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THE IMPACT OF PRAYER ON THE  
MINISTRIES OF D. L. MOODY, C. H. SPURGEON, AND BILLY GRAHAM:  
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of  
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary  
Lynchburg, Virginia

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by

Rodney Baker  
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Rodney Baker

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To Our 24-Hour Intercessor--Jesus

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## ABSTRACT

This study describes the significance of prayer in the nineteenth century ministries of evangelist-revivalist D. L. Moody, pastor-evangelist C. H. Spurgeon, and the twentieth-century ministry of evangelist Billy Graham. Furthermore, a description of the three most successful evangelical ministries of the last two centuries will demonstrate the vital role of prayer in their effective Christian ministries.

After extensively researching the lives of D. L. Moody, C. H. Spurgeon, and Billy Graham, it is clear that prayer played a major role in their lives and, according to personal statements, was a key to their success. While various facets of their ministry have been examined, this proposed work will be narrow as it solely examines the spiritual discipline of prayer in the lives of Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham.

This thesis has been written by using primary sources, which included Moody's, Spurgeon's, and Graham's own words and recordings of their lives. The paper also used biographers and other secondary source's evaluations of these men's ministries, especially in regard to their prayer lives.



## INTRODUCTION

There are servants of Christ who seem to possess greater power and effectiveness than their contemporaries. In fact, the ministries of these giants of the faith surpass what most have experienced, resulting in the positing of various explanations of success.

Three such men credited with spearheading the growth of evangelical Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are C. H. Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, and Billy Graham. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born of the flesh on June 19, 1834, in Kelvedon, England. He was born of the Spirit on January 6, 1850, in Colchester. Dwight Lyman Moody was born of the flesh on February 5, 1837, in Northfield, Massachusetts. He was born of the Spirit on April 21, 1855, in Boston. Billy Graham was born of the flesh on November 7, 1918 just outside of Charlotte, North Carolina. He was born of the Spirit in 1934 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Many reasons have been offered for the success of these men's ministries. Some people have concluded that Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham experienced success because of their preaching, some say it was their spirituality, some say their earnestness, and others say it was their prayer life. No doubt, their success was due to a combination of all the above. However, Spurgeon affirmed that one of the primary reasons souls were won at the Tabernacle was because of the spirit of prayer.<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon clearly understood

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<sup>1</sup>William B. Riley, *The Perennial Revival: A Plea for Evangelism* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1916), 51.

that proclamation power came from God as he asserted, "Oh! To think this: that you a puny man may stand here and speak to God and through God may move all the worlds."<sup>2</sup> "I would rather have a Master of Prayer than a M.A. from both universities [Oxford and Cambridge]. He who knows how to pray has his hand on the leverage which moves the universe."<sup>3</sup>

A contemporary of the English C. H. Spurgeon was the powerfully anointed American, evangelist-revivalist D. L. Moody. Mr. Moody was a man of prayer. Here, we also touch the inner source of his matchless power.<sup>4</sup>

Moving from the nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century, students in the history of revivals began predicting that mass evangelistic meetings like those held by D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and others had possibly come to an end.<sup>5</sup> Then God raised Christianity's greatest evangelist in history, Billy Graham. Like Spurgeon and Moody, Graham believes "more can be done by prayer than anything else. Prayer is our greatest weapon."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "True Prayer--True Power," *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 6 (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), 336.

<sup>3</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The Best Strengthening Medicine," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 37 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1971): 328.

<sup>4</sup>A. T. Rowe, *D. L. Moody: The Soul-Winner* (Anderson, Ind.: Gospel Trumpet Co., 1927), 82.

<sup>5</sup>David Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (Waco: Word Books, 1971), 23.

<sup>6</sup>Cort R. Flint and the Staff of Quote, comp. and ed., *The Quotable Billy Graham* (Anderson, S.C.: Doke House, 1966), 153.

The following research will be a significant contribution to the field of Church Growth/Evangelism. After a thesis/dissertation search, the writer discovered that no similar study has been undertaken. Therefore, this will be original research.

This study describes the significance of prayer in the nineteenth century ministries of evangelist-revivalist D. L. Moody, pastor-evangelist C. H. Spurgeon, and the twentieth-century ministry of evangelist Billy Graham. A description of the two most successful evangelical ministries of the nineteenth century and the most successful twentieth century ministry of Billy Graham will demonstrate the vital role of prayer in their effective Christian ministries.

After extensively researching the lives of C. H. Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, and Billy Graham, it is clear that prayer played a major role in their lives and, according to personal statements, was a key to their success. While various facets of their ministry have been examined, this proposed work will be narrow as it solely examines the spiritual discipline of prayer in the lives of Spurgeon, Moody, and Graham.

This thesis has been written by using primary sources, which included Moody's, Spurgeon's, and Graham's own words and recordings of their lives. The paper also used biographers and other secondary source's evaluations of these men's ministries, especially in regard to their prayer lives.

## CHAPTER ONE

### PRAYER IN THE EARLY LIFE, CONVERSION, AND CALL OF D. L. MOODY

#### **The Influence of Prayer in Moody's Early Life**

An examination into the life of D. L. Moody displays how God can take what seems unpromising and make it a success. Edwin Moody married Betsy Holton. Their sixth child of nine children, Dwight Lyman Moody, was born on February 5, 1837, at Northfield, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> The family lived on a small farm supported by Edwin, who was a stonemason with a reputation for being carefree, dashing, and given to alcohol. He died suddenly when Dwight was only four years old. The memory of Edwin's posture at the time of his death apparently remained etched in the mind of the Moody family, as recorded by W. H. Daniels, a personal friend and neighbor of D. L. Moody for years. Daniels explained that while working in his customary job of stonemasonry, Edwin felt a sharp pain in his side and returned home to rest. The pain intensified around one o'clock in the afternoon. "Edwin staggered to the bed, fell upon his knees beside it, and in the posture of prayer, death seized upon him before anyone knew he was seriously ill."<sup>2</sup> Whether Edwin was praying for himself and his family or bent over due to agonizing

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 19.

<sup>2</sup>William Haven Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1875), 4. According to the preface, this work is almost entirely from original materials, obtained by the author in person. Edwin's position at the time of his death left an indelible impression on the minds of the Moody family.

pain at the time of his death, God mightily intervened in the lives of the large, poverty-stricken Moody family.<sup>3</sup> One month after her husband's death, Betsy gave birth to healthy twins and was advised by worldly-wise neighbors to give away or bind her seven oldest children. Rev. Oliver Everett, a minister of the local Unitarian parish, became intimately involved with the Moody family and counseled Betsy to keep her children together "to trust in God, and to bring them up for Him: promising to help her in their education, and, if need be, in their support."<sup>4</sup> Keeping his vow, Everett often visited to share encouraging words, settle quarrels, assist with debts, and encourage Betsy to continue to rely upon God in the raising of her children.

During his visits to the Moody home, pastor Everett shared Jesus with the family. They enrolled the older children in Sunday School with the entire family being baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>5</sup> Although this is the only recorded water baptism D. L. Moody received, he insisted his genuine salvation experience occurred when he was nineteen years old in 1856. Nevertheless, pastor Everett's kindness, generosity, and spiritual guidance certainly impacted Moody's life. Throughout his preaching career, Moody credited many of his successes to his mother's prayers and dependence on God. Rev. Oliver Everett was instrumental in Betsy's

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<sup>3</sup>John C. Pollock, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1963), 4. Edwin's creditor, Richard Colton, collected almost everything from the family at the time of Edwin's death. The dower law of Massachusetts prevented the home from being confiscated.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 4-5. Though Everett was a Unitarian, he baptized Moody in the name of the Trinity that his denomination denied. According to Moody, 21, Everett believed in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

<sup>5</sup>Moody, 21.

support as he led her to Christ. Going to church was not a debatable question in the Moody home, and Everett commissioned D. L. Moody and his siblings to recruit members for Sunday School.<sup>6</sup> Moody was aggressive as he canvassed the neighborhoods of East Northfield each Sunday. Individuals visited by the Moody children regularly visited Everett's church. Playing a significant role in the spiritual training of the Moody family, the Reverend Mr. Everett involved young D. L. Moody in Sunday School mission work earlier than is commonly understood.

Biographer Stanley Gundry believed that D. L. Moody was taught nothing of consequence regarding the faith by his mother.<sup>7</sup> This position seems unsubstantiated and a misunderstanding of Betsy's influence in Dwight's life. Dwight's mother, Betsy, became a very religious woman whose motto was "Trust in God." Early in life, the children were taught to pray to Him who protects the fatherless and the widows.<sup>8</sup> On Sunday evenings, Mrs. Moody read to her children from a large family Bible containing written family records and a catechism.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the week, she read from a devotional book after beginning each day with prayer.<sup>10</sup> The children often repeated the reading of a Scripture or a verse of a hymn. Betsy Moody was faithfully consistent in her

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Stanley N. Gundry, *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), 18.

<sup>8</sup>Moody, 21.

<sup>9</sup>Paul Dwight Moody and Arthur Percy Fitt, *The Shorter Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: BICA, 1900), 11.

<sup>10</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 26.

child rearing as she was “willful, determined, and a person of character.”<sup>11</sup> Looking back at his childhood, Moody was grateful for his mother’s reading of the Bible, prayers, and insistence on his church attendance which became a habit. Moody often said, “Mother, I thank you for making me go to the house of God when I didn’t want to go.”<sup>12</sup> Moody never spoke of his early life without tender references to his godly mother, who to the end made home the most loved place on the earth.<sup>13</sup> When the task of raising her children became too heavy, Betsy would cast her burden upon the Lord. Moody remembers his mother retreating to her room to pray for wisdom and patience; and, upon returning, the children were behaving.<sup>14</sup>

At his mother’s funeral, Moody shared a few words in her honor. He described his mother’s wonderful tact and the love that knitted the family together. She was determined to raise the family. With the help of almighty God, she accomplished this mountainous task. Betsy’s broken heart over the death of her husband drove her to pray for the comforting presence of God. Moody often woke up and heard his mother praying and weeping to God.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 35.

<sup>12</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 26.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Daniels, 7.

<sup>15</sup>Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1936), 12.

Prior to his death, Edwin gave Betsy a newly printed Bible. Elizabeth, Moody's sister, shared how one night her mother wept and prayed over the Bible. She opened the Word and marked with pencil around the passage Jer. 49:11, which reads, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me."<sup>16</sup> Betsy cried out to God acknowledging her children as a gift from Him and that He would be a Father to them if she fulfilled her motherly role. Betsy's exemplary prayer life impacted Moody's reliance upon God especially during his adult life and ministry.

During his childhood years, Dwight was healthy, boisterous, self-willed, and a born leader among his peers.<sup>17</sup> Thinking of himself as an adult, Moody was very self-reliant.<sup>18</sup> He was not naturally a religious child, and prayer was his last resort.<sup>19</sup> However, while alone, Moody was once forced to call upon God for help when an old fence fell on him. He explained the incident as follows. "I tried and tried but could not lift the heavy rails. I hollered for help; but nobody came. Then I thought I should have to die away up there on the mountain all alone. But I happened to think that maybe God would help me, and so I asked Him; and after that I could lift the rails."<sup>20</sup> Following his mother's example of praying during a crisis, Moody lifted up his first recorded prayer.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>17</sup>D. L. Moody, *The Great Redemption; Gospel Light, Under the Labors of Moody and Sankey* (New York: J. Fairbanks and Company, 1888), 15.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Abbie Clemens Morrow, *Best Thoughts and Discourses of D. L. Moody* (New York: Scribner and Sons Publishers, 1876), 1.

<sup>20</sup>Elias Nason, *The Lives of the Eminent American Evangelists Dwight Lyman Moody and Ira David Sankey* (Boston: B. B. Russell, 1877), 31.



Moody's childhood was full of many difficult disadvantages. He was not a good student and was guilty of being mischievous. Moody's education included several years in grammar school and a little time in the Northfield Academy for boys.<sup>21</sup> His instruction did not pass the elementary subjects of "a little reading, a little writing, and a little arithmetic. . . . He was taken out of school and sent to work the first summer he was able to earn anything."<sup>22</sup> At this time, he was less than ten years of age. Due to his family situation, Moody did not gain an adequate education. Findlay suggests that if one studies the spelling and grammatical construction of Moody's writing and speaking, it is optimistic to think that he received the equivalency of a fifth grade education.<sup>23</sup> An overzealous critic, who was not an active worker, once told Moody he should not speak in public because of his faulty grammar. Moody responded, "I lack a great many things; but I'm doing the best I can with what I've got. But look here, friend, you've got grammar enough; what are you doing with it for Jesus?"<sup>24</sup>

On another occasion, Mr. Moody was ridiculed by a speaker who followed him at a convention. The speaker insisted that Moody's speech was composed of mere newspaper clippings. When he finished berating Moody before the audience, Moody stepped up again and acknowledged his deficiencies in preparing a fine message.

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<sup>21</sup>Findlay, 41. Henry Cutler, a friend of Moody in his later years, once estimated that Moody's overall education was equivalent to a fifth grade level.

<sup>22</sup>John Herridge Batt, *Dwight L. Moody: The Life-Work of a Modern Evangelist* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1902), 21.

<sup>23</sup>Findlay, 41.

<sup>24</sup>Moody and Fitt, 38.

Thanking the minister for pointing out his weaknesses, Moody asked him to lead in a prayer that God would help him to do better.<sup>25</sup> Throughout his ministry and his life, Moody was ever mindful of his poor education.

As an adolescent, Moody's mother saw him as a born leader among his peers, who thought like a man.<sup>26</sup> While cutting logs one day on the mountainside with his brother, Edwin, Moody abruptly shouted, "I'm tired of this! I'm not going to stay around here any longer. I'm going to the city."<sup>27</sup> Thus, at the young age of seventeen in 1854, Moody moved to Boston and visited his uncle, Samuel Holton, who was a successful shoe salesman. At first, he refused to give Moody a job. However, the religious uncle later employed Moody with the condition that he would attend Sunday School and worship at Mount Vernon Congregational Church.<sup>28</sup>

### **Prayer and the Conversion of D. L. Moody**

At the Mount Vernon Sunday School, Moody met the teacher, Edward Kimball, who the Holy Spirit would use to lead Moody to a personal faith in Jesus. Kimball said of Moody, "I have seen few persons whose minds were spiritually darker than was his when he came into my Sunday School class."<sup>29</sup> Mr. Kimball possessed an evangelistic

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>26</sup>Moody, *The Great Redemption; Gospel Light, Under the Labors of Moody and Sankey*, 15.

<sup>27</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 35.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>29</sup>Paul Gericke, *Crucial Experiences in the Life of D. L. Moody* (New Orleans: Insight Press, Inc., 1978), 23.

heart of love for his class. At first, Moody felt lost in Kimball's class as he found it difficult to locate Bible passages. He ignored the drawing of the Holy Spirit to accept Christ by saying, "I thought I would wait till I died and then become a Christian. I thought if I had the consumption or some lingering disease, I would have plenty of time to become one, and in the meantime enjoy the pleasures of the world."<sup>30</sup>

Important events of Moody's two years in Boston were his joining the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), his conversion experience, and his uniting with the church. Moody's first voluntary act pertaining to Christianity was becoming a member of the Boston YMCA in the spring of 1854. Young evangelical businessmen organized the Association in 1844 led by George Williams (1821-1905).<sup>31</sup> Moody considered the YMCA as "a place providing useful services for young men like himself and as a vehicle for broadening his social horizons a bit."<sup>32</sup> Attending the YMCA for the benefits of a reading room with regional newspapers, library books, and offerings of literary classes, Moody could not have imagined the important role this institution would play in his future evangelistic ministry.

Keeping the promise to his uncle to attend church while in Boston, Moody was faithful to his Sunday School class taught by Edward Kimball. In his first class, he could not find the Gospel of John and was bored to the point of sleeping during worship

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<sup>30</sup>D. L. Moody, no original source indicated; quoted in Paul Gericke, *Crucial Experiences in the Life of D. L. Moody* (New Orleans: Insight Press, Inc., 1978), 11.

<sup>31</sup>Although founded in London in 1844, the YMCA was not formally organized in the United States until 1854 in Boston.

<sup>32</sup>Findlay, 46.

service. While listening to the Reverend Mr. Kirk, pastor of Mount Vernon Congregational Church, and Edward Kimball, the Spirit of the Lord began to draw Moody. The loving sermons of his pastor, coupled with the caring instructions of his Sunday School teacher, caused Moody to remember the truths taught to him by his mother, and “he began again to pray the Lord to help him to be good.”<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Kimball did not give up on reaching Moody. In fact, on April 21, 1855, Kimball was burdened for Moody’s salvation; and after praying for wisdom, he visited the shoe store to confront Moody about trusting in Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Kimball described the divinely orchestrated soul-winning opportunity in this manner:

I found Moody in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once and putting my hand on his shoulder, I made what I afterwards felt was a weak plan for Christ. . . . It seemed the young man was just ready for the light to shine upon him, and there, in the back of that store in Boston, he gave himself and his life to Christ.<sup>35</sup>

The morning after making the most important decision of his life and praying the most important prayer of his life, Moody declared:

I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I had first trusted in Christ. I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it had before--I thought that it was just smiling upon me. . . . It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man, and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he has never been regenerated. If you hear a person get up in the prayer-meeting and he begins to find fault

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<sup>33</sup>Daniels, 22.

<sup>34</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 41.

<sup>35</sup>Edward Kimball, quoted in William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 41.

with everybody, you may doubt whether his is a genuine conversion; it may be counterfeit. It has not the right thing, because the impulse of a converted soul is to love.<sup>36</sup>

Moody's conversion immediately brought about great change in perspective and living. The work of saving grace continued in him, and his piety deepened. The work of sanctification had begun in him, even though Moody had little knowledge of orthodox theology.

In May 1855, Moody presented himself to Mount Vernon Congregational Church for membership. The minutes of Mount Vernon Congregational Church lists Moody's salvation date and his feelings on being a Christian. He expressed a distaste for sin, a desire for holiness, a dependency upon Christ, a love for the Bible, a fervent prayer life, a desire to be used, and was proud to be known as a Christian.<sup>37</sup> After being questioned for membership, which was a normal procedure during that day, it was felt that Moody did not possess enough doctrinal knowledge to be accepted into the membership.

