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**PRAYER**  
**By Forman Lincicome**

Author of:  
A Lot in Sodom  
A Tribute to Mother  
Behold the Man  
Enemies of the Home  
The Doubles of the Bible  
The Three D's of the Sanctified  
What Is Your Life  
etc.

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**DEDICATED**

To My Loyal Friends,  
Everett Mattox and Rachel Mattox  
of Mansfield, Ohio

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**PREFACE**

The content of this booklet has been published at the earnest request of many of those who  
were much helped by it in the various churches and camp-meetings where the sermons it contains

were delivered. Many of the thoughts we have assembled and organized on this vital subject have been gleaned from many sources. We have quoted freely and quite fully from some who have written on the subject.

We do not claim for it any more than the presentation of a few simple rules that we have brought together for the purpose of benefiting those who may be fainting in prayer.

We trust that all who read what we have to say on the subject may be helped to a better understanding of what prayer is, and to engage more fully in its exercise. if this is accomplished we will feel we have made some small contribution toward making better Christians, and better Christians will mean better churches, and a better church will mean a better world.

F. Lincicome

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## INTRODUCTION

I take great pleasure in introducing this very valuable work to all Christian people and workers throughout the church and Kingdom. The blessing which has accompanied the work of the author over a course of so many years, both as pastor and evangelist, invests what he writes with authority. He combines knowledge with zeal, wisdom with earnestness, for his work is based on a wide experience and an effective ministry.

The greatest lack in present-day evangelism is the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, and the outstanding reason for this lack of the Spirit is the failure of the church in prayer. It is noticeable that the writer does not deal with prayer either as an abstract system, or as a piece of ecclesiastical organization. He speaks throughout of prayer as being in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament and the practice of Jesus. All who have had the pleasure of hearing Reverend F. Lincicome's evangelistic messages will agree that they are like the man -- sincere, practical, and inspirational. In this little Book you will be convinced that the writer's purpose is to capture the total personality of every would-be soul winner.

The only hope for our homes, our children, our churches, and our country is a revival that will bring men to the knowledge of the kingdom of God through the King and Saviour Jesus Christ I appeal to every one to get the book, read it again and again, give it to others, and call to prayer.

Yours in the great work of the kingdom,  
E. P. Boyd,  
Elder of the Washington Conference

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## CONTENTS

### PART I -- ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

1  
Communion

2  
Petition

3  
Intercession

\* \* \*

## PART II -- LAWS OF PRAYER

1  
The Law of Need

2  
The Law of Detachment

3  
The Law of Abiding

4  
The Law of Earnestness

\* \* \*

## PART III -- NECESSITY OF PRAYER

1  
In Order to a Holy Life

2  
To prevent Spiritual Decline

3  
To Keep Spiritually Energized

4  
To Keep Spiritually Sensitive

5  
For the Best Qualification for Christian Work

\* \* \* \* \*

## PART I -- ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

A well-rounded prayer has three elements in it, namely, Communion, Petition and Intercession.

### 1. Communion

Communion is prayer with your face toward God and God alone. David said, "Come, and let us kneel before the Lord." At this stage of our prayer we are not asking anything of God. A praying man is not always beseeching God; he spends time in adoring God, loving God, and praising God. It is my opinion that more "praise" and less "petition" would bring a great blessing to your soul. We surely have much to praise God for, so the next time you feel a bit discouraged when you go to prayer, begin your prayer by praising God for past and present mercies, and you will find it will bring you out into the clear light much more quickly than if you start your prayer with petition. Try It and see if it does not work.

Communion is the subjective side of prayer, and it is this phase of prayer that we often miss. With most people the fundamental, if not the exhaustive, conception of prayer is petition, asking God to give them something. The greatest achievement of prayer is not in having something given to us as a result of praying, but rather in having something done to us, something done in us, as is seen in this scripture, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Note, it does not say, "It shall be given to you," but rather, "it shall be done unto you," done in you. It is great to have something given to us, but greater to have something done in us, to us.

Prayer is more than a medium of securing blessings. It is a channel through which we build ourselves up in God. A means by which we lift ourselves to newer and higher heights and levels of living, by which we keep ourselves up in a heavenly frame, up above the world's magnetism, and out of the cellar and basement of our natures.

Communion is a time of impartation, inspiration and revelation. Prayer is more than an oratory; it is an observatory. It is where we see things. Prayer not only reveals Him; it unveils us. So prayer is both an outgo and an income.

Through communion we constantly receive the inflowing life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In ourselves we are spiritually bankrupt. It is true that we receive the life and the spirit of God at conversion, yet we must keep drawing on Him by communion to maintain that life. Through communion the Holy Spirit reveals to us the mind of God. We miss much of the revelation of God's will because we are not in a place where God reveals that will. It is while in communion with God that we put ourselves in that atmosphere in which the Spirit of God can reveal Himself. When we get alone in the chamber of communion we can hear the voice of God, and here it is that God reveals His mind to us as nowhere else. Through communion the Spirit of God fits us for the service of God.

### 2. Petition

The second element in prayer is petition. Petition is prayer with our face toward self in the more limited sense. Petition has its place in our prayers, but it does not have first place. Our prayers should never begin with petition. To begin my prayer with petition is to start it on too low a level. It is no sin to start it there, but it is nothing short of heart idolatry to keep it on that level. The pattern prayer given to the disciples by our Lord has several petitions in it -- six in all. Five of them concern spiritual needs and one of them physical needs. But in this prayer they were not taught to pray for their own needs first, but rather for Kingdom needs: "Thy kingdom come."

The element of petition is overworked in our prayers. In fact it is the only element some people ever use. When they get into trouble, when reverses, sickness, and hard problems confront them, then they pray to God for help. There are many people who are willing to use God, who are not willing to let God use them. The only part God plays in the lives of some people is that of a glorified Santa Claus.

Too many prayers are made up of a column of wants, and most of the petitions are self-centered. They have become professional beggars. It is "give me" -- "give me" from the time they start praying until they stop. I do not know why it is, unless it is that our spiritual liabilities are so greatly in excess of our spiritual assets.

The closet time, instead of being a time of enrichment, is too often spent in taking out a degree of bankruptcy. Instead of the closet being a filling station, it has become a repair shop. Too often we go in for repairs when we ought to be going in for replenishings. I saw the words, "Closed for repairs," over the door of a factory, and immediately I said, "These words, 'Closed for repairs,' could be written over many a prayer closet."

