

***Colossians 4:2 - Don't be weary in prayer; keep at it; watch for God's answers and remember to be thankful when they come.***

***How have you put prayer into your work?***

If you say you're too busy to pray, you're in the process of losing in the spiritual battle. Prayer needs to be the foundation of your life and work. If it is not, then you are not ready to lead God's way. God EXPECTS you to persist in prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

***I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer. ~ Martin Luther***

Your leadership will never come anywhere close to its potential without first figuring out HOW you are going to build a *Purposeful Prayer Practice*. Building a *Purposeful Prayer Practice* may be one of the most important ideas you've ever considered for your life and leadership. Prayer should not be something you "just do", an afterthought, a routine, a rote proclamation, or simply a recitation at a church service. Heartfelt prayer is a necessity for your life and leadership. If you have ANY desire to become something more, better, improved, greater, effective, or exceptional – then you're going to need purposeful prayer.

- *Ephesians 3:14-16 (NLT) - When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.*

***Prayers are the nerves that move the muscles of omnipotence. Prayer is not an exercise in futility because God's will, will be done in any case; prayer is the means by which God's will is carried out. ~ John MacArthur***

At the start of Jesus' ministry on earth, he spent 40 days in prayer. He augmented his prayer by fasting and going into the wilderness so he could have a "Duo" – a time for just him and God. What Jesus did, the prayers he said, and how he used that time for dialogue with God is unknown. What IS known is that he came out from that time capable of confronting Satan face-to-face and prepared to fulfill God's calling for his ministry.

- *Matthew 4:1-4 (TLB) - Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to be tempted there by Satan. For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. Then Satan tempted him to get food by changing stones into loaves of bread. "It will prove you are the Son of God," he said. But Jesus told him, "No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need."*

Throughout Jesus' ministry, there were many times he would separate himself from others to have purposeful prayer. His disciples asked him how to pray and he gave them an example. His recorded prayers include prayers for guidance, and prayers for his followers and disciples. He prayed and was transformed to have a conversation with Moses and Elijah. When he knew he was about to be tortured he prayed from his agony and when he was in the midst of dying on the cross, he prayed for God to forgive his executioners. Without purposeful prayer you'll never be capable of handling the attacks from the enemy. Without purposeful prayer you'll never discover all of what God wants to do for you, within you, and with you.

- *Luke 22:41-44 (NLT) - He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.*

***We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that He injects into our bodies energy, power and strength. ~ Charles Stanley***

To reach your potential as a leader, you may want to do something similar to Jesus' "Duo" when he began his ministry. Call it a retreat, a time of reflection, godly consultation, an appointment with the Father, a heavenly conference, or a spiritual symposium. Call it whatever works for

you... but what you call it does not matter as much as scheduling the time and place where you and God can be alone and talk for a period of quality time. While you are there, lay out your heart to him about everything you can think. Ask him about your future, ideas, struggles, desires, hurts, goals, vision, and more. Ask him what you might do for his glory then listen for his voice to give you insights, directions, inspiration, guidance, or even commands. Spending time with God puts YOUR life in the proper perspective.

- *Jeremiah 42:3 (NIV) - Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.*
- *Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*
- *Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT) - Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

You are never left alone when you are alone with God. ~ Woodrow Kroll

Hearing God's voice requires a listening heart, and his voice will become stronger over time, but it often requires silence on your part. You'll want to embrace the stillness, build your desire to hear him, expect that he wants to tell you something, and remove yourself from the world's noise and chaos. Find a place without distractions, clutter, or worldly objects that might pull your attention. Find a time when your mind is ready to listen and the confusion of the world is not able to reach you. Ask good questions of God and expect his answers. And be prepared to accept that what God will tell you may not what you want to hear. Whatever God tells you will always align with his word, the Bible, so reading the Bible can be very good preparation for hearing God's voice. At all times, be thankful, give him praise, and give him your love.

- *Psalms 143:7-10 (TLB) - Come quickly, Lord, and answer me, for my depression deepens; don't turn away from me or I shall die. Let me see your kindness to me in the morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for my prayer is sincere. Save me from my enemies. O Lord, I run to you to hide me. Help me to do your will, for you are my God. Lead me in good paths, for your Spirit is good.*

God answers our prayers not because we are good, but because He is good. ~ A.W. Tozer

God made you unique so how you find the fullness of your godly leadership and your personal purposeful prayer will also be unique. You should also be building your capacity for praying. That means NOT doing the same thing over and over without putting your mind and heart into it. Prayer should always be the most honest, emphatic, authentic, and affectionate conversation you have each day. It is not repeating the same things over and over without mentally engaging in the conversation. You wouldn't repeat rote words or ideas to a person you loved. So, why would you do that to God? You need his insights to overcome the things of the world and that's not likely to happen without some purposeful dialogue – purposeful prayer.

