

Essay summary of
Dick Eastman's
THE HOUR THAT CHANGES THE WORLD
by
Doug Woolley
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Prayer accomplishes two vital things: It changes you and it changes the world around you. Matthew 26:40 is used as support by many to suggest that we should pray for 1 hour. Prayer is divine communication with our Heavenly father. Because this is an open universe, some things will only get done as we combine prayer with action. When we pray we are confirming our dependence upon the Lord. If we go throughout the day without praying, we are saying to God that we can handle life on our own. We need to learn how to pray since prayer does not come naturally to us. According to Dick Eastman:

To be effective our sixty minutes with God should be carefully arranged. Systematic prayer adds health to the devotional habit. Most tasks in life are accomplished systematically. In fact, without a systematic approach to life, many goals would remain unreached.

Be careful not to become a slave to any "prayer system." Indeed, prayer is not a system at all but the development of a relationship between man and God. The highest goal of the devotional habit is to strengthen this relationship... There is nothing wrong with developing a consistent, systematic habit of prayer, as long as we carefully "watch" that our praying remains truly spiritual.

Dick Eastman gives a prayer system that divides the 1 hour prayer into 12 five 5 minute time slots to pray about different topics. These topics include: praise, waiting, confession, scripture praying, watching, intercession, petition, thanksgiving, singing, meditation, listening, and praise again.

At the beginning of our prayer, we should **PRAISE** God and hallow His name as it is mentioned in the Lord's Prayer. "Praise is vocal adoration of God. Adoration is the act of rendering divine honor, esteem, and love." When we approach God in prayer, we must look to Him first rather than ourselves. This is the main reason for praising Him first, before confessing our sin. Praise is unselfish, and God inhabits the praise of His people, while that same praise also sends Satan traveling away. We can praise God for His name(s) (like Jesus Christ), for His righteousness, for his infinite creation, or for His Word.

Next is the process of **WAITING**, which is the silent surrendering of the soul to God. It is a time of silent love, whereas praise is loud and bold. Waiting is soft and says to God, "I love you." Intimate relationships best develop when alone, when you just enjoy His presence as a lover. An intimate relationship needs patient time and concentration. We should think lovely thoughts of each member of the trinity as we are waiting.

After we have looked first to God, we can then engage in **CONFESSION** of our sins. To confess is to "agree with God" concerning our guilt. God does not need to know that we have sinned (since He knows everything), but He needs us to know that we have sinned and that we are unworthy of His grace. When we confess our sins, we need to be willing to change our ways, which is difficult. We need to cry out before the Lord as David did in Ps. 139:23-24 when he said, "Search

me O'God, and see if there be any wicked way in me." The Holy Spirit works best through a clean vessel, so for that reason, we need to be cleansed with the forgiving blood of Jesus. We need to cry out as David did saying in Ps. 51:10-11, "Create in me a clean heart, O' God [a right relationship with God], and renew a right spirit within me [a right spirit toward others], Cast me not away from Your presence [a holy dependence on God's presence], and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me [a dependence upon the Holy Spirit to work through me]." Confession of sins cleanses our temples and keeps it clean.

Next, we should incorporate **SCRIPTURE PRAYING**. When we pray according to the scriptures, the will of God, we know that He will hear us. When we know that He hears us, we have the assurance that our requests will be answered, according to 1 John 5:14-15. God's Word brings power and life to our prayers. We should never enter into prayer without a Bible at hand. It is suggested that we read and pray about one chapter during our prayer time. We can use this time to search the scriptures for power to be used for later petitions. As we approach a verse that gives us revelation, we should meditate upon that verse for further revelation. These thoughts from passages can be used in petitions or for other types of prayer.

We next spend a time of **WATCHING**. We need to be on the alert of current issues going on in our world. To effectively "watch" we need to prepare ahead of time by researching some needs in the world. Denominational and missionary magazines are good sources to look through when searching for current prayer needs. Also, we must "watch" to see that our prayer is remaining "spiritual" and that our minds are not wandering off of our purpose during this prayer. We must watch that the Holy Spirit is enlightening us during our praying so that we can be effectual and fervent and thus accomplish much.

INTERCESSION for the lost comes next. Intercession is prayer for people other than yourself. It focuses on the needs of others rather than yourself. Our prayers do not directly save people, but it opens the hearts of people to be able to receive the Gospel and Christ's love. If our prayers are not "vain" then our intercession can be repetitive of other prayers that we have offered. We should list the names of those for whom we are praying for, and as we speak their names' the Holy Spirit may put a desire within us to pray for a specific need for them. In our prayers we should ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into the harvest. We should claim open doors and divine appointments, and then that the picked fruit will remain. When praying for the lost, we should have the Lord raise in their hearts certain questions that will cause them to do some deep thinking. These questions could include: **WHOM** can I trust? **WHAT** is my purpose? **WHEN** will I really be free? **WHY** do people hate religion? **HOW** can I cope? **WHERE** will I go when I die? After looking to others needs then we can look to our own.

