

September 1

Production of Prayer

Matthew 6:1-20

The Jewish people in the land of Egypt suffered under the hand of Pharaoh. After seeing their production of bricks when straw was given to them, Pharaoh decided to make the job harder. He made them go after their own straw. The Jewish people were able to continue making the same number of bricks even with this added task. Later they were required to produce bricks without straw. Still they managed to make the bricks and maintain their production quota. Even today, in Egypt you will find buildings where lower levels have bricks made with straw. Bricks higher up are made from different materials. The Jewish people had found a way to make bricks without the straw which they had thought was necessary. They were a praying people who looked to God for deliverance. God helped them to produce and meet the increasing demands of their slave masters.

What can be done to stop the losses of your company? What production improvements can be made so that your company thrives and you continue to have a job? The same God that helped the Israelites in Egypt will help us today if we ask Him!

September 2

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). God promises to meet our needs when our focus is on Him and on the spread of His kingdom. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19 assures us.

In Isobel Kuhn’s book *Green Leaf in Drought Time*, the Matthews were a missionary family trapped in China when the communists were in control. The family was cut off from any way of escape. They were placed under house arrest. Later, they were severed from all supplies or anyone that could help them. The Matthews were in a little Chinese house that was thousands of miles from home. People around them were afraid of being killed if they took them food. The Matthews family prayed. God took care of them. They never missed a meal! Read the book.

September 3

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

God can supply anywhere. In jail John Bunyan could see an apple tree through the window. He watched as the tree bloomed and as the apples grew, but those apples grew just out of his reach. Though he asked the Lord for some fresh fruit, it seemed that those apples were the closest fresh fruit God had for him. One night it rained and rained and rained, and the wind blew. The apple tree started to lean. (You can guess in which direction it leaned.) John Bunyan was able to pick fresh apples!

God can also supply through anyone. For years a local grocery store gave the church leftover baked goods and produce to share in our church family. (Have you ever heard of grocery stores helping churches?)

God can supply anywhere through anyone! God cares more about us than He does about the birds. He feeds the birds. They do not go hungry. God cares more about us than He does the lilies. He clothes the lilies. God can supply clothing or anything else that we may need.

September 4

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

For a while, when we were raising children, Carolyn and I did not have the money to buy the suits that I needed. We prayed. For years I never had to buy a suit. God always provided. Someone would ask, “What size suit do you wear?” We had been praying, and Carolyn knew what to tell him. Often someone would say, “I have one or two in that size that I don’t need anymore. Maybe they will fit you.” One time I was in a Bible conference and a man said, “I want you to come over to my car. I have some suits in my trunk, and I think some of those might fit you.” They did!

Pray for what you need. God’s children are not limited to the world’s means of provision. We have prayer. We can pray about our personal needs. Pray for food. Pray for clothing for your children. Pray regarding housing. Pray regarding furniture. Pray for children and their struggles. Pray for wisdom in raising children. Whatever the need, God is able to provide!

September 5

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

You can pray about contacts. I was at a train station in Prague in the Czech Republic when it was under Communism. I needed someone that could speak English and help me find the necessary train. No one was speaking English. No one wanted to hear me if I was speaking English. Each motioned me away. All were afraid that Russian soldiers might hear, and they would be in trouble. I decided to walk around, and I prayed. Finally, I walked into an office and stood. A man came out of the back and motioned to me to come over to his line. So, I went to his line and asked him if he spoke English. He did!

Our church prayed to locate a Bible, and God led us to a basement full of Bibles. We also met the translator that had checked the translation work for those Bibles. God can give contacts anywhere if we will humble ourselves and learn to pray. Whatever we need, God can meet that need.

September 6

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

I was having trouble with my heart because of blood clots that had passed through my heart and settled into my lungs. We went to the hospital. A young man new to the hospital was working that day. He had been to a social gathering a night or two before; and in his pocket, was a card with information on the top lung specialist in the area. That young man *just happened* to have that card in his pocket and had just met the lung specialist. He was able to call and arrange for me to have the best of care. God can arrange such contacts. He starts arranging them before we have a need. Pray, and watch God work.

