

A wooden bench with horizontal slats and metal legs sits on a paved surface in front of a dense, green hedge. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

“ — MEETING WITH GOD — ”

STORIES, INSIGHTS AND QUOTES FROM
THE HEART OF DAVID WILKERSON TO
EMPOWER YOUR PRAYER TIME

WORLD CHALLENGE

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WORLD CHALLENGE, INC.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is a compilation of writings or sermon excerpts from David Wilkerson on the subject of prayer and how prayer worked in his life. Even though it is not a complete collection on this subject by David Wilkerson, we hope that what you experience in this booklet is uplifting and inspiring – so that as you enter into a conversation with God with your whole heart, you are able to take hold of His promises and wait on the fulfillment of the Kingdom.

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One of David Wilkerson's Daily Prayers:
Jeremiah 10:23-24 (NASB)

*"I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in
himself;
Nor is it in a man who walks to direct
his steps.
Correct me, O Lord, but with justice;
Not with Your anger, or You will bring
me to nothing."*

INTRODUCTION

I want to talk to you about a kind of prayer that is most pleasing to the Lord. You see, not all of our praying blesses the heart of God. Yet, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I trust that what I share with you here will change the way you pray – from now until Jesus comes!

I have no intention of complicating prayer. It has been made too complicated already by well-intentioned teachers who have turned it into formulas, strategies and theatrics. Some Christians literally put on combat boots and uniforms to dress the part of “prayer warriors.” Others attend prayer meetings where they are given “prayer guides,” booklets that tell them how to fill up the hours they'll be there.

I am not condemning any of this. But I would like to show you the kind of praying I believe pleases the Lord most. Actually, the kind of prayer that most pleases God is very simple and easy to understand. It is so simple, in fact, a little child can pray in a way that pleases Him.

Let me begin by saying, I believe most Christians want to pray. At one time in our walk with the Lord, we all prayed with some consistency. But after a while, many believers quit. And now they are convicted by their prayerlessness.

The disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray” (*Luke 11:1*). They would not have asked unless they had wanted to learn. And I believe that most who are reading this message would love to be faithful in prayer – but they don't know how. The problem is, they simply don't understand the purpose of prayer. And until they grasp this vital purpose, they will never be able to maintain a fulfilled, meaningful life of prayer.

Let us start out our time with this prayer:

“God, put in all of us a heart that is easily wooed to Your presence. Help us to pray through all our trials to completion...to listen closely to Your Spirit in our secret time of communion with You and to put all our confidence in Your revealed Word. In these ways, we can know our prayers are pleasing to You. Amen!”

TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WORD

Christ is the living Word of God. And when you are shut in with Him in prayer, the Holy Spirit will always lead you to God's revealed Word. He will build up your faith by feeding you from the Bible – even while you're in the secret closet! We are commanded: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ... Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, ... And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (*Ephesians 6:11, 13, 17*).

Often when you receive specific instructions from the Lord, His Spirit will whisper, “Now turn to...”, directing you to a passage of Scripture. God's Word will speak to you directly – telling you how to get through your crisis!

*"I have questioned God sometimes
whether prayers have gone unanswered.
But answered prayer is still harder
to believe."*

—David Wilkerson,
The Cross and the Switchblade

"PRAY THROUGH" BY LISTENING

Tell me – when you are spending time with Jesus, do you receive direction from Him? Does He tell you what to do – and when and how to do it? Some Christians don't believe God does this. But Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice ... and they follow me" (*John 10:27*).

There is no way through your trial, except to get alone with Jesus and cry, "Lord, You're the only One on this earth who can help me. Only You know the way through this trial. So I'm going to stay here till You tell me what to do. I'm not going anywhere until You speak to my heart!"

This is the kind of "praying through" that is pleasing to God! It means stopping everything, all activity, until you hear His voice. Only then will you hear Him speak clearly to your heart: "You've got to make things right with this person..." Or, "You've got to make restitution here..." Or, "Just stand still till next week. Don't get in a hurry. Sit in My presence and trust Me..." He will give you clear directions!

"I am the 8th generation of preachers, that dates all the way back to the Civil War. My father taught me to pray. He said, 'David, Elijah had 24 hours a day, just like you, and he prayed. So you find a way to pray.' And then he would add, 'God always makes a way for a praying man.' "

—David Wilkerson

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER (NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL)

Jesus prayed a “breakthrough prayer” at Gethsemane.