There are at least four things that hinder our petitions:

(1) An unforgiving spirit is one of them. The spirit of Christ is a forgiving spirit. We can see this in connection with the question Peter asked: "Master, how many times must I forgive a man? Seven times?" Apparently Peter thinks he is growing in grace, but Jesus replies by telling him that forgiveness is not a question of mathematics -- "Shall I forgive a fellow seven times?" -- not seven times, but seventy times seven. My! 490 times is surely a good many times.

S. D. Gordon comments on the man who owed his lord a debt, twelve million dollars -- that is to say, practically an unpayable amount. He went to him and asked for time -- "Be easy on me; I mean to pay you." And his lord generously forgave him the whole debt. Then this forgiven man went out and found a fellow servant who owed him some money, and the amount was less than seventeen dollars. He says, "Pay me what you owe me, or go to jail." This is Jesus' picture of a man as He knows him who knows him best. And in effect He says what we have been forgiven by God is as an unpayable amount; and what we are not willing to forgive is like sixteen and a half dollars by contrast. Many a splendid life today is an utter cipher in the spiritual realm because of an unforgiving spirit.

The shortest route to God for some people would not be by the way of the mourner's bench, but around by their neighbor's house and first be reconciled. When you come to make your

sacrifice and remember that your brother hath something against you, leave your gift and go and be reconciled.

"We should forgive lovingly, as Christ forgave Peter; we should forgive compassionately, as Christ forgave those who murdered him; we should forgive generously, as He forgave the thief on the cross; we should forgive forgetfully, as God has forgiven us."

We have all been wronged some time or other. There is the groceryman who over-charged you, the automobile man who lied to you, the landlord who neglected you, the telephone girl who was snippy to you. There is the friend who touched you for a "tenspot" and has never given it back, the relatives who have imposed on you, the neighbor who has lied about you, and the man you trusted who deceived you. There is the man higher up who snubbed you, the wife who has not treated you right, children who have disgraced you, and the husband who has failed in kindness. There is Uncle Joe who died and did not leave you anything in his will, and the church that turned you out. Let us recall every person who has stabbed us with anything from a pin to a hand spike, pull them all together in the tank of our memory, then turn the hose on them in the waters of forgiveness.

Having an unforgiving spirit shuts out the possibility of God's forgiveness. "If we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you."

(2) A lack of persistence has kept some from realizing the answer to their petitions. Too often we come to the "amen" too soon in our prayers, and this is very true of our secret prayers. Short prayers will deplete our spiritual vigor, arrest our spiritual growth, undermine our spiritual foundations and destroy our soul-saving tendency. Short praying is a sure indication of superficial piety and an infallible proof of heart backsliding.

Would we have the oil that lubricates our spiritual machinery, that will prevent the leaking of steam, the clogging of machinery, the bucking of belts, and hot boxes and blown-out cylinder heads and moral wrecks all along the line?

Would you have the ability to outride every storm and come in off of every battlefield with victory perched upon your banner? Would you start the choir birds to singing in the forest of your soul and the flowers to ever blooming, and the running brooks to flowing across the sparkling pebbles of your soul? Then pray until you have prayed clear through.

How long has it been since you prayed long enough to pray through and received an outpoured blessing from God on your own soul?

Let us not forget that the largest results come to us through protracted prayer. It was a great result on the day of Pentecost, but it did not come about by a "Now I lay me down to sleep" affair. It came about by protracted prayer, by ten days of praying. In that great revival on the day of Pentecost they had only one sermon and ten days of praying; now we have ten sermons and only little smatterings of prayer.

It was a great result Elijah brought about when he prayed the heavens open after they had been closed for more than three years, and brought to the people relief from a terrible drought that had caused so much suffering. But it did not come about by offering a sentence prayer. Elijah was persistent in praying. He prayed for a while, then sent a servant to see if there was any sign of rain. When he was told by the servant that there was no sign of rain, Elijah went down the second time and prayed. Again he sent the servant to look for signs of rain, and we read that Elijah did this seven times before the heavens opened and flooded the earth with a refreshing rain. Yes, this was a great result, but you note it came to pass through protracted prayer. The largest results come to us as individuals, and also as a church, through protracted prayer.

(3) The answer to our petitions is sometimes not realized because of a lack of definiteness in our praying. Much is lost in prayer because of its scattering generalities and indefiniteness. To pray for everybody and everything in general is to get but little in particular.

Much is lost from a lack of being definite when praying for yourself. Salvation as an experience is definite. It is definite both in seeking and finding. The commands of God that relate to experience are definite, such as, "Be ye holy," "Be ye therefore perfect."

David was definite in his praying for full salvation: "Create in me a clean heart." He did not pray to be drawn nearer to God; he did not pray for a deeper experience, nor to be given more religion; this would have been too indefinite. He might have prayed for more religion and received it, and yet he would not have known how much he had, for the comparative degree is very indefinite. The word "more" is one that can not be bounded. It is neither in the positive nor superlative degree. It is in that middle class that swings back and forth. This is a day of generalizing -- we have general calls, general witnessing, general seeking and general praying, and also general preaching. "We need more definite preaching. Definite preaching will result in definite conviction, and definite conviction will bring about definite seeking, and definite seeking will produce definite finding, and definite finding will result in definite witnessing."

(4) To get an answer to our petitions they must be in accord with the will of God. The purpose of prayer is to get God's will done. To understand God's will we must understand something of God's character. S. D. Gordon calls our attention to five words in the Bible that suggest to us something of what God is. The words are "father, mother, friend, lover, and husband." God is so much that it takes a number of earth's relationships put together to get a good suggestion of what He is. These relationships give us an idea of the character of the God to whom we are praying.

The greatest prayer that one can offer is "Thy will be done." It may be well also to remember that God has a first and second will for us. Some people will fill a secondary place all their lives because they will not let God have first place. God has a first choice and a second choice for us. He always prefers that His first will be accomplished in us, but when we will not step up to that height He comes down to the highest level we will come up to, and works with us there. For instance, God's first choice for Israel was that He Himself should be their King. But they insisted on having a king in order to be like the nations about them.

