

Something Everybody Can Do by Lester Roloff

This subject is important because it's the difference between "the haves and the have nots." One of the disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." He said, "Men ought always to pray." There are some things that are only done by prayer plus supplementary fasting. It's strange what people lean on when they get into trouble, but oh, sad to say, the average church member uses God just like a man does a spare tire. They throw Him in the trunk and say, "Stay there. If I have a blowout, I'll call on you."

There are various kinds of prayer. Secret prayer is the best and ought to be practiced the most. Apart from secret prayer, forget about all the rest of it. A man who doesn't pray by himself has no right to pray in public. A man who had rather pray in public than in private is a Pharisee and a hypocrite. If you can't be prayed up when you get to church, don't try to catch up in the church house. I used to hear, when I started preaching, "The Sunday morning service reveals the popularity of the church and the Sunday School. The Sunday night attendance reveals the popularity of the preacher, as to the crowd that comes back to hear him preach." That used to be the great night of evangelism and the great themes and revival themes would be preached on Sunday night. "The Wednesday night prayer meeting reveals the popularity of the Lord."

There is also family prayer, group prayer and public prayer. Then there are the places of prayer. They prayed in the upper room. They prayed in houses. They prayed at the riverside. They prayed on beaches. They prayed in jail houses. The Bible said, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together." The power of God came down. They prayed with power. That's the secret of the success of God's people through the ages -- prayer. What are the requirements? This is the practical side of praying. Keep in mind now, that Brother Roloff is not the final answer as the teacher of prayer. Jesus is. But, if I've learned anything through the Bible and in practice and experience, I'll pass it on to you tonight. I know the Bible says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And then He said, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Those are tremendous promises.

We're coming now to the requirements of a successful prayer life. What must I do to get my prayers answered? What is the thing that will make you keep on praying? It's hearing from Heaven! I'm going to reverse that. The thing that will reveal your faith is praying when no answer comes. That's the supreme test. I've gone over a number of chapters in the book of Job again. In one of them, Job said, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." He was looking for God. Can you imagine? He was the best man God had and he couldn't find Him. He said "Lord, I want you to show me why you're doing this to me. We've always been on

good terms and you've been my best friend. I'm not against you and am not going to turn against you, but I need an explanation and I want you to give it." But the Lord didn't pay him any attention. I imagine the Lord just kind of smiled and said, "Later on. After a while." So finally Job said "I went forward and He wasn't there. Backward. I couldn't perceive Him. On the left hand where He doth work. I couldn't behold Him. On the right hand where He hid himself and I couldn't see him." That's all the directions isn't it? Forward, backward, left, right. He said "I couldn't get one glimpse of Him." Then he said, "But He knoweth the way that I take and when He hath tried me, He will bring me forth as gold. My feet have held His steps. His way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips. I've esteemed His words more than my necessary food." That's the secret of it right there. It was the most severe test he ever had. It wasn't when all of his ten children died. It wasn't when he lost all of his camels, oxen and sheep and goats and chickens. It wasn't when he lost all of his servants. The greatest loss was not when Mrs. Job came and said, "Just curse God and die." That wasn't his most severe test. That was just part of it. Then three fair-weather friends came and looked at him and they didn't speak for seven days. Not one word. Finally they opened their mouths and skinned him and scalded him and scathed him and ate him up alive. But that wasn't his greatest test. Do you know what the greatest test was? You've never been there until you've reached this place, and that is when you look up to God and there's not any God. You just pray like you used to pray and there's no answer. There's no response. There's no God. There's no feeling and your faith is severely tested. But let me tell you something. You're going to have to learn to believe God when you cannot perceive God. You're going to have to learn to "faith" Him when you can't feel Him. Unless you do, you're going to be in bad shape before this thing's over with. There'll come a time when God reserves the right to cut you completely loose from Him and then see what your faith will lead you to do. "In all this, Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly."

What are the requirements for real successful praying. Number one. This is the unknown quantity. Mark X here, because it marks the spot. PURITY. That's right. Psalm 66:18 says "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." If I regard... If I say to Brother Mike, "If you see George, give him my regards." That means to pass my love on to him. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. That cuts off God's willingness from me. God said, "Of course I can hear you, but I will not, because you're giving your regards to the devil." That's what He's talking about. Psalm 66:18.

