

chapter twelve

THE SUBSTANCE OF
PRAYER

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
or so it has been told.
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
the cream was deep and cold.
"Oh, what's the use," said number one,
"It's plain no help's around.
"Good-bye, my friend, good-bye, sad world"
and weeping still he drowned.

But number two, of sterner stuff,
dog paddled in surprise.
The while he licked his creamy lips
and blinked his creamy eyes.
"I'll swim at least a while," he thought,
or so it has been said.
It really wouldn't help the world
if one more frog were dead

An hour or more he kicked and swam,
 not once he stopped to mutter.
 Then hopped out from the island he had
 made of fresh churned butter.
 (Author unknown)

Lessons from Three Men and a Frog

I first heard this witty poem 20 years ago in a message by John Garlock, one of my professors at Christ for the Nations Institute, on the subject of tenacity. There aren't many messages a person remembers 20 years later, but John Garlock has a knack and an anointing for preaching "rememberable" sermons. Others, of course, have a similar gift of preaching very forgettable messages. I've heard lots of them, and even preached my share.

Brother Garlock mentioned the story found in 2 Samuel 23:8-12 about three of David's mighty men: Shammah, Adino and Eleazar. Shammah had tenacity in the face of a humble assignment, defending a small plot of lentils from a bunch of Philistines. Adino personified tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds as he killed 800 Philistines single-handedly. Eleazar pictured tenacity in the face of incredible overwhelming fatigue as, after fighting for several hours, his hand had to be pried from his sword.

Thanks, Professor Garlock, for teaching me through three men and a frog the importance of perseverance and endurance. I rank it near the top of my list of most important spiritual traits. And the longer I live, the higher it rises. "Hang in there" didn't make it into the Ten Commandments, but it did into the nine fruits of the Spirit.

The word *makrothumia*, translated "long-suffering" in Galatians 5:22 (KJV), is defined by Strong's Concordance as "longanimity or fortitude."¹ That's what I said, "Hang in there."

In this day of instant everything—from "fast foods" to "get rich quick schemes" to "how to have the biggest church in town overnight" conferences to "four easy steps to answered prayer" seminars—we are rapidly losing the character trait of hanging in

there. We cook faster, travel faster, produce faster and spend faster...and we expect God to keep pace with us, especially in prayer.

Dick Eastman, in his book *No Easy Road*, states:

Much of society has forgotten to persevere....Few have a striving spirit like the artist Raphael. Once he was questioned, "What is your greatest painting?" He smiled, saying, "My next one." One finds Raphael always striving to do better. This is what we need in prayer, an attitude of persistence."²

We are much like the African cheetah that must run down its prey to eat. It is well suited for the task, as it can run at speeds of 70 miles per hour. The cheetah has only one problem, however, in that it has a disproportionately small heart, which causes it to tire quickly. If it doesn't catch its prey quickly, it must end the chase.

How often we have the cheetah's approach in prayer. We speed into our closets with great energy, we speed to the front of the church, or we speed to someone else for prayer. But lacking the heart for a sustained effort, we often falter before we accomplish what is needed. For our next prayer excursion, we decide to pray harder and faster, when what is needed may not be more explosive power, but more staying power—stamina that comes only from a bigger prayer heart.³

George Müller was a "stayer." One example of his persistence is related by Dick Eastman in the previously mentioned book:

"The great point is never to give up until the answer comes. I have been praying for sixty-three years and eight months for one man's conversion. He is not saved yet, but he will be. How can it be otherwise....I am praying." The day came when Müller's friend received Christ. It did not come until Müller's casket was lowered in the ground. There, near an open grave, this friend gave his heart to God. Prayers of perseverance had won another battle. Müller's success may be summarized in four powerful words: He did not quit.⁴

Easy Doesn't Do It in Prayer

The very Son of God spent many entire nights praying in order to fulfill His ministry. It took Him three arduous hours in Gethsemane to find strength to face the Cross. "He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7).

We, on the other hand, have mastered the art of one-liners in prayer, and think if we give God a two-hour service once a week we're fairly spiritual. "Easy does it" might be good advice in a few situations, but for most of life, including prayer, *easy doesn't* do it.

A pilot early in a flight went to the back of the plane to check on the reason for a warning light. The problem was a door ajar, which flew open as he approached it. The pilot was immediately sucked from the aircraft.