We should make a study of God's will. God has two wills for us, or better, two parts to His will. There is His will of grace, and His will of government. His will of grace is plainly revealed in His Word. It is that we should be saved and cleansed from all sin and by and by be glorified in His presence.

His will of government is His particular plan for my life. God has every life planned, and if we find that plan or place, we will be happy and labor at a very great advantage. We should all desire it so much that we would pray like Saul soon after he was converted: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" For us not to do it is to neglect the essential factor in the solution of the problem.

The will of God should have the largest place in our prayers. Prayer is not the ignorant outcry of a clamorous soul seeking to have its own way. Our petitions must be in harmony with the will of God.

I can hear some one say, "That narrows prayer." No, it doesn't; it broadens man's will. There is nothing narrow or narrowing about God. God has the largest place in the Lord's Prayer. That is why the ages have failed to wear it out. You will note that the first, second and third petitions in this prayer are His. They set forth His personality, His name and His kingdom. These petitions you have to utter before you come to a single petition for yourself. The fourth, fifth, and sixth all belong to us. Having offered these, we come to the conclusion, which belongs to God. The Lord's Prayer is the power it is because God has the chief place in it. There can not be anything broader nor grander than the will of God. So let us see that our prayers run parallel with God's will so that God may have the chief place.

In Abraham's prayer for Sodom, God is given the chief place. Abraham wants God to do only what is consistent with His justice. He only desires that God take His own way. Direct prayers might look like dictations to God. So Abraham's prayer is composed of questions. In this respect his prayer is unlike other prayers. Each of six questions inquires simply what God's will is. Abraham said, "Wilt thou spare the city for fifty righteous people?" -- then forty-five, then forty, then thirty, then twenty, then ten. And for all that Abraham asked, God had a ready answer -- "certainly." It was not God who left off granting, but Abraham who left off asking. God was willing to do more in the case of Abraham than Abraham asked. God is always in advance of our prayers when the prayers are in harmony with the will of God.

### 3. Intercession

The third element in praying is intercession. Intercession is prayer with our face toward others and is objective rather than subjective in its effect. S. D. Gordon, from whom I quote at real length, has said that there are five outlets of power, but that the power that is released through intercessory prayer is the greatest. The first outlet of power is through the life, or what we are. If we are right, the power of God will constantly flow out of us unconsciously, for we all exert a twofold influence, a conscious and an unconscious influence. It is my own opinion that we accomplish more either for good or bad in the realm of unconscious influence, for we accomplish more in what we are than by what we do. We do our greatest preaching when we are not preaching at all.



For you to exist is for you to do two things: first, to radiate; second, to be the recipient of radiators. All the good we accomplish with our radiations will never be known, but we do know that they go a long way in helping to form the characters and settle the destinies of those who are the recipients.

One old preacher said to his son, "Let us go into the city and preach." They started at once for the city, and as they journeyed they conversed back and forth as they walked along the busy streets, and through the humble alleys to the edge of the city, and to the village beyond. When they started for home, then the son who was also a minister, turned and said to his father, "When shall we begin to preach?" The father replied by saying, "My son, we have been preaching. We have been preaching while we were walking. We have been seen by many, our behavior has been marked by many, and so we have delivered a morning sermon." The father said, "Son, it is no use that we walk anywhere to preach unless we preach while we walk." We are living epistles read and known; we all have our readers. Every day that little book of your life is being read by some one in the shop, in the office, in the home. So let us so live that we will furnish our readers with some good reading.

The second avenue through which God manifests His power is through our lips, or what we say. What we say may be said stammeringly, and not the best of grammar may be used in expressing it, but it will make the hearts of those who listen burn within them if it is spoken from the heart. I have heard people speak, and their speech was very smooth and accurate, but what they said rolled off me as easily as it rolled out of them.

Another channel through which God manifests Himself is through the service we render, or what we do. What we do may be done very imperfectly, but if it is our best, it will be God blest, and when God's blessing is on it, it always brings forth a harvest.

Another way God reveals His power is through our money, or what we give. Money comes next to omnipotence, of all the things we handle.

The greatest outlet of power, however, is through intercessory prayer. This outlet of power is greater than the power of the life lived. The power of a life is tremendous; nothing we think of is to be compared with a pure, holy, consistent life, and yet its power is limited to the home, city or community in which it is lived. The life often touches only one spot

The power that is released through our lips depends on the life back of it. Words that come brokenly and awkwardly are often made eloquent by the life behind them, and many times words that are wonderful have all their meaning and effect sapped by an inconsistent life back of them. No one cares for a man's profession, no matter how loud he says "Amen" on Sunday, if on Monday he goes out and sells a suit of clothes to be all wool, when he knows it is half cotton, or goes out on Monday and sells a horse to be sound as a dollar, when he knows it has the blind staggers. The power that flows through our lips may be great and it may touch many spots, but it is always less than a life.

The power that is released through money depends largely on the motive back of it. Begrudged money and stained money soil the treasury. So that which comes the nearest to omnipotence comes nearest to being impotent.

But the power released through prayer is tremendous. It may touch not only one spot, as a life does, but wherever in the world you choose to turn it. Prayer opens a whole planet to one's activities; we can be touching hearts away off in Africa as really as if we were right there. Prayer puts us in direct dynamic touch with the world.

Intercession is the highest form of service, and also the hardest form of service. No sort of service that we render pulls on every part of our entire being like real praying. Communion and petition are necessarily self-wide, while intercession is world-wide. Intercessory prayer is objective rather than subjective. It has to do wholly with others. It is the selfless prayer.

The main driving purpose of intercessory prayer is outward rather than inward. They are telling us that prayer has no value in influencing others, that it is only subjective in its effect, but this is not true, for prayer in its simplest conception supposes something changed that is not otherwise reachable. The objective is the real driving point of all full prayer. The subjective is in order to the objective.

"Prayer does influence God. It does not influence God's purpose, but it does influence God's practice. Every right thing God has already purposed to do, but He does nothing without consent. He has been hindered in His purpose because of our lack of willingness."

Someone asks, "Is our intercession necessary so far as God is concerned, and the work He would have accomplished in the world?" We must say that it is necessary. It is impossible for God to bring the world forward to its goal without the aid of human beings. We must not overestimate the importance of the human agency, nor must we underestimate it, for the human is as indispensable as the divine.