Ten months later, during his second examination on March 12, 1856, Moody proved he had gleaned a greater degree of theological knowledge. Moody explained that he had maintained his habits of Bible reading and prayer and believed God heard his prayers.<sup>38</sup> He also stated he would never give up his hope or love for Christ whether or

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<sup>36</sup>D. L. Moody, *Secret Power: A Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1881), 19. A description of Moody's conversion by Moody forty years after his conversion.

<sup>37</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 43-4.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

not he was accepted as a member of the church.<sup>39</sup> He was received as a member and continued to grow spiritually in his devotion and service for Christ. The only drawback was that Mount Vernon Congregational Church was a passive rather than an active church. Thus, Moody's zeal was not encouraged but often extinguished by the Reverend Mr. Kirk, especially when Moody insisted on speaking and praying at every meeting.<sup>40</sup> Moody felt like a caged bird at this church and began to dream about the West.

In September of 1856, Moody departed from Boston to live in Chicago. Maintaining a desire to succeed in the business world of sales, Moody became a clerk for E. E. Wisnall who was an owner of a retail shoe company.<sup>41</sup> Moody excelled in selling shoes and set out to make one hundred thousand dollars in order to buy a shoe store. However, an internal struggle arose, which posed the question, should he give up business and give himself wholly to Christian work? Later, Moody was led by the Holy Spirit in June 1860 to leave the business world and employ his gifts for God in the salvation of souls, which was far more rewarding and challenging.<sup>42</sup> Henry Drummond, a friend of Moody's, insisted that Moody would have become one of the wealthiest men in the United States if he had remained in the business world.<sup>43</sup> Instead, Moody became one of the most spiritually rich men ever to live as he sold out his life for Jesus.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Daniels, 26.

<sup>41</sup>Findlay, 58.

<sup>42</sup>Gericke, 20.

<sup>43</sup>Henry Drummond, *Dwight L. Moody* (New York: McClure, Phillips, and Company, 1900), 57.

Within a few months after arriving in Chicago, Moody wrote home describing the great revival. He penned the following note to his mother on January 6, 1857. "There is a great revival of religion in this city. I go to meeting every night. Oh, how I do enjoy it! It seems as if God were here Himself. Oh, Mother, pray for us. Pray that this work may go on until every knee is bowed. I wish there could be a revival in Northfield."<sup>44</sup>

On May 3, 1857, Moody transferred his membership to the Plymouth Congregational Church of Chicago. He became involved with passing out religious literature, inviting people to the church, and helping poor families. He could not keep silent about his Lord. In prayer, Moody often expressed opinions about the Plymouth church members which were not flattering; and, he was asked to fill his four pews, but leave the speaking and preaching to those who were well-equipped.<sup>45</sup> Moody dedicated himself to reach young ruffians for Sunday School. He kept his four pews full and soon desired to start his own Sabbath school.

Next, Moody rented an old saloon for Sunday School and for meetings in the evening. Children were brought in from the roughest section of Chicago (known as Five Points) where people were rude and their children were rugged and uncontrollable. Moody persuaded the children's attendance by distributing toys, sugar plums, pennies, and other allurements.<sup>46</sup> A Mr. Reynolds one night walked in on Moody while he was

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<sup>44</sup>Findlay, 63. This information is taken from the collection of Mrs. Emma M. Powell, a granddaughter of Moody who lives in Northfield. Portions of this collection are found at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and other parts remain at the Northfield School for Girls. Also, Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 48.

<sup>45</sup>Drummond, 65.

<sup>46</sup>Nason, 57.

holding a little black boy and with difficulty trying to read the parable of the prodigal son. After the meeting, Moody approached Reynolds and said, "I have got only one talent; I have no education; but I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for him: I want you to pray for me.' I have never ceased, from that day to this, to pray for that devoted Christian soldier."<sup>47</sup> From the very outset of his ministry, Moody acknowledged his weaknesses and his utter dependence upon God for success.

### Prayer and Moody's Call to the Ministry

Moody's Sabbath school grew rapidly reaching twelve to fifteen hundred. They began prayer meetings in the homes of the Sunday School members.<sup>48</sup> However, he had failed to lead anyone to a personal relationship with Christ. Then God intervened and opened Moody's eyes. A very sick teacher in the Sabbath school reported to Moody that he needed to return to New York State. However, he wanted to see his class of girls, between the ages of twelve and sixteen, trust in Jesus as their Savior. Moody and the teacher visited one of the girl's homes and discussed salvation and the future of her soul. The teacher then asked Moody to pray for the teary-eyed girl. Moody recalled, "I had never done such a thing in my life as to pray God to convert a young lady there and then. But we prayed and God answered our prayer."<sup>49</sup> Within ten days, all of his class had been converted. Moody held a prayer meeting for the teacher just before he left, which

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>48</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 48.

<sup>49</sup>Charles R. Erdman, *D. L. Moody: His Message for Today* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1928), 26.



kindled a fire in Moody's soul the rest of his ministry. Moody had just prayed for the dying teacher and was rising from his knees when one of the class members began to pray and then another until the whole class had prayed. Moody tasted the spiritual world and would never be pleased in the business world again. He gave up his job and exclaimed, "Oh, the luxury of leading someone out of the darkness of this world into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel!"<sup>50</sup> Moody decided to give God all his time.<sup>51</sup> He vowed not to ever let another day pass without speaking to at least one person about their salvation.<sup>52</sup>

Moody's Sunday School mission work was full of experiences where prayer brought about great changes. One of the workers reported to Moody a family of several children who were forbidden by their infidel father to come to the North Market School. Moody relentlessly visited the man and was cursed and threatened. Finally, Moody caught him in a welcoming mood and challenged him to read through the New Testament. The infidel agreed if Moody would read Paine's *Age of Reason*. After both finished their reading, a meeting was set. Moody arrived and many blasphemers and atheists were waiting for an opportunity to meet the young missionary. He gave them forty-five minutes, and he reserved fifteen minutes for his preaching. He had to call order to their arguing among themselves and said,

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 27. Erdman dedicated this book to the memory of one whose passion was the quest for souls.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>52</sup>Gericke, 25.

I am in the habit of beginning my addresses with prayer. Let us pray. . . . When he had finished, a little boy who had been converted in the Mission School, and had come with his friend to this strange meeting, began to pray . . . and begging Him to help them believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost fell upon the assembly. . . . Pretty soon they began to be frightened. They rushed out, some by one door and some by the other--did not stop to hear a word of the sermon, but fled from the place as if it had been haunted.<sup>53</sup>

Soon afterwards, the infidel's entire family came to know the Lord, and later he stood up in a noonday prayer meeting requesting prayer for his lost soul.

Another notable incident occurred when some Roman Catholic boys kept disturbing Moody's meetings at North Market Mission by breaking the windows. Moody asked Bishop Dugan if he would restrain the boys and if he would put in a good word for him to his people. Bishop Dugan said he would be glad to make the recommendation if Moody joined the true church and ceased being a heretical Protestant. Moody responded, "No man wants to belong to the true church more than I do. I wish you would pray for me right here . . . and the bishop prayed very lovingly for the heretic, and when he had finished, the heretic began to pray for the bishop."<sup>54</sup> The two men became friends, and the wild young boys did not break the prayer room windows anymore. The Sunday School and the prayer meetings continued to grow as Moody was constrained by love for Christ to reach the lost and set men working for the kingdom.

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<sup>53</sup>Daniels, 71-2.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 73-4.

### Young Men's Christian Association

In May 1861, Moody became the Chicago YMCA's first full-time employee.<sup>55</sup>

Moody often commented that the association did more to develop him for his evangelistic service than anything else. On the other hand, he infused new life into the YMCA while assisting in raising money for buildings, organizing programs, and giving the association an evangelistic fervor. As president of the YMCA, Moody's number one agenda was to pray and see souls won to Christ. He recognized the vital role of prayer in softening and drawing the hearts of the unsaved. He maintained and expanded the daily noon prayer meetings because "their threefold purpose related directly to the innermost springs of action within evangelical Protestantism--the corporate life of daily worship, the search for the unconverted and the drive to ignite revivals."<sup>56</sup> Praying in agreement knits souls together and presents our requests to a gracious miracle-working God.

The success of the prayer meetings under the name of the YMCA was carefully organized and planned by Moody. YMCA members stood on all the bridges crossing the Chicago River and the main sections of the city inviting people to the meetings. Just before the Spirit-filled prayer meetings, Moody spent an hour in the closet under the stairs in prayer.<sup>57</sup> He personally led the prayer service most days with extended remarks and then a time of prayer. During prayer time, a three-minute limit was allotted, and a bell would ring when time was up. "Members of the Chicago YMCA became famous for

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<sup>55</sup>Gericke, 23.

<sup>56</sup>Findlay, 114.

<sup>57</sup>Day, 107.

the amount of information and words they could spew out in a three-minute speech or prayer!”<sup>58</sup> Indeed, great things were accomplished as a result of prayers that were answered.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Moody incessantly sought opportunities for the YMCA to minister to souls. During the Civil War, the association, along with Moody and accompanied many times by his wife, Emma, reached out to the soldiers. A mobilization center, Camp Douglas, located south of Chicago, was chosen by Moody to pitch a tent for an evening prayer service, which led to a chapel paid for and built by Moody.<sup>59</sup> Over fifteen hundred Gospel services were held by the YMCA, and Moody hastened “from one barracks to another, day and night, week-days and Sundays; praying, exhorting, conversing with men about their souls, reveling in the abundant work and swift success the war brought within his reach.”<sup>60</sup> Altogether, Moody went to the battle front nine times to minister physical and spiritual aide. He spoke to thousands of wounded soldiers at the battles of Murfreesboro, Shiloh, Fort Donelson, and Pittsburgh Landing; traveled with the army at Cleveland and Chattanooga; and was one of the first chaplains to visit Richmond. The first business on the front was to find out if the injured or dying soldier was a child of God. If so, Moody moved on and allowed the other organizations to take care of his physical needs. If a wounded soldier was lost, Moody pointed him to Christ and pled for his salvation decision. Nightly, Moody “prayed God to give them victory

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<sup>58</sup>Findlay, 114.

<sup>59</sup>Day, 107.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

over sin, Satan, and the rebels. His voice might often be heard rising in prayer from the tents of the ungodly.”<sup>61</sup>

During this time, Moody grew concerned about his brother, Warren, who had enlisted in the war. He wrote a letter to his mother on September 13, 1862, and asked her to remain aware of his brother’s location. Moody wrote with a sense of urgency, “Mother, I wish you would talk to Warren about his soul. Tell him you will pray for him daily, and God will answer your prayers. Tell him not to play cards, for it leads to gambling, and gambling leads to Hell.”<sup>62</sup> Along with men involved with the YMCA and the “Bands of Brothers” (the name given to converted soldiers who set out to spread the Gospel among the troops), Moody saw thousands upon thousands of soldiers come to know Christ. Frank Beardsley, in *The History of Christianity in America*, pointed out that immorality, intemperance, and all kinds of sin did not flood America during the post-Civil War era because of the great evangelists of which Moody was the central figure.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to Moody’s departure from the YMCA to full-time evangelistic work, he asked two men, B. F. Jacobs and J. W. Dean, to pray for enough money to purchase a building for the Association. Moody then retreated to a special prayer closet to intercede for this request of a new YMCA building.<sup>64</sup> Believing the prayer would be answered, Moody secured a charter for tax exemption on the YMCA’s real estate. God

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<sup>61</sup>Moody and Fitt, 48.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>63</sup>Harry J. Albus, *A Treasury of Dwight L. Moody* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 17.

<sup>64</sup>Daniels, 121-5.

providentially answered their prayers by prompting Cyrus McCormick, owner of McCormick Farm Machinery, to donate ten thousand dollars to begin a building fund, which led to the first YMCA hall ever built in America.<sup>65</sup>

Moody was a man who did not hesitate to ask God and then ask man. He asked and received. Often times, he was blessed abundantly above what he requested. Moody spent minimal time in his new office. Instead, he continually ministered to the spiritual and physical needs of people. Rev. James Chadwick, city missionary of the Episcopal church, recalled,

I have known him to start from the Young Men's Christian Association with baskets of provisions for poor families, many of whom would have been neglected or overlooked if not for his timely interest. . . . In the noon-day prayer-meetings men have arisen and told how Mr. Moody visited their homes with substantial relief for their hungry children, and then joined in prayer for all the family.<sup>66</sup>

As a result, many families were led to trust Jesus as their Savior. Moody played an important role in this organization throughout his life. His early involvement in the YMCA provided him invaluable experience and personnel for his evangelistic work.

#### Moody Meets Sankey

During a YMCA convention in Indiana in 1870, God orchestrated the introduction of Ira Sankey to D. L. Moody. At the conclusion of the convention, it was announced that Moody would lead an early morning prayer meeting at six o'clock in a

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<sup>65</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 116.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 121.

nearby church.<sup>67</sup> This opened the door for Sankey to meet Moody. At the prayer meeting, there was some difficulty in starting the singing; and, at the prompting of his friend, Sankey sang, "There is a Fountain Filled With Blood." Startled by his beautiful voice, Moody glanced at him and "dropped his eyes into the familiar prayer-pose which millions, in years following saw him take whenever Sankey sang."<sup>68</sup> At the end of the meeting, Moody was introduced to Sankey and commenced asking him biographical questions relating to his occupation and family. Moody then abruptly declared, "Well, you'll have to give that up! You are the man I have been looking for, and I want you to come to Chicago and help me in my work."<sup>69</sup> Sankey promised to give the offer prayerful consideration. Several months passed, and he received another invitation to spend at least a week with Moody. When Sankey arrived early one morning, he found Moody and his family gathering for morning prayers.<sup>70</sup> Moody and Sankey then spent their first day together visiting the sick of Moody's church. "Mr. Sankey sang and Moody read words of comfort from the Word of God and offered prayer for the healing of both body and soul."<sup>71</sup> The following Sunday, a large number of people stood during the invitation for prayer after Sankey sang and Moody preached. Moody looked at Sankey and motioned he was right in asking Sankey to come. Soon thereafter, Sankey

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>68</sup>Day, 164.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

resigned his position in business and joined Moody in the work of the Illinois Street Church and the YMCA. Both men had to decide whether to be involved in the business of this world or the business of the world to come. They could have accomplished great things for God in the business world, but “there is something infinitely better than doing a great thing for God, and the infinitely better thing is to be where God wants us to be, to do what God wants us to do, and to have no will apart from His.”<sup>72</sup>

Sankey was heavy, a little taller than Moody, full of personal grace, and, like Moody, had brown eyes, a brown beard, and relied on the power of prayer for the anointing of success in his ministry of music. His voice has been described as gentle, yet penetrating, with hundreds silently gathering outside his window just to hear him practice.<sup>73</sup> Never failing to select his songs by guidance of the Holy Spirit, Sankey seemed to paint pictures in music, and what he sang mysteriously clinched what Moody preached.<sup>74</sup>

Totally dependent upon God, Sankey pled with God to speak to the masses through his singing. In Scotland on Sunday, November 23, 1873, Sankey led the first service alone as Moody was sick. Very anxious and equipped with hymns and an organ, Sankey began the service after praying, “Oh God, help me! . . . and the glory of the Lord immediately filled the tabernacle and so abode for two hours.”<sup>75</sup> This occurred over and

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<sup>72</sup>D. L. Moody, ed., *Thoughts for the Quiet Hour* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1899), 106.

<sup>73</sup>Day, 167.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 171.



over. Guidance would come powerfully upon Sankey as he lifted his heart in prayer. As a team, Sankey and Moody were humble men who God filled with His Spirit as they ministered to the hearts of millions in their meetings.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EVANGELIST-REVIVALIST, D. L. MOODY'S ANOINTED MINISTRY

#### **Prayer and the Preaching of D. L. Moody**

Charles Erdman, a biographer, published that at the end of his life, Mr. Moody was the “most famous and influential evangelist in the world.”<sup>1</sup> According to Theodore Cuyler, Moody spoke to an average of forty thousand to fifty thousand people a week.<sup>2</sup> A. T. Pierson, author and Bible expositor, calculated Moody’s total outreach by pen and voice to be one hundred million people.<sup>3</sup> Moody had a message of good news that he was compelled to share.

Moody began speaking for the Lord soon after he was led to Christ by Edward Kimball, his Sunday School teacher, in the rear of his uncle’s shoe store in Boston in 1855.<sup>4</sup> It was at his mission Sunday School at Market Hall in 1858 that Moody had his first real chance to preach. Speaking to the slum dwelling children, he developed “the foundations of that direct anecdotal style and explosive delivery which became a

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Erdman, *D. L. Moody: His Message for Today* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1928), 11.

<sup>2</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of D. L. Moody* (Philadelphia: International, 1900), 466.

<sup>3</sup>Will H. Houghton and Charles Thomas Cook, *Tell Me About Moody* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1936), 117.

<sup>4</sup>William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 41.

splendid instrument of his future service.”<sup>5</sup> Moody’s class, nicknamed “The Bodyguard,” grew to fifteen hundred, and a church was established. Many speaking opportunities were also extended. “Moody’s preaching violated most of the rules of homiletics and many of the rules of English, but he had a message from God and delivered it in the power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.”<sup>6</sup> Throngs of people came to know Jesus as Moody preached the Gospel. Henry Drummond wrote, “If eloquence is measured by its effects upon an audience, . . . then here is eloquence of the highest order.”<sup>7</sup> However, Moody often met criticism for slaughtering the king’s English.

Moody believed his preaching was effective because he dowsed it with Scripture. A churchgoer who sat in one of his services commended Moody’s preaching to others because it was “saturated with Scripture, in its spirit and aim. . . . The Bible is continually in his hands, and his incessant use of it cannot but affect the style of sermonizing hereabouts.”<sup>8</sup> The richness of Scriptural teaching and illustration in Moody’s messages is not surprising as Edward Pell writes, “He hugged his Bible to his heart as his dearest treasure, and by some sort of process he soon came into possession of more of its wealth

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>6</sup>A. T. Rowe, *D. L. Moody: The Soul-Winner* (Anderson, Ind.: Gospel Trumpet Co., 1927), 87.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Drummond, *Dwight L. Moody* (New York: McClure, Phillips, and Company, 1900), 64.