PETITION is the act of praying for specific personal needs. First we need to define our need, our daily bread. We need to express our total dependence upon God to supply us with our needs. We should present our case to the Lord as if we were presenting it to an attorney. If our prayers are from a pure heart with the right motives and are in the will of God, then our prayers will be heard and answered. Petitions should be specific, completely analyzed from every angle and perspective, sincere, and simply stated. We should ask the Holy Spirit for those needs that we have that would bring special honor to the Lord as a result of the need being fulfilled.

Next, we offer up a sacrifice of **THANKSGIVING** to the Lord. Praise focuses on who God is, whereas thanksgiving focuses on what God has done for us. At this point in the prayer, it is allowable for the mind to wander through the previous days' activities searching for things to be thankful for. We can confess spiritual blessings, material blessings, physical blessings, and external blessings rendered on other things that indirectly bless us. Our thanksgivings should be specific.

We can thank God for past blessings as well as new blessings. We can thank God for the things that we can expect of Him in the future. In addition to confessing thanksgivings, we can sing them.

We are exhorted in Ps. 100:2 to "serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with joyful **SINGING**." Singing is making melody in our hearts' with spoken words of praise, English or tongues. Our singing not only glorifies God, but it also is a weapon of warfare that has power over the enemy. Some different ways of singing unto the Lord include: singing praises unto the Lord, singing of God's power and mercy, singing a song of thanksgiving, singing the name of God, singing God's Word. We can also sing a "new" song, an original song from our heart which we have never sung before. After singing we should calm down our spirits for the next session.

Next, we take time to **MEDITATE** upon a "spiritual theme in reference to God." To meditate is to ponder and to give attention to a certain scripture or thought. Some of the themes in which we can focus upon include: meditation on God Himself, meditation on God's Word, meditation on the works of God, meditation on past victories, and meditation on positive thoughts. Phil 4:8 encourages us: "finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute; if there is any excellence or anything worthy of praise, let your minds dwell on these things." It is good and acceptable to allow our minds to wander within the frame of our theme and ponder all aspects of our theme, which may lead us into some deeper study of the subject. While our spirits are quiet, and after we have thought silent words, we can then listen to hear silent words from our Lord.

LISTENING is the act of mental absorption of "divine instruction from God concerning matters for that day" or for other things including answers to specific questions. Our prayers need to become two-sided so that it becomes a conversation instead of a speech. We need to have the faith and confidence that God will truly speak to us, and we should appropriate this faith by bringing pencil and paper to write down the spoken words that we receive. To best listen, we need to be quiet and in a quiet surrounding. When we are busy and loud, we cannot hear the still soft voice which desires to speak to us and guide us throughout the day. "Our goal in prayer is to discover what God wants us to do so that He will be glorified." Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho's secret to success is that he prays and he obeys. After we have received divine instruction, we should then close our prayer with praise.

We should begin our prayers with praise and end our prayers with **PRAISE**, looking to God as being number one in our lives'. At the end of our praise, we should be changed from the inside out. At the end of a prayer, it is popular to end with a strong "Amen", which means "so be it" or "it is done." A strong "Amen" implies that we know that God has heard our praying and our petitions. We leave the Lord not asking, but giving to Him. We are to give Him honor and glory and praise for His omnipotence, omniscience, and His omnipresence. We should allow our spirits to rejoice and repeat the words "Hallelujah!"

In conclusion, our prayers have not only changed us, but they have also changed the world in which we live. We must set it in our wills to spend sixty minutes per day with the Lord at a certain time and keep that appointment. It is very advisable to set the prayer time in the early morning before going off for the routine day. People usually have problems with their commitment to prayer because they do not set up a specific time each day to pray, and thus the day goes by without having prayed. It is good to "declare your commitment verbally each day." We must "fight all interruptions fiercely, since they are usually Satan's schemes to block our powerful weapon- prayer. If we are married, then our spouses' can help block some of the distractions while we continue praying. We need to develop goals for our prayer which will motivate us to progress. "Finally, recognize the overwhelming importance of your daily hour with God. Until we recognize the full worth of our

prayers, we will never develop a consistent habit of prayer... Indeed, only as we become convinced that 'believing' prayer truly changes things will we give ourselves to the daily exercise of prayer." As we spend ONE HOUR in prayer, we are allowing God to work through us and to CHANGE THE WORLD.