It thus becomes evident that God has voluntarily made himself dependent also upon our prayers. For after all, prayer is the deciding factor in the life of every one who surrenders himself to God to be used by Him.

"What we do in God's kingdom is entirely dependent upon what we are, and what we are depends again upon what we receive, and what we receive depends again upon prayer."

This applies not only to the work of God in us, but also to the work of God through us. For Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his vineyard." Here Jesus has said He is dependent upon our prayers. He does it through our praying. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers."

Heaven is full of power that will convict and convert, but it must be released before it can help any one, and the greatest agency in releasing it is prayer -- prevailing prayer. In the old covenant there were only a few through whom God could transmit this power, but since the birth of

the church on the day of Pentecost this has been changed. Since then He makes all who will accept salvation transmitters of power.

The intercessory prayer is for others rather than for one's self. It is the highest and holiest prerogative of our being and the mightiest power of our Christian life, broadest and biggest in its range. Much has been done by testimony, by living and preaching, but infinitely more has been done through intercessory prayer.

The greatest thing we can do for God or man is to pray. It is not the only thing, but the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who say prayers, or talk about praying, nor those who merely believe in prayer. I mean those who TAKE TIME to pray.

No, you will not have time to pray. It will have to be taken from something else. A twenty-four hour day is too short a time to do everything that has to be done. Something will have to be left undone, and that something may be important, but it is less important than prayer. There are few who are putting prayer first, but those who are doing it are doing the most for God in wining souls.

My friend Ernest J. Clark, a fine Christian business man of Battle Creek, said to me while in conversation on this subject, "God desires to lay a special call to a life of intercessory prayer on a great number of His followers, but because of the prevalent preference for talking to men rather than to God they fail, and God's work suffers an irreparable loss. Not faith only but faith and works. Nothing worth while is ever accomplished in the work of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth except the effort be accompanied by prayer. There are fewer prayers than preachers, fewer spiritual wrestlers than exhorters, fewer intercessors than incessant talkers."

Intercession is the method to be used, or means of having things done by God, that would not otherwise be done. It is God alone that can give harvests of wheat, and yet God will give harvests of wheat only when men sow grain.

The intercessory prayer is the selfless prayer. To be an intercessor we will need to have done largely with our own case. Of course none of us will ever get to the place where we will not need to pray for ourselves, but, as it is in many cases, we have little or no time to pray for others, for we are so nearly bankrupt spiritually that most of the time has to be spent on self. We would have more time to spend on others if we did not need so much time in settling up old scores and paying up delinquent taxes.

"The success we are having, or not having, is the best criterion for measuring our spiritual life. Intercessory prayer is a proof of our close relationship with God and a right heart attitude toward others. It evidences the utter absence of the selfishness that so often dominates or mixes all our desires.

So if we are to make a well-rounded prayer there must be three elements in it: communion, petition, and intercession. Communion is the upward drive of prayer, or prayer with our face toward God; petition is the inward drive of prayer, or prayer with our face toward self;

intercession is the outward drive of prayer, or prayer with our face toward others. Communion and petition store the life with power, while intercession releases that power. Communion and petition are subjective, while intercession is objective.

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## PART II -- LAWS OF PRAYER

(1) The first one is the law of need. Prayer is the evidence of a deep sense of need. We will never really pray until we feel the urgent need of something that only God can give.

The law of need is the basic factor in prayer. The more conscious the need, the more persistent will be the petition. A sinner will not pray long for pardon unless he feels his guilt, till he senses his lost condition. The converted man will not pray for a clean heart until he feels his need of it. Neither will the saints pray long for their unsaved relatives until they see their peril. Nor will the church pray as it should for a revival until it realizes how much one is needed. This agonizing sense of need is all too rare among us and accounts for the failure of much of our praying.

The need may be personal, or it may be for others. It may be personal as in the case of the publican. The Pharisee and the publican went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee really did not pray, for he did not express any need. He made no confession -- he did confess for the publican. If we could get into heaven by confessing our neighbors' sins, the broad way would be devoid of traffic. The publican found forgiveness, for he confessed his need. He made a real confession, for it was made in the singular number. Real confessions are never made in the plural number; they are always made in the singular. He does not pray, God be merciful to "us" sinners, but rather, God be merciful to "me" a sinner. It took many words for the Pharisee to tell God what he was not, but it took only one word for the publican to tell God what he was. The publican made only one trip to the mourner's bench and went home justified. If you want God to save you, do not exhaust the typesetter's capital I's, as did the Pharisee, in telling God about your virtues, but tell Him of your sins. No one will do a good job of confessing until he feels his need.

The need may be personal as in the case of the prodigal. It was a sense of need that made him pack his suitcase and take the middle of the road and head toward home. He said, "I am perishing with hunger," and when a man feels like that he can travel very fast. The prodigal had gone a long distance from home, and so have some of you, but the right kind of conviction will enable a man to travel every inch of the long journey, and wonderful is the velocity of a truly convicted soul, for the Holy Ghost furnishes it with wings that distance men and devils with astonishing expedition.

One can travel a long journey in a very short time if he only feels he is perishing with hunger.

The need may be personal as in the case of the blind man. The blind beggar cried, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me," and the people tried to silence him, but the more they opposed him, the louder he cried. What made him persistent in the face of such discouragement? It was an

inwrought conviction of need, which is always the background of successful praying. The blind man "cried"; before he got his eyes open he had to have his mouth open. I have noticed that those who come to Christ to seek Him always get the quickest and best results who give up their voices when seeking. I have found that also to be true many times when praying all alone; when I can pray out loud I seem to reach God easier than when I am compelled to do it in silence.

The need may be personal as in the case of the widow who went for help to an unjust judge who did not fear God nor man. She had been robbed of her rightful possessions.

It might be that some of us are in a "widowed state" who have been robbed partially or wholly of a soul burden, robbed of a desire to read the Bible and to pray in secret, robbed of the power to live a wholly sanctified life. If so, there is only one thing necessary in order to get it back, and that is to feel our need of having it back so much that we will go after it and not give up till we get it.

The means of enrichment is within our reach. Only earnest, persistent prayer prompted by a sense of need will restore to us that which may have been lost. It restored the widow's loss.