<sup>8</sup>James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 257.

than many a well-equipped student has gained in a lifetime.”<sup>9</sup> Moody continually read and memorized the Book. He placed a high priority on his study of the Bible as he said, “I have one rule about books. I do not read any book, unless it will help me to understand the Book.”<sup>10</sup>

In his preaching, Moody’s primary goal was presenting the Gospel. People often complained that he did not teach in-depth about a great number of doctrines. He presented Calvary as the only way of escape and said, “The man who talks against the blood throws out the Bible.”<sup>11</sup> Moody frequently traced what he called the scarlet thread through both the Old Testament and New Testament.<sup>12</sup> Even the Gospel songs in his meetings often made reference to the blood of Jesus. Of the 132 songs compiled in Sankey’s and Moody’s *Gospel Hymns No. 2* book, 20 percent contained direct references to the blood.<sup>13</sup> “Redemption by the blood was at the very center of Moody’s conception of the Gospel and his understanding of the Bible.”<sup>14</sup> Moody was faithful to preach the

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<sup>9</sup>Edward L. Pell, *Dwight L. Moody: His Life, His Works, His Words* (Richmond, Va.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1900), 89.

<sup>10</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1928), 31.

<sup>11</sup>Stanley N. Gundry, *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), 102. This book is a comprehensive evaluation of Moody’s proclamation theology.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 103.

Gospel, and the Holy Spirit of God “achieved” the result intended as countless souls were brought into the Kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

In 1868, Moody’s method of preaching primarily on the wrath and judgment of God changed when he met a young English preacher named Harry Moorehouse. He taught Moody how to study the Bible by subjects. He also convinced Moody that the central idea of the Bible is the love of God. Moorehouse preached the tender side of God from John 3:16, and Moody was powerfully affected.

I used to preach that God hates the sinner. . . . I never knew that God loved us so much. This heart of mine began to thaw out; I could not hold back the tears. . . . I took up that word ‘love’ and I do not know how many weeks I spent in studying the passages in which it occurs, till at last I could not help loving people.<sup>16</sup>

Fleming Revell wrote about Moorehouse’s influence on Moody. “D. L. Moody had great power before, but nothing like what he had after dear Harry Moorehouse came into our lives and changed the character of teaching and preaching in the chapel.”<sup>17</sup>

Moorehouse told Moody he was going about preaching the wrong way. He explained that Moody should preach about the love of God and intermingle Scripture in his messages. Moorehouse explained he was a man of one book who allowed Scripture to explain Scripture, and instead of Greek and Hebrew, he employed the language of

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<sup>15</sup>Drummond, 74.

<sup>16</sup>Richard K. Curtis, *They Called Him Mister Moody* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 69.

<sup>17</sup>John C. Pollock, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1963), 74.

prayer.<sup>18</sup> Moody began to faithfully study what the Word said and hid it in his heart by way of memorization. Moody arose at 4:00 A.M. for two hours of Bible study.<sup>19</sup> He studied the Bible through his own eyes and allowed the Holy Spirit to illumine the Word of God.<sup>20</sup>

Moody invested his sermon preparation time in topical research. His first topic was love, which he studied for weeks until he could not help but to love people. Moody next meditated on the compassion of Christ until it overpowered him to say, "I could only lie on the floor of my study, with my face in the open Bible and cry like a child."<sup>21</sup> Moody continued in fervent study of the Word and cried out to God in prayer. This was a secret to Moody's success as he continually preached that "there must be more prayer, more heart-searching, more going into the closet and closing the door, there meeting God face to face, to obtain power to present the love of God in a fitting manner to the multitudes."<sup>22</sup>

Many people find it difficult to explain a man like Moody. He acquired only a fifth grade education and had very poor grammar.<sup>23</sup> Yet, God powerfully used him to

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<sup>18</sup>William Haven Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1875), 178-9.

<sup>19</sup>Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1936), 204.

<sup>20</sup>Moody's library (that assisted him in sermon preparation) consisted of his Bible, *Cruden's Topical Concordance*, and whatever Spurgeon had said about a text.

<sup>21</sup>Day, 205.

<sup>22</sup>Harry J. Albus, *A Treasury of Dwight L. Moody* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 35.

<sup>23</sup>Findlay, 40-1.

reach the masses. Early in his ministry, Moody heard the following words that challenged him for life: “The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.”<sup>24</sup> Moody said, “He did not say a great man, nor a rich man, nor an eloquent man. . . . I will try my utmost to be that man.”<sup>25</sup>

### **The Undergirding Power of Prayer in the Ministry of D. L. Moody**

Whenever you see a successful man, you want to know his secret. D. L. Moody was a very successful evangelist and worker for the Lord. What was the secret of his power? Mr. Moody was a man of prayer. Here we touch his inner source of matchless power. “There was a correspondence between Mr. Moody’s life and his prayers. Both were massive, and on a grand scale. Prayer was the real working power of Moody’s life.”<sup>26</sup>

A critical year in the ministry of D. L. Moody was 1871 when he began doubting his personal abilities. An intense hunger was aroused in him after two women who used to attend his meetings mentioned, “We are praying for you to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>27</sup> Moody explained, “I began to cry out as never I did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service.”<sup>28</sup> Soon thereafter,

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<sup>24</sup>Moody, 134.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Rowe, 80.

<sup>27</sup>Moody, 146-7.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

God filled Moody with an additional filling of His Spirit while he was in New York.

Moody gave the following description of this monumental day.

Well, one day, in the city of New York--oh what a day! I can not describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world--it would be as the small dust of the balance.<sup>29</sup>

After this filling of the Spirit, Moody was changed "from a young, somewhat cocky and proud preacher, to a humble, soft, and mellow-hearted preacher, who quietly, but richly," proclaimed the love of God for all men.<sup>30</sup>

Moody realized that spiritual power would be absent from the believer who was not engaged in prayer. In his message on power entitled "In and Upon," Moody pleaded, "Let us not rest day nor night until we possess it; if that is the uppermost thought in our hearts, God will give it to us if we just hunger and thirst for it."<sup>31</sup> He continually insisted that there must be more secret prayer and more meeting God face to face in order to receive power to successfully present the love of God and live the Christian life.<sup>32</sup>

Moody preached, "We have the same warrant [as the Old Testament patriarchs] to go to

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 149. Also, A. P. Fitt, *Moody Still Lives: Word Pictures of D. L. Moody* (Philadelphia: Pinebrook Book Club, 1936), 28-9; and Paul Gericke, *Crucial Experiences in the Life of D. L. Moody* (New Orleans: Insight Press, Inc., 1978), 39-45.

<sup>30</sup>Albus, 35.

<sup>31</sup>D. L. Moody, *Secret Power: A Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1881), 50.

<sup>32</sup>Albus, 35.



God and ask the fire from heaven to come down and consume our lusts and passions--to burn up our dross, and let Christ shine through us.”<sup>33</sup>

D. L. Moody knew that prayer was the key that unlocks heaven’s door. Dr. R. A. Torrey, the first dean of what is now Moody Bible College, often said, “Moody is a far greater prayer than preacher.”<sup>34</sup> Moody believed that nothing was too hard for the Lord and “nothing is more pleasing to our Father in heaven than direct, importunate, and persevering prayer.”<sup>35</sup>

### Personal Prayer Life of D. L. Moody

D. L. Moody arguably was the most prominent American evangelist who led mass revival campaigns in the nineteenth century. Grover C. Loud, in *Evangelized America*, described Moody as America’s greatest evangelist who prayed personally with seven hundred fifty thousand people, preached to a hundred million, and assisted more than a million to trust in Jesus.<sup>36</sup> What was the secret to Moody’s success? Simply put, he knew the power of prayer to secure the anointing of the Spirit for service. The secret is “the Spirit of the living God, co-operating specially with the spirit of the speaker, and preparing the minds of those that hear for the reception of the truth. This untutored

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<sup>33</sup>D. L. Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It?* (Chicago: Fleming Revell, 1884), 8.

<sup>34</sup>Albus, 38.

<sup>35</sup>D. L. Moody, “Petition,” in *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It?* (Chicago: Fleming Revell, 1884), 99.

<sup>36</sup>Grover C. Loud, *Evangelized America* (New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, 1928). See also Albus, 18.

evangelist is a man of prayer . . . ‘the Holy Ghost is here in power,’ says he; . . . ‘God is with me: this is all the strength I have.’”<sup>37</sup> Moody was fully aware of his educational deficiencies and human insufficiency. However, he was also cognizant of God’s ability to use the weak things of this world to confound the strong. Moody remained utterly dependent on God and His all sufficiency.

Not only did he preach about prayer, he practiced it. While many people advocate agonizing in prayer, Moody felt that quality, not quantity, is what mattered. Moody’s son, Paul, recalls sharing a crowded hotel room with his father and the brevity of his prayer at bedtime. He admitted that his prayer was shockingly short. Paul excused his father’s short prayers by explaining that “the attitude of his soul at all times was such that long prayers were unnecessary.”<sup>38</sup>

Another story illustrating Moody’s abbreviated prayer life occurred while he was on the ocean steamer, *Spreer*, in 1892 when it seemed for two days the ship would sink. Moody was asleep on the ship while everyone else fervently prayed on the storm-tossed deck. Around 2:15 A.M., he was awakened by his son and instructed to come to the deck. Once on the deck, his son spotted a light in the distance, and they knew God would rescue them. One of the passengers reproached Moody for not praying throughout the night. Moody quickly responded, “I’m all prayed up.”<sup>39</sup> Moody began to preach to the

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<sup>37</sup>Elias Nason, *The Lives of the Eminent American Evangelists Dwight Lyman Moody and Ira David Sankey* (Boston: B. B. Russell, 1877), 229-30.

<sup>38</sup>Paul D. Moody, *My Father* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938), 97.

<sup>39</sup>George Arthur Buttrick, *Prayer* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), 194.

passengers and told them their lives were shipwrecked and a Rescuer would deliver them if they lifted their heart in earnest prayer to Him.

One final example of Moody's brevity in praying transpired one New Year's Day when he made two hundred visits. After arriving at one of his member's homes, he introduced himself:

"You know me: I am Moody; this is Deacon Thane, this is Brother Hitchcock. Are you all well? Do you all come to church and Sunday-School? Have you all the coal you need for the winter? Let us pray." And down we would go upon our knees, while Mr. Moody offered from fifteen to twenty words of earnest, tender, sympathetic supplication, that God would bless the man, his wife, and each one of the children.<sup>40</sup>

Then he hurried off to the next house with the whole process taking approximately one and one-half minutes. Moody wore out the horses and the deacons before the day was over.

D. L. Moody openly admitted that he tried unsuccessfully to pray all night.<sup>41</sup> This did not seem to bother him as he maintained an attitude of prayer. Possessing great faith in the power of prayer, Moody continually prayed in all places, as to all matters pertaining to his life and ministry.<sup>42</sup> He understood that we can not grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ unless we pray to Him.<sup>43</sup> Prayer and study of the Scripture were paramount on Moody's list of priorities. "In order that our prayers may be for such things as are according to the will of God, they must be based upon the

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<sup>40</sup>Daniels, 116.

<sup>41</sup>Moody, *My Father*, 97. See also Erdman, 39.

<sup>42</sup>Erdman, 39.

<sup>43</sup>Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It?*, 1.

revelation of His own will to us.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, Moody had a rule about books. He did not read books unless they helped him understand the Book (the Bible). The Bible was one Book he knew alone with its vital message. Believing that a Bible-taught Christian who feasts and meditates on the Word by prayerful consideration will not be easily offended, Moody remained calm and strong in his faith and leadership when he was openly ridiculed about his poor grammar and periods of short prayer.<sup>45</sup> Despite what some people thought, “Prayer was perfectly natural for Moody.”<sup>46</sup>

Claiming the promises of prayer, Moody cried out for great things from God. As he traveled incessantly speaking to multiplied thousands, Moody’s life consisted of planning, praying, and preaching.<sup>47</sup> During his anointed messages, the fire of God fell, and floods of souls were saved.<sup>48</sup> The blessings would come so abundantly that the churches could not handle all the converts, and many were left overwhelmed with the power and glory of God’s great outpouring and presence.<sup>49</sup>

### Praying for the Power of the Holy Spirit

Moody realized power from on high was essential. Great oratory and homiletical masterpieces may impress temporarily, but the Holy Spirit’s anointing influences

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>45</sup>Moody, *Secret Power: A Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work*, 88.

<sup>46</sup>Erdman, 39.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>48</sup>Daniels, 260.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

eternally. Hence, much of Moody's preaching, teaching, and writing evolves around the necessity of the Spirit's filling for power. So vital was the Spirit's power to Moody that he declared, "I'd rather die than not have the power of God on my life to work for Him. I'd rather die than live for the sake of living."<sup>50</sup> He obeyed Eph. 5:18 and continually sought to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He believed in the baptism of the Spirit at conversion, but he also believed in additional fillings for service. He refuted the idea that one filling was sufficient for a lifetime. Moody described Christians as leaky vessels who need to stay right under God's fountain to be kept full all the time.<sup>51</sup> He urged prayer for "a fresh power, a fresh supply of grace, every time we take up a new task, or go from one place to another."<sup>52</sup> Moody literally pled with preachers and laymen alike to seek the power of the Holy Ghost on their ministry. Preaching on "The Gift of the Holy Spirit," Moody exhorted that we ought to have one hundred times more power than Elijah and Elisha possessed.

Let us pray that God will fill us with the Holy Ghost. Let us pray that He will send the Spirit into our cold churches and Sabbath-schools, that are now so stiff and formal. . . . Let us pray to the God of Elijah, and let us pray that the fire may come down and burn up all the dross in our hearts--all that is not pleasing in the sight of God--and that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Moody, *Secret Power: A Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work*, 113.

<sup>51</sup>Day, 219.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>D. L. Moody, *Ten Days with D. L. Moody, Comprising a Collection of His Sermons* (New York: J. S. Ogilvie and Company, 1886), 141-2.

Sin grieves and quenches the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as water cannot flow through a frozen pipe and blood cannot flow through a clogged artery, the power of the Holy Spirit cannot flow through a sinful life. Knowing this all too well, Moody beseeched others to get down on their faces and cry mightily to God to forgive their sins.<sup>54</sup> He believed many lives were full of sin. According to Moody, an emptying of oneself was needed in order for God to fill. He declared, "I believe many a man is praying to God to fill him when he is full already with something else. Before we pray that God will fill us, I believe we ought to pray for Him to empty us."<sup>55</sup>

If there is not a humbling of one's life followed by prayer and a turning from sin, then one should not expect the mighty work of the Spirit in their life. In fact, Moody viewed the prayers of those living in known sin as an abomination. Proverbs teaches this as it says, "He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."<sup>56</sup> Biblically speaking, Moody believed individuals have no right thinking God will answer their prayers if they do not turn from their sin. There is no sound that goes up to God sweeter than the one confessing sin and asking for God's forgiveness.<sup>57</sup> Only after true repentance does God hear prayers and make His power available.

Wherever Moody preached, he felt the need for enablement from on high and encouraged others to seek this power. He started what was called the Northfield

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<sup>54</sup>Moody, *Secret Power: A Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work*, 113.

<sup>55</sup>Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It?*, 32.

<sup>56</sup>Proverbs 28:9.

<sup>57</sup>Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It?*, 33.

Conference in 1880. The attention of this conference focused on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in preaching. For ten days, well-known Christian men confessed impure motives and cried out with tears for God to cleanse them and fill them with the Holy Ghost.<sup>58</sup> Devout Christians from all over the world gathered to pray, and there were over three thousand letters and telegrams requesting prayer. God opened the windows of heaven and blessed the men who attended by powerfully affecting their places of ministry.<sup>59</sup>

Over and over again, Moody was renewed by the Holy Spirit and did more work than seemed physically possible. With conviction, Moody believed that “when the fire of God indwells humble humanity, we have power to move with April freshness amidst boundless responsibilities; it is not work which destroys us, but work in the flesh.”<sup>60</sup> Empowered by God day after day, prayer was natural for Moody and was a source of power in every ministry he undertook. Moody possessed a divine message, which he delivered with clearness, conviction, and convincing power.<sup>61</sup>

### Prayer and Soulwinning

The world knows little of the works accomplished as a result of prayer.<sup>62</sup> In order to be an effective soulwinner, the Holy Spirit’s power must be present; “spiritual power

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<sup>58</sup>T. J. Shanks, *D. L. Moody at Home* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1886), 32.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>60</sup>Day, 272.

<sup>61</sup>Erdman, 38.

<sup>62</sup>J. B. McClure, comp., *Anecdotes and Illustrations of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Rhodes and McClure, 1888), 170.

is often in direct proportion to our prayers.”<sup>63</sup> Moody continually offered up ejaculatory prayer to God for the power He alone distributes in the winning of souls.<sup>64</sup> Within a generation of his death, Moody had secured a place in church history as an immensely successful evangelist and soulwinner. One friend observed that “the distinct impression left upon my mind was that this man thinks of nothing, plans for nothing but for Christ and souls.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, when his son, W. R. Moody, stated that his father “lived solely for the glory of God and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” his proposition appears true.<sup>66</sup> However, D. L. Moody realized his absolute need and dependence on God and asked for his friends to continually uphold him in their prayers.

Moody’s magnificent obsession was to see people come to know Jesus.

Believing that prayer secured power and influence from God, Moody explained how the great assemblies were a wondrous time. However, nothing compared to sitting at the feet of Jesus and basking in His presence.<sup>67</sup> Alone in prayer, Moody cried out with tear-filled eyes for Jesus to come and save the thousands and the individuals he met and ministered to each day.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 206.

<sup>64</sup>Arthur Percy Fitt, *Moody Still Lives* (New York: Revell Company, 1886), 149.

<sup>65</sup>Bradford, 133.

<sup>66</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 2.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>68</sup>Nason, 80.