The copilot, seeing by his panel that a door was open, turned back toward the airport immediately and radioed for a helicopter to search the area. "I believe I have a pilot sucked from the plane," he said. After landing the plane, everyone was astonished to find the pilot holding on to the rung of a ladder, which he had miraculously managed to grab. He had held on for 15 minutes and, still more amazing, had managed to keep his head from hitting the runway, though it was only six inches away!

Upon finding the pilot, they had to pry his fingers from the ladder! That's perseverance!⁵

Anyone long associated with the Church of this century, especially in America, knows that our problems do not result from a lack of information or material strength. If we fail in achieving what God asks from us as we run our race, it will be a failure of heart and spirit.

Like the frog, I have kicked and swum my way over time to more victories than I have accomplished quickly and easily. I have fought until my hand clove to the sword. I have found that a tenacious endurance is often the key to victory in prayer.

But WHY?

Why is persistence required in prayer? This I have labored about for years. Does God have a certain amount of prayers required for certain situations? Do we talk Him into things? Does God ever "finally decide" to do something? Do we earn answers through hard work or perseverance?

The answer to all these questions is no.

"What about the prayer of importunity in Luke 11:5-13?" some will ask. "Doesn't it teach that we importune or persist with God until He decides to give us what we need?"

The answer is an emphatic no! We don't persist against God.

The word "importunity" in Luke 11:8 (*KJV*) is an unfortunate translation of the word *anaideia*, which actually means "shamelessness"⁶ or "bold unashamedness."⁷ *Aidos*, the root word, means "modesty or shame"⁸ and is translated as such in 1 Timothy 2:9. Here in Luke 11, it is in its negative form, making it "without modesty or shame."

The point of this story is the same as Hebrews 4:16, which is to approach the throne of grace boldly, not with a sense of unworthiness or shame. As the petitioner in the story, we can approach our friend, God, at any time knowing we are accepted.

Is God using the waiting period to teach us? I think at times this is certainly the case, and yet, if this is the reason for a delay, we shouldn't need to pray for the same thing again and again. Once and then a waiting in faith would be adequate.

In other situations the delay might be that God has the right time for an answer to prayer. "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary" (Gal. 6:9). But, again, if this is the reason, asking once and waiting in faith should be sufficient.

So why is a persistence or perseverance necessary in prayer? Why did it take me 30 hours of praying to get the cyst dissolved on my wife's ovary? Why did it take a year to obtain a miracle for the little girl in the coma? Why does it sometimes demand several years of intercession to see someone saved? Why did Elijah have to pray seven times before the rain came? Why did Daniel have to pray 21 days before the angel broke through with his answer?

His Throne in Our Hearts

There are probably reasons I am not aware of for the need for persistence in prayer. I certainly don't have all the prayer answers, but I want to submit one explanation for your consideration. I believe our prayers do more than simply motivate the Father to

action. I have become convinced of something Gordon Lindsay, a great man of prayer and the founder of Christ for the Nations, called the "substance" of prayer.⁹ In fairness, I must say I don't believe it can be conclusively proven, but there is great weight of evidence suggesting it, and I have embraced it as truth.

The concept is that our prayers do more than just motivate the Father to action. They actually release the power of the Holy Spirit from us to accomplish things. Certain types of praying would of course do this more than others.

For example, in our chapter on travail we spoke of this happening as we pray in the Spirit. Another powerful way this occurs would be through speaking the Word of God as a sword into situations (see Eph. 6:17). General declarations or commands are other activities that release the power of the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 17:20; Mark 11:23). The practice of the laying on of hands is another scriptural method of imparting power (see Mark 16:18; Heb. 6:2).

That there is literal power from the Holy Spirit which can be released from us is absolute. The power of God that brings life, healing and wholeness to the earth flows out from us—the Church.

Please don't picture some throne in heaven and feel like it's all there. He has now made His throne in our hearts and we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are the *naos* of God. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19 this word means, "holy of holies."¹⁰ We are now the holy of holies, the dwelling place of God upon the earth. When He moves to release power upon the earth, it doesn't have to shoot out of the sky somewhere—it comes from His people where His Spirit dwells upon the earth.

The Church, God's Womb upon the Earth

Whether through speaking, touching, laying hands on the sick, declaration or worship, when God's power starts flowing upon the earth, it is flowing through human vessels. We, the Body of Christ, are God's womb from which His life is birthed or released upon the earth. The life that Christ produces flows from the womb of the Church.

In John 7:38 Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" The innermost being, or belly (KJV), is the word *koilia* which literally means "womb." Translating it literally, we would say, "Out of his womb shall flow rivers of living water." The word "womb" speaks of reproduction. It speaks of birthing. It speaks of the bringing forth of life.