The need may be for others, as in the case of the man who had a friend come to his home at midnight and who had nothing to set before him. So he went to his neighbor and interceded in behalf of his friend, but the neighbor said, "We are all in bed and we can not give you," but we read that the man insisted on the neighbor getting up and giving him the bread, but not because the friend had come did he do it, but because of his importunity he arose and gave him all that he needed. What made him persist? It was a feeling of need, a need not for himself but for another.

(2) The law of detachment. Jesus set forth this law when He said, "When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and shut the door." This is the law of detachment. Much is lost in prayer because we violate this law.

If we are to attain an inner fellowship with Christ, this law must be obeyed, and if it is obeyed, there are two things that are necessary.

The first thing is separation. This is accomplished by going into the closet. This breaks our connection with the outer world; this separates us from external things. Going into the closet and shutting the door seems to teach us that it is a work that requires time.

The second thing we must accomplish in order to obey this law of detachment is concentration, or shutting the door. It is not enough to go into the closet; the door must be shut. It is possible to go into the closet and not shut the door. It is possible to withdraw outwardly and not withdraw inwardly.

The secret life has little chance until this law is fully obeyed. Until we withdraw outwardly and inwardly our prayers will go up and bring nothing down, go out and bring nothing in. It is not the amount of time we are on our knees that counts. Ten minutes on our knees in the closet with the DOOR SHUT will bring a greater empowerment to us than thirty minutes with the door open.

It is not the vocabulary of the prayer on which Christ places value. Prayer at its best is always in the closet with the door shut. There is not the temptation to unreality in secret prayer that there is in public prayer. No form of prayer can take the place of secret prayer. One might manage to exist spiritually without public prayers or family prayers, but it is not possible to keep in touch with God without secret prayer.

Secret prayer lies at the very root and foundation of our prayer life. A holy life does not live in the closet, but it can't live without the closet.

The "closet" is the "closed place" the place from which the world is shut out. While outward seclusion has a great advantage for quiet, refreshing talk to God, and talk with God (for in the closed place we may not only talk to God -- we may talk with God) we can close the door while walking along the crowded streets, while at work in the office and factory. I am glad for this, for many times outward separation would be unattainable, while inward separation never is.

We should set apart time for going to the closet. Jesus does not say how often we should go, nor how long we should stay, but He does say we should go into the closet. Not that God is not in the church or even on the corner of the streets, where the hypocrites in Christ's day were wont to pray. But God meets us in a peculiar and special way in the closet. The shortest, the surest, the safest way to meet God is in the closet.

Too often we go into the closet, but do not shut the door, and often we shut the door, but do not keep it shut long enough. Secret prayer is the most purely spiritual of all human employments. Of course secret prayer can not be shut up to places and bound down to times, but for its proper performance and full fruit the closet is absolutely indispensable.

If we rush through prayer in the closet, we had better not go to our knees at all. It does not take much time to walk into a closet, but many times it takes a long time to get the DOOR shut. We all know how difficult it is to control our thoughts, but until we fully concentrate we miss much of the help it should bring.

Secret prayer is such an essential duty that the Bible nowhere lays down laws and rules either as to times or places for such prayer. The Bible does take pains to tell us how the saints of other days did, how Abraham and Jacob, David and Daniel, and how Jesus and the apostles did -- Abraham for Sodom, Jacob at the Jabbok, Daniel with the open window, Jesus all night on the mount and in the garden at midnight, Peter on the housetop and Paul in prison. So we are left to choose our own times and places, few or many, open or secret, vocal or mental, just as we need, and just as we like.

(3) The third law of prayer is the law of "abiding." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

There is an intimate relation between prayer and character. It is the prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. So we can see that not only the right kind of prayer is necessary, but also the right kind of a man. He must be a man who is right with God. This is the condition upon which we may have access to God. The man who accomplishes anything by his praying must pass this

test: he must be righteous. He must have rectitude of character before God and man. The reasonable thing about this requirement, or law is, that it is within the reach of all.

We can think of several things that might have been required' of us in order to make us effective in our praying. Jesus could have said, "The prayer of the rich man availeth much, the prayer of the theologically-trained man, or the prayer of the fluent man or the prayer of a college-bred man availeth much." How glad we ought to be that He did not demand any such qualifications in order to make successful prayers.

The essential thing that God has required is within the reach of all. No matter if you were born in a log cabin in the hills of Kentucky, you may not be worth one hundred dollars in cash, nor have a C grade education, but you can be righteous. No matter what place or position in life you may occupy you can be right with God. If we fail at this point of righteousness we are disqualified for the job. Yes, there is an intimate relation between prayer and character. This is what the psalmist had in mind when he said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Does it not seem to you at times that heaven mocks our efforts in prayer and that very few of the many prayers we send up are answered? May not the cause for it be because we are failing in righteousness -- because we are regarding iniquity in our hearts, because we are not abiding in Him? May it not be because we are violating this law of prayer, the "law of abiding"?

(4) The fourth law of prayer is the law of "earnestness." Earnestness is one of the strange ingredients in successful praying, and many of our prayers fall for a lack of it. God has not pledged Himself to hear and answer half-hearted, frost-bitten prayers. The Scripture says, "Thou shalt find HIM if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 4:29).

A lady presented herself at the altar as a seeker in a certain revival meeting, and the evangelist asked her what she was seeking. She replied by saying, "I would like to have more religion." "How much more do you want? Would you like to have Him sanctify you?" She said, "Well, if the Lord wants to sanctify me, I am perfectly willing." The idea of anyone patronizing God like that! As if to say, "I am not concerned myself so much about it, but if He wants to, if it would be any accommodation to Him to sanctify me, I am willing."

There are surely many motives for spiritual earnestness. Foremost among them is the presence of lost souls all about us. We have two things on our hands at the present time: a passionless church and an indifferent world. I think the passionless church is largely responsible for the indifferent world. I believe the heart of the world will yet respond to the heart of the church. The alienation of the people is not fundamental. The people are not sick of Jesus Christ; they are only sick of His feeble, thin-skinned, pliable, plastic, world-conformed, compromising, half-hearted followers.

Jesus prayed earnestly. "He being in agony prayed more earnestly." Does the world's need pierce our hearts to such an extent that we agonize in prayer? We never can heal the need we do not feel. The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of bleeding hearts. "As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless." Oh, how easily we become callused, how easily we become wrapped in the soft wool of self-indulgence, so that the cries from far and near do not seem to reach us.