September 7

Personal Needs

Matthew 6:1-20

Years ago, I talked with Dr. Williams, and he shared a problem that he was having. He wanted to start making books available to download on the internet. I have no idea how to do that. (Even the language of the programs is almost as foreign to me as Spanish or German.) I asked him what the problem was. He said that much of the material that he wanted to make available was in Word Perfect, but he needed it to be in Adobe Pro. He did not know how to make the conversion. I could not help him myself, but I did know someone who could. I contacted Bob Feather. He knew how to make the conversion. He could even tell Dr. Williams where to get the free material necessary to make the change easily. God gives contacts and works things out. We may not know how to solve the problem we are facing, but He can give us the contact and the help we need!

September 8

Proving

Matthew 6:1-20

There are a lot of things that can be proved in prayer. Many people see prayer as nothing more than a religious motion that might buy a little peace of mind. By praying and praying correctly, we can prove the power of prayer. When we pray and get answers, we give proof that prayer really works. By prayer, we can also prove the reality of God. You talk to Him, and He acts. God acts in ways different from the world's ways. He supplies over and above what the world can supply. A Christian's life ought not only to be above reproach but also above human understanding. We ought to live lives above human explanation. The God who really cares is the only explanation. "Oh Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). He hears, and He answers prayer. "Ask of me and I shall give thee..." (Psalm 2:8). "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). God also promised that if we will ask, we will receive. He promised that if we will knock, the door will be opened. These are promises that we can prove in prayer!

September 9

Proving

Matthew 6:1-20

My father had three unsaved cousins. I am afraid that all three of them died lost and are burning in Hell right now. The cousins' father and mother were missionaries but did not have time for their children. The parents got too busy in their work. Two of the cousins begged Carolyn and me not to do as their parents had done and lose our own children.

Raised in Brazil by spiritists, the cousins were taught that God is spirit and spirit is God and all that is involved in that demonic debauchery. They studied at Bucknell where their father had graduated. The evolution and atheism which they were taught at Bucknell destroyed everything their parents had taught them. Agnostics if not atheists, the cousins did not know if a real God existed.

One of the cousins requested, "Would you pray for us? We think there might be a God because of the answers that you get." Though arguing with that cousin intellectually would not have proved God's existence, answers to prayer had opened a door. That cousin began to wonder if she had been wrong for fifty or sixty years of her life. By our prayers, we can prove the reality of God.

September 10

Proving

Matthew 6:1-20

Studies say that the second most effective way to reach a Muslim is by praying and getting answers. Muslims do not know anything of a god that can hear people and provide. They do not have a god that answers. A Muslim translator was employed for translating *Daniel Nash* into one of the tongues in Malawi, Africa. The Muslim volunteered to do the work for very little money because he was curious about this book on a life of prayer. By the time he finished translating the book, that man had been converted. He said that the god he served could not do what this God could do. This was the God he wanted to follow. That man also wanted copies of *Daniel Nash* to pass out to Muslim friends.

Christians tend to expect God to hear and answer prayer. We take answers to prayer for granted. The world does not experience answers to prayer. Answers in prayer prove the nature and the wonders of our God. Answers to prayer also prove the truth of the Bible. God is who He says He is. He can and will do what He says. God and the promises He has made can be counted on.

September 11

Proving

Matthew 6:1-20

The nature of salvation is revealed in answers to prayer. We have a personal Savior, a personal God and a personal salvation. We do not just know teaching intellectually. We know it in a real and personal relationship. I am with God, and God is with me. This is the core of being saved. God is not just some sort of force or being. God is a real and personal God.

Deists had no real, personal God. They tried to learn a few principles and adjust those to the way they wanted to live. Thomas Jefferson, a deist, said that Creation was like making a clock and winding it up. God created and then left everything to run according to the laws that He had set up. Christians have a real, living Savior; and through prayer, we have an opportunity to show that reality.