A similar phrase is found in Revelation 22:1,2:

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The picture here is of Jesus as the source of life. Out of Him flows the river with trees on either side. Leaves are produced by the trees, which are fed by the river, which is fed by Jesus. People—the nations—eat the leaves and are made whole.

What I want to point out is that the phrase "river of the water of life" in this passage is the same phrase in Greek as the "rivers of living water" in John 7. There is no difference between the river of life flowing out of the Lamb bringing healing and wholeness to the earth, and the rivers of living water that are to be flowing from the womb of the Church. We are His birthing vessels, His incubation chambers. Why should that surprise us? Is it not supposed to be the very life of Jesus in us that we are ministering to the earth?

John 7:39 tells us, "But this He spoke of the Spirit." It is the Spirit of God flowing from us. He doesn't lay hands on the sick—we lay hands on the sick. He doesn't lay hands on a person and ordain—He tells us to do it for Him. He, inside of us, releases a river to flow into that person, and they are now anointed and appointed by God. When He wants to bring forth the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation and life, He does not echo it from the heavens. He speaks it through us. God's life, the literal power and energy of God flows out of our mouths and penetrates the hearts of unbelievers, and they are born again.

We are the ones who wield the sword of the Spirit—the spoken Word of God. When the Spirit of God wants to cut and bring judgment into situations, He doesn't just speak from the clouds. He speaks from His people—out of our spirits. When I speak His Word into a situation at the direction of the Holy Spirit, it is as if the Lamb of God Himself spoke the Word. It releases God's life! We are the womb of God from which the river is supposed to flow.

Measurable Power

It is important to realize that this power is measurable. There are cumulative amounts of it. That there are measurable levels of almost any spiritual substance is easily proven.

There are measurable levels of faith. Romans 12:3 says, "as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." The word "measure" here is *metron* from which we get the word "meter." In other words, God has "metered out" to each a portion of faith; from there it must grow. There are levels of faith. There are measurable portions of righteousness. There are even measurable portions or degrees of sin.

In Genesis 15:16, God told Abraham He was going to give the land to his descendants in four generations. The reason He could not give it to him yet was because "the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

There are measurable levels of grace. Second Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you." In fact, in Acts 4:33 (KJV), we are told that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." The Greek word for "great" is *me-gas* from which we get "mega". There is grace, there is mega grace and there is all grace!

There are measurable degrees of love. John 15:13 speaks of greater love. Matthew 24:12 talks of love that has grown cold. Philippians 1:9 refers to love abounding more and more.

There are measurable degrees of the power of God. In Mark 6:5, there was a measurable degree of the power of God missing. The verse says that because of the unbelief of the people in

Nazareth, "He could do no miracle there." The Greek does not say, "He chose not to" or "He didn't." It says literally, "He could not" because their level of faith or unbelief had hindered the flow of the power of God. Although He was able to heal a few sick people, He could not work a miracle.

The same verse that talks about a "mega" grace talks about "mega" power (see Acts 4:33, *KJV*). They had mega power because they had mega grace! My point is simply that the aspects of the spirit realm are very tangible and real. The anointing is real. Power is real. We do not see it, but it is there. There are measurable, cumulative amounts that exist in the realm of the spirit.

Certain amounts of this power or river or life must be released in the realm of the spirit to accomplish certain things. Different amounts are required for different things. Just as in the natural you need different levels of power for different things, so it is in the spirit realm. It is like the difference between the amount of power it takes to light a flashlight versus a building, or a building as opposed to a city. The same thing is true in the spirit. Different amounts of God's power are needed to accomplish certain things.

Differing Measures of Power

Let's look again at Mark 6 where Jesus could not get enough power flowing in Nazareth to work a miracle. Enough power was flowing to get some healings, the implication being that they were minor, because the verse differentiates between the healings and miracles. Enough power was flowing for one, but not the other. This implies that differing amounts are needed for different things. Jesus could release enough to get a few healings, but He couldn't get enough flowing, because of their unbelief, to work a miracle.

The disciples in Matthew 17:14-21 had been casting out demons and healing the sick because Jesus had given them authority and power to do so. A lunatic boy was brought to them, however, and they couldn't get the job done. Jesus came along, and it was no problem for Him to exorcise the demon causing the lunacy.

The disciples had enough power flowing in their ministry to deal with most demons and diseases, but they came up against

one that required more faith and power—and they didn't have enough to overcome that one! Again, the obvious implication is that different measurable levels are needed to accomplish different things.