Earnestness is one of the essential qualifications for successful praying. It is not the loudness, nor the length of our prayers, but the faith and fervor that reaches the heart. To pray earnestly does not mean necessarily to pray long or loud.

Hannah was so in earnest and so lost in prayer that she did not utter a word. Only her lips moved (1 Sam. 1:13), but God answered her prayer. The prophets of Baal shouted and cut themselves until the blood ran, but Elijah stood quietly and entreated God, and God answered by fire. It is true that in our earnestness and zeal we do sometimes wax loud, but this does not always indicate earnestness.

Jesus "being in an agony.. prayed more earnestly." The word "agonize" was a very popular word in the early church, but the word is not in the modern church's vocabulary. There is another word that has taken its place, and that word is "organize." The church is organizing more than it is agonizing. It is spending more time in installing new machinery than in enriching its fundamental power. They are more intent on riveting the organization than they are in strengthening the organism.

When a church becomes a bit distressed over its spiritual impotence, instead of going to God and praying for a new and bigger release of divine power, it gets busy and installs a new piece of machinery, just as if machinery creates power. Machinery does not create power; it consumes power, and the more machinery you get without the driving force to run it the more dead weight you have on your hands.

When a church discovers that it is losing its power it will often create a new organization as a substitute for that loss. But organization, as I see it, is an almost inevitable accompaniment of spiritual decline. The church has always resorted to human mechanics when it has lost its spiritual power. A Spirit-filled church has use for but very little machinery. My prayer has been and will be that God may raise up someone and raise him up quickly -- who is big enough to kill this organization fiend and bury it in a grave ten miles deep. What the church in general needs most is less program and more prayer, less organization and more agonizing, less human mechanics and more spiritual dynamics. "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Just as it takes steam to run an engine, cash to run a bank, and brains to run a university, so it takes the Holy Ghost to run a church. And just as an engine without steam is helpless and a bank without cash will fail, and as a university without brains is a humbug, so the church is powerless and fruitless without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. A Ford car can run as well without gas and oil as a church without spiritual power.

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### PART III -- NECESSITY OF PRAYER

(1) The first reason we mention for the necessity of prayer is in order to a holy life. Prayer and a holy life are one. They mutually act and react. One can not survive without the other. A holy life does not live in the closet, but it can not live without the closet. Everything vital to godliness is nourished by closet air. It has been said that the Reformation was born in Luther's closet. That is



where all reformation is born. I find myself better or worse just to the extent that I pray more or less. I find the God-consciousness fading out of my life just to the extent that prayer fades out of my life.

"If we are to meet God in the closet we will have to stay with Him out of the closet. Our ability to stay with Him out of the closet will be just to the extent of our ability to stay with Him in the closet, for it is what we are out of the closet that gives victory or defeat in the closet. If the spirit of the world prevails in our non-closet hours the spirit of the world will prevail in our closet hours, for the stream of our praying can not rise above the fountain of our living. We can not rise higher than our character."

We must be on Sunday what we have been all week. If we have been worldly-minded all week, we will be worldly-minded on Sunday. Brethren, we are praying feebly because we are living feebly, and we are living feebly because we are praying feebly.

The lack of prayer will show itself in the quality of my life. If I neglect prayer for a few days I feel it, but if I neglect it for two weeks the people see it.

The life one lives affects his prayers. A man's life and prayer correspond. Our life registers itself in our prayers. Between a man's prayers and his life there is a constant action and reaction. Your life broadens or contracts your prayers, and your prayers broaden or contract your life. Your prayer and my prayer will not be any bigger than we are. If we are selfish and narrow, then our prayers will be selfish and narrow.

(2) We also need to pray to prevent spiritual decline. Religion does not give us any fixed state above which we can not rise, nor below which we can not fall. There are two principles in every breast; a progressive principle and a retrograde principle. As soon as the progressive principle ceases to operate, that minute the retrograde principle begins. Hence we are going forward or backward, upward or downward. We can not stand still. We are living souls, and are never twice the same. There are no stationary periods in life physically, intellectually, or spiritually. The law of life is progress or degeneracy; we are incapable of permanence. Some one has said that none "need to stay where they are." I will go further and say. "None can stay where they are."

All life is subject to evaporation, decay and death, and all life will die unless it is fed, for no organism can sustain itself, be that organism ever so complete. The tree is a complete organism, but it can not live on itself. The church is a complete organism, but it can not sustain itself. I have seen a few of them try to do so, but every church that has tried it has eventually died. When any church fails to reach out its arms of love and sympathy for a lost world, and to replenish its ranks, that have been depleted by death and backsliding, then it will soon become obsolete.

Declension is the forerunner of deterioration. There are some trees that are blown over suddenly, but when they are examined it is found that dry rot has been going on in the trunk for a long time. So with many a person. They have been backsliding so gradually and unconsciously as to attract no attention because there has been no change in their outward lives, but all at once some crisis or demand comes, and they do not have the inner adequacy to stand the test. It is true that the

Christian life rarely, if ever fails by gross immorality, but it comes about by almost unconscious and insensible degrees. Whenever you see an individual who was once a Christian standing shamelessly on the mountain-top of impiety, or wallowing in the miry pit of vice beneath, you may safely assume that that person has been worming his way in that direction for a long time, and that the sudden outward change was preceded by a gradual inward preparation.

No person ever backslides first in his feet; he always backslides first in his heart. It never comes about by a blowout, but rather by a slow leak. No normal collapse comes about all of a sudden; it comes about gradually.

Heart declension is now going on in the hearts of many of my readers. Many have seen a better day religiously; and if this state of declension be not arrested, if there be no impartation of new impulse, if you reach not a "reconstructive crisis," you will drift farther and farther from God. Heart backsliding as a rule is not deliberate, not positively willful; it comes about by neglect, by what we leave undone rather than in what we do.

It is not what we are doing that is watering our fires, clogging our machinery, breaking our belts, or giving us hot boxes and blown-out cylinder heads and moral wrecks all along the line. It is not what you are doing that is depleting your spiritual vigor and arresting your spiritual growth and destroying your spiritual foundations.

It is not so much what we are doing that is stopping the choir birds singing in the forests of our soul and the flowers blooming, and the running brooks flowing across the sparkling pebbles of our souls.

