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## *Revolutionary Prayer: Five Requests In The Morning*

by Rev. Larry Malcolm

Jesus was a revolutionary! He commanded a dead man to come out of the grave. He told Peter to walk on the water. He instructed one young man to sell all he had and give it to the poor. Hopefully we have all had some of those revolutionary experiences. Our lives need to be knocked out of orbit from time to time. This usually happens in times of crisis. I had one of these crises in Zimbabwe, Africa during the revolutionary war in the 1970's that led to that troubled nation's independence.

My British friend, Philip Evans, his wife, daughter, and ten other Elim Pentecostal Assemblies missionaries had been brutally murdered in the revolution. We had sat in my living room the day before he died and talked of future ministry plans in that country. Now he was dead. What about my continued ministry there? What about my family?

There is an important Christian discipline that most of us struggle with. It is PRAYER. We are often told in sermons to pray more and have been convicted of our failure to do so. At times I have felt like the disciples in Luke 11:1: "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'"

In those trying days of war, I came across a short article by Rev. D. James Kennedy that helped me and gave birth to this message I

have shared many times. It deals with the "how to" question of prayer. One word of caution, it only works if prayed in the morning.

The FIVE REQUESTS in the morning are:

First, "LORD LET ME DIE." Don't be alarmed. I don't have a death wish. I'm excited about the future. These are the greatest days in history to be alive. God said, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Joel 2:28) in the last days. What then do I mean by wanting to die? We have two natures at war inside us: that old self with its sinful nature and the new life in the Spirit that Christ has given us. Like John the Baptist, "I must decrease and he must increase." That only happens when I die and get out of the way.

I like to blame others, circumstances, or the devil for my failures. The truth is, I'm my own biggest problem. AND, I'm in good company. The Apostle Paul had the same problem. To paraphrase Romans 7:14-20: Paul said,

"I get up in the morning and make two lists. The one is a list of all the good things I want to accomplish that day. The second is a list of all the bad things I don't want to do. Sadly, at the end of the day I have not done most of the things on the 'Do' list and have done most of the things on the 'Not to Do' list."

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Then Paul found the answer. If he died, Christ could live in him. He told this wonderful truth to the Christians of Galatia. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Christ will make us victorious if he lives in us. "I have overcome the world," Jesus said in John 16:33. John put it this way, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Christ frequently gave the command, "Follow me." Many have struggled to obey. However, Christ tells how we can successfully do this in Matthew 16:24 "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" If we first "deny", and then, "die", to "follow" Christ is not difficult. It is self that causes the problem. Our problem is we reverse the order and try to follow without dying. My first request in the morning is, "LORD LET ME DIE".

Second, "LORD CLEANSE ME WITH YOUR BLOOD." This may sound unnecessary the first thing in the morning. If I pray at night for forgiveness before going to sleep, why do I need cleansing in the morning? This request is not for my actions. It is for my mind and the influence of a sinful world.

In John 13 Jesus is celebrating the Passover with his disciples. It is in a borrowed room and none of the disciples wants to be the host and wash everyone else's feet. They had just been arguing over who would be at Jesus' right and left in the place of importance. To wash feet didn't fit the image. At the same time, it wouldn't be very appetizing to recline at the table with someone's

dirty feet next to your head for several hours. Jesus took off his robe, picked up the towel and the basin, and began to wash their feet.

Peter objects and tells the Lord that he will never wash his feet. Jesus' response is that if he doesn't wash Peter's feet, Peter will have no part in him. I love Peter's enthusiastic response, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus tells him that is not necessary for he is clean except for his feet that are dirty from walking in the streets. Only his feet are dirty and need washing.

I live in a sinful world that is bombarding my mind with its values and desires. I hear it on the radio and TV. I see it in the magazines and billboards. I am told it in conversations that surround me. I came to understand how powerful this subconscious influence was one day while

driving down the highway. I often whistle or sing as I go through the day. Feeling good, I began to sing a tune that popped into my head. "Brush your teeth with Colgate, Colgate dental cream. It cleans your breath, while it cleans your teeth." Without thinking I was singing the happy tune of

a toothpaste commercial. I had been listening to the car radio and had heard that commercial a number of times and it had stuck in my subconscious mind without me realizing it. And I don't use Colgate. I use Crest.

That is why Paul told the Romans, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) My second request is, "LORD CLEANSE ME WITH YOUR BLOOD."