**After asking, we tend to sit back and wait on God when
He is often waiting on us.**

I'm thoroughly convinced this principle is a reason it takes awhile to get most prayers answered. Receiving an instant miracle is far and away the exception. Usually it is not just a matter of asking the Father to do something, but rather a matter of releasing enough power in the spirit to get the job done. Most Christians are not aware of this. After asking, we tend to sit back and wait on God when He is often waiting on us. We have failed to understand that there are prayers which do more than just ask Him.

Sometimes, when it appears God has finally "gotten around to it" or when we think something just suddenly happened, the truth is that enough power has finally been released through prayer to accomplish it.

Prophets Who Persevered for the Power

When the prophet Elijah came to the widow's son who had died, he spread himself out on the corpse face-to-face and prayed three times (see 1 Kings 17:21). Why did it take three times? Because the man of God wasn't where he needed to be spiritually? Because he didn't have enough faith? Because he didn't do it right the first two times?

We are not told the reason, nor is it insinuated that any of those things are true. I believe the reason was that he was releasing a little more life out of his spiritual womb or spirit each time. It takes a good bit of life to raise the dead!

In previous chapters we have looked at 1 Kings 18 where Elijah prayed for rain, and discussed the significance of God choosing to work through man and man traveling to bring forth God's will. Let's look at this passage again.

In 1 Kings 18:1 the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth." God didn't say, "I might." He didn't say, "If you pray hard enough." He didn't say, "I'm thinking about it." He just said, "I'm going to do it." It was God's timing, God's idea, God's will.

Yet, we are told at the end of this chapter that Elijah labored in prayer diligently seven times in the posture of a woman in travail before clouds appeared and the rain came. He didn't casually walk to the top of the mountain and say, "Lord, send the rain," and immediately it was done. That's not the "effectual, fervent prayer" James 5:16-18 tells us Elijah did to first stop and then bring the rain.

The question we must ask ourselves is: If it was God's will, timing and idea, then why did Elijah have to pray seven different times until the rain came? The most reasonable explanation to me is that it was necessary to persevere until he had completed enough prayer—until enough power had been released through his intercession to go up into the heavens and get the job done.

Why did it take Daniel 21 days to get his answer when God sent an angel to him the very first day he started praying? I would think if God wanted to send an angelic messenger, He could get it through immediately if He wanted. He has enough power, doesn't He? Then why was this angel detained for 21 days?

I believe Daniel's faithful praying every day was releasing power into the realm of the spirit. Not until enough power was released to break through the demonic opposition in the spirit could God get the angel through with the answer!

Please understand that I am not limiting God's power. I am fully aware that one word from God could rout every demon in hell. What must be factored in is God's decision to work on the earth through man. It seems reasonable to me that if a man's prayers were responsible for the angel being dispatched, they would also be the key to breaking through with the message. As Billheimer said, "Although the answer to his prayer was granted

and already on the way, if Daniel had given up it presumably would never have arrived."¹¹

Releasing the River of Power

Why did it take Jesus three hours in the Garden of Gethsemane to break through? Why didn't the angels come immediately and comfort Him? Surely God was not holding out on this righteous sinless man! Power was being released in the spirit to cause the breakthrough.

I am not speaking to you about vain repetition. I am not talking about asking God again and again and again. I am talking about understanding the ways and principles of God enough to know how to release the river in order to give birth to things out of your spiritual womb. When we intercede, cooperating with the Spirit of God, it releases Him to go out from us and hover over a situation, releasing His life-birthing energies until that which we are asking for comes forth.

Why did it take a month to get rid of the cyst on my wife's ovary? What was I doing as I prayed for her an hour every day during that time? I was releasing the river from my womb!

Some would say that God finally did it after I had persevered enough. No. Throughout the entire month her pain was decreasing, which according to our doctor had to mean the cyst was shrinking. It didn't just suddenly happen. Power being released in the realm of the spirit was accomplishing something physically inside of her. Every day when that power was released, it was destroying the cyst just a little bit more...and more...and more.

Why did I have to pray for more than a year for the comatose young lady I told you about at the beginning of this book? I went to see her at least once a week for a year speaking the Word of God, weeping, calling forth a new brain inside of her head and fighting the good fight of faith. Why did it take a year? Because it takes a lot of power to form a new brain. Why didn't God do it instantly? I don't know. I tried everything I knew to get Him to do so.

