



Best-selling author of *Commanding Your Morning*

CINDY TRIMM

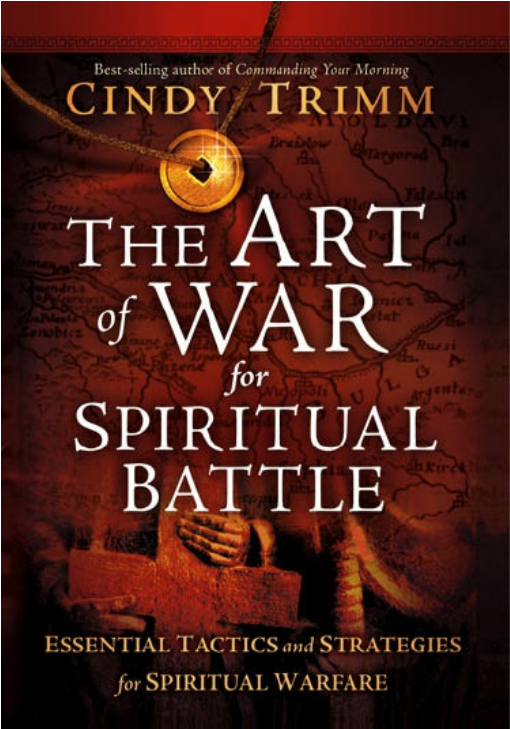
THE ART
of **WAR**
for
SPIRITUAL
BATTLE



ESSENTIAL TACTICS *and* STRATEGIES
for **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

Best-selling author of *Commanding Your Morning*

CINDY TRIMM



THE ART
of WAR
for
SPIRITUAL
BATTLE

ESSENTIAL TACTICS *and* STRATEGIES
for SPIRITUAL WARFARE



THE ART
of WAR
for
SPIRITUAL
BATTLE

CINDY TRIMM

Charisma
HOUSE
A STRANG COMPANY

Most Strang Communications Book Group products are available at special quantity discounts for bulk purchase for sales promotions, premiums, fund-raising, and educational needs. For details, write Strang Communications Book Group, 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, Florida 32746, or telephone (407) 333-0600.

The Art of War for Spiritual Battle by Cindy Trimm Published by
Charisma House
A Strang Company

600 Rinehart Road

Lake Mary, Florida 32746

www.strangbookgroup.com

This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc., publishers. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked NAS are from the New American Standard Bible, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972,

1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org) Scripture quotations marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked THE MESSAGE are from The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Cover design by Justin Evans

Design Director: Bill Johnson

Manuscript Preparation: Rick Killian, www.killiancreative.com

Copyright © 2010 by Cindy Trimm

All rights reserved

Visit the author's website at <http://www.cindytrimm.com/>.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data: Trimm, Cindy.

The art of war for spiritual battles / Cindy Trimm. -- 1st ed.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN 978-1-59979-872-1 -- ISBN 978-1-61638-179-0 1. Spiritual warfare. 2. Sunzi, 6th cent. B.C. Sunzi bing fa. I. Title.

BV4509.5.T72 2010

235'.4--dc22

2010013561

E-book ISBN: 978-1-61638-270-4

Contents

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Part One](#)

[Preparations and Foundations](#)

1 First Principles

2 The Tao of Prayer

3 Heaven and Earth (the Spiritual and Physical Realms)

4 The General of Prayer

5 Method and Discipline

[Part Two](#)

[Joining Heaven's Strategic High Command](#)

6 Allying Your Forces

7 Defensive Tactics

8 Downloading Divine Strategies

Appendix: Watchman's Report

[Notes](#)

Preface

The Art of War by Sun Tzu [Pronounced "sun zi."] has become an increasingly popular reference book over the last decade for everything from resolving disputes to investing in the stock market to managing corporate mergers and buyouts. This little book of proverbial wisdom seems just as relevant today as when it was written in the sixth century B.C. It is still required reading in military academies around the world, and in 2006, Chinese President Hu Jintao even gave a copy of the book to then U.S. President George W. Bush as a gesture toward greater international understanding and openness.

The reason for this is that, at its heart, The Art of War is a manual of wisdom on handling conflict of any kind. As I was reading it again recently, it dawned on me how its philosophy is equally relevant to the spiritual battles taking place around us every day. There are multiplicities of wars raging on many different kinds of terrains, ones that have overwhelmed the most powerful and sophisticated governments and challenge the most adroit intellects, scholars, or philosophers. There are wars against crime, drug abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, hunger, homelessness, terrorism, poverty, epidemic and pandemic

diseases, and global warming. There are interpersonal conflicts, financial hardships, identity crises, emotional and psychological struggles—the list seems to go on and on. Yet few in our world today understand that for every evil that manifests in the physical world, there first has to be a battle that was lost in the spiritual realm.

I believe that if we were really equipped and properly prepared, we could win each battle on every front. There are two realms in conflict—the natural and the supernatural. There are two kingdoms in conflict—darkness and light. The two kingdoms cannot rule in the same place—that is the nature of division and conflict, not the nature of a peaceful and prosperous society. For a community to flourish, evil must be continually defeated—day after day, year after year, generation after generation—otherwise all that happens is continual strife and infighting. Many people have become disillusioned because they feel it is a never-ending battle. But you must take heart; do not be discouraged. The battle we are engaged in will end in victory. Therefore, you must fight the good fight of faith and not of doubt; you must not give in to disbelief.

God's power and goodness that are within are far more powerful than any evil without. Conquer the foes of doubt and unbelief within, and your enemies without will be vanquished. You will win over personal stumbling blocks, proclivities, habits, and addictions in your private life, and over the struggle against injustice around the world. We

long for God's will—His mercy, His salvation, His healing, His abundance—to be done on the earth just as it is in heaven. We must fight to win. This is our war.

With all of this in mind, I thought, "If there was such a powerfully succinct book on military tactics and strategies for physical war, why shouldn't there be such a book that instructs us how to win spiritual battles?" Thus was born *The Art of War for Spiritual Battle*.

Sun Tzu was a military general in the latter years of Confucius's life. During this time in history, the children of Israel were just returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple as a result of the decree of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire. Although the prophet Daniel was in his final years, God was raising up Ezra, Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Zechariah, among others, as His messengers to Israel. As with yesteryear, so it is with our generation today. We are preparing for the changing of the guards. One generation is passing on as another is being raised up. That time in the world was a pivotal time in history—a defining moment. It is the same today with us; it will be the same tomorrow with the next generation of leaders. Humanity looks for a hero, and I think that the heroes of our generation will be unsung, uncelebrated, and maybe even unrecognized. They will be those who win the battles in the confines of their prayer rooms. These will not fight with guns and missiles. They will fight with the superior weapon of prayer.

Sun Tzu's *Art of War* is a short book divided into

thirteen chapters covering everything from counting the costs of war to maneuvering in the field to when to attack, when to retreat, when to let your enemy take the first move, and when to wait things out. Its advice and wisdom are delivered in brief proverbial stanzas and succinct lists of important considerations for facing common situations. For the purpose of this book, I have paraphrased Sun Tzu's sayings to bring out their relevance to spiritual warfare and the power of intercessory prayer. Rather than organizing these thoughts in thirteen chapters, I have rolled them into eight that I feel are more relevant to the modern reader. These principles teach the necessary disciplines of a modern-day prayer warrior; tactics for organizing prayer initiatives to take cities and nations back from tyranny, cruelty, and injustice; protocols for enforcing your authority as you wage your prayer campaign; and strategies for establishing and expanding God's kingdom wherever you have been assigned.

Now is the time to rethink how you approach prayer so you can download God's orders, regain your personal power over anti-purpose, anti-peace, anti-joy, and anti-prosperity forces, as well as reclaim the kingdoms of this world for Christ. Studying Sun Tzu's tenets gave me fresh insight and perspective in how to battle evil, and I believe they will equally empower you. No one goes into battle with the intent to lose, but battles are lost every day because the enemies we are fighting are better trained and better prepared. Prayer takes you into heaven's boot

camp and God's divine gym. Through prayer you will quickly gain spiritual, emotional, and mental muscles. God has already assigned the greatest sparring partner—the Holy Spirit. He will prepare you for every battle you will face in life and give you divine strategies that are designed to cause you to triumph over evil every time. Consult with Him any time you feel you are uncertain about the nature of the battle and the appropriate weaponry you should employ. It is time for a revolution of prayer—the nations of this world are ripe not only for a harvest that gives hope and guarantees deliverance, but also for the transformation that can only come through prayers that are prayed with passion, conviction, confidence, faith, and wisdom beyond anything we have ever prayed before. The effectual fervent prayer will indeed yield great results. You must fight in prayer for your loved ones, community, government, health, prosperity, future, country, province, and the global destiny of humanity.

As you read this book, may the Spirit of God arm you with the strategies you need to overcome the forces opposing you and that keep you from carrying out your assignment on the earth. I pray a new courage rises up within you to step forward and become the decorated general of prayer God has predestined you to be. I pray God fills you with the courage, the tenacity, the determination, and the wisdom you need to win your life's battles.

Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for
war;
stir up the mighty men.
Let all the men of war draw near;
let them come up.
Beat your plowshares into swords,
and your pruning hooks into spears;
let the weak say, "I am a warrior."

—Joel 3:9–10, ESV

Prayer does not fit us for the greater works;
prayer is the greater work. . . . Prayer is the
battle.

—Oswald Chambers

[Introduction](#)

The art of spiritual war is of vital importance to the individual, the community, the nation, the church, and the world. It is a matter of life and death, blessing and cursing, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of study that no one can neglect.

—The Art of War, 1:1–2, paraphrased [1](#)

Prayer is the simplest of practices, and at the same time, the most mysterious of spiritual disciplines. In it lies the master key to everything God wants for you, and yet no other aspect of following God seems more difficult to fathom. While folding your hands, bowing your head, and turning your thoughts or words toward God is as easy as sitting down to coffee with a friend, what transpires in the aftermath is the most multifaceted and mystifying journey in the universe. At its essence, prayer is a quest surpassing anything that you could or will ever read about in any thriller, novel, or adventure story. It is in prayer that we probe spiritual realities, communicate with God, access the arsenal of heaven, and expand God's kingdom on the earth. It is as simple as pulling aside to a quiet place and opening your heart to God, and as dynamic as tapping into the power and imagination that created the cosmos.

As with God, nothing is impossible, so it is that through prayer, nothing is implausible. Prayer gives heaven permission to invade the earth. Through this discipline, we are able to pray heaven down to keep hell from rising.

You must realize God will never abandon you, but He is ever-present wanting to work His will in your life. As Theresa of Avila said, "All difficulties in prayer can be traced to one cause: praying as if God were absent." God is right here with you, living inside of you, ready to release His kingdom through each of you, because "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Every believer is equipped with an arsenal of incredible life-altering and world-

changing power. For those who rightly esteem the privilege of accessing God's armory of possibilities, each word spoken through or by that person holds enormous, innovative, potential creative and re-creative power.

The Father has entreated each one of us to come and be involved in a dialogue that marshals angels and sets forth the weaponry of war—weaponry that impacts the spiritual realm and affects how events unfold in the natural world. He is still waiting for those of us who have the courage to step up and take their places in the highest ranks of His army. God has enough privates; what He desires now are generals who will pay the price of dedication and discipline to hear His divine strategies and implement them upon the earth.

By going into prayer rather than striving with those around you using worldly tactics hampered and confused by human motives, you signal your dependence on God and your trust in Him as the source of all real hope. You acknowledge that the only things that will last are those born in the strategic command center of His throne room. Your communication with God on behalf of others declares your commitment to seek His strategies and care for the objects of His affection. God's communication with you marks the anticipated change of regime as "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15). It shows your intention as a believer to annihilate barriers and hindrances—those things that divide the army of God into factions and

divisions the devil can manipulate and keep ineffective—refusing to erect your own throne and kingdom where only His is intended to be. Your times of intense prayer will not only affect present circumstances and conditions, but they will also give you a future hope.

Whatever God births through you in prayer, He is also required to sustain. You see, it doesn't matter what human beings formulate, plan, and strategize upon the earth, for all of it will ultimately come to nothing. He is a big God who created a big world for you to do something big in it. He is always trying to communicate with you. Prayer is the means by which you can engage Him.

There is a big conversation going on. God is sharing some big ideas. What you need is to get in on the big conversation going on in heaven's war room right now. According to Jeremiah 7:13, God is always speaking. Are you listening? If you participate in prayer correctly, consistently, faithfully, and persistently, God will let you listen in on that conversation, and you will overhear exactly what it is you need to do to continually advance in your life, fulfill your purpose, and maximize your potential.

The problem is, as with any form of communication, correctly interpreting what you are hearing can be tricky. The communication of heaven is seamless and eternal. It has neither a true beginning nor a discreet ending. Where we live in the milieu of the massive stream of constant stimuli that vie for our attention and interpretation, heaven's communication gets too easily lost in the static.

This is why you must consistently clear your calendar and reconfigure your daily agenda so that you can learn the art of strategic prayer. This will allow you to plumb the depths of the Spirit, to navigate new spiritual terrain, and to conquer old enemies of your soul. They develop within you the “knowing” that is heaven’s affirmation that you have received the messages sent. Prayer creates hedges of protection that keep you and your loved ones safe, provides the strategies of heaven that will give you victory, knits you together with others of like precious faith to form the army of God, and builds within you the strength of character to see the battles through to their victorious end. Without these principles and practices, you can argue with people until you are blue in the face about the truths of God, and all they will do is laugh—but by utilizing your prayer arsenal, you grant God permission to intervene so that even the most hard-hearted will topple to their knees before His throne.

There is a war being waged for the souls of the earth, and if you haven’t stopped to look lately, the good guys aren’t gaining much ground these days. The only way to turn that tide is to fight again as the evangelists and revivalists of old did. I’m not saying we need to go back to their methods necessarily, but we do need to get God’s strategic directives for our time just as they did for theirs. God is looking for leaders, for generals, to organize and lead that charge, but He first needs to know that they are skilled and disciplined in the art of spiritual war. Are you

willing to do what it takes to be among them?

I believe that we are in a generation that will again see great generals of prayer—but it will not come easily. As in the case of the five virgins who ran out of oil waiting for the bridegroom to come, and thus missed the wedding celebration, this call will pass over those who are not filled with the Spirit to the point of having more than enough. Will you be one who grabs hold of the strategic concepts of spiritual war to change your city, your state, your nation, and your world—or, when Christ calls, will you be caught ignorant, unprepared, and lacking? God is waiting for you to step up and become a disciplined leader in His army—a leader who knows how to employ His tactics with precision and unleash His cosmic weapons of mass salvation. Are you ready to enlist in the ranks of God's generals of prayer? Training begins now.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

—2 Corinthians 10:3–6

Part One

Preparations and Foundations

The art of spiritual war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions of taking the field and winning the battle.

These are: (1) The way; (2) heaven; (3) earth; (4) the general; (5) method and discipline.
—The Art of War, 1:3–4, paraphrased

One First Principles

Therefore, in your deliberations and preparations for war, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:

(1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with right on his side?

(2) Which of the two generals has the most ability?

(3) With whom lie the advantages derived from heaven and earth?

(4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?

(5) Which army is stronger?

(6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained?

(7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.

—The Art of War, 1:12–14, paraphrased

In the Book of Acts, Jesus's last words before He ascended to heaven gave the church a direct order, which was to be carried out before His return:

[Do not] depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father. . . . "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

—Acts 1:4, 8

It was a military-like command to go out and take territory for God and expand His kingdom around the earth—but only after having first received the power and strategies from heaven's war room. God was ready to unleash His kingdom and His divine power upon the earth. As we stand here more than two thousand years later, this commandment has still not been completely carried out.

You may ask, "What exactly is God's kingdom?" God's kingdom is simply any place God's will is performed on the earth as it is through the administrations of the government of heaven. When one attempts to understand the kingdom of God, the seeker must first learn what is meant by the actual concept itself. It has become almost a catchphrase in the body of Christ, without many people truly understanding the concept thereby or living out their proper authority.

Over time, the true meaning of the kingdom of God has been overshadowed by the religious conventions of Christianity, church denominations, and the traditions of man, thereby hindering believers from true freedom. Let us take some time to truly understand what God really intended by this phenomenon called the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is a literal, spiritual realm accessible only to born-again believers. This realm encompasses the power and resources essential to the believer if he or she desires to achieve the manifestation of heaven on earth. (See Genesis 2:4–5.) It can be best understood from an analogous perspective of the natural cosmological systems of the universe.

In the kingdom of heaven, the believer's earthly experience is filled with the essence of the righteousness that is God. It is a spiritual realm in which believers are privileged to exist and function at prosperous levels while physically living in the earth. This life is lived with the perspective originally intended by God at the forefront—that is, fulfilling God's original mandate to humanity as presented in Genesis 1:28—that we are to have dominion on the earth.

The kingdom of God has its own unique characteristics, consisting of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It encompasses countless other principles; however, these three concepts are, at best, a summation of what the omniscient God purposed for His earthly kings to whom He gave complete dominion over all that exists in

the earth.

As previously stated, this lifestyle can only be accessed and experienced by those who have faith in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. According to Luke 17:20, this kingdom cannot be perceived by the natural eye, because it is the sovereign rule of our unseen God through His citizens in the earth realm.

To achieve the maximum benefits God intended, we must move from merely surviving and settling for mediocre lifestyles to living—abundantly. God did not intend for His people to live beneath their potential. We find evidence of this in the Old Testament, and it was later manifested and maximized in the perfect example of Jesus Christ while He lived on the earth.

Jesus Christ emphatically proclaimed the kingdom of God. Since He so passionately promoted kingdom living, it is wise, at the least, to seek and obtain all that He purposed and planned for your life from the beginning of time.

Christ has instructed us as believers, above all other pursuits, to seek the kingdom. It should be the epitome of our priorities. In this realm we demonstrate our royalty and manifest our authority.

Open the spirit of your mind and allow these laws of the kingdom—which are based on principles found in the Word of God—to be firmly planted in the fertile soil of your heart. Then, and only then, can the kingdom be internally

understood and subsequently realized through your existence as a kingdom ambassador in the earth.

Ignorance Is the Enemy

The greatest enemy of the church is not sin but ignorance. Satan's number-one goal is to keep you ignorant concerning the kingdom, as was described in Hosea 4:6:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also will reject you from being priest for Me;
Because you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.

Even as Satan challenged Jesus in Matthew 4, so it is today with the church. The key confrontational issue has to do with the kingdom, because it is literally God's rule on the earth through man—His earthly representatives.

Think about that for a moment.

What rules heaven? God's will as expressed in His laws and principles. Is there sickness in heaven? No. Is there poverty in heaven? No. Is there slavery, sex trafficking, drug and alcohol abuse, oppression, famine, war, child soldiers, persecution, terrorism, malnutrition, bankruptcy, or water that isn't safe to drink in heaven? No. I'll tell you another thing; heaven doesn't need orphanages or divorce courts either, because those aren't issues there. The things that are tearing our world apart don't exist in heaven, because God's will is as accessible there as breathing the air is to us.

The next question is, what rules the earth? As long as man does not take his rightful stance, posture, and place in God through prayer, evil and evil human beings will rule. Herein lies the challenge. You must arise and take your place so that through you God can restore order, peace, righteousness, morality, ethics, just governance, health, and healing.

Though we all have different racial and ethnic backgrounds and are from all types of families, our emotions and passions have commonality; they respond to the human condition and life challenges, hardships, and disappointments in very similar ways. God planted it within each of us to want to make a difference in our world—a difference that will bring good and not harm, peace and not strife, prosperity and not poverty. But too few realize that the groundwork for this overcoming lifestyle begins in our prayer closets. It is the place of training and preparation. It is the boot camp to overcoming. Just as one who is not practiced in the art of sword craft cannot artfully wield a sword, no person on this earth can correctly use God's Word who has not been trained in it by the Master Himself. Prayer is that place of training, and also the place of overcoming. There are battles still raging for the peoples of the earth, and those battles are fought in the spiritual realm before they manifest in the natural. I remind you that the Spirit realm is the causal realm. If you prevail in the Spirit, you will win in the natural. If you can learn the art of victory through intercession, then such

struggles that steal the souls of humanity need not ever manifest at all.

