

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## WHEN DANIEL PRAYED

by Neal Pollard

Many have found strength and comfort, as children of God, in crying, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). Recorded on the pages of the Scriptures are the prayers of great people. The desire of God to have His people pray to Him can be found in the many recordings of the prayerful in His word.

Remember the fervent prayer of Abraham on Lot's behalf? The continual behest of Abraham for God to preserve the lives of Lot and his family made its way into the Genesis account (18:23-33). During the conquest of Canaan, when Joshua and the Hebrews went up against the Amorites, Joshua prayed a most unusual prayer. In Joshua 10:12, Joshua prayed that the sun would stand still over Gibeon and the moon remain in the valley of Ajalon. The great faith and confidence that Joshua had in God was not betrayed. The barren Hannah desperately wanted a child. The book of First Samuel records two of her prayers. First, she besought God "in bitterness of soul" and "wept sore" in her petition for a son (1:10-18, 26-27). Then, she prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God for answering her prayer (1 Samuel 2:1ff). Who can forget the humility of heart Job demonstrated in pledging his submission to his God in prayer and in pleading for the forgiveness of his meddling "friends" (Job 42:1-6, 10)? King David's model prayer asking for forgiveness and pledging his penitent heart is cited with great regularity even in our present day (cf. Psalm 51). Old king Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and called for God to review his righteous past and heal his grave illness (Isaiah 38:1-8). "He wept sore" (38:3) and God heard his prayer and saw his tears, leading Him in His mercy to extend the king's life (38:5). Surely, all the prophets were men of prayer. Elijah prayed for a drought, and rain was withheld from the earth for three and a half years (1 King 17:1). Habakkuk prayed a prayer revering the God of all ages (Habakkuk 3). Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God from inside a fish's belly (Jonah 2:1). Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and the other seers spent as much time on

their knees as they did in the temple courts and city streets. But, one prophet we remember as the "Praying Prophet."

What a great example Daniel is of prayerfulness. The regularity, sincerity, and humility of his prayers brought him both persecution and praise. His prayer life got him into and out of trouble with kings. Yet, the constant invariable in the prophet's life was his reliance upon prayer. The book of Daniel reveals many characteristics of his prayer life, the study of which can fortify the quantity and quality of *our* prayers.

### Daniel Prayed Privately (Daniel 6:10)

Remember the way Jesus described the disgusting hypocrisy of some seemingly religious folks? In the Sermon on the Mount, He instructed, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:5-6). Daniel 6:10 tells us that the prophet went into his house to pray. The scholars tell us,

"But his conduct (praying before the open window, NP) was the natural result of his fear of God and of his religion, under the influence of which he offered prayers not to make an outward show, for only secret spies (the presidents and princes of Daniel 6:4, NP) could observe him when he so engaged" (*Keil-Delitzsch, Daniel*, 213).

So, Daniel was only continuing his custom of going privately before God's throne. Because King Darius had outlawed praying to anyone but himself, Daniel stood to win no praise from the mainstream society of Babylon. Add to that the general character of Daniel, whose great courage defied any tendency for him to practice pointless servility.

Daniel realized that closeness to God

comes with "spending much time in secret" with Him. In so praying, Daniel had a prayer life characteristic of Jesus. It was our Lord who went alone up into the mountain to pray (Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12), who went into a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35), and who went into Gethsemane alone to pray (Matthew 26:36). What a privilege children of God have to take their most secret thoughts, needs and wants before the Creator of the Universe!

### Daniel Prayed Boldly (Daniel 6:10)

What does the verse say? It says that **when Daniel knew** of the king's decree, **he went** into his house and prayed. Such was in line with Daniel's character. He had the courage to abstain from the king's meat and wine in keeping with his obligation to God (1:8ff). Facing the decree of death, Daniel confronted Arioch and Nebuchadnezzar (2:14ff). He told Nebuchadnezzar that he was going to eat grass like an ox, his hair would grow like feathers, and his nails like bird claws (4:19-27)! Later, he was bold enough to tell Belshazzar, "This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (5:26-28). He told kings they would suffer great defeat and embarrassment. Is it any wonder, then, that he would not let the threat of a few lions keep him from talking to God?

Daniel followed the counsel Moses gave the Israelites in regard to their enemies, which was to "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 31:6). The foundation of Daniel's boldness of prayer was not self-reliance; rather, his courage rested in a trust of God's unlimited power. Perhaps prayer makes us bolder. Maybe moral courage leads us to pray more. Maybe both are true. Daniel prayed boldly.