- *Jeremiah 33:2-3 (NLT) - This is what the LORD says—the LORD who made the earth, who formed and established it, whose name is the LORD: Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.*

We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services but few conversions; much machinery but few results. ~ R.A. Torrey

Remarkably, there are only two major choices for your leadership. You can lead God's way or lead the world's way. **One of the foundational bricks for building a business or organization and leading God's way, is purposed prayer.** Without consistent and purposeful prayer, you have no hope to reach anything of true, lasting, and eternal worth. Keep in mind, what the world considers to be important and what God considers important are very often two different things. God wants to meet your needs – not your greeds. God wants your best – not your leftovers. God

wants to help you to bare good fruit – not tasteless pap. God is ALWAYS desiring to help you, but he also has caveats and prayer is one of them.

- *Matthew 13:40-42 (NLT) - Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!*

Leading God's way will bring you a variety of successes based on the level you believe God for his help. (Mark 11:23) Leading God's way will also bring you rewards throughout eternity. (John 4:26) Leading God's way establishes your service to others. (Mark 10:44) Leading God's way will help you harvest fruit of the spirit and have the potential to earn crowns in heaven. (Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 9:25) Leading God's way builds a dynamic continuum in your life for greater impact and making the world a better place. (1 John 1:15) Aren't those ideas worth elevating the importance of your time to pray? Think of it as the best ROI, (Return on Investment), for your business.

Ultimately, the transcript of your prayers becomes the script of your life. ~ Mark Batterson

Leading the world's way will put your eternal life in jeopardy. Leading the world's way is a slippery slope built like a pyramid scheme of who has power and willing to dole it out in doses to their acolytes. Leading the world's way is about self over service. Leading the world's way leads to a continuum of a darkening world, spiritual ineptness, tragedy, anxiety, fear, and the manipulation of people for Satan's desires. Leading the world's way is replacing God with mammon.

- *Mathew 6:24 (BLB) - No one is able to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and he will love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and he will despise the other. You are not able to serve God and mammon.*

Mammon's influence is a continuous and ever-increasing offense that leads to the destruction of a person, region, country, and eventually – a people.

Mammon is the god of many worldly leaders. Mammon is often translated as money, wealth, materialism, avarice, or possessions. Yet, mammon is a demon, a god of greed. The worship of mammon also includes an allowance and promotion of incompetence, ineptitude, ignorance, bitterness, and involuntary servitude for the willing acolytes of its influence. Whatever the translation, mammon is a seductive power that pulls people away from the true God and manifests a culture of envy, lust, power, and greed. Looking around the world it doesn't take much effort to see who has made mammon their god.

- *Luke 16:14-15 (NLT) - The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. Then he said to them, "You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God."*

What would happen if you made the decision to put Purposeful Prayer into your life and leadership right now? You might ask God for his help and you would certainly put him in the center of what you want to do. You might lay your burdens at his feet and then stop worrying about them. You might ask for the things, people, ideas, support, and focus you need and then you could enjoy your life's journey as he gives you insights to those things. It's always your choice to pray – or not.

- *Psalms 37:23 (NLT) - The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives.*

If you're not willing to build purposeful prayer for your business or organization, and that includes the people who are part of it, you're not leading – you're simply occupying a position.

- *Ephesians 6:18 (NIV) - Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

Prior to the twentieth century, business courses, and indeed business schools themselves, were based on biblical principles. ~ Larry Burkett

God answers prayer. He likes bold prayers and honest conversations. He likes specific prayers so he can answer them in fascinating ways that will astound you. God listens to every prayer you make and if you're willing to listen, he will always answer, even when his answer sometimes is – no, not yet, or “hold that thought because there is something you need to learn first.” There is no prayer that is inconvenient to God's eternal life and power.

Not to pray because you do not feel fit to pray is like saying, “I will not take medicine because I am too ill.” Pray for prayer: pray yourself, by the Spirit's assistance, into a praying frame. ~ Charles Spurgeon

Consider building a *Purposeful Prayer Practice*. What is that? At times you need to pray hard or intense. Other times you push your prayers until you get an answer. Some prayers take years and others take only moments. You pray when it's hard to pray. You pray when you're hurt, sad, overwhelmed, or angry. Pray when you're happy, thankful, joyful, pleased, and relieved. Pray for yourself and pray for others. *Purposeful Prayer Practice* is building a relationship with your Heavenly Father as the most important relationship in your life. When you think about the realities of the short life that you have on this earth, your prayers to God are your only anchor in the midst of the storms of life.