

The Importance of Prayer

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Excerpts

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Photo date and location unknown

The most important thing in prayer is the attitude of the person who is praying. The most essential thing is your commitment to go forward without reservation. If anything wants to block you, you have to be decided that it will never stop you. Unless you have that commitment first, God will not waste His time trying to help you. He has always been deceived in history, so what God needs to see is proof of what you are and how strong your commitment is. You may tell God you are totally committed, but He will shake His head and think, "I have to wait three more years and see." If God sees that something isn't quite right in you, He will wait before sending down His help. God needs to be sure.

God is foolish if He gives His help freely but then at the end of several years the person is all in pieces. If I were God I would also wait and see. Suppose you were God; what would you do? You may tell God, "You see I am living as a church member and I will die as one." Then God will notice and look more closely, but no matter how firmly you pray, without this basic commitment nothing will happen and you will be wasting your time. A decisive attitude is the key.

Do you think I made a commitment to God that I would never change, not for fifty years or the rest of my life? I prayed first for the absolute faith which could say, "Even if not a single person in this world can believe, I will believe and follow in whatever incredible course You give me." Second, I asked for absolute knowledge and wisdom. Third, I asked for absolute love. I prayed for these three things throughout my life, and now in looking back I see that they have been fulfilled, even when I didn't know it was happening. There is no other power that could go beyond the boundary of race and nation. Since God could give me this absolute wisdom, I could search and find the Divine Principle and the truth about the world.

An attitude of absoluteness is the basis for everything. Nowadays most of you think in terms of when you will get married, thinking that you are getting older and older. If this worries you then your absolute commitment is starting to shake. Instead of shrinking, you can make your commitment much thicker by thinking, "Marriage? That doesn't bother me or change my commitment." When you face great problems and agony, after you finally overcome them your faith will be like iron. When you can see the kind of obstacle that might confront you, you can clear the field.

Suppose you have been married for some time and are deeply in love, but then suddenly your husband or wife dies. Would all of heaven and earth crumble for you? That might be the very moment you could curse God for taking your loved one away, but instead you can thank Him for His grace in giving you a situation that will strengthen your faith. Then your belief can become stronger instead of weaker. God is a

parent, and if He takes a loved one away it is not because He hates you but for some greater reason. If you can accept it and have faith in that purpose then you are ready for another challenge.

In our Unification Church faith the most beautiful word is indemnity; through indemnity we can pay the debt of sin. You can think that no one else could stand such a burden of indemnity, so God is asking you to pay instead as His champion. You can accept it with a thankful heart. When you compare the time you spend without the person you love with the millions of years your generations will live, your payment of indemnity is small in comparison to the blessing God will give you and your descendants. If the death of your loved one was really accidental and not direct intervention of God, yet you pray with this grateful attitude, then God will feel that He has really found an extraordinary child and His blessing will automatically be yours. Your attitude will decide the amount of blessing.

Are you ready? If an extraordinary grief or tragedy hits you, are you ready to thank God and ask what is next? You know the law of indemnity; you cannot expect only good things and then curse God when unpleasant things happen. With knowledge of indemnity there should be nothing you cannot bear. That is the attitude of those who truly know God. When you first join this Church your eyes might be bright and filled with fervor, but after three years your eyes get a little duller, don't they? No? Ten years later? It is easy to say no, isn't it? But do you really have confidence?

Prayer is an absolute necessity. You may kneel down all the way to pray, but the most important thing is that you create an environment of commitment first. Unless your basic attitude is ready, no amount of prayer will be useful. In the Christian world today many people pray every day, but do you think they pray to destroy the Christian churches? No, they pray for prosperity, but the churches are crumbling nevertheless. Do you pray for the sake of the Unification Church? You don't have to pray for the Unification Church; pray for the big things: the nation, the world, the liberation of God. What you are really doing then is praying for a cross even bigger than the Unification Church.

