

BIBLICAL PRAYER (46)

According to God's Word, believers who meet God's prerequisites for prayer can actually become part of a sovereign moving of God in which He can and will change the world in which we live. **One very important passage of Scripture on this point is I Timothy 2:2 .**

H. A. Ironside said of this verse: "I am quite sure of this: if we prayed more for those at the head of the country and in other positions of responsibility we would feel less ready to criticize them; we would be more disposed to recognize the heavy burdens resting on them, and to understand how easy it is to make mistakes in times of crises. Our rulers need divine wisdom that they might govern well in subjection to Him who is earth's rightful King. As we pray earnestly for them we are furthering our own best interests, because as the affairs of nations are ordered according to the will of God His people find living conditions more comfortable and enjoyable. We are told to pray 'for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

Christians are to be examples to others of subjection to Government. When difficulties arise and differences come up that divide people and set one group against another, we should be characterized by a quiet, restful confidence in God as we refer these things to Him in prayer" (*I & II Timothy*, pp. 53-54).

When Israel found herself in captivity to the Babylonians, the Jews were given a message from God that they were to seek the welfare of the city they were in and were to pray for its welfare (**Jeremiah 29:7**). This would naturally mean that when God answered their prayers, they too would have peace and welfare since they lived in the city where God was granting these blessings. This is the same principle of **I Timothy 2:2**.

Every one of God's people needs to realize this extremely important principle. It may be applied in a nation, state and city. It may be applied on the job, in the home and in the church. If God's people will seek the welfare of the organization and pray for its welfare, they will discover God will move and will bless and they will share in the results of those blessings. **The world in which we live can be changed through prayer.** God can sovereignly change things from being that of turmoil to being that of tranquility. When we realize the impact we can make through prayer it should drive us to our knees.

J. Oswald Sanders writes: "Since God has commanded us to pray, prayer must form part of His overall purpose. Since he has pledged Himself to answer these prayers, is it not reasonable to assume that in His scheme of things, He has made full allowance for all the implications of prayer? Could it not be that our prayers form part of His plan and purpose, and indeed by the very factor that would bring that purpose about? If the foreordination of God is a valid objection to intercession, could it not also be contended that it is a valid objection to every other form of human activity" (*Prayer Power Unlimited*, p. 123).

Perhaps one reason why God chooses to work in harmony with the prayers of His people is so that His people may experience the wonderful blessings of being a fellow worker in the program and plan of God.

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Another way in which prayer can change the world is through salvation. Obviously, the world becomes a much better place to live when people have Jesus Christ at the center of their lives. Although the Bible makes it clear that salvation is of God, the Bible also makes it clear that praying for the salvation of the lost is also of God (**I Tim. 2:1-4; Rom. 10:1**).

J. Oswald Sanders, in his book on soul winning, was so convinced that prayer was necessary to the salvation of the lost that he said every believer needed to pray three things for himself and three things for the lost:

- A. For Himself - 1) Moral courage to speak for Christ; 2) Guidance as to whom to approach; 3) Guidance as to what to say;
- B. For the Lost - 1) Indifference or hostility will be broken down; 2) Soil of the heart may be prepared for sowing of the seed; 3) Liberation of the soul from the power of Satan.

Mr. Sanders went on to say that until we are willing to pray with such definition, our evangelistic praying is likely to be futile (*The Divine Art of Soul Winning*, pp. 35-40).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer also believed that prayer was a critical part of saving the lost. He writes: "All evangelism must begin with prayer. The importance of preaching and teaching the truth is in no way lessened by this emphasis upon priestly prayer. It must only be borne in mind that prevailing prayer necessarily accompanies all other ministry; for it commands the power of God, and secures the needed illumination of the mind toward the Word that may be preached. Without prayer there will be little understanding and vision of the Gospel, even though faithfully presented. ... Fundamentally, then, the personal element in true soul-winning work is more a service of pleading for souls than a service of pleading with souls" (*True Evangelism*, pp. 88-93).

If we can learn to pray properly, we can mightily influence our world for the glory of God. We can, according to the sovereign program of God, be a coworker for Him in accomplishing powerful things in this world.

(Area of Change #4) - Prayer can change personal circumstances.

Whether it be the elimination of negative circumstances or the addition of positive circumstances, the Word of God makes it clear that prayer can change the personal circumstances and situations that surround the child of God (**James 4:2**).