

back, back to Exodus

Let us look at the subject of prayer this month, with a plea to get back to the basics of the Christian life, both corporately and individually from **Exodus 17:8-16**.

Israel is faced with confronting the Amalekite army, which would have been a daunting task because obviously while in Egypt there would be no reason to have trained soldiers at their disposal.

Moses' leadership qualities come to the fore when he instructs Joshua to choose some men, go, and fight the enemy. We begin to see a different aspect of prayer when Moses announces that he will stand on the hill above the battle with the Rod of God in his hand to intercede on behalf of the Israelite army.

First, we see the clear combination of prayer and action. Israel needed to do both to gain the victory. Prayer should never be seen as a replacement for action, nor action as a replacement for prayer; we need both. Prayer is essential because it is absolutely vital for God ordained action. Action is essential because it demonstrates our faith and belief in God and His direction.

The prayer and action strategy is especially relevant in evangelism when doing door to door visiting or street witnessing. Like Joshua, we are confronting the enemy of the gospel – Satan. He will, and continues to do all he can to stop, discourage and frustrate the spread of the gospel. It is highly significant that we have far more Christian martyrs today than in all of the previous history of the church. Satan is not about to let Christians and the Christian church freely proclaim the gospel.

Second, we need to understand that we keep praying until the victory is won. Moses' hands got tired and eventually they fell and then so did Joshua and the Israelite army's prospects. The enemy began to prevail. Have you ever wondered why we see so much division in our churches, often over petty things? Why are we seeing little impact of the gospel into our communities? Why are we seeing so much

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PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ His ongoing faithfulness in the ministry of Challenge as we continue to see the paper distribution grow and expand around the world
- ★ A journalist joining our team mid September
- ★ The faithful supporters who pray regularly for the Challenge ministry and staff
- ★ Ongoing financial support we receive from people and organisations around the world assisting with various projects

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moral breakdown in our churches with a divorce rate that rivals the world? Could it be that we have dropped the hands of prayer both individually and corporately, and as a result the enemy is prevailing over the church, stunting its growth and severely diluting its witness in the community.

Did you notice how when Moses' hands grew tired and began to drop, Aaron and Hur moved in to assist him? They came to help maintain the banner of prayer and call upon the authority of God to grant the victory. Friends, we need to encourage one another to pray and to intercede for one another.

Third, Moses, Aaron and Hur prayed until the battle was won because they recognised that the source of victory was in praying to God. It is fair and reasonable to assume that without prayer the victory over the Amalekites would have been impossible. I have heard it said; nothing of any eternal redemptive value is achieved unless we pray. We can have the best people, planning, practice and purpose but without prayer, it will amount to nothing more than hay, wood and stubble. That is hard for our ego to handle.

Just recently, while having my quiet time with the Lord, something flashed into my mind that made me think how easy pride can sneak into our service for the Lord. My mind slipped into thinking that Challenge's growth was dependent on me doing constant promotion. In reality what I was saying was that God needed me to help Him develop the circulation of Challenge. As I meditated on what was a subtle shift in my thinking, I recognised that God did not need me at all. If He wanted to grow the paper, He could do it in the flash of a moment without my help. I realised afresh that if deputation was going to bear lasting fruit, it has to be done in complete dependence upon Him.

When Joshua went into battle, he knew he had quality prayer backing, and I have no doubt he knew he needed it. He discovered how important this was after he had led Israel to a wonderful victory over Jericho. Israel then went into battle against Ai thinking they could easily overcome them in their own strength. They suffered a humiliating defeat and lost 36 lives.

Friends, we need to get back to the basics of prevailing intercessory prayer, which brings forth our absolute dependence upon God. Nothing else will do.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Every person the Impact team had the privilege of giving a paper to; or sharing Jesus with; or praying a prayer of commitment with. Pray for a continued harvest in South Africa
- ★ Prisoners in Malawi who received Jesus and have now commenced discipleship. Pray for their growth
- ★ An upcoming promotion and development trip to Sydney (Sept 10-30) for Carl. Pray for God ordained opportunities



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