Once Moody became convinced of his responsibility to win people to Christ, “He vowed that he would never let a day pass without speaking to at least one person about his salvation.”<sup>69</sup> Hence, Moody seldom neglected an opportunity to share Jesus and pray with others; “saying to a stranger waiting on a train, ‘Are you for Jesus?’ to a conductor, ‘Are you all right with God?’ to a doctor of divinity, ‘How does your soul prosper?’”<sup>70</sup> Because of his holy boldness and spiritual courage, Moody was nicknamed “Crazy Moody.” He would not wait for opportunities to witness, he would make them.<sup>71</sup> The following conversation is an example of Moody’s straightforward anointed method. As he approached an individual, he asked, “Are you a Christian?” “It’s none of your business,” was the curt reply. “Yes it is,” was the reassurance. “Then you must be D. L. Moody!” said the stranger.”<sup>72</sup> Moody was not concerned about what other people thought about him or his zeal for the Lord. He felt no one was fit for God’s service until the world considered him mad. He would often say people accused Paul of being mad, and he wished there were more bitten with that kind of madness. “If we [soulwinning Christians] are mad, we have a good Keeper on the way and a good Asylum at the end of the road.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Gericke, 23.

<sup>70</sup>Nason, 81. See also Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 109.

<sup>71</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 75.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>73</sup>D. L. Moody, *To the Work! To the Work!* (Chicago: Revell, 1884), 76.

Moody's love for souls preceded him wherever he ministered. He tried every tactic possible to win people to the Lord. His hunger for souls was first exhibited in his mission work with children. To assist him in visiting, Mr. Moody purchased a little pony, known as his "missionary horse," which attracted many children by giving them rides.<sup>74</sup> This pony contributed to the popularity of his Sunday School as it rapidly grew to fifteen hundred. When Moody approached some streets, the kids began to cry out, "Ah, here's Moody! Come, here's Moody!"<sup>75</sup> They acted like Moody was their best friend. He had candy in both pockets and freely gave it away as he visited homes of the poor and sick. He even offered a caged squirrel to whomever brought the most scholars (visitors) to Sunday School. It was during this early part of ministry that he developed uninhibited boldness in telling others about Jesus.

Led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Moody penetrated the roughest places sharing the Gospel. Alone with one of his young converts, Moody entered a bar and asked the keeper if they could pass out some tracts to the men who were drinking. Permission was granted. Moody then struck up conversation with the keeper and learned that his parents were Christians. Immediately, Moody asked if they knew he was selling liquor. The keeper was seemingly pierced with conviction. Moody and his friend told the barkeeper goodnight and were headed home when they sensed a need to return and pray for the keeper. Begging the keeper's forgiveness for not previously praying for him, the men knelt in the sawdust; and, according to the friend of Moody, Mr. Stillson, "I

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<sup>74</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 74.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

never heard a man pray like that before, it seemed as if the baptism of the Holy One was upon him.”<sup>76</sup> A couple of weeks later, the man was met, and he had given up the saloon business and quit drinking saying he would rather die a poor man than sell liquor. This witnessing encounter shows Moody’s willingness to humble himself and go anywhere, whether up or down, to find and see a sinner saved.

Moody taught soulwinners that God always blesses the words and efforts that are made to further His kingdom.<sup>77</sup> Rejection by a lost person was not to be the end of one’s effort of outreach in Moody’s mind. If one visit does not wake up a man spiritually, send a second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh visitor, and so on day after day until that man is reached for Christ.<sup>78</sup> “It is a great thing to save one man, to get him out of the pit, to have his feet set fast on a rock, and a new song put in his mouth. Nothing will rouse an indifferent man quicker than to have a number of friends after him. If you can not bring him yourself, get others to help you.”<sup>79</sup> In short, Moody promoted an aggressive Christianity that must take up her responsibility. Going is not a suggestion, it is a command. Personal, earnest effort is a must in the area of soulwinning. “Every man and woman who loves the Lord Jesus Christ must wake up to the fact that he or she has a mission in the world, in the work of reaching the lost.”<sup>80</sup> A church cannot pay a pastor

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<sup>76</sup>Daniels, 62.

<sup>77</sup>Moody, *To the Work! To the Work!*, 56.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 67.

for doing the evangelism God has planned for each individual. Not everyone is called to be an evangelist. However, everyone is called to evangelize. One day all Christians will be judged for their divinely appointed evangelistic responsibility.

Many people use the excuse that they must have more knowledge of the Scripture before they go soulwinning. Moody retorted that enough preaching and teaching had been done, and “What we want now is hand-to-hand work, personal effort, individuals going to people and pressing on them the claims of Christ.”<sup>81</sup> In response to his challenge for Christians to go out, an eighty-five year old woman took a district and began to witness throughout the area. Who was going to throw out an eighty-five year old woman? When she came upon someone who refused a tract, she would read it to them. Moody responded to her efforts by saying that every able bodied young person who is not working for Christ to win souls ought to be ashamed. During his meeting, Moody called for a thousand men and women to join him to win a soul that week. He believed that something was wrong with a Christian’s life if they could not lead a person to Christ. “If you have not an influence for good over one of your friends or neighbors, there is something in your life that needs to be put right. May God show it to you today.”<sup>82</sup> In his eyes, something was wrong with a religion that was not winning souls and producing missionaries, because Christ in us yearns for us to win people for the Kingdom.

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<sup>81</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 229.

<sup>82</sup>Moody, *To the Work! To the Work!*, 97.

If for some reason a person could not go out and rescue the perishing, Moody offered a powerful illustration describing what they should do. He shared the story of a fireman who went to a scene where a child was on the fourth floor of a home on fire. The fireman tried to make his way toward the fourth floor, but the fire got hotter and the flames blew toward him. Fearing for his life, he was about to retreat when a roar of cheers went up for the fireman; he returned to rescue the child from the smoke and flames. Moody exclaimed, if you can not rescue the perishing, you can at least pray for and cheer for those who are attempting to win souls, and the Lord will bless the prayer and effort.<sup>83</sup>

### Prayer and Sunday School Work

Moody's heart was broken when Sunday School teachers were not praying for power to lead souls to Jesus. During Moody's early work with his Sunday School class, he sought great numbers. He realized the need to win young people after leading a Sunday School class of girls to the Lord. In his mind, immediate decision for Christ should be the first question posed to every soul. Moody remembered how "the moment he became direct in method, definite in purpose, straightforward and tender and loving in dealing with them about the great question of present salvation, they sweetly and promptly responded and became converted."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>84</sup>John Herridge Batt, *Dwight L. Moody: The Life-Work of a Modern Evangelist* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1902), 51.

At a Sunday School convention in Princeton, Moody and his friend, Mr. E. W. Hawley, the secretary of the YMCA, arrived to assist two distinguished speakers. These speakers did not make it, and Moody and Hawley were asked to speak. Frightened, they spent half a night in their room crying out to God in prayer for power and wisdom in making their presentations. Mr. Hawley spoke with effectiveness while Moody spoke as an anointed man from on high. He stressed the need of Sunday School teachers to walk with Christ and the awfulness of preparing for and teaching their class in a carnal and worldly manner.<sup>85</sup> There was a great response of repentance and prayer for power during the invitation. Moody cried out, "If I had the trumpet of God, I would blow it and call every Sunday School teacher in America to lead at least one soul to Christ this year."<sup>86</sup> Moody's understanding of God's sovereignty in salvation is seen in this prayer: "We know that man has not the power to reach the human heart; but we pray that the Spirit may convict of sin, that the Holy Ghost may do His office work, and that the work may be deep and thorough."<sup>87</sup>

Often shocked at the lack of soulwinning in the places he spoke, Moody preached challenging messages on the need to reach the lost. At one convention, the delegates rejoiced over 7,855 souls that had been led to the Savior. Moody asked the secretary how many teachers were involved in leading this number to Christ. The secretary's reply of 82,833 teachers incited Moody to balk, "If 82,833 [teachers] had been faithful, instead of

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<sup>85</sup>Daniels, 161.

<sup>86</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 104.

<sup>87</sup>D. L. Moody, *The Great Redemption; Gospel Light, Under the Labors of Moody and Sankey* (New York: J. Fairbanks and Company, 1888), 415.

7,855 souls being converted, there might have been 82,833. I cannot help but feel if teachers were earnest and zealous and often in their closets, they might at least each bring one soul to Jesus every year.”<sup>88</sup> Moody saw the throngs of souls unsaved as a tragedy. He further viewed the Christians who did not speak to the multitudes of unsaved people they encountered as a bigger tragedy. In Sheffield, England, there were one hundred fifty thousand people who did not go to worship. Moody said, “If there seems to be a blacker sight than these thousands of lost souls, it is the thousands of apathetic Christians who see them daily and do not tell them about eternity. I believe if there is one thing that pierces the Master’s heart with unutterable grief, it is not the world’s iniquity, but the church’s indifference.”<sup>89</sup>

### **Prayer Revival of 1857-8 and Its Impact on D. L. Moody’s Ministry**

The third era of general revival following the First and Second Great Awakenings in America was the Prayer Revival of 1857-8. Starting a noonday prayer time on September 23, 1857, Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier invited others to join him in prayer on Wednesdays.<sup>90</sup> Six men gathered the first week, and the crowds grew each Wednesday until the first week of October, 1857. It was then decided to hold meetings daily instead of weekly. Within six months, as many as fifty thousand were attending union prayer meetings all over New York. This revival fire swept across America. According to Orr,

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>89</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 217.

<sup>90</sup>James Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: The Moody Press, 1974), 4.

an estimated one million people joined the churches nationally, and two million converts were added to the churches worldwide.<sup>91</sup>

When the flames of revival spread into Chicago, it touched D. L. Moody in a very special way. In the winter of 1858, he shared the following impressions of the revival with his mother. "I go to meeting every night. Oh, how I do enjoy it! It seems as if God was here Himself. Oh, mother, pray for us. Pray that this work may go on until every knee is bowed. I wish there could be a revival in Northfield, that many might be brought into the fold of Christ."<sup>92</sup> What D. L. Moody felt and saw during the awakening in Chicago left a "profound impression on the life of the zealous young man from New England."<sup>93</sup> D. L. Moody continued to faithfully support the daily noon prayer meeting in Chicago, which was one of the permanent results of the revival. It was not long until he was the appointed leader of the meeting.<sup>94</sup> Orr once described a conversation with a historian about the revival of 1857-8. As Orr presented his research of the revival, the historian asked, "Who started that? Moody?" Orr replied, "No, Moody did not start the '58 Revival. The '58 Revival started Moody."<sup>95</sup> Orr contends that "Moody was

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<sup>91</sup>James Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening*, rev. ed. (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1964), 166.

<sup>92</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 48.

<sup>93</sup>Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858*, 147.

<sup>94</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 115.

<sup>95</sup>James Edwin Orr, "Revival and Evangelism," *World Evangelization Information Bulletin* 38 (March 1985): 6. See also Malcolm McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *Firefall: How God Has Shaped History Through Revivals* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 265-7.



without question the greatest single product of the Revival."<sup>96</sup> Loud also believed that this revival motivated Moody with a zeal that characterized him throughout his ministry.<sup>97</sup> Moody became excited about winning young people to Christ, and his ministry flourished in the Spirit-charged atmosphere of Chicago where two thousand gathered daily in the Metropolitan Theatre for prayer. This prayer revival fueled Moody's evangelistic work among students that led to the formation of Christian associations and daily prayer meetings in the state universities.<sup>98</sup> Findlay suggests that this revival was one of the factors, if not the factor, that led Moody to abandon shoe sales and go into full-time evangelism.<sup>99</sup> The revival of 1857-8 was such a major event in his life that just before he died, he said, "I would like before I go hence to see the whole church of God quickened as it was in '57."<sup>100</sup> During the revival of 1857-8, never was the power of God more demonstrated than in the gatherings at noon each day.<sup>101</sup> D. L. Moody undergirded his campaigns with these prayer meetings throughout his ministry.

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<sup>96</sup>Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858*, 200.

<sup>97</sup>Loud, 27.

<sup>98</sup>Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858*, 147.

<sup>99</sup>Findlay, 59.

<sup>100</sup>D. L. Moody, quoted in James Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: The Moody Press, 1974), 198.

<sup>101</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 208.

### Prayer in His Meetings

Success followed Moody from city to city and country to country. During many years, he could go to any big city in America or England at anytime and assemble a meeting, which would attract an audience of thousands for weeks at a time. What was the secret of success behind his meetings? A mere glance shows that each revival, conference, or convention was simply saturated in prayer. Whether in Dublin, Edinburgh, Scotland, Philadelphia, or New York, special prayer meetings were held weeks in advance.<sup>102</sup> Whenever Moody spoke, he wanted to lift up Jesus and let Him draw all people to Himself. On his first trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, he exhorted, "I want you to pray that I may be so full of the love of God that I can speak only of Jesus Christ and Him crucified."<sup>103</sup> As a result, his mission lasted twenty-six months instead of three; and crowds ranged from five to ten thousand.

Moody learned the importance of prayer, prayer, and more prayer as a pastor of the North Market Mission. He established weeknight prayer meetings in an old saloon. He taught his parishioners to pray and engaged others in prayer meetings. These meetings were an assembly of people who came together wanting something of God and came to get it by the biblical practice of asking.<sup>104</sup> Due to personal prayer and leading others to intercede, Moody saw tremendous results as a pastor of his church and as an evangelist abroad.

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<sup>102</sup>Erdman, 53, 62-3.

<sup>103</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 477.

<sup>104</sup>Daniels, 52.

Many biographers have recorded what Moody did, but few have examined who he was. An examination of who he was is necessary if one is to grasp the reason for the supernatural movement in his meetings. He was a very spiritual man who prayed and sought prayer. One lesson that stands out in Moody's life is the value of constant prayer and nourishment on Bible truth and Christian practice.<sup>105</sup> Prayer held a very high and reverent place in all of his meetings.<sup>106</sup>

In revivals, Moody earnestly asked for prayer warriors to undergird the services in communion with God. In New York, he asked for one thousand believers to exit the preaching hall and pray for him to speak with unction from on high. At the close of his message, he said, "I want more of His power. Pray for me that I may be so filled with the Holy Spirit when coming on this platform that men may feel I come with a message from God."<sup>107</sup> Moody believed in the constant presence and leadership of the Spirit of God. He sought to be a worker with God in every endeavor he undertook.

From city to city, noonday prayer meetings were established. Many people would come at midday for a time of prayer and the public reading of the Bible. Moody learned about the noonday prayer meetings during his work with the YMCA. In fact, he was used by God in the process of reviving this time of prayer in America. Seeing its success in America during the prayer revival, Moody inaugurated a noonday prayer time in Great

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<sup>105</sup>Batt, 149.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 142-3.

<sup>107</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 280.

Britain and other places in England.<sup>108</sup> Noonday prayer meetings at a central point were held throughout the series of revival services.

Prayer, in the mind of Mr. Moody, . . . was an actual power by which results could be obtained. Therefore at those noonday meetings definite petitions were presented, reports of the work were given, and a spirit of belief and of expectancy was aroused. Thus, the entire campaign was conducted in an atmosphere of prayer.<sup>109</sup>

Despite often cold receptions by ministers abroad, thousands were saved and souls were stirred in answer to ongoing prayer. W. H. Daniels observed that the tremendous success was not wholly in the labors of Moody and Sankey, but an answer to the previous six months of prayer, which had been for the meeting to be blessed with the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>110</sup> Responding to God's blessings resulting from earnest prayer, Moody challenged the cities he visited to continue the daily noon prayer meetings. He requested that the Lord's children pray that these meetings would be an institution in the city for God to bless and bind all Christians.<sup>111</sup>

In regards to the conducting of the prayer meetings, Moody felt the prayers should be short and to the point. He felt the meetings should be open for anyone to speak or pray as they were led; in so doing, many would be refreshed. However, he despised

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<sup>108</sup>Daniels, 243.

<sup>109</sup>Erdman, 95. Moody's campaigns were constantly undergirded by prayer. See Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 183, 209, for a look at prayer in Edinburgh and Irish and English cities. See Daniels, 264, 311, 325, for a look at prayer meetings in Scotland, Belfast, and Dublin. See Batt, 99, for a description of a six-week prayer meeting in Exeter, Strand.

<sup>110</sup>Daniels, 325.

<sup>111</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 163.

long public prayers that killed the interest of an audience. He explained, "The first five minutes of a prayer I join in thought with the petitioner. To the second five minutes I am passive, and then I pray that this long-winded brother will stop!"<sup>112</sup> He quipped that the prayers in the Bible are short with the exception of the dedication of Solomon's Temple and that prayers in the meetings should be brief.<sup>113</sup> Moody accused those who prayed long public prayers of trying to make up for no prayer at home and insisted they should be asked to keep prayers short lest they hurt the cause of Christ with boredom.<sup>114</sup> His suggestion and practice of keeping prayers short, music lively, interaction with the audience, and a joyous atmosphere lent to the success of these prayer meetings. This was seen in three definitive ways: (1) prayer requests poured in from everywhere; (2) dispatches were received from all over saying that people were praying for the meetings; and (3) the meetings' attendance generally grew as the services progressed.

The impact of the Moody-Sankey revivals far surpassed the credentials of the men themselves. Audiences grew to over twenty thousand at each meeting, miraculous answers to prayer and strength to continue at such a high pace were obviously derived from a supernatural source. Friends and interested observers shared differing views about Moody. Doctor W. R. Dale was a minister in Sheffield who looked down on Moody's meetings at first. However, as interest and attendance continued to grow, he began to attend the meetings. Dale could not explain the power Mr. Moody possessed.

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<sup>112</sup>Moody, *My Father*, 95.

<sup>113</sup>Shanks, 109.

<sup>114</sup>Moody, *Ten Days with D. L. Moody, Comprising a Collection of His Sermons*, 148.

