

ONE

TURNING YOUR SOUL-WINNING THOUGHTS INTO SOUL-WINNING PRAYERS

One on one initiative-evangelism can become as natural as breathing, but prayer is where it starts

By Kurt von Schleicher

“Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.” –Victor Hugo

I told the pastor, “I’ll be glad to go pass out Gospel tracts on the beach.” But I thought the stack of them that he was handing to me was slightly thick. I thought, “Man, this is the last thing on earth I really feel like doing right now. I’d rather just grab my board and hit the waves again.” All my shy “stay cool” tendencies oozed out of every pore in sweat and nervousness. Wow! That *make-it-or-break-it* moment of truth came suddenly and God was basically trying to transform me from an every day surf-rat-Christian into a new day world changer. Yes, radical transformation from a semi-popular Dana Hills beach dude into a full blown, “Jesus Freak” with zero sophistication or hubris! Yup... I guess I was really joining the “God squad” now, “the soul patrol” ...whatever you want to call it. Man, I just couldn’t believe it. I was actually becoming a full-fledged member of those guys I thought I’d never become ...to go tell the Good News. And that’s exactly the Lord’s desire for us all—to make us all into contagious Christians with infectious faith, but not in some weird spooky kind of way! It was my choice and I reluctantly agreed. “Way dude, I can handle it! Sure, I’m not afraid of what they’ll think of me ...or am I?” I felt this was the hundred proof, the “extreme, hardcore Christianity,” and now it was like: Go for it, Kurt! Don’t hair out like a mamma’s boy. So I gritted my teeth and ventured up the hot white strand. Who would be my first victim... Oh, I mean divine-setup-encounter? Then it happened as an old friend appeared and was approaching me in his wet quick silver trunks. I somehow slipped into a new mode of silent intercession that has since become a habit of life for me.

“Hey Robert, what’s goin’ on?,” I asked as I silently prayed: *Lord how and what should I say to this guy? I know he needs You. Give me boldness and help him see that he needs You.* Now this was a person I really felt like I cared about, I think it was Jesus guiding me in this, because we kind of grew up together in the same dead church and we had spent a lot of years partying and surfing together. He replied, “I heard the surf report today and I’m just checkin’ it out after a long day of work, Kurt. What’s happenin’ with you?”

“Well, you see we’re having this Christian rock concert over there on the grass at six and I just want to like ...invite you, cause you’re my bro and all. All this

might sound hyper-spiritual or kind of different, Robert, but you know that I've recently accepted Jesus Christ into my heart and to my surprise at the time, He actually showed up. He totally forgave me of all my sin-weirdness," I explained to Robert. *Tug on Robert's heart now. Please, I don't want to coach or direct you Lord, but please convict him, Lord. Take away the blinders and open his eyes.*

I handed Robert the not so groovy looking or even modern Gospel tract about Jesus and the concert flyer and we had an agreeable fifteen-minute discussion about some spiritual matters. Well, one after another I met some more people that were open, some that were closed and some... YIKES!—were angry atheists that like to chew up and spit out young Christians like me. But it was the most exciting challenging day of my life! How radically thrilling it was when Scripture verses came flooding into my memory and then into my mouth ...for their ears. And just to see a couple hundred weekenders gathered around the music later that evening ...and more importantly around the Message of Jesus. That was WAY cool! I thought, what could be better than this, seeing people give their lives over to Jesus Christ right in the beach park?

It wasn't long after that day, that I picked this activity up again and began really enjoying this new casual role as Mister Long haired-prayer-evangelist. Everywhere I went at school, work or wherever, as I'd talk to people I'd simply pray for them, *Oh Father God, I know it's hard for him to be living with his alcoholic dad. Strengthen and sustain him. I know he loves the guy a whole lot, but he is also hurting... Use me in his life and then him to win his dad, Lord.*

Even going door to door on occasion, or out to witness in parking lots at huge secular concerts, or in the park. Witnessing was made so easy when it was coupled together in this silent intercessory combination. Sometimes the meanest worldliest people in the world would open up and receive Jesus as their Savior. Talking to strangers and acquaintances about Jesus started out as a dreaded duty for me, but while talking to the Holy Spirit and Jesus about it more and more, it became a thrilling, fun and interesting mission of mercy. It was the one God of the universe that made the difference in my life, turning it from a public verbal-depression-session into a private and public ministry of intercession. Yes indeed, an inner sanctum of beautiful conversation with the incredible Deity that can change people's lives—He that is able to gloriously transform the irreligious inside and then work it all out—with out-working witnessing power for all the right reasons.