If you pray for yourself or for things smaller than the Church then God will not answer because He is not interested in listening to such boring prayer. When you talk about the nation and world, He gets excited and starts looking for ways to help. This is training for how to love greater things. If you really live like that then even if you don't have time to pray God will still back you up.

In churches today people pray for their denominations, their social security check or their family problems and their pet. God's ears hurt when He hears those prayers and He will plug His ears. If those people prayed for God to use their church to help save the world and liberate God, He would perk up and be amazed because God is just like you. When you only talk about yourself in your prayer, God is thoroughly bored and nothing will happen. But if you pray for His righteousness and His kingdom, He will be caught up in your passion.

In order to fulfill bigger things you need an adventurous mind and be willing to take risks. Then God will tell you not to worry, that He is right behind you. If you throw yourself into overcoming the stone walls and persecution before you, God will take up your battle for He knows who is just and who is unjust. But first God will watch, giving you a chance to knock your opponent down with your own capability. This is the same thing a father and mother would do. If you come running to God to ask for help before you even confront your enemy, He, like any parent, will be ashamed to hear you and will send you back out again.

Create a good problem; be a heavenly troublemaker instead. I came to America and became a good troublemaker, and that's why America doesn't like me. America has built a prosperous society, but I came to shake this nation and Americans resent my disturbing their peace. But I did not come to destroy America, only to warn this nation that there is danger ahead. Someone has to warn the people and bring them out of disaster. You know there is a big battle coming so you must ready yourself in body and spirit. After you go first you can ask God to come and help you with anything you lack. Then God will say, "Go ahead. I am right behind you."

If you seriously sit down and pray in those circumstances, God will encourage you. As soon as proof of your commitment comes to God, an avalanche of help will come to you. I have had the experience of thinking about some problem and not even praying about it, but already God knew my thoughts and went one step ahead of me. When I discovered that my thinking had been fulfilled, He smiled and said, "See what I did?"

You need the basic attitude of sincerity as a foundation of prayer. Otherwise, no prayer will work. More important for creating that atmosphere is to go out and serve one more person, knock on one more door, receive more persecution. That is more valuable than sitting for hours in a dark room praying. Prayer is only needed after you have exerted all your energy and it was not enough. Then you can ask God to come help. When you can do it then you don't have to ask God, but can tell Him to relax. The prayer for all seasons is the prayer for God's kingdom and His righteousness.

Do you think God prays sometimes? Sometimes without thinking a parent murmurs to himself or herself,

"Oh, I wish my son would do this, or be that way." That is God's prayer also. God is murmuring about you, about me and about the Unification Church because this is an emergency and He is engrossed in His concern. That is God's prayer. You don't even have to sit down to pray; you can just talk to yourself as you go, whispering and murmuring your concern. That's prayer. In our case praying and doing is our life. Praying and waiting is not our life.

If you pray unconsciously in everyday life then undoubtedly you are becoming sons and daughters of prayer. If you give your last ounce of energy but it is not enough, then ask God for assistance and your prayer will be answered. If that were not the case, how could we ever subjugate Satan? Satan has given unending anguish and heartbreak to God for 6,000 years and if there were no way we could finally subjugate him then there would be no end to it. There must be a way.

The power of prayer works wonders, but prayer must be serious and done with one united heart, not a divided heart. When the moment of engagement comes, it is a most serious moment for both men and women, but in the Unification Church it is different because you leave it to me. Do you realize what a formidable job it is to pick your own spouse? In that moment you become dead serious, but prayer is even more serious than that. If you pray with that attitude then it will be answered. If your parents are on their deathbed it is a serious moment, and the words you speak then are urgent. There is no way you could doze at that time. Your prayer to God is more serious than that.

Prayer is like a covenant between you and God, a promise. Once you make a contract, you follow through and then it will undoubtedly be fulfilled. That is the attitude I am talking about. You must not be disappointed when prayer is not answered immediately. Some answers come late. At other times you should not be overjoyed when prayer is answered quickly. That is not necessarily the best thing.

