

## **Utter Dependence upon God; in prayer**

We can do so much in our lives and ministry without God can't we – don't we? How long would it take us to notice if the Spirit has left us on our own? Has He? We are utterly dependent upon God in every circumstance, in every relationship and in all ministries for all good and for the ability to honor His great name in them. There is a necessary connection between our felt dependency upon God and our pursuit of God in prayer. This bleeds over into our ministries. We are either modeling before people (children and adults) how to serve without God or with Him. Either one is always happening: always. This seminar is intended to cultivate your thirst for a felt dependency upon God and to express that thirst in prayer as you meditate upon Scripture. It is also intended to cultivate creative thought in how to lead your ministry teams and children/youth in prayer in the context of the ministry program, as you corporately meditate upon Scripture. This seminar is about seeking God with all of our hearts, through prayer.

### **Summary Statement (in other words)**

Psalm 118:4, "Let those who fear the LORD say 'His steadfast love endures forever'". Fear and love our great and glorious God and do so through humble yearning/longing prayer in the name of Jesus, first in private and then in ministry.

## **Part One:**

### **An appeal to the heart: honoring our great and glorious God through a humble prayerful dependency upon Him**

- **An appeal to the heart through Scripture: dependency/humility**
- **20 minutes**
  - o A call to humility
  - o Consider Hezekiah
  - o Consider Jesus, being supreme in humility
  - o Consider Paul
  
- **An appeal to the heart through Scripture: pray by grace**
- **10 minutes**
  - o A call to grace
  - o Consider the alternative
  
- **An appeal to the heart: Consider the possibilities yet to be seen**
- **5 minutes**
  - o What if...
  - o Prayer of Transition

## **Part Two:**

### **An appeal to the mind: honoring our great and glorious God through purposeful practical application**

- Six opportunities for prayer in the classroom
- A look at three kinds of prayer
  - o Blessing
  - o Blessing with "pause"
  - o Examine the heart with "pause"

## PART ONE:

### An appeal to the heart through Scripture: dependency/humility

Prayer in our lives and in our classrooms, while dependent upon good practical application, is actually more about an atmosphere of humility and felt dependence upon God. If we get this wrong, we get it all wrong.

- **A call to humility from Scripture:**

Isaiah 66:2

“But this is the one to whom I will look  
He who is humble  
And contrite of spirit  
And trembles at My word”

Isaiah 57:15

“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up  
Who inhabits eternity  
Whose name is Holy  
I dwell in the high and holy place  
And also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit  
To revive the spirit of the lowly  
And to revive the heart of the contrite”

Psalms 51:17

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit  
A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise”

Matthew 5:3-7

“Blessed are the poor in spirit  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven  
Blessed are those who mourn  
For they shall be comforted  
Blessed are the meek  
For they shall inherit the earth  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness  
For they shall be satisfied”

Summary Statement: God looks with favor upon the humble, and a primary way that the humble express their humility is through prayer, for the prayerful acknowledge that they are utterly dependent upon God.

Do these words describe  
our heart before God  
and the ministry He has  
us in?

Humble  
Contrite  
Tremble  
Lowly  
Broken  
Poor in spirit  
Mourn  
Meek

The “better” we become  
at our work/ministry,  
the more vulnerable we  
become and the  
evidence of the sin of  
pride is a decreasing  
sense of contrition,  
brokenness...a  
decreasing sense of  
urgency to run to God in  
prayer

Words worth quoting:

Concerning "poor in spirit"; Dr. Martyn-Lloyd Jones

"We are not looking at men confronting one another, but we are looking at men face to face with God. And if one feels anything in the presence of God save an utter poverty of spirit, it ultimately means that you have never faced Him...It [being poor in spirit] means a complete absence of pride, a complete absence of self-assurance and of self-reliance. It means a consciousness that we are nothing in the presence of God. It is nothing, then, that we can produce; it is nothing that we can do in ourselves. It is just this tremendous awareness of our nothingness as we come face to face with God...Look to Him, keep looking at Him. Look at the saints, look at the men who have been most filled with the Spirit and used. But above all, look again at Him, and then you will have nothing to do to yourself. It will be done. You cannot truly look at Him without feeling your absolute poverty, and emptiness. Then you say to Him,

Nothing in my hand I bring  
Simply to Thy cross I cling

Empty, hopeless, naked, vile; but He is the all-sufficient One

Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O lamb of God, I come"<sup>1</sup>

Concerning humility; C.J. Mahaney

"Our definition of humility must be biblical and not simply pragmatic, and in order to be biblical it must begin with God. As John Calvin wrote, "It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself." That's where the following definition can help us: Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martyn-Lloyd Jones, *"Studies in the Sermon on the Mount"*, (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), page 45, 50, 52.

