

Enduring prayer in holiness is not optional

Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thess 5:17-18

If we not consciously living in the presence of God seeking holiness and truth through prayer, we are often unconsciously living in the world as if we are still fleshly according to the wisdom of the world.

We can see the world in us when we get out of joint because of what is happening around us that is felt as loss. If we have indeed died to the world with Christ, and being raised up with Him, then we have already counted all things in the world as loss in order to gain Christ.

Accordingly, we have received everything we need for eternal life and happiness in Jesus Christ. For our heavenly Father has ordained that in Christ we share in all that is His rightful inheritance.

As a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us according to the faith we have received, we can see the whole truth about life from God's perspective, in that in Christ we are to be holy as He is holy so we can pray with assurance He hears us.

When we feel like we are alone in the world we have taken our minds away from Christ to seek another that is nothing. For the mind set in the Spirit of God in Christ is life and peace. And if by the Spirit we are putting to death the flesh we will live with God.

Therefore, God uses what disturbs our fleshly minds to get our attention in order to show us that we are still obsessed with the things of the world and ourselves and our fleshly brokenness.

And He has not left us without clear instructions concerning our attitude to the world. *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1 John 2:15

Effective prayer is all about surrender to the Sovereignty of God

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”
Matt 6:10

“Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”
Mark 14:36

“Father, not My will, but Yours be done.”
Luke 22:42

Humble prayer changes us from looking to ourselves to focus on God and His glory and Sovereign will. We live for the Sovereignty of God so we pray according to His will.

“Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and on the earth; Yours is the dominion, LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honour come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.
Chron 29:10-13

Oh, Lord GOD! Behold, You Yourself have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, who shows mercy to thousands, but repays the wrongdoing of fathers into the laps of their children after them, great and mighty God. The LORD of armies is His name; great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of mankind, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds;
Jer 32:17-19

“I am the one who forms light and creates darkness; the one who brings about peace and creates calamity. I am the LORD, who accomplishes all these things. O sky, rain down from above! Let the clouds send down showers of deliverance! Let the earth absorb it so

salvation may grow, and deliverance may sprout up along with it. I, the LORD, create it.” Isaiah 45:7-8

‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’ Isaiah 46:9-10

The NIV has v10 saying, *“I will do all I please.”*

Effective prayer depends on humility in the sight of God

“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” James 4:6

We are made new in Christ according to His image to enjoy loving communion with God, this is so that we can live for His glory. We should never doubt God's love for us because we have received everything in Christ pertaining to life and godliness constant with the divine nature.

Praying silently or audibly at all times is a gift of grace from God that helps keep us consciously alive in the presence of God so that we remember we are now His beloved holy spiritual children and not someone living in the world as if it is our permanent home. Prayer is our life line that secures our minds in the things of the Spirit.

The Wisdom that comes from the Spirit reveals that every servant of Christ is incomplete in their personal sanctification, simply because we still retain something of Adam's declaration of independence to stand apart from God and His people, according to human wisdom. No one knows all the mystery of God.

We are all prone to take life in relation to the flesh too seriously when we become despondent because of the let-downs we experience in the world. No one is made perfect in the image of Christ, so everyone has the potential to hurt our over sensitive feelings when we feel under pressure.

We can even misinterpret people's motives and assume harm when none is intended.

The solution to being downcast is to look to Jesus Christ who gives His life to those who love and obey Him according to His purpose.

Why do we sin and feel comfortable with ourselves?

We claim to believe that God is sovereign over all things; that He has united us to Himself in Christ by giving us life according to the Spirit. And when we believe in Jesus Christ for our salvation, we necessarily die to our declaration of independence according to the flesh or we cannot be with Him as Lord who rules over us due to His Divine Majesty. To live by ourselves is rejection of Jesus Christ.

When we behave without knowing the presence of God's Spirit, we have resurrected our old self according to the flesh. When we live as if we are self determined, we behave as if God doesn't exist.

Straying from the presence of God means being drawn into the way of the world. There is only the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. There is no in between place to call home. The forces of light or the forces of darkness. Prayer is a gift of grace to keep us in the light of the Kingdom of God. We neglect prayer to our peril.

Jesus Christ came to restore mankind to intimacy with our Holy God which we lost when we inherited at birth the declaration of independence from Adam, who passed his fallen spiritual condition on to all his descendants. Jesus died for our sin so that we can live in peace because we surrender to the absolute sovereignty of God in every situation He allows in our daily lives.

Our sin is living for the self of declared independence, which means we will not surrender to the Lordship of Christ through the obedience of faith to be holy as He is holy. Independence is comfortable according to life in the flesh without God.

If His holiness is not at the forefront of our awareness because He is with us, then we have separated ourselves from God again by declaring our independence to behave without holiness.

At any time, we should be able to ask Jesus, Lord, do You approve of my thoughts and behaviour, and know He will say yes? If the answer is not yes, we are not acknowledging that He is our Lord and master in all things so that we live for Him and not ourselves.

