

## CONVERSATIONS THAT CHANGE ETERNITY

*"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."*

Matthew 6:5-7 (NIV)

### ❖ Why Is Prayer So Important?

*Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

James 5:13-16 (NIV)

*"Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and I am here at your command. <sup>37</sup> Answer me Lord so these people will know that you Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."*

1 Kings 18:36-37 (NIV)

1. Prayer is when "HUMAN IMPOTENCE and DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE intersect."
2. Prayers are PROPHECIES, "the best predictors of our SPIRITUAL FUTURE."
3. Prayer allows God to do the MIRACULOUS in our MUNDANE world.

### ❖ Why We Struggle with Prayer?

*You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

James 4:2-3 (NIV)

1. We pray with a DIVIDED HEART.

*When you ask you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives...*

James 4:3a (NIV)

2. We pray with a SINFUL HEART.

*If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened.*

Psalm 66:18 (NLT)

3. We pray with an UNFORGIVING HEART.

*"But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."*

Mark 11:25 (NLT)

4. We pray with a SELFISH HEART.

*Whoever shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will call and not be answered.*

Proverbs 21:13 (GW)

5. We pray with a DOUBTING HEART.

*But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

James 1:6 (NIV)

❖ Why Do We Need to Prioritize Prayer?

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,<sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,<sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,<sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

Ephesians 3:16-21 (NIV)

1. We need to learn to pray BIG PRAYERS... DREAM BIG.

*Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.<sup>2</sup> Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."<sup>3</sup> March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days.<sup>4</sup> Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.<sup>5</sup> When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."*

Joshua 6:1-5 (NIV)

2. We need to learn to pray PERSISTENT PRAYERS... PRAY HARD.

*Then Jesus told a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "There was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)

3. We need to learn to pray CONSISTENT PRAYERS... PRAY LONG.

*Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*

Daniel 6:10 (NIV)

❖ Closing Challenge – Will you commit with me to recommit to the Priority of Prayer?