It is not what we are doing that is causing us to come in off so many battlefields with defeat perched upon our banners. It is not what we are doing that is filling our souls with a creeping paralysis, and taking the light out of our souls until our faces look like blown-out lamps, but it is the things we are leaving undone. The sin of omission is the curse of the church, and what is making such inroads on our piety.

(3) We need to pray to keep ourselves spiritually energized. The disciples on one occasion were asked by a father to heal his lunatic son, but the disciples could not do it. Then the father took his son to Jesus, who was just coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and asked Him to do it for him, and Jesus said, "Bring him to me," and the son was healed. Then the disciples went to Jesus and inquired of Him just why they could not heal him, and Jesus replied by saying, "This kind cometh not out but by prayer." They were lacking in spiritual power because they were falling down in their prayer life.

Have we been failing partially or wholly in our work as individuals and as a church in getting people saved, and have we asked Jesus the cause of our failure? If we did ask Him the reason for it, I imagine He would put His finger on our prayer life and say, "You are powerless because you are prayerless."

It is not enough to be baptized with the Spirit. If we are to keep a normal experience we will need to have our spirituality energized and re-energized. Paul said, "Though the outward man

perish the inner man is renewed once a year at the annual camp-meeting." No, he said, "It must be renewed once a quarter at the district meeting." No, he said, "It should be renewed once a week at the midweek prayer-meeting." No, he didn't. He said, "The inner man must be renewed DAY BY DAY."

Our religion is not like an eight-day clock. It is not like a storage battery. It must be wound and charged daily. The children of Israel could not gather manna enough to do them two days at a time; they had to go out each morning and get it fresh. There must be a daily renewing, refilling, replenishing.

Refilling and refreshings are needed when there is no moral defilement. Every time the automobile runs into the garage it does not go in for repairs. It goes in for oil, gas, and water. It goes in for refillings and renewings. So it is with a holy soul; it is often sensible of a spiritual exhaustion when there is no sense of defilement. Deeply spiritual people often feel their need of refillings and refreshings.

Paul said, "Strive together with me in your prayers that you may be with me refreshed." A sense of spiritual need is not an evidence of spiritual poverty. Jesus said, "Who touched me? . . . Virtue has gone out of me," and by virtue going out it made it necessary for Him to pray so that He would have that healing and saving power to give to all who touched Him by faith.

Service without unction or divine power is important. Our strongest effort without the cooperation of the Holy Spirit is impotent, whereas our feeblest effort with the unction of the Holy one is omnipotent.

It is prayer that puts omnipotence into our service. It is not for us, as Christian workers, to see how much more we can do than we are doing for God. It is for us to see how much more of God we can get into what we are doing. It is God in the service that counts, God in the prayer, in the testimony, in the special singing, in the personal work and in the sermon, that does the work.

We often hear it said, "What this church or that church or our church needs is some new talent," but that is not what it needs most. What it needs most is more of God on the talent we already have. More of God in our Sunday-school teachers and officers of the church, pastor and people.

So much of the service we perform is more or less lost because it is rendered in the flesh without unction. What we do has not been preceded by enough prayer to make it effective. One minister who was about to die called all the ministers of his district to his bedside and said to them that he had one big regret, and that was that he had not prayed more. Another Christian worker said he had all his lifetime tried to do the maximum of work on the minimum of prayer.

(4) We need to pray to keep spiritually sensitive. The hope of the world depends on the church keeping spiritually sensitive, but I fear our range of feeling is fast becoming reduced.

We are powerless because we are passionless, and we are passionless because we are prayerless. Passion apart from prayer can not live. The indictment against the church is that it is

losing its soul-saving tendency, and when any church loses its overflowing sympathy and compassion for a lost world, then it is no better than an ethical club and will soon become a social center or a playhouse. When we lose our soul burden as churches or individuals we have lost our pungent, penetrating, heart-breaking force, and then our work will result in mere reformation, but the work of the church is not reformation; the work of the church is regeneration.

When our love and sympathy loses its pang, then we have lost our power to reach the heart of humanity. Paul once heard a cry to come over into Macedonia and help them, and the pain on the distant shore was reflected in his own life. His sympathy and passion tore the strings of his sensitive heart so much that he endeavored to go at once. My dear reader, does the world's need pierce our hearts as it should? Has a numbness settled down upon our spirits so that the pangs of the world make no corresponding sympathy?

I am amazed how easily we become callused. I am ashamed of how small and insensitive is the surface which I present to the needs and sorrows and pain of the world.

We can never heal the need we do not feel. Only as we feel can we make others feel. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The apostles agonized in intercession. Paul warned them day and night with tears.

Our prayers so frequently cost us nothing. They shed no blood and no tears. And isn't it too bad that we can not shed a tear for those for whom He shed His blood? It was David's apprehension of the value and peril of the soul that made him grieve for the people's transgressions so that it turned his eyes to rivers of water for those who kept not God's law.

It was Christ's concern for the fearful 'fate of the Jews that made Him look over Jerusalem, with heaving bosom, weeping eyes, and crying heart, from the brow of Olivet as He bewailed their coming calamity.

This is why the great-hearted Saint Paul could have wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. And this is why he ceased not to warn the people day and night with tears.

Such solicitude every professed Christian ought to feel for lost souls perishing in their sins all about us. But alas, where is that practical realization of God's merciful design? Where is that profound conception of the soul's peril? Where is that tender solicitude for the soul's safety? Where is that earnest activity for the soul's welfare which is comprehended in a proper care for the soul?

What parent cares as he should for the souls of his children? What teacher cares as he should for the souls of his pupils? What preacher cares as he should for the souls of his hearers? What Christian cares as he should for the souls of his neighbors?

A few there are, indeed, who sigh and cry for the lost souls about them, and God knows them, but they are the exception to the prevalent indifference. Many a sinner would not stray far from the truth if he would say what one of old said, "No man careth for my soul."

If the Christians had always cared for souls as they should, we would have a different church today.

Why care less for souls than for money, titles, position, influence, sensual pleasures and posthumous fame? Why devote more labor, more treasure, and more time to the adornment of our dwelling, to the improvement of our cities, to the construction of our railways, to the erection of public monuments, than we do to saving the lost and filling the mansions that are vacant, with redeemed immortals.

