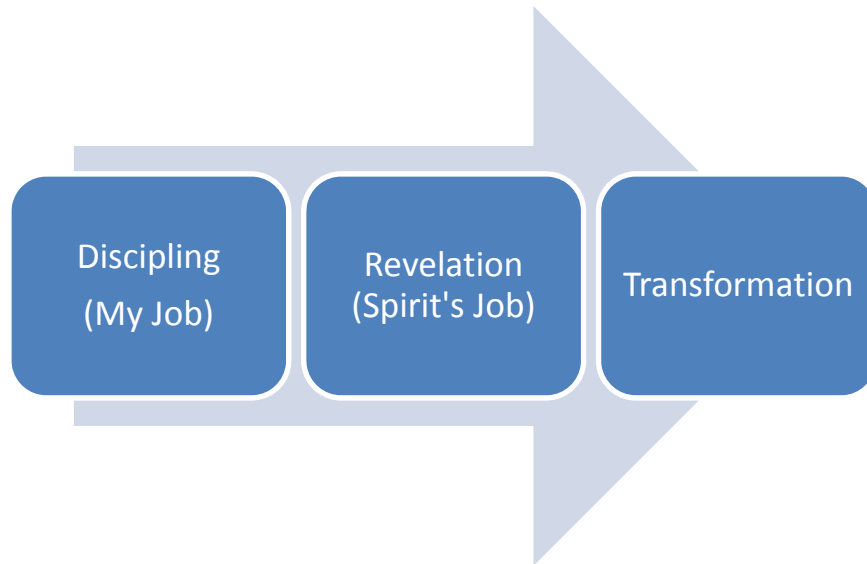


PRAYER AND DISCIPLESHIP



Ephesians 1:17-19: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father** of glory, may **give** to you a spirit of wisdom and of **revelation** in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸ ***I pray*** that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

1. Why did Paul pray this?
 - a. What is our job? What is God's job?

2. Is it possible God will NOT do His part unless we ask? Why is it that God would WAIT for us to pray?
 - a. God gets the credit! To the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)
 - b. God knows if He forces His will on us we will rebel (Rom. 7). Example:
Is there a risk in helping your son with homework if he doesn't want it?

3. Effectiveness and Efficiency of Prayer
 - a. God aligns Circumstances to create willingness to change!
(Can we do this?)
 - b. God reveals our identity to create readiness to change!
(Can we do this?)
 - c. Is it possible for transformation to happen without God working?

CONCLUSION: We must ask God to join us for transformation to occur! Otherwise, we will spin our wheels discipling unwilling and unready people.

TOO BUSY NOT TO PRAY

- a. **Oswald Sanders:** Prayer influences men by influencing God to influence them. If we want to influence the world...we must pray well.
- b. **Henry Blackaby:** More than any other single thing we do, your prayer life will determine your effectiveness. "There are simply some things that can only be achieved through prayer" (Ps 50:15)
- a. **Prayer is the Most Effective and Efficient Activity One Can Undertake:**
 - i. **R. A. Torrey** (Late 1800s – Moody): Prayer can do anything God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent.
 - ii. **Charles Spurgeon:** Prayer is the "Slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence."
 - iii. **Hudson Taylor** (China mission): "it is possible to move men through God by prayers alone"
- b. **Prayer Saves Time:**
 - i. Prayer allows God to do more in days, hours, & minutes than we can do in years or a lifetime.
 - ii. **Luther:** "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer" (instead of his normal 2 hours!)

The efficiency and effectiveness of prayer is something that is comforting to everyone who is busy – if you want to advance the kingdom...then PRAY!
- c. **Prayer is Omnipresent:**
 - i. I cannot be in two places at once, but God can! We can bless Iran every day from our bedroom.
 - ii. **S. D. Gordon:** "Prayer opens a whole planet to man's activities." I can be on my knees ministering to a pastor in Africa.
 - iii. **Wesley Duewel:** Thru prayer, you can minister in jungles and feed millions of starving kids.
- d. **Prayer is the Determining Factor:**
 - i. The more we pray the more God works.
 - ii. **Ezekiel 22:30-31:** God needed a man to stand in the gap, but there was none.
 - iii. **John Calvin:** "He is inactive, as if forgetting us, when He sees us idle and mute."
 - iv. **Billy Graham:** "There is but one power available to redeem the course of events...prayer."

God wants to work in partnership with His children...He has time and will wait for us to pray!
- e. **God Does Nothing in Ministry Apart from Prayer:**
 - i. It defeats the devil (Lk 22:23), gets lost saved (Lk 18:13), is a way to acquire wisdom (James 1:5), restores backsliders (James 5:16-20), strengthens (Mt 26:41), get laborers to mission fields (Mt. 9:38), cures the sick (James 5:13-15), accomplish the impossible (Mk 11:23-24).
 - ii. **Billy Graham:** "More can be **DONE** by prayer than anything else. Prayer is our greatest weapon."
- f. **Prayer Is Our Greatest Spiritual Weapon:**
 - i. **Ephesians 6:** Paul spends lots of time on spiritual warfare and closes the discussion with an appeal to prayer – prayer fights the battle of spiritual warfare!
 - ii. **S. D. Gordon:** "Prayer is man giving God a footing on the contested territory of this earth."
 - iii. **Dick Eastman (Every Home for Christ):** "Prayer is not so much another weapon on our list of weaponry as it is the actual battle."
 - iv. **Wesley Duewel:** "Your task as a Christian is too big for you. Its immensity and awesomeness must drive you to prayer." God's available for your ministry if you will pay the price to pray.

CONCLUSION: It is not possible for you to effectively and efficiently do ministry, disciple people, advance the kingdom etc. You do not have enough time! You do not have enough power! Your human effort will wear you out! The only way you can have enough time and power to advance the kingdom is to PRAY. It is the most effective and efficient way to change the world!