

Testimonies from Eight Believers regarding the Intimate and Vital Relationship between God's Word and Prayer

DWIGHT L. MOODY

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) "was an untiring Bible student. He usually rose about daybreak in summer, in order to have a quiet season alone with his Bible and his God, while his mind was fresh, and before the activities of the day divided his attention." Moody encouraged his readers to have a time alone with God.

I never have seen a man or woman who spent fifteen or twenty minutes alone with God every day that didn't have the dew all the while. I have never known one to backslide, either. You never get more than one day's journey from Christ if you come to Him every morning. Shut the world out Get closeted with God and you will learn His secrets. I like to get up at five o'clock in the morning and turn the key and be alone, and let God talk with me.

Some people say: "I cannot concentrate my thoughts. My mind just goes all over the world."

Well, that is true. There is no bigger tramp on the earth than the human mind. It is astonishing how the mind travels; and you ask, How can we bring our thoughts into captivity and have fellowship with God, instead of thinking of ourselves and everything under the sun?

Prayer is important, but there is something else as important. When I pray I am talking to God; when I read the Bible God talks to me. We need both...

JAMES M. GRAY

James M. Gray (1851-1935) was an excellent bible teacher and an active evangelist. In his best known work, *How to Master the English Bible*, he pointed to prayerful reading.

The most important rule is the last. Read it prayerfully. Let not the triteness of the observation belittle it, or all is lost. The point is insisted on because, since the Bible is a supernatural book, it can be studied or mastered only by supernatural aid.

The conclusion of his plan for such mastery of the Bible is that our reading be punctuated with prayer.

In the light of the foregoing, let the reader punctuate the reading of it and every part of it with prayer to its divine Author, and he will come to know "How to Master the English Bible."

ANDREW MURRAY

Andrew Murray (1828-1917), the well-known Christian teacher of South Africa, spoke and wrote extensively about the believer's fellowship with the Lord. In his concern for the spiritual life of Christians, he wrote that both the Word and prayer should be combined in the personal time spent with the Lord.

Heart to heart fellowship with the Lord, according to Murray, involves the interaction of God's Word and prayer.

The Word comes from God's heart, and brings His thoughts and His love into my heart. And then the Word goes back from my heart into His great heart of love, and prayer is the means of fellowship between God's heart and mine.

How can a believer practice turning God's Word into prayer? In *The Prayer Life* Murray offered this practical advice for a profitable and power prayer life.

Read a few verses from the Bible. Do not concern yourself with the difficulties contained in them. You can consider these later; but take what you understand, apply it to yourself, and ask the Father to make His Word light and power in your heart. Thus you will have material enough for prayer from the Word which the Father speaks to you...

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

The reputation of C.H. Spurgeon (1835-1892), a diligent and powerful British minister during the last century, came at least in part, from his unique ability to use figurative language and dramatic illustrations in presenting the truths of God's Word.

Spurgeon described the interdependence of God's Word and prayer using vivid illustrations.

It is a great thing to pray one's self into the spirit and marrow of a text; working into it by sacred feeding thereon, even as the worm bores its way into the kernel of the nut. Prayer supplies a leverage for the uplifting of ponderous truths.

...New veins of precious ore will be revealed to your astonished gaze as you quarry God's Word and use diligently the hammer of prayer.

Use prayer as a boring rod, and wells of living water will leap up from the bowels of the Word. Who will be content to thirst when living waters are so readily to be obtained!

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH

Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) is widely known for her book on Christian living, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. In *Everyday Religion* she described the way to take the words of God.

If we will take the words of God, i.e., His revealed truth, into our lips and eat it; that is, if we will dwell upon His words and say them over and over to ourselves, and thoroughly take in and assimilate their meaning in a common-sense sort of way, we shall find that our soul-life is fed and nourished by them, and is made strong and vigorous in consequence.

In *The God of All Comfort* she uses Psalm 23 as an example of praying the Word.

Then say the words over to yourself with all the will power you can muster, "The Lord is my Shepherd. He is. He is. No matter what I feel, He says He is, and He is. I am going to believe it, come what may." Then repeat the words with a different emphasis each time:

The *Lord* is my Shepherd.
The Lord *is* my Shepherd.
The Lord is *my* Shepherd.
The Lord is my *Shepherd*.

EDWARD M. BOUNDS

E.M. Bounds (1835-1913) "wrote transcendently about prayer, because he was transcendent in its

practice." for many years he prayed from four in the morning until seven. His many books display "the depths of his marvelous research into the Life of Prayer." Like Spurgeon, Bounds used figurative expressions to illustrate the role of the Word of God in prayer.

God's Word is the basis, as it is the directory of the prayer of faith.

In *The Necessity fo Prayer*, he pointed emphatically to prayer not based on the Word as flabby, vapid, and void.

Unless the vital forces of prayer are supplied by God's Word, prayer, though earnest, even vociferous, in its urgency, is, in reality, flabby, and vapid, and void. The absence of vital force in praying, can be traced to the absence of a constant supply of God's Word, to repair the waste, and renew the life.

JOHN HYDE

John Hyde (1865-1912), called by some "Praying Hyde", was faithful to take the Gospel to India. This account shows his practice of prayer mingled with the Word.

Right on his face on the ground is Praying Hyde. This was his favorite attitude for prayer. Listen! He is praying; he utters a petition, and then waits; in a little time he repeats it, and then waits; and this many times until we feel that that petition has penetrated every fibre of our being and we feel assured that God has heard and without doubt He will answer. How well I remember him praying that we might open our mouth wide that He might fill it (Psalms 81:10). I think he repeated the word "wide" scores of times with long pauses between. "Wide, Lord, wide, open wide, wide." How effectual it was to hear him address God, "O Father, Father!"

W.H. GRIFFITH THOMAS

A minister, scholar, and teacher, W.H. Griffith Tomas (1861-1924) showed the weakness of prayer life to be due to a lack of knowing God through His Word.

God's Word is the fuel of our prayer. As we open the page in the morning, the promises prompt us to prayer, the examples incite us to prayer, the warnings urge us to

prayer, the hopes of glory stir us to prayer—everything in the portion taken for meditation can be turned into prayer....Depend on it, hiding God's Word in the heart is the secret of prayer, and the reason why our prayer-life is so weak and barren is that we do not know God through His Word.

As to the connection between prayer and Bible study he said:

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to do more than call attention to the intimate and necessary connection between prayer and all Bible study, whether the study be mainly critical or purely devotional. Bible knowledge is at once a cause and an effect of prayer. We need prayer for spiritual and intellectual enlightenment before and as we study the Word of God, while the results of our study will in turn lead to more prayer and increasing waiting on God in fellowship. Thus the two act and react on each other, for prayer in its simplest definition is just our speaking to God, and the Bible is God speaking to us.

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