PRIORITIZING PRAYER MINISTRY

God had one Son and He was a Soul-winner—He was the ultimate Fisher of human beings! And what is this glorified Soul-winner currently doing today (without stopping)? He is praying for you and me. He is praying evangelistic prayers at the right hand of the Father for our lost friends that He has appointed for salvation. Why? Because as long as there are people going off into eternity, splitting Hell wide open, compassionate evangelism is His heartbeat ...and it should be ours as well. For us it should start down upon humble knees! I like what Ed

Silvoso said, *"What is the Spirit saying to the churches? My observation is that the Spirit is delivering a dual emphasis—prayer and evangelism."* As I went to look and corroborate his statement in my Bible, it would appear that worship, prayer, evangelism and also us preparing Christians to better worship and evangelize, has been God's emphasis for His Church for thousands of years.¹ God's command to pray without ceasing in the Spirit of love is what should link these activities together for Christians. The Psalmist said, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; My soul refused to be comforted" (Ps. 77:2 nkjv). The Apostle Paul commanded, "Pray without ceasing" (1Thess. 5:17). And he practiced this kind of supplication saying, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (Rom. 1:9). He retorted, "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1Thess. 2:13). He was grateful and voiced it, "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day" (2 Tim. 1:3).

Serving God and talking to God—the two go together beautifully, because one is literally the outgrowth of the other. Every verse of God's Book that we so deeply cherish is a soul-winning verse! Every verse of His Book also urges us towards vertical relationship with Him and serving. But the reason evangelism turns so many of us off, is because we Christians tend to pray so seldom. We make the command to "pray without ceasing" more difficult, complicated and mysterious than it needs to be. Perhaps it's a simple matter of making the main thing the MAIN THING in our lives. Richard Foster tells us, *"When prayer becomes our major life activity, we experience what it means to 'offer a sacrifice of praise to God continually' (Hebrews 13:15); to pray 'in the Spirit on all occasions' (Ephesians 6:18); to 'devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart' (Colossians 4:2)."* So many times the word pray is linked with words such as "always," "everything", "constantly," and even "night and day" (Romans. 1:9-10; Col. 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3:10). Our perpetual "inner-self-talk" -- the chatter in our brains as we commute, work on the car, prepare sandwiches for the kids, exercise—can all be transformed into a beautiful and continual conversation with God. Maybe you're thinking yeah right, I can just imagine the traffic accidents and spaced out employees in the work place comparing their prayer lists and being horrible example-witnesses. It doesn't have to be that "spacey!" It doesn't have to be so regimented either.

You, yes you, can turn the thoughts in your head, the longings of your heart, and the urgings of your spirit into world changing prayer without acting spooky or strange. We've all heard talk of **those people so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good**, but that description is truly an oxymoron if you think about it. Living like that depicts a spiritual retard, off balance with the Word. The bottom line is, being led by the Spirit is never at odds with being wisdom led. The results will be synonymous – people getting right with God. The Bible tells us "Since, then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts (affections) **on things above**,

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). Paul Tournier says, *"Our task is to live our personal communion with Christ with such intensity as to make it contagious."* Can you think of a city that should forgo on such a righteous epidemic?

PRAYING GOD'S WILL

If we're going to weave prayer in through out our day, greater intimacy with God is bound to develop. Greater compassion for people will develop. We can bring up whatever or whoever is in front of us. And when we run out of local-evangelistic-things to say to God, we can bring up international concerns. I think a lot of what goes on in the name of missions on the field, is not and by that same token, a lot of the witnessing that happens domestically, like on our school campuses with so many foreign exchange students and all, is full-blown "missions." To me "missions" is far more a matter of *what you are* (in character and word) rather than where you are located geographically. It's about winning the irreligious, starting where you're at, in your Jerusalem and then branching out.