Humility is a heart surrendered to the absolute sovereignty of God through faithful obedience. If we are not aware of our surrender we are not living in humility and truth in the presence of our Holy Majestic God.

We don't pray enough, so we don't walk with God enough. Instead, we often choose to live like a dead man. God help us live with You. If we are not enjoying the fullness of holiness, we are not living a life of continuous prayer according to the Spirit of God in all things.

Call the emergency number quickly. Instead of denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily, it would appear that we want to live by the flesh instead of living by praying continuously in the presence of God, knowing He hears the prayers of the humble.

We need to pray because our life depends on prayer as the Father is glorified in the Son.

Humility accepts we are in Christ because of the work of God

And we have the best communion with Him when we consciously walk in His presence in prayer.

We are made alive in Christ. Chosen in Him by God.

Washed clean from sin. Forgiven in Christ.

Justified in Him.

Born of the Spirit.

A new creation.

With the divine nature.

In the image of Christ.

Set aside from the world.

Adopted into God's family.

A temple of the Spirit.

An ambassador for Christ.

A servant of Christ.

Following His example.

Gifted to do His work.

A member of His body.

To glorify God.

Having received everything pertaining to eternal life and godliness in Christ. To be glorified in Christ.

This is the basis for our life of continuous humble prayer. Whatever is not consistent with this life of holiness in Christ is fleshly and needs to be put off as being put to death with all perseverance.

God answers the prayer of humility His way

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honour Me."

Psalms 50:15

Because we are still influenced by the flesh, we often ask God to change the circumstances He has ordained for our judgement or

Sanctification and growth in holiness. But we want to be in comfort and easy, we don't like His training in righteousness through tribulation and exacting trials.

Our brokenness, under the influence of satan is always before us, attempting at every opportunity to interpret life to us in the world as the only way to live, this is in order to lead us away from our new life of holiness in Christ, so that we will be of no use to the kingdom of God.

We must be on guard, and stand firm in the faith we have received in Christ Jesus our Lord and Master.

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." John 8:31-32

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." John 15:7-11

Asking God for what we wish is for the purpose of fruit production for His kingdom, not personal property in the world. Asking for what we wish in the world is according to our life in the flesh.

We are chosen by the sovereign will of God to glorify Him in all things.

It is His will to transform His chosen children into the image of Christ, not to make us comfortable in the world. Prayer should help us know God's purpose for our holiness in Christ.

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 1 Pet 1:13-16

God ordains our circumstances for His purpose that we learn to trust in Him regardless of our circumstances. For we live for Him and not He for us. Christ is our life; we are not running His life to decide our purpose.

Any dissatisfaction or discord we face, and any doubt or frustration, are all instrumental in calling us to turn to Him in humility and obedience so that we trust in Him who lives in us by His Spirit so that we can be Christ minded according to His will.

He changes our circumstances when it suits His purpose for our holiness and His glory. With all our concerns, after doing all we can responsibly do as His children, we hand all things over to Him. It is then for us to accept the outcome of His will, for He strengthens us to live according to His will so that we prove what is right and good and perfect.

casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Pet 5:7

In this way of humbly trusting our Father to do what is right in His sight, we can rest in peace, knowing that He is working out all things for our greatest good so that we grow in the image of Christ.

We are to seek the Reign of Christ and the kingdom of God as our first priority, (Matt 6:33) not the kingdom of the world that is perishing. *'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'* 1 John 2:15

In John 17 when Jesus was close to the time of returning to the Father, Jesus didn't pray for God to make the circumstances of His disciples smooth, no, He prayed that the Father would keep His people from the dominion of satan.

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."

John 17:13-21

Our circumstances are ordained so that we can be one in God. God changes our circumstances according to His predestined plan for our holiness.

'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Who will bring charges against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, but rather, was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Just as it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We were regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Rom 8:28-39

Father, may we delight daily in the great treasure of Your Son, so that we behold His glory in our vision, so that the things of the world grow dim in our desires. For we look forward to our heavenly home and finally living in the fullness of love and joy as we finally see You face to face.

Prayer is living face to face with God in the pursuit of His glory

We seek His face prayerfully when we read His word and rely on the Spirit to inform our minds. We adopt a mind of prayer when we meditate on His will in the night watch so that we can be taught to understand His way even in our sleep. We are to give thanks throughout the day as we appreciate His glory revealed to us in creation and His good works for the benefit of mankind. We are to seek the wisdom of God in our daily pursuits, at home, in the market place and where we earn our living. We are to pray for those who persecute us, daily if needed.

We are to have the attitude that was in Jesus when He walked as we walk as those who belong to another kingdom. We are to pray for God's will to be done in all those who come within our sphere of influence, and for those whose influence affects us. Believers and unbelievers. Family first, then work colleagues, neighbours, Church members and Elders. Friends we know in the world. And Governments and servants of the people.