I said, "Damsel, I say unto you, 'Arise!'" She arose not! I did all the things I'd read about the heroes of faith doing. In faith, I

even sat her up in the bed and commanded her to wake up, but like a limp rag doll she flopped back down on her pillow. I do not know why God chose not to do it as an instant miracle, but because He didn't I'm relatively certain of this: A measurable amount of the river had to flow until there was enough of it to produce that miracle.

Ephesians 3:20,21 says:

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and forever, Amen.

The word for "exceeding abundantly beyond" is the same word for the abundant grace of God in Romans 5:20. The word is *hyperperissos*. *Perissos* means "superabundant,"¹² *hyper* means "beyond" or "more than."¹³ Together, they would mean superabundantly with more added to that. That's like saying more than more than.

Ephesians 3:20 says He has enough power to do more than we can ask or think with more added to that—more than more than. So, why are we often deficient?

Operative Power

The power source is not the problem. The rest of Ephesians 3:20 gives us a clue. It tells us He is going to do this more than more than enough "according to the power that works within us." Wuest translates the phrase "in the measure of the power which is operative in us." The word "measure" is *kata* which not only has this implication of that which is measured in us, but Strong says it is also used at times with the connotation of "distribution."¹⁴ He is going to do this superabundantly more than we can ask or think in the measure of the power that is distributed from us. Are you distributing power? Are you distributing the river?

Please don't think you are releasing enough power to accomplish the miraculous by sporadic or casual praying. You

are not! You must release the power of God inside of you on a consistent basis. James 5:16 (KJV) says, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (italics mine). Wuest translates it this way: "A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much as it operates." Notice the verse doesn't say, "A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much because it causes God to operate."

It certainly does this, but that's not what this verse is telling us. It says, "A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much as it—the prayer—operates" (italics mine). The *Amplified* translation reads, "The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]." Wow! Our prayers go to work. Notice the word "continued." The *Amplified* captures the present tense meaning of the verb. We have the power inside of us that created the world. We have the same power in us that went into the depths of the earth and took the keys from the kingdom of darkness. We must release it. Release the river! Release the power! Release it and release it and release it and release it some more! Again and again and again!

Tipping the Prayer Bowls of Heaven

As we do, the Scriptures indicate that our prayers accumulate. There are bowls in heaven in which our prayers are stored. Not one bowl for all of them but "bowls." We don't know how many but I think it very likely that each of us has our own bowl in heaven. I don't know if it's literal or symbolic. It doesn't matter. The principle is still the same. God has something in which He stores our prayers for use at the proper time:

Revelation 5:8: "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints."

Revelation 8:3-5: "And another angel came and stood at

the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake."

According to these verses, either when He knows it is the right time to do something or when enough prayer has accumulated to get the job done, He releases power. He takes the bowl and mixes it with fire from the altar.

I want you to picture this. He takes the same fire that fell on Sinai, the same fire that burned the sacrifice consuming the rocks and water and everything else when Elijah was on the mountain, the same fire that fell at Pentecost, the same fire that destroys His enemies, the very fire of almighty God, and He mixes your bowl of prayers with His fire! Then He pours it upon the earth...lightning starts to flash, thunder crashes, the earth quakes. Something awesome happens in the realm of the spirit which then affects the natural realm.

This must be what happened when Paul and Silas were in jail and began to sing praises late in the night. Worship started ascending, God was anointing it, the bowls filled and God poured it out. The earth literally started quaking, the jail door opened and their shackles fell off. As a result the first convert in Asia was born again in Philippi. The gospel made its first penetration into a new continent on earth.

Recently, I believe the Lord showed me what sometimes happens when we come to Him with a need, asking Him to accomplish what He says in His Word. In answer to our requests, He sends His angels to get our bowls of prayer to mix with the fire of the altar. But *there isn't enough in our bowls to meet the need!* We might blame God or think it's not His will or that His Word must not really mean what it says. The reality of it is that sometimes He cannot do what we've asked because we have not given Him enough power in our prayer times to get it done. He has poured

out all there was to pour and it wasn't enough! It's not just a faith issue, but also a power issue.

I hope this doesn't alarm you. I get excited when I think about it. I didn't know it at the time, but when I was standing over the comatose girl, every time I spoke the name above every name, every time I prayed in the Spirit, every time I laid hold of His Word and promises, every tear I shed was put in a bottle (see Ps. 56:8)—or a bowl—and God was just watching until finally it was full.