I've heard it said, "You're either becoming more missionary or more missionary needy. You're either a soul-winner or a backslider." And Jesus affirmed this saying, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matt. 12:30). It's true, this whole Jesus lifestyle must remain prayerful, influential and everyday-natural, or Christianity simply isn't practical. We can't take the Message to the ends of the earth in our own power can we? This is a supernaturally natural thing demanding more than we have, in and of ourselves. We need His sense of values! Rebecca Manley Pippert said, *"If you live by the same values and priorities Jesus had, you will find evangelism happening naturally. It becomes a life-style and not a project."*

Let's face it, the way from God to an unrighteous human heart is through a righteous human heart (our Lord built-in no other options). And John R. Stott gives it even more impetus, *"The church is under orders! Evangelistic inactivity is disobedience."*

I think Jesus really wants to open our eyes to the fact that the neighbor next door, or the people sitting next to us on the beach, or on a plane, or in a classroom really matter! They are not interruptions to our schedule. They are there by divine appointment. Jesus wants us to come down to their level to sense their acute emptiness, see their needs, their loneliness, their longings. And He wants us to give them the gift of time, as He gives us the courage to reach out to them. That's simply following His own example and Romans 12:16, which commands: ***"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate."***

The people of Jesus' day thought Rabbis and holy men were unapproachable. But Jesus' work was in the marketplace. He made people feel, not like they were an intrusion, but comfortable and welcome. From His scheme of things, they fit in and sure they should have a place with us, as well.. Christ was also very busy, but

His life was a constant demonstration that there were only two things that really mattered in this life — God and people. Why? Because they are the commodities that will last forever.

Personally, I enjoy laser-beaming people in love, all through the day, *Holy Spirit soften his heart. Let him not wander outside the reach of your love and witnesses. What would You have me say and how?*

I remember when I was a missionary in Southern Germany. I would pray like this all day long, in the parks, on the fast trains and on the Straßen Bahn (streetcar). I used to enjoy praying for, and then talking with the people I rode with everyday. It really did have great affect! Many opened up their hearts and some of the people would receive Jesus Christ and His forgiveness right on the spot. Many became my lasting friends too.

But what do we pray? Well, we pray whatever piece of God's will (according to the Bible of course) that we understand. Some of His will we don't see clearly yet (many Christians don't spend much time in prayer or the Bible), but much of it we do. We pray for the pastors, missionaries and leaders that we know about and have relationship with. We can pray that we will discover and consider others needs (Phil. 2:3), accurately examine ourselves for sin (2 Corinthians. 13:5), or fulfill our part in helping others come to know Christ personally (1 Corinthians. 3:6).

SPIRITUAL BREATHING SHOULD BE CALLED PRAYER WITH NO CEASING

I'm not into the Jesus Seminar teachings, or the Emergent Church's decline away from Bible teaching or even into repetitive Catholic-styled form prayers and contemplative mystical religious weirdness! I don't need monastic religious icons, art, indulgences, images or a piece of the actual cross. I'm not into meditative Eastern influences or special physical breathing techniques to get mature in Christ. I don't even believe that breathing exercises will put a person in a spiritually receptive state. I'm grateful for the oxygen I receive, but it was the Lord through Paul that challenged us to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and this command follows hard on the heels of his challenge to "be joyful always" (1 Thessalonians. 5:16). Did you ever wonder why God put those two verses together? It's because the joy of the Lord is our strength and he doesn't want us to ever be without it. Who would listen to the message of the despondent?

The connection between these two commands lays before us the fundamental ratio between constant joy and constant prayer. Those who forever pray are those who continually rejoice. There is a splendid correlation of deliverance in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 and 17. Praying without ceasing is related to the matter of rejoicing! Joy is always found in the appetite of all we are hungry for. Food is never boring to a starving man. It is never drudgery to eat your choice edibles. That's right, just thinking about scarfing down my favorite German victuals makes my mouth begin to water. When I imagine the smell of sizzling weißwurst on the grill, with non-alcoholic Lowenbrau and some hot spices sprinkled over the top,

along with some fresh sauerkraut and spätzle, look out! I become a dangerous man.