<sup>2</sup> C.J. Mahaney, *"Humility"*, (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 2005), page 21-22

- **Consider Hezekiah: follow his lead (II Kings 18ff; II Chronicles 29ff)**

And he [King Hezekiah], set combat commanders over the people  
And gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city  
And spoke encouragingly to them saying  
'Be strong and courageous  
Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him  
For there are more with us than with him  
With him is an arm of flesh  
**But with us is the LORD our God  
To help us  
And to fight our battles...**

Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it  
**And Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD  
And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said**

'O Lord the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim  
You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth  
You have made heaven and earth

**Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear**

**Open Your eyes, O LORD, and see**

And hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God

Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands

And have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods

But the work of men's hands, wood and stone

Therefore they were destroyed

**So now, O LORD our God,**

**Save us...**

**Please from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You, O LORD, are God alone"**

- **Consider Jesus, Mark 1:21-39, who even in His sinless state knew where to go:  
He went to His Father in prayer. He is supreme in humility.**

- The pure sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29); prayed
- The perfectly loving Good Shepherd (John 10:11); prayed
- God in the flesh (John 1); prayed
- He did not pray merely to be an example to us. He prayed because He needed to. Consider the implication of this truth...

Jesus needed to pray

**\*\*\*Perhaps the most important words during this seminar and what they imply for us are these four words: Jesus needed to pray. Ask the Spirit of truth to show you what this means.**

○ **Words worth quoting, Thomas Brooks**

“The heathens had this notion amongst them...that the way to honor their gods was to be like them. Sure I am that the highest way of honoring Christ is to be like Christ: I John 2:6, ‘He that saith he abideth in Him, ought Himself also to walk even as He walked.’ Oh, that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts. Christ is the sun, and all the watches of our lives should be set by the dial of His motion. Christ is a pattern of patterns; His example should be to us instead of a thousand examples. It is not only our liberty, but our duty and glory, to follow Christ in all His moral virtues absolutely. Other patterns are imperfect and defective, but Christ is a perfect pattern; and of all His children, they are the happiest that come nearest to this perfect pattern.”<sup>3</sup>

- **Consider Paul**

Philippians 3:7-11

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ  
Indeed, I count everything as loss

Because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord

**For His sake**

**I have suffered the loss of all things**

**And count them as rubbish**

**In order that I may gain Christ**

**And be found in Him**

**Not having a righteousness of my own** that comes from the law

But that which comes through faith in Christ

The righteousness from God that depends on faith

That I may know Him

And the power of His resurrection

And may share His sufferings

Becoming like Him in His death

That by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead”

**For the sake of our great and glorious God: pray**

What gain should I consider  
loss? What gain am I tempted  
to worship and trust in over  
trusting in God?

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Brooks, “The Secret Key to Heaven”, First published in London as “The Privie Key of Heaven, 1665, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), Page 16

## An appeal to the heart through Scripture: Pray by grace

### - A call to grace

Instead of being overwhelmed with guilt at yesterday's prayerless ministry, look ahead to today/tomorrow's blessing of grace from our God in Jesus name; the blessing of a felt dependency upon Him carried out through prayer. Bask in grace, do not cower in guilt.

#### o Psalm 90:16-17

"Let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!"

- God does the establishing
- The psalmist does the asking

#### o Jeremiah 9:23-24; 17:7-8; 29:12-13

"Thus says the LORD: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD...Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit...for I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you. You will seek Me and find Me. When you seek Me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the LORD..."

