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Prayer First

by Laura Tracy



As I have been writing this article, I have received messages from Christian friends fretting about situations in their lives. When I asked them if they had talked to God about it, almost all of them replied, "No, I didn't even think to do that." Then I felt compelled to share my testimony of how I learned to pray first.

For many years when I faced obstacles, I quickly came up with solutions on my own. I thought I knew what the problem was, and how to fix it. But my actions usually made the problem worse, and I finally began to turn to the Lord in desperation. He patiently began to show me that if I would seek Him first and only act or speak at His direction, He would release His power into my situations. I stood back and watched in amazement at how God worked!

In the Word I noticed that Jesus the Son of God, was the only human without sin, and yet He prayed before doing anything. He prayed before starting His day (Mark 1:35), making decisions (Luke 6:12-13), beginning His ministry (Matthew 4:1-2), performing miracles (John 11:41-42; Matthew 14:23), going through great trials (Matthew 26:42), and teaching others (Luke 9:18-22).

Jesus showed us that those who pray first not only fulfill their Godly purpose, but also alleviate much of the anxieties of life.

Before Missionaries Bug and Nona Freeman went to Africa, another minister wanted to build them a brand new home, free of charge. Bro. Freeman said, "Thank you so much but let me pray about it first." When Bro. Freeman returned he said, "I'm sorry, but the Lord said no, we are not to accept this gift." The minister agitatedly asked why, since it was at no cost to them. Bro. Freeman told the man that he didn't know, but he had learned to simply ask the Lord and obey what He said. Years later, the Lord revealed to Bro. Freeman that this home would have been a temptation during their difficult days in Africa, and that they would've given up and returned to America. Tens of thousands of souls wouldn't have been reached if Bro. Freeman had not prayed first.

2 Chronicles 16:9 has become a beautiful beacon for my life. This message, spoken to a backslidden king who forgot to pray first, continues to inspire me: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him." What a glorious promise to those who seek Him first!

I believe in this last hour, if we will be loyal to seek God first, we will go forth with clarity, boldness and power!

Note: Laura Tracy resides in Nasonworth, New Brunswick where her husband Jeff is pastor of the Pentecostal Church In Motion. Laura is Choral Director at Northeast Christian College in Fredericton.

Prayer First and Continue the Work

by Joann Thornton



Ever had something weighing so heavy on your mind that you're distracted in other responsibilities? Ever find your mind wandering from the job right in front of you and your heart in other places? Have you ever been anxious after taking on a job and discovering that it was bigger than you expected? Have you ever endured criticism and opposition while trying to do good for the benefit of others?

If so, we find ourselves in good company. Nehemiah of the old testament was a cupbearer to the King of Persia. Nehemiah 1:3 tells us that he learned news that the walls of his home city of Jerusalem were broken down. This news so grieved him that he mourned heavily for many days. But when faced with this grievous news, Nehemiah exemplified a posture and process that will work for us today as we face difficult life situations.

Nehemiah immediately began to fast and pray. Recorded in Nehemiah 1:5-11 is his very specific prayer of worship, petition and repentance. The state of his country weighed heavy on his heart and as he went to prayer, God began to place a plan in his mind. As we follow his story, we see that Nehemiah already had favor with the King who granted him papers to travel across borders, as well as, compile materials needed to begin the project of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. From the very beginning, Nehemiah faced trepidation of his own brethren and opposition from enemies. While attending to the many responsibilities of building, he also had to organize workers, mediate disputes between families, schedule watchmen on the walls and recognize those that were a hinderance to the work. Doesn't this sound like details we must navigate as we walk with God and strive to do His will? As people of prayer, we all must fight for our families, churches, communities and country. And, we are often grieved to see the many areas that are broken and in great need of repair.

We find such a clear example to follow in Nehemiah. With every new distraction, his response is: Prayer first, then he continues the work. As another threat arose and he assessed each new challenge, Nehemiah would again follow the same process: Prayer first, and then continue the work. [Nehemiah 1:5, 2:4, 4:4-5, 5:19, 6:9]

In all of these challenges, at least 11 times, Nehemiah prayed first, then continued the work. And, Nehemiah accomplished what he intended to do in a miraculously short time. In 52 days, the wall was finished. This tried and true method is still powerful and effective today. Let's Pray first and continue the work. God is with us and for us. He will help us build.

What if We Prayed First?

by Debra Summers



We've all been there—situations where we feel helpless or, at times, hopeless. We wept until no tears are left. We have been frightened by our circumstances. A parent has been diagnosed with an incurable disease. A child is experimenting with sin, and we see the danger ahead. Or maybe relationships in the family are strained and not getting better. Our hearts are breaking. What do we do? Where do we turn? Is there help for our situation? My friend, I give you Jesus.

We often pray to Him as the last hope when everything else seems to fail. When we have tried everything else, worried, talked to friends, and posted on Facebook, we will turn to Him in prayer in hopes he will pity us and do what we cannot do.

But what if we prayed first?

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) states, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Jeremiah 29:12 (ESV) reads, "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you." What a promise! He listens. He loves us, so we can approach His throne in prayer with confidence and expectation that He will respond to our needs. We should approach Him with prayer, not as an afterthought.

When we find ourselves in these situations, our first response should be to pray. Find that secret place, that prayer closet, or the one spot you meet with Him and pour out your heart. When we do, we are admitting that we are needy and unable to meet the need of whatever the situation is. We pour out our heart to the one who is infinite and all-sufficient.

Imagine what can happen if prayer is the first thing we do. When anxiety, fear, brokenness, and worry try to take over our thoughts and direct our response, let us pray first! Psalm 55:22 says "Cast thy burdens upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." What a promise. I can leave it there and give thanks. Why? Because He is able.

Note: Debra Summers serves alongside her husband, Stephan, as the first appointed resident missionary to the beautiful island of Cyprus. She is the mother of Victoria and Lauren and enjoys reading, cooking, and traveling.

From the Editor



God is doing mighty things!

God is opening many doors and this newsletter is now available in:
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