### Daniel Prayed Frequently (Daniel 6:10)

Daniel prayed three times a day! Why did Daniel find it necessary to pray so

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often? David reasoned, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17). Daniel did not let location, circumstance, or convenience dictate how often he should pray. Doubtless, Daniel needed the spiritual strength he drew from talking to God! Frequent prayer drew him nearer to God.

How well Daniel used his time. He serves as an example of how idle time could better be utilized. How effective are the words of Garnet Rolling:

"Were half the breath that's vainly spent,  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Our cheerful song would oftener be,  
Hear what the Lord has done for me."

We should pray more frequently. By praying often, we grow closer to God. Through frequent prayer, one finds strength, serenity, and satisfaction. In constant prayer man wins God's approval. Remember Paul's exhortation to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17); his admonition to "continue in prayer" (Colossians 4:2); follow Paul's inspired advice by "praying always..." (Ephesians 6:18).

**Daniel Prayed Subordinately****(Daniel 6:11; 9:7, 9; et al.)**

Daniel was humble. He made supplications before his God. He recognized, as he prayed, the exalted nature of God and the sinful, frail nature of man. He submitted himself to God. Though not a weakling (as evidenced by his vast cou-

rage), Daniel was meek. His meekness spilled into his prayer life. How natural it is to look in Daniel's window and find him on his knees!

God is pleased when man approaches Him with a humble spirit. In the story of the Pharisee and the publican, Jesus, while not praising the sin in the publican's life, said his prayer was more pleasing than the Pharisee's because of his humility of heart. "What does God require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). In the words of the wise man, "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly" (Proverbs 3:34). James' advice to the brethren is, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you" (4:6). Peter adds, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5). This principle of humility should carry over from our daily life into our prayer life! Daniel teaches us to pray humbly!

**Daniel Prayed Contritely****(Daniel 9:3-6)**

Daniel's supplications were made "with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." He confessed that he and all of Judah had sinned against God. The shame of God's elect behaving like the godless nations broke the heart of this prophet. Thus, he poured out petitions for himself and the people.

Daniel 9:4 and the verses following resemble Nehemiah's confession, "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly" (9:33). Daniel's reaction to sin was appropriate. He would say with David, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Godly hearts will bend under the weight of sin's filthiness so that they cry aloud to God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). The principle of the scriptures rings out, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness" (James 4:8-9). Like Daniel, let us be truly heartbroken by our sins. And, let this attitude be reflected in our prayers to God.

**Daniel Prayed Uprightly****(Daniel 9:21-23)**

Even as Daniel lay prostrate on the holy mountain, Gabriel came to comfort him.

Gabriel said, "At the beginning of thy supplications (see Daniel 9:1-19, NP) the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Daniel 9:23).

What epitaph do you desire to be placed upon your headstone? "He was feared by every man?" "He was filthy rich?" "He was shrewd in business?" Or, "He was greatly loved by God?" Daniel's righteous petition drew an immediate response from God, according to Gabriel. This verse reminds us of James' words, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16b). John records the healed man's words, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). How true those words ring! Because Daniel was a faithful, obedient child of God, his prayers were heard.

**Conclusion**

Do I pray to God when my schedule is full? Do I pray to God when my plans have failed? Do I pray to God when my cup of life is filled? Do I pray to God when my faith is frail? When do I pray? Am I a person of prayer? If not, why not?

Remember the exclamation of Henry Martyn, who said, "My present deadness I attribute to want of sufficient time for private devotion. O that I might be a man of prayer!" When more grasp the importance of a faithful prayer life, so much more good will be accomplished! How much we learn from the times when Daniel prayed!

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**Before You Pray**

by Jerry Moffitt

I would encourage you to keep this article. Read it when you do not feel like praying. Read it before you pray to increase your faith.

"Ye have not because you ask not" (James 4:2).

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7,8).

"For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove

hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).

"Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon him, To all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry and will save them" (Psalm 145:18,19).

"And Jesus said unto him, if thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

"And Jesus answering, saith unto them, have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16).

"Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:6,7).

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God" (Psalm 20:7).

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for Jehovah" (Psalm 27:13,14).

"Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he will sustain thee: He will never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding:

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5,6).

"If I cherish iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18).

"In the day when I call, answer me speedily" (Psalm 102:2).

"Then they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses" (Psalm 107:6).

"I love Jehovah, because he heareth my voice and my supplications" (Psalm 116:1).

"Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20,21).