Because you are surrounded by the world there are many stages to go through horizontally and vertically. The answer to prayer does not come from you but down from heaven and it takes time to reach you. There have been many foolish people who received answers to their prayers up to a point but who didn't go the final inch, and when they weren't satisfied they betrayed God. When you pray for the world you may not see things changing immediately around you, but far away the communist world starts to crumble. The impact of prayer can be felt in a far-away place. If you are in the Abel position, the answer comes from Cain and takes time to reach you.

You must think that your prayer today may not be fulfilled until thousands of years from now. I pray such prayers. I am not praying just for this world today; I am praying for 1,000 and 2,000 years from now. If that prayer makes a bridge between that time and now then the Unification Church will continue to flourish even a long time after I am gone from the earth. That kind of prayer is needed. If many of you pray that kind of eternal prayer, the world will start to shake and the impact will be far-reaching. The root of that prayer is your tears, sweat and blood, and out of it beautiful flowers will blossom.

When Jesus prayed on Gethsemane he was deadly serious, shedding tears, sweat and blood. All day long you must be in a prayer mood, not just one hour, but 24 hours. What prayer position do you prefer? The best is to kneel and lower your head. You have to restrict your body's freedom, as though it were bound. You will feel pain, but overcome it because you must be serious. Then God will know your attitude. That is a necessity for prayer. Without prayer Jesus and the saints could not have done the great things that had an impact on the world. When you resort to the power of prayer you can have hope because you never know when the fulfillment will come.

My prayer is centered on the culmination of the third seven-year course. You may think I relax when I am alone, but there is no moment of relaxation because my mind is always concentrated on the completion of the third seven-year course. You must understand the importance of prayer and have conviction that prayer will be answered. Through prayer you can receive power.

Through prayer you can receive visions into the future and guide yourself accordingly. You will know what kind of difficulty is coming and how to divert it and overcome. If you know how to steer yourself then you can do big things, and prayer alone can pioneer such a path. It is more important than eating. I go out to nature because it gives me a better environment for prayer, and I love nature for that reason. I love the quiet of midnight. I don't say much about the visions I receive, but if you receive them then don't you think I do too? That kind of new world can only be reached through prayer. In that position you can taste love. This world is desert-like, but the world created through prayer has a climate where love can thrive.

You must learn how to generate your own power. You cannot expect that I will always pull you and push you out. You must make yourself self-propelling. In order to do that, prayer must be the diet of your life. Whether people recognize your efforts or not, you must do your duty enthusiastically because you have a covenant with God. Day and night you move on; there is no pause. That is a living testimony.

Every several years my topic of prayer changes, which shows progress to a new era. In a prayerful mind I

know precisely what time it is in God's timetable. That kind of preparation is necessary for self-perfection, and you must learn it through the power of prayer. Do you pray in the way I taught you today, for His kingdom and righteousness?

Pray that this country can become a center of God's righteousness. Your country has seen many fervent patriots, but you must pray with more fervor than any of them. If your concern for this country is greater than God's then this country will survive, but otherwise it will crumble.

What is our goal and destination in the Unification Church? I am leading you where God desires for you to be. It doesn't make any difference whether it is difficult or easy because whether there are many obstacles in front of us is irrelevant. The important thing is not just getting there, but getting there in the shortest possible time. If we go quickly then there is less danger, but when the process is stretched out there are many opportunities for disaster and we must not allow that.

This is a transitional period; we are entering into a new era, a new plateau and history of faith. Therefore, this is a critical moment for you and God. Last night I spoke to the department heads about the true meaning of home church. Home church is the greatest gift God and True Parents can give mankind. It has never existed before and will not again in the future. When you make this gift yours by fulfilling it, you will definitely become a son and daughter of God. I have prepared this precious gift for you for my entire life of sixty years and now I freely give it to you.

