

Set Free: Devoted to Prayer

When the first Christians were delivered from the Law of Moses and from sin, they devoted themselves to prayer. If we want to be free from sin and Satan, we must be devoted to prayer. Why? How?

Ephesians 6:10-13 explains why:

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (ESV).

If the enemy was our neighbor, it wouldn't be an issue. We could get on a diet, exercise, and weight training regime to deal with our neighbor. But our enemy is Satan. Look again at **vs. 12**. What luck do you think you can have against that?

Paul's initial advice is emphasized. "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." Why be devoted to prayer? Because only God can defeat our enemy. If we want to win, we have to be strong in God's power and might; we are too weak in our own.

In **II Corinthians 12:7-10**, when Paul asked three times for His thorn in the flesh to be removed, God responded, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (ESV). Then Paul said, "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (ESV). A little later he wrote, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Only when we realize how weak we are and throw ourselves on God will we ever be strong.

When Jesus provided a model for prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**, He taught His disciples to pray, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." What a prayer! We need to rely on God to deliver us from evil and temptation. This hearkens back to **Psalms 141:3-5**. David was basically praying, "God, whatever it takes, keep me from sinning." We cannot possibly win the battle against Satan without calling out to the Lord for help.

How do we devote ourselves to prayer? **I Thessalonians 5:16-18** says, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; give thanks in all circumstances" (ESV). This is devotion to prayer. We should rejoice, praising God in every aspect of our lives. Prayer must be a constant and never-ending habit and response in every circumstance. We must acknowledge God in all our ways, thanking Him for His grace and mercy in every aspect of our lives.

Without prayer, we cannot maintain our freedom from sin and Satan. We are simply not strong enough. But God is. Be devoted to prayer.

The final article in this series is next.

—Edwin L. Crozier