The crowd was comprised of rich and poor, tradesmen and manufacturers, and a cross section of the entire city. After being touched by a number of Moody's meetings, Dale approached Moody and told him that "the work was most plainly of God, for I could see no real relation between him and what he had done. He laughed cheerily, and said he should be very sorry if it were otherwise."<sup>115</sup> Continuing to attend the meetings, Dale concluded that Moody deserved the right to preach the Gospel, because he could never talk about lost souls without tears in his eyes.<sup>116</sup>

Throughout the meetings, Moody acknowledged God's sovereignty over the actions of the audience and the salvation of their souls. He continually asked the Lord to preside over the meetings as he prayed in private, "O' God, keep the people still, hold the meeting in Thy hand."<sup>117</sup> God answered his prayers but occasionally allowed a disturbance to occur for a purpose. For example, the head of an infidel club once tried to break up a meeting by mocking Moody during his message. After the sermon, Moody asked him if he wanted to become a Christian. The man replied "no" and smirked that it would be difficult to persuade him to ever trust in Christ. Receiving permission to pray, "Mr. Moody knelt down beside the scoffer, prayed for him earnestly and tenderly, and then left him, promising to pray for him still further at home."<sup>118</sup> Not long thereafter, he resigned the presidency of the infidel club and became a faithful follower of Jesus.

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Moody, *The Great Redemption; Gospel Light, Under the Labors of Moody and Sankey*, 44.

<sup>118</sup>Daniels, 278-9.

Time and time again, filled with the fruit of the Spirit, Moody questioned inquiring souls in a confrontational manner. Dealing with inquirers about their salvation was what Moody enjoyed most. He stressed getting them on their knees to pray when the time was right saying, "Sometimes a few minutes in prayer has done more for a man than two hours in talk. . . . When the Spirit of God has led him so far that he is willing to have you pray with him, he is not very far from the Kingdom."<sup>119</sup> Moody encouraged inquirers to openly pray on their own or to have them repeat a prayer. He felt, "It is a good thing for a man to hear his own voice in prayer. It is a good thing for him to cry out, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'"<sup>120</sup> Moody excelled in the art of asking people to make a decision for Christ and saw multiplied thousands come to know Jesus.

The tremendous success of his meetings and the number of souls he saw saved would make the carnal man prideful. However, Moody remained humble and acknowledged that all blessings come from above. His close friends observed his total dependence on God. In regard to Moody's success of leading thousands to Christ, stirring the Christian world, and motivating many to go into full-time service, Major Whittle, a close friend in Chicago, said, "He is wholly and thoroughly conscious that it is all of God. Praying alone with him, I found him as humble as a child before God. Out in the work with him I found him as bold as a lion before men. No hesitation, no shrinking, no timidity; speaking with authority, speaking as an ambassador of the most high

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<sup>119</sup>Shanks, 69.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

God.”<sup>121</sup> Mr. Moody had a massive faith and a great deal of snap about him. He believed in the continual presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in his life. Reverend Wharton, a friend and worker with Moody, exclaimed,

He is a worker together with God in everything. It is thrilling to hear some of his prayers with those who work with him. On Sunday morning he will cry to God for a great blessing, and when the day is done and all meet in his room, how sweet it is to kneel and be led by him in a prayer of thanksgiving for victories of the day.<sup>122</sup>

The evidence above presents an explanation for Moody’s place among history’s spiritual giants--the power of God in his life through prayer.

### Prayer in His School

Prayer was an essential element in every area of Moody’s ministry. Noticing a desperate need for an emphasis on the spiritual disciplines of prayer and soulwinning, Moody established a school, which emphasized the practical and spiritual aspects of how to do ministry. He set up Northfield and Mount Hermon schools in 1879. With great faith, Moody and another man knelt on a vacant lot and asked God to give it to them for a school. The prayer was answered as the trustees moved quickly to secure the plot at Chicago and LaSalle. In September 1889, the first building of the Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions of the Chicago Evangelization Society was erected.<sup>123</sup> The catalog for Moody Institute in 1895 presented a mission statement for the school.

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<sup>121</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 259.

<sup>122</sup>H. M. Wharton, *A Month with Moody in Chicago* (Baltimore: Wharton and Barron Publishers, 1894), 15-6.

<sup>123</sup>Dorothy Martin, *Moody Bible Institute: God’s Power in Action* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 21.



According to the catalog, the Institute laid a great emphasis on spiritual development for each student at the school.<sup>124</sup> The school insisted that if students left school without power from on high and a closer acquaintance with Christ, the program was a waste of time.

Moody not only preached about prayer, he prayed and asked people to support him with their prayers. Dr. R. A. Torrey, the first superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute and perhaps Moody's closest friend, recalled Moody's requests for prayer during his meetings. Mr. Moody would call and tell him about a new work he was beginning and asked Torrey to lead the students in prayer and fasting. He would often gather the students in the lecture room and read a letter saying, "Mr. Moody wants us to have a day of fasting and prayer, first for God's blessing on our own souls and work, and then for God's blessings on him and his work."<sup>125</sup> These times of long prayer often lasting into the early morning transformed the students' lives and character by instilling a total reliance on God.

After Moody's death, there was a time for personal testimony on the campus.

One student, who worked with Moody, rose and gave the following testimony.

I should like to speak especially of the place that prayer had in his life. I have been looking through some of his letters lately, letters which I received from him during these years that I have been at Northfield, and there is scarcely one of them in which there is not some mention of prayer. Sometimes he wrote asking me to pray for the work in a certain city, that the ground might be ready for the seed; again he would write that he was to speak upon the Atonement or upon the Holy Spirit, and would ask me to pray that God would make it real to the people; then there would come

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>125</sup>R. A. Torrey, *Why God Used D. L. Moody* (Chicago: BICA, 1923), 9.

a letter saying that the work was deepening, that he believed it was in answer to prayer. . . . Certainly all of Mr. Moody's work began and continued and ended in prayer, and as I have thought about the work he has left us to do, I realize how much we need to learn this lesson of prayer, and I pray that God may pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplication.<sup>126</sup>

If you truly want to know about a person, ask the people closest to him what he is like.

The above testimony shows the importance of prayer to Moody. He did not just preach about prayer, write about prayer, or talk about prayer. He prayed and pleaded for others to pray for him.

When Moody returned from his British campaign in 1892, he went to Mount Hermon and gathered the faculty and students together at six o'clock in the morning. He deeply desired the anointing of the Holy Spirit to see a great harvest of souls during the World's Fair. He declared, "If you think anything of me, if you love me,' he said with a choking voice and tear-filled eyes, 'pray for me that God may anoint me for the work in Chicago.'"<sup>127</sup> He began to follow the apostolic strategy of prayer with special days of prayer and fasting during the Fair. People from all over the world were interceding for the meetings, which numbered as many as seventy some days. Moody used his college students during the Fair, and his spiritual leadership was branded on their hearts and minds. He would exhort, "Ah, we can not lead others nearer to Christ than we are living ourselves, and there is no use working unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We want to get down on our faces and humble ourselves at His feet. If we do these things then our

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<sup>126</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 582.

<sup>127</sup>Day, 311.

preaching will be with power, and our work will bear a precious harvest of souls.”<sup>128</sup> Indeed, multiplied thousands were saved, the World’s Fair closed on Sundays, the workers grew mighty in the Lord, and revival was kindled in many parts of the world. Moody’s habit of dealing with every mountainous task by prayer was an impressionable influence on all who personally knew him and those who study his life today.

### **Prayer in His Family Life**

As a husband and a father, D. L. Moody lived what he preached. Under the heading of Marriage, the inscription “D. L. Moody to Emma C. Revell, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1862,” was recorded in his family Bible, which was often read in the confines of their small cottage. While home from his meetings and responsibilities, Moody played like a child with his children, guests, and wife. However, when an unconverted guest visited his home, Moody immediately quit playing and inquired about his soul. If the Holy Spirit was dealing with the person’s life, Moody would soon have him on his knees praying for salvation.<sup>129</sup>

In short, Moody was a family man whose family adored him. According to Moody’s son-in-law, A. P. Fitt, “No man’s private life will stand scrutiny better than D. L. Moody’s, whether you consider him in the role of parent, neighbor, or friend.”<sup>130</sup> Desiring to please God by setting a Christian example, Moody rose before dawn and

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 315-6.

<sup>129</sup>Daniels, 197.

<sup>130</sup>Fitt, 89.

employed the first fresh hours of the day in personal Bible study and prayer.<sup>131</sup>

Immediately after breakfast with his family at 7:30 A.M., he gathered everyone in the home for a time of Bible reading and earnest prayer.<sup>132</sup> After devotions, Moody played with his children as he enjoyed his home being full of laughter. But in a moment's notice, he would summon his children, "'Come, let us pray!' and then all would kneel and listen silently to the out breathings of his fervent soul."<sup>133</sup>

Moody loved his family and took a keen interest in their daily lives at home, grade-school, and college. He wanted to see them trust in Christ and be used mightily by God. He believed in a prayer-answering God who wants every family to be saved. During one message, he cried out, "Everyone of our children will be brought into the ark, if we pray and work earnestly for them."<sup>134</sup>

Moody's children were greatly impacted by their father's prayer life and preaching on prayer. He wanted his children to know what it meant to be blessed and what it meant to go without. Thus, Moody did not give into every request his children presented. One of Moody's sons, Paul Moody, wanted a bike and came across one of his father's sermons on prayer. This message revealed that his father did not like to be nagged but asked once. Paul cut this extract out of his father's message. He proceeded to ask his father for a bike on his fifteenth birthday indicating he was only going to ask

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<sup>131</sup>Moody, *My Father*, 50.

<sup>132</sup>Fitt, 91. See also Moody, *My Father*, 50; Batt, 154.

<sup>133</sup>Nason, 86.

<sup>134</sup>McClure, 170.

once and remarked, I thank you in advance for honoring this request.<sup>135</sup> A few weeks later, Paul was invited to Richmond where his father was conducting a meeting. He did not dare bring up the bike as his birthday fell during this time. When he returned home, there was a new bike waiting for him. Paul Moody explained how his father's gifts meant more to him than the recipient, and "He seems to me in retrospect the most generous man I ever knew, taking more delight in giving than anyone else I ever met."<sup>136</sup>

Moody did not allow his work to interfere with his familial duties. On the day Paul was to depart for Yale, his father drove him to the station. On the way, Paul expected his father to lay down some rules and expectations. However, after being unusually quiet for a period of time, Moody explained to his son that he had been praying that God would use Paul to bring all his classmates into the kingdom.<sup>137</sup> The class did elect Paul to be one of the four deacons in charge of the religious life of the class, which delighted D. L. Moody.

While D. L. Moody was a role model Christian father to his children when he was home, it is vital to understand the support and influence of his wife when he was away. Emma was Moody's greatest human resource whom he depended on to raise their children in a Christian home. He never failed to express to those closest to him the debt he owed to God for giving him "the best wife God ever gave to a man."<sup>138</sup> Mrs. Moody

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<sup>135</sup>Moody, *My Father*, 79.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>138</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 76.

often stayed at home while Mr. Moody was away at a meeting. During Moody's meetings in England, Emma remained at home teaching and praying with the children daily saying, "'O my little dears, you belong body and soul to Christ!'"<sup>139</sup> Referring perhaps to his mother's prayers for him as a child and to Emma's prayers for their children, Moody often said the impression a praying mother leaves upon her children is lifelong.<sup>140</sup> Emma was a godly mother and wife who taught her children about God and accompanied her husband when possible. During visits to the Civil War battlefields, religious gatherings, pleasure drives, and the Paris Exposition, Mrs. Moody enjoyed ministering and spending time with her husband.<sup>141</sup>

Emma left an indelible impression upon the hearts of D. L. and her children with her sensitivity to the Spirit's leading. One morning at breakfast, Emma told D. L. that she must go and talk to a troubled young man. After she ate breakfast, Emma and D. L. prayed that the Lord would bless His Word as she spoke to this young man about his soul's condition. When Emma arrived at the young man's home, he said, "I am glad you have come to see me," and a half-hour had not elapsed before he was on his knees trusting in Christ.<sup>142</sup> The Spirit had prepared this young man's heart, and he became a steadfast Christian. This is one example of how God mightily used Emma. God also used Emma after Moody persuaded her to start a training program for women called to

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<sup>139</sup>Day, 96.

<sup>140</sup>McClure, 170.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>142</sup>Moody, *Ten Days with D. L. Moody, Comprising a Collection of His Sermons*, 115.

missions who needed Biblical, theological, and practical training. Within three years, she organized an impressive program. "In one year alone, she and her Bible-readers have held 673 cottage prayer-meetings, 78 mothers' meetings, 165 school prayer-meetings; have directed 502 sessions of sewing schools, made 2,820 calls for Bible reading; 479 visits to the sick, and distributed 10,628 tracts and religious papers; this in addition to their own regular hours for daily Bible study."<sup>143</sup>

While Emma and D. L. sought to lead as many people as possible to Jesus, they did not neglect the spiritual responsibility of raising their children in a Christian home. D. L. Moody was away preaching a lot, but he made sure Emma and the children faithfully read the Bible, prayed, and attended church. As a grandfather, he missed few opportunities to spend time with his grandchildren. He often could be seen with his granddaughter, Emma, in his arms as he took her for a carriage ride singing to her. As Emma's one-year birthday approached, Moody wrote her a letter describing the white frosted cake that her grandmother was going to bake and how he looked forward to taking her on a carriage ride. Homesick to see Emma, Moody closed his letter writing, "And now, my dear Emma, I am praying for you that the Lord will watch over you day and night and keep you from all harm. You will never know how much your grandfather loves you. I shall be glad to get you into my arms again."<sup>144</sup> On November 13, 1899, a fourth grandchild was born, Mary Whittle Moody. D. L. immediately telegraphed to her parents, "Thankful for good news. May she become famous in the Kingdom of Heaven

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<sup>143</sup>William Haven Daniels, *Moody: His Words, Work, and Workers* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1877), 503-4.

<sup>144</sup>Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 536.

is the prayer of her grandfather.”<sup>145</sup> No matter what the occasion, the one trademark of Moody’s blessed life was prayer.

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 541.



## CHAPTER THREE

### PRAYER IN THE EARLY LIFE, CONVERSION, AND CALL OF C. H. SPURGEON

#### **The Influence of Prayer in Spurgeon's Early Life**

Like D. L. Moody, Charles Haddon Spurgeon ranks as one of Christianity's spiritual giants. He was arguably the most influential preacher in England, as D. L. Moody was the most influential preacher in America during the 1800s. "He [Spurgeon] was great as a man; great as a theologian; great as a preacher; great in private with God and great in public with his fellow men."<sup>1</sup> In his childhood, he was well taught in prayer. This section will observe the people who disciplined Spurgeon to be great in private with God.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in Kelvedon, Essex, on June 19, 1834. He was the oldest of seventeen children, of which nine died in their infancy. Spurgeon's father was bivocational. During the week, John Spurgeon was a bookkeeper and preached to an independent congregation on Sundays. Soon after Spurgeon's birth, his parents moved to Colchester, and he was sent to Stambourne to live with his paternal grandparents. Spurgeon's grandfather, James Spurgeon, was a pastor of an independent congregation for nearly forty years. James had a profound impact on C. H. Spurgeon's formative years, especially in the area of spirituality. Spurgeon was humbly appreciative

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<sup>1</sup>James Douglas, *The Prince of Preachers: A Sketch, A Portraiture, and A Tribute* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 1.

of his godly heritage. He testified that he could view four generations and see “God has been pleased to hear the prayers of our grandfather’s father [Job Spurgeon], who used to supplicate with God that his children might live before Him to the last generation; and God has never deserted this house, and has been pleased to bring first one and then another to fear and love His name.”<sup>2</sup>

At eighteen months until six years of age, Charles Spurgeon lived with his grandparents, James and Lois Spurgeon. This provided an excellent opportunity for Charles to see firsthand a godly couple seeking precious communion with God. James Spurgeon was a wise man of God who preached with a powerful anointing for over fifty years. Charles Spurgeon remembered souls getting saved wherever his grandfather ministered.<sup>3</sup> Charles often watched his grandfather walk in the grass behind a high hedge near the sanctuary for thirty minutes or more before he mounted the pulpit. This left an indelible impression upon the mind of Charles Spurgeon, which he would later emulate before preaching in his church.<sup>4</sup> While preparing sermons, James would place Charles in a chair to read books like Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and Bunyan’s *Pilgrim Progress*.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 1834-1854 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1898), 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 31. When Charles became a preacher, people who had heard his grandfather preach came to hear him and said, “We would run our shoes off to hear a Spurgeon.”

<sup>4</sup>Russell Herman Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Boston: Hastings, 1892), 55. Spurgeon, 18.

<sup>5</sup>Spurgeon, 23. Charles said he read *Pilgrim’s Progress* over one hundred times. C. H. Spurgeon, *Pictures from Pilgrim’s Progress* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 5.

reading of these books exposed Charles at an early age to great men and women of God who lived holy lives. As a child, Spurgeon's reading imparted great theological understanding. He indicated, "I could discuss many of the knotty problems of controversial theology."<sup>6</sup>

While but a young child, Charles was given to living a Christian lifestyle. Along with reading the above spiritual classics, Spurgeon's spiritual feelings were stirred as he read the Scriptures at family prayer time.<sup>7</sup> No doubt, Charles was further drawn to God as he was often present while his grandfather counseled and prayed with his parishioners.<sup>8</sup> With boldness and authority, he confronted Christians who were living worldly lives to the disappointment of his grandfather. After hearing about a man in his grandfather's congregation who was setting a bad public example, Charles declared, "I'll kill Old Roads." James ignored this comment, but later Charles found Old Roads (a professor of religion) in public having a cigar and drinking a mug of beer when Charles confronted him asking, "What doest thou here Elijah? sitting with the ungodly; and you a member of a church and breaking your pastor's heart. I'm ashamed of you!"<sup>9</sup> Angry for a minute, the man put aside these vices and became a committed Christian.

Lois Spurgeon, Charles' grandmother, and Aunt Ann also impacted his life. His grandmother faithfully read her Bible, spoke often about the love of God, and gave him a

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<sup>6</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Come Ye Children* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1897), 99.

<sup>7</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 17.

<sup>8</sup>Arnold Dallimore, *C. H. Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 5.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.

penny for every hymn by Isaac Watts he learned.<sup>10</sup> On the day of her death, she remained at home, reading her Bible, and praying for her husband as he preached.<sup>11</sup> Her daughter, Ann, had the primary responsibility of looking after Charles. Ann was dearly loved by Charles as she spoiled him.<sup>12</sup> Charles was surrounded by love and encouraged by each family member.

