

**The Power and Promises of Prayer
(Mark 1:29-45)**

Prayer: The Cornerstone of Discipleship and Missions

35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

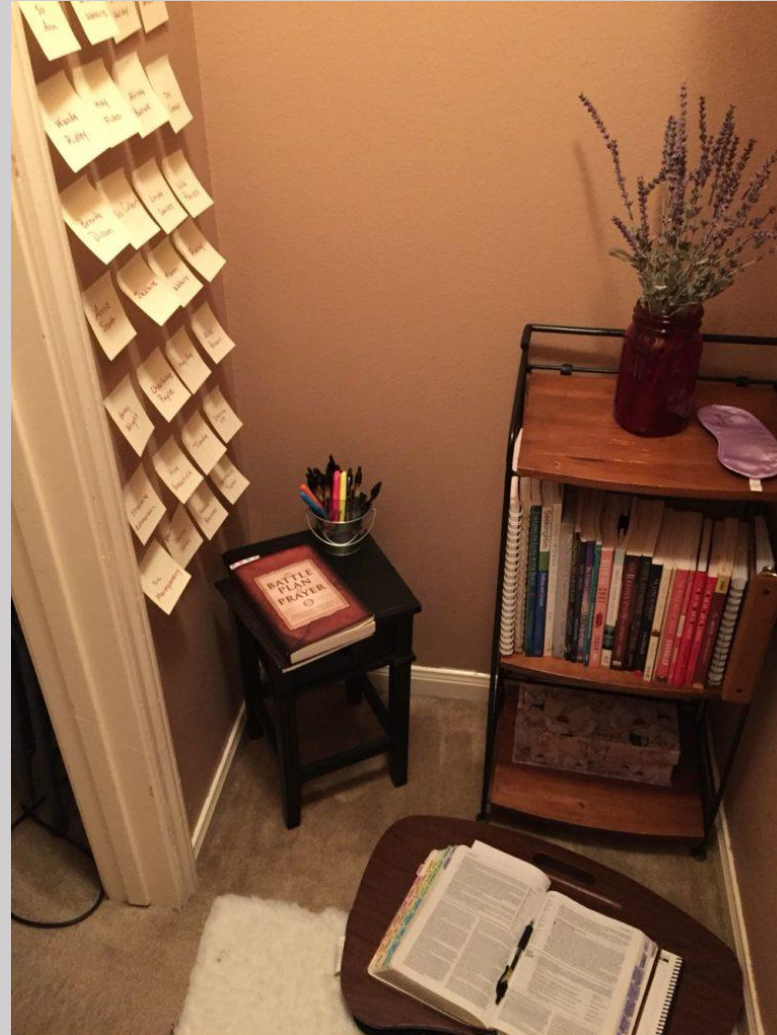
36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."

38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." 39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Introduction: Of prayer closets and baby pens



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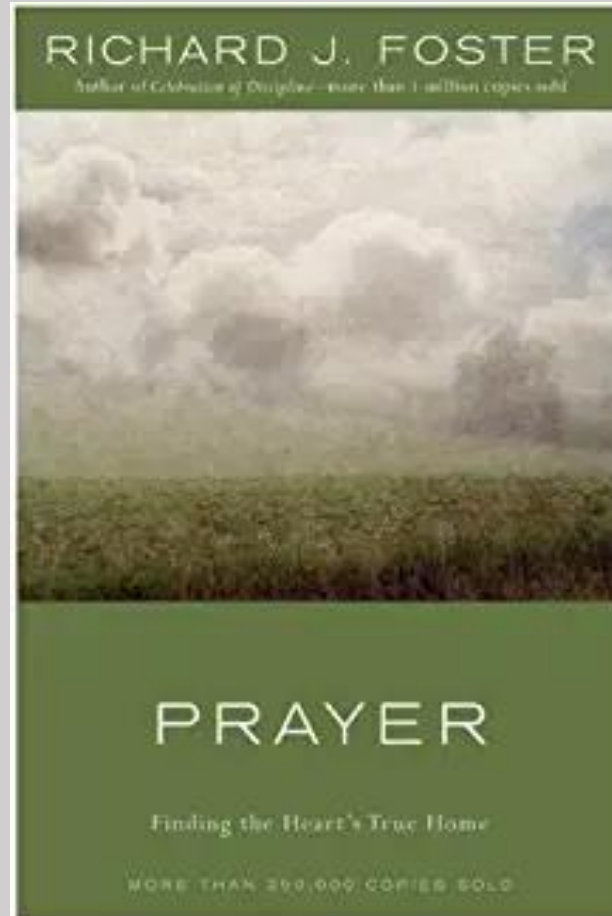


Introduction: Of prayer closets and baby pens



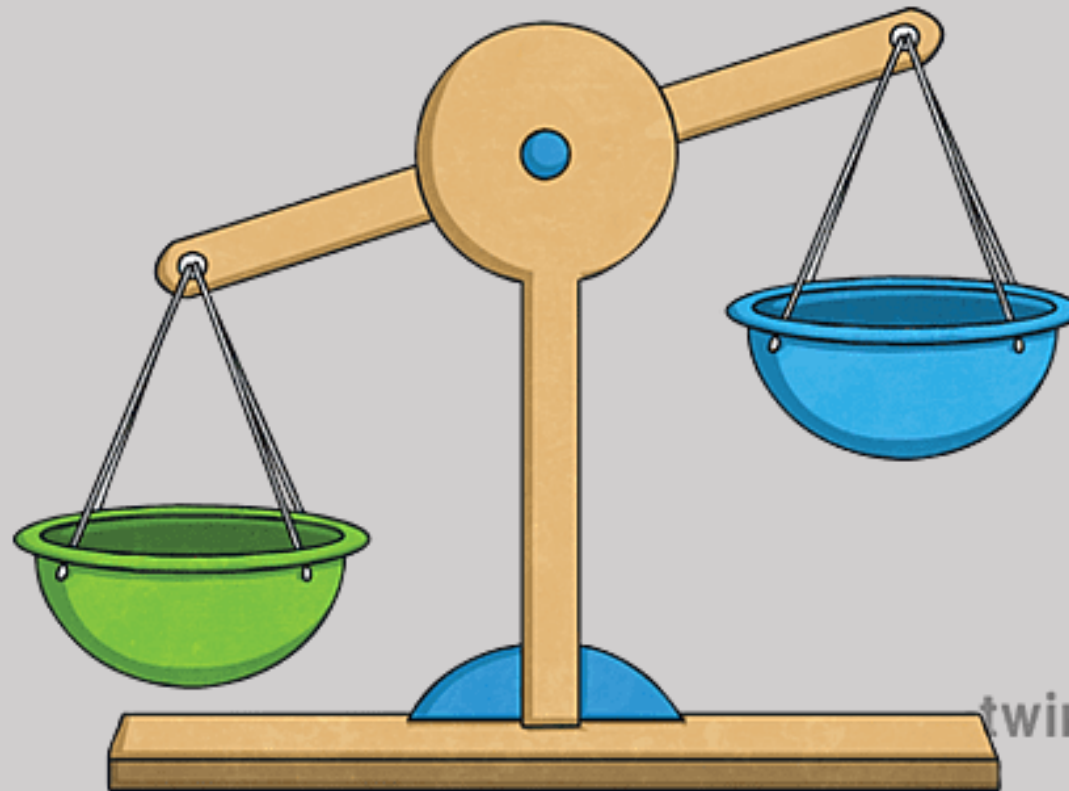
A. Prayer is All-encompassing

- Moving inward, moving upward, moving outward



B. Prayer is Peaceful

- Restores our “equilibrium”



B. Prayer is Peaceful

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

--Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

C. Prayer is Paradoxical

- If God is sovereign, what's the point of prayer?
- It is an act of:
 - Obedience
 - Faith
- ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. --Jeremiah 29:12 (ESV)

D. Prayer is Performative

- The act of “speaking” makes things happen
- Linguistics: performing an act by the very fact of being uttered, as with the expression “I promise,” that performs the act of promising. Thus, these are sentences that change the social reality

E. Prayer is Non-empirical

- It is not measurable
- We live in an era that values “usefulness” and results
- An era that privileges materialism and scientific verification
- What would a “pound of prayer” be?
- How does one confirm an “act of prayer”?
- Do we evaluate the value of prayer based solely on its results?
- To what extent does prayer return us to our “essence”? (*imago dei*)
- *Ontology*: “the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being”

F. Prayer is Powerful

- High-octane fuel and a supercharger



F. Prayer is Powerful

- The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
- ¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

James 5:16b-18 (NIV)

G. Prayer is Pride-reducing (humbling)

- We encounter a “Holy” God

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector:

- ¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’
--Luke 18:13

Prayer is Simple yet Complex

- Prayer is a paradox:
 - Humility-Power
 - Essence-Results (“Useless”- “Useful”)
 - Necessary-Superfluous
 - Inward-Outward
 - Individual-Corporate
 - Calming-Exciting
- Prayer is a gift from God that enables us to return to God

Let Us Pray