Thus, as you look at joining the forces of God's army to establish His kingdom upon the earth, you need to count the cost. You need to look at some initial considerations and the lay of the two sides and see what it is that you need to do to gain the victory. For Sun Tzu, this boiled down to the answers to seven questions:

1. Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with right on his side?
2. Which of the two generals has the most ability?
3. With whom lie the advantages derived from heaven and earth?
4. On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?
5. Which army is stronger?
6. On which side are officers and men more highly trained?
7. In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

Some of these answers are easy. (1) God has right on His side over our adversary, (5) God's army is stronger, and (7) God "is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). But what of the others? Do our prayer generals have more ability in warring for right than those who are seduced by Satan to establish his kingdoms of evil? Which side is better at using its authority under

heaven and upon the earth? Which side is more disciplined in what it is doing? On which side are the officers and soldiers better trained and practiced in establishing the will of their master upon the earth? While we as Christians have all the power behind us, how well are we acting in that authority? The determination in whether we will be victorious or defeated hangs upon the honest answers to these questions. We are overcomers, but are we overcoming? Thus the issue is not the power of our God, but how disciplined and prepared we are to win the battles of our spiritual war in prayer.

Thinking of these questions reminds me of what happened with U.S. General George Patton during World War II. Patton demonstrated the need for both physical and spiritual preparations to win the battles we face, and in his case these were literal battles against evil. In early December 1944, the German Sixth Panzer Army was making a desperate attempt to regain lost territory in France through surprise attacks on the eighty-eight-mile front that was tenuously held by the Allied Forces. They were making great headway in the midst of heavy rains, thick fogs, and swirling ground mists that muffled the sound of their engines, blotted out the sun, and reduced visibility to only a few yards, keeping Allied planes grounded and forces on the ground isolated. Under this cover, the Nazi tanks easily cut through the few divisions holding the front in Luxembourg as they pushed south. The foul weather was an incredible aid to the Axis leaders, and

Patton knew that if these troops were going to be turned back, the skies would have to clear or they would have little chance to determine where the Panzers would strike next. These rains had been plaguing the lines between France and Germany since September.

So, on the morning of December 8, General Patton, who was an Episcopalian and used to written prayers, called the Third Army chaplain, saying, "This is General Patton. Do you have a good prayer for weather? We must do something about those rains if we are to win the war." The chaplain who took the call did not find a specific prayer on weather in the prayer books he had access to, so he composed the following:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen.

Because of the season, the chaplain also added a Christmas greeting. When the general approved it, he instructed, "Have two hundred fifty thousand copies

printed, and see to it that every man in the Third Army gets one." The chaplain then directed the general's attention to the greeting on the other side of the card and said, "If the general would sign the card, it would add a personal touch that I am sure the men would like."

Smiling at the gesture, the general crossed to his desk, took a pen, and signed the Christmas message. When he handed the card back, he said, "Chaplain, sit down for a moment. I want to talk to you about this business of prayer." He crossed to the window and looked out at the steady rain. He was a striking figure at six feet two with broad muscular shoulders and dressed in his uniform, which showed the discipline and polish of a dedicated soldier.

"Chaplain, how much praying is being done in the Third Army?"

"Does the general mean by chaplains or by the men?"

"By everybody," he replied.

Thinking a moment, the chaplain responded, "I am afraid to admit it, but I do not believe that much praying is going on. When there is fighting, everyone prays, but now with this constant rain—when things are quiet, dangerously quiet, men just sit and wait for things to happen. Prayer out here is difficult. Both chaplains and men are removed from a special building with a steeple. Prayer to most of them is a formal, ritualized affair, involving special posture and a liturgical setting. I do not believe that much praying is being done."

The general crossed to his desk, sat down, leaned back in his chair, and began toying with a pencil he had found laying there.

"Chaplain, I am a strong believer in prayer. There are three ways that men get what they want: by planning, by working, and by praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning, or thinking. Then you must have well-trained troops to carry it out: that's working. But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat or victory, success or failure. It is the reaction of the actors to the ordeal when it actually comes. Some people call that getting the breaks. I call it God! God has His part, or margin in everything, that's where prayer comes in. Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, no epidemics. This is because a lot of people back home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy simply because people prayed. But we have to pray for ourselves too. A good soldier is not made merely by making him think and work. There is something in every soldier that goes deeper than thinking or working—it's his guts. It is something that he has built in there: it is a world of truth and power that is higher than himself. Great living is not all output of thought and work. A man has to have intake as well. I don't know what you it, but I call it religion, prayer, or God."

He talked briefly about Gideon and men he had known

who felt they must always be in prayer or else they would crack up, then eventually, he went on: "I wish you would put out a training letter on this subject of prayer to all the chaplains. Write about nothing else, just the importance of prayer. Let me see it before you send it. We've got to get not only the chaplains but also every man in the Third Army to pray. We must ask God to stop these rains. These rains are that margin that holds defeat or victory. If we all pray, it will be like what Dr. Carrel said [Dr. Alexis Carrel had been quoted some days earlier in the press describing prayer "as one of the most powerful forms of energy man can generate"], it will be like plugging in on a current whose source is in heaven. I believe that prayer completes that circuit. It is power."

In the days that followed, a quarter of a million prayer cards and 486 training letters on prayer were distributed to the soldiers and chaplains of the Third Army, sometime between December 11 and 14. From December 16 to 19, the men fought bravely against an enemy almost invisible in the rains, and on the nineteenth, the Third Army turned north to meet the attack of the Panzer divisions. Even though continued rains and bad weather was forecast, the skies cleared on the twentieth, and the fog dispersed. For a better part of a week the skies remained bright and clear, creating perfect flying weather for planes by the thousands to pound the Germans to defeat as well as cut off the chances of the arrival of any reinforcements.

When the general saw the chaplain again in January of

1945, he said simply, "Well, Padre, our prayers worked. I knew they would." Then he cracked him on the side of his helmet with his riding crop to punctuate his gratitude for the chaplain's help.1

As believers, are we yet ready to stand as prayer generals with this same faith, planning, and work at the head of God's army to marshal His troops to pray down His will for our world with just this same enthusiasm? Are we as prepared and disciplined, but still relying on God to make the difference? Before we can hope to attain to such successes, we must first develop overcoming prayer lives of our own.

An Overcoming Prayer Life

In order to have an overcoming prayer life, knowing that these conflicts and wars are waged against all humankind, not just us, helps give perspective. We face no challenge, "except such as is common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13). If we understand this, then we are better able to persevere in prayer, knowing that the turmoil we see is business as usual for Satan, and God has beaten him at it millions of times before. This knowledge helps us to contend with difficulties and gives us the faith we need to overcome them.

But while the victory is ever the Lord's, it will not manifest on the earth if you as a believer do not fight for it. This is your time on the earth to see that God's will is done during your watch. You, who have jurisdiction on the earth while you are here, must stand in the gap and tell Satan, "No, I will have none of your monkey business here." Praying earnestly—and ultimately victoriously—in such matters is to strive in the spirit through mastery of the techniques and disciplines of prayer. In praying earnestly, there is a heavy exertion of energy consistently propelling you forward to obtain the object of your faith. The greater work Jesus said you would do will not first be done with hands reached out to others, but will first be done by hands folded in prayer and hands reached out to God.

You make a mistake if you underestimate the tenacity

needed to win such battles. The fights are often so prolonged that you will be tempted to—and will—try anything else rather than persevere in prayer all the way to victory. The answer to the pain of drug addiction, marital infidelity, unemployment, homelessness, prostitution, or any of the number of other evils that need to be overcome in our world require dismantling of the old and establishing of the new. At the moment a prayer is uttered, angelic hosts move throughout the atmospheres on behalf of the pray-er(s), rooting up and tearing down entrenched strongholds that have wreaked havoc on lives. Then God meticulously plants and nurtures, one by one, the answers to counteract those evils, until all is in alignment with His will. Just as it took a long time for the enemy to spawn his diabolical webs and trap people in them, it will take time as well to unravel and reposition people to receive the blessings of the Lord. Therefore, we must pray patiently, persistently, and passionately. Staying steadfast in prayer over such matters until the answer arrives not only is the key to victory, but it also matures our faith in ways that no other practice can.

In order to take the fields of battle God has assigned us, we need steadily and patiently to be plugged into His command center in just this way. We need to be constantly tapped into the big conversation that is going on in the heavenlies, tuning into heaven's frequency and listening in to what God is broadcasting concerning His will and His ways of bringing His goodness into manifestation

on the earth.

I'm not just talking about miracles, either. Miracles are wonderful things, but you know what? Heaven doesn't need miracles to make things right. The systems of heaven simply work the way they are supposed to. God's will on the earth could look as much like a school or a hospital as it could a healing revival. It could look like a church that doubles as a community center to help people find work when they need it or teach English to immigrants as easily as it could miraculously open prison doors in the middle of the night as it happened in Bible days. Believe it or not, most of the social services offered by governments today—unemployment offices, health clinics, job training centers, schools, advocacy groups for safe working conditions and abolishing child labor, and so forth—started as outreaches of Christian ministries. Such ministries, holistic in essence, sought to reach out to help people spirit, soul, and body. We need a similar approach today. Our churches need to again be the powerhouses that connect and improve communities, not just somewhere to sing, clap your hands, and hear a “good word” or a Sunday morning book report.

But how are we going to return churches to that kind of relevance? Once again, we need to become masters of winning battles in the spiritual realm, so that God's will is done in the natural realm around us as easily as it is done in heaven.

Prayer cannot be a passing fancy or fad. Power comes

through constant prayer. When a group of American ministers visited Pastor Charles Spurgeon in the late 1800s, he offered them a tour of his church's facilities. He took them through the massive sanctuary and around the various buildings of the compound and then asked if they would like to see the power source, the boiler room of the ministry. Thinking it dramatically unremarkable, the visitors tried to politely decline, but Spurgeon insisted. So he led them down a rather ordinary stairway down to the church's basement, then down a hallway to a room with a closed door. When he opened it, instead of finding the plumbing and furnace they expected, they found a hundred or so people on their faces in prayer. "This," Spurgeon said with a smile, "is my boiler room."²

When Spurgeon was asked the secret to his success, he credited his success to his praying church members.³ What is the power center of our churches today? Those inexperienced or new to life in Christ often think that winning spiritual battles is as easy as asking. Thank God that in many instances this is true. We ask for things in prayer, and sometimes the answer comes immediately. But don't let such easy successes fool you. Satan is not ignorant of God's methods and the power of prayer! The last thing he wants is believers practiced in the long-term campaigns of prayer required to dismantle his empires of greed, hatred, pain, suffering, and deception. Because of this, he has no problem letting some little answers through every now and again. So, you come to Christ, you pray for

your rent money in a service, and someone hands you a check before you leave. Praise God. Or you face an exam and need God's wisdom to help you pass it. You are blessed and you get an A. Or you are on a short-term mission trip and you pray for a child's foot to be turned around the right way from being crippled, and before your eyes the child goes from walking with a crutch to running and leaping and dancing. Praise God!

But what I want you to see here is that it is not always in Satan's interest to block such prayers from coming to pass. If the devil did, you might just pray all the more determined. So what he would rather do is let you convince yourself that prayer should always be this easy, then you will never learn to persevere in it. You will pray for something a few times, but when the answer doesn't manifest as others have before, you will begin to question things. You will wonder if your faith is just not strong enough, or if you have interpreted the Scripture correctly—or you become convinced it is just not God's will. So your determination wavers. You begin to hedge your bets by praying artificially spiritual things like, "Your will be done," so that if your prayer doesn't get answered, you can always blame it on God's will rather than anything that was within your control.

Satan knows that if he can let you convince yourself that everything that comes from God is always spectacular and easy, then you will begin to overlook the supernatural for gimmicks and tricks. You will be "tossed to and fro and

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Eph. 4:14). You will remain children who think everything that is good in life comes on your birthday or Christmas, and you never learn to work for anything. Satan doesn't really care if you become a Christian and get blessed every once in a while—as long as he can keep you from truly understanding how to exercise your authority in Christ. Because of this, he doesn't mind letting a casual prayer though here and there, as long as it keeps you convinced that prayer is like a vending machine where you put in your faith, push a button, and immediately your answer pops out. In fact, it probably gives him a laugh, because as you jump up and down, he is already envisioning your doubts and discouragement when he later hinders something bigger you will pray for; he knows you will give up just short of seeing it manifested.

You see, what Satan really doesn't want is a persistent, methodical, importunistic believer who lives by prayer. He doesn't want someone who is so disciplined and tenacious in prayer that once that person begins to pray, Satan knows, no matter how long he fights to delay the answer, he has no hope of winning. If we had more Christians who prayed like that, then there would be an inevitable, unstoppable, step-by-step, day-by-day dismantling of the kingdom of darkness that he could never withstand. The end of his kingdom of bondage, disease, deformities, and emotional torment would be written on the wall. So he is

quite content to keep us thinking that all the big things are really in God's hands alone, so we never need to worry about much more than our own needs and those of our immediate family.

Do you find that hard to believe? Well, look then at the story of Daniel. Nowhere else in the Bible do we see so many plots against one person to do one thing—simply stop this man from praying three times a day. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace for what? Because they would only bow their knees to God—something they did regularly with Daniel. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den . . . why? Because he threw open his windows and prayed unabashedly. And yet, we don't see Moses-like miracles being done by Daniel. There were no plagues of deliverance upon the Babylonians as there had been on the Egyptians. No, instead we see a simple prophet of God who prayed with a regimen nothing could deter him from, and it brought about the deliverance of Israel from Babylon.

Look at the story in Daniel 9. Daniel is reading in the Book of Jeremiah one day in one of his devotional times, and he makes a discovery. According to Jeremiah, God said that the exile of Israel would only last seventy years. Daniel is an old man at this point, so he starts to count his birthdays. "Let's see, I was taken into exile when I was a child of so many years, and now I am so old—why, that is more than seventy years!" There it was, a promise in Scripture, and it hadn't come true! So what does Daniel

do? He begins to seek God through prayer and fasting to find out what was going on. He began confessing his sins and the sins of Israel and presenting his petition to heaven, inquiring as to why this promise of God had not yet been fulfilled. He gets a vision from the Lord about the future, but it is not the answer he is after, so he stays in prayer. He received other visions—incredible, mind-boggling things, but again they weren't the answer to his question, so he kept praying. Then finally after three weeks, an angel appeared to Daniel saying:

Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come. . . . Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth.

—Daniel 10:12–14, 20–21

The very moment Daniel started praying, God sent this messenger, but he immediately ran into demonic interference, and it took twenty-one days to fight through with the answer. Satan let other insights come through, hoping that Daniel would be so fascinated by them he would forget what he was really praying about, but when Daniel persisted, Satan's forces were eventually defeated. Daniel received his answer, and within that same year, according to some scholars' chronologies, King Cyrus decreed that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt. (See Ezra 1:1–4.) It was the first step in Israel's return to the Promised Land.

A similar thing happened with Rees Howells, an intercessor in Wales in the early twentieth century. He had spearheaded a very successful mission outreach to the local coal miners, of which he was one, but over several months his closest compatriot in the mission was considering leaving because he didn't want to be second fiddle to Rees. Rees took the matter to prayer, and God answered very matter-of-factly: Rees was to turn the leadership of the mission over to his friend, step down from the pulpit, and go behind the scenes to become an intercessor and pray that the mission would have greater success in the hands of his friend than it'd had in his own. Rees eventually reluctantly agreed, and the mission exploded in attendance in the coming months.

Following that, God gave Rees an even greater challenge that seemed even more obscure. He was to pray for the son of a benefactor who had gone off to war and fallen away from God. Rees agreed that he would pray that the young officer would not return to the front without returning to God. This would not be a prayer for a matter of hours, or even days, either. Rees's shift in the coal mine was from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., six days a week. He would then come home, eat dinner, and go to his room and spend from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on his knees before God reading his Bible and praying for the young man. He did this for six months. In that time the man's son was discharged from the army and moved to Canada, never returning to the front, but also not yet returning to God. Eventually Rees received the conviction in his heart that his intercession had been answered, and he left this vigil to pray for other things, telling his benefactor the work was done in the spirit. It would be another twelve years, though, before the man's salvation manifested and he turned his life back over to God. It happened just weeks before his father passed away. In all that time Rees never budged from the conviction that the man's salvation was already accomplished in heaven as God had promised him in prayer.[4](#)

Another example would be a little noticed part of the Christmas story, from the day just after New Year's when Jesus was presented at the temple to be consecrated to the God.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. . . . Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

—Luke 2:25–26, 36–38

Both Simeon and Anna had been blessed by God to see Jesus before they died, but why? Why—and when, for that matter—would God tell them they would see the Messiah before they died? The only logical answer was that it was while they prayed, and, logically again, while they were praying for the Messiah to be born on the earth. How long had they been praying? According to this passage, Anna had been living in the temple praying day and night for eighty-four years. That doesn't mean she never slept, but

it does mean the primary occupation of her time was prayer. In writing this, Luke took the time to mention that her father's name was Phanuel, a name remarkably like the Hebrew Penuel, the place where Jacob wrestled all night with God and received the name Israel, meaning "a prince of God" or "one who has authority with God." (See Genesis 32:22–30.) It seems that God couldn't even send His own Son to the earth without someone praying Him in.

I could tell other stories—and I will later on—but I hope this is enough so that you can see there is a way of prayer to accomplish things in the heavenlies that is beyond merely presenting our requests to God. It is a surer way, but it is also a more difficult way—certainly not for the faint of heart. However, the rewards are limitless. By spending consistent, purposeful, and fervent time in prayer, knowing God, discerning His voice, and walking in His ways become as intimate to us as knowing those who live with us in our own homes. It opens us to understanding the mysteries of God and allows God to reveal to us exact strategies for praying for specific people, growing our churches, changing our communities, and releasing God's kingdom on the earth. It also lets God's wisdom rub off on us regarding how to conduct our businesses or work our jobs, how to invest and manage our money, and what we need to do to nurture our relationships and discipline ourselves to keep our bodies fit and strong.

Many people think that engaging in this level of spiritual

warfare is something for only a select few, but there is no gift of prayer or office of intercessor mentioned in the Bible. What this means is that each of us has a part to play in manifesting God's kingdom on the earth. Prayer is a call of duty, a practice and principle for every one belonging to Christ. After all, if He is our Lord, how can we honor His lordship if we don't communicate with Him daily? Certainly we will each be led to pray in different ways and with different intensities, but prayer is as foundational a Christian discipline as reading the Scriptures or obeying the law of love. It is the place of apprenticeship for learning the voice of God and communicating with Him so that He can teach and empower us to live as His representatives on the earth. It is the key to our success and to winning battles in every arena of life. This is why we must become people who live in the way of prayer.

The people who know their God shall be strong,
and carry out great exploits.

—Daniel 11:32

Two The Tao of Prayer

The way, the moral law or truth, is what causes the people to be in agreement and accord with their leaders; it is what they dedicate their lives to, for good or ill, and gives them a purpose from which even danger cannot turn them.

—The Art of War, 1:5–6, paraphrased

The time of Sun Tzu was one of spiritual as well as physical turmoil in China. While province waged war against province, struggling for dominion and wealth, philosophers such as Confucius also roamed the countryside like Old Testament prophets preaching that leadership was not based on might as much as right—that true leaders pulled their power not from the size of their army so much as the moral fortitude of their governance. Thus Sun Tzu—the philosopher warrior—espoused the way a ruler lived and governed as the foundation for his study of the art of war. For the best way to win a war was

not to have to fight one at all—winning hearts and minds was more powerful than ruling with an iron will. Thus emerged a system of moral thought based on the fingerprints God left all over everything in nature and the sense of right and wrong God inscribed on the human heart when He first created man and woman.

The word way in the passage above is transliterated from Chinese as the Tao, or “the unconditional and unknowable source and guiding principle of all reality . . . the art or skill of doing something in harmony with the essential nature of a thing.”¹ It is my prayer that you will learn the art and develop the skill of praying in harmony with God, according to His name, essence, and power. In his writings, C. S. Lewis used the concept of the Tao to represent the universal moral law that is innate in all cultures and ethnicities.

The Chinese also speak of a great thing (the greatest thing) called the Tao. It is the reality behind all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge . . . into space and time. It is also the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and supercosmic progression, conforming all activities to that great exemplar.²

This universal moral truth—even as mysterious and complex as it is—comprises the innate values we all hold for justice, integrity, love for beauty, and compassion. It is the essence of God's imprint upon all human beings, left from when He created us in His own image. According to Taoist tradition, it is the foundation for how one should live, and by one's harmony with it, the righteousness of one's cause could be judged.

It is interesting how much this parallels the preaching of Jesus—that what was important was not defeating the Roman might that ruled Israel at that time, but ushering in the righteous, moral governance of the kingdom of God—a kingdom above anything of this earth that was not about military power but about spiritual virtue. Jesus came not so much to establish a throne from which to rule but a way in which to follow Him. As He described Himself in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." In fact, according to Acts 9:2, Christianity was even called "the Way" before those in Antioch began calling themselves "Christians" (Acts 11:26). Jesus had introduced a new way of living and thinking that would turn the world upside down.