The most striking incident in Charles' early childhood occurred during a visit by Richard Knil of Chester, a missionary for the London Missionary Society. He was a great soulwinner who visited Stambourne to preach. On a visit to the Spurgeon home at six in the morning, he heard Charles read the Scriptures during devotions. He gave Charles praise, won his confidence, and for three days presented the Gospel and prayed with Charles.<sup>13</sup> Knil described how good God had been to him, and then he prayed with his arms around Charles' neck that he might know and serve the Lord.<sup>14</sup> Just before his departure, Knil took Charles on his knee and prophesied to his family: "I know not how it is, but I feel a solemn presentiment that this child will preach the Gospel to thousands, and God will bless him with many souls."<sup>15</sup> This prophesy was later fulfilled. When

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<sup>10</sup>Richard Ellsworth Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1934), 29.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>13</sup>Douglas, 12.

<sup>14</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 34.

<sup>15</sup>Douglas, 12.

Spurgeon spoke at Rowland Hill's Chapel, he kept his promise and sang the hymn Reverend Knil had requested beginning:

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.<sup>16</sup>

At the age of nineteen, Charles corresponded with Knil by letter expressing his gratefulness for the kind words of encouragement shared with Charles when he was but a child. Charles penned, "Your words spoken in season have been good to me; and if I am of any use in the army of the living God, I owe it in great part to you that I ever enlisted in it. I am not nineteen yet; and need, and trust I shall have, a mention in your prayers."<sup>17</sup>

Exposure to visiting ministers and the influence of godly grandparents imprinted Christian values upon Charles' heart and mind for life.<sup>18</sup>

At the age of seven in 1841, Charles returned home to his Christian parents in Colchester. John, Charles' father, led his family in the reading of the Bible and prayers whenever he was at home.<sup>19</sup> However, he had to be away most of the time. Charles recalls a time when the fear of neglecting his family to win other souls gripped his father and caused him to immediately turn home. On returning home, he found Eliza pleading with God for the salvation of their children, especially for the strong-willed, first born,

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<sup>16</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 34.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Ray, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1903), 19.

<sup>19</sup>Conwell, 49.

Charles.<sup>20</sup> Without interrupting his wife, John felt at ease to go about his Father's business and returned to the revival.

Spurgeon often cited two reasons for who he was: (1) his praying mother, and (2) the message he proclaimed.<sup>21</sup> During his childhood, Charles heard the sweet name of Jesus daily as his earliest recollections of life included "the house of God, the family altar, the Holy Bible, the sacred song, and the fervent prayer."<sup>22</sup> Charles was overcome with gratitude for God allowing him to be the son of such a spiritual lady. He insisted,

I have not the powers of speech to set forth my salvation of the choice blessing which the Lord bestowed on me in making me the son of one who prayed for me and prayed with me. How can I ever forget when she bowed her knees and with her arms about my neck, prayed, "O, that my son might live before Thee!"<sup>23</sup>

Such a mother's tenderness, love, and care catches and holds her children's attention. They know she has their best interests in mind. James Archer, Charles' younger brother, saw his devout mother as the source of all blessings, by the grace of God, the Spurgeon family enjoyed.<sup>24</sup> Eliza faithfully cried out to God for the salvation and corresponding sanctification of her children. With prayerful hands, she rocked, fed, disciplined, and lifted the very souls of her children to God's watchcare.<sup>25</sup> Throughout his life, Charles

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<sup>20</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 69.

<sup>21</sup>John C. Carlile, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: The Religious Tract Society and the Kingsgate Press, 1933), 24.

<sup>22</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 67.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 69. See also Day, 39.

<sup>24</sup>William Y. Fullerton, *Charles H. Spurgeon: London's Most Popular Preacher* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 14.

<sup>25</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 102.

felt indebted to his mother for explaining the Bible verse by verse to him and then praying over him. Branded in his memory was one earnest prayer that was interceded as follows, "Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sin, it will not be from ignorance they perish and my soul must bear swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ."<sup>26</sup> One by one, each of the eight surviving children were saved in answer to a mother's prayer unto salvation.<sup>27</sup>

### **Prayer and the Conversion of C. H. Spurgeon**

Spurgeon's mother bearing witness against him stuck in his soul like a knife. He knew his protective parents deeply loved him. They carefully monitored his life, and he was "scarcely ever permitted to mingle with questionable associates, warned not to listen to anything profane or licentious, and taught the way of God."<sup>28</sup> Although he was not yet saved, Spurgeon was involved in several spiritual activities as a child and adolescent. He especially loved the discipline of prayer. He once published a magazine announcing a prayer meeting that he would conduct.<sup>29</sup> Charles could also be found in the hay-rick praying and reading aloud and occasionally preaching to his brother and sisters.<sup>30</sup> Instead of playing outside, Charles buried himself in reading books like Baxter's *Call to the*

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 68. Spurgeon referred to this incident in "Heaven and Hell," *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 1 (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1855), 307.

<sup>27</sup>Day, 40.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>29</sup>Fullerton, 12.

<sup>30</sup>Robert Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 30.

*Unconverted*, Richard Alleine's *Alarm*, and Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. Influenced by reading these books and the Bible, his mother's prayer to be a witness against him if he did not get saved, and his grandfather's description of the bottomless pit, Charles possessed a dire need for forgiveness. He described his heartfelt urgency saying, "If you would know a deep and bitter, and awful fear of the wrath of God, let me tell you what I felt as a boy."<sup>31</sup>

Spurgeon recalls hopelessly searching for the Lord and the peace a relationship with Him affords. Constantly convicted about his sin, he agonized in prayer. Remembering the first time he ever sincerely prayed, Spurgeon commented,

I came really to pray; and then I saw myself standing before God. . . . I was full of penitence of heart, because of His majesty and my sinfulness. I think the only words I could utter were something like these, 'Oh! Ah!' And the only complete sentence was, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' . . . I fell down in utter prostration of spirit; but there was in that prayer a true and real drawing near to God.<sup>32</sup>

On this occasion, he felt like his grandmother, who prayed for him often, looked down from heaven with elation and exclaimed, "Behold, he prayeth! behold, he prayeth!"<sup>33</sup> Despite his first "sincere prayer," Spurgeon prayed agonizingly with all his heart for six months without assurance of salvation.<sup>34</sup> Desiring to hear about salvation, Spurgeon decided to attend worship services all over Colchester. Spurgeon insisted he did not

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<sup>31</sup>Spurgeon, *Come Ye Children*, 24.

<sup>32</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 77.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle, Publisher, 1892), 28.



attend a worship service without prayer to God and that no one was more attentive than himself as he longed to be saved.<sup>35</sup> He was sadly disappointed that the preachers to whom he listened did not preach salvation, and his unforgiven sins continued to haunt him.

Spurgeon's soul-searching agony came to an end on January 6, 1850. Because of a snow storm, Spurgeon attended a Primitive Methodist Chapel in Colchester en route to the church he planned to attend. With fifteen people present waiting for the pastor who was late, a layman got up and began to read Isa. 45:22, which said, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Looking at Spurgeon, the man said, "You are in trouble and you need to look." The preacher continued looking at Spurgeon and declared, "Young man look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing else to do but to look and live."<sup>36</sup> At fifteen years of age, Charles Haddon Spurgeon looked and was born again. Spurgeon happily proclaimed, "Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away . . . and that moment I saw the Son; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him."<sup>37</sup> He was dramatically changed as his soul was flooded with the joy and peace that the Holy Spirit imputes at salvation. A few weeks before turning sixteen years old, Spurgeon was baptized on May 3, 1850. Writing to his mother, Spurgeon wished his mother a happy birthday and declared, "Your

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>36</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 106. See also Lorimer, 30-1.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

birthday will now be doubly memorable, for on the third day of May, the boy for whom you have so often prayed . . . your firstborn, will join the visible Church of the redeemed on earth . . . by open profession.”<sup>38</sup> On the morning of his baptismal service, Charles got up early for a couple of hours of quiet prayer and dedication to God.<sup>39</sup> Prior to, at the time of his salvation, and after, Spurgeon’s life was enveloped in prayer.

Spurgeon was baptized by W. H. Cantalow, pastor of the Isleham Baptist Church. His parents reluctantly allowed a Baptist to baptize him by immersion. Only five months later in Cambridge, Charles broke family tradition and became a Baptist. In a conversation with Charles, his mother shared, “Charles I have often prayed that you might be converted, but never asked that you might be a Baptist.”<sup>40</sup> With quick wit, Charles responded that the Lord answered his mother’s prayers with His usual bounty of giving her abundantly more than she requested.<sup>41</sup>

### Prayer and Spurgeon’s Call to the Ministry

Just as his mother prayed when he was a child, Charles ventured to live a committed life for his Lord. In his diary, he asked God to “Make me Thy faithful servant, O my God; may I honour Thee in my day and generation, and be forever consecrated to Thy service.”<sup>42</sup> Seeing this hunger for God, Satan attacked Charles’

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>39</sup>Shindler, 42.

<sup>40</sup>Day, 64. See also Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 69.

<sup>41</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 69.

<sup>42</sup>Ian Murray, ed., *The Early Years* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1902), 118.

assurance of forgiveness. He sought the prayerful support of those nearest him, knowing that he had surely been sincere when he repented of his sins. In a letter to his father, dated March 12, 1850, Charles thanked his parents for their many prayers, which he had requested beginning in January. He wrote,

Prayer is to me now what the sucking of milk was to me in my infancy. Although I do not always feel the same relish for it, yet I am sure I can not live without it.

When by sin overwhelm'd, shame covers my face,  
I look unto Jesus, who saves by His grace;  
I call on His name from the gulf of despair,  
And He plucks me from hell in answer to prayer.  
Prayer, sweet prayer!  
Be it ever so feeble, there's nothing like prayer.

Even the Slough of Despond can be passed by the supports of prayer and faith.<sup>43</sup>

An indicative sign of God's calling on his life was manifested as he began to share Jesus throughout his community. He revived a society for distributing tracts and was a captivating Sunday School teacher at Saint Andrew's Baptist Church in Cambridge where children and adults enjoyed hearing him teach.<sup>44</sup> He also became a member of the Lay Preachers' Association and acquired "a desire to devote himself to the work of God in a public way; and others had already perceived that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel."<sup>45</sup> Charles would soon realize God's calling in an even clearer and more intense manner.

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<sup>43</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 120.

<sup>44</sup>Shindler, 48.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 50.

Spurgeon was asked by James Vinter, the president of the Lay Preachers' Association, to go four miles away from Cambridge to Teversham to accompany a friend whom he thought to be the preacher that night. On the way to the meeting, Spurgeon wished God's blessings on his friend's sermon. Shocked by Spurgeon's sentiments, the young man nervously shared that he had never preached before, and Spurgeon responded likewise. Coming to terms with the absolute refusal of the other young man to preach, Spurgeon prayed for Divine help and was led by the Holy Spirit to preach the text, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (1 Pet. 2:7).<sup>46</sup> He trusted God to open his mouth in honor of His own dear Son.<sup>47</sup> With just a few farm laborers in attendance, Spurgeon successfully delivered his first sermon with the resounding question from the congregation of, "How old are you, young man?"<sup>48</sup> Despite his youthfulness in age and as a Christian, Charles decided that "Jesus was the object of my soul's desire, that for Him I hoped to live, and for Him I would be prepared to die."<sup>49</sup> Following this first opportunity of preaching, Spurgeon received many invitations to speak and was soon asked to pastor at Waterbeach in 1852. After many hours of prayer, he accepted the call.<sup>50</sup> Upon his arrival, the congregation grew from forty to one hundred. The people of Waterbeach fell instantly in love with Spurgeon as he reached out to everybody in their

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<sup>46</sup>Douglas, 40.

<sup>47</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 201.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 203.

<sup>50</sup>Day, 72.

community and boldly preached the Bible to the edification of the church. Spurgeon grew as he underwent “a thorough surrender to the will of Christ, continuously sustained in every area of life.”<sup>51</sup>

In the midst of his ministry at Waterbeach, family and friends encouraged Spurgeon to seek higher education. Joseph Angus of Stepney’s College arranged a meeting with Spurgeon at the home of Mr. MacMillan, the publisher. However, upon arrival, the servant girl escorted each man to a different room. After waiting for some time, each man’s patience ran out, and both returned home. En route home, a disappointed Spurgeon said he seemed to hear a voice that said, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!”<sup>52</sup> Spurgeon was filled with a greater appreciation for his loving and praying church at Waterbeach and was led to renounce college training, vowing to preach the Word as long as he had strength.<sup>53</sup> The Waterbeach congregation was elated that God answered their prayer, ““Lord, keep him here!””<sup>54</sup> He wrote to his father and mother explaining his decision and requested prayer for wisdom as he led the awakened Waterbeach congregation. He presented his need for their prayers by expressing, “I need your prayers doubly at this time, I know I shall have them and I believe I have felt the blessing of them more than once. . . . Get everyone you can to pray

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>54</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 246.

for me; a prayer is more precious than gold, it makes me rich.”<sup>55</sup> Spurgeon was dependent on God for any advancement in ministry. He was led not to seek great things for himself in the way of academic accolades.<sup>56</sup> As a result, he was prepared for promotion by the grace of God whose Word instructs, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5:6). Skipping the supposed prerequisite of higher education for advancement, Spurgeon was ready for lifelong personal obscurity and poverty in his humble charge at Waterbeach.<sup>57</sup>

Providential circumstances, which led to success, were commonplace in the life of Charles Spurgeon. In 1853 he spoke at the annual Cambridge Sunday School Associational Meeting. A young man, George Gould, heard him preach and returned to London encouraging Thomas Olney, a deacon of New Park Street Baptist Chapel, to invite him to preach. Passionately persuaded, Olney invited Spurgeon to preach in December 1853, and the church was touched by his preaching. After filling the pulpit three more times, the members of New Park Street Baptist Chapel were impressed by his anointed extemporaneous preaching and prayers. Spurgeon talked to God with the utmost respect. Speaking to God as a parent, Spurgeon’s “prayer was the instinct of his

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 247.

<sup>56</sup>William Williams, *Personal Reminiscences of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, second edition (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1895), 159; quoted in Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 197. Later in life, Spurgeon refused an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree replying, “To tell the truth, I wouldn’t give you a two pence for a bushel of ‘em.” Also, Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 242. Spurgeon thanked the Lord for providence that led his steps in another path than the college route.

<sup>57</sup>Day, 84.

soul and the atmosphere of his life. It was his vital breath and native air.”<sup>58</sup> George Lorimer commented that it seemed that Spurgeon “preached well, because he had prayed well,” and this captivated the people to listen to his messages as they were drawn in by his supplications.<sup>59</sup>

After receiving a six-month probationary period invitation to New Park Street Baptist Chapel, he requested that the period be reduced to three months. Spurgeon did not want the church to suffer through a long period of his presence if it was not ordained by God. Spurgeon also urged the people to “wrestle in prayer to God that I may be sustained in this great work.”<sup>60</sup> The church rapidly grew and voted to suspend the probationary period. Spurgeon’s prayer for the windows of heaven to be opened was answered.<sup>61</sup> After attending a service at New Park Street Baptist Chapel, Sheridan Knowles, a famous actor and play writer, instructed his students to “go and hear him at once if you want to know how to preach. His name is Charles Spurgeon. He is only a boy, but he is the most wonderful preacher in the world.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Dinsdale T. Young, *C. H. Spurgeon’s Prayers* (New York: Revell, 1906), vi.

<sup>59</sup>Lorimer, 62.

<sup>60</sup>Shindler, 67.

<sup>61</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), 129.

<sup>62</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 354.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PASTOR-EVANGELIST, CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON'S ANOINTED MINISTRY

#### Prayer and the Preaching of Charles Spurgeon

There is little wonder why contemporaries called Spurgeon the "Prince of Preachers." Colin Chadwick labeled Spurgeon's preaching ministry, "A preaching career without parallel in modern history."<sup>1</sup> Before Spurgeon was twenty years old, he preached over six hundred times. His sermons sold over twenty-five thousand copies a week and were translated into forty languages.<sup>2</sup> "His collected sermons fill sixty-three volumes equivalent to the twenty-seven volume ninth edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and remains the largest set of books by a single author in the history of Christianity."<sup>3</sup> Spurgeon's son, Charles, insisted, "There was no one who could preach like my father. In inexhaustible variety, witty wisdom, vigorous proclamation, loving entreaty, and lucid teaching with a multitude of other qualities, he must, at least in my opinion, ever be regarded as the prince of preachers."<sup>4</sup> There were many factors suggested for Spurgeon's

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<sup>1</sup>Colin Chadwick, no original source indicated; quoted in Lewis Brastow, *Representative Modern Preachers* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), 387.

<sup>2</sup>Lynn May, Jr., "The Impact of One Life: Charles Haddon Spurgeon," in *Baptist History and Heritage* 14, no. 2 (Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1984).

<sup>3</sup>Eric Hayden, "Did You Know?" in *Christian History* 10, no. 29, 2.

<sup>4</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 1854-1860 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1899), 278.



success as a preacher. An extraordinary voice was one of Spurgeon's greatest assets.<sup>5</sup> As J. C. Carlile states, "Mr. Spurgeon could talk to music, his voice was probably the most wonderful voice God ever made."<sup>6</sup> Without amplification, Spurgeon worked tediously on voice projection, making his enunciation and articulation clear enough to be heard by thousands.<sup>7</sup> An editor to the *London Times* who heard Spurgeon preach, wrote, "The preacher held us spell bound for about two hours . . . his voice, its power and volume are sufficient to reach everyone in that vast assembly."<sup>8</sup> He spoke the common language of the people without oratorical effort. Weekly, Spurgeon used his clarion voice to preach the Gospel to throngs of people and saw his church grow to a membership of 5,427 in 1882, which made it "the largest evangelical church in the world."<sup>9</sup>

Dr. John Cairns, a scholar and a golden-mouthed preacher, rejoiced more in hearing Spurgeon's prayers than his sermons.<sup>10</sup> While Spurgeon knew he was gifted with a special voice, he was wholly aware of the need for supernatural power. Spurgeon prayed for his hearers to be divinely impressed as the Spirit of God spoke during worship

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<sup>5</sup>John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 292.