Malcolm Muggeridge would like to remind us of the spiritual hunger that ought to exist when we are in close relationship with Jesus. *"...this bridge, this reconciliation between the black despair of lying bound and gagged in the tiny dungeon of ego, and soaring upwards into the white radiance of God's universal love -- this bridge was the incarnation, whose truth express that of the desperate need it meets. Because of our physical hunger we know there is bread; because of our spiritual hunger we know there is Christ."*

Theresa of Avila is reported to have asked God to make her pray four hours every day. "Ah," replied God, "as I do not make the birds eat, neither will I make you pray; the birds eat because they get hungry. When you are hungry for me you, too, will pray, Theresa."

Now, this art of evangelistic prayer breathing (silently praying while we verbally witness) is never a thing that should replace your personal quiet time alone with God. But, how many Christians get alone briefly and then ditch God all day after their quiet time, running out into their world, (having Jesus as Lord in theory only). Jesus said the "The foxes have holes to live in, and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place" (Matt. 8:20). What have we allowed to dis-place Him in our lives? Remembering Jesus is imperative, individually and corporately! Let's re-member the Head to His body. He who would talk to men about God, would do well to first talk to God about men. Only those in touch vertically can have power with those horizontally! Here is precisely the evangelistic prerequisite. Even the book of Acts didn't begin with acts, but with prayer in the upper room and take a minute to check out that conversion rate.

This calls for both kataphatic and apophatic approaches in prayer. First the cleansing, emptying processes, arriving at meditation by negation, deleting all thoughts and activities that distract us. And then a strong kataphatic approach, an affirmative mode, an agenda of reception and relationship. This is no use of some religious New Age mantra (righteous meditation is always Word focused). Confession is made unto God with true repentance and then His forgiveness is then received by trusting Him. Yes, Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven and born again. Breathe in God's strength, appropriating it by faith ...His amazing grace, His radical revival, His persistent passion! Breathe out his praise with inner gratitude, His thanks with biblical thoughtfulness, your appreciation with anticipation and joyfulness ...to the Father! Dr. Bill Bright calls this, "spiritual breathing." The Bible says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. 26:3). And my question remains, why can't evangelistic-praying weave in and out of your normal daily communion and relationship with Christ? But man, how we turn our thoughts away so quickly!

I discovered another helpful method that is time proven. I try meditatively, to repeat to God a prayer or truth that has great meaning to me. For example,

when situations grieve me, but I am powerless to change them, I find myself praying, "*Into Your hands I commit this thing..., I feel up tight about the upcoming speaking engagement -- Into Thy hands I commit this thing..., I don't want my ministry to end -- Into Your hands Lord I commit..., I don't want my old friend to die -- Into your hands..., I really want this person to love you and feel your love! How can I draw the net and win them? -- Into Your hands... I commit them to You, Jesus.*"

Let me tell you, offering this so called *breath-prayer* is changing my attitude and thinking. My self-talk-thoughts transformed into prayers are less willful and more open to God's will. To those of us who have worked long lists of prayer requests (like I still try to do on occasion), breath-prayers may seem infantile, or too subjective, or too esoteric and deep, but they don't have to be. Think about how natural Jesus Christ lived moment by moment in union with His Father. Why should we be any different? He is our ultimate Example! Our convenient technological scheduling devices have freed up more time for us to be productive, but it seems like we still live with zero margin built in, at a breakneck pace and on the edge of losing our victory. Meditation (Bible based), reflection, listening and simplicity, in constant prayer is what 21st century Christendom desperately needs! We can pray to Jesus or praise Him with loud shouts and song, like in celebration, or we can do these things in silence inside as we commune with Him and as we normally breathe.

Can I trust you with a secret? When I got married to my wife I thought she was a bit *off* spiritually, because she rarely enjoyed her quiet time with audible praying, that is until I saw the answers she would get. And as I began writing some to the Lord, I discovered that God would read my silent prayers in my journal before I could finish them. He would act on them before I even got a chance to read them to Him out loud. Maybe that's why they call personal devotions, "quiet time." This supernaturally natural relationship with my unseen friend greatly intrigues me! *The processes of inner prayer with the right address attached to them (to the Father in the Name of Jesus) do not have to grow more complex, but can be more simple as we whisper the words and formulate them spontaneously* (not in vain repetition like the repeating is going to add efficacy or power, but in simple faith and close intimacy of relationship). These so called breath-prayers are different from "vain" repetitions. Jesus described vain repetitions as lofty, impressive recitations made with those *other-than-God-in-mind* to notice (Mt. 6:7).