It is one thing to accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and call ourselves Christians, but there is an added power to living in the way of Christ—to acknowledging that "for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My [God's] ways higher than your [our] ways, and My [His] thoughts than your [our] thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). Taoist

philosophy emphasizes that it is not so much about right believing, as Confucius would have held, but it is about right doing. It is something like the age-old Christian dichotomy between faith and works: which is more important? For the ardent believer, the two are functionally inseparable, or as prayer general William Booth, founder of The Salvation Army, put it: "Faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of men walking. First faith, and then works; and then faith again, and then works again—until they can scarcely distinguish which is the one and which is the other."³ While it is right believing that puts us in position to receive of God's kingdom, it is right doing that expands it and makes it tangible even to those who don't know God.

The rub comes in the difference between doing good things and doing what God has specifically directed us to do. God's way is not just doing good and believing the right things; it's doing them side by side in partnership—or covenant—with Him. God's way opens only to those who know not only how to hear from Him but also how to rightly interpret and act in accordance with His Word. Kingdom expansion will be led by those who know how to pray until they have received God's specific instructions in matters and then obey what they hear through the power of the same unyielding spirit of prayer.

What kind of prayer am I talking about? In one way or another, at one time or another, no matter what people

believe or what they say their religion is, in confident faith or open desperation, everyone prays. They throw up “if you exist” prayers, “because You’ve promised” prayers, “I’ve got no one else to turn to” prayers, “God, if You will just do this for me, then I will follow You for the rest of my life” prayers, or they count off the beads on their rosary or tick off the items on their prayer lists going over all the concerns of their life one by one before God. Those are all very valid forms of prayer, which God will respond to as He deems fit, but none of these are the way of prayer I am talking about. All of these methods throw prayer out like a lifeline, as a plea for compassion, or even as a well-argued, well-reasoned appeal for God to intervene in the affairs of humanity, but for the most part none who pray like this clearly discern His will. Why? Because they are not listening for God to speak to them as much as they are looking for God to act on their behalf.

Everyone has prayed like this, but prayer leaders—those who become generals of prayer—aren’t satisfied with simply going through life with circumstances neatly lining up for them. They are hungrier for the Answerer—the One who answers—than they are for the answers. They are hungrier to make a difference in the world than they are for living comfortably.

These extremists—I like to call them generals—are those who live by prayer. As Madame Jeanne Guyon wrote in her *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, “Let all pray: we should live by prayer, as we should live by love.” [4](#)

Prayer generals are those who refuse to compromise or accomplish things by any other way than God's—those who, as Jesus did, refuse to take their next step or speak their next word unless they know God is directing them to do so. They would not go out to minister until they felt they had prayed through and connected with God for that day. As Jesus said: "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things" (John 8:28). When did His Father teach Him? While He was on His knees in prayer.

You see this resolve in the lives of people like Charles Finney, who decided one morning in response to the Spirit of God speaking to his heart "Will you accept it [the Gospel] now, to-day?" that he would indeed accept it or else die in the attempt. That day as he walked to work, he stopped dead in his tracks and went into the forest where he knelt down and determined he would pray until God told him one way or the other of his eternal future. He stayed in that place of prayer all morning and "prayed till my mind became so full that, before I was aware of it, I was on my feet and tripping up the ascent toward the road."⁵

This kind of prayer is not giving God a grocery list of wants and concerns, but it is tapping into the Big Conversation that is happening around the throne of God. I believe that God is always speaking, but we are not always listening. We get distracted. First Corinthians 14:10 tells us, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in

the world, and none of them is without significance,” but I can tell you at the same time that not all of them are relevant to you. They are all saying good and even important things, but what you need is direction and strategy from heaven.

So much of the time I see Christians running from one meeting to another trying to get the best teaching possible—and there is a great deal of good teaching out there—but at the same time I see Jesus standing in the back of these same meetings watching and wondering when they are going to come and spend some time learning at His feet. They’re like God-paparazzi, running around hoping to catch a glimpse of some great thing or person, hoping to cash in on being in the right place at the right time, but with no discipline to take the time to wait on God for themselves. I think this is because it is so much easier to run around from meeting to meeting than to kneel down alone in your prayer closet and not budge until you’ve cleared and quieted your mind enough to really hear God. Do you want to have God answer your prayers? Then all you have to do is what Jesus did—simply stay in prayer until He answers you. That alone is the true way of prayer.

Perhaps this is why when Jesus taught on prayer, He didn’t give specific instructions and lists of how-tos, but He told a couple of simple stories and explained “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1, KJV). Think about those parables for a moment. I am sure you have heard them before—but if not, get your Bible and

look them up. There is the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:2–8), the parable of the neighbor at midnight (Luke 11:5–13), the story of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30), the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:10–14), among others. After reading these, it isn't hard to surmise that the most important qualities a prayer life should have are faith, humility, and perseverance. In fact, after telling the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus teaches:

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?

—Luke 18:7–8, emphasis added

As Jesus prepares to return to the earth, will He find the kind of faith that grabs hold of God like this in prayer and doesn't let go until it gets the answer?

Faith, Humility, and Perseverance

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

—Hebrews 11:1, ESV

There are three parts to faith. Part one is the

supposition—the thing you hope will happen and believe has happened. It is the thing you put forth in prayer as a request or petition to God. Second is the evidence that gives credence to the supposition—the documentation saying you have the right to ask for what you are asking for since it has been promised to you. The last is the confidence that your supposition is true whether you have physical proof of it or not. Faith is then simply the trust you have that God will do what He has promised. As a lawyer rests his case after presenting the evidence for his client, confident he has proven his side effectively, so, when we have faith, we rest our confidence in the dictates of God's Word. In other words, we believe our petition has been granted because God said so, even if we haven't seen it realized yet.

Since faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, what is possible in the physical realm should not restrict our prayers. We have the right to establish things in the spirit and begin to make a demand on things that have been divinely incubating, awaiting their set time of manifestation. It takes faith to fight for such manifestations. Since the beginning of the earth, God prepared to answer what you have only asked for now. These answers have a set time of manifestation. But they can only be released by faith. Natural eyes neither perceive them, nor can natural ears detect them. They must be discerned by the spirit and activated by faith.

As we pray by faith, we need to ask God for the spirit of

the children of Issachar to discern times and seasons. (See 1 Chronicles 12:32.) According to the Book of Revelation, God moves at a particular time and a predetermined moment: "So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind" (Rev. 9:15). The angel told Daniel that God sent an answer on the first day he prayed, but Daniel didn't receive it for twenty-one days because of warfare in the heavenlies. So it could be with you. Marinate your prayers in faith in the Word of God, just as Daniel did. Pray the Word, not your worries. Pray the promise, not the problem.

In the ministry of Jesus, there are only two instances when He commended someone for having great faith. They are worth looking at here.

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my

servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" . . . Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

—Matthew 8:5–10, 13, emphasis added

The second, however, is oddly dissimilar:

And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O

woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

—Matthew 15:22–28, emphasis added

I think there are several things we can learn about faith from comparing these two stories. Those with faith trust in the Answerer more than in their right to ask. The centurion knew Jesus was a healer because he had heard the stories of Jesus healing those who came to Him; perhaps he had even seen it for himself. The Canaanite woman also knew without question that it was Jesus's nature to heal all those who asked Him. Yet at the same time the centurion knew Jesus would be scorned for visiting his home just as the Canaanite woman accepted the label as a "dog." What they were asking was not based on who they were but on who Jesus was.

Both also knew that Jesus's word on the matter was enough. Once He said yes, there was no need to bother Him any further with the same question. The centurion knew this to be true because he understood authority. The Canaanite woman knew it because she understood Jesus's character—He was a man of compassion and integrity who always followed through on what He said He would do. The thing is, while the answer for the centurion came quickly, the Canaanite woman, like the woman protesting to the unrighteous judge or the neighbor knocking in the middle of the night, didn't receive a yes at her first

request. In fact, Jesus tried to ignore her, and then put her off by calling her a dog. However, she knew His true character. She knew she had no right to ask for what she was asking for—she wasn't worthy of it—but that had no bearing on who Jesus truly was. So she persisted, knowing that by His very nature Jesus couldn't turn her down unless she gave up asking.

When we pray, the petitions that are made should come from our innermost being. The only reason to pray elongated prayers is because we believe that the one to whom we address our prayers is able and willing to answer us even if things appear otherwise. In reliance on our knowledge of God's nature, we can rest with assurance that He will answer us. We can cease from worrying or trying to fix situations on our own. No longer anxious, our hearts beat with the resolute rhythm of heaven. Resting in this certainty acknowledges that there is a skilled surgeon working on our problem and restoring us to wholeness, and we need not be concerned because we are in good hands. Many people want to pray as if they could actually push God to do or not do what is in His providence to do. The truth is that we have entered a rest when we give up ownership of the matter, as Christ did in saying, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Rest assured, God always answers our prayers. The outcome may not be what you planned, but the result will be far greater than your heart could have conceived. You must also trust God to know what answer is in your best

interest.

Notice also that neither the centurion nor the Canaanite mother asked Jesus for healing because they thought they deserved it—in fact, both seemed to know that they didn't. As a foreigner, the centurion knew he was unworthy of having Jesus enter his household, just as the woman batted away after being called a dog cleverly turned it around in a bit of self-deprecating humor and capitalized on the unlimited, unrestricted favor and grace always demonstrated by Christ. Yet they still asked, and even asked boldly. Neither turned away or grew impatient until they had Jesus's word that they would receive what they had asked for. There was a tenacity, a perseverance and persistence in their asking that couldn't be denied. They weren't leaving until they got what they asked for, even if they had to ignore what initially sounded like refusals. They had faith that they would get what they were after before they even asked, but they still hung on to Jesus until He promised He would take care of it. This is the tao of prayer.

Look at Paul, for example. In 2 Corinthians 12 he tells of asking God to deliver him from a person or a group of people—diabolically driven—who had been following him around and being a "thorn in his flesh."[6](#) Here is his account of what happened when he prayed for deliverance from this "thorn":

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord

three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

—2 Corinthians 12:8–10

Note that Paul prayed three times and was told three times, "My grace is enough for you, for when you are weak, I am strong." At first Paul must have thought this was a "no, I won't deliver you from this mob," until he finally realized God was saying, "Nothing they do can overcome you because you have My grace. I will be with you no matter what, and together we will triumph in revealing My glory in you, which is far greater in its impact on a larger spiritual and social scale. In your weakness, they will see My strength." When Paul realized that, he decided he would rejoice in persecutions rather than running from them. In the end, he did this by going to Jerusalem. Even though everyone told him that if he went he would be bound and thrown into prison, Paul saw it as a free trip to Rome to share the gospel with everyone in the Roman courts.

Besides this, we hear Paul advising us to be “continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Rom. 12:12) and to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Do you get the impression that Paul was quick to his knees about any concern, that there was nothing he didn’t pray about, and that he was diligent in getting his answers in prayer?

In this same way, when you pray, don’t ever let yourself waiver in your faith. Hold fast to what you have learned and the confidence you have received in your relationship with Christ, even in things thought to be dead and buried, irreversible or impossible. God can resurrect a life thought to be over, heal the terminally ill, save the worst of sinners, and topple tyrannical governments. You acknowledge His ability to cause dead things to live when you are faithful in prayer. When you hold your place in faith, as the Canaanite woman did, continuing to believe God, God is pleased, breakthroughs are secured, divine interventions are guaranteed, and eternal life is apprehended for you and those you pray for.

Thus the way of prayer dictates that until there is a release in your spirit—an assurance that the matter is resolved or tangible evidence of deliverance—do not stop praying. This is the difference between winning and losing. In your communication to, with, and on behalf of God, plant your feet wide apart in the Spirit realm, stake your claim, be steadfast and unmovable, and defy any and all circumstances to move you from your position in prayer. In the days when God is extracting sins and evil and

replanting with salvation, we will see any evidence above the ground that He is at work beneath the soil. Yet we cannot afford to stop praying just as the results are about to break forth. The seedling will need your steadfastness in order to push through and flourish. Do not release or give up. Push; persevere. Never, never give up or give in. It's time to be steadfast and wait on the Lord. God, in whom you put your trust, is always faithful to answer.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

—1 Corinthians 15:58, emphasis added

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

—Acts 2:42, emphasis added

Three
Heaven and Earth
(the Spiritual and Physical Realms)

Heaven signifies darkness and light, the climate, times and seasons. Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.

—The Art of War, 1:7–8, paraphrased

For Sun Tzu, heaven was the atmosphere around and above us, though for us as Christians it is still the place in which God's timetable and seasons for His plans upon the earth are established, the place of determining the difference between evil and good (darkness and light), and the climate in which God's will is done without interference. Heaven's desire is for God's kingdom to be restored upon the earth, but heaven needs representatives and ambassadors on the earth to give it a legitimate right to step in and set up jurisdiction. It is only through our appeals—our prayers—that heaven gains the right to

inhabit the earth. In other words, prayer legalizes heaven's interventions.

The earth is the domain of decisions. It is where human beings have the right to choose good or evil, blessing or cursing, success or failure, life or death. But these things don't just come with the choosing—they must also be fought for. For the earth is also the place of battles and wars, defeat and victory, abundance and need, risk and reward, and prosperity and calamity. We must realize that being on the earth means we live in the heart of the war zone between heaven and hell, good and evil, eternal life and eternal death. It is our place of testing and struggle, but also the only place we can experience victory and earn reward—although neither will come without a fight.

God's original plan was for peace and prosperity to fill the earth, but with the fall of Adam and Eve, His will was thwarted. He tried to find new representatives to partner with and bless the world, but it didn't take long for Him to recognize that each succeeding generation had to win victory for itself or fall into corruption and self-destruction. In Abraham he found a man of faith who taught his children well, but within less than a handful of generations his children had let themselves be enslaved by the Egyptians. He brought them a deliverer in Moses, and then a conqueror in Joshua, but when Israel failed to follow through on the mandate of heaven to clear Canaan of all enemies and evil influences, God determined instead to use Israel's enemies as a testing and training ground

where they would learn how to fight for what was good and righteous. Your tests, challenges, and struggles are your training grounds.

Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. . . . They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

—Judges 3:1–2, 4, ESV

God gave Israel two ways of obtaining that instruction, wisdom and revelation—or, you could say, God’s written Word and God’s prophetic word. God sent His prophets and His Son that you might have the Bible, the logos or living Word, so that you would know His ways through experience. But He also inspired His prophets to write the Bible so that you can know His wisdom and statutes. You read the Bible to understand God’s laws, the history of His people, and the nature of His nature. His revelation, however, comes from His presence, which you acquire primarily through prayer. It is only through prayer that you receive revelation that is particular to you as an individual.

It is through prayer you receive the specific instructions and stratagems to fight the battles in your part of the overall war for righteousness on the earth. It is through prayer God gives a fresh word specific to your current situations and reveals to you where you are in His plan for your life.

As did the Israelites, so each of us has our own purpose and domain of responsibility upon the earth. We have a jurisdiction that God has called us to watch over and where He has called us to establish His kingdom. He has the technological prowess ready for our use to target the strongholds and reveal the patterns in the movement of the enemy within the territories for which we are responsible. He can give you the intelligence you need to succeed. As God downloads to you the alliances, gatekeepers, and territorial spirits, you must consult with the Word of God in order to acquire the schematic and pattern that reveals the original plans and purposes of God, and then pray accordingly.

Prayer is essential for kingdom expansion. While heaven is pregnant with possibilities, and God has so much blessing that He wants to pour out on the earth, we have to remember that we live in enemy territory. The world system—in which we live as foreigners in a foreign land—has no desire for the will of God and His goodness to manifest on the earth. This system instead wants the bait and switch of the satanic kingdom, which promises fun, pleasure, and real living, but instead drains the happiness

and life out of those who give in to it. It gives shallow, temporary pleasures that lead to death rather than the hard-fought-for, eternal fulfillment that comes from embracing the zoe—"eternal life"—of God.

Though God's will is to deliver every man, woman, and child from the parasitical system of the world, He is a righteous God who will not violate His own legal system. In Eden, He gave the rulership of the earth to humanity's representatives, Adam and Eve. They, in turn, forfeited it to Satan through their disobedience. Satan thus became the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). For centuries God had little legal right to step back into the affairs of humanity. Abraham's faith made way for a covenant with Him through which God could implement His backup plan. The sacrifice of Abraham's seed—God's own Son, Jesus Christ—would one day break the stranglehold of hell and death over humankind and open up direct access to heaven's strategies and power to anyone who would accept Jesus's sacrifice. Satan lost jurisdiction as a result of the cross. Authority over the earth was returned to humanity, but Satan soon figured out that if he could confuse and deceive human beings into believing they didn't really have that authority, then he could still run the show. He created a complicated system that preyed on humankind's selfishness and pride, through which he would steal their souls little by little. He has been doing that ever since.

A great analogy of this is seen in the movie *The Matrix*. The world system is very much a matrix fooling all those

trapped in it. They think it is real life, but in fact, it is all an illusion—an elaborate deception so that those controlling the matrix can suck the energy out of their lives. Thus Neo, the Christian-like hero-figure of the movie, escapes the deception of the matrix and learns to rewrite its rules according to the truth and the power of his faith. Once his mind had been liberated, he was able to freely make destiny decisions that expanded another kingdom and not the kingdom from which he was delivered. In a similar way, your real God-given possibilities are only limited by what you believe. That is your role on the earth. You are to transform the matrix of the devil's systems, which steal, kill, and destroy, and replace them with the miraculous power of life in God. We are the revolutionaries here to turn an upside-down world back right side up.

Within the world system, you are considered a resistance fighter. Your mission is to join the prayer resistance force and to return the earth to its original ownership and rulership. You have been chosen to follow Christ and to reestablish the kingdom of heaven—and then expand its borders as far as you can make them reach. I warn you. It is not a task you can do alone, though. You must join with others of like mind and like precious faith. You have been given the right—the legal jurisdiction over your own domains—to ask of heaven and receive what heaven has to offer to shift climates, to alter atmospheres, and to proclaim the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This is a revolution that most likely will not be broadcast on the

nightly news. You most likely will not gain much attention or receive the accolades befitting a hero. But you must take the challenge to become God's hero. God will not force you to do it. You must make a decision. I am convinced that God can do much more for this world when one of His saints prays, than all the armies of the world put together. As John Wesley put it, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer." In other words, because of His nature, God will only intervene on the earth for those who belong to Him when we invite Him to invade whatever our life touches within our spheres of influence. Prayer is the conduit that brings heaven to the earth.

Satan's plan B is that if he can't keep people locked in his matrix, at least those who have escaped he will keep powerless and disjointed. He uses the world's same stumbling blocks of jealousy, strife, lust, arrogance, and, his greatest weapon of all, ignorance. His only hope is to keep the resistance fighters separated from one other so that he can still manipulate them—the old divide-and-conquer strategy. He doesn't mind how loudly we yell for God when we get together and how excitedly we jump around and sing; he just doesn't want us to turn any of that enthusiasm and boldness into unified prayer.

Think of it this way: You are a volunteer in a war-torn country come to give humanitarian aid and relief. You are not a citizen of that country but of one that is far away. You have no legal authority as an officer of the nation you are in except that you are there as a goodwill ambassador

to help its citizens as best you can. Your nation back home, however, fully supports what you are doing and wants to help in any way it can. When you come across a village that has been ravaged by war—its crops have been burned, its people are starving, and its water supplies are contaminated—you are moved by compassion to help. However, your nation has no right to come in and fix anything. You, being there on the ground, can help, but you have no resources. So you make the call back home and request protection for yourself and the villagers, medical supplies, food to feed the hungry, seed and farming tools to repair and replant the fields, drills to dig new wells, and materials to rebuild the homes and schools. Until you make the call, no one knows exactly what you needed. When you call and merely describe the problem, you still would not get you what you needed, but making the request will.

Prayer generals do more than just describe to God what He already knows. They actually unlock heaven's vault in order to unleash heaven's provisions. It is only after you make the request that spiritual helicopters and divine airplanes are deployed, loaded with supplies and everything you need to bring aid to that village. As with this example, by praying with specificities, you can establish your own little bit of heaven on the earth right in the midst of a battle zone. According to John 15:7, you must ask what you will, and it shall be done. Do not make mention of the things you do not want. Do not become like

a spiritual rap artist giving description without prescription.

That is exactly what you have been called to do wherever God has planted you. You must make your requests known unto God. (See Psalm 21:1–8.) God’s word—with a small “w”—gives us each individually His specific instructions and orders. Heaven has a mandate to reestablish good upon the earth, but it needs clear communication lines so that it can receive requests for what is needed, as well as hands on the ground to implement the strategies and distribute to the needs.

That’s where the real work is. That’s the heat of the fight. It’s easy to understand God’s will for good, but it takes steadfast perseverance to see it manifested. It is one thing to establish a law or claim jurisdiction over an area; it is quite another to see that law enforced. For it to work effectively, we need both wisdom and revelation to apply the right strategies, ensure that justice reigns over corruption, and find ways to meet needs without interruption. Prayer is the key to keeping those strategies and provisions flowing from heaven.