<sup>6</sup>John C. Carlile, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: The Religious Tract Society and the Kingsgate Press, 1933), 208.

<sup>7</sup>Craig Skinner, *Lamplighter and Son* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984), 485.

<sup>8</sup>Spurgeon, 248.

<sup>9</sup>Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 285-6.

<sup>10</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Prayers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 1.

services.<sup>11</sup> Spurgeon further acknowledged that prayer is one discipline, which aids the delivery of a message; and nothing can so powerfully prepare a preacher as descending from communion with God to speak to men.<sup>12</sup> Speaking to the Metropolitan congregation, Spurgeon emphasized his intentional avoidance of trying to be eloquent or oratorically polished in his sermons.<sup>13</sup> He labored in prayer for his God-given abilities to be empowered by God for eternal results to occur.

A second frequently suggested factor for Spurgeon's effectiveness was his clear presentation of the Gospel. The Gospel Spurgeon loved to proclaim was "the gospel of salvation by grace, through faith in the precious blood of Jesus, the gospel that tells of redeeming love and Jesus' power to save."<sup>14</sup> Simply put, the focus of Spurgeon's sermons was on one person, Jesus. Spurgeon taught that "the sermon which does not lead to Christ, or of which Jesus Christ is not the top and the bottom, is a sort of sermon that will make the devils in hell laugh, but might make the angels of God weep."<sup>15</sup> Spurgeon cried out for his hearers to "know Jesus. Sit at His feet. Consider His nature, His work, His suffering, His glory. Rejoice in His presence, and commune with Him

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>12</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), 45.

<sup>13</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "Simple Fact and Simple Faith," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 63 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1980): 31.

<sup>14</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 4, 1878-1892 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1900), 378.

<sup>15</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "How to Read the Bible," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 25 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1980): 634.

from day to day.”<sup>16</sup> He heralded forth the simple Gospel and urged saints to grow in their intimacy with Jesus by engaging in communion with Him day by day.

In preparation for messages, Spurgeon read many books and was well informed about many fields. He would sit for hours praying and waiting for the text and topic God wanted him to preach.<sup>17</sup> Spurgeon considered prayer the main part of his study.<sup>18</sup> Prayer over the Scripture will bless the pleading preacher and those he addresses.<sup>19</sup> Spurgeon treasured the revelatory power of the Bible and its life-giving truth above all other books. He based his ministry upon the infallible, inerrant Word of God. When standing to deliver his sermons, G. Holden Pike exclaimed, “The scripture is read as by a man who believes it; every word clear, with here and there a comment, to give the sense, and cause the people to understand the meaning.”<sup>20</sup> Spurgeon entreated his people to be walking Bibles. While reading his sermons, it was evident Spurgeon meditated, memorized, and possessed “a genuine faith in the Word of God and its power to save.”<sup>21</sup> Before preaching, he wanted to understand each passage in order to correctly teach and apply it. Confused about a difficult passage, Spurgeon referred to the aid of commentaries. He

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<sup>16</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *All Around Ministry* (London: Billing and Sons, Ltd., 1960), 52.

<sup>17</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 4, 65.

<sup>18</sup>Richard Ellsworth Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1934).

<sup>19</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 86.

<sup>20</sup>Godfrey Holden Pike, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (New York: Funk and Wagnall Company, 1892), ix.

<sup>21</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 343.

asked God to illumine the passage by crying out, “O Lord! teach me what this means; and it is marvelous how a hard flinty text struck out with the steel of prayer.”<sup>22</sup>

Coupled with knowing the Word, Spurgeon taught the necessity of divine unction to effectively communicate the Gospel. To receive this effectual touch, one must commune with God. Spurgeon insisted that if a preacher will “be much with God in holy dialogue, letting Him speak to you by His Word while you speak back to Him by your prayer and praises . . . you will obtain force.”<sup>23</sup> In a message entitled, “How to Attract a Congregation,” Spurgeon further explained to his students why a preacher’s sermon is sometimes without effect.

Sometimes the sermon is dull because the preacher has not done his best to gather things new and old, and at other times because he has not waited upon the Lord in prayer, and so has not drawn upon the fresh springs which are found only in the eternal hills. Work hard at your sermons . . . pray the Holy Spirit to anoint them with fresh oil for so they will never be barren or unprofitable.<sup>24</sup>

Despite one’s homiletical ability or gifts, Spurgeon realized a message is going to have eternal value only if it is bathed in sincere, yearning, desirous prayer for quickening power. His personal testimony in the Tabernacle was “Next to the Holy Spirit who sets

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<sup>22</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, quoted in George Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Blakeman and Co., 1857), 74-5.

<sup>23</sup>Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, 340.

<sup>24</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “How to Attract a Congregation,” *The Sword and the Trowel* (August 1883), 27.

us praying and sets us working, I owe prosperity in preaching the gospel to the gospel that I preach.”<sup>25</sup>

When preparing for a sermon, it would be expedient to follow Spurgeon’s pearl of experiential wisdom and “stoop before God that we may conquer amongst men.”<sup>26</sup>

Truly, for over forty years, the Metropolitan congregation experienced revival by adhering to the call for prayer. Similar awakenings will not occur in churches until agonizing prayer is offered by preachers and the laity to God Who makes our ministries flourish.<sup>27</sup>

A special move of God transpired on Spurgeon’s second trip to New Park Street Baptist Chapel. The church asked him to fill the pulpit in January, and by the end of the month, he was asked to consider a call. On April 28, 1854, Spurgeon answered the invitation to pastor New Park Street Baptist Chapel. In his acceptance letter to the church, Spurgeon requested the members to be in earnest prayer for him that he may understand and be equipped for this divine responsibility. He was humbled and grateful that this city church would call him at the young age of twenty. Emphasizing his dependence on prayerful support for a second time in his letter, Spurgeon asked the church to “remember my youth and inexperience, pray that these may not hinder my

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<sup>25</sup>Robert Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1892), 136.

<sup>26</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, quoted in Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 209 (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992). William Williams, *Personal Reminiscences of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, rev. and ed. Marguerite Williams (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 198.

<sup>27</sup>William B. Riley, *The Perennial Revival: A Plea for Evangelism* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1916), 51.

usefulness.”<sup>28</sup> The church had greatly dwindled; and, according to church records, the situation looked bleak before Spurgeon arrived. However, there were several people in the church who persistently prayed for revival.<sup>29</sup>

### Prayer and the Metropolitan Tabernacle

Wonders can be accomplished with just a few praying people. Spurgeon inherited a praying church. Etched in his memory was their earnest manner of praying. Spurgeon described the members’ prayers as follows.

Sometimes, they seemed to plead as though they could really see the Angel of the covenant present with them, and as if they must have a blessing from Him. More than once, we were all so awe-struck with the solemnity of the meeting, that we sat silent for some moments while the Lord’s power appeared to overshadow us; and all I could do on such occasions was to pronounce the Benediction, and say, “Dear friends, we have had the Spirit of God here very manifestly tonight; let us go home, and take care not to lose His gracious influences.”<sup>30</sup>

Upon his arrival, the church immediately began to grow seeing many souls converted. In one year, His blessing of new additions increased until there was no more room available. In February of 1855, the congregation moved to Exeter Hall for morning services and later to the larger Music Hall at the Royal Surrey Gardens where crowds continued to grow in proportion to the facility provided.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, the church constructed the five

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<sup>28</sup>Godfrey Holden Pike, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle; or An Historical Account of the Society* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1870), 10.

<sup>29</sup>Susannah Spurgeon and J. W. Harrald, comp. and ed., *The Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1898), 339.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>31</sup>Pike, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle; or An Historical Account of the Society*, 146-7.

thousand five hundred seat Metropolitan Tabernacle beginning on August 16, 1859 and completed in March 1861.<sup>32</sup> Most appropriately, the Tabernacle, which had been built for a house of prayer, was opened with a meeting for prayer.<sup>33</sup> Spurgeon quickly pointed out his dependence on prayer by indicating, “We have not begun, we have not continued, we have not ended anything without prayer.”<sup>34</sup>

Thus, from the outset of Spurgeon’s ministry, prayer was a secret behind the leadership and growth in the Tabernacle.<sup>35</sup> Each Sunday with a charming voice, Spurgeon stood in his pulpit and invited, “Let us commence the worship of God by prayer.”<sup>36</sup> He challenged the congregation to see prayer as an integral part of worship, which pleases God and brings results for His glory. Spurgeon explained that without prayer, a church will be cold, complacent, and lifeless.<sup>37</sup> When people pray for their pastor and their church, they are more likely to listen because they have joined in his supplications.<sup>38</sup> Encouraging involvement in regular seasons of prayer, Spurgeon taught that prayer and the fervency of one’s spiritual pilgrimage were bound together. He

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<sup>32</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1876), 78-9.

<sup>33</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 1856-1878 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1899), 4.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 4, 243.

<sup>35</sup>Day, 224.

<sup>36</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 235.

<sup>37</sup>Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, 355.

<sup>38</sup>George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle, Publisher, 1892), 62.

believed prayer “is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, and the honor of a Christian.”<sup>39</sup> Spurgeon asserted, “A prayerless church member is a hindrance, he is in the body like a rotting bone or a decayed tooth. . . . Brethren, let it not be so with any one of you.”<sup>40</sup> The church was disciplined to pray because all strength to live a God honoring, Christian life is found in prayer.<sup>41</sup>

As taught, the Tabernacle members cried out for God’s blessings, and the church prospered numerically and spiritually. This did not surprise Spurgeon, who expected growth when the people prayed. Deacon Olney, a dedicated leader at the Tabernacle, witnessed firsthand Spurgeon’s practice to always “give glory to God first, and then to the praying people.”<sup>42</sup> During the celebration of his fiftieth birthday, Spurgeon addressed the question of why the Tabernacle had been so blessed. He shared, “We have not prayed as we should; but, still, we have so prayed as to prevail; and we wish it to be on record that we owe our success, as a church to the work of the Holy Spirit, principally through His leading us to pray.”<sup>43</sup>

What were some of the ways prayer was practiced among the laity at the Tabernacle? Conscious of the power of prayer, the pastor commenced the year 1866

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<sup>39</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 2.

<sup>40</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Intercessory Prayer,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 18 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1971): 255.

<sup>41</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Daniel: A Pattern for Pleaders.” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 61 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1980): 527.

<sup>42</sup>Shindler, 118.

<sup>43</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 4, 243.



with a month of revival services undergirded by a day of prayer and fasting at the Tabernacle.<sup>44</sup> One attender noted that the atmosphere was charged with prayer as “six thousand souls filled the Tabernacle. Earnest addresses were delivered, sobbed out petitions presented to the throne of Grace, and the Holy Ghost descended, making saints feel their miserable insignificance and sinners their wretched condition, as unsaved and undone.”<sup>45</sup> The success of this meeting caused the church to anxiously await an annual week of prayer at the beginning of each new year. Thousands of people regularly attended the Tabernacle’s prayer meetings each Monday night. Spurgeon never studied or had notes for these meetings as he spoke extempore.<sup>46</sup> The prayer meetings were a real source of power for this church as God’s blessings showered down.

The movement of prayer did not exist only within the adult population of the Tabernacle. Spurgeon began a young people’s prayer meeting on Mondays one hour before the churchwide prayer meeting. It was a tremendous success with an approximate average of seven hundred.<sup>47</sup> Spurgeon loved the young people and attended their prayer meeting whenever possible. When away from the Tabernacle, he wrote to his youth on a regular basis. One of his letters intimated, “I was much encouraged by the prayerful attention and deep feeling which I saw last Monday in many of you. It filled me with great hope concerning you. I see that you desire to have your sins forgiven and to escape

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<sup>44</sup>Henry D. Northrop, *Life and Works of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon* (Chicago: Memorial Publishing, 1892), 84.

<sup>45</sup>Drummond, 446.

<sup>46</sup>Day, 132.

<sup>47</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 115.

from the wrath of God, and I am therefore rejoiced.”<sup>48</sup> In his correspondence with the youth, he was evangelistically confrontational. Spurgeon penned such phrases as “be warned,” “you’re standing over the mouth of hell,” and “will the time of decision never come” to those who were not saved.<sup>49</sup> Spurgeon won the hearts of the youth as a result of spending time with and praying with them.<sup>50</sup> He beckoned the saved youth to “be watchful for the souls of others.”<sup>51</sup> Needless to say, many young people came to know Jesus during these youth prayer meetings.

Whether it was the youth or adult members gathering in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, the one spiritual discipline that characterized the church was prayer. After attending an anointed service, an American visiting Spurgeon’s church shook his head and said he had one simple question for Spurgeon. In an interviewer’s fashion, the American asked, “What is the secret of your influence?” Spurgeon paused and answered, “My people pray for me.”<sup>52</sup> He did not mean prayer in the normal manner but striving with God until He answered.<sup>53</sup> His understanding of the vital necessity of prayer support and personal prayer was perhaps the clearest insight into his greatness as a preacher.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 118-21.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>52</sup>James Douglas, *The Prince of Preachers: A Sketch, A Portraiture, and A Tribute* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 143.

<sup>53</sup>Arnold Dallimore, *C. H. Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 49.

<sup>54</sup>Drummond, 310.

Fervently, the congregation sought God in prayer. Revival began at the New Park Street Baptist Chapel and continued throughout Spurgeon's ministry at the Tabernacle.<sup>55</sup> However, the question arises, "Could Spurgeon himself pray?"<sup>56</sup> There seems to be unanimous consent that Spurgeon was a prayer giant. From liturgical worshipers to more spirited worshipers, Spurgeon was recognized for his anointed prayers. A British high churchman attended a service at Spurgeon's Tabernacle and wrote an article describing the reasons for Spurgeon's success. Among the six reasons noted was, "He is evidently a man of prayer."<sup>57</sup> Conversely, Professor J. P. Fruit felt, "When Spurgeon prayed, it seemed as if Jesus stood right beside him."<sup>58</sup> Spurgeon seemed to be in continual communion with his Master.

Repeatedly, visitors to the Tabernacle made reference to his beautiful pulpit prayers. Oftentimes, parishioners felt God spoke to them more during his prayers than in his preaching. A pastor of fifty years wrote to Spurgeon indicating he had told two other ministers about his planned visit to the Tabernacle. They called Spurgeon a mountebank. The minister replied, "Before you got half-way through your prayer, I said to myself, 'This lad is no mountebank.'"<sup>59</sup> Only half a prayer validated Spurgeon's ministry in the heart of this older pastor. Renowned evangelist, D. L. Moody, also remarked that he was

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<sup>55</sup>Day, 224.

<sup>56</sup>Drummond, 29.

<sup>57</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Full Harvest, 1861-1892* (London: Banner of Truth, 1962), 68-9.

<sup>58</sup>Day, 222.

<sup>59</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 4, 160.

blessed each time he heard Spurgeon preach; but he was more impressed when he heard Spurgeon pray.<sup>60</sup> The resounding consensus pertaining to the power of Spurgeon's pulpit prayers continued at a memorial service for ministers and students shortly after Spurgeon's death. Reverend Herbert Evans, chairman of the Congregational Union, shared that he had preached several times at the Tabernacle; and each time he left with the conviction that "Spurgeon was the strongest believer in prayer I ever met . . . it is prayer throughout the place."<sup>61</sup>

Few things delighted Spurgeon like praying to God from the platform of the Tabernacle. In his prayers, it was evident that he had talked heart-to-heart with his Master on a regular basis. When asked about his method of prayer in the Tabernacle, he avowed he saw his nearest approaches to heaven transpire while he prayed on the platform. He felt "lifted up, even to the very presence of the great God, as he stood there praying with his people, whom he loved so well."<sup>62</sup> Spurgeon talked with God humbly and reverently with an earnestness, a solemnity, and an appreciation that only the Holy Spirit could actuate as he spoke to his listening Father. Spurgeon's manner of prayer was molded by his belief that "the keys of heaven swing at the girdle of the man who knows how to pray . . . prompted by the Spirit of God, first purified by the Savior,--and offered by a man who knows that the Father himself loveth him."<sup>63</sup> Definitively, the real source

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>61</sup>Shindler, 138.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>63</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "Pray Always Pray," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (November 3, 1878), 481.

of Spurgeon's power was God. The element that led the Source of his power was prayer (corporate and personal) according to Spurgeon. He demonstrated this belief by habitually requesting the prayers of others and continually praying throughout his converted life.<sup>64</sup> It appears providential that the last day Spurgeon preached, he read a portion of his sermon entitled, "Let Us Pray," which consisted of three subdivisions: "(1) Prayer explains mysteries; (2) Prayer brings deliverance; and (3) Prayer obtains promises."<sup>65</sup> Ironically, the reason for Spurgeon's success was a mystery to many, he was a vessel used by God to bring the message of deliverance to millions, and he declared that the promises of God he so abundantly received were a result of prayer. Fittingly, prayer was "the last act of worship at the last service he ever conducted" on January 17, 1892, Amen!<sup>66</sup>

#### **Prayer Revival of 1857-8 and Its Impact on Spurgeon's Ministry**

The Prayer Revival of 1857-8 was borne out of prayer and continued by the means of prayer meetings. Orr concluded that the Prayer Movement of 1858 was unlike any other revival in American history, with the exception of the Great Awakening, in that this revival became worldwide.<sup>67</sup> Orr estimated that the revival lasted fifty years with its effects going on and on. Every facet of American society seemed driven to pray, and

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<sup>64</sup>Shindler, 118.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>67</sup>James Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in America* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952), 20.

approximately fifty thousand conversions transpired weekly with an average of ten thousand added to the churches nationwide every week for two years.<sup>68</sup> Overall, Orr figures there were two million converts worldwide.<sup>69</sup>

Keith Hardman refers briefly to the Third Great Awakening and explains that historians have often overlooked this period because of the lack of fanaticism and major personalities responsible for this movement.<sup>70</sup> It was a cross denominational, evangelical revival fueled by the prayers of laity and empowered by the sovereign hand of God. “Its significance spread across the Atlantic and affected the British Isles greatly, and the men and women it enlisted for Christian service were powerful leaders in the years ahead.”<sup>71</sup> Along with Samuel Garrett, Henry Varley, Baptist Noel, Andrew Bonar, and Horatio Bonar, Spurgeon was listed among the pastoral evangelists of the Awakening.<sup>72</sup>

Riding the crest of the Prayer Revival of 1857-8, Spurgeon built the Metropolitan Tabernacle.<sup>73</sup> While Spurgeon’s London ministry commenced five years before the Third Great Awakening with revival-like results, it is not coincidental that the Tabernacle was begun in 1859 when the spiritual atmosphere was electric. England’s spiritual climate was touched by the prayer revival, and people gathered to pray with an

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 31-3.