September 12

Proving

Prayer will show our personal God and that we have a personal position of priesthood. God has made us kings and priests who have access to Him. By prayer and obedience, we advance the kingdom. Most of the world tries to advance by programs, but prayer and obedience are God's ways. His ways are different than the world's ways. They are superior. God shows the superiority of that which He is doing. He moves in supernatural ways.

God's kingdom is advanced through prayer. "...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). The Devil trembles when we pray. He may try to divert us by showing us activities that we can do instead of praying. Busyness is often the enemy of usefulness. The Devil does not mind us continuing in what is good if he can keep us from what is best.

We can pray and find that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. If we will just pray, Satan can be overcome by God. The church that really prays can change the world that greatly outnumbers us. When we pray, we can prove the reality of what we say and believe.

September 13

People of Prayer

Daniel

Let us consider the background to a mighty life of prayer. The prophet Daniel had a godly heritage, a righteous life and wisdom.

Daniel's godly heritage

I Chronicles 3:1 tells us that David's second son was called Daniel. Daniel was likely named for one of his ancestors and perhaps was a descendent of David. (See Daniel 1.)

Ezra 8:2 and Nehemiah 10:6 show that children were named for Daniel. A life well lived may be honored in this way. Daniel left a godly legacy, and parents honored him by naming their children after him.

Daniel's name means "God's judge." His parents likely chose that name because they were God fearing. Their desire to see their son walk with the Lord and serve Him is reflected in their choice of the name Daniel.

Daniel had a godly heritage which was a good preparation for a godly life and prayer ministry.

September 14

People of Prayer

Daniel's righteous life

In Ezekiel 14:14, God puts Daniel in the same category as Noah and Job. “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God” (14:20 also). Together these three seem to be held up as godly examples.

In the midst of a corrupt generation, Noah “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). Because of his godly life, his family was rescued from the world-wide flood.

Job was perfect and upright and “one that feareth God, and escheweth evil” (Job 1:8). God held Job up to Satan as exemplary.

Daniel's righteousness is shown by his choice. “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself...” (Daniel 1:8). He was determined to live a godly life and please the Lord with his choices.

Righteousness involves right praying. James 5:16b says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Prayer without a righteous life will not be effectual. Consider Psalm 66:18. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

September 15

People of Prayer

Daniel's wisdom

Daniel was known for unusual wisdom. In Ezekiel 28:3, he was used as an example. "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel...."

Daniel and his three friends were found to be wiser than all the astrologers and magicians. "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20).

Sometimes knowledge leads to pride. Pride then leads to judgment by God. "...Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (I Corinthians 8:1). True wisdom, however, leads to humility and the blessing of God. "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Daniel was wise and humble and thus greatly used by God. Both Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 identify Daniel as a prophet--a spokesman for God!

September 16

People of Prayer

Daniel 1:4 describes Daniel and his friends as “children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace....” Several qualities enabled them to stand in the king’s palace. The first one listed is that they had no blemish.

King Jesus invites us to stand in His courts. We too must be without blemish. I John 1:8 reminds us that “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” We all are blemished before a Holy God, but thank the Lord for His promise to cleanse us. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Because of the precious blood of Jesus, we can stand in the courts of God blemish free!

September 17

People of Prayer

Much is to be learned from the phrase “Daniel purposed in his heart” (Daniel 1:8).

- 1. Daniel was goal oriented. His goal was to maintain purity and live a godly life. Do you have a goal? What is it?**
- 2. Daniel’s goal was a heart goal rather than just a decision made with his mind. “Daniel purposed in his heart” (Daniel 1:8).**
- 3. Daniel followed his childhood training. He had the opportunity to choose his own way yet stayed faithful to his godly upbringing.**
- 4. Daniel made this choice as a young person. Young people can be faithful to God.**
- 5. Daniel had settled that he would do right whatever the cost. Many like to do right if it is convenient. However, Daniel resisted the tide of cultural norms. For him, this was a settled issue.**

September 18

People of Prayer

Daniel's purpose was not to defile himself. He had a Biblical understanding of those things that would defile him and thus cost him power in his prayer life. Do we know what defiles us?

