

## Living the Supernatural Life Part 11: “A Supernatural Prayer Life”

1. Last week I talked about the value of Spiritual Preparation in the Christian’s life. We learned how Jesus didn’t wait until a crisis or need to pray or to fast, but that He practiced those disciplines regularly so He would have the resources available at a moment’s notice.
  - a. We as a church (and as individuals) are beginning to have encounters with people who are desperate for God. They are coming to us with needs that range from emotional and spiritual distress to financial crisis and even empty cupboards.
  - b. We must be spiritually prepared to respond to these needs that God sends our way...and if we have not prepared ourselves, we will not only miss the eternal possibilities that God is laying before us, we will miss the chance to personally experience the “supernatural life” that Jesus promised every follower of His.
  - c. Many of you may not be aware that God has brought **3** people into a saving knowledge of His Son through our church’s ministry in just the past 4 weeks. You have heard the testimony of how God led Lori and others to minister to a family in dire need and how God worked through their life.
  
2. John 16:23-24 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”*
  - a. This passage is one of seven exhortations or commands that Jesus gives to pray in His name in the short space of just 2 chapters. Jesus commands us to *“ask the Father for anything in My name.”*
    - i. Can you wrap your head around this concept that Jesus commands us to ask the Father for our needs? He doesn’t suggest it. He doesn’t beg us to ask. He commands us to ask, and to ask for hard things!
      1. He commands us to ask and to ask for much! Faith pleases the Father!
      2. When we think of commands, we think of the 10 commandments...but the commands of Jesus are far plainer. He commands us to ask of the Father for our needs, to love one another, and to share God’s love with others. Those are the commands that change the world and change us!
  - b. **God is waiting to give.** *“He will give it to you.”*
    - i. God is a giving God. He desires to give us what we need more than we want to ask for it.
    - ii. Didomai means to give, to reach out, to deliver over to another. God is reaching out to you, to give you what you need most in life. It is of course, a relationship with Himself.
    - iii. *I have heard a parable of how when we get to heaven we will find filing cabinets full of our secret sins and will be saddened by what we read. That’s hogwash! God has forgiven your every failure and sin when you surrendered to Him. But what we might be surprised to find is a big warehouse in heaven of all the blessings and gifts God had stored up for us that we never appropriated through prayer while on earth.*
  - c. **Everything depends upon your prayers.** *“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask....”*
    - i. Can you understand that God wants and needs your prayers? Yes, God needs your prayers. He has limited much of His activity upon the earth to your requests.
    - ii. You can do nothing without God. But God refuses to do much without you!
    - iii. Someone’s healing, someone’s job, someone’s safety, someone’s eternal salvation depend upon your willingness to humble yourself and ask God to intervene.
  - d. **You must ask and receive.** *“... ask and you will receive.”*
    - i. Most of us stop with asking. We think that receiving is the result of asking.
    - ii. The words “you will” are not in the Greek. That has been added by translators to make it read easier.