<sup>69</sup>James Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: The Moody Press, 1974), 199.

<sup>70</sup>Keith Hardman, *The Spiritual Awakeners* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 188.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858*, 119.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 122.

expectancy to see God move mightily in their midst. Spurgeon asserted, "The times of refreshing from the Lord have at last dawned upon our land. Everywhere there are signs of aroused activity and increased earnestness. A spirit of prayer is visiting our churches."<sup>74</sup> Drummond says ministering during this classical revival explained much of Spurgeon's effectiveness.<sup>75</sup> In 1860, Spurgeon contended that for six years the church has experienced showers of unrelenting blessings, and at this time, the number of conversions and the zeal of the church are ever growing.<sup>76</sup>

Spurgeon was openly against revivalism that suggested the power to convert men rested in the hand of a man. He firmly believed revival was a genuine work of God and prescribed prayer and faith in regards to seeing a genuine revival occur.<sup>77</sup> In 1873, Spurgeon warmly embraced Moody and distinguished his labors from revivalism.<sup>78</sup> Although he was suspicious of revivals, Spurgeon saw the life and force of the prayer movement "breaking out in many new places in new works for the Lord Jesus."<sup>79</sup> Evidence of the prayer revival's movement could be seen between 1860 and 1870 in England. During this period, Baptist churches grew in London by 60 percent and over

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<sup>74</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit* (London and Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1859), 5; quoted in Arnold Dallimore, *C. H. Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 83.

<sup>75</sup>Drummond, 263.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>77</sup>Ian H. Murray, *Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 407.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Bible and the Newspaper* (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1973), 109.

half of the two hundred fifty thousand members polled were in church as a result of the revival.<sup>80</sup> Drummond believes Spurgeon knew the prayer revival was a primary reason for his early ministry's success, and he deeply desired it for all Britain.<sup>81</sup> In 1909, fifty years after the prayer revival, Reverend Archibald Brown recalled the days of God's special blessings. He declared, "Let it be remembered that C. H. Spurgeon was living in that revival age . . . when was this building reared? . . . when the flames of revival were sweeping through all London."<sup>82</sup> In agreement with historians, laity, and preachers, Spurgeon and Moody were keenly aware that their respective ministries flourished in large part as a result of the prayer revival's spiritually-charged atmosphere. Spurgeon knew prayer was vital for individuals to be renewed by the Lord. In 1877 Spurgeon asked, "What can we do without your prayers? They link us with the omnipotence of God. Like the lightning rod, they pierce the clouds and bring down the mighty and mysterious power from on high."<sup>83</sup>

### Personal Prayer Life of C. H. Spurgeon

Talking to God was one of the delights of Spurgeon's life. He realized the importance of a disciplined prayer life. When writing commentary notes on Luke 11:9,

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<sup>80</sup>Skinner, 47. In the 1860s Spurgeon filled the Tabernacle with eight thousand children for Rayson Hammond to address. Seventeen years later, Rayson returned, and many of the converts were main leaders in the church.

<sup>81</sup>Drummond, 271.

<sup>82</sup>Skinner, 47.

<sup>83</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The God of Peace and Our Sanctification," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 23 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1979), 445.



he insisted that prayer is not a vain exercise, it is heard and answered.<sup>84</sup> Lewis Drummond comments, "It must be remembered that though he [Spurgeon] did not spend long hours in prayer, he lived in a constant attitude of prayer. . . . Prayer became such a vital part of Spurgeon's life that he simply breathed the atmosphere of God's presence."<sup>85</sup> During a message in 1860, Spurgeon said, "My own soul's conviction is that prayer is the grandest power in the entire universe, that it has a more omnipotent force than electricity, attraction, gravitation, or any other of those other secret forces which men have called by name, but which they do not understand."<sup>86</sup> His fervent prayer life was a prominent aspect of his ministry. Spurgeon wholly leaned upon God as he knew "All our strength lies in prayer."<sup>87</sup> He realized, "When we depend upon our money, our teaching, our preaching, we get what these can do . . . but when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do."<sup>88</sup> This attitude toward prayer spilled over into every area of his life.

Spurgeon did not depend on his personal strength or gifts. He trusted in God and praised Him for His promises available for all. Prayer should be an earnest asking of God's promises. Spurgeon compared his method of praying to cashing a check at a bank. He explained, "If I go to a bank, I pass my check across the counter, take up my money,

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<sup>84</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Devotional Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 558.

<sup>85</sup>Drummond, 573.

<sup>86</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "True Prayer--True Power," *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 6 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), 336.

<sup>87</sup>Spurgeon, "Daniel: A Pattern for Pleaders," 527.

<sup>88</sup>Curtis Hudson, comp., *Great Preaching on Prayer* (Murfreesboro: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1988), 1.

and go about my business; that is the best way of praying.”<sup>89</sup> Believing the promises of the Bible, Spurgeon asked and received them by faith. He went from his knees singing with a heart of gratefulness to God for keeping His promises. Because just as sure as a person is saved when believing in Jesus, “if a promise is made to prayer, to holiness, to reading the Word, to abiding in Christ, or whatever else it may be, give thy heart and soul to the thing commanded, that the blessing may become thine.”<sup>90</sup> Spurgeon described prayer as the fluttering of angel wings on their way to bring us the promises of heaven.<sup>91</sup> However, if one is to be the beneficiary of heaven’s promises, prayer will foreshadow his blessing just as the cloud foreshadows rain.<sup>92</sup> Pleading the promises in prayer and accepting them by faith, Spurgeon received answers to his prayers. In fact, if all the answers to his prayers were recorded, they would fill a volume.<sup>93</sup>

### Manner of Prayer

Spurgeon exhibited a childlike faith when he approached his all-providing God in conversation. Acknowledging God’s sovereignty, Spurgeon was “given continually to prayerful intercourse with the Heavenly Father.”<sup>94</sup> He apparently viewed nothing too

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<sup>89</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *According to Promise* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 69.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>91</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Gems* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 10.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup>Shindler, 11.

<sup>94</sup>Lorimer, 52.

small to bring before God in prayer. Susannah witnessed that he rarely even penned a letter without raising his heart to Christ.<sup>95</sup> During one period of sickness, this practice was exhibited when he wrote to fellow ministers challenging them to practice greater diligence in their ministry, especially in the area of prayer. He began his letter by saying, "I pray that every word I write may be approved of God, and may be, by the Holy Ghost, rendered serviceable to you."<sup>96</sup> At Spurgeon's funeral service, Reverend A. T. Pierson recalled Spurgeon's last prayer before going to Mentone. Pierson described Spurgeon's prayer like Zinzendorf's who, at the age of five, threw love letters to Jesus out the window.<sup>97</sup> Like a child going to his earthly father asking for help, Spurgeon went to His heavenly Father and left his case with God. He asserted there was no middle ground in living. Believing there was no middle ground in depending upon his Creator or man, Spurgeon's manifest reliance was upon God.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Day, 223.

<sup>96</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 156.

<sup>97</sup>Shindler, 199. See also Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 239. Spurgeon was influenced by Müller's prayer life when visiting him. He said, "The simple childlike holy trust of Müller was overpowering. He is not a sanctimonious person; but full of real joy, and sweet peace, and innocent pleasure." This was Spurgeon's description after seeing Müller reprimanded by a man for taking what the other man thought too "trifling a matter" to present to the Lord.

<sup>98</sup>Lewis Brastow, *Representative Modern Preachers* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), 405.

### Naturalness of Prayer

Total dependence on the Master caused Spurgeon to be noted for his prayerfulness.<sup>99</sup> Rarely does it appear that much time ever elapsed that Spurgeon was not engaged in a time of prayer. Pastor Harry Abraham described how George Rogers and Spurgeon were kidding one another and then entered into a time of prayer and praise. Between the playfulness and prayer, there was no apparent abrupt transition, no uneasiness--but naturalness and equal joy to enter into conversation with their mutual best Friend.<sup>100</sup>

Another abrupt from activity to prayer occurred when American Minister, Wayland Holt, described an experience of walking in the woods with Spurgeon. During their walk, Spurgeon suggested they pray. Instantly, he lifted an earnest prayer to God and continued on their excursion. Holt recounts, "The prayer was no parenthesis interjected. It was something that belonged as much to the habit of his mind as breathing did to the habit of his body."<sup>101</sup>

Although Spurgeon did not spend long periods of time in prayer, second after second, minute after minute, he desired to maintain a heart of prayer.<sup>102</sup> In Spurgeon's life, prayer was as vital as the beating of his heart.<sup>103</sup> Taking the advice he exhorted

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<sup>99</sup>Day, 223.

<sup>100</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 355.

<sup>101</sup>W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), 179.

<sup>102</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "Unseasonable Prayer," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 49 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1971), 476.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

others to follow, Spurgeon worked as one who stayed close to God, whose very breath was prayer, and whose dependence upon heavenly assistance blessed his work for God.<sup>104</sup>

### Prayer and Soulwinning

To Spurgeon, the “chief business” of the Christian and the “main pursuit” of every Christian was soulwinning.<sup>105</sup> He taught that a soulwinner cannot quicken the soul, but the Holy Spirit will use the Word he shares to draw people to Jesus.<sup>106</sup> When teaching people about fulfilling the Great Commission, Spurgeon explained the parallel truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.<sup>107</sup> God has chosen man to speak to his fellow man, and He will draw men to Himself by the Gospel. Spurgeon exclaimed that he did not envy Gabriel in heaven as he could not think of anything making him happier than being on earth fulfilling his Master’s will in winning souls for Him.<sup>108</sup> Spurgeon declared my main business is being used in the winning of souls.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Let Us Pray,” *Messages to the Multitude* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Company, 1892), 22.

<sup>105</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Pa.: Whitaker House, 1995), 9.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>107</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 155. See also Lorimer, 82.

<sup>108</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Resurrection for the Just and Unjust,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 59 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1979), 140.

<sup>109</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Scriptural Salvation,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 36 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 277.

Spurgeon questioned the salvation of those who would not attempt to lead others to Christ.<sup>110</sup> He preached that one cannot be assured of his salvation if he has no desire for others to be saved.<sup>111</sup> Comparing the apathy of those who do not work for souls to Ishmael being born of the flesh, Spurgeon said if one was truly God's child, "His heart's prayers would go up for the progress of the Kingdom, his heart would be in anguish for those not converted to God in his family, and he would be joyful when souls were converted."<sup>112</sup> Spurgeon believed that when one failed to reach out to the lost after prayer and Bible study, he possessed at best a "superficial spirituality."<sup>113</sup> If we live near to God, we will exhibit a love for the souls of men. As his parents had prayed, the love of Christ did continually constrain Spurgeon to search for lost souls.<sup>114</sup> To walk with Christ meant to pray and reach out at all costs.

He taught that Christians should agonize, weep, and plead for souls. When results are not seen, the soulwinner should tell the Lord, "I have prayed for them, I have talked to them, I have wept over them, I bear them on my heart as a burden. Their very name seems to burn itself with letters into my soul. Lord, save them! Lord, save them, and

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<sup>110</sup>Spurgeon, *The Bible and the Newspaper*, 60.

<sup>111</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "She Was Not Hid," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 34 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 222.

<sup>112</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The Two Lives," *According to Promise* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 16.

<sup>113</sup>Drummond, 574.

<sup>114</sup>George Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Blakeman and Co., 1857), 48.

they will be saved!’ That is the way to win souls.”<sup>115</sup> Spurgeon pled and always planned for instant fruit. He insisted, “We usually get what we expect.”<sup>116</sup> When he prayed to God, Spurgeon knew hardened hearts would be softened. If you can not prevail with man for God, prevail with God for men, women, boys, and girls.<sup>117</sup>

In soulwinning, dependence upon God is one’s strength. With an attitude of total reliance, we should go forth and win souls for Him.<sup>118</sup> It is a privilege to commune with God and have His heartbeat for friends, family, and other people we meet. Spurgeon insisted that every Christian should plead with God for the erring, the profane, and the blasphemer to be saved.<sup>119</sup> He declared this type of urgent discourse with God “is more than golden.”<sup>120</sup> Touched by his manner of praying for the unconverted, one writer shared, “We have heard his voice break into sobs, and have seen the tears stream down his cheeks, as he pleaded with the unconverted and implored them to be reconciled to God.”<sup>121</sup> Spurgeon would rather have died than to live if he was not used to win souls.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, quoted in Charles Thomas Cook, ed., “The Whole Machinery of Salvation,” *C. H. Spurgeon’s Sermons on Soulwinning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 16.

<sup>116</sup>Lorimer, 83.

<sup>117</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 46.

<sup>118</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 34.

<sup>119</sup>Charles Thomas Cook, ed., *C. H. Spurgeon’s Sermons on Soulwinning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 170.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Drummond, 279.

<sup>122</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Temple Glories,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 7* (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1971), 221.

Specializing in presenting Jesus to others, Spurgeon was a doctor of souls. Many writers consider Spurgeon one of the greatest soulwinners that ever lived.<sup>123</sup> He would have been successful at many things, but he chose the grandest vocation of bringing souls to Christ by preaching and soulwinning.<sup>124</sup> Do not get the wrong impression, Spurgeon often did not feel comfortable speaking to people one on one.<sup>125</sup> In his own words, “I often envy those of my brethren who can go up to individuals and talk to them with freedom about their souls.”<sup>126</sup> Despite this uneasiness, the Holy Spirit imparted holy boldness and an urgency to win souls in Spurgeon’s heart. Possessing a magnificent obsession, he panted in “prayer for souls, [with] much anxious desire that men may be brought to Jesus.”<sup>127</sup> In his private life as well as in his public ministry, Spurgeon was compelled to share Jesus with others. If his heart was right with God, Spurgeon believed he would talk to people about their soul’s condition at the country store, at the courthouse, along the roadside, or wherever he met people.<sup>128</sup> Spurgeon’s goal was to share Jesus with people in his private life as much as in his public ministry.<sup>129</sup> Following the Spirit’s leading, Spurgeon did not show prejudice in his outreach attempts. He

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<sup>123</sup>Drummond, 307. See also Robert Shindler, *From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 310.

<sup>124</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 46.

<sup>125</sup>Drummond, 252.

<sup>126</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 131.

<sup>127</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 226.

<sup>128</sup>Cook, 15.

<sup>129</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 226.



witnessed to one poor soul with the same devotion that he ministered to the masses, which often included wealthy and highly intellectual people.<sup>130</sup>

One reason Spurgeon especially liked one-on-one experiences was because the person could not as easily turn down the message as when spoken to in a large gathering.<sup>131</sup> Two personal witnessing experiences Spurgeon described included a cabman and a desperate case. A cabman pulled out a little New Testament and explained to Spurgeon that it had been fifteen years since Spurgeon had spoken to him about his soul and given him the testament; and, he had not missed a day reading the Book given to him.<sup>132</sup> Spurgeon concluded, "The seed had apparently fallen into good ground."<sup>133</sup> The second experience called for a dire remedy as the man agreed with all Spurgeon said and was not affected. Feeling hopeless, Spurgeon looked at him and said, "The fact is one of these days you will die, and be damned," and walked away.<sup>134</sup> Summoned to return, Spurgeon explained to the man the reason for his statement and left again. Not many hours later, anguished with conviction, this man was gloriously saved.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch*, 199.

<sup>131</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 135.

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*

### Prayer and Soulwinning at the Metropolitan Tabernacle

During one-on-one soulwinning experiences, Spurgeon taught his congregation to get the person “alone, and, in love, quietly and prayerfully talk to him.”<sup>136</sup> Success in personal soulwinning is usually attained as a Christian prays that the unconverted be delivered from their sins and the Christian longs to be used by God.<sup>137</sup> Laboring with the power and knowledge that the Holy Spirit can do anything, Spurgeon beckoned his congregation to go about all outreach appointments expecting to see results as they were Divinely aided.<sup>138</sup> Spurgeon exhorted, “If every Christian would make Christ known every day, what a powerful missionary organization the church would be.”<sup>139</sup>

Thus, the Metropolitan Tabernacle members were trained to be on the lookout for lost souls.<sup>140</sup> When Spurgeon first came to the church, he was available Tuesday afternoons to speak to inquiring souls or to listen to their salvation testimony. Counseling up to seventy-five people in one day, he thoroughly enjoyed this time of ministry as the salvation of souls was his greatest joy.<sup>141</sup> However, the number of persons grew so large that he had to train his church members to counsel the inquirers. Performing this sensitive task, the messengers looked to see if a person had completely trusted in Christ, experienced a newness of life, and understood salvation was by God’s

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<sup>136</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 229.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>139</sup>Cook, 13.

<sup>140</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 130.

<sup>141</sup>Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch*, 131.

gracious working.<sup>142</sup> Explaining to his church how to be effective at soulwinning, Spurgeon emphasized the need to keep up the prayer meetings.<sup>143</sup> He was convinced that when a church did not increase in an area of population growth, the prayers of the people and the preaching of the minister were not fervently anointed.<sup>144</sup> Spurgeon's love for souls was contagious as he earnestly prayed that they might be delivered from their sins and often responded "Hallelujah" when he heard about a soul being saved.<sup>145</sup>

### Praying for the Power of the Holy Spirit

Spurgeon was well aware that the huge success he experienced was not a result of his power or abilities. Throughout his life, Spurgeon regularly voiced his dependence upon God to accomplish His will. Man's power and ability may have temporary results, but God's power derives eternal benefits. Without His power, our ministry will be lifeless. We should not expