How to build a Gospel Advancing Ministry!

Intercessory Prayer

We are about to embark on a 7 part series based on the 7 values of a Gospel Advancing Ministry

* Explain research project.
* Explain crosscheck with the book of Acts
* Pray for the youth leaders to receive it well

Intercessory Prayer Fuels It!

Tell story of my broken heart my Freshman year at Liberty and my desperate prayers for this relationship to work…the meltdown after the phone call…

You see…A broken heart leads to a bent knee.

I’ll never forget when my mom was diagnosed with cancer (picture)…my prayers by her hospice bed of desperation…

You see…A broken heart leads to a bent knee.

In 2008 our ministry fell into desperate financial times…prayer walks began…prayers of desperation…

You see…A broken heart leads to a bent knee.

Often times our prayers of desperation are over broken relationships or crashing finances or a life-threatening sickness…but what about desperate prayers for the lost.

Where are our desperate prayers for the lost?

A broken heart leads to a bent knee.

No Apostle modeled this kind of prayer-drenched desperation than the Apostle Paul. He was desperate to reach the lost. And it all started with…

1. A Broken Heart

“I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race….” Romans 9:1-3

The Apostle Paul was a man of deep emotion. According to his own accounts he wept often and was moved beyond words to cry out for the lost. His heart was broken beyond our comprehension.

Look at what he says here. He wrote, “I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people…..”

Can you imagine that? His heart was so broken for his fellow Jews that he would live life without Christ and go to hell for all of eternity apart from Christ if it meant that his fellow Jews would be saved!

What does it take to get that level of burden?

* Being with Jesus on a daily basis…because the more we spend time with Christ the more we adopt the heart of Christ Jesus not only wished himself cut off he actually willing was cut off from the Father to save Jews and Gentiles. That’s why he screamed “my God, my God why have you forsaken me?”
  + And on the cross he prayed “Father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing.” Even on the cross he is praying for the lost.
  + By the way…give Gospel
* Empathizing with the lost on a consistent basis…imagining what their lives are like and having your teenagers do the same…imagining their eternity without Christ and having your teenagers do the same.
  + Matthew 9:36…when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless…like sheep without a shepherd….
  + Jesus had compassion on them…word means “to suffer with”…he saw them…he suffered in his soul for them….because he imagined them as sheep being surrounded by wolves being torn and shredded.
  + The word “harassed” here—skullo in Greek—means “to be mangled, torn apart, or cut to the bone”. The word “helpless” (rhipto) means “to throw to the ground”.
    - When I was about six or seven years old my mom took me out to some farm to meet some people she knew…I went out onto the farm area and just looked around…there were a group of teenagers…they skinned a rabbit alive…it made the most horrific screams I have ever heard…I begged the adults to make the teenagers stop…I cried and freaked out…I’ll never forget having a broken heart for that rabbit.
    - To this day, I hate to see a rabbit suffer…I have compassion for them…
    - But, in many ways, teenagers today are being skinned alive…they’re being mangled, torn apart and cut to the bone…that’s what Satan wants to do…he uses social media, peer pressure, drugs, depression, suicidal thoughts, the media, comparison…anything and everything to skin them alive.
    - It only takes one funeral of one teenager to break your heart forever….Teenage girl funeral service…

The Wailing Wall of Jerusalem (picture of Jews wailing at the wall)

Much of what we know as Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD when Roman forces, led by Titus, smashed a Jewish revolt. That’s when the temple fell. There was only one wall left…the retaining wall…what we know now as “The Western Wall” or “The Wailing Wall.” So the Jews who survived Jerusalem’s destruction were left wept and wailed at the Wall. Many of the orthodox Jews continue that tradition of wailing at the wall. Today, many put written prayers in the cracks of the walls as they pray for the restoration of Jerusalem. They are wailing because of the destruction of the Temple, but they are also wailing for the Messiah to come and deliver them from oppression and set the Temple back up once again.

When I went to Jerusalem almost five years ago seeing the orthodox Jews praying at the wailing wall is something I’ll never forget.

Sadly, these Jews don’t know that the Messiah has already come. His name is Jesus Christ. And he has set up a new Temple, his church, to be the bright and shining light for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Maybe we need a wailing wall too…Could you imagine teenagers lined up in a wall of your youth room, praying and interceding for their friends? Maybe they’d put sticky notes of prayer on the wall for their friends who don’t yet know Jesus. Instead of praying for the Messiah to come to the earth and deliver them from oppression like the Jewish people, they’d be praying for the Messiah to come to the lives of their friends to deliver them from spiritual bondage.