We must also understand God’s times and seasons in His plans for the earth. That is why God gave us His Word. He intended it as a law book sent from heaven. It is also the Good Lord’s Almanac for reading the prophetic signs and reading the kairos times—the prophetic seasons—in His master plan. God doesn’t have two sets of books that govern heaven and the earth—that would be inconsistent. Instead, the laws heaven’s advocates use to argue for

justice are the same laws as the Law Book—the Bible—He sent to express His will for the earth. That is why He said:

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions
for My own sake;

And I will not remember your sins.

Put Me in remembrance;

Let us contend together;

State your case, that you may be acquitted.

—Isaiah 43:25–26, emphasis added

Every word of Scripture is true. The author has given a mandate that we are to invoke God's name to cause needed changes in lives and communities. This mandate by the author, Father God, gives us the confidence by which we can pray with authority—in effect arguing court cases before the judgment seat of heaven. As members of Planet Earth's true parliament, we are representatives before the Great Judge, advocates lobbying heaven for change on the earth. We have the legitimate authority to speak to God on behalf of the earth and for the sake of humankind. When you open your mouth in prayer, it is not the tone or volume that gives the authority; it is the position that God has put you in to rule in His name.

The court of heaven governs the spiritual realm in which God and the angels live. Everything that exists in the natural was first created in the spiritual. When God spoke to create the physical world in Genesis chapter 1, He

wasn't pulling things out of thin air. God doesn't make something out of nothing. Instead He called things that existed in another spiritual state out of the spiritual realm to become the physical stars, planets, and galaxies of our universe. As Hebrews 11:3 tells us: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word [the rhema or spoken breath] of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Long before God began this natural creation, He reasoned, measured, planned, and plotted it out in His mind:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His
hand,

Measured heaven with a span
And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?

Weighed the mountains in scales
And the hills in a balance?

—Isaiah 40:12

God took a few drops, rolled them around in His palm, and determined the consistency water needed to have. He figured out how much the earth would need to sustain life, how, if it froze, the ice should be lighter than the water so that the animals living in it would survive. He determined how it would be used by living organisms to live, how it would evaporate to form clouds and then condense and fall back to the earth to replenish even the highest mountaintops, and how it could hold oxygen for aquatic animals and move over rocks and soil to form streams and rivers, collecting minerals and moving them from one place to another to create fertile valleys and plains. Everything that water does, God figured out before He created the first drop that would fall from the sky or settle into a puddle. Then He did the same with the mountains and rocks and stars and solar systems and so on and so on.

Let there be no misunderstanding. You can speak words in prayer that you do not believe, and they will not produce the results you are looking for. Parroting without conviction or faith does not produce divine alignment. You must be decisive. Make a deliberate and conscious decision to agree with the Word of God, and then set your heart to be convinced of the truth of what you have read or heard.

Only when you are able to do that shall you attain to the higher heights and deeper depths. Once you have decided to throw your full conviction into your words, heaven and earth will align to answer your prayers. Now your assault against the enemies of Christ will profit the whole earth.

The precepts and laws of heaven govern the creation of all that exists in the physical realm. Everything that exists now in this universe existed first in the spiritual universe. In this same way, things that happen in the physical realm today still have a spiritual origin. Satan and his legions are spiritual beings, and they influence human beings from their place in the spiritual world, which exists all around us invisible to the natural eye. Then they manipulate circumstances. They get people to believe lies so that they will make the wrong choices. They split up marriages so that children grow up without fathers and get sucked into the culture of hatred that fuels gang life, seeking the approval their fathers are not there to give. These spirits enchain and imprison entire nations with the defeatist attitudes that lead to poverty, jealousy, and war. All of these are physical manifestations of things that began in the spiritual realm. Thus it is possible, through prayer, to put a restraining order on those forces in the courtrooms of heaven, prohibiting them from so easily influencing the earth. We can let loose the light of Christ to the point that Satan's deceptions will be exposed. Thus the general of prayer must understand the factors of heaven and earth in order to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12).

God is in control of both realms. In His name you must take authority over every situation and command every spirit to comply with His Word! The Lord did not save you to leave you abandoned, weak, or impotent. He saved you because He loves you and desires to see you as He originally created you in His image and likeness. He created you so He could be with you, and so you could be strong and powerful and make a dynamic impact through your confidence in Him. You know He hears you. You can also be confident that He will complete every work He has begun in you.

Yes and Amen!

People often think that when they have prayed for something once and not received it, perhaps it is because God's answer to the question was, "No, you can't have that," but the Scriptures do not support that teaching. In fact, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells us that God is not a "yes" and "no" God, but a "yes" and "amen"1 God!

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

—2 Corinthians 1:19–20

This doesn't mean we will never fail in prayer, nor do I want to condemn anyone who has prayed and not seen his or her request granted. He may still have you in heaven's gym to gain more spiritual muscles before the big fight. Nevertheless, although that happens from time to time, it should not be the usual state of affairs. Many times prayers do or don't get answered because we are simply not practiced enough in the way of prayer, or we have not given God anything to say yes or amen to. As long as you are praying His Word according to His will, God's answers to your prayer will always be yes and amen, but that is often followed with an enabling—an instruction or a word of wisdom—that is necessary to them to walk the answer out. Certainly sometimes God will take care of the matter all on His own, but for the maturing Christian, there is also a part for us to play.

Look at the life of Jesus, for example. There is no question that Jesus was always prayed up. He was connected with the Father and valued His prayer time so much that He would sneak away from the disciples without telling them so He could pray undisturbed for as long as He needed to pray. Then when He faced a situation—a blind person coming to Him for healing, for example—He knew just what to do, and it wasn't always the same. Sometimes He simply touched their eyes (Matt. 9:29). Another time He spit in a man's eyes (Mark 8:23), and another time He spit and made mud and put it on the person's eyes and told him to go wash it out (John 9:6–7).

These were not spontaneous acts. They were a direct result of a life lived by prayer and fasting. Jesus had a part to walk out in obedience for the prayer to manifest. These two are inextricably connected. After much prayer He allowed God to determine His daily agenda and assignments.

Too often we reach a critical situation in our lives, and we don't know how to prevail until we pray through to the answer, or we find ourselves more overwhelmed by the circumstances we face than by the promises of God. This hampers our faith, because the more failures we have in prayer, the more we think God is holding out on us for some reason. However, prayer is not some kind of mechanical practice that will get the same response to the same words each time like a magical incantation. Prayer is not sorcery or witchcraft. Prayer is about connecting with God and getting His word on whatever we are facing, and then acting accordingly. My observation of the life of Jesus has caused me to conclude that often Jesus became the answer after He had prayed. There seems to always have been a corresponding action.

Could it be that you are not waiting on God to move, but instead He is waiting on you? Could it be that you may either already have the answer or be the answer? God's answer to our prayers is always yes and amen, but there are also other things you need to consider as you come to Him. Sometimes you are not in the position of faith and obedience that you need to be in when the crisis comes.

There is an old saying that "Success is when preparation meets opportunity." Perhaps we have missed many divine opportunities because we have not been prepared. Too often our preparations have not yet brought us to the place of discipline and virtue we need to be in order to overcome the dilemma facing us.

For example, look at what happened with the disciples when they faced a boy possessed with evil spirits:

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast him out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be

impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

—Matthew 17:14–21, emphasis added

A grain of mustard seed isn't very big; in fact, it is the tiniest of all seeds, but it will never amount to anything if it is not properly planted and cultivated. Prayer ingrains supernatural power into our spirits. Further, continuous, consistent prayer cultivates our faith. Essentially prayer is that preparing, imbedding, and nurturing process. Prayer takes our faith and shows us the reality of God and His power by connecting us with Him on a daily basis. It is not an overwhelming thing. It is not like you suddenly get electrical charges that start shooting out from your fingertips. And it doesn't happen overnight. But when you pray and you are steadfast in prayer day after day, things just begin to look differently around you. Prayer changes your perception and gives you the ability to see things from God's perspective. It is as if a fog that you never noticed before begins to lift. As you face situations and decisions, wisdom begins to show you more clearly the right way to go. Revelation about the specific actions you need to take is there when you need it. The words for any certain circumstance just well up within you when you need to speak them. It is not that some incredible manifestation happens; it is just that, according to Psalm 1:3, whatever you do or say prospers because of prayer. Like the tree planted by a stream, your spiritual roots tap

into a fresh supply of power, which is available upon demand.

Not only that, but your heart begins to yearn for prayer, letting you know when you need to spend more time seeking God. Spiritual fruit becomes abundant in your life. The still small voice of God becomes easier to distinguish from all of the other things rattling around in your mind. It is not necessarily a spectacular thing, but somehow you develop a knack for doing the right thing at the right time and being in the right place to take advantage of opportunities others miss out on.

Of course, Scripture also tells us that there are prayers that God will not answer—while this may effectively act like a “no” answer to a request, it is really a failure to connect. And what blocks that connection? God cannot bless something that will ultimately be a curse to you. The Bible gives us some simple examples:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

—James 4:1–3

Why is there strife and division within our families and our churches? Because there are things that we want, needs to be met in our lives, and we are not getting them. Why are we not getting them? James gives us two reasons:

1. We are not asking the right source.
2. If we are asking, our motives are carnal (selfish and self-serving).

There are two questions you must ask yourself:

1. Have you taken the matter to God in prayer?
2. Is your request scriptural?

As we have already discussed, prayer is not just about asking and receiving. But at the same time, if we are neglecting to ask for whatever we need or want, then we are not trusting God as Jehovah-Jireh, the God who is the source of all provision. Shouldn't the first place we take a desire for something—be it a promotion, a better car, a spouse, money to pay off a credit card, or whatever—be to God in prayer? Shouldn't we lay every request at the foot of His throne as part of the process of figuring out how we are going to get it? If we are ashamed to bring it to God in prayer, isn't that a sign that something is wrong with the desire in the first place? Look at what David said about spending time seeking God in relationship to our desires:

Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.

—Psalm 37:4–5

We need to run everything that we want through the purifying furnace of God's presence as we wait on Him in prayer. Delighting in the Lord is the right path not only to getting the desires of our heart, but also of sanctifying the desires themselves. God will not just give us what we want; He will make us desire what He wants—give us His desires—so that following Him is that much more joyful and fulfilling. Some things will fall away as we pray for them because we realize they were never right for us in the first place. To put it simply, the more you hang out with God, the more He rubs off on you—and the more He will rub off on how you do your work, how you relate to your family members and friends, and how you make your decisions. Spend enough time with Him, and suddenly your desires start to look a lot like His.

Prayer is not to be kept in a glass box on the wall with "In Case of Emergency" written over the top of it. People complain that their prayers don't get answered for this very reason: they don't live by prayer depending on God for the little things as well as the large and building their faith up day by day. They blame God when they aren't in

shape to handle the prayer marathons required to get God's answer for the situation they are presently in. Those who are prayer generals know how to do this. They are practiced and disciplined because they exercise the authority in prayer every day.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death.

—1 John 5:14–16

Four The General of Prayer

The general stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and discipline.

—The Art of War, 1:9, paraphrased

Far too many people who aspire to be generals of prayer become spooky characters instead of men and women of holy character. A general is not made from one successful battle but from many wars. Some go out and fight one successful skirmish and think they are ready for promotion, but true promotion only comes from God. Others may recognize and acknowledge it, but these kinds of accolades should be secondary for the prayer general. It is not about the medals and glory—for the glory belongs to the Lord God alone—but about bringing the kingdom of God to bear on the kingdoms of this world through prayer. We can never accomplish this if we lack the virtues of a general of prayer: godly wisdom, honesty, kindness, courage, and living lives of disciplined devotion rather than

being driven by the latest wind of doctrine or whim of desire.

Wisdom only comes with experience and being grounded in the knowledge of God's Word. As we discussed earlier, 1 Corinthians 14:10 tells us: "There are . . . so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance." There are all sorts of teachers, religions, and philosophies out there, and they are all interesting and can give fresh insight into knowing God, but not all of them are true, and even fewer of them are relevant to your life and earthly assignment. Wisdom is not about how much truth you know as much as how much you are willing to let that truth govern your life. There are many scholars who never do anything but debate the finest points of theology and religious thought, and then there are simple saints who don't know a hundredth of what those people know, but they act on it and miracles happen around them regularly. Truth is easy to debate but difficult to live. Victory doesn't always go to the cleverest strategist but to the strategist who employs the most effective strategy. Wisdom is what gives that edge. Knowing what is true, knowing what works, having discernment and discretion are all parts of being wise, but learning to know God's voice and how to act on it is what makes the difference in the heat of battle.

Generals of prayer must be ruthlessly honest, first with God, then with themselves, and then with others. As Paul advised Timothy, "The goal of our instruction is love from

a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5, NAS). Paul’s mandate from God was that their teaching would be marked by purity of heart and intention. Virtue, as passed from Jesus to the woman with an issue of blood to heal her (Luke 8:46), is the power of pure and righteous living. Loving from a good conscience means always obeying your conscience, which is the voice of your human spirit that will either speak from the law written on your heart or from what the Holy Spirit tells it to say. Honest or sincere faith is faith that is not tainted by selfish desires or ungodly ambitions. The basis for all of this is a life where honesty is uncompromisingly pursued both where others can see it and when no one else is looking but God. This only comes from spending time in prayer confessing your sins and asking God, as David did:

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

—Psalm 139:23–24

As it has been said, “What you are on your knees is what you really are and no more!”

There are times when we earnestly are in denial as to the truth of our situation or the circumstances surrounding others. Many times we blame the devil for our problems when in fact they are due to our own lack of diligence,

discipline, courage, conviction, or character. The Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, is able to help us discern where we actually stand with God in such situations. Although God is always on our side, there are times when genuine repentance needs to take place before He can effectively address what is happening in our lives. God is not looking to bail people out who won't grow up and take responsibility, but He is quick to stand with those who desire to grow up enough that they can reach out and help others.

The Holy Spirit also helps us to see others as Christ sees them. Only then can we begin to pray sincerely for them. There may be some horrid facts in your past or the past of others, and although the history is true, it is not the truth. It is not the final verdict on where things will end up. The truth is always the eternal truth as delivered into the earth, the eternal purpose put in each one of our hearts as a gift to humanity. God wants to bring light, enlightenment, and understanding to your prayer life. He wants you to see clearly so you can pray truthfully, so that the chorus of heaven will move at your command to establish the truth upon the earth.

Benevolence, or kindness, must also be the mark of anyone who would be a leader of others in prayer. This person may not be a pastor, but he or she will have a pastor's heart. The person will have the demeanor of the Great Shepherd. The art of prayer—more than any other discipline of the Christian life—is one learned through

experience, and it will take time, disappointments, and making mistakes to grow in it. If a prayer general does not have a compassionate spirit that will comfort those who stumble and correct with gentle instruction, that person will only give opportunities to Satan to create strife and division in the ranks. The effective prayer general also keeps the best interest of all in mind in every endeavor, always seeking justice, equity, and mercy.

On the other hand, the general of prayer is also a warrior who is not afraid of anything. Big prayers? Impossible tasks? Changing nations? Righting injustices great and small? No problem! A prayer general has triumphed over intrinsic and extrinsic enemies of his soul in order to conquer enemies who fight against his country or God's kingdom. A prayer general was once a regular soldier who, over the course of time, consistently made his mark in the military by distinguishing himself through disciplined, courageous, heroic, selfless acts that benefited, prospered, and protected his platoon so that they successfully fulfilled their mission with little or no casualties of war.

Making your mark in the world as someone who prays is hard. If it were easy, everybody would do it. But it takes patience, it takes commitment, and it comes with plenty of failures along the way. The real test is not whether you avoid the failures or not, because you won't. It is whether you allow them to discourage you and cause you to resign to a place of inactivity. Generals are made from soldiers

who learn from their mistakes, who take courage knowing that the commander in chief has more faith in them than they have in themselves.

Making mistakes comes with leadership. If you are to succeed and to become great, you must take risks. And in taking risks, there is always a chance of failure. But successful people start where failures finish. You must take courage and never buckle under the weight of criticism or the fear of failure. Failure gives relevance and significance to success. Failure and success exist on opposite ends of the same continuum. Persevering in spite of resistance is important. It is the only way mankind has been able to progress. Without doing so, the Wright brothers would have never invented the airplane, and let's not talk about the invention of the light bulb. Had Edison not persevered, we would still be riding horses and driving buggies and sitting in darkness enjoying the flickering light of a candle. You must continue to add prayer pressure to your situation. God has an answer. Prayer will determine the outcome. You must, at once, rid your prayer life of horse-and-buggy kinds of prayer and begin to pray supersonically.

Rees Howells is a man I consider a prayer general. Later in his life, an aging head of the Bible college he had founded, he was unfazed when God told him to take on the outcome of World War II in prayer. He canceled classes and instructed students and faculty to pray throughout the day and night. One of the mandates he

received was to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, which meant making sure the Holy Land did not fall into Nazi hands. For Rees he felt this meant that Rommel's tank divisions in North Africa could not be allowed into Egypt, for if Egypt fell, the Allied troops had no other barrier between the Germans and all the rest of the Middle East. At the height of their fervency in prayer, the fighting was fierce between British troops and Rommel's 90th Light Panzer Division. Years later, in his book *Pipe Line to Battle*, Major P. W. Rainer would tell of the remarkable breakthrough in those tenuous moments:

The sun was almost overhead, and our men were fast reaching the end of their endurance, when the Nazis broke. Ten minutes more and it might have been us. Slowly, sullenly the Mark IV tanks lumbered back from their battle smoke. And then an incredible thing happened: 1,100 men of the 90th Light Panzer Division, the elite of the Afrika Korps, came stumbling across the barren sand with their hands in the air. Cracked and black with coagulated blood, their swollen tongues were protruding from their mouths. Crazily they tore water bottles from the necks of our men and poured life-giving swallows between their parched lips.1

The Germans had been without water for twenty-four hours when they came across a six-inch British water pipe line. Desperate, they machine-gunned the line and fell on their faces to drink greedily of the water that squirted out. The line, however, was brand-new, and with drinkable water so scarce, such pipes were tested for leaks with salt water. Only after several mouthfuls did the German troops realize their mistake, and the salt quickly multiplied their thirst several fold. Thus they surrendered without the strength to fire another shot. As it turned out, this was the deciding battle for the fate of North Africa. The editor of Major Rainer's book commented: "Such an incredible happening as this cannot be treated as a mere coincidence. Assuredly the hand of Almighty God is in evidence once more, coming to our aid when weighty issues are in the balance."² It was a hand that was both invited and allowed jurisdiction by the prayers of students in a Bible college thousands of miles away.

No great endeavors are ever accomplished without prayer. Martin Luther King Jr. would never have succeeded in the fight for civil rights without a huge backing of prayer warriors. The Salvation Army transformed the face of England and poverty in the late 1800s with a staff made up almost exclusively of ex-drunks, ex-prostitutes, and the homeless. What was at the center of all of their work? Prayer. As General William Booth himself said, "Work as if everything depended upon your work, and pray as if everything depended upon your prayer."³

A prayer general must also be marked by his or her discipline in both private and corporate prayer. The prayer general must be a man or woman who not only prays but who also prays until he or she sees results. Such prayer warriors have earned their stripes through seeing battles to their victorious end. These are people who can recognize the voice of God, know how to download the strategies of heaven, and can successfully implement them until the expected results are achieved. This is the person who not only prays with the same regularity as he or she breathes, but when he or she takes your hand to pray in agreement with you, you sense the Spirit of God engulfing you like a warm fog. These are the people who speak with such an anointing that their words hit like punches to your stomach if they are words of correction or like refreshing nectar if they are words of encouragement.

Such generals of prayer are indeed a rare breed, but as you are probably already beginning to see, history is full of turning points that pivoted the right way because they were praying—prayer warriors who understand how to open the conduit from heaven to the earth no matter how difficult the task at hand. Their ability to call heaven to the earth was never something learned overnight, but it came through discipline and perseverance and letting God lead them step by step and prayer by prayer.

Why Do We Need Generals of Prayer?

These five factors—one, the way; two, heaven; three, earth; four, the general; five, method and discipline—should be familiar to every general: those who know them will be victorious; those who do not will fail. . . . The general who hearkens to this counsel and acts upon it will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general who hearkens not to this counsel nor acts upon it will suffer defeat—let such a one be dismissed!