Breath-prayers can be quiet groanings of the heart that become more meaningful to God, the more honest we make them. Unlike mantras, which people willfully repeat to zero their thoughts on nothingness or on non-deities in meditation, breath-prayers take the complicated longings of the heart and in righteousness subject them to God's authority in the practical daily rhythms of life. Oh how we crave this simplicity in a culture gone mad, wowing people with a barrage of words—then adorning those words with upscale graphics, and then using them to manipulate and convince for cash. A breath-prayer, (for lack of a better name really) resembles the unembellished unencumbered approach that Jesus taught us. Man, just give a simple yes or no (my paraphrase of Matthew 5:33-37).

For too long, we've thought that short, simple prayers are not sophisticated enough. What a relief to grow into a relationship with God where we don't have to wait for the appropriate time and place to voice theologically sound, but irrelevant explanatory masterpieces. Try just breathing His Name as you ask Him to refill you. We can pray simple prayers all the day through and enjoy being with Him in peace.

We Westerners are said to be broad, maybe so with all the media information flying at us, but we are much too shallow, as well. And shallowness is never comfortable with a message of depth. The only depth we should seek is that like Jesus explored—the beautiful, majestic, engulfing fathomless personage and nature of Father God.

Continual praying is possible! But if prayer is seen as only talking to God, we will have one view of it. If it is seen as talking and listening to God, we will have a second view of it. And if it is seen as togetherness with God, we shall have yet another view. Prayer is far more than just talking and listening, but you will only go as far with it as your longing and expectation will allow. If you come close to Him, He will come closer to you.

As your desire is expressed to Him for certain lost people, simply believe that this longing will be fulfilled. Those who want to talk to God are talkers. Those who want to listen to God are listeners. But those who crave His unbroken fellowship, His magnificent presence, His warm-hearted tenderness and closeness, these are pray-ers. Calvin Miller wrote in "Table of Inwardness:"

"In this secluded place I meet a King. He comes alone to drink reality with me. Sometimes we talk, sometimes we sit and sip a life that passes by the crowd, as inwardness is born--it's a felt thing with spiritual vitality—a commonality--a union where unattended hopes are knit, where silence roars as quiet sings aloud. O Christ, I love it here! It is our place. Speak Lord or not. Touch me or not. Show then your will or bid me wait in patient grace. Fill all my hungry need with joy again. With simple loaves of bread and chalice wine, heaven, earth and all of God are mine."

We must win people with Jesus. He's the leader in this endeavor. "With Him," will come to mean that we spend time with those His heart is reaching out to. You see, we are to follow more than His teaching, more than His principles or example, we are to follow Him, where He's going and that my friend is after souls, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). Is He not "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8)? Is He not living in you now? Jesus says to us, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). We aren't really following if we aren't really fishing are we?

"Godly" inwardness can be without the negative and prevalent invertedness. We can be as evangelistically or internationally minded as we are Christ minded! Try for a week to carry around a three by five card with the statistics written down

for seven nations, along with their respective Operation World prayer tips for these nations. Then become a coffee-break-missionary. When my dear leader friends are overseas conducting their leadership training, I often feel led to pray for them throughout the day. I have a very busy schedule like anyone, but stuck in that traffic jam or in the office, I just call on the Lord. And often times in public, it must be in silence. *"Anoint, refresh, protect, guide ... Lord speak through them today. Send wave after wave of revival in and through them, Jesus. Make their every punch against evil count. Instill soul-winning and church planting in those hearing the Word of God today!"*

FOCUS YOUR FAITH

Psalms 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Have you ever wondered why the Lord would put a meditation statement right before a world evangelization statement? It's because He wants us to see the divine order. Ministry to Him comes first, then to the peoples of the world. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). We are called to fulfill our first ministry to Jesus and then we are to minister to our neighbors and to the nations. He wants us to prioritize, seek Him, think bigger and then spend ourselves on what He cherishes. People in darkness are his valuables! And to those who don't get the cart before the horse, so to speak, Jesus promises, "I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places" (Isaiah 45:3).

