

DEPENDENCE ON GOD

The Book of Luke shows Jesus as the Son of man – his humanity is specially emphasized – that is why we have Jesus here praying and teaching on prayer the most of all the gospels.

The success of Jesus' life is entrenched in his extreme link with God. Jesus made himself inseparable from God. His great dependence on God has lifted his life to a degree that he can live out the life that God wanted him to live. To live like Jesus, we have to learn not to be dependent on ourselves, but on our God. Any person can rise to great heights for God – because God is a great God and we can all live out the life that God has called us to live. I trust that God will enlighten your life today and make you a person who holds on to God and fly in the days to come.

PRAYER OF DEPENDENCE – OFTEN

*(Luke 5:16) "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and **prayed.**"*

The first thing we can learn from the life of prayer of Jesus is in 5:16. The English translation has a very important word – “often”. It is something that Jesus often does – go away and pray. In fact, if you read the gospel of Luke, it says this in a few places. It is a life habit for Jesus to go spend time in prayer.

Now it is interesting to note the context in which this verse is mentioned – verse 15 – “Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.”

Jesus consistently goes to prayer when his life is faced with pressure and difficulties of life. This is a very important spiritual discipline for anyone who faces pressures. Life is full of difficulties and learning to surpass these are key to flying like an eagle. Too many people cannot manage stress. Jesus has the best solution to stress – prayer.

How can prayer manage stress? Someone defined prayer as demonstrating our dependence on God. Prayer is not uttering some words. Prayer is an attitude – it is an attitude which says that I cannot do it by myself – I need God. That is why it is an insult to God when you pray and then afterwards take up the pressures of life on your own shoulder. We are saying that we depend on God and then our actions show that we do not trust him.

There is much in life that is totally beyond us. There is so much that we cannot control. One of the hardest things for us to do is to try to do those things that we cannot do. However, man is constantly trying to do these things, that is why pressure of life becomes so hard to bear and anxiety is one of the major killers today.

- Can you control the future? Yet most people worry about the future – will I lose

my job, will the economy of Hong Kong improve? Hey, you don't know.

- Can you control your health? Why then do many people worry about their health?
- Can you control the safety or health of your children?
- Can you change the life of others? Yet many wants other to change – own spouse, cell leaders, etc.

Some things belong to God – give to God that which only He take care. Then life is much more relaxing. Then we can handle many more things in life. The secret to flying like the eagle is to build the habit of praying – releasing those that belong to God to him. Refuse to bear the burdens that only God can bear. This is the secret to living with great responsibilities but still not to be burdened down with it.

Lorne Sanny, who was once the president of the Navigators for many years, had the burden of the whole organization on his shoulders. Every now and then he would feel the burden too heavy, so he would go away to the mountain behind his office and go to his favorite place of prayer. There is a big rock there. He would imagine that it is the throne of God and God is on the throne. He would walk up to the throne of God and present his burdens to God one by one. Then he would imagine that God stretched forth His hands and took it. Then he would bring another burden and repeat the same procedure until all the burdens have been handed over to God.

Prayer releases burdens and let you fly like an eagle. That is why Jesus could handle so much pressure. Trust you will build this habit of praying often.

PRAYER FOR WISDOM – MAKING DECISIONS

(Luke 6:12-13) “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. (13) When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.”

When Jesus was faced with a decision, he went to prayer. On this occasion, it was the decision to select the 12 apostles. Jesus has always been a decisive person. He has never hesitated in knowing what to do. His habit of spending constant time with God has made him into a confident and decisive person. He knows what he was doing and he knows the God is on His side.

It is interesting to note that he was not so much concerned about making the right or wrong decisions. He was more concerned that God is fully guiding him. When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, he did not teach them to pray for guidance, but to pray that “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Many people are concerned with finding out the will of God, but do not spend time on discerning their own motives. The Bible tells us that God will guide us, and we have to believe His promise. But in the process of seeking for God's will, do we discern our motives? And are we fully submitting to His will?

Prayer clarifies our motive for action. Making the right decision starts with making decisions from the right heart. Why do you want to do what you want to do? This is more important than what you should do.

It is interesting that Jesus, after prayer, selected 12 apostles. However, one of them betrayed him. What happened? Did Jesus make a mistake in discerning the will of God? Did he select the wrong person?

Often, we see guidance in terms of the result or the end product. Then we determine by the result whether we made the right or wrong decision. However, often, the process may be the key thing. So many things happen in the process and God is doing a lot of things in the process. Sometimes the end result may not even be the will of God – it could be the working of the devil, but God is still in charge and He can still bring good out of the bad that has happened. If we live in this type of relationship with God, then we will fly like the eagle.

Praying often and surrendering our will to God over and over again gives us the confidence that God is in full control of our lives and what we do is in the centre of His will. It will also help us clarify our motives. Build this habit in your life and you will fly like the eagle.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION – SIMON

*(Luke 22:31-32) “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. (32) But I have **prayed** for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”*

Wow! I love this phrase. What a statement to make! “But I have prayed for you.” What a statement of confidence.

Jesus had no doubt when he made this statement. Why? Because He has spent much time with God and had full confidence in the control of God. He knew that God is in control and not the devil – over his own children. Jesus said “when” you have turned back – not “if” you turn back. Jesus believed in the power of intercession.

This is the power of praying for others. We badly need to release this type of prayer in our lives – in our family, in our cell groups and in our church. When we see one another, we can say with confidence – “I have prayed for you.”

Susanna Wesley prayed for her children individually everyday. She had 10 children. This is leading your children spiritually. Can we make a pack of praying for our children everyday? You cannot control their destiny, but God is in control. Praying for your children.

Someone wrote a book on why do cell groups become effective in some dynamic churches. This was a survey he did of 8 of the most effective cell churches in the world. What is it that makes certain cell leaders effective in leading these cells? Do you know what he found? He discovered that the greatest factor is the prayer life of the cell leader. The more the cell leader pray for the people, the more the cell multiplies. This is an amazing fact and one that we should have expected, but many of us have forgotten. It is good time that we are reminded of this fact.

Jesus – the Son of God – has to say – “I have prayed for you.” Let us even more be this type of people.

We have the prayer chain in the cell. Activate it every week. Prayer is the key to healthy life of individuals and for the cell group.

It is interesting that pray does not require any special gifting. Anyone can be a prayer warrior. It is simply bringing the person to God and let God do the work.