



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

February 7, 2016

Don't Stop Believing

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

—Deuteronomy 6:4-7

There is a sense of urgency these days about the state of our nation. The culture we live in seems to be changing rapidly into something we don't recognize. The ways of God as described in Scripture are being laid aside, and we as Christians feel pushed to the margin. But we also feel genuine concern for the cost our society will pay for rejecting God. At the level of the individual and the local church, there is an awareness that we need to pray, but it seems to be taking hold sluggishly. So how exactly should we pray?

First and foremost, the people of God need to know who God is and where our good lies. American Christians have lived so long in security, known such abundance, and enjoyed abundant freedom for so long, we look to American culture as the bedrock of prosperity. We pray for a restoration of American values, so we can regain American security. We overlook the fact that our nation has perverted its core principles from the beginning and deceive ourselves into thinking that our blessings are our birthright. But every good gift comes from God. We need to ask Him to turn our hearts to love and trust in Him above all things. We have one God. We need to look to Him and hope in Him alone.

We also need to know who the people of God are. Who can count on His promises and expect Him to answer our prayers? Only one people on earth are bound to the God of the universe in a covenant bond. The Church. The host of people who put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Christendom is not the Church. It is the network of cultures where the Church makes its home and has primary influence. But all cultures that have enjoyed the blessings of God's Word and His ways ultimately reject Christ. The United States is no exception.

This rejection is nothing new. It is the way of Man's heart since our sin in the garden. It's the reason Christ came into the world. Our rejection is what condemned Jesus to death. Our rejection is what Christ—both God and Man—reversed by obeying His Father to the point of death. His resurrection shows that God accepted His perfect sacrifice. Now Jesus is the only Source of security and hope for all who trust Him. Only the Church has the assurance of God's promise. As wonderful as our country is, the United States is not the people of God and has no leverage before His throne.

The prayer of God's people needs to be driven by His call more than our desires or our understanding of what is best. The world is utterly dark. We are its only light. This lost world can only know God's love through our testimony. They can only value His righteous ways through our example. They can only walk in holiness by the grace of God in Christ alone. The law of the land, the influence of culture, blessings of the most Godly leadership are impotent apart from the power of God in individual lives. Power we receive through the Gospel alone.

So let us pray. Let us ask God to use us to influence our country for Christ. By all means, let us pray for the upcoming elections, but by no means should we put our hope in a particular outcome. Let us pray that we, God's people, will love Him with all of our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our strength, remembering at all times that *God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Romans 5:5). We already have all we need.

And let us pray in harmony with the heart of God that we will love our neighbors as ourselves. Love is the difference between being right and being righteous. The one wins the argument. The other wins the heart and the culture. Our God is good—SO good. Ask Him to reveal that fact to us and through us, for the glory of His name and the good of all who look to Him because of our testimony.

To the praise of God's glory

Prayer for the Week

Sunday (Church): Pray for Tim East and Steve Flood. Ask God to make the truth of His Word clear to them and to strengthen their faith as they walk with Him each day.

Monday (Home and Family): Commitment your household to Christ. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Tuesday (Job/School): Ask God for opportunities to express His love for those you serve through your job.

Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community): Pray for your relationships and Christian influence in your neighborhood. Acknowledge God's right to command you to, "Go and make disciples."

Thursday (The Nation): Pray that the love of God will spread throughout His Church in America, so that we are "filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18).

Friday (The World): Seek the triumph of the Gospel throughout Latin America. May the Gospel be the "power of God to salvation for all who believe."

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): Praise your Creator for His glorious creation and for giving you life. "Of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."

Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

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. –Isaiah 41:10