

Chuck Smith:

Prayer

- I. There is a spiritual conflict raging in the universe around us.
 - A. It is a war against good and evil.
 1. The prize is the control of the minds of men.
 2. Thus you are thrust into the battle, like it or not.
 3. Your life will be controlled either by good or evil.
 4. We sometimes refer to this as the battle between the flesh and the spirit, but in reality it is a battle against spirit and spirit. The spirit of darkness and the spirit of light.
 - B. Satan was at one time an angel of God. Angels are spirits, thus Satan is a spirit.
 1. When Satan rebelled against God, one third of the angels followed him, and they comprise a powerful spiritual force the world.
 2. Their goal is to conscript you in the rebellion against God.
 3. They will stoop at nothing in order to destroy you.
 4. They have a very strong beach head in your life, and that is your flesh.
 5. The thrust is to get you to live after the flesh, a lustful, selfish, hedonistic, life.
 6. Those persons who they have conscripted in the battle, will stop at nothing to sway men into their camp.
 - C. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness, in high places.
 1. For the most part, nations are controlled by these diabolical forces.
 2. Look at the evil decisions that have come from the Supreme Court of this land, since 1963.
 - a. The banning of prayer, or anything that has to do with the Bible or Jesus Christ from the public school.
 - b. The inability to define obscenity, thus opening the door to all of the pornography that has flooded the land.
 - c. The granting of abortion upon request thus allowing 25,000,000 babies, thus far, to be destroyed before they ever had a chance to make a choice.
 - d. I wonder what those Supreme Court justices will do when they have to stand before the judge of the universe, and answer for the millions of lives that have been destroyed because of their decisions.
 3. I cringe at the fact that Hillery Clinton now has the opportunity to appoint a new Supreme Court justice, just at time when it seemed that an equitable balance was being developed.
 4. This is what Paul was referring to as spiritual wickedness in high places.
- II. Our weapons against these awesome powers.
 - A. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy.

II Cor. 10:4

1. One of the most powerful weapons that God has place in our arsenal is prayer.
 - a. This is a spiritual weapon that allows us to become engaged in this spiritual warfare.
2. It is sad and strange that we are so anxious to meet the foe on his turf where he has a decided advantage.
3. I think of the ministry of Operation Rescue and I wonder how many more babies they might have saved had they mobilized the people to pray rather than block the doors of the abortion clinics.
 - a. That much fervor and energy in prayer would have shut many more abortion clinics, I am sure.
 - b. But people are far more apt to show up for a demonstration than a prayer meeting.

B. Why do people find prayer so difficult?

1. Do you find it difficult to talk to someone that you are madly in love with?
 - a. No, you call them at every opportunity.
 - b. You love to be with them, you love to hear their voices.
 - c. Quite often I will call my wife or my grandchildren, and when they answer the phone, I will say, "I just wanted to hear your beautiful voice."
 - d. No urgent reason for calling, just connecting with someone I love.
 - e. We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our soul, mind and strength, how often do you just connect with Him?
2. The reason you find prayer so difficult is that Satan will do everything to keep you from prayer.
 - a. When you get down to pray, you will suddenly remember a thousand urgent things that you were supposed to do.
 - b. Or the phone or doorbell will ring.
 - c. The baby who is supposed to be napping begins to cry.
 - d. Satan realizes that prayer is a deciding factor in the spiritual battle, it is the weapon by which he is defeated, thus he will fight hard to disarm you.
 - e. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
 - f. I think of how many things have been developed to take us from prayer. If we would spend as much time in prayer as we take watching T.V. for instance, how much more we could see for good in this world.

III. Daniel's experience in prayer.

- A. It was in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, thus Daniel must have been close to ninety at this time. He was probably close to the time when the Lord would call his warrior to rest.
- B. His prompting for prayer.
 1. It was probably reports from those who had returned from the captivity to the land.
 2. There was very few who took the opportunity to return which in itself must have been discouraging.
 3. Those who did go back were discouraged and demoralized,

the high ideal of rebuilding the temple, was replaced soon by desires for their own comfort, and they were concentrating more on their own houses than the house of God.

4. The reports must have broken the heart of this man whose heart was so completely after God, and he went into mourning.

5. Mourning over the state of the nation.

C. His preparation for prayer.

1. He fasted from pastries, meat, and wine.

2. He did not anoint himself at all for this period of time.

3. He continued steadfast in this commitment for three full weeks.

D. His prayer was finally answered by a heavenly visitation.

1. He was informed by his heavenly visitor, that from the first day that he set his heart to chasten himself and seek understanding from the Lord, God had heard his request and had dispatched this messenger to bring to him the answers.

2. However the angel became engaged in a battle with the powers that controlled the nation of Persia, who had detained him for 21 days until Michael one of the chief princes came to his aid, that he might continue with his mission.

3. This prince of Persia is one of those spirit forces in high places that Paul tells us that our true warfare is about.

4. It is a well known fact that Hitler was the tool of men who were deeply involved in the occult.

5. President Reagan's wife continually sought the counsel of an astrologer.

6. Jean Dixon boasts of the many calls she received from the different presidents.

7. The heavenly messenger sent to Daniel declared that when he left Daniel he was going to return to the battle against the prince of Persia, and after him he would be doing battle with the prince of Greece.

E. The forces that are against you are strong and sinister. They are in control of this present evil world.

1. The only way you can possibly hope to stand against them is in the Spirit, and the power of His might.

2. Carnal weapons are useless in this battle.

3. All of your count ten, or ten steps methods will ever avail to bring you lasting victory in this battle.

4. You must arm yourself with all the spiritual armor available.

a. Your strength is in the Lord, and the power of His might.

b. Your spiritual armor is righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God.

5. Then what? "Praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, continuing with perseverance.

F. The real fighting comes on your knees, and that is where the true victory will be found.