I think of Christ’s breakthrough prayer as the “ultimate prayer.” By *ultimate* I mean the end of a series. By this point, everything had been tried and this was the ultimate, or final, prayer, the one that would move mountains and shake hell. It was simply this: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (*Matthew 26:39*).

Jesus gets up from pleading and says, in essence, “I have prayed, wept, fasted, done everything. Now, Father, I unload My soul to You, in total trust. Your will be done.”

Have you ever presented this “ultimate prayer” to the Lord over a situation?

- I have prayed, fasted and interceded over this matter.
- I have asked, knocked, sought and believed.
- Yet what is happening now is not what I want.
- I don’t think I can handle it.

The Place of Rest

Then you add, “But You are the Almighty God, and I cast everything into Your hands. Now, Father, do what You want to do, when You choose to do it. I rest in Your promises to me.”

This is the rest that remains for God’s people today, the rest referred to in Hebrews 4. It is to come into the blessed promise of the New Covenant, in which God declares to us, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be My child.”

Beloved, until you pray this ultimate prayer, you cannot move your mountain. But when you do, God will open your eyes to something amazing and you will no longer miss the answer to your prayer when it comes.

THE POWER OF THE SECRET CLOSET

Do you have a closet of prayer? I don't mean an actual clothes closet (though that could do) but, rather – do you have a habit of shutting yourself in with God?

To have a “secret closet” means simply to be shut in with God anywhere, anytime – giving quality, chosen time to yearn after Him, seek Him and call on His name.

“Prayer closet” means “prayer habit.” Do you have a daily practice of getting alone with God? That is what the prayer closet is all about – practice. It is about disciplining yourself to come before God – to answer when the Spirit's wooing calls you. It means having a heart that says, “I must get alone with God – I must talk with my Father today!”

Don't be deceived – it takes concentrated effort to pray! When you go into your secret closet, shut the door and turn off the phone! Any child of God who sets his heart to seek the Father is going to face what I call “satanic interruptions.” The devil will come to interrupt you – to get your mind onto anything except your heavenly Father.

Jesus clearly said, “When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*” (*Matthew 6:6*). In other words, when you go into your closet, don't start praying until you shut the door!

This means, don't talk to your Father with a cluttered mind. Shut out all the thoughts that keep you drifting away from Him. Be awake, focused, not wasting words, not thinking of something else. You can let your mind wander when you talk with friends, or when you're on the job or in school. But when you come into the presence of the King, the Bible says, “He sees in secret!”

Many people pray for long hours, yet they are powerless in their daily walk. They wonder why answers do not come, why they don't have victory. It is because they pray with their closet door wide open! They leave open the door of distractions – and God does not answer halfhearted, insincere prayers.

Do you go into the secret closet and pray haphazardly for hours, scatter-gun-style – never directing focused prayers, never hitting the target of God's ear, because you don't know what you want or need?

Beloved, this discipline is absolutely imperative. If we are to meet with God and be heard by Him, then we have to be where He is – in secret! “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (*Matthew 6:6*). God has invited you to come boldly to His throne of grace – and it is behind closed doors!

*"The day you learn to be publicly specific
in your prayer, that is the day you will
discover power."*

–David Wilkerson,
The Cross and the Switchblade

LEANING ON GOD'S PROMISES WITH PRAYER

Scripture makes it clear that the answer to everything in our lives is prayer mixed with faith. The apostle Paul writes, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (*Philippians 4:6*). Paul is telling us, “Seek the Lord about every area of your life and thank Him ahead of time for hearing you!”

Paul emphasizes that we are always to pray first and not as a last resort—going to our friends first, then to a pastor or counselor, and finally ending up on our knees. Jesus tells us, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (*Matthew 6:33*). We are to go to the Lord first!

Our ministry receives heartrending letters from multitudes of broken Christians. Families are breaking up; people who walked faithfully with Christ for years are living in fear and defeat. Each of these people has been overcome by something—sin, depression, worldliness, covetousness—and year after year, their problems seem to get worse.

Yet, what shocks me most about their letters is that very few of these Christians ever mention prayer. They turn to tapes, books, counselors, call-in radio programs, therapies of all kinds, but rarely to prayer.

Why is it so hard for Christians to seek God for their desperate needs when they are in times of crisis? After all, the Bible stands as one long testimony that God hears the cries of His children and answers them with tender love.