This is the communion of received grace in a life of prayer which is to be understood as a daily 24-hour reality and not just 20 minutes of daily quiet time with an hour on Sunday which is considered all that is needed. This prayer cannot be contained in a few minutes in 24 hours.

We are not to live like the prodigal son going off into the world to do our own thing while forgetting who our Father is through the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.'
Phil 4:4-7

'Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.' Col 3:23-24

We are in Christ at all times because He sustains us by His divine power. So, we need to be aware we are inseparably joined with Christ as His personal possession, to serve Him in the presence of God our Father. We cannot survive spiritually as short-term visitors.

Therefore, having a consistent and enduring attitude of prayer needs to be of the utmost importance and worthy of our continuous devotion

to spiritual discipline if we have the right priorities, because we have by God's grace received the greatest treasure possible with life in Christ.

Jesus said "*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*" John 15:5

Only the humble will deny themselves to abide in Christ. And to abide in Jesus means to dwell, to stay, to remain or to continue with Him always. 24-7

We have been given the language of communion with God called prayer to help us, to keep us on track, and to move us in the direction of seeing all things summed up in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the same ways as Jesus lived in an attitude of prayer with the Father.

How many fleshly attachments to the world remain in our thinking to cause us to behave in a worldly manner, and how many memories of our brokenness do we need to put to death if we are to stop grumbling in order to discipline ourselves to walk in the presence of our Holy God through faithful prayer?

We must humbly consider our ways. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* James 4:7-8

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thess 5:16-18

Always, and without ceasing, In all things. All the time with a heart of repentance and expectant prayer as we delight in the Father doing all things according to His will. These commands (consider, submit, resist, drew near, cleanse, purify, rejoice, pray, give thanks in all

things) cannot be obeyed without having a moment-by-moment attitude of constant prayer.

This is the hard work of our sanctification we are called to undergo by putting off the old ways of life attached to the world that still attract us, and instead of the flesh, we are to be putting on our new life in Christ according to His life in the kingdom of God. *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.* Col 3:5

"Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matt 6:9-10

What is the will of God for the people of humble faith?

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. Rom 8:29

Constant spiritual progress is only possible with a commitment to an attitude of prayer in putting to death what is fleshly in us and others as we then put on what is divinely bestowed on us in Christ according to His divine nature. *'Put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.'* Col 3:10

Putting on Christ is dependent on putting off the flesh first. Always, without ceasing, in all things. *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."* Luke 9:23

The cross Jesus insists on belongs to those who have been given to Him by the Father is the instrument of our death to self in order to live for Christ. This dying daily to what is corrupted and proud in us can only be done through continuous prayer in fellowship with God with the whole of our being committed to glorifying Him in all we do.

'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' Matt 22:37

We can only love Him like that when we die to self; and we can only die the death we would naturally avoid through the fellowship of prayer as we live in dependence on the presence and the power of our sovereign God.

If we are not concerned with growing in holiness through our prayerful relationship with Christ and constant fellowship with our Father, then our prayers for other things will not be coming from the righteousness we might otherwise have achieved, and as a result be less effective.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. Phil 2:12-16

To borrow a phrase from the great 4th century brother Athanasius: "Deeming all things in His hand." Deeming means to regard or consider in a specified way. This way for us can only mean God is in control of all things in heaven and earth to do as He chooses. Even our struggle against the mind of sin in us, and the evil ways of the world are part of His eternal plan for our ultimate glory in Christ.

Therefore, we rejoice in our suffering for His Names sake, and we maintain our holiness through prayer. *In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* 1 Thess 5:18

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 1 Pet 2:21-24

Holy communion with God in prayer is always and forever

Be assured, God helps us in our weakness, and He hears the prayers of the humble heart. Lord, help us in our weakness. For the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. When we realise our minds are constantly chewing over and over the things of the world, we need to take charge of our minds and return our thoughts to reflect on the things of God that are eternal and rewarding. We need to develop self control so that our default mind setting is the kingdom of God having forsaken the world.

The answer to all our needs is Christ, and we can have His constant presence in our prayer. Because of the Sovereignty of God we can know He does all things for His glory as He reconciles all things in Christ in heaven and on earth. When we are in need we dare not look to the world, and we dare not look within ourselves, because all we find there is the corruption caused by sin. We must look up to Christ for life and peace.

Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper

time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

1 Pet 5:5-7

When we who are called in Christ to live as Christians, but run our own race, and do things according to our own discretion, we will find that God is opposed to us, for we are not humble before Him.

When we accept that He is Sovereign over all things, the good and the bad, the enjoyable and the painful, then we live in humility and He will exalt us at the proper time. Then we can pray the prayer of the righteousness and rejoice in the answer that God has ordained for every situation in our lives. Humility will open us to His Fatherly care as we put all our anxieties on Him once and for all time by enduring faith.

The world is fallen, but our God reigns over all things, and nothing happens without Him ordaining it will happen when it will happen.

Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning. Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch. For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You...But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favour as with a shield.

Psalm 5:1-7, 11-12