

Much praying is not done because we do not plan to pray. We do not drift into spiritual life; we do not drift into disciplined prayer. We will not grow in prayer unless we plan to pray. That means we must self-consciously set aside time to do nothing but pray. What we actually do reflects our highest priorities. That means we can proclaim our commitment to prayer until the cows come home, but unless we actually pray, our actions disown our words. D. A. Carson in *praying With Paul*

## THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

72. Q. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill (Ex. 20:13).

73. Q. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life (Eph. 5:28,29) and the life of others (1 Kings 18:4).

74. Q. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment absolutely forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto (Acts 26:28; Gen. 9:9).

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#### Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

# THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

## THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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### BEHOLD HE PRAYETH

*And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, Acts 9:11*

It is always a cause of great rejoicing when a believer hears of the conversion of a poor lost soul to eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. True believers never tire of relating the fact and much about their own conversion and joyfully tell of being brought graciously to faith in Christ and their entrance into a life of full submission and dependence on Him. We are told that many such conversions occurred in the biblical accounts such as the fact that about 3000 souls were added on the day of Pentecost. In the wisdom of God only the conversion of Paul is related with great detail. Perhaps this is so that we understand the intimate attention that the Lord gives to each work of salvation so that we understand that His vested interest and great love for His own is of infinite worth to Him. After all, those who come unto God by Him have been purchased at infinite cost. While we hesitate to generalize the conditions of the salvation experience of each individual, we would note that the Lord's direct involvement in the process is common to all. In the Parable of The Lost Sheep, the Lord depicts Himself as the One who goes into the wilderness and having found the sheep, lays it on His shoulder rejoicing, and then bears it into the presence of His friends. Paul retold his story often.

Our text relates the instruction and assurance that was given to a faithful disciple named Ananias. While there was some hesitation on the part of this man in that he knew the reputation of this Saul of Tarsus he

understood that it was the Lord who was speaking to him. In that we are shut up to faith in Christ our Lord, often it is enough to hear, “And the Lord said...” The groundwork for giving Ananias peace in this matter was quickly laid with the imperative “behold, he prayeth.” As a disciple this man would have known the significance of this in his own life. His rehearsal of the past of Paul may have been as much a matter of wonder as it was of doubt. He had just a few days before been “breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” The minds of men are not always capable of moving as quickly as the does the Lord. But, his answer to the Lord in v. 10 was “Behold I am here Lord.” He knew his master's voice and was ready to respond.

It has been well observed that we have nothing to fear from a praying man. We can only surmise as to the content of the praying of Paul. The fact that he was blind and neither ate nor drank for three days indicates a most profound impact on him. Indeed, Paul the proud and self-assured Pharisee had met true righteousness and sovereignty in the person of Jesus Himself. We can assume that repentance was much in evidence and that the need of mercy was sorely felt. He was in a state of surrender having been fully arrested in body and soul. He had no other means of communication at that point and so he prayed. There is no doubt that as a “Pharisee of the Pharisees” he had prayed publicly and in the manner condemned by our Lord. John Gill

astutely observed that he now prayed with the Spirit and with understanding of things for which he had no desire before. Dr. Gill further wrote: "God has no stillborn children; as soon as they are quickened by His grace, they cry unto Him; prayer is the breath of a regenerate man and shows him to be alive."

Ananias would have been further impressed with the providence of God in this matter. The Puritan Thomas Manton wrote of the "particularity of God's providence" and applied it specifically to the situation of Paul. Manton wrote: "God knoweth where we are, what we do, what we think and what we speak; as where Saul was, in what street, in what house and what he was doing. God seeth all in what posture we are, whether we fear or rejoice, whether we are sad or merry, whether angry or pleased, whether toying or praying." Such detail related to Ananias removed any doubt as to what he should do. Ananias would have sensed that Jesus was telling Him that Saul (Paul) was even then in direct communication with Him. The Lord went on to relate to Ananias that He (Jesus) had revealed to him that Ananias was coming in answer to His prayer and that He had identified him to Paul by name!