- “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry.” (*Psalms 34:15*).
- “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles” (*verse 17*).
- “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (*1 John 5:14–15*).
- “Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (*Matthew 21:22*).

These promises are overwhelming evidence of God's care.

THE FOCUS OF PRAYER

Prayer is often one of the most selfish areas of a Christian's life. When you think about it, most of our prayers focus on our own needs. The two main subjects of our intercession are our own spiritual growth and the needs of our families and friends.

Occasionally, we may reach beyond our own narrow concerns and pray for others. Yet usually when we say, "I'll pray for you," we don't do it. Or, we pray once and then quickly forget about their need.

Recently I have been examining my own prayer life in light of the Scriptures and I have been convicted about the narrowness and limitations of my own praying. Like most believers, I spend much of my prayer time seeking the Lord about my walk with Him. I cry out to be made holy, to become like Him, to receive guidance for life, to have His anointing on my ministry. And I enjoy sweet communion with Him, quietly worshiping Him and being refreshed in His presence.

I also intercede daily for my family. I ask the Lord to protect my children from the schemes of the devil—to make my sons like oaks planted by the river of God, to make my daughters polished stones in His palace, and to make all my grandchildren lovers of

Jesus. I pray for the concerns of our church body. I also intercede for individuals who are in crisis and for the many missionaries and ministries we support.

You might say, “That’s all commendable, Brother Dave. It’s comforting to know you’re shut in with the Lord, communing with Him and praying for all those needs.”

But according to God’s Word, sweet communion is not enough. Yes, it is the secret to spiritual growth, and we can have no greater experience on earth. But if we go to the throne only for our personal edification and needs, we are being selfish. We simply cannot neglect praying seriously for the dire needs all around us.

“Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”” (*Matthew 9:37–38*).

LAYING IT BEFORE GOD: CREATING EFFECTIVE PRAYER

“How much time do I spend in front of that screen each night?” I wondered. “A couple of hours, at least. What would happen, Lord, if I sold that TV set and spent that time—praying?” I was the only one in the family who ever watched TV anyway.

What would happen if I spent two hours every single night in prayer? It was an exhilarating idea. Substitute prayer for television, and see what happened.

Right away I thought of objections to the idea. I was tired at night. I needed the relaxation and change of pace. Television was part of our culture; it wasn't good for a minister to be out of touch with what people were seeing and talking about.

I got up from my chair and turned out the lights and stood at my window looking out over the moonlit hills. Then I put another fleece before the Lord, one which was destined to change my life. I made it pretty hard on God, it seemed to me, because I really didn't want to give up television.

“Jesus,” I said, “I need some help deciding this thing, so here's what I'm asking of You. I'm going to put

an ad for that set in the paper. If You're behind this idea, let a buyer appear right away. Let him appear within an hour ... within half an hour ... after the paper gets on the streets."

When I told my wife, Gwen, about my decision next morning, she was unimpressed. "Half an hour!" she said. "Sounds to me, Dave Wilkerson, like you don't want to do all that praying."

Gwen had a point, but I put the ad in the paper anyhow. It was a comical scene in our living room after the paper appeared. I sat on the sofa with the television set looking at me from one side, the children and Gwen looking at me from another, and my eyes on a great big alarm clock beside the telephone.

Twenty-nine minutes passed, by the clock.

"Well, Gwen," I said, "it looks like you're right. I guess I won't have to ..."

The telephone rang.

I picked it up slowly, looking at Gwen.

"You have a TV set for sale?" a man's voice asked.

"That's right. An RCA in good condition. Nineteen-inch screen, two years old."

"How much do you want for it?"

“One hundred dollars,” I said quickly. I hadn't thought about what to ask for it until that moment. “I'll take it,” the man said, just like that. “You don't even want to look at it?” “No. Have it ready in fifteen minutes. I'll bring the money.”

My life has not been the same since.

Had David Wilkerson not given himself to prayer that heeded God's call to go to New York, Teen Challenge would never have happened. Since that time the ministry of Teen Challenge has transformed hundreds of thousands of lives. Around the world today and every day, men and women are currently in a center being set free by the power of Christ.