- Boast in God not self
- Trust in God
- God has plans for me - His plans
- Call upon Him; seek Him with all your heart

#### o John 15:4-5

"Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

- Philippians 1:6  
 “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ”
  - God began the work
  - God will finish the work
  
- Philippians 2:12-13  
 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”
  
- II Corinthians 3:4-6  
 “Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
  - Sufficiency for God honoring ministry is not from me
  - Sufficiency for God honoring ministry is from God
  
- II Corinthians 12:9-10  
 “He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”
  
- Hebrews 13:20-21  
 “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.”
  
- I Peter 4:7-11  
 “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace; whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength God supplies-in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen”

- I Peter 5:5  
“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ ”
- II Peter 1:3-4  
“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness”
- Jude 24-25  
“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”
- Words worth quoting, Charles Spurgeon  
“I told my people the other morning, when preaching from the text, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee’, that for the first time in my life I experienced what Abraham felt when he fell upon his face and laughed. I was riding home, very weary with a long week’s work, when there came to my mind this text, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee’, but it came with the emphasis laid on two words, ‘My...thee’. My soul said, ‘doubtless it is. Surely the grace of the infinite God is more than sufficient for a mere insect as I am’ and I laughed, and laughed again, to think how far the supply exceeded all my needs. It seemed to me as though I were a little fish in a sea, and in my thirst I said, ‘Alas, I shall drink up the ocean’. Then the Father of the waters lifted His head sublime and smilingly replied, ‘Little fish, the boundless main is sufficient for thee’. The thought made unbelief appear supremely ridiculous, as indeed it is.”<sup>4</sup>

- **What is the alternative to grace and dependent prayerfulness?**

- **May there be no alternative to yearning for God in prayer**  
**Psalm 63 (1,8)**

“Oh God, You are my God  
Earnestly I seek You  
My soul thirsts for You  
My flesh faints for You  
As in a dry and weary land where there is no water  
My soul clings to You  
Your right hand upholds me”

- **Run in prayer to God in the name of Jesus with resilient hope; with God given joy; with dependent longing.**

<sup>4</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “Lectures To My Students” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), page 193-194

## **An appeal to the heart: Consider the possibilities yet to be seen**

- What if the prayer environment in our classrooms was real and growing to the degree, that parents began to ask a second question next to the first after each class time, the first being “what did you learn today”? What if they began asking relational questions like, “were you with God today – did you spend time with Jesus – what did the Spirit say to you in while in prayer and thinking through His Word – did you cultivate sweet fellowship with Jesus”?
- What if our team leaders and teachers and ministry teams put as much effort in creating a God-honoring prayer environment in their classrooms as they did in teaching God’s Word in their classrooms?
- What if the ministry God has put you in was known for it’s God glorifying
  - o Word ministry: we teach children the Bible
  - o Prayer ministry: we help children listen to and pray to the God of the Bible
  - o Psalm 119:2, “How blessed are those who observe His testimonies; who seek Him with all of their heart”
- What if your time with God alone – in private (in the Word and prayer) was the primary driving force, by God’s grace, that shaped the ministries you lead – all of it/them; every activity, every lesson, every moment...
- What if the prayer environment in our classrooms was real and growing to the degree that children sensed (not merely thought) love for Jesus? What if God blessed them with a spiritual sense of His presence, His holiness, His truth and His love?
- What if the prayer environment in our classrooms was real and growing to the degree that children were learning what it really means to live by, walk by, be led by and be filled by the Spirit?
- What if prayer was not an obvious emphasis in our classrooms?
  - o We would be training little Pharisees
  - o We would be teaching children and modeling before them how to live the Christian life without God; we would be training them for an autonomous life – and independent life: the way of Satan.