You can make it yours in six months. This is an incredible opportunity. Home church should be the subject of your prayer. Pray with a parental heart for your home church people as your children who are struggling in hell. Your heart as a parent must be grieved and desiring to save them. If you don't have that feeling then you are in a dire emergency; you must open your heart to parental feeling of love toward your people. If you don't have real love for them then push yourself until you do. No one has to teach a parent to love his children. If you feel like a parent to your home church then your love will be the same and no one will have to teach you.

Just finishing elementary school takes six years of daily attendance. Do you think home church is comparable even to elementary school? It is the school for becoming a messiah. Think of how important it is. Even though you might attend it your entire life, you must give your heart and soul because you could not have any better school. Even though you have only 360 homes, God will treat your efforts there as though you had given them for the entire universe.

In America there are about 70 million homes, and if each person had 360 homes we would need 200,000 members to cover all America. If the entire Christian population accepted Divine Principle and wanted to do home church, what would happen? There would be no room for you! There is nothing more important for you than this. Test your own power of prayer; take one person and pray for him fervently, constantly, without telling him. Pray tearfully for his well-being and then that person will feel a magnetic attraction to you. He won't know why he feels drawn to you.

If you receive in your prayer that you will meet a person at such and such a time, when you go there then that person will come. If you are dead serious then these things will happen. Hypnosis can transfer a person into another state of consciousness, but how much more can prayer change lives. There is no distance or limit to its influence because the power of thought travels everywhere. You can mobilize the entire spirit world by the power of prayer. You have experienced that I will work through your prayers and tell you certain things. There is no limit to the power of prayer.

When you have the right attitude in prayer then miracle after miracle will happen. The most important part of a launching pad is the foundation. At take-off it must not break under the heat and pressure. Your prayer is like a missile firing and you need a solid foundation. You must not pray from greed for yourself. That prayer would be harmful to you. Public prayer as a public person will cleanse you and elevate you higher and higher.

If you live with this high sensitivity to spirit world, you will sense what is forthcoming. Your perception will be keen and you can prepare for the future. You should know that you are like two people in one. Your inner man is like a mirror, clean and bright. When the inner and external men are not synchronized you feel anguish, but when they are perfectly aligned you feel joy and power. This is happening every day within you. When you see a person your inner man can tell you what kind of person he is, and if you hear a person's report, a sixth sense will tell you how truthful it is. When someone walks into a room, I can see whether he is bringing good news or bad.

Don't neglect this inner man but consult him all the time. When you are higher spiritually you are always there, always speaking with this inner man. You have a spirit man and he wants to talk to your physical man. You may not have any intention of saying anything yet suddenly you find your mouth moving. That is not you but your inner partner speaking. Even the rats of a ship can sense when a ship is in trouble and run away, but how much more should man, the supreme creation of God, know when life or death is

coming? Shouldn't you be alerted when a certain destiny is forthcoming? For your inner and outer man to become one you need the power of prayer.

I have a family but I seldom pray for them. My prayer is anguish for the nation and world and cosmos. God will concern Himself with my well-being because I am concerned with God's. If I only paid attention to my family instead of to the world and God, my family would get sick. I don't concern myself with my family's well-being; I concern myself with the Church and God's work and I know God will take care of them in the meantime. This is the principle of give and take.

Those who want to do more for others will receive more; those who want to go down will be lifted up. Don't pray empty prayers. Now you know the power of prayer. Everyone needs to experience these things spiritually. You must know whether the things you do will succeed or fail.

You know that certain things will succeed because you feel pulled in that direction and are eager to go ahead. Your body is like the receiver of a radio. Free yourself from self-centered thinking, and then mighty things will happen to you. You must open that valve.

You are entitled to ask for God's power, but only for the sake of His righteousness and Kingdom. Then He will come down. Pray and act; you will feel different from yesterday and you will know the power of prayer is in action. Today is just the beginning; pray to tell God that you are just beginning and need His help. Make a showdown with God every day. It shall become second nature, and without being conscious of it you can live that life all the time. Let's do it then.

Let us pray.