Excerpt from *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson

GUARDING YOUR PRAY TIME

The Lord has led me to take the following steps to guard my prayer time and withstand all satanic conspiracies. I believe these steps are meant for you as well:

1. Make communion with the Lord your primary goal in life.

This must be a life-and-death decision on your part. Communion in prayer and study in God's word cannot be optional. Your thought shouldn't be merely that you ought to pray – but that you cannot survive without prayer! Job declared, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary *food*” (*Job 23:12*).

Only when prayer becomes important enough will you make the time to do it. Yet, most Christians – including pastors–neglect prayer simply because they don't recognize its importance and effectiveness. I know that as a pastor, I dare not minister to people until I first minister to the Lord; otherwise, I will be an unprofitable servant.

The truth is, it is impossible to waste time when you are in prayer, seeking God. And furthermore, outside the secret closet, the praying man or woman

accomplishes more in less time, with less hurry and sweat.

But the most effective work for God we'll ever do is on our knees, anyway. While the prayerless run helter skelter, to and fro, attempting great things, the praying Christian is hard at work moving kingdoms, shattering strongholds—and, in the process, becoming a giant with God!

2. You must consider your appointments with God more sacred than any appointments with people—no matter who they are!

How embarrassing it must be for heaven to see the way we Christians give so little regard to the majesty of our God, the King of glory. We're often flippant in the way we keep Him waiting. And at the drop of a hat, we'll suddenly cancel plans to meet with Him in His courts—all for the least trifling thing!

Can you imagine someone keeping the creator God of the universe waiting, while that person lingers to view his favorite TV program? Yet that is what most of us do! Even worse is that we often don't bother to show up in God's presence at all. It's not that we forget our appointment with Him—but that we willfully refuse to appear before Him!

Isaiah lamented, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” (*Isaiah 53:3*). When I allow interruptions to come between me and my appointments with the Lord, I am hiding my face from Him – and not appreciating him!

3. You must reject every interruption that is within your power—and take spiritual authority over those interruptions you discern to be supernatural!

Of course, some of my interruptions are my own doing—and they are mostly nonsense. There is nothing conspiratorial about many of the interruptions I allow during the day. But, beloved, you must constantly be aware that Satan can and does conspire to interrupt you in supernatural ways, when you have committed yourself to prayer and seeking the Lord!

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly"
(Matthew 6:6).

CONCLUSION

We were made for fellowship with God—even in our heaviest times. I ask you: Do you love to be with Him? Do you prefer Him above all others? Does your heart cry out, “Jesus, You’re my everything. You are my soul’s great pleasure—and I love Your company!”

Dear saint, God is faithful to respond to your every need and request. So, as you go to prayer now, simply pray, “Lord, I come now not just to have my needs met—needs You have foreseen and are eager to supply. No—I come also to meet Your need!”

Amen!



*Transforming Lives Through the Message
and Mission of Jesus Christ*

World Challenge, Inc. was founded by Reverend David Wilkerson in 1971 and served as a corporate umbrella for his worldwide crusades, ministers' conferences, book and tract publication, video production, street evangelism, literature distribution, church planting, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and many charitable outreaches. Gary Wilkerson became president of World Challenge in 2010 and moves forward with the same heart and vision as his father with World Challenge, sharing the message of the gospel through mission outreaches and with printed and online resource distribution. Sermons from David Wilkerson and Gary are shared monthly through the Pulpit Series newsletter and daily devotionals to hundreds of thousands of people. The numerous mission outreaches to the poor with World Challenge's Mercy Ministries include orphanages, overseas widows' fund, emergency/disaster relief, healthcare clinics, community development and feeding centers. World Challenge's World Poverty Solutions seeks to minister to the poorest communities worldwide by sharing the love of Christ to bring lasting change to the whole person and communities – mentally, physically, socially, financially and spiritually.



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In the coming year our goal is to expand our reach and provide even more people with the resources they need to grow in Christ and apply the Bible to their lives. If you find this resource valuable in your daily walk, would you consider giving a donation of \$10 or more today so that we can continue to produce encouraging resources like this one.

Your partnership will help bring the power of the gospel from right where you are into some of the most spiritually dark places here and around the world. Thank you.

To donate by mail send your donation to:
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"After much prayer, careful study
and reliance on the Holy Spirit,
I have concluded this about
Christ's intercession for us. Jesus
died on the cross to purchase
peace with God for me – and He
is in heaven now to maintain that
peace, for me and in me."

—David Wilkerson



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