- What if prayer was so important that each classroom had a designated spot set aside solely for prayer and what if parents went to that spot each morning to pray with their children as they dropped them off in preparation for what God would bring them? What if there was such an environment of longing and humble expectation for God to show up through the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer?
- **Who is on the other side of our prayers: the Isaiah 40 God is**
- **Prayer of Transition**



- **Two: Opening Prayer**

- What is it?
- How long is it?
- What are the weaknesses or potential problems with opening prayer?
- What are the opportunities or strengths with opening prayer?
- A few guiding thoughts:

- **Three: Closing Time Prayer**

- What is it?
- How long is it?
- What are the weaknesses or potential problems with opening prayer?
- What are the opportunities or strengths with opening prayer?
- A few guiding thoughts:

- **Four: Prayer of Transition**

- What is it?
- How long is it?
- What are the weaknesses or potential problems with opening prayer?
- What are the opportunities or strengths with opening prayer?
- A few guiding thoughts:

- **Five: Small Group Prayer**

- What is it?
- How long is it?
- What are the weaknesses or potential problems with opening prayer?
- What are the opportunities or strengths with opening prayer?
- A few guiding thoughts:

- **Six: Large Group Prayer**
  - What is it?
  - How long is it?
  - What are the weaknesses or potential problems with opening prayer?
  - What are the opportunities or strengths with opening prayer?
  - A few guiding thoughts:
- **Three kinds of prayer (three of many)**
  - **One: Prayer of Blessing**
    - Jesus blessed the children (Matthew (19:13-15))
    - The priests blessed the children on the eve of the day of atonement
    - Take a passage of Scripture, always Scripture, and turn it into a prayer where you face the child and in faith declare that this will be so, according to God's will. You do so with much humble boldness  
Example: Isaiah 41:10  
"Fear not, for I am with you  
Be not dismayed for I am Your God  
I will strengthen you  
I will help you  
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand"
    - Normal Prayer: "God please help these children not to fear..."

Always keep the Gospel in front of them and the call to belief and repentance. Therefore the intentional use of the word "as" ...

Blessing: insert the word "may" and lean into it with faith:

"As God has made you His servant and as you have trusted in Jesus, may this true:

May you not fear, for God is with you

May you not be dismayed, for God is your God

May He strengthen you

May He help you

May He uphold you with His righteous right hand"

- Appropriate touch
- New Testament Blessings: I Thess. 5:23-24; Hebrews 13:20-21
- **Two: Blessing with "pause"**
  - Instruct the children that whenever there is a pause, they are to take what they just heard to God.
    - God, I just heard...may the Spirit of truth show me what I need to know and feel about...?
    - What do I need to know about Jesus?
    - What do I need to know about me?
    - Listen
- **Three: Examine the heart with "pause"**
  - John 16:13, 26 "When the **Spirit of truth** comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on his own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come...But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me."
  - Romans 8:26-28 "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

- This is an appeal to the Spirit of truth to reveal three primary points of truth in the context of prayer
  - One: What is true about God; what is true about Jesus?
  - Two: What is true about God's Word?
  - Three: What is true about my heart before God, His Son Jesus and His Word?
  
- This is especially appropriate at the end of the lesson
  - As a large group
  - As a small group, after the transition from teaching time
  - Time frame: 30 seconds up to much longer minutes depending upon the age of the group

## Children Desiring God: Our Glorious God Utter Dependence upon God; in prayer

April 30-May 2, 2009

Dear Brother and Sister,

I am grateful to have spent an hour or so with you talking and praying about the power behind the ministry God has us in, namely prayer. May you return to your places of ministry and to your families with a renewed sense of your utter dependence upon God and that it would move you to pray. A word of caution: the evil one would desire very much to work despair and guilt into your heart concerning prayerlessness. If this does occur, respond in prayer with the Gospel. There is much hope found in Romans 8 and the opening words are this: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus".

Please receive this prayer of blessing drawn from Jeremiah 9:23-24, 17:7-8; 29:12-13. May you go in peace and in the name of Jesus

"May you boast in the LORD

In His wisdom

In His might

In the riches of His grace

May you boast in the grace of knowing the LORD

May you be blessed as a tree planted by water – by streams of water

Not fearing in the heat

Not anxious in the year of drought

Always bearing fruit

May you be blessed as you trust in the LORD

May you seek God and find Him

For He hears the prayers of His people

May you call upon God

May you seek Him with all your heart

For He will be found by those who belong to Him

This is what God declares

All of this in the name of Jesus and for His sake, Amen"

Your Fellow Servant of Jesus Christ,

*Pastor Bud*