- 1. We can learn from the story of Dinah that immorality defiles us (Genesis 34:2, 5, 13, 27).**
- 2. Touching the unclean thing led to defilement (Leviticus 5:3).**
- 3. Leprosy made a person unclean and thus defiled (Leviticus 13:15). Leprosy represents sin in the Bible. Thus, we can say that sin defiles us before a holy God.**
- 4. In Leviticus 18:24, God tells his people that they are not to be involved in the practices of the world around them. The world defiles us.**
- 5. Leviticus 19:31 states that seeking help from familiar spirits, wizards and demonic powers defiles a person.**

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People of Prayer

- 6. Abuse and disobedience to Scripture bring defilement to the earth (Isaiah 24:15).**
- 7. Lies, iniquity and a perverse tongue also bring defilement (Isaiah 59:3).**
- 8. Wrong worship brings defilement (Jeremiah 19:13, Ezekiel 43:8).**
- 9. Defilement was brought by people following their own way and doing their own thing (Ezekiel 36:17).**
- 10. I Corinthians 8:7 teaches us that our consciences can be defiled.**
- 11. Titus 1:15 states that our minds and consciences can be defiled.**
- 12. Hebrews 12:15 shows us that bitterness troubles us and defiles others.**

Have we been defiled? If so, we need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us! Are we, like Daniel, determined not to defile ourselves?

September 20

People of Prayer

What was the result of Daniel's purpose and purity? "Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs" (Daniel 1:9). God can give us favor with the heathen. Before the need arose, God was preparing the way for Daniel by bringing him into favor with the prince of the eunuchs. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). Pray today, and watch God prepare you for tomorrow!

September 21

People of Prayer

Daniel 1:12-17

Praying people know that God blesses separation. They also know that obedience to God does not always make sense scientifically. Both these truths can be seen in the experiment that Daniel proposed to the prince of eunuchs. Daniel asked that for ten days his three friends and himself eat pulse and drink water. Their countenances would then to be compared with the countenances of others of the children of Israel that had eaten the prescribed diet. Daniel trusted God to bless in observable and measurable ways. We may trust Him to do the same for us.

God blessed the obedience and separation of Daniel and his three friends. “And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat” (Daniel 1:15). Obeying God despite logic produces superior results.

God gives to those who trust and obey. “As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:17) . God blesses those who are obedient to him!

September 22

People of Prayer

Daniel 1:19-20

“And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.”

Even heathen leaders can see the results of God’s blessing! God’s blessing can give us the relationships we need. God blessed Daniel’s relationship with the prince of the eunuchs. God’s blessing can also give us position and standing with the heathen. God gave positions and standing to Daniel and his three friends. God’s blessing can give us superior knowledge to meet whatever need we face!

September 23

People of Prayer

Daniel chapter two teaches us that man has limitations. Help received from demons also is limited. However, our God can do anything! God's help is limitless!

“The Chaldeans answered, before the king, and said, ‘There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king’s matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh’” (Daniel 2:10-11).

As humans, these Chaldeans could not answer the king. Thank the Lord; we do not depend upon human means. Our God is the God of the impossible!

Daniel said of the Lord, “He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast made known unto us the king’s matter” (Daniel 2:22-23).

Our God hears and answers prayer! He gives wisdom that is unknown to man!!!

September 24

People of Prayer

Prayer takes time. In Daniel 2, notice the way Daniel approached this emergency. His life is at stake, and Daniel asks the king's captain why the king had been so hasty. After hearing the captain's answer, "Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation" (Daniel 2:16). Why do you suppose Daniel asked for time? He planned to pray, and sometimes it takes time for prayer to be answered. We too must be willing to set aside the time necessary to meet with God and hear from Him.

