

YOU ARE
COMPLETE
in
HIM.
COLOSSIANS 2:10, 10:1

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Devoted to Prayer

What can be accomplished through prayer? "Then Joshua spoke to the Lord," noted the Old Testament records, "in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of the Lord, 'O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and O moon in the valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies" (Joshua 10:12,13). That was an awesome prayer, with awesome results — results that obviously only God could accomplish. There are many other prayers recorded in the Old Testament writings,

wherein God did some great and mighty things in the physical realm to establish His power over all. Jesus Himself prayed some powerful prayers, including that which set the stage for His raising Lazarus from the dead. "Father," said He, "I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that You did send Me" (John 11:41,42). He was not kidding when He said, "If you have faith and ... you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matthew 21:21,22). You just have to have a knowledgeable enough faith to know what to ask for and when.

- **Devote yourselves** — The apostle Paul, therefore, was going to encourage the brethren in the congregations over which he had any influence to pray. "Devote yourselves to prayer," is his exhortation to the brethren in Colossae, "keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). The prayers of the saints, in the economy of God, have tremendous power in the spiritual realm. The great things that were accomplished through the recorded prayers of the Old Testament were done in the physical realm to set the stage for the saints' understanding of what could be accomplished in the spiritual realm. "Elijah," said James, "prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit" (James 5:17,18). That statement was to provide the backing for the application to the new covenant saint's prayers, as James noted, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16). The individual Christian, if he really devotes himself to prayer, can pray some big prayers for progress and open doors in the spiritual realm, and have God do some of the really powerful and mighty works for the spread of the gospel. God is, as Paul taught the Ephesians, "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (Ephesians 3:20). The brethren just need to think and ask!

- **Alert and thankful** — The apostle in his encouragement appealed to the disciples to keep alert in their prayers. When saints take the time to sit down in protracted prayer, it is possible to become sleepy. So the follower of Christ has to make provision to stay alert in this way, having appropriate breaks and developing techniques to help himself not to drift into a sleepy mode during prayer time. Also, there is a tendency for the mind to wander during prayer. So the saint has to develop habits of keeping his mind focused during prayer, such as writing the prayers down or saying them out loud. Furthermore, the prayers and petitions are to be coupled with "an attitude of thanksgiving." The firm but loving Father is not particularly delighted in answering requests from ungrateful brats. The sons of God should be, and need to be, truly thankful for all the provisions which come from God's extensive grace.

Prayer — properly understood — because it can accomplish so much, is something the Christian really desires to do. Prayer is the means by which healthy praise and thanksgiving can be offered to the great and awesome God. And prayer is the mechanism through which God works to accomplish His great and mighty work in spreading the gospel and changing people's lives and eternities!

JAY WILSON

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