Our tendency is to read of such accounts of

our Lord's dealings with His people and think it not like that in these days. Certainly things were more visible and descriptions were more revelatory of Spiritual activity. But, the nature of true prayer and its effects have not changed. It is we who have given way to routine discharges of duty which are of little consequence. Ananias was assured that all those things that are characteristic of one truly born again of the Spirit and converted unto faith in Christ alone were present with Paul. This was assured by the simple declaration that "behold, he prayeth."

So it was that when Ananias arrived he greeted the future apostle with the words "Brother Saul." The same Jesus had communicated with both and there was no doubt as to the nature of their relationship to each other. This man had been sent with the power to restore his sight and to witness his filling with the Holy Spirit. And so began a life of prayer, obedience, unquestioning service and worship. We should study the miraculous conversion of Paul and seek an identity with both him and Ananias. O that it would be observed of us all that "behold, he prayeth" and that we might know and enjoy a real and vital relationship with Christ our Lord as did Paul. *bhs*

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## Born Captive to Sin, Rescued by Grace

I was born into this world with certain sinful dispositions and inclinations, and neither therapy nor willpower could produce real change to my fallen human nature. God's holy laws could only expose to me, as a fallen creature, my utter moral impotence and accountability to God (Rom 3:19, 20) but gave me no ability to obey them. The gospel, on the other hand, is not a simple call to behavior modification, but instead, the granting of a renewed heart, a new nature, which loves God's commands (1 John 3:9, 5:1-4; Deut 30:6; Ps. 119:97; Ezek 36:26). And by grace I was declared righteous for Jesus's sake, who fulfilled God's law for me, not because I brought anything of my own to the table. As a result the gospel of grace awakens me to the fact that other sinners are also fallen human beings. So how can I look down on anyone, when God had such amazing mercy on a great sinner like me? I now only want to point others to the light of the gospel of Christ that they might also know Him.

-- john\_hendryx

## EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Paul prayed for the Colossians unceasingly. This is an essential mark of effective prayer. It is diligent, persistent, and continual. That is how Paul prayed for the Colossians—unceasingly. This is all the more remarkable when you consider that Paul and the Colossians had never met face-to-face. Theirs was a relationship of correspondence. Paul had not visited this church. Yet Paul continually prayed for them. Ouch. There are many times we fail to pray for our closest family and friends. But Paul prayed unceasingly for people he had never even met. How do you pray for someone you have never met—when you do not know the person or the circumstances? How do you pray when you don't know what to pray? You know you need to pray. You may even want to pray. But you do not know what to pray. I believe Colossians 1:9–14 is the answer. As we read through this prayer, it's obvious that Paul does not pray about physical or material or even relational circumstances of the Colossians. Of course, this is not to say that you should not pray about your health, finances, family, career, or goals. You ought to pray about everything. But when something is not right in a believer's life, or in a local church, the heart of the matter is always the matter of the heart. We are prone to focus on our circumstances. But God focuses on our hearts. As Proverbs 4:23 tells us, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." God is always more concerned about what is happening in you than He is about what is happening to you. God is always more concerned about what is happening within you than He is about what is happening around you. God is always more concerned about your internal disposition than He is about your external situation. So Paul prayed about heart-level issues. He prayed for needs, issues, and concerns that were underneath the skin. He prayed about spiritual priorities. In so doing, Paul shows us how we should pray when we don't know what to pray.

H. B. Charles *It Happens After Prayer*.

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More than anything else, prayer enables you to see your own heart and brings you into alignment with God's heart. Prayer is not a monologue in which we imagine ourselves to be communing with God. Rather, it is a dialogue through which God fashions your heart and makes his dream of you a reality. It is truly the treasured gift of the Christian that through direct answers and not-so-direct answers, the follower of Jesus begins to love God for who he is, not for what he may get out of him.

Ravi Zacharias in *The Grand Weaver*

Take time. Give God time to reveal Himself to you. Give yourself time to be silent and quiet before Him, waiting to receive, through the Spirit, the assurance of His presence with you, His power working in you. Take time to read His Word as in His presence, that from it you may know what He asks of you and what He promises you. Let the Word create around you, create within you a holy atmosphere, a holy heavenly light, in which your soul will be refreshed and strengthened for the work of daily life.

Hudson Taylor – quoted in *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*

There are no boring conversions. A resurrection from the dead cannot be boring. Piper