Daniel also asked his friends to pray. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:17-18). It is important that we have people with whom we can share prayer requests. We join our hearts together in specific requests.

September 25

People of Prayer

Daniel 2:19-24

“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision” (Daniel 2:19). What a blessing it is when God answers prayer! Note that the answer was given to Daniel in a night vision. We can assume from this that Daniel was asleep before the vision came. Even in the midst of life-threatening circumstances, Daniel could sleep. He not only prayed to God but also trusted in God. Are you able to trust God in the midst of life’s troubles? Pray, and then trust!

The second part of verse nineteen says, “Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.” As soon as the answer came, Daniel began to praise God! He took time to thank and bless God even before returning to the king with the answer that would save his own life. We must not forget to thank and praise God and give Him glory for His mighty working in our lives!

September 26

People of Prayer

Answered prayer gives us confidence and authority!

Notice how Daniel approaches Arioch. “Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; ‘Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation’” (Daniel 2:24).

Answered prayer will encourage our hearts and give us boldness before those who do not know our God.

September 27

People of Prayer

Answered prayer proves God's existence. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

When he stood before the king with the answer, Daniel was careful to give all of the credit and glory to God. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnessar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed are these" (Daniel 2:28). Daniel gave credit to God. God is able to reveal even the secret things. We asked, and He answered! This was Daniel's testimony to the king.

In Daniel 2:47, the king said, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." Answered prayer is a witness to the lost. What testimony could we share of how God answered prayer? That witness will lead people to acknowledge that our God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings. Perhaps the trying situation you are in today is an opportunity for God to show His power and draw others unto Himself.

September 28

People of Prayer

Daniel demonstrated humility in promotion. “Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. *Then Daniel requested* of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babyon: But Daniel sat in the gate” (Daniel 2:48-49).

The king’s response after seeing that God had given the answer to Daniel was to promote him. God allows promotions to praying saints. Remember Joseph. God may trust you with possessions, position, power and opportunity as you walk with Him. Notice though that Daniel did not forget his three friends that had stood with him and prayed with him. It is crucial that as God blesses us, we do not become proud. Rather, we look for opportunities to bless others. Daniel was happy to be out of the limelight and see others promoted and blessed.

September 29

People of Prayer

Promotion brings pressure

Daniel and his three friends faced pressure as they were promoted. Their lives of prayer and dedication to purity in chapters one and two of Daniel prepared them for the temptation and trial of chapter three. Use today to draw closer to God! Tomorrow's tests and trials will be better handled if we walk closely with the Lord today.

The temptation in chapter three was to conform. Note how the king attempted to manipulate. First, he used crowds. Daniel 3:2 lists those that gathered that day. "The princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces...." This was an influential crowd. These were the movers and shakers in the province of Babylon. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chose to stand out in this influential crowd.

Second, the king used music to manipulate. When the people heard the music, they were to worship the idol. Wrong music prepares people for wrong worship or can lead to other sins. The music was mentioned four times (Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, and 15). We should be aware of the effect that music has on us.

Last, the king used consequences of the fiery furnace to pressure all to conform. The three young men were willing to face death in order to obey and stay faithful to the Lord!

September 30

People of Prayer

When the king realized that the three did not bow to the golden image, he decided to give them a second chance. Was this a second chance or a second test? We must realize that in the midst of our trial the devil may present us with something that seems like an escape, but in reality it is false mercy and a second test!

The three young men answered that their God could deliver them; *but if He did not*, they still would not worship the golden image. They recognized that God is able, but He can do as He chooses. They submitted themselves not to the king's will and not to their own will but to God's will. Proper prayer can help us overcome men, music and its influence, moods, methods, manipulation and messages!

Once again we see God exalted through the faithfulness of his servants in a time of testing. Even the heathen can praise God. He is so high compared to all else. Notice the last phrase of Daniel 4:3. "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation." God's kingdom is forever, whereas men's kingdoms rise and fall. Nebuchadnezzar was recognizing how great our God is!