—The Art of War, 1:11, 15, paraphrased

In his Lectures on Revivals of Religion, Charles Finney taught the following in his message on the importance of prevailing prayer:

There are two kinds of means requisite to promote a revival: one to influence man, the other to influence God. The truth is employed to influence men, and prayer to move God. . . . Prayer is an essential link in the chain of causes that lead to a revival, as much so as truth is. Some have zealously used truth to convert men, and laid very little stress on prayer. They have preached, and talked, and distributed tracts with great zeal, and then wondered that they had so little success. And the reason was, that they

forgot to use the other branch of the means, effectual prayer. They overlooked the fact that truth by itself will never produce the effect, without the Spirit of God, and that the Spirit is given in answer to prayer.4

Finney would know. His first set of revival meetings in Evans Mill, New York, didn't start out so well. After a few weeks, all he had managed to do was convince a few churchgoers to rededicate their lives to God. At this time, an older minister by the name of Daniel Nash came to town. Finney had met Nash when he had sat on his ordination board. He was a crusty, dry minister who Finney thought was of little use to the cause of Christ—however, that was before Reverend Nash had had his own personal revival.

Being struck with a disease that inflamed his eyes, the smallest flicker of a candle caused Nash great pain. So he closed himself into a dark room for several weeks trying to recover. With nothing else to do, Nash decided to use the time to pray, and the experience transformed his life. Nash emerged from that room not only physically healed but also spiritually rejuvenated. He had changed from a preacher of monotonous sermons to a man of fervent intercession!

One of Finney's biggest stumbling blocks in Evans Mill was a barkeeper who was openly opposing his meetings. This man would accost any Christian who crossed his

path, loudly mocking and shouting obscenities at them. Learning of this “hard case,” as Finney had called him, Nash wrote the man’s name down on a list he kept in his pocket. He said nothing more about it. He remained in town a day or two longer, and then went on his way.

Not many days following, the notorious tavern owner walked into one of the meetings. There was a general muffled hubbub that ran around the room as people saw him enter. Many suspected he had come to make trouble. A few even got up and left in fear of being attacked in whatever scuffle he might start. Finney watched him as he continued to preach, noticing that the man seemed uncomfortable and anxious. Suddenly, the man stood up and, visibly trembling, asked if he might say a few words. Finney, suspicious, but even more curious to hear what he might have to say, let him have the floor.

Over the next several minutes the man made the most brokenhearted confession of his sins Finney had ever heard. He seemed to address every aspect of his own depravity and his treatment of God. Then he asked for forgiveness and gave his life to Jesus.

In the coming weeks revival swept Evans Mill and spilled over into the surrounding communities. By the time Charles finally left about six months later, the barkeeper was leading a nightly prayer meeting right in his own tavern.⁵

The difference was not in what Finney had preached that night—it was in the prayers offered by a man he had,

at one point, thought had no faith or value to the kingdom of God.

In the years to come, Daniel Nash, who became known as "Father Nash," and Charles Finney grew to be close friends. Father Nash, sometimes with others, sometimes on his own, would go into towns where he knew Finney would soon be preaching and find a place to stay. He would then hole up for days at a time and pray for the Holy Spirit to fall. Finney wrote the following account about one such occasion:

On one occasion when I got to town to start a revival a lady contacted me who ran a boarding house. She said, "Brother Finney, do you know a Father Nash? He and two other men have been at my boarding house for the last three days, but they haven't eaten a bite of food. I opened the door and peeped in at them because I could hear them groaning, and I saw them down on their faces. They have been this way for three days, lying prostrate on the floor and groaning. I thought something awful must have happened to them. I was afraid to go in and I didn't know what to do. Would you please come see about them?"

"No, it isn't necessary," Finney replied. "They just have a spirit of travail in prayer."[6](#)

Finney and Nash worked together like this for the next several years. Then in 1830, an incredible revival broke out in Rochester. Although the town was inhabited by ten thousand people, more than one hundred thousand were saved. The streets became so empty during Finney's meetings that the shops closed so employees could attend. Bars went out of business for lack of customers. Theaters closed or held prayer meetings instead of their usual shows. The crime rate dropped dramatically and stayed low for years. Charitable organizations flourished. It was said you couldn't walk down the street and not hear someone talking about Jesus or discussing some religious matter.

Not only that, but in the history of Finney's ministry, roughly 80 percent of those converted stayed true to their faith for the rest of their lives. For most revivals today, we are lucky if only 80 percent backslide and fall away.

Daniel Nash died on December 20, 1831, less than a year after the revival meetings in Rochester drew to a close. He was fifty-six. Finney would not see another revival of such magnitude for the rest of his life. In fact, less than four months after Nash's death, he stopped itinerating all together and became a pastor in New York.[7](#)

Where are such Father Nash Nash es today? Where are those like Rees Howells, George Müller, Catherine Booth, and others who refused to start any endeavor unless it was first grounded in prayer? Each of these, in his or her own unique way, prayed down heaven until it enveloped

the earth. Are there still generals of prayer such as these who walk the earth today?

I believe there are. There is a new generation of prayer warriors who are shaking the earth with the atomic power of their faith-filled decrees. In this hour, these generals of prayer are getting in position. A shift is taking place on this planet. Today there are ministries sprouting up around the globe focused exclusively on prayer. In 1999, Pete Greig, for example, launched 24-7 Prayer in the United Kingdom within just a few months of Mike Bickle and his team starting to pray twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week prayer at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City. Both ministries have been praying around the clock ever since—more than ten years now.

In 2007, at their international conference, 24-7 Prayer was pleased that they had more than six hundred prayer rooms from around the world that had registered on their Web site. Then someone from Brazil told them about eleven hundred new prayer rooms that had opened there. Miracles are commonplace, as more and more people are gathering to pray around the clock.

A group in Uganda had gotten a word from the Lord while praying in their 24-7 prayer room—several of them each received the word Kacunga in their spirits. No one knew what it meant. They did a little research and discovered it was the name of an island in Lake Victoria. They sent a team there and found a remote tribe no one had known was there. Sadly, they came to discover that

more than 90 percent of the islanders were infected with HIV/AIDS. They preached to the village, and fifty people came to the Lord. They also planted a church before they left. They are now continuing to reach other remote islands and have even opened a 24-7 prayer room in Baghdad, Iraq—where no American could safely establish a church, they were able to do it. It is harnessing the power of God through prayer that makes what seems impossible possible. And it always starts with prayer.

Other organizations devoted to unleashing the power of prayer are emerging all over the world. My own ministry, Cindy Trimm International, is one of them. CTI hosts an annual World Summit on Prayer where thousands gather from around the world to seek the Lord and pray for the nations.

God is moving among a new generation, and it's all about prayer. The church did a great job in the twentieth century preaching the gospel, but today, street and televangelism only seems to rouse public debate so that people grow more confused about the truth than ever. We don't need better forms of evangelism or more clever presentations of the gospel. What we need is a new anointing of the Holy Spirit such as Finney had in his meetings, or as the early Methodists saw in the Great Awakening, or that swept the camp meetings in Kentucky during the initial summers of the 1800s. It is no longer about trying to convince people that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)—it is about making room

for Him to show Himself master over every infirmity, failure, human problem, and social issue. We don't need more clever sermons or Sunday morning book reports; we need God to show up.

When Paul was in Athens, he stood on Mars Hill and tried to convince the wise Athenians that they should turn to Jesus, whom they already worshiped as "the unknown God." Listen to what he said:

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him

and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”

—Acts 17:22–27

What happened in Athens? Not much. We have no record of a church starting there. We have no “Letter to the Church in Athens” in the Bible. All Paul did was fuel more philosophical debate! Even the great wordsmith Paul couldn’t impress the intellectual elite of ancient Athens.

So Paul returns to prayer and takes his show down the road to the raucous port city of Corinth. Look at what he writes about his ministry there:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

—1 Corinthians 2:1–5

The revival in that city shook it to its core. The

Corinthian church certainly had its share of trouble, but more than anything else it had to do with growing so fast they couldn't keep up with the demand for guidance and teaching. Their trouble was an oversupply of the gifts of the Spirit and an undersupply of sound doctrine. Today we have too many teachers and not enough new believers! Oh, that we would have the problems of Corinth's explosive growth today! Our nations would be transformed overnight and our churches flooded with purpose! Until we bring the power of prayer to bear—and infuse that prayer with the power of the “God-of-the-Angel-Armies”⁸—our churches and nations will continue to be bound by the god of this world.

What we need today are prayer strategists who will take hold of heaven and not let go until they receive God's divine direction. As God raises up the Mike Bickles and Pete Griegs and countless others dedicated to prayer we haven't yet heard of, will you rise to call of heaven and be part of ushering in God's final glory?

And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

—Matthew 21:22

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

—Luke 11:9

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

—John 15:7–8

Five Method and Discipline

By method and discipline are to be understood the marshaling of troops in its proper subdivisions, the chain of command, the management of logistics, and the proper command over finances and resources.

—The Art of War, 1:10, paraphrased

There is no need for a general if there is no army. There is no discipline in the ranks if there is no discipline in their commanders. While generals must eventually learn to command great armies, they often start as foot soldiers, first learning the disciplines and methods of commanding themselves. That is why, of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (ESV), self-control is the last in the list, and therefore the first that should be mastered.

Any soldier assigned to a battalion or military unit is first disciplined in training. From basic training onward, all

advancement in rank and skill requires the continuing growth of knowledge of strategies and tactical maneuvers, as well as familiarity with weaponry systems and how to interpret intelligence reports. The orderly regimentation of a prayer warrior positions the recruit for endurance and perseverance even in the toughest of circumstances. Roadblocks in the Spirit that withhold God's blessings from the earth are only destroyed through disciplined, persistent prayer. It is the regular affirmation of prayer that destroys the enemy's towers and defense systems.

Jesus called us to be constantly growing in such tactics and disciplines. Though He expects us to come to Him as children and never lose our childlike trust in Him, He also expects us to grow up and become capable ambassadors ministering to others as He would in the world.

That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.

—Ephesians 4:14–15

As we set out on a lifetime of following Jesus, we must grow up and mature in our faith if we are to make any difference for the kingdom of God. As we grow in Christ, we learn new skills and develop divine habits. Our levels of

proficiency increase in our abilities and talents. We are distinguished by the excellence achieved and seeming ease with which we follow Jesus. Mastery of skills and techniques in any endeavor sets you apart as someone who is not casual in your pursuit. The same happens with those who pursue God through prayer.

When you pray masterfully, you learn to chronicle your prayers, to schedule regimenting times of prayer, to fast, and to persevere in the Spirit until the circumstances you are praying about bend to the will of God. Anyone can learn to master prayer, though that mastery will come in different ways with varying skill sets to different individuals. As you grow in prayer competence, the Holy Spirit assists in apportioning a training regimen uniquely crafted for your assignment on the earth. No two prayer lives will ever be the same, nor will they have the same focus and emphasis. However, when put side by side, it is not difficult to see how they complement one other. Not only can you learn from praying with one another, but praying together will also have a compounding effect in the heavenlies. The more you pray and become experienced in prayer, the more your unique, God-ordained desires and designs will emerge. You can never neglect these or let them be compromised; otherwise you will fail in the specific part of God's overall plan to which He has called you.

More than any other aspect of following Jesus, prayer methods, techniques, and tactics are not outlined in

Scripture in easy-to-follow steps. In fact, little is really taught about how to pray as much as when you pray. As believers, when it comes to praying, the Bible seems to emphasize learning how to pray through experience and getting as much experience as possible by remaining steadfast and instant in prayer. As we have already seen, Paul told us we should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). So, more than anything else, simply be consistent, be consistent, BE CONSISTENT in your prayer times! You will obtain a tenacity of spirit when you stay vigilantly and relentlessly focused on seeking God in prayer. Look intently to the matters God has exposed in the realm of the Spirit. Pray with force and perseverance. Once your focus is locked, the intensity of prayer should escalate until it dismantles the illegal movements of the satanic kingdom. The term vigilant connotes a stare, or gaze, that defies anything to move out of timing or order. It is a privilege to move with this kind of intensity in undistracted and undeterred prayer.

While discussing prayer, I recently had a friend tell me about something he had read in an essay about "Seeing."[1](#) The essay told about operations in the 1950s that were giving sight to individuals who had been born blind. These people were various ages, from small children to people in their fifties and sixties. The operations had surprising results. While they enabled the eyes of these people to operate normally for the first time in their lives, the people did not immediately begin walking around as any other

person might. Instead they saw everything as color splotches and light and dark places. Everything appeared flat, they had no depth perception, and anytime something went out of sight behind another object (a dog going behind a chair for example), they were initially shocked. The world they had known over the years was very different from what they now perceived.

What happened was they saw the world as an infant first sees it on coming out of the womb, because their brains had yet to learn how to interpret the input their eyes were giving them. They couldn't distinguish a face from a plant except for the voice speaking to them from a certain direction. To get used to his new world, one man sat on the edge of his bed, tossed his shoe out in front of him, then took a few steps toward it, reached for it, then tried again if he had not gone far enough yet to grasp it. They had no concept of distance or space except that one place took more steps to get to than another; however, their entire world beyond that was never larger than what they could immediately touch around them. One young woman was so alarmed and disoriented by what she was perceiving that she took to closing her eyes to get around her family home rather than being confused by all she saw. Others were so overwhelmed by the new sense that they fell into apathy and despair.

I think the same thing happens when we are born again, or "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6), as Jesus called it. When this happens, we suddenly have a complete new set of

senses, senses that perceive in the Spirit realm in the same way our natural senses perceive in the physical realm. However, while we don't remember how difficult it was to learn to use our senses as we grew from babies to toddlers and into small children, as Christians we too often balk at these same difficulties as we try to understand the things we perceive spiritually. Like the man Jesus healed from blindness who first saw "men like trees, walking" (Mark 8:24), we need an additional touch of Christ or more experience learning to see before we really understand the overwhelming nature of perceiving and understanding spiritual things.

This kind of spiritual insight helps us to pray from the right vantage point. God told John in Revelation 4:1 to come up higher so that he could get a better perspective. God consciousness and spiritual sight are required to pray from God's perspective. You must see situations and people as God sees them, or else your prayers may actually be working against God's designs rather than in accordance with them. You want to stay seated in the heavenly realm—in Christ—so that you can attest to the movements of the adversary and stand in the gap for those who are yet to understand the true nature of the things of the Spirit. When you can see the landscape and territories as God sees them, when you can see the strategic layout of God's plan, then your prayers take on a potency and intensity that annihilate satanic entrenchments.

What we don't want is to be among those who would rather close their eyes and go back to relying only on their natural senses to inform them what is true about the nature of the universe. This is something I think most of the church at large has done! Why? Because spiritual perceptions can seem so strange and make us very uncomfortable. The people struggling to understand them can make mistakes in their interpretations, and for many people this makes them doubt their sincerity. They think these people are making things up to get attention rather than struggling to understand the glimpses God has given them of His perspective. Of course, this gives good reason not to be quick to proclaim what God is showing you in prayer until you are sure you understand it and that it is truly from God. But this does not justify the temptation of going about with your spiritual eyes closed simply because it is easier. All you do then is keep yourself from being of any value to the kingdom of heaven and wander about as another blind person among the blind.

Thus as people born of God with new, underdeveloped spiritual senses, when we come to God in prayer, it is not only a time to lay our concerns and requests before God, but it is also a time for us to close our physical eyes and seek to perceive with our spiritual ones. It is time for us to open our spiritual ears and listen for the Holy Spirit to speak to us. Often we mistake Him for our own thoughts (and sometimes we mistake our own thoughts for the Holy Spirit speaking), but with practice, just as infants learn to

distinguish their mother's voice from all the others in their world, so we learn to know the voice of the Good Shepherd. As Paul quoted Isaiah: "[Physical] eye has not seen, nor [physical] ear heard, nor have entered into the heart [understanding] of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9, inserts added). Such things must be perceived spiritually, and such spiritual attunement to the things of God comes through prayer.

This spiritual alignment, this maturing and disciplining of our spiritual senses, is to understand what God is showing you and to accurately distinguish His direct teachings, but it doesn't develop overnight. Just as an infant grows into a child and the child into an adult, so when we are born again, we learn to correctly interpret our spiritual perceptions as we discipline ourselves to pray and fathom the mystery of knowing God. Before you can be a leader of other prayer warriors, you must first master the discipline and methods of your own personal prayer life. Before you can hope to help marshal others into prayer battalions, you must first have struggled through a few battles of your own as a foot soldier.

Becoming a Prayer General

The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple where the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose. . . . The general is the bulwark of the church; if the bulwark is complete on all points, the church will be strong; if the bulwark is compromised, the church will be weak.

—The Art of War, 1:26; 3:11, paraphrased

The main things that differentiate a general of prayer from a foot soldier are experience in battle, training in tactics, and knowing how to receive the divine strategies of heaven—direct from the throne of the commander in chief—and to implement them successfully. A prayer general is thus thorough and exacting in hearing from heaven, and systematic and precise in obeying God's instructions. The difference is probably most easily seen in the lives of two of Israel's commanders in chief, Saul and David.

While it is true that it is more important where you end up than where you begin, Saul is rarely given credit for the potential he had as a leader. In a room full of candidates

for king of Israel, where both David and Saul were present with a host of others, Saul, with his charisma and stature, would have easily been a standout we probably would have selected ourselves. The Bible, in fact, tells us that Saul was "a choice and handsome son. . . . There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9:2). He came from a wealthy family, and men naturally followed him. When Samuel first met him, he was humble and courteous (1 Sam. 9:17–21). He was a successful warrior. God gave him a new heart to be the leader of Israel, and he even spoke prophetically (1 Sam. 10:9–13). When Samuel presented him to the people as their new king, he said, "'Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?' So all the people shouted and said, 'Long live the king!'" (1 Sam. 10:24).

In the following three years, Saul and his son Jonathan continually defeated the enemies of Israel. Then, as a Philistine force of thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and foot soldiers beyond number gathered at Israel's border preparing to invade, Samuel called for a sacrifice to be held before the battle. He told Saul and his troops he would be there in seven days, and they were to wait for him to make the sacrifice.

However, the seven days passed, and Samuel didn't show. Saul looked around him and saw the tribes of Israel that had gathered for this event getting restless, especially

in the face of an enemy force that was larger than anything they had faced before. Saul convinced himself that the tribes would leave if something didn't happen soon, so he took things into his own hands and demanded that the peace offering be brought to him so that he could make it. After all, it was the kingly thing to do. Someone had to take charge. The buck had to stop somewhere, so Saul made the tough decision, bit the bullet, and took it upon himself to make the sacrifice. It was the logical and expedient thing to do.

But it wasn't the godly thing.

Samuel came over the hill as soon as the sacrifice was completed, and he wasn't happy. Saul tried to explain his decision.

When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, "The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD." Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.

—1 Samuel 13:11–12, emphasis added

But Samuel answered him:

You have done foolishly. You have not kept the

commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.

—1 Samuel 13:13–14, emphasis added

What Samuel said here is very interesting. God didn't pick a loser on purpose to show Israel what would happen if they chose to be ruled by a king instead of the system of judges He had appointed. God was ready to back Saul all the way and establish his lineage as kings in Israel forever. Up to this point, every battle, every kingly decision, every challenge had been a test of character for Saul, and he had been passing them all with flying colors. Now, in the face of his biggest challenge yet, would Saul trust the word the Lord had sent to him or trust in his own wisdom? When push came to shove, Saul trusted more in himself than God.

But God had not given up on Saul. He continued to deliver Israel under his leadership and that of his sons. Then came time for another test. God sent Samuel to Saul with very specific instructions.

The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his

people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

—1 Samuel 15:1–3, ESV

In effect, God was saying, "The Amalekites have become such an abomination that you need to cleanse the earth of them—them and everything they have ever touched!" Though it may seem harsh to our modern sensibilities, at this time God knew that Israel had to be separated from pagan nations or they would fall back under their influence and turn away from God time and again. So the Amalekites were all to be destroyed as an act of obedience for the future integrity of Israel.

But Saul again seemed to have a better idea. As was the custom of the time, as a gesture of respect from one king to the other, he chose not to kill the Amalekite king but take him away as a captive. Then when it came to the best of the possessions of the Amalekites, he could not bring himself to waste them, so he brought them back as sacrifices to God. In each decision, he made a compromise based on logical reasoning, convincing himself that God would understand. After all, he had done what God

wanted in principle by destroying the villages and killing most of the people and their livestock. He felt he'd kept the spirit of the commandment, and surely God would see his logic and agree.

But God wasn't pleased.

Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings
and sacrifices,
as in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
and to listen than the fat of rams.
For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has also rejected you from being king.

—1 Samuel 15:22–23, ESV

Samuel knew Saul's heart. Indeed, Saul would seek the Lord, but it was not knowing God Himself that Saul was after—his faithfulness was only a means to his own ends. He wanted success for himself and Israel, but it was for his own popularity and status. When it came down to it, he bowed to local custom, not the will of God. He listened to his commanders and generals and did what they wanted. So they kept the best as plunder—with the excuse that it would all be sacrificed—rather than heeding what God had commanded. His prayers were thus rebellious to the point of being witchcraft—dabbling in spiritual arts to influence

or control the actions of others. His presumptuousness in thinking he could change God's direct strategies to benefit himself was an act of putting his desire for things before his desire for God, no better than bowing down to a graven image and thinking it was going to give him everything he wanted.