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

"Our fathers trusted in thee: **They trusted**, and thou didst deliver them" (Psalm 22:4).

"Jehovah is my strength and my shield; my heart hath **trusted** in him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7).

"Let me not be put to shame, O Jehovah; for I have called upon thee" (Psalm 31:17).

"Delight thyself also in Jehovah; and he will give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto Jehovah; **Trust** also in him, and he will bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:4,5).

"My soul, wait thou in silence for God only; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my high tower; I shall not be moved" (Psalm 62:5,6).

"Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah: Jehovah answered me and set me in a large place" (Psalm 118:5).

"But whoso putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

"Every word of God is tried: He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him" (Proverbs 30:5).

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*A smile happens in a flash, but the memory of it can last a lifetime.*

## Warm Weather and Immodest Dress

by Bobby Duncan

As the weather warms up, we generally wear less clothing and/or lighter clothing. There is nothing wrong with adjusting our clothing to fit the weather, so long as our clothing adequately covers our bodies. The fashion of the world, of course, is to wear scanty provocative clothing, especially when the weather is warm. Unfortunately, some in the church will be influenced more by the fashion of the world than they are by the word of the Lord.

Your Bible says: "[I will therefore] that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..." (1 Timothy 2:9). Certainly the same is required of men. In case some woman wants to know what modest apparel is, then she should read verse 10: "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." It is modest if it is becoming (appropriate, suitable, proper) to women professing godliness.

It is a fact that times have changed, and styles have changed, and society has changed, but the word of God has not changed and human nature has not

*(Continued on page 4)*

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changed. Several years ago a well-known preacher wrote the following:

"What is wrong with mixed swimming? I can't speak for the ladies, but I can speak for the men. There's not an ordinary man who can look at a woman clad in nothing but a bathing suit for a long time without entertaining evil thoughts. 'But,' some will say, 'it does not bother me.' One who says that may be so young that his passions have not arisen, or he may be so old they have subsided, or he may be so ignorant he doesn't know what is going on, or he may not be normal, or he may be lying. He fits into one of these five categories, or he is a spiritual giant; but spiritual giants don't spend their time at mixed swimming parties."

Our Lord warned against looking and lusting when he said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28).

I know there are those who accuse anyone who warns against the evils of immodest dress of being "evil-minded." This accusation has intimidated many preachers and caused them to stop preaching against immodest dress. I pray I might never be intimidated by such charges. I hasten to say also that the danger of lust is not the only reason Christians should dress modestly and decently. The matter of our good influence should be weighed carefully in determining how we are to dress.

In the forty-odd years I have been preaching I guess I have heard all the arguments as to why the Bible injunction with reference to modesty does not have to be obeyed: "Nobody thinks about it any more." "In some cultures the women go bare-breasted." "Time was when a woman was immodest if her ankle showed." "Some are going to lust anyway." And on, and on, and on the arguments go. But the real reason most members of the church persist in wearing clothing that is less than modest and decent is simply this: God's will is not important enough for them to yield their own will to him.

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*It is unwise to make strife without counting the cost.*

### An Apology & Plea For Patience

We recently sent postcards to several of our readers requesting more complete addresses or we would have to drop their names from our mailing list. I know that some of those who received cards have given us the best address information they have. Our problem is that your local postmasters have not forwarded your new addresses or corrections on to the US Postal Service National Database in Memphis, TN. The Post Office says we **must** zipcode our addresses according to this National Database. If your address is not in that database we cannot enter the correct zipcode for your address, even if you give us your correct 9 digit zipcode. I know that sounds crazy, but the P.O. does this to keep mailers from being able to add zipcodes which are incorrect. The problem is that the Post Office, either local offices or in Memphis, are not providing mailers with a database that is 100% complete. Each new address or change is supposed to be added to this National Database by the P.O. within 90 days. We know some of you have lived at your present addresses far longer than that, but your address is not yet in the National Database.

Please check with your postmaster to be sure you know your correct current and P.O. approved address with your 9 digit zipcode. Also, ask your postmaster to be certain your address is in the National Database file which is made available to mailers. We apologize for any inconvenience to you and ask for your help and patience. We will see that all those who are giving us the best information they have will continue to get **FCGN**, but we will have to make a separate mailing and will be charged a higher rate by the P.O., even though the problem is not our fault. Be sure to write us if you have problems receiving your issues of **FCGN**. Thank you!

- Editor

*True friendship comes when silence between two people is comfortable.*

- Dave Tyson Gentry

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### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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