man who does not recognize his mistakes isolates himself from society. It is human to make errors, but it is a mark of Christian character and culture to confess and correct them.

Holiness is important because it helps me to know the deep meaning of self-abandonment to the redemptive will of God. Unless I know this deep meaning, "a holiness emphasis," writes Rev. William Greathouse, "may become static through introspection. My quest for power may be for self-aggrandizement. My search for the Spirit may be for a refined type of selfishness."

Holiness is important because it produces a new channel through which Christ manifests His saving purposes to the world, (John 17: 19-21). It is possible for holiness to fester into carnality if it loses its outreach for the lost. A little church, instead of being a holy church may be a selfish or sinful church. A large church instead of being a worldly church, may be a Spirit-filled church. Actually the size is incidental, the outreach for souls is fundamental.

Holiness is important because it makes possible a contact with God on the one hand and man on the other. When Jacob came to the end of his selfishness he was told—"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (natural posterity of Abraham), but Israel (spiritual part of the nation), for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Gen. 32:28.

There comes a time when it seems folly for a church to excuse its lack of fruitage in evangelism with the pious platitude that—"There were no souls saved, but the church was greatly strengthened." A holy people should be a fruitful people, and a fruitless church should sometimes call for repentance, rather than excuses. A church with holy hands will have harvest hands.

PRAYER

Prayer is not a combination by which we persuade God to do what He is reluctant to perform. It is rather the means designed by the Almighty to make it possible for Him to work among His people. We do not disturb our God by our oft coming, but we rather hurt Him by our lack of faith. If our prayers are not answered, it is a reflection upon ourselves, not upon God. Let Him search our hearts lest there be some barrier that prevents the movement of His power. God would gladly visit us mightily. Let us pray fervently and pray expectantly.

—Royal S. Woodhead.