Upon hearing this rebuke, Saul appealed to Samuel for forgiveness, but it was too late. Samuel demanded the king of the Amalekites be brought to him. He drew his sword and slew the Amalekite on the spot, then left to anoint a new king.

David would be different.

David remained in his father's house until he was called to Saul's home as a musician to calm the king's increasingly tormented state. When David praised, demons fled. Saul and his court noticed something special about David, so Saul made him his armor bearer.

Then David was sent by his father to bring food to his brothers on the front lines of the battle with the Philistines. The minute he heard Goliath's taunts, he was offended not so much for Israel, but for the shame it threw on his God. So, by God's power and for His glory, David slew the giant and received even more favor in the courts of Israel. That was only, of course, until Saul grew jealous, and David was forced to flee for his life.

David could have chosen bitterness or sought revenge, but instead he chose to pursue God. In sorrow he entered God's presence, and there he found a love for his enemy

he couldn't overcome. I think David's heart broke for Saul just as God's had. In the rest of his story, we find David going to God before each battle to learn His will. Early in his life when Saul sought the counsel of God before a battle, we always see him going to Samuel or a priest, but David went straight to God. Later in his life, Saul would seek the counsel of diviners and witches, even trying to bring forth the ghost of Samuel to advise him. Saul wanted answers; David wanted the Answerer.

David had no heart for a go-between with God. Scripture repeatedly records how David would go to the priests, put on the ephod—a formal priestly robe—showing his humility and sincerity, and then inquire of the Lord for himself. He always stayed in prayer until he heard from God, and then immediately went out and did what he heard to do. While Saul always wanted to be in good standing with other leaders, David only cared about being right with God and having His counsel on what to do next. Psalms is replete with scriptures that tell of David's hunger for God and his desire to be led by Him alone. Look at Psalm 69, for example, and contrast it with Samuel's words to Saul from 1 Samuel 15:

Save me, O God!
For the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in deep mire,
Where there is no standing;
I have come into deep waters,

Where the floods overflow me.
I am weary with my crying;
My throat is dry;
My eyes fail while I wait for my God.
. . . Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,
And the reproaches of those who reproach You
have fallen on me. . . .

But as for me, my prayer is to You,
O Lord, in the acceptable time;
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.
Deliver me out of the mire,
And let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from those who hate me,
And out of the deep waters.

. . . Draw near to my soul, and redeem it;
Deliver me because of my enemies. . . .

I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
This also shall please the LORD better than an ox
or bull,
Which has horns and hooves.
The humble shall see this and be glad;
And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.

—Psalm 69:1–3, 9, 13–14, 18, 30–32, emphasis added

While Samuel had to admonish Saul that obedience was better than sacrifice, David knew that praising God and seeking Him in everything was yet a better offering. Even when David became complacent, staying home from battle and falling into sin with Bathsheba, he still didn't seek the forgiveness of men as Saul had sought the forgiveness of Samuel. Instead David threw himself on his face before God in repentance. These differences are striking. For Saul, his religion was a means to his own greatness and reward; for David, his religion was the means to the great God who "is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). There is a big difference between the two.

The prayer generals God is calling from this generation for the battles of the twenty-first century will have the heart of a David, not of a Saul. They will be men and women who know God's voice. They will be so practiced in prayer that they can fall into deep intercession in an instant. They pray righteous prayers of desperate honesty that go straight to the heart of God. It is not that they get answers for their much speaking, but because God is used to having them in the throne room and knows they are there for more than His promises. They are the ones familiar with handling "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).

[God] raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will."

—Acts 13:22

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

—James 5:16

Part Two

Joining Heaven's Strategic High Command

The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for the opportunity of defeating the enemy. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself. . . . The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

—The Art of War, 4:1–2, 8:11, paraphrased

Six Allying Your Forces

That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg—this is affected by the science of weaknesses and strengths. In fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed to secure victory. . . . The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle—you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

—The Art of War, 5:4–5, 11, paraphrased

On May 27, 1722, a young carpenter named Christian David led a band of a dozen or so religious refugees out of Moravia to the estate of twenty-one-year-old Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf in Saxony, Germany. At the time, Protestant believers in Moravia were being imprisoned and put through extreme trials (made to stand in wells during freezing weather, strapped to plows like horses and made to till the fields, or fastened into heavy

chains they had to carry with them wherever they went). When Christian heard of their plight, he made contact with the count through a series of acquaintances, having learned he was a devout man and had dedicated the village on his estate to be a city of God. His hope that the count would offer asylum to these brothers and sisters in Christ was not misplaced. The count agreed to let the refugees live on his land and pursue God together with him and the rest of those in the village of Bethelsdorf.

Arriving a little over a week later on the count's estate, after having traversed the winding trails of the mountains, the travelers settled in their first night in the shell of an unfinished barn on a hilltop referred to as Hutberg, or Watch Hill. Rather than pushing on to Bethelsdorf, Christian and the others decided to settle on this hilltop. In the years to come, Watch Hill would be renamed The Lord's Watch, where the Moravians founded the village of Herrnhut.

Herrnhut became a collecting point for religious outcasts and those seeking sanctuary from religious persecution. Christian would make several more trips into Moravia to lead refugees back to this safe haven. Like another David who had gone into exile when his king sought to kill him, "everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him" (1 Sam. 22:2). As would happen, the larger Herrnhut grew, the more frictions began to wear between different groups. Not all who came to Herrnhut were sincere in their

faith—some had actually been chased from their previous churches with good reason. These began to prey upon the sincerity and innocence of the other believers, creating division and strife within the church at both Herrnhut and Bethelsdorf. Christian himself was drawn into this holier than thou deception to the point he built a new home for his family away from the others in town and dug his own well to keep from having to interact with the townspeople and risk being infected with their compromises and worldliness. What Christian had founded to be a city on the hill had fallen into factions and strife.[1](#)

So it was that in May of 1727, Count Zinzendorf decided to address the spirit of division head-on and remind the community of its original purposes. Calling a general meeting all were required to attend, he preached for three hours on the sin of division, read through the “Manorial Injunctions and Prohibitions” that all of those who had joined the township had agreed to abide by, and then outlined some further statutes about behavior toward one another that he felt were necessary for members joined together in a Christian society. A spirit of repentance fell on the township, and things changed overnight. Those who had been unable to see one another without quarreling now met to share meals, sing praises to God, and pray for one other. The count held daily services, which were widely attended, and on the warm summer evenings groups would gather on the hilltop under the rich canopy of stars and just sit and listen in prayer for the

voice of their Good Shepherd. The following months became a golden summer of unity and deepening purpose.

That August, Herrnhut and Bethelsdorf shared a Communion service together that Count Zinzendorf would later describe as “a day of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit . . . it was its Pentecost.” In the following weeks, members of the congregation at Herrnhut decided that just as the fire on the altar in the temple had never been allowed to go out, they would offer intercession for the world that would never cease. Twenty-four men and twenty-four women covenanted together to take hourly shifts and pray around the clock seven days a week. From August 27, 1727, prayer was offered at Herrnhut without interruption for the next one hundred years.²

This one-hundred-year prayer meeting is remarkable enough, but when you look at that century of prayer, you can instantly see the power of this kind of unity in intercession. Within that time John Wesley, born again himself through the teachings of the Moravians, was at the forefront of the Great Awakening, a wave of revival that laid the foundation for the evangelical church as we know it today. This move of the Holy Spirit swept through both England and the American colonies, spreading a unity of faith and purpose that still affects world affairs today. This was also one of the greatest times of missionary outreach around the world. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, outpourings of the Holy Spirit transformed the wilderness of Kentucky and Tennessee, as tens of thousand gathered

to see unbelievable manifestations of God's power, hear prophecies from the mouths of children, and see miracles. Toward the end of the 24-7 prayer at Herrnhut, Charles Finney was walking into the forest determined that he would know God or die in the attempt, and the Second Great Awakening that would change the face of nineteenth-century America would soon be under way.

I tell you this story so you will see that any new work of God follows this same pattern. Small works God has ordained can grow quickly, and with the quick growth, there will be disputes and divisions that arise almost at once that will threaten the success of the movement. Only with proper teaching alongside a good deal of prayer will the work continue to grow instead of stagnating or compromising its beliefs in order to please everyone. This takes leadership that is grounded in the Word and prayer. Wherever unity begins to form, Satan and his minions will rush to cause strife and division, because they know that when believers pray in one accord, the manifestation of the kingdom of God isn't far behind. Do not become discouraged when there seems to be conflict and confusion surrounding a once-thriving work of prayer. You must ask God for a new strategy to solve it. These occurrences are usually an indication that it is time to go to the next level in prayer for further training, retraining, updating, and refreshing.

When hearts gather together and unite, the force of their prayers is multiplied exponentially in the Spirit. No

matter how many are assembled, their prayers ascend as multiples of hundreds and thousands for each person present. As the Scripture says: "Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight;

your enemies shall fall by the sword before you" (Lev. 26:8). When we gather together to pray, there is a corporate anointing that harnesses the prayer of agreement to bind, loose, tear down, pluck up, and sound the trumpet for spiritual advancement. (See Matthew 18:18–19.) The foundations of the earth are shaken by corporate prayer, shaking whatever can be shaken, so only that which cannot be shaken will remain. All flesh and diabolical schemes are overridden. The threats and whispers of the adversary are silenced and annihilated as we pray.

In the days shortly after the resurrection of Jesus, the entire church came together to pray. Look at the power that was released:

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak

with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:1–4

The result? Three thousand were saved that day. Later, in response to the persecution they were experiencing at the hands of the religious leaders in Jerusalem, the church gathered to pray again.

They raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

'Why did the nations rage,
And the people plot vain things?
The kings of the earth took their stand,
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the LORD and against His Christ.'

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may

“speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

—Acts 4:24–31

And again, thousands more were saved as a result.

In order for there to be a synergy within our churches for spreading the kingdom of God, every part of the body of Christ within that church must be “joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). The determination of what is to be supplied is in the hands of the Father. The Lord has inscribed in our DNA the code that determines the talents and abilities He has placed within us that are for the sake of our communities even more than they are for ourselves. He has placed His Spirit in our belly in such a manner that when we receive His Son as Savior, we are quickened and made alive. Now, as the sons and daughters of God, we are called to constantly be in His presence and in His service.

God has a homing device in the Spirit calling us to Him. We are called to be in His Son, in Christ, and when each

of us is in our proper place abiding in Him, we are one. In Christ we live and move in the divine synchronization of a military under command. The synergistic nature of our movements is in response to His calls to action for those around us. There is a call to see and feel the pain that God feels as the works of the enemy devastate our lands, but there is also an incredible wave of deliverance that happens when the membership of our churches move in unified synergy.

Coming Together as One

The onset of spiritual troops is like the rush of a torrent, which will even roll stones along in its course. The well-timed decision is like the swoop of a falcon, which strikes and breaks the back of its victim all in the selfsame blow. Therefore the good fighter will be overwhelming in onset and exact in timing. The force of such will be like the drawing back of a crossbow, and the timing like the pulling of the trigger just as the target is within the crosshairs.

—The Art of War, 5:12–15, paraphrased

This is why our churches need prayer generals to stand with our pastors, just as Father Nash and Abel Clary stood behind Charles Finney—and Rees Howells was willing to step down from leadership in his mission and pray for his successor. This is why we need men and women of God so familiar with prayer in their own private lives that they can teach others the basics they need for effective personal prayer lives. When we pray, our words are released in the Spirit realm to empower, harmonize, and synergize with spirit beings. This is why we need to marshal our prayer troops into the work that binds foul spirits and looses ministering angels.

A prayer general understands not only the importance of unity in prayer but also the tenets of helping believers

grow together into prayer units. They understand “the marshaling of troops in its proper subdivisions, the chain of command, the management of logistics, and the proper command over finances and resources” (The Art of War, 1:10, paraphrased). They understand the authority of their pastor and the practical necessity of running the church as a responsible organization within a community. Like a business, it has an obligation to manage resources ethically and efficiently; as a spiritual body it has a mission to build God’s kingdom and not kingdoms of its own.

From the Founding Fathers of the United States to the mid-twentieth century, most American leaders understand the power of unity in prayer. In fact, from the time when the United States was a loose confederation of colonies, American leaders routinely called for days of prayer and fasting for the success of their battles. Look, for example, at this proclamation of a day of prayer and fasting that President Abraham Lincoln sent out in the midst of the American Civil War:

**By the President of the United States of
America A Proclamation**

Whereas the Senate and House of Representatives at their last session adopted a concurrent resolution, which was approved on the 2d day of July instant and which was in the words following, namely:

That the President of the United States be requested to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer by the people of the United States; that he request his constitutional advisers at the head of the Executive Departments to unite with him as Chief Magistrate of the nation, at the city of Washington, and the members of Congress, and all magistrates, all civil, military, and naval officers, all soldiers, sailors, and marines, with all loyal and law-abiding people, to convene at their usual places of worship, or wherever they may be, to confess and to repent of their manifold sins; to implore the compassion and forgiveness of the Almighty, that, if consistent with His will, the existing rebellion may be speedily suppressed and the supremacy of the Constitution and laws of the United States may be established throughout all the States; to implore Him, as the Supreme Ruler of the World, not to destroy us as a people, nor suffer us to be destroyed by the hostility or connivance of other nations or by obstinate adherence to our own counsels, which may be in conflict with His eternal purposes, and to implore Him to enlighten the mind of the nation to know and do His will, humbly believing that it is in accordance

with His will that our place should be maintained as a united people among the family of nations; to implore Him to grant to our armed defenders and the masses of the people that courage, power of resistance, and endurance necessary to secure that result; to implore Him in His infinite goodness to soften the hearts, enlighten the minds, and quicken the consciences of those in rebellion, that they may lay down their arms and speedily return to their allegiance to the United States, that they may not be utterly destroyed, that the effusion of blood may be stayed, and that unity and fraternity may be restored and peace established throughout all our borders:

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, cordially concurring with the Congress of the United States in the penitential and pious sentiments expressed in the aforesaid resolution and heartily approving of the devotional design and purpose thereof, do hereby appoint the first Thursday of August next to be observed by the people of the United States as a day of national humiliation and prayer.

I do hereby further invite and request the

heads of the Executive Departments of this Government, together with all legislators, all judges and magistrates, and all other persons exercising authority in the land, whether civil, military, or naval, and all soldiers, seamen, and marines in the national service, and all the other loyal and law-abiding people of the United States, to assemble in their preferred places of public worship on that day, and there and then to render to the almighty and merciful Ruler of the Universe such homages and such confessions and to offer to Him such supplications as the Congress of the United States have in their aforesaid resolution so solemnly, so earnestly, and so reverently recommended.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 7th day of July, A. D. 1864, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth.

—Abraham Lincoln³

While there is a chain of command in the army of God, it is different from most hierarchies. Our model for it is the threefold trinity of God. While God the Father is the

commander in Chief, you will see Him honoring the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit each honoring Him as well. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the word of the other two and is ever reminding people of the teachings of the Son, while the Son will never do or say anything not spoken to Him by the Father. As in a jazz trio, while one may have the lead, there is still a musical interplay between the members, and each will have their part to play and time to sound out while the others provide continued backup.

I believe there is a very similar interplay in a prayer group—while there is a strict leader in one sense, there is also a jazz-like trading off and improvising as the Spirit leads each member of the group. Through this, there is a harmony of roles and respect for each other's gifts. Harmony requires that notes and vocals synchronize to form a beautiful melodious sound. Like the sound of rain on different objects, the Spirit touches us uniquely, with varying degrees of resonance and intensity. There is a beauty in the sound that comes from this harmony, which you will not experience when you pray alone. There is a greater depth of the Spirit's presence and a more tangible power for putting on Christ. In His presence we are daily receiving what we need whether God gives us revelation, assignment, or commission. Through what He gives us, He is activating our voice upon the earth. The sound, pitch, and volume of our voices join the harmony of heaven's decrees, and the kingdom gains ground in our midst.

Getting in tune with the Spirit in this way requires that the varying pieces to His musical score be read and understood. The Lord harmonizes our varying syntaxes, tonal inflections, timing, skills, and personalities to accomplish what one person could not do alone. Harmony does not require movement at the same time, for the same purpose, nor in the same manner. It requires that each person perform uniquely as assigned within the tempo and calling that God has established. We are asking God to orchestrate and assist us in hitting the divine rhythm that makes our efforts exceptionally prosperous when we pray harmoniously with one another.

So the prayer general becomes a central force for unity, pulling together those in search of the life God has promised all, just as Christian David gathered and led the Moravians to Herrnhut. These prayer groups must be the pillars that lift up our churches if they are to truly transform our communities with God's love. It is only within this "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) that we can receive the military intelligence from heaven and implement God's strategies upon the earth. Upon that gathering we must first look to secure our defensive positions, and then we can begin to reach out in an assault on the gates of hell.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,

Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

—Psalm 133:1–3

Seven Defensive Tactics

Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive. Thus security against defeat comes only from proper safeguards and defensive tactics; successful attacking only comes from a superabundance of strength. . . . The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret places of the Most High; the one who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven. On the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves and on the other, a victory that is assured and complete.

—The Art of War, 4:5–7, paraphrased When we awake to the reality of the spiritual battles going on all around us, we immediately realize there are massive assaults being leveled at our loved ones, communities, churches, and nations. The onslaught and bombardment are continuous and without regard for ignorance, innocence, or infirmity. No matter what the status of every human being, the kingdom of darkness assails to render deathblows, dismemberment, and/or paralysis.

Knowing this, you must realize this is not a time to wait for the next missile launch, the next sabotage attempt, or

the next "hit man" to be deployed for us to spring into action. You must lift your voice and come in fury and passion to put to shame all the contrivances of the enemy. You must act offensively. You cannot let the plans Satan has for the children of God come to pass. Not today. Not on your watch. Not ever! You must also affect and enforce the original plans and purposes of God over and above the plans of the enemy. Though demonic agents use fire to forge weapons, "no weapon formed against you shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17). Every attack leveled against your loved ones opens up the opportunity to plunder the enemies' possessions and territory instead of the other way around. You may not have chosen Satan as an enemy, but he has chosen you. Yet God has given you the power to shut down every initiative instituted by anyone and everyone who moves by satanic impulse. Their provocations to attack you will serve you instead. This is the inheritance of the Lord, which will propel you in fervent determination to battle in prayer.

You know God hates what the enemy does to His people. Therefore when you war on behalf of your family and friends, nation and the world, you should war with a righteous passion—a passion born out of a love for God and for everything He created on this earth. It is simply another way in which we are knit together in Christ. With the love of God as a constant companion, passion speaks to the depth of our love returned to God, no matter where we are in our prayer journey. In the cold of the winter

when you are alone with your thoughts and fears, your love for God should rekindle your commitment to His purposes. When you are in a temporary place of separation for the sake of personal growth or sanctification, whether in a winter season, desert time, or isolation for trial, your total dedication to the process of prayer and your reliance on God deepen your walk. You rely on Him alone; you trust Him alone; He becomes your salvation in completely new and wonderful ways.

The art of war begins with securing the lines before pressing in to an offensive against the gates of hell. The God who saved you has equipped you for and before each and every battle. If you watch the nightly television news, you learn that major ministries tend to fail because of things that are within their own borders of authority, not because they have been overcome by reaching out to take new territory for God. Ministers fall into sexual sin because they have not taken the proper precautions to guard themselves against it, or their finances fail because they do not discipline their spending or accounting procedures properly. Many fail because they fall into pride, and it opens them to all kinds of difficulties. They stop relying on prayer or think they don't have time to seek the Lord of their work because they are too busy and too involved with the work of their Lord. Defeat comes because they have not guarded the home fires, not because they have not launched the proper offensives. The first priority of spiritual war is protection from sin and temptation. Once

the borders of your domain are secured, only then can you think about taking the fight to the enemy.

Set the Watchmen on the Walls Every foot soldier at one time or another is assigned to patrol duty. They are assigned to take a watch at the front gates or in one of the towers surrounding the camp. They do this to keep out intruders, warn those within if there is an attack, or inform their commanders of approaching messengers. They also do it as an exercise in vigilance, even if it doesn't seem like there is anything to be watchful for. Setting out a watch is one of the most basic of defensive tactics, even for an army in the field. No matter how strong your walls, if a watch is not set, the enemy will find a way in.

In the days during which the Old Testament was still being written, cities would set watchmen on the walls for these same purposes. These watchers had to be vigilant, stay awake, and endure the elements no matter the conditions. These watches were often long, boring, and uneventful, but they were still necessary. The reason for

this is obvious: if the watchmen failed, the city would fall.