- iii. By including the word “will” it sounds as if when you ask, that God drops your answer out of the sky into your lap.
  - iv. You might recall our sermon series on “Embracing Grace” in which I talked about the meaning of “receiving” in the bible. The Greek word used is *Lambano*, which means to “TAKE as your own. Or to LAY AHOLD OF.” It is a much stronger word than our English word to passively receive.
    - 1. Receive sounds like “let it drop into your lap” – passive.
    - 2. Biblical reception means to TAKE IT, lay a hold of it, take it as your own, This is the way God wants us to pray and to receive. To ACTIVELY take what God offers!
    - 3. The translation of this portion of the verse tells us to do two things: “Ask and receive” or “ask and take a hold of.”
      - a. I think of Kelvin Winslow going into the huddle and saying to Brady Quinn, “hey man, please throw me the ball.” He asks. But if Kelvin Winslow doesn’t catch that ball, or makes no effort to stretch out and get it, or avoids a collision and misses the ball...he never completed the equation.
      - b. God tells us to ask and then do whatever it takes to lay a hold of His promised answer.
  - v. If I were to hold out a dollar bill and say that I am offering this dollar bill to anyone who would receive it...what will you do?
    - 1. Many of you would raise your hands and “ask” for it.
    - 2. Some of you would doubt my sincerity, and not ask.
    - 3. Others of you would say, “I don’t need a dollar” and not ask.
    - 4. Some of you, perhaps a few of you, would be so desperate that you wouldn’t be content to simply ask for the dollar bill I am offering...you would do what? (come up and take it)
  - vi. God offers great and wonderful gifts to His children, He desires to give them often more than we desire to receive them. Our “reception” of them must exceed passivity. We must exert faith and action to take a hold of what God offers. That is what prayer is and does.
- e. **God delights in producing joy in us. “...so that your joy may be made full”**
- i. What father doesn’t delight in seeing their child enjoying his gifts? God delights in the joy we experience from having our prayers answered and our needs met.
  - ii. That warehouse I mentioned? The key to it is prayer. Faith turns the key and opens the door and claims the blessings.
  - iii. How many of you have DARED to ask God for a healing for a loved one...like Bertha’s daughter? Yes, God has the final say, but we would be surprised at how often God has wanted to say “yes” and we never asked because of our cynicism, unbelief in the goodness of God, or our lack of faith.
- f. The concept of prayer is so central to the supernatural life that the supernatural life would not be supernatural without it.
- i. **Prayer is talking with God.** Get out of your head the religious notions about prayer, as if God won’t hear you unless you..
    - 1. Make the sign of the cross.
    - 2. Say certain words.
    - 3. Are on your knees.
    - 4. Or repeat the words “in the name of Jesus” at the end of your prayer.
  - ii. **Prayer is not primarily about getting God to do what we want.** Its purpose isn’t to get God to do what you want, but rather, to adjust our thinking to what God is doing.

1. What we must do in prayer is to develop a Kingdom oriented thinking, one that is focused upon God and what He desires more than we do.
  2. Prayer is at its root a relationship between God and a person.
  3. At the root of the supernatural life we live is us getting to know the Father's heart. That is accomplished in prayer. Listening prayer.
- iii. **Prayer is an encounter with the presence of God.**
1. Read account of John Hyde.
    - a. Dr. Wilbur Chapman, a missionary, wrote the following letter to a friend. "I have learned some great lessons concerning prayer. At one of our missions in England, the audiences were exceedingly small. But I received a note saying that an American missionary was going to pray God's blessing down upon our work. His name was John Hyde, and was often called "Praying Hyde." Almost immediately after getting word of this, the halls were packed and at my first invitation 50 men accepted Christ as their Savior. As we were leaving I said, "Mr. Hyde, I want you to pray for me." He came to my room, turned the key in the door and dropped to his knees, and waited five minutes without a single syllable coming from his lips. I could hear my own heart thumping and beating. I felt the hot tears running down my face. I knew I was in God's presence. Then, with upturned face, down which the tears were streaming, John Hyde cried out, "O God." Then for five minutes at least, he was still again; and then, when he knew that he was talking with God...there came up from the depth of his heart such petitions for men as I had never heard before. I rose from my knees to know what real prayer was."
    - b. Dr. Chapman concluded, "It was a season of prayer with John Hyde that made me realize what real prayer was. I owe to him more than I owe to any man for showing me what a prayer life is."
  2. Do you know what "real prayer" is? It is always a supernatural encounter with our Supernatural God! We settle for far too less too often, don't we?
- iv. **Prayer is a sign of spiritual LIFE.**
1. Prayer, if it is true and real, is like breathing. Without out, we are as good as a corpse.
  2. A prayerless Christian is a contradiction. If you are alive, it is your nature to pray. Your deepest hunger is to seek the face of our Living God to speak intimately with Him.
  3. Why don't we? Maybe because we have filled our hunger with other things. (Sawdust in the concentration camps – no nutrition, but it numbed their hunger).
3. Every Christian I know suffers from praying too little. Even great prayer warriors feel as if they do not pray enough. God has placed in our hearts a great hunger that is only truly satisfied by being in His presence.
- a. I don't want you to come because of guilt. I believe God wants you to come because you know **You need Him** more than anything else.
  - b. **"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** That is what God says to you. Won't you acknowledge your need for Him?
  - c. **"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."** (Jer. 33:3)
  - d. Would you come for prayer? Would you come and lay down your burdens? Would you come and let us pray for you for your needs? God desires to meet them more than you are willing to admit you need them met.