

A PRAYER STRATEGY FOR LASTING CHANGE

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One of the challenges of intercession is maintaining the larger vision and purpose of our prayers. As we continue to pray for this nation in the midst of increased lawlessness, anarchy, and rebellion, it is easy to become discouraged and wonder if our prayers are working. However, God is working behind the scenes to do much more than simply address the troubling issues of the day. In His redemptive purposes, He uses the trials and setbacks, and even the enemy's attacks, to sanctify us, make us holy, and become more like Himself (Eph 5:27). **Ultimately, He is not after our circumstances as much as He is after us. Until WE are changed, the culture around us won't change.** The kind of transformation He desires always starts with His people.

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18).

Here are some considerations in our ongoing intercession as we seek to become a transformed people.

1-Focus our prayers on **declaring His purposes** rather than on **fixing the problems**.

It's easy to get fixated on the issues at hand and forget His ultimate purpose in transformation. Until we can displace the godlessness with true righteousness through Christ, cycles of sin will continue. This requires a change of values and beliefs as we align our hearts and our prayers with His eternal Word. *Pray beyond the problem and declare His promise! Pray God's heart and will over the situations at hand, and don't get distracted by the seeming discrepancies.*

2-Focus our prayers on **God's increasing kingdom** instead of the **world's crumbling systems**.

Apart from Christ, this world will continue to fall apart. We shouldn't be surprised at the failure of man's attempts to secure peace and freedom. God will continue to shake everything that can be shaken in order for the reality of His kingdom to be clearly demonstrated through His people (Heb 12:27-28). *Instead of praying "against" things, pray FOR the purposes of God to prevail! Spend time in worship and praise so that the King of glory may come in (see Psalm 24:9).*

3- Address the **sin issues** (dying carcasses on the land) instead of **fighting the devil** (shooting the buzzards).

The only reason our spiritual adversary has any foothold, both personally and corporately, is because of sin and unbelief. These attract the enemy just as rotting flesh on the ground attracts buzzards. Rebuking the enemy (shooting the buzzards) won't do any good if we don't deal with the sin (removing the flesh). Living a holy and righteous life is one of the best means to attracting heaven and repelling hell (2 Cor 2:15; Eph 5:2). *Pray for obedient hearts that quickly respond to His Word. Pray that we would not only "turn from our wicked ways" but demonstrate holy lives that attract heaven.*

4-Shift from a **warfare mentality** to a **Presence reality**.

Spiritual warfare may be necessary for a season but it was never intended to be a lifestyle. We were created to LIVE FROM and IN God's presence (Acts 17:28; Isa 63:9; Psalm 27:4-6). We need to remember the supernatural power of God's tangible presence (Isa 63:9). Throughout biblical history, the greatest victories came because of God's presence, not because of man's skills at warfare (the battle of Jericho in Josh 6; Jehoshaphat's army in 2 Chron 20; the cloud of His presence at the Red Sea).

There is no glory in battle. Our glory should be in The One who has already defeated the devil. *Spend time in celebrating the victory of our King and avoid fighting an enemy who has already lost.*

5- Know that our spiritual authority in prayer comes more from **who we are** than from **what we pray**.

It is not the specific words of our prayers that change things, but the condition of our hearts and the obedience of our walk. A transformed life is one that *loves* to do what we *ought* to do because we live, speak, and pray from a relationship that has radically changed us from the inside out. *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”* (John 15:7).

In our desire to see things change in our nation, let us remember that WE are the ones who must change first. The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives inside us, and has power to bring new life to every nation and every tribe. As we are transformed, everything around us will begin to reflect the power of His kingdom. Let our prayers reflect this goal.

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