Number two. FRUIT. Matthew 21:21-22. The disciples were talking to Jesus about the fig tree. They said, "That fig tree is gone. All You did was put your Word to it. You said 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever,' and it withered away." When God puts His Word on you and you refuse to bear fruit, He has the right to say, "Just let him wither." Then you've got to wither. It's the only thing you can do. "They marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree,

but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." Now, that marvelous golden text, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

In Matthew 18:18-20 we read the greatest contract in the Bible. This concerns FAITH. "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Does that still mean what it meant when He said it? Do you mean to tell me that we can bind the devil and bind the adversary? Do you mean God will give Christians binding power today? If He meant it then, He means it now. There must be FAITH -- real faith.

Now turn to Mark 11:22-23. Oh, how precious are these promises. That's all we have to go on. "Have faith in God... Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass: he shall have whatsoever he saith." Now, verse 24, the other golden text: "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray..." When you get on your knees and get in the spirit of prayer, the Bible says He will give you your desires. He says IF you will delight yourself in the Lord, and you ought to be a delightful prayer warrior. "When you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

That leads us to one more thing. FORGIVING GRACE. In verse 25 He said, "When you stand up to pray, you'd better be sure you've forgiven those who have wronged you." That's no problem for the Christian, but it's impossible for the unsaved. I talked to a man yesterday. who said "I have bitterness." I said "It will ruin you." There's no substitute for the tenderness of Jesus. No matter how much you hate the devil, you'll love people. No matter how much people might hurt you and try to destroy you, you'll love them while they're doing it. If you grow in grace, you'll thank God for the day the enemies arose so you could learn how to treat your enemies. But He said "If you do not forgive, neither will your father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." How serious it is. My whole prayer life depends on my forgiveness of others. An unforgiving spirit will completely ruin your prayer life. You can spend all night here at this altar, and you can holler, "Oh, God. Lord, I've got to have an answer." You'll never get it. He said, "When you come to the altar with your gift and then you had a very sober, serious, sacred thought, 'Somebody's got something against me,' you leave your gift right there and you go and first be reconciled to your brother." You'd better hear me tonight, there's no such thing as two brothers not being reconciled. If you are brothers in Christ and sisters in Christ, there's a way for both of you to get together because you have the same Christ in both of you.

What am I talking about tonight? It's simply if we're brothers. Do you know what

He said? He said, "You leave it right there." To me, that's faith, because when you go to your brother... "But Lord, I don't have anything against him. He's got something against me. Let him come to me. He's the one that did it. I didn't." The Lord said "Well he doesn't have enough grace. I think you have a little praying grace and you ought to have a little more. You go to him. Will you do that?" He goes out there and after a while both of them come back with a gift. He said, "I'll give mine," and the other one said, "I'm going to give mine too. Let's pray for each other." That's what He's talking about. Do you have unforgiveness tonight toward anybody? Don't go to bed tonight until you say, "Lord, what a delight to let You give me grace to forgive. I want power in prayer." We're spiritually insane to let something stand between us and getting our prayers answered.

Why don't you grow up? Why don't you let Jesus give you the answer and say, "Lord, thank you for forgiving grace." I've never forgiven anybody with my forgiveness. It's always been His. I've never had grace, made up any grace, manufactured any grace, whipped up any grace, picked up any grace. God gives me grace.

Oh, this sweet neglected privilege of prayer. Folks why would it be necessary for Brother Roloff or Brother anybody else to have to speak long and many sermons on prayer? Have you read your Bible? Have you ever noticed one good and great man who didn't pray? Have you ever heard of a great preacher who wasn't great in his place of prayer? Oh, may the Lord search us out and help us. Time is so short. Eternity is so long. We must not let our prayer path be clouded with the clouds of unforgiveness, doubt or impurity or uncleanness, an unclean attitude or spirit. Oh, may God bless you as you say, "Lord, oh, get me back to my prayer place and get me back to the prayer spirit." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. Jeremiah 33:3 reminds us of God's promise to answer when we pray. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."