For those in the cities of Israel, the watchmen also had another duty: that was to pray. As God told Israel through Isaiah: I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night.

You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep
silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the
earth. . . .

Go through,
Go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people; Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
Lift up a banner for the peoples!

Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
"Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His
reward is with Him, And His work before Him.'"
And they shall call them The Holy People, The
Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not
Forsaken.

—Isaiah 62:6–7, 10–12

God took this a step further when He called His prophets watchmen over the people of Israel. As He said to Ezekiel: Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

—Ezekiel 3:17

Watching in prayer thus was the first line of defense between the people of Israel and any peoples that might seek their harm. The discipline of systematically walking along the top of the wall would be a deterrent to any spies interested in attacking the city, for if they could see that the watchmen took their jobs seriously, they had a good indication that the troops defending the city were well disciplined and vigilant over their duties. How often could it have happened that a watchman was seen by a foreign spy that watchman did not see himself, but because of the watchman's diligence in his duty, the spy returned to his commander to advise him to choose a different city to attack because this one was well guarded? The watchman didn't always know the nature of the threat, but there were times his vigilance diverted defeat without there ever being an attack.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is replete with scriptures and stories supporting the relevance of watching and praying—it is no less significant to modern-day prayer warriors, intercessors, and believers interested in hearing from God and aligning with His will. Vigilant,

competent watchers will be able to:

- Use their spiritual faculties to discern movements of God and the frequencies, promptings, and insights of the Holy Spirit
- Access the will, plans, and purposes of God
- Discern the works of darkness and counteract them
- Understand and interpret dreams and visions
- Thicken defensive prayer hedges
- Give a round-the-clock spiritual covering to their church and its members

As they spend hours watching and praying, those who rise to be generals of prayer develop all of these abilities. They are vigilant not to judge by what they see with their natural eyes or hear with their natural ears, but they allow the Holy Spirit to train their spiritual senses so they become sharp and accurate concerning spiritual matters. This is why we are admonished: For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

—Hebrews 5:12–14, emphasis added Those who

have mastered the prayer techniques of watching develop a strong discernment for what is good or evil, no matter how fine the difference may appear between what is righteous and unrighteous, and between doing things God's way or the devil's. Watching is not like being wary or concerned; it is not even affiliated with the nervous tension formed from anticipation of the enemy's movement. Being a watcher connotes a level of care and esteem in performing each obligation the Lord has assigned and setting a single focus to see that those for whom you pray are not waylaid, ambushed, or sabotaged. What you learn as you watch and pray will couple itself with wisdom to save entire cities. This type of prayer also establishes parameters and spheres of protection for the global community of God.

When I think of this, I think of the movie *The Last Samurai* and how the soldiers and generals were trained in the art of excellence even when it came to the smallest matters of preparing and serving tea, tending a garden, mending their clothing, sharpening and caring for their weapons, training their bodies, and what they ate and how they ate it. Everything they engaged in was an art and carried a formal respect in its practice. No detail was too small to be attended to with excellence.

Learning the discipline of a watchman requires great spiritual maturity because of the intensity of divine

inspiration that can accompany it. Be careful of the seduction of the enemy. Seduction is the satanic antithesis of inspiration, just as lust is the counterfeit of love. Allow the Holy Spirit to coach you in utilizing the senses of the Spirit and not of the flesh.

The Watchmen Protocols

The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy and does not require too much from individuals. Hence the general is apt at picking the right people for the right posts and making the right combinations of soldiers to create synergy and not dissipation of strength and motivation. . . . Thus the energy created by proper combinations is the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of spiritual energy.

—The Art of War, 5:21, 23, paraphrased
Watching and praying are the essential defensive discipline for every believer. In fact, Jesus said it was our primary responsibility until He returned to the earth.

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time [of My return] is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and

gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!

—Mark 13:33–37, insert added If the church has failed, it is because our watchmen have failed. If our spiritual hedges of protection have been breached, it is because they were weakened through negligence.

There is certainly power in the Word of God as it is spoken into any situation, but no place is it more powerful than in prayer. It is one thing to proclaim the truths of God, but it is quite another to proclaim that same truth when it has already been prayed through in the Spirit. To look at the state of the church today, we do not see the emphasis on prayer that there once was, and so the church is growing ever weaker as the protective barrier between truth and deceptive doctrines has fallen to disrepair through neglect.

The evangelical movement that was birthed in fervent prayer is reeling today because we have gone from telling people they must pray through until they know they are

saved to dishing out a prescribed prayer when they come forward in response to an altar call. Our watchmen and women have grown slack in their duties because they have been trained in complacency. We don't see miracles as they did in the old days simply because we don't value prayer as they did. We must purposefully set and revitalize our watches.

We cannot forget that there is a fight to be fought. There are people in danger who need to be rescued. Prayer is important, even though it is also difficult. We must train our watchmen to be ever vigilant, because Satan would like nothing more than to stop our prayers. The word vigil, in fact, means "a period of keeping awake during the time usually spent asleep, especially to keep watch or pray." It was a common practice for those preparing for knighthood—they would stay awake and pray the entire night so that they could sanctify themselves to accept the calling they were about to receive without any reservations. Every believer desiring to be used of God should do the same. Oswald Chambers gave the following advice about coming to God in these solitary times of prayer: Jesus did not say—"Dream about thy Father in secret," but "pray to thy Father in secret." Prayer is an effort of will. After we have entered our secret place and have shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot get our minds into working order, and the first thing that conflicts is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is the overcoming of mental wool-

gathering. We have to discipline our minds and concentrate on willful prayer.

We must have a selected place for prayer, and when we get there the plague of flies begins —This must be done, and that. "Shut thy door." A secret silence means to shut the door deliberately on emotions and remember God. God is in secret, and He sees us from the secret place; He does not see us as other people see us, or as we see ourselves. When we live in the secret place it becomes impossible for us to doubt God, we become more sure of Him than of anything else. Your Father, Jesus says, is in secret and nowhere else. Enter the secret place, and right in the centre of the common round you find God there all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God.[1](#)

If we are to fulfill our callings, we must have the stamp of God on everything we do. We will only stand as strong with God in public as we are able to stand with Him in

private.

The treasures of heaven are set aside for the believer. Your position and assignment involve different levels of intercession as you maneuver in each defensive posture. The cunning of the enemy seeks always to masquerade the truth of your inheritance and to keep you from the door that accesses it, Jesus Christ. A defensive regiment pushes back clouds of deceit. The Lord has already purposed to deliver the believer out of every affliction wrought in deception. Scripture forecasts the demise of the enemy of the souls of mankind as a certainty, so he wastes no time in shrouding his activities, hoping to catch us off guard. Ensure that you are properly attired in the armor of light and of the Lord so that the plots of the enemy may be easily exposed. Attune your spiritual senses as a vigilant watchman on the wall. Once you have established your patrol, repaired the breaches, and fortified your boundaries, the enemy doesn't stand a chance as you take the fight beyond the confines of the church and into the streets. To do this, it is crucial that you learn to stand your watch.

Prayer Watches

In ancient Israel, watches were set out in three-hour shifts, beginning at sundown (6:00 p.m.) and then circling the clock after that (thus the watches changed at 9:00 p.m., 12:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 12:00

p.m., 3:00 p.m., and then again at 6:00 p.m.). Each of these watches had its own prayer assignment and area of strategic intercession. Using the information that follows in this section, each of these biblical watches can become a significant prayer watch for the believer today.

6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.—Evening Transformational Watch Prayer focus: **This is a time of supplication, confession, repentance, and strategic and prophetic national and global intercession. Ask God to slay the evening wolves according to Habakkuk 1.**

Important scriptures: Genesis 1:5; Daniel 9:1–23; Daniel 10:1–14. God works from evening to morning.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

—Habakkuk 2:1

9:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m.—Night/Seeking Watch Prayer focus: **This is the time when tremendous revelation begins to flow. Like Daniel, do not leave the presence of God until He has fully downloaded the complete revelation He has for you. Resist the spirit of abortion. According to Obadiah 5, rebuke the thief that comes in the night.**

Important scriptures: Song of Solomon 3:1–4; Jeremiah 6:5; Acts 20:7

Praise/worship songs: "Search for You"

Additional prayer tools: Use the Commanding Your Morning prayer at this hour.[2](#) Prayer-proof your life and download success and prosperity into your day, life, family, marriage, finances, ministry, and business.

12:00 a.m.–3:00 a.m.—Transitional/Breakthrough Watch Prayer focus: **This is the demonic/bewitching hour where there are high demonic activities. Pray that the strongman be bound. You must deal the enemy a deathblow. In the world this is the beginning of the graveyard shift. Declare that the plots and plans of the enemy will be overthrown.**

Important scriptures: Exodus 11:4; 12:29; Judges 16:3; Ruth 3:8; 1 Kings 3:20; Job 34:20; Acts 16:25

Praise/worship songs: "Search for You"

Additional prayer tools: Pray using the Rules of Engagement and Binding the Strongman strategies.[3](#)

3:00 a.m.–6:00 a.m.—Graveyard/Prophetic Watch Prayer focus: **Be careful of the demonic ambush of sleepiness. You must continue to wrestle until you see the face of God.**

Important scriptures: Genesis 32:24–30; Matthew 26:34

Additional prayer tools: Use Nuclear Warfare and the Atomic Power of Prayer resources.[4](#)

6:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m.—Breakthrough Watch Prayer focus: **This is the breaking of a new day/cycle watch. Pray that God will make all things new for fresh starts. Prepare yourself to receive new and fresh revelation. Continue to declare victory over all your adverse situations and circumstances. Begin to quicken, mandate, call forth, and bring to life. According to Matthew 20:8, pray for those involved in kingdom initiatives and those called to advance the kingdom.**

Important scriptures: Numbers 2:1–3; Isaiah 59:16–21; Malachi 1:11; Mark 16:2.

Praise/worship songs: "Like the Dew in the Morning"; release strong praise according to Psalm 113:3 ("let Judah praise") and war according to Joshua 11.

Additional prayer tools: Use Breakthrough Prayer Strategy.[5](#)

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.—Morning Watch Prayer focus: **This hour is dedicated to breaking up the fallow ground, plowing, and planting. Use God's Word in prayer. Spend time reading Scripture and in praise and worship. Expect strong prophetic winds to blow. You will receive visions and angelic visitation as well.**

Important scriptures: Nehemiah 8:1–3; Matthew 20:5–6; Acts 10:1–4. Pray according to Exodus 14:24–31 and Psalm 68:1–4.

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

—Psalm 68:1–3

12:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.—Transitional/Apostolic Supernatural Watch Prayer focus: **This is a time for strong spiritual warfare, also a time for corporate gathering of the saints for supernatural deliverance and miracles. War and protect your prophetic destiny and those things that God has manifested as blessings. Once you have prophetically birthed something, you must build prayer shields and firewalls to protect it from premature death.**

Important scriptures: 1 Kings 18:19–40; 1 Kings 20; 2 Kings 4:20; Jeremiah 6:4; Zephaniah 2:1–4; Matthew 26:45–54; Acts 22:6

Additional Prayer Tools: Gather people for noontime prayer and deliverance services.

3:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.—Afternoon Watch Prayer focus: **As the sun sets, press in to the secret place of God for protection. This is a time for heavy seduction to**

give in to temptation for your entire church body. While most people are out and about, you will be tempted to follow likewise. Ask God to protect your resources, ministerial staff, help ministers, support staff, business relationships, employees, and others from the spirit of Belial. Ask God to protect your priesthood anointing from the spirit of prostitution. Do not allow anyone to prostitute your name, anointing, gifts, or resources. Pray for systems and infrastructures, and ask God to release them from the control of perverted and deviant spirits. This is an hour that is not strongly covered. The enemy knows when we are uncovered, and he strikes at this time.

Important scriptures: Judges 19:1–30

Final Thoughts

Today there are many ministries and churches that have again taken up the call to obey the commandment “Take heed, watch and pray” (Mark 13:33) by setting up around-the-clock watches seven days a week so that when Jesus returns, He will not find us sleeping. In order to do this, many have followed the pattern of the Moravians by setting up twenty-four one-hour prayer slots throughout each day. Their assignment is to pray for the church, the community, and whatever else God puts on their hearts. This is the method I generally prescribe for churches who

feel this is part of their calling. I believe the first step in training watchers is to come together and learn to pray for an hour without letting other concerns and thoughts crowd out the focus on prayer and hearing God's voice. When first starting out, I have found it best to divide your prayer time into four fifteen-minute blocks or stages. (The appendix provides a form you can use for your watchmen to report on what happens during their times of prayer.)

Stage 1: Entering the gates Enter His gates with thanksgiving according to Psalm 100. Charge yourself in the Holy Ghost as you are advised to do in Jude 20. Fortify your prayer according to Nahum 2:1: He who scatters has come up before your face.

Man the fort!

Watch the road!

Strengthen your flanks!

Fortify your power mightily.

During the first fifteen minutes, focus your mind in prayer, laying aside any other concerns of your day that may come to mind. This is when you will accrue power for your actual watch. This is important because the enemy will seek to distract, disrupt, and derail you during your watch. To counteract his attack against you, this stage is of utmost importance because your flesh—your carnal mind—does not want to pray. So flood your spirit with praise and focus your spiritual senses on listening to God.

Stage 2: Ask and it shall be given.

Ask God to help you live a consecrated lifestyle. Spend the second fifteen minutes in prayers of confession and petitioning the Lord for needs. You may also have specific prayer points from one or any combination of the following areas of your life: personal, marriage, children, ministry/calling, finances, physical, social, and others.

Stage 3: Seek and ye shall find.

Spend the third fifteen minutes in meditation and worship. Read the Bible for insight, wisdom, strength, and encouragement from God. Research every scripture concerning the things you have petitioned the Lord for according to 1 Chronicles 16:10–11 and Matthew 6:33.

Stage 4: Knock and the door shall be opened.

Expect spiritual portals to be opened. Spend the final fifteen minutes in supplication and watching according to Matthew 26:41 and Ephesians 6:18. After you have prayed through your one-hour watch, go into victorious praise and thanksgiving.

Once you are more experienced in following the prompting of the Holy Spirit, feel free to release this format and follow His leads. The more you pray together as a church body, the more you will find you have a balance in your prayers between the things the prayer generals of your church feel need to be covered in prayer and the things you feel the Spirit of God is leading you to pray for.

As you grow in prayer and get used to it as a rhythmic practice and discipline in your life, you may want to deepen it even more with fasting. Many people make the mistake of thinking that fasting is simply denying oneself food for a certain period of time, but it is really much more. While fasting is the practice of self-control and disciplining the flesh, the aim is to draw closer to God. Time you gain by not doing whatever you are fasting (eating, preparing food, etc.) should be spent in prayer. This can be harder if you are cooking for a family, because you will still need to cook for them, but you can still cheerfully do so and accompany them with your juice or soup or tea. Or you can practice abstaining from other activities such as television, spending time on social networking sites, playing video games, or any other practice you feel takes up your time that is not crucial to your family's physical and financial health (for example, you can't fast going to work!). When you fast food, the point is that each time you feel a hunger pang, that is a reminder that you are abstaining from food so that you can pray more, so use it as a prompting to pray. It would be the same with any other activity that you give up—every time you think of it, remember to pray.

If you are fasting with others or as a church, take the time to add some extra prayer meetings over the duration of the fast, whether that means meeting in the morning, at noon, or in the evenings (or even all three so people have options if it involves a larger group). If getting together is

difficult, join together with those participating on a conference call and pray together for fifteen, thirty, or sixty minutes. Be creative! If you can't figure out how to pray together, then pray about ways to pray together. God will bless your determination.

Another thing that you can do is pray later at night, fasting sleep for an hour or more to pray. You can also organize twenty-four to forty-eight hour burns where people pray around the clock starting on Friday evenings and continuing through the weekend. People don't have to pray the entire time, but they can take shifts or come and go as they are able.

Again, I want to emphasize being creative in finding ways to see more prayer lifted up to God. If the church has fallen short on praying perseveringly in the past, then it is time for us to say, "Not on my watch!" We must pray over our families, our churches, our ministers, our communities and nations, and whatever God puts on our hearts to pray for. God is looking for intercessors to stand in the gap in the hedges and on the walls and block the access of the devil to everything we hold dear. Let God find you in prayer saying, "Lord, I'm here to pray whatever You need prayed! Just tell me! And if You don't have anything specific, then I will just fill the heavenlies with my thanksgiving and praises for Your awesome presence!" It is when He knows you are present and ready to pray, determined not to stop until you pray through to the answer, that He will also know He can trust letting you in

on the big conversation going on in heaven. And let me tell you, that is when things start getting interesting—that is when God starts downloading His divine strategies and we start taking massive ground for His kingdom!

I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

—Ezekiel 22:30

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

—1 Timothy 6:12

Eight Downloading Divine Strategies

Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting, thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy is to besiege walled cities. . . . Therefore skillful leaders subdue the enemy's troops without any fighting; they capture cities without laying siege to them; they overthrow kingdoms without lengthy operations in the field. With forces intact, God's generals dispute the mastery of the world and thus, without losing a soldier, their triumph is complete. This is the method of warring with divine strategies.

—The Art of War, 3:2–3, 6–7

Edmund and John Hyde attended seminary together starting sometime around 1890. Edmund was an outstanding student and stood out among his peers. He

decided early in his studies that he would go to the foreign mission field. However, before he could graduate, disease took Edmund to be with the Lord. John, who was quieter and almost a shadow to his brother, felt the void left by Edmund's absence and wrestled with taking his place on the mission field. The issue was not settled until, some weeks before graduation, John took the matter to the Lord, praying through the night for the answer. The following morning he told a fellow student, "It's settled." John had heard from heaven and never had another doubt about his calling to foreign missions.

In 1892, John Hyde boarded a steamer bound for India. John seemed a misfit as a missionary. He was somewhat shy and introverted and had a poor ear for picking up foreign languages. He was also a little slow of speech and a rather poor preacher. But in seminary he had learned at least two things:

1. If he was going to be effective, he needed to understand God's Word before he needed to understand the words of those he was preaching to.
2. How to pray things through until he got an answer

India was a hostile environment to Christianity at the time, and any success the missionaries had often brought fierce persecution. The missions John worked on saw very little fruit during the first six years he was there, and so he felt something must be missing from their preaching. John

began to pray more and more, and eventually spent entire nights in prayer searching for God's will for the people of India. In 1904, John organized an annual prayer conference and challenged the attendees to make a covenant of intercession for India centered around five questions:

1. Are you praying for quickening in your own life, in the life of your fellow workers, and in the church?
2. Are you longing for greater power of the Holy Spirit in your own life and work, and are you convinced that you cannot go on without this power?
3. Will you pray that you may not be ashamed of Jesus?
4. Do you believe that prayer is the great means for securing this spiritual awakening?
5. Will you set apart one-half hour each day as soon after noon as possible to pray for this awakening, and are you willing to pray till the awakening comes?¹

For thirty days before the 1906 prayer conference, John and another man prayed all of their waking hours. Another missionary joined them at twenty-one days before the convention. God moved powerfully at the event as a result, and attendees wept with passion for the fate of the souls of their brothers and sisters throughout India. Things were being broken open in the Spirit over the nation.

After that breakthrough, John dedicated night after night to God in prayer. While others began to worry he would

wear himself out, each morning he would appear at breakfast smiling and refreshed. Despite his awkwardness of speech, when John now spoke, his words carried power. Then in 1908, he came upon the idea of praying for one soul to be saved each day. He took to not going to bed until he knew in his heart God had granted him a soul for the next day. In the following year, he saw roughly four hundred people saved—not through his preaching, but through one-on-one conversations and conversions. He became a powerful personal evangelist. The following year, he began praying that two a day would be saved, and he saw more than eight hundred people come to Christ. The following year he began praying that he would see four a day come to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

John literally prayed, "Father, give me souls, or I die!" and God answered his prayers. John became known as "Praying Hyde" by those who knew him best, and many considered him an apostle of prayer. Unfortunately, in 1910 and 1911, John was sidetracked by illness and headaches that turned out to be from a brain tumor caused by a type of cancer that had no treatment at the time. However, even facing death, John continued to pray until his last day. John "Praying Hyde" died on February 17, 1912, at the age of forty-seven. His last words were, "Bol, Yisu' Masih, Ki Jai," which, translated from Punjabi means, "Shout, the victory of Jesus Christ!"

What was Praying Hyde's secret? When asked, he did not say it was the long hours he spent in prayer, nor some

special power of faith granted to him alone. Instead, he said quite simply that he asked what Jesus was praying at the right hand of the Father, and then let the Jesus inside of him pray those prayers. As John described it:

Who is the source of all life? The glorified Jesus. How do I get this life from Him? Just as I received His righteousness to begin with. I own that I have no righteousness of my own—only filthy rags, and I in faith claim His righteousness. Now, a twofold result follows: As to our Father in Heaven, He sees Christ's righteousness—not my own unrighteousness. A second result as to ourselves: Christ's righteousness not merely clothes us outwardly, but enters into our very being, by His Spirit, received in faith as with the disciples (see John 20:22), and works out our sanctification.