Our hearts must be broken for the lost…My Uncle Richard and our family wailing wall, so to speak…tell story

Paul had a broken heart for the lost and it led to….

1. A Bent Knee

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.” Romans 10:1

Paul’s deep emotion led to motion. He broken heart led to a bent knee.

This is the hard work of intercessory prayer that we must partake in and equip our teenagers to partake in.

* Praise is a party
  + Everyone loves the praise part of our prayer lives…crank up a little Hillsong, Passion Band, Elevation, Vertical Worship or whatever and you can have yourself a praise party.
  + This is the type of prayer that made David dance with reckless abandon before the Ark.
* Supplication is a privilege
  + It’s when we ask God to supply our needs or answer our prayers.
  + We can go directly to God on our behalf.
* Intercession is a pain.
  + I don’t mean this in a disrespectful way but literally.
  + Colossians 4:12, “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”
    - “Wrestling” in the greek is closely related to the word “agony” in the Greek…agonizing in prayer over others.

Intercessory prayer is the manual labor of the prayer world. It is the selfless sacrifice of our time to stand in the gap for others. It’s when we pray for our fellow believers and for others. It is when we wage war with the forces of darkness for the souls of the lost and for the spiritual maturity of the saved.

It’s when we pray for the lost to be saved.

“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Paul is giving Timothy instructions on how to run the church services back in Ephesus. He is instructing Timothy to make prayer the first priority…not evangelism…not singing worship songs…not even the preaching of the Word….but prayer!

Why? Because it ignites our evangelism! It enlivens our worship! It infuses our preaching with Holy Spirit power!

DL. Moody once said, “Jesus never taught his disciples how to preach, but how to pray.”

And praying for the lost is key to, not only our public prayers, but our personal prayers. We must help our teens to pray for the lost. Why? Because God, according to 1 Timothy 2:4 wants “everyone to be saved and to understand the truth!”

When we pray we pray the heart of God back to him. And what is his heart? It’s this, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Without intercessory prayer our evangelism efforts falter. But with them they are supercharged with divine power for the tearing down of strongholds. Listen to the words of Armin Gesswein, a Lutheran pastor whom God used to ignite a prayer movement in America and around the world.

"Prayer is the lifeline of New Testament evangelism, the oxygen for its holy fire. The New Testament was born in prayer. It knows no evangelism without prayer, and no prayer which does not lead to evangelism.” Armin Gesswein, a man God used to ignite a prayer movement in America and around the world.

It’s when we pray for the saved to be sanctified.

So much of our prayer lives are for us. So much of our teen’s prayer lives are for themselves.

Todd Peters and The Black Toyota Truck Factor (picture)

Lee Strobel…part of the brain that focuses…Reticular activating system

The Reticular Activating System (RAS) is a bundle of nerves at our brainstem that filters through unnecessary information so the important stuff gets through. The RAS is the reason you learn a new word and then start hearing it everywhere. It’s the reason you buy a new car and see it everywhere. It’s the reason you start praying for the lost and start thinking about reaching them.

According to Study.com, “Often, the RAS is compared to a filter or a nightclub bouncer that works for your brain. It makes sure your brain doesn't have to deal with more information than it can handle. Thus, the reticular activating system plays a big role in the sensory information you perceive daily.”

Intercessory prayer for the lost helps on going plans of reaching the lost get past the bouncer at the door of your teenagers’ brains.

Again, this is one of the reason’s Paul was always reaching out to the lost, because he was consistently praying for the lost.

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.” Romans 10:1

Here the Apostle Paul invites the Ephesian believers to become prayer warriors using a type of prayer called “Intercessory prayer.” The word intercession comes from two Latin words that mean “I go” and “between”…literally, “I go between.”

When we intercede for someone else we are getting in the middle of the danger. We are getting in between them and whatever situation they may be facing. When we intercede we are asking God to intervene.

And, as we’ll discover this weekend, this generation of teenagers needs an army of intercessors who are willing to go between them and the dangers they are facing.

Ma Zeemer was my intercessor….because she got between me and the danger…she got between me and two ferocious dogs.

She was a fearless go between!

Today I’m asking you to be a fearless go-between, a fearless intercessor on behalf of the next generation, to swing that bat right in the twisted faces of the devil and his horde of demons…Because they are seeking to drag this next generation through hell and to hell. They’re doing it right now! In what ways? Here are just a few…

Closing illustrations

In 1990 the Gulf War began was a conflict between Iraq and a coalition force of approximately 30 nations led by the United States and mandated by the United Nations in order to liberate the nation of Kuwait…Iraq had invaded it and these nations united to free it….

* …Stormin Norman Schwarzkopf (picture), Gulf War, Air support (picture)