Many of our prayers lack focus. They are so random and trivial, wandering generalities. They fly at God without ever taking aim at the things that God's heart is taking aim at. We boldly pray for homes, boats, cars, vacations. We pray for power, faith, revelation and anointing and all as an end in themselves, but none of them are! Some love the feeling it gives, but it's not for our senses. Jesus died for lost people here and there, on their way to a real hell. Everything we have is to be utilized for rescuing. Prayer must not leave out those in need all around us! A friend of mine named, John Garlock once told me, *"Kurt you were saved for two reasons, a big one and a small one and you're the small one. Others are the big one."* I couldn't agree more!

Centering is a matter of focusing our faith. No new age lingo here, centering simply means to move from the periphery of a circle to its center. Each of us has had the experience of driving a car whose tires are out of balance. They are impossible to steer. The wheels wobble back and forth. The rubber makes bad thumping sounds. The problem is rectified though when we take the car in to a technician who balances wheels. How does he perform this trick?

He adds weights to various parts of the metal rim so that the tire's center is moving symmetrically and harmoniously with the center of the axle smoothly. Then the ride is much better and driving becomes enjoyable. Christians, who major on minors, pray out of balance. Their values are somewhere on the periphery of the Lord's expectancy. His Word tells us what balance is, but these people are

selfish and somewhat off the wall. Society sometimes calls these people mentally unbalanced, but this malady is only the result of spiritual imbalance. I think large parts of the Church are thinking and praying out of balance. If only the American Church could see the big picture, the global need. Did you know for instance, that 95% of Christians never share Jesus with others? They don't witness because they are afraid, they feel half-equipped, and because they simply don't care. Did you know 95% of all the ordained ministers of the Gospel in the world are in the United States ministering to about 6% of the world's population? If only Americans knew how blessed we were in relation to the rest of the world. We talk and talk about so many pitiably little problems, but we don't even notice the huge problems of our next door neighbors, let alone in far off lands. We don't care to become missions-literate or to ask the Lord what He would have us do. I have friends that choose to remain computer-phobic and in the long run that will have some repercussions, but if we as Christians remain evangelism-ignorant we alone will contend with much larger consequences. We serve the ultimate Missionary! All around the world, I've found that the only people who share their faith with others, are those who have fallen deeply in love with Jesus through spending time with Him in prayer!

WHISPER THE WORD IN PRAYER

What can have more power than praying God's own Word to Him in faith and holding Him to it? Nothing! This is what moves the hand of God. This is what honors the Spirit who inspired its writings. Once while pondering Jesus' prayer in John 17, I settled into verse 23, especially the last phrase, "You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved me." Since then I find myself saying *You have sent me, and have loved them as you have loved me.* There are mutual blessings in this for the one sent and the ones sent to and there is equal love there as well. *Talk about something reassuring and remunerative! You love me Lord and that's why I can love others.* Here are a few other prayers we can breathe.

Show me the heart of this person Jesus and help me understand its pain. This prayer can ignite in us a new compassion toward people others ignore, the down-and-outers, the disenfranchised, (Matthew 20:34, Mark 1:41). A couple nights ago I took my wife out on a date. We went to a movie called, "The Spitfire Grill" which was about a girl who just got out of prison and was trying to start a new life. She thought that by starting over in a small town in Maine she would have a better chance. But the town was suspicious of her from the start and in the end turned on her. She was killed by the sin of pre-judging, and so cruelly, just because they wouldn't wait on all the facts to come in. Another man stole money from the Grill, but she was blamed and suffered the consequences of his sin. I thought, Christians in close fellowship with the Holy Spirit will never fall prey to the critical attitudes of the world, nor hurt the innocent, because the God they listen to, sees the hearts of those around them.

As I look into the faces of my three wild and normal boys, my thoughts can become irritated at times. Why can't these guys quit roughhousing around? Discipline should only go so far, and God knows I take it to the limit. Instead of

overdoing it, I'm learning to turn such thoughts into prayers, asking God to show me what's going on in their lives, in their hearts and minds. And this prayer gets me in a listening mode faster than anything. It has a way of wringing all my self-importance out of me like my wet shammy gets after a car wash. It extracts the laziness or grouchiness out of my spirit and attitude. It helps me tune in to the needs of others and genuinely care. Ministering to my boys, preparing them for world changing is so important! *Thank you for my little arrows Lord.*

Make them sharp communicators and me too while You're at it. What You want, when You want, and as You want, Jesus. My answer is YES so what's the request? "Yes Lord!" That's the motto of my life. I'll go wherever, whenever and to whom ever with the Gospel!

