

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 71

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Topic: Praying In The Opposite Spirit

Date: 9th November 2009

Luke 23:33-34 MKJV *And when they came to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on the right, and one on the left. (34) And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And parting His clothing, they cast lots.*

Matthew 5:43-45 MKJV *You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (45) so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

One of the most powerful forms of spiritual ministry is when we do not retaliate against evil but instead pray 'in the opposite spirit' so that we love our enemies as Christ commanded us to.

Life is full of negative situations and Satan takes advantage of them. The Devil wants us to become bitter, resentful, hateful and unforgiving because then he can get a foothold in our lives to destroy us spiritually.

Ephesians 4:26-27 ISV *"Be angry, yet do not sin." Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, (27) and do not give the devil an opportunity to work.*

The Devil also wants us to be angry so that we will turn against our friends, family, pastor and church and cause division and defile many:

Hebrews 12:14-15 ASV *Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: (15) looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled;*

One of the best ways to cope with unjust treatment is to take it to God in prayer, and especially to leave the matter in the Lord's hands: **Romans 12:19 ISV** *Do not take revenge, dear fiends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me. I will pay them back, declares the Lord."*

1 Peter 2:21-23 MKJV *For you were not called to this? For Christ also suffered on our behalf, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps, (22) He who did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth, (23) who when He was reviled did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but gave Himself up to Him who judges righteously.*

Here are some examples:

- a) Moses interceding for the rebellious Israelites who constantly complained against him and even wanted to kill him. (Exodus 32:30-35)
- b) Jesus interceding for the soldiers who crucified Him (Luke 23:33-34 above)
- c) Stephen praying for forgiveness for those who stoned him. (Acts 7:60)
- d) Paul praying for the salvation of the Jews which persecuted him. (Romans 10:1-4)

This does not just apply to physical persecution but to other things as well. For instance we can pray that the boss who humiliates us will be blessed or that an annoying neighbor will be saved. Instead of raging and resenting we can be interceding!

Instead of fuming over disruptive social situations pray that their positive opposite may occur. For instance if you are concerned over corruption pray for integrity and transparency. Pray for the salvation of your leaders and your government, for wisdom, grace and protection and that God may place the love of righteousness and truth in their hearts.

No matter how bad the situation is you should not pray with rage, anger, bitterness and unforgiveness in your heart!

1 Timothy 2:8 KJV *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

I find that when I get worked up over something it takes me some time to get into position to pray in the opposite spirit – or even to work out what the opposite spirit is! For instance if a person has shown me rejection and contempt then the opposite spirit is one of reconciliation and honor.

Instead of flaring up and vowing revenge I should show them honor (at least in my prayers). I should desire reconciliation. Now they may not ever reconcile – that is up to them. But if I pray aright then my heart would be free of resentment, anger and bitterness. I would have done the right thing before God and had a testimony before the angels.

Praying in the opposite spirit has the advantage of gradually lifting us out of the 'reactive life' where we let other people 'press our buttons' and make us react. Over time we learn to handle things better, to pause and pray, to be steady in our inner selves. This pays big dividends both personally and professionally because no one wants to be around a person who is easily agitated but everyone enjoys someone who is calm, professional and loving.

You may not be able to stop yourself getting angry, but there is no need to stay angry!

Praying in the opposite spirit vents all the poisonous destructive anger and lets God deal with it. Tell your problem to God and push through until you know you are in the right place spiritually once more. We see this often in the Psalms where King David brings some agonizing conflict with his enemies before the throne of God:

Psalms 25:15-22 MKJV *My eyes are ever toward Jehovah; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. (16) Turn to me, and have mercy on me, for I am wasted and afflicted. (17) The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. (18) Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. (19) Look on my enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. (20) Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. (21) Let purity and uprightness keep me; for I wait on You. (22) Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

Now we need to remember that King David had enormous power and could have simply had his political enemies killed just as many kings of that time would easily have done without a second thought. But David chose God's way and did NOT take his own personal, spiteful revenge. These psalms indicate that David was restraining his anger and his political and judicial power and was leaving the matter with the Lord.

Just a final note, praying in the opposite spirit does not apply if your life or the life of your children is in danger. You should not stay in an abusive or violent situation. There is an appropriate time to go to the police and to protect yourself and your family. I am not encouraging staying in hopeless and dangerous situations. What I am encouraging is reacting to life's provocations in a Christ-like manner.

Blessings,

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