Get Radical—Pour on the Power

And on a Saturday morning in 1986, the Almighty looked over at one of the angels and said, "See the little girl over there whose brain is no longer functioning that has to be fed through her stomach and breathe through a hole in her throat and is lying there like a living dead person and the doctors say there's no hope and that she's going to die? Do you see her? Take this bowl that's been filled, mix it with My fire, and go dump it on her head." The rest is history.

Go into your child's room if he or she is not born again and, preferably when they're not there, put prayer power—substance—in everything they touch. This power can go into clothing or handkerchiefs and minister to people. Enough anointing and power from the river flowed out of Paul's innermost being and went into his handkerchief that notable miracles took place when people touched those handkerchiefs. Enough of it was in Jesus' clothes that when they reached out and grabbed the very bottom edge of it, something flashed out of Him.

You will recall the testimony of Polly Simchen who came to me with a handkerchief and said, "Would you pray over this? We're going to cut it up and put a piece everywhere our son goes. We're going to hide it everywhere we can." As she shared earlier, Polly would come to me every once in awhile and say, "I've run out of them. I need another one." So we would pray and douse another one in the anointing of God.

She hid one piece under the insole in her son Jonathan's shoe and he loaned his shoes to a friend. This was the most radical

drunk, burned-out freak I'd seen in a long time. The friend made a mistake! He wore the wrong person's shoes! No, actually his life was saved—radically saved, filled with the Spirit of God and turned on for Jesus. Jonathan lost a rowdy friend because the friend became so filled with the presence of God that Jonathan couldn't stand to be around him anymore. As we mentioned earlier, Jonathan is now also living for the Lord.

Smear everything your children have with the anointing! The Old Testament word "anoint" means to pour or smear with oil. It's okay to get a bit radical. Jesus liked it when people tore roofs off, crawled on hands and knees pressing through crowds, climbed trees, shouted obnoxiously crying out for mercy, bathed His feet with tears and hair—He simply loves wholeheartedness.

John Killinger tells about an interesting method used in the past to break a wild steed by harnessing it to a burro. The powerful steed would take off across the range, twisting and bucking, causing the burro to be tossed about wildly. What a sight! The steed would run away, pulling the burro alongside, and they would drop out of sight—sometimes for days. Then they would return, with the proud little burro in charge. The steed had worn himself out, fighting the presence of the burro. When he became too tired to fight anymore, the burro assumed the position of leader. And that's the way it is many times with prayer. Victory goes to the persistent, not to the angry; to the dedicated, not to those who can provide great demonstrations of emotion and energy. We need committed, determined, systematic prayer, not once in awhile fireworks.¹⁵

Forgive Us, Father

Father, why is the thing we need the most, the thing we do the least? Why are most of us so busy we don't have time? You must have many frustrated days when Your eyes roam to and fro throughout the earth in search of someone whose heart is completely Yours. You must weep often when You seek for a man or woman to stand in the gap to fill the breach and find no one. Your heart

must ache at times for us, Your people, to rise up and be what You've called us to be.

We humble ourselves before Your throne and ask You to forgive us for our lack of prayer. And forgive us as leaders, Lord, who have not told Your people the truth. Forgive us as a church—the Body of Christ—for allowing evil to rule in this land when You have more than more than enough power in our wombs to change it.

Forgive us, for it is not Your fault, that we have a generation marked X. It is not Your will that we kill the next generation before it takes its first breath. It is not Your plan that we still have not overcome the principality of hatred that divides this land.

Forgive us, Lord. Cleanse us now and break the curses we have allowed to rule over us. Forgive us and cleanse us from the sin of apathy, complacency, ignorance and unbelief. Wash us with the water of Your Word. Break off of us this lethargic prayerlessness, which we justify a thousand different ways. It really boils down to disobedience, unbelief and sin.

Father, please forgive us and deliver us. Set us free from being hearers of the Word only, and not doers. Give us homes and churches that are founded on the rock of obedience to Your Word. Rise up in Your people with the stubborn tenacity that Jesus had, that the Early Church walked in. Cause us to cast off everything that would oppose Your Spirit and move us into a realm that pays a price and lays hold of the kingdom of God.

Fill us with Your Spirit. Baptize us in fire. Let there be an impartation of the Spirit of grace and supplication. Let there be an anointing that comes from Your throne to hungry people who are tired of status quo, of mediocrity, of death and destruction. We are tired of it, God. We are tired of being defeated by a defeated enemy. We are tired of being held back from our destiny, both individually and as a nation. We are tired of lack and disease. We are tired of sin. We are hungry for something—the God of the Bible!