Isn't that kind of like Thomas A. Kempis' prayer from his writings in *The Imitation of Christ*? Doesn't this kind of praying also resembles Jesus' plea in the garden: "Let this cup pass from me..." (Mt. 26:39)? I like the rap-like cadence and rhythm of those wants, especially when I have difficulty surrendering certain people and situations to God. This replaces my normal self-thought-talk, Man how can I change this person?

I, like anyone, am of course powerless to change anyone, but I've worn myself out trying before. I've tried to change them, when I should have been trying to win them. When I breathe these words of surrender, totally relinquishing control, I accept that the people and events I loathe can become part of God's purpose, (even when I don't agree with their ways). Hurt people, hurt people and healed people are supposed to heal people. God can show me their hurt and frightful end (their end if no one reaches out to them, that is). *Jesus, help me see how I can turn the key to their heart. Show me how I can click the switch on in their mind so your light will enter.*

Or here's one, *Show me how I can spur that Christian on toward love and good works today* (Heb. 10:24). This silent prayer came about one evening when my dear youth minister friend and his wife came over for dinner. I was kind of in a rowdy mood listening to DC Talk loud when they arrived and it took me fifteen minutes to slow into their gear and hear them. They shared some incredible trials they were experiencing with a fellow youth minister who had treated them harshly. They had almost abandoned the ministry and the Lord, because the pain and conflict were so intense.

This prayer helps me zoom-in, empathize, listen better and just be a better friend like I need to be. I offer this prayer when I meet ministers I really admire and am substantially wowed over. Rather than procure an attitude of bowing to the floor in, "I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy to be in your presence." I pray and somehow remember that this under-hero I esteem was just another sinner that got saved and he may also be a struggling saint needing real encouragement.

After breathing a prayer, I've actually surprised myself with certain spurring words to the "big boys" I've come in contact with, to the apparently fruitful with such hyper-influence. And how cool to observe the humility as some of them have actually applied what their little brother recommended. I didn't expect them too at all. Some years ago, I remember picking up John Jacobs from the Airport one day and out of the blue I said, "Man, you need to pack up your team, relocate to Dallas, and base from this city and from this local church." He told me he needed a church home, and then said, "I'm going to pray about doing just that." And not long after, the Power Team moved here that very year and did just that. Now I'm sure he heard that line from my pastor, as well, I don't know, but in any case the decision was made on that weekend visit. He has gone on to make other decisions since then, but how cool to see people find a home church to commit to.

I used to pray for my boss who was an author of books. He also had a mission-minded radio program, and as I would drive him all over north Texas, we would have some great talks together. There were some things I didn't agree with, but he would patiently endure much of my soul-winning exhortations and sometimes, to my utter amazement, I'd hear him repeat some of my specific suggestions on his radio program. *"Alleluia Lord," I would say!*

As we incorporate prayer into all the moments of our lives, our body truly becomes God's chapel all day long. It's like you're a walking Ark of the Covenant filled with His soul-winning fervor. What an awesome place to hang out, in the presence of the Lord!

I have an exciting dream of a new movement of evangelistic pray-ers who immerse all their activities—not just their worship time, but everything they're involved in—with prayer during every moment of the day. I dream of an in-touch missionary movement that thinks, breathes, talks and acts as it communes with the Lord; one that plans careful strategies as it simultaneously surrenders to the Spirit. I dream of a Church that bathes every issue in prayer and believes for miraculous signs and wonders, as well as for effective social reforms internationally; one that knows in its social know-er that nothing important will happen unless the Spirit blows through its plans. A unique movement with a burden (deep heart felt concern), with a strong sense of urgency, one that knows that God has no back-up plan to use angels if we humans fail to evangelize. Only a biblical combination of supernaturally natural ongoing prayer, refined strategic warfare, and proactive one-on-one rescue intervention will change this world! It worked with my friend, Robert in Dana Point. Not that evening, but one a few days later, when I dropped Him off at his home in his driveway. Robert bowed in prayer and repentance, right in my Volkswagen bug, and joined the Lord Jesus Christ. How about you, would you like to [join the Lord](#) in this movement?

¹ I might not agree with all that Ed Silvano or his close friends teach about spiritual warfare, but I do like this statement.