The third is, "LORD FILL ME WITH YOUR SPIRIT." If I am to be like Christ, I must be filled with the Spirit. Paul writes to the

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Ephesians, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18) He used an illustration they all understood: the table beverage they drank with their meals every day. This was not some rare occurrence. They partook daily. In the same way they needed a daily filling of the Spirit. The Greek verb for "be" is in the present continuous tense and literally means "be being continuously filled" with the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit produces the "fruit of the Spirit". "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

I used to pray this scripture passage every day in the first church I pastored after graduating from Bible College. This little congregation in a small Midwestern town had its start when a woman named Ersie was thrown out of an evangelical church because of her vicious and divisive tongue. She then started a church in her home with her large family of children and grandchildren. It was her church and she let everyone know that. By the time I arrived, they had a little building of their own and 35 adherents.

I would invite people to church only to be told, "Not as long as Ersie was there." Everybody in town knew her. I got discouraged. Daily I prayed for God to give me love for this woman, joy in spite of the circumstances, patience in dealing with her, kindness, etc. I struggled unsuccessfully to have God answer this prayer. One day God spoke to my heart and said I was praying incorrectly. I needed to pray to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit would produce the fruit. I changed my prayer and my life changed.

My third request is "LORD FILL ME WITH YOUR SPIRIT."

Fourth, "LORD LEAD ME BY YOUR SPIRIT." I need help! My knowledge is not complete. I can't see the future. My agenda is not always God's. I want God's plan for my life. For this to happen I need his guidance. "Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

Suppose a policeman set out in his patrol car one day and turned off the radio because he didn't want to be bothered. All day long he enjoyed the beautiful day. He heard the birds singing. He watched the children play in the park. He never saw an accident. But the dispatcher had tried to reach him about one on the highway that

morning. They had tried to call him to stop a robbery, but the radio was turned off. There was a riot downtown. The station couldn't reach him.

At the end of his shift, the policeman went back to the station. He walked in and said, "What a wonderful day. No accidents, robberies, or fights." The desk sergeant would have probably called

him a fool for not coming back in to have his radio fixed. They had tried to reach him all day. Can you imagine the response when he told the sergeant that it wasn't broken. He just hadn't turned it on. I doubt if he would have heard, "Well done good and faithful policeman." The same is true of my life each day. My fourth request is, "LORD LEAD ME BY YOUR SPIRIT."

The fifth request is, "LORD USE ME TODAY." I have always dreamed of owning a 1955 Ford Thunderbird. Just suppose I went to a junk yard and found one. Then I took it to a good auto

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body shop and asked them to restore it to original condition. Next I took it to an expert mechanic to completely rebuild the engine, transmission, and drive train. Finally I took it to a station for new tires and filled it with premium gas. Then at the station I call a friend to come tow my Thunderbird, in mint condition and full of gas, to my home.

At my house a carpenter has taken out the wall in the living room, and we push the car into the house and rebuild the wall. I invite all my friends over to see my new car. When everyone arrives I tell them to be quiet and I will run the motor for thirty seconds. They can hear it purr like a kitten. But only for thirty seconds. I don't want to use up the gas. My friends would think something is wrong with me. Why would I fix up and tune up and fill up a car just to admire it in my living room?

Why should God answer my prayer to fix up and tune up and fill up my life if all I want to do is have people come and say how nice I look? I must be willing to be used by God if I expect him to do these things in my life each day. My final request is, "LORD USE ME TODAY."

Put God to the test. See if he won't start a revolution in your life. Don't pray these requests just once and expect great changes. You need to pray them every day for it to work. As I have prayed this prayer, I find God is always showing me new ways I need to die. The cleansing must be daily. I need to drink of the Spirit constantly. God wants to use me each day. My heart's cry is, "Lord, change me!"

*(All scripture quoted is from the NIV)*

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## Outline:

Text: Luke 11:1

Introduction: Dealing with the "how to" questions of prayer.  
There are five prayer requests which will revolutionize your life.

- I. Lord Let Me Die!
  - A. We must die to the old nature and live to the new life in the Spirit (Romans 7:14-20)
  - B. Christ will make us victorious if he lives in us (1 John 4:4)
- II. Lord Cleanse Me With Your Blood
  - A. Our mind is under constant attack (John 13)
  - B. The subconscious influence of a sinful world (Romans 12:2)
- III. Lord Fill Me With Your Spirit
  - A. We must be continuously filled (Ephesians 5:18)
  - B. Being filled with the Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- IV. Lord Lead Me By Your Spirit
  - A. Our knowledge is limited (Romans 8:14)
  - B. To walk so God is pleased
- V. Lord Use Me Today
  - A. God wants to use us
  - B. We must be willing and available

Conclusion: Put God to the test. He will start a revolution in your life.

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The Barnabas Files newsletter is published monthly by Northwest College. It is our intention that this publication, written by our faculty, will be an inspiration and will encourage the reader.

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