"Why contribute more to popular spectacles, social festivities, musical entertainments, excursions and a thousand other things of less importance and value? Why think more about diamonds than the crown jewels of Jehovah, your apparel than the white robes of the ransomed, your equipage than the horses and chariots of fire, your habitation than the golden structures of the New Jerusalem, your daughter's wedding than the marriage supper of the Lamb?"

What excuse can we plead as Christians? Can we plead ignorance of duty, want of means, or insufficient motives? For many years God and heaven have been pouring light upon us, reminding us of our obligations, plying us with every sweet persuasive, with every strong incentive, with every appeal of tenderness and of terror. There is no excuse that we can give for our criminal apathy. We will stand speechless at the judgment seat of Christ.

What other guilt is like the guilt which disregards the greatest interest in the universe? And how does the cruelty of such indifference heighten its criminality?

What is to be said of that disciple of the all-pitying Jesus belonging to a church whose badge is universal charity, who suffers a human soul to perish by his side without the slightest endeavor for its rescue? Who of you would not plunge into the flood to save a drowning child, or rush through the smoke and flame to bear forth a fainting woman from a burning house, or walk miles to give relief to a suffering animal?

"And shall the perishing soul elicit no compassion -- the soul for which God built this beautiful world and reared the jeweled stories of the heavens, the soul for which the eternal well-beloved came forth from the bosom of the Father to encounter the malice of wicked men and wrestle single-handed with all the powers of hell, the soul for which He ascended with the wounds of crucifixion in His palms to stand before the throne, a martyred Lamb, a perpetual Intercessor, pleading with the eloquence of blood freely shed as its ransom?"

Have you ever witnessed a shipwreck? It is a fearful sight. The storm is fierce and loud, the waves rage horribly, the shuddering bark is lifted toward heaven, and then let down with frightful concussion upon the rocks. See, she is going to pieces. There are two or three hundred lives on board. One after another is washed from the deck, some plunge into the sea and struggle with the billows till they sink. Others cling timidly to the rigging, or lash themselves in desperation to some floating spar. Safe on the land we watch; then with agonizing interest we shudder, we shrink with horror. A boat is launched upon the breakers, brave men are trying to carry a line from the shore to the wreck. What shouts of joy hail their success in reaching and delivering them! Look

at the happy spectators gathering around them, grasping their hands and blessing God for their deliverance.

Oh, Christian friends, this is no picture of a perishing soul, nor of the interest we ought to take in its rescue, nor of the joy that angels feel over every sinner who repents. When some courier seraph returns to the empyrean with the intelligence of a soul's salvation, instantly through all the corridors of heaven is heard the glad flutter of immortal wings, the elder children of the family coming to greet their younger brother and compass him about with the song of deliverance. May we share the solicitude and participate in the joy, may no accusing voice in judgment, no wailing from the ranks of the reprobate and ruined ever reach our ears, that "no man cared for my soul."

Oh, that some message of God might arouse us from our criminal apathy. Oh, that some infusion of love divine might melt us in pity and stir us into action on behalf of the perishing multitudes around us who are living and dying without hope, because of no one caring for their souls.

(5) The fifth reason why we need to pray is in order to qualify us for soul-saving work. This is singularly and particularly true of God's ministers. A minister's preparation is two-fold -- he not only has to prepare his head, but must prepare his heart. He goes to the study to prepare his head and to his closet to prepare his heart. It is a popular notion that a preacher's most important task is the preparation of his sermon, but It is not so; it is the preparation of his heart.

The church is right in principle, but wrong in emphasis. When a church puts the emphasis on Yale and Harvard and Princeton it is in the wrong place. The emphasis must be put on Jerusalem as the place to tarry to receive the power and purity that are necessary to make the minister's work successful. We say this without any thought of putting a premium on ignorance, for we only need to go to the Old Testament to find that the greatest man there was an educated man. Moses is the man. We go to the New Testament and find Saint Paul also highly trained. Then we turn to church history and find a sketch of the lives of thirty men from the eleventh century until now, and all but one of them were college men, and some of them were so well educated that they became college presidents, and many of them were great revivalists.

Yes, indeed, the day in which we live demands a full head, but it also demands a full heart. Some think it is impossible to have both at the same time. They think if we have a full head we would be sure to have an empty heart, but not so; it is possible to have both.

Because the emphasis has been shifted to the head, everywhere we find preachers cramming their heads and starving their hearts. It would seem that there is more head than heart. We need more vital preaching. A sermon is not much unless it is touched with emotion, and emotion is something that can not be manufactured. It comes as a result of prayer and meditation.

Many a sermon could be compared to a fine winter day -- short, clear and cold. Brevity is good, clearness is better, but coldness is fatal. Moonlight preaching ripens no harvest. Without the drive of passion, preaching easily degenerates into mere talking, and such talk gets nowhere. It raises no heat in those who hear it, because it is not born out of the passion of the heart. A preacher can fire only as he himself is fired.

Man is essentially emotional; consequently the final appeal must be to his heart. We can only make our hearers feel as we feel. There is a psychological law that prevents a sermon from making a deeper impression on the hearer than it makes on the one who delivers it. The value of a sermon, after all is said and done, is not in its form but in its effect. A sermon that reaches a man's heart and causes him to forsake his wickedness is a great sermon, no matter what the critics say.

We are living in a day of highbrow objection to emotion. The emotional element in religion is being sadly neglected. Logic is being placed before life. This is a day when they want a Christianity without a Christ, and a Christian experience without emotion, but a religion without emotion is too dry to kindle a fire, to say nothing of saving a sin-captured, devil-enslaved world. I do not understand why there is so much objection to emotion in religion. There is no cool dignity at the football game, not any at the political convention, nor at the stock markets. None at the baseball game. Let a Babe Ruth knock out a home run, and nobody in that crowd gets up and delivers a tirade on the impropriety of emotionalism. No, sir, it is emotion that makes the game popular. But when it comes to religion it must be different. We must be lifeless and cold and formal and mechanical. If we become enthusiastic over sports they call us a fan, but if we become enthusiastic over religion they call us a fanatic. The minister has many problems, but his greatest problem is in keeping the zeal and passion and soul burden that he had in the beginning, and he finds that that dies out of his soul just to the extent that prayer is neglected.

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THE END