

PRAISE the Lord for:

- A number of commitments coming from our Military edition of Challenge produced for South Africa. This is a real breakthrough as they work with military personnel and families
- The opportunities that God is giving to us to reach out with the gospel. We praise the Lord for these open doors and for all that He is going to do as a result of walking through them
- Our wonderful volunteers who come each month to help with the wrap and mailing of the newspaper. Without them the paper would not go out
- His faithfulness to the Challenge ministry and families. Whilst finances are difficult at times the Lord never fails, and the day to day expenses of the ministry are always met

I recently read again the story of John Hyde or Praying Hyde as he was called. Certainly we cannot read such a life story and not be challenged to a deeper prayer life. I have of late been challenged by God to deepen my prayer life because it is the only way to see consistent victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

Reading through Exodus, chapter 17 seemed to highlight to me so many important aspects of prayer. As the nation of Israel is entering into the district of Rephidim they are faced with one of many trials. Their response provides us with an important contrast between themselves and Moses.

Israel, when faced with a trial, responded by first complaining or murmuring against God. Moses, however, turned to God in prayer. I know that most of us know that this should be our response, at least in theory, but how many of us are like the nation of Israel? When we are faced with a trial we can only see our problem, and so we complain to God.

I find prayer is a wonderful way of remembering what God has done in the past. In fact a number of the feasts Israel were instructed to keep, were specifically designed to help the nation of Israel remember the faithfulness of God. Why? Because we are fickle and appear to forget so quickly the many blessings of the Lord.

Israel, it seems, had an incredible ability to forget the most amazing miracles of God's deliverance and provision. I think that in part, the problem lay in their shallow relationship with Jehovah God. This was revealed in their response to trials.

Again and again, we read of Moses communing with God and in particular praying to God. It would seem in today's spiritual climate that prayer has become something of an after-thought, rather than the vital ingredient of a dynamic Christian life. For Moses it appeared that prayer was such an important part of his walk with God, it was all but a reflex action no matter what the circumstances.

How do you respond when beset by a trial of some kind or another. Do you pray or complain?

Continued over

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PRAYER needed for :

- Production team (Bob, Darryl and Caitlin) as they put each edition together. Challenge produces 11 editions for Australia each year. The team also prepare bi-monthly editions for North America and southern Africa ... these include specific "street" and "prison" editions
- Our writers as they provide articles each month for the Australian edition
- The continued growth of the paper here in Australia. We have begun to see a decline in distribution
- The Trezona family as they continue to grow and develop the Challenge newspaper in the USA.
- The finances of the work both locally and globally as we have struggled to have sufficient funds to sustain what we do, let alone expand the work, which we are under constant pressure to do

Why then is prayer so vital to our Christian walk? There are a number of reasons we can see from this chapter.

1 Prayer transforms the pray-er. When Moses went up onto Mt Sinai, he came down with his face shining. So much so that he had to cover it up with a veil.

2 Prayer transforms our relationship with God. As we pray God is pleased to reveal to us more of His character and power.

3 Prayer transforms our relationship with other believers. I am absolutely convinced that the majority of the problems we are seeing in our churches can be attributed primarily to a lack of prayer corporately and individually.

4 Prayer transforms our desire and power for service. When we pray God is able to work in our lives to remove whatever it is that hinders our desire and power for service.

5 Prayer transforms our effectiveness in service. We begin to see God do things in and through us that we never dreamed were possible.

It is my heart's desire that we regain a fresh passion and willingness to pray, because, as we do, God will do things far beyond what we can think or imagine.

As we pray God is able to impart His willingness and ability to effectively serve Him.

Somehow we have lost sight of the fact that we worship a supernatural God. Prayer brings this back into sharp focus. Exodus 17 also underlines the fact that Christian victory is won in the prayer closet not in the heat of battle.

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

MY RESPONSE

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