Why not the same with our prayer lives? Let us remember the word "for." "Christ died for us," and "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." . . . So I confess my ever-failing prayers . . . and plead His never-failing intercession. Then it affects our Father, for He looks upon Christ's prayer-life in us, and answers accordingly. So that the answer is far "above all we can ask or think." . . . Christ's prayer life enters into us, and

He prays in us. This is prayer in the Holy Spirit. Only thus can we pray without ceasing. . . . No more working up a life of prayer and failing constantly. Jesus enters the boat, and the toiling ceases, and we are at the land whither we would be. Now, we need to be still before Him, so as to hear His voice and allow Him to pray in us—nay, allow Him to pour into our souls His overflowing life of intercession, which means literally: face-to-face meeting with God—real union and communion.[2](#)

In order to pray and war for our communities according to heaven's strategies, we must come to grips with the depths of the fact that there is no victory to be gained or territory to be taken that will ever be of our doing alone. We cannot beat the devil, but Christ has already defeated him. It is not our clever advertising of our churches, the efficiency of our programs, or the charisma of our preachers that saves souls, but it is the revelation of Jesus for who He is and what He has done. That revelation does not come from other people, for as Jesus Himself described it: "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). It is upon this revelation of who Jesus is that the church itself is built (v. 18). Effective prayer is not, then, a matter of beating demons as much as it is revealing Christ. What

better way is there to pray than praying the same prayers Jesus is praying as He intercedes at the right hand of the Father? (See Hebrews 7:25.)

Consolidating Fire Power

What the forefathers called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease and with all the glory going to God. Hence victories bring neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage, for he conquers an enemy that has already been defeated. . . . Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position that makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy. Thus it is that in spiritual war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.

—The Art of War, 4:11–15, paraphrased

This is the final stage of prayer that few seem to reach—when we can move from our daily defensive prayers for protection to taking the battle to the enemy as God directs us. This is the realm of prayer champions and true heroes of faith about which few hear. We often know the names of the preachers and evangelists, but we do not know the names of all those who paved the way in the Spirit to have

the results that they did. These did not seek the spotlight, only the continual presence of God. Having covered things defensively in their prayers, they were awarded the privilege of standing at the war table in the center of God's strategic, high-command center and learning God's plans for the earth, and then allowed to take part in seeing them come to pass. This is what Habakkuk described as he stood keeping his watch in prayer, ready to act on whatever God instructed him to do.

I will stand my watch
And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say to me,
And what I will answer when I am corrected.

Then the LORD answered me and said:

"Write the vision
And make it plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
For the vision is yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.

—Habakkuk 2:1–3

Satan desires to ambush our souls to cause us to be

afraid. His only chance of victory is to keep us from praying, and if he can't do that, then he wants to keep our prayers short and ineffective. He pulls out his weapons of temptation, accusation, deception, and empty hopes so we will cower in the corner and not enter the fray. He wants to keep us downcast, discouraged, and doubting the importance of prayer. However, our fight in prayer has no boundaries. As the Word of God takes up residence in us, there is no doubt that it has the power to transform the way we see the world. It becomes clear that the best tactics of the enemy are to convince us we should not answer the bell for the next round of the fight.

It will not be so with you. You will answer every challenge. You must pray fearlessly and relentlessly, knowing that it is God who wars on your behalf—it is God who teaches your hands to war, and it is God to whom the ultimate victory will go. You can pray fearlessly because you have nothing to lose. Everything you have belongs to God and will return to Him. He is Lord of all and is worthy of a people who trust Him implicitly and will fight without fear. This is the realm of prayer that changes things on the earth, the place where you have so much faith in God that nothing—even the fear of death on the battlefield to which you are called—can keep you from your God-given mission. You become like Paul, taking the fight to the gates of hell rather than standing at your own gate and praying the devil can't get in. Paul's strategy was simple:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:6–7

The True Source of Courage

The consummate leader cultivates the righteous law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus victory is a matter within one's own control and not subject to circumstances or luck.

—The Art of War, 4:16, paraphrased

In any new venture or stance that is righteous, great faith is required—and great faith is always accompanied by action. The hindrance to obedience to the call of God is when faith is challenged by fear in such a way that the believer is paralyzed and does nothing. According to Revelation 21:8, the cowardly will not be seen in heaven. Why? Because if we fear, we don't have the love of God in us, for His "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). In order to move in faith, the love of God must be seated in our consciousness, for "faith" works "through love" (Gal. 5:6). We have to know and experience the unfailing love

of God. Our courage then does not show that we do not have fear, but instead it shows that we have assessed the situation and deem the Word of God to be of greater impact. Fear of the Lord is not something that should make us afraid before Him, but something that should deliver us from being afraid of anything else. If we have truly experienced God's presence, then what on earth could ever make us afraid to do as He has instructed us? The fear of the Lord delivers us from fear of anything man can do. As David said, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Ps. 118:6). And, as John learned of those who triumphed over the devil in the final days of the earth:

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

—Revelation 12:11, emphasis added

So, because we pray and know how to find God in prayer, we have courage, and we pray courageously. We do not fear praying for things that are impossible with man, because His love has cast out fear and permitted us to participate in His overcoming of the world.

Set for Triumph

In the heat of battle, if victory is long in coming,

then weapons will grow dull and ardor will dampen. Lengthy sieges will exhaust your strength. If the campaign is protracted, the resources of the church will not be equal to the strain. . . . Then, when your weapons are blunted, your ardor dampened, your strength exhausted, and your treasury emptied, others will spring up to take advantage of your shortsightedness. Then no one, no matter how wise, will be able to avert the consequences of your lack of foresight and proper planning. . . . Only the one who is thoroughly acquainted with the pitfalls of spiritual war can understand the profitable way of carrying it out.

—The Art of War, 2:2–7, paraphrased

Taking the fight to the gates of the enemy is not the work of a novice. It is a trust and authority that must be earned in a steadfast dedication to prayer. I know there are many who will pick up this book and want to skip to this chapter and practice living it before all of the others, but it won't work that way. A novice does not have the necessary wisdom because he or she lacks the necessary experience and training. That is why the Scriptures warn about putting a novice in spiritual leadership too quickly. We must count the cost before we engage in the fight.

What king, going to make war against another

king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

—Luke 14:31–33

No one has to remain ignorant or unwise, though. The Book of Proverbs gives direction, and Scripture gives the power to take hold of wisdom. Wisdom is the marriage of understanding the protocols of the heavenly realm and the knowledge of the appropriate response in the earthly realm. One comes through study of the Word, the other through experience and revelation. Both take time.

When you pray wisely, you will always pray according to the principles of the Word of God that you have learned. Wisdom is powerful. As Ecclesiastes 9:18 says, "Wisdom is better than weapons of war." God gave both David and Daniel the weaponry of wisdom to use. The wisdom of God superseded the cleverness loaded into the wisdom of human beings. When you pray wisely, you pray in agreement with the Word of God and can accomplish more in one breath than many who spend years cleverly maneuvering to get what they want. To do this, you must pray the Word, not your worries. Load the Word in your

heart, and transform your mouth into a semiautomatic weapon of precision, speaking only that which agrees with God. What you speak must always express the faith and knowledge of God that is within you. What you speak must show that you know God well enough that you can be confident in taking Him at His Word.

Of course, knowing God is different from knowing about God. When the Bible speaks of knowing God, it speaks of progressive levels of intimacy into His presence. Mystics like John of the Cross and Madame Jeanne Guyon spoke of this as a journey that was at times across barren, lonely deserts and at others through peaceful, fertile valleys. There were times when God felt ever present and near, and others where it was as if He had forsaken them. These were all times that had to be pushed through by faith, for after every desert was the reward of fresh waters of revelation. This journey only comes through an obsession to be with Him; otherwise it is we who become distracted and wander away. If you lose track of His presence, it is either because you are not persevering in your pursuit of Him or because you have given up following where He is leading. This is the kind of knowing God that unlocks His grace. As Madame Jeanne Guyon put it:

To teach man to seek God in his heart, to think of Him, to return to Him whenever he finds that he has wandered from Him, and to do and to

suffer all things with a single eye to please Him .
. . is leading the soul to the very source of
Grace, wherein is to be found all that is
necessary for sanctification.[3](#)

In His grace you learn the magnitude with which God despises what the enemy does to His people—you also learn of His tender affection and what He feels for those who are exploited or oppressed. This gives you the fervency with which to pray, a fervency that can scare you in its intensity and boldness. This knowledge through fellowship helps us to understand things that others have spent lifetimes pondering in the vanity of their own minds. The more we know God through experience, the more He rubs off on us. The more we hang around the foot of His throne, the more we can speak knowledgeably as to the particulars of His will.

God does not change. He reveals His nature in every line of Scripture. When you read it and mediate on it prayerfully, it becomes like reading letters written personally to you. As with a close friend, after a while you start to complete each other's sentences and know exactly what the other means even when they can't express it themselves. There are things you will come to know about the Father that no one will succeed at convincing you of otherwise. You gain a knowledge of Him that God has chosen specifically to reveal to you. Then when you make petitions in prayer, you have a distinct advantage, because

you've learned the particular nuances of how to ask in order to appeal to His likes and dislikes. You pray knowledgeably—you simply agree in prayer with God, praying the same prayers Jesus is praying as He intercedes for the earth. Can there be a more powerful prayer of agreement than that?

Knowing the truth and knowing yourself truly help you to drop facades and look to God for His divine purpose instead of being fooled by your own hidden agendas. This allows you to pray the heart of God, praying prophetically as He gives you the words to unlock the barriers keeping His will from the earth.

In praying God's words as well as His Word, we tap into the genius of God and legislate His oracles into the earth realm. It is God who has set the stage for our progression into His image and likeness, and it will be God who watches over His words to perform them. The people who speak out of the Spirit of God will do great exploits in His name. To do so means to come into agreement with the God-breathed words spoken in the law and the prophets, as well as individualized words of direction revealed and received through our spirit from God. As consummate planners and strategists, we must follow every word that proceeds out of God's mouth and pray prophetically, just as Paul advised Timothy to do:

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy,
according to the prophecies previously made

concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

—1 Timothy 1:18

God rarely uses the same tactics twice in a row to answer the same crises. While a tactic is an expedient way or manner of achieving a goal, a maneuver that changes the balance of power on the battlefield, it is never enough on its own. The timing, specifically God's timing, of carrying out that tactic is also crucial. Each situation will require a unique tactical response. What worked for you in prayer yesterday will be insufficient in new territories, dimensions, and realms. Look again how Jesus often used different tactics to heal the blindnesses He faced, or look at the history of battles Israel faced and how God gave them unique strategies to win each one. The tactics used to defeat Jericho didn't work at Ai, nor did God advise Gideon to use the same maneuvers as Joshua, nor did God give the same tactics to Mordecai and Esther that He did to Gideon that they might avoid the genocide planned by Haman.

The Lord provides unique experiences and opportunities to deepen your prayer life so you can embrace the entire arsenal of prayer weapons He has available for you. Sometimes the situation calls for a proclamation, sometimes a petition; in other situations it is enough to

buffet challenges with praise and thanksgiving. The skills developed in the foothills of prayer give you the wide range of tactical maneuvers available as you begin to scale the peaks. The enemy of your soul stands in amazement when he hurls his most destructive mechanisms and a simple tactic from the Lord makes it look as though you have never been in the fire or flood Satan intended for you. You walk away looking good and smelling good, and the kingdom of darkness is left defeated and befuddled. Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you walk out rejoicing in the power of your Savior.

Essentials for Victory

Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory:

(1) They will win who know when to fight and when not to fight.

(2) They will win who know how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

(3) They will win whose army is united in the same spirit throughout all its ranks.

(4) They will win who, having prepared themselves properly, are patient to take the enemy unprepared.

(5) They will win who have capacity and employ the proper strategies.

Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not your enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither your enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

—The Art of War, 3:17–18, paraphrased

Victory in spiritual warfare is a matter of being the right person—the righteous person—in the right place, praying the right prayers, at the right time. It is a balance between knowing yourself and being honest and transparent before God, knowing your enemy, and knowing the power and resources of your commander in chief. It is only when you get this balance wrong that things come unraveled and you lose focus as member of Christ's body fighting for His kingdom on the earth. You must weigh every element of every situation individually and be sure you have covered every aspect in prayer.

In every situation it is best to review the possible outcomes before you begin to choose your course of actions. You must know yourself, your own faith, what God has promised, and what His will is for any given circumstances. You cannot afford to be impetuous and get ahead of God. You must heed the intelligence that comes from the throne room of heaven. Without it, you cannot understand what is happening and will lose heart. What

happens if God decides not to move as you expect, or has a different timetable? What if God realigns your life such that you will not have any crutch but Him? Can it be possible that God will accomplish the words He has spoken to you or about you in a different manner than you have imagined? No matter what the answers are, you have to look at the end from the beginning and come out with an answer that agrees with kingdom mandates. None of this can really be done until you are practiced in the art of spiritual knowing, something that only comes through praying until you get the answer.

If God promised it, you can expect it to come to pass, but the how is up to God and can only be discovered if you ask. When you come to Him with such prayers, don't let your mind wander or wonder. Keep in the forefront of your focus the things God has embedded and inscribed on your heart. Whatever you have heard from God or read in His Word that touched your spirit and ignited your soul, that word spoken to you shall not return to God without producing results. God made great and precious promises, and they shall come to pass. As prayers go up out of the earth realm, they shall achieve the objective for which God sent the promises to the earth in the first place. When you pray, nothing in your past or present can stop the manifestation of God's purpose in your life.

The spirit realm is the causal realm, so expect that whatever you are praying shall come to pass once you know it has been sealed in the Spirit. God has already

released these things before the foundations of the earth. He has assigned a specific time and season for them to come to pass. Do not be counterproductive in your prayers by praying one thing and confessing another. Be consistent in knowing that whatever you commit to releasing that pertains to your life will be loosed—

positive or negative, in faith or in unbelief—and whatsoever you bind is bound. Do you understand? The Bible says whatsoever—good or bad, little or big—it will come to pass.

The choreographed movement of God is complete. All of the splendor and majestic creations of God for the habitation of man are perfected. All of the plans God had in overseeing your creation as a human are fully written. God finished His work before the foundations of the earth were laid. So, when it is said that we are to pray in the Spirit, the dynamics we are really looking to gain is alignment with the rhythm and mind of God. As we seek this, the Spirit of the Lord teaches us how to pray. He speaks to our hearts to cause us to embrace the protocols of heaven and helps us daily take the small steps that put us in agreement with heaven. Praying in the Spirit in this way acknowledges that there is much that heaven has to impart to us. Sometimes we do not know what to pray or how to pray, and so the Spirit of God assists us in our inability or ineptness (Rom. 8:26–27).

Jesus told His disciples that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against [My church]” (Matt. 16:18, KJV). This

means that our ultimate responsibility is not to be defensive and protective of what we have, but to be offensive that His kingdom might break beyond the gates of hell itself, or at least into the brothels of Bangkok, the slave-filled tin mines of the Congo, the kidnapers of invisible children in Darfur, the meth labs in your city, or whatever other hole Satan has trapped human beings in that he might slowly suck away their souls. We make a mistake if we think God cannot reach into these places and bring deliverance, but we also make a mistake if we think it is all up to His sovereignty. We must invite Him into our world in order for Him to change things, and we must battle in the heavenlies until His answers make their way to the earth. Now is the time for action; now is the time "always to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1, ESV). Take God at His Word, and launch out into the life of prayer today. Live in the tao of prayer. God is looking for privates to promote to generals for the work He wants done before He returns.

Do you have what it takes to answer that call?

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

—Hebrews 4:16

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and

having done all, to stand. . . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

—Ephesians 6:13, 18

Appendix
Watchman's Report

NAME: _____

TIME: _____ DATE: _____

God's Word

I will stand at my watch
and station myself on the ramparts; I will
look to see what he will say to me, and
what answer I am to give to this
complaint.

Then the LORD replied:

“Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.
For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it
speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come
and will not delay.

—Habakkuk 2:1–3, NIV

Prophetic Insight

Promptings/Stirrings

Visions

Dreams

Impressions

Other Remarks

Notes

Introduction

1. I have paraphrased these statements to make them more applicable to the body of Christ rather than leave them as mere tenets of physical war. I selected the Lionel Giles translation to use as the base translation since it is readily available on the Internet if you search for "Art of War Giles." These numbers reference the chapter and verse from Mr. Giles's translation.

One First Principles

1. James H. O'Neill, "The True Story of the Patton Prayer," Review of the News, October 6, 1971, first appearing as a government document in 1950, <http://www.pattonhq.com/prayer.html> (accessed January 18, 2010).

2. As related in Jim Denison, "Studies in 2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally," Baptistway Press Adult Online Commentary, <http://www.bgct.org/TexasBaptists/Document.Doc?&id=1134> (accessed May 5, 2010).

3. Ibid.

4. Norman Grubb, Rees Howells: Intercessor (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 1952), 104–120.

Two The Tao of Prayer

1. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "Tao," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tao> (accessed March 23, 2010).

2. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Simon &

Schuster, 1944), 30.

3. William Booth, "The Founder's Message to Soldiers," Christianity Today, October 5, 1992, 48.

4. Jeanne Guyon, A Short and Easy Method of Prayer, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/guyon/prayer.iii.html> (accessed March 23, 2010).

5. Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Charles G. Finney, Michigan Historical Reprint Series (n.p.: Scholarly Publishing Office, UNIVERSITY of Michigan Library, 2005), 17. Originally published by A. S. Barnes, New York, 1876.

6. A lot of Bible teachers mistakenly think this thorn in the flesh was a disease of some kind, perhaps even an eye disease since in Galatians 4:15 he suggested the Galatians were ready to pluck out their own eyes so they could give them to him. However, this phrase was always used to describe a group of people elsewhere in the Scriptures, so it is more likely that Paul is using it in this same way. Besides, in the list of "endurances" he mentions earlier in 2 Corinthians 12, he mentions nothing about being sick, only about being "infirm" from being beaten or stoned and left for dead!

Three

Heaven and Earth (the Spiritual and Physical Realms)

1. Amen means "so be it."

Four

The General of Prayer

1. Grubb, Rees Howells: Intercessor, 251–252.
2. Ibid.
3. As quoted in "The Salvation Army Risca Corps Revelations!" Easter 2003, http://www.riscasalvationarmy.org.uk/files/rev_0403.pdf (accessed March 24, 2010).

4. Charles G. Finney, Lectures of Revivals of Religion, Michigan

Historical Reprint Series (n.p.: Scholarly Publishing Office, UNIVersity of Michigan Library, 2005), 48–49.

5. Charles G. Finney, "I Commence Preaching as a Missionary," in *The Original Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, Garth M. Rosell and Richard A. G. Dupois, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989, 2002), 56–57.

6. Paul Reno, *Daniel Nash: Prevailing Prince of Prayer* (Asheville, NC: Revival Literature, 1989), 8.

7. Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs of Reverend Charles G. Finney: Written by Himself* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1876), 320.

8. As "Lord of Hosts" is translated in *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English*.

Five Method and Discipline

1. Annie Dillard, "Seeing," in *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1974), 27–31.

Six Allying Your Forces

1. J. E. Hutton, "The Founding of Herrnhut, 1722–1727," in *A History of the Moravian Church* (n.p.: BiblioBazaar, 2006), 183–196.

2. Dr. A. K. Curtis, "A Golden Summer," <http://www.zinzendorf.com/agolden.htm> (accessed March 25, 2010). This article first appeared in "Glimpses 37: Zinzendorf," *Glimpses of Christian History*, from the Christian History Institute, <http://www.christianhistorytimeline.com/GLIMPSEF/Glimpses/glimps037> (accessed March 25, 2010).

3. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* online, Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation 114—Appointing a Day of National Humiliation [sic], Fasting, and Prayer," July 7, 1984,

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=69994>
(accessed January 27, 2010).

Seven Defensive Tactics

1. Oswald Chambers, "August 23," in *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year*, orig. copyright © 1935 (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1993).
2. Cindy Trimm, *Commanding Your Morning* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2007), 120–148.
3. Trimm, *The Rules of Engagement* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2008).
4. Visit my Web site, www.cindytrimm.com, for more information on these prayer tools.
5. *Ibid.*

Eight Downloading Divine Strategies

1. E. G. Carre, editor, *Praying Hyde: The Life Story of John Hyde* (Orlando: Bridge Logos, 1982), 9–10.
2. *Ibid.*, 26–27.
3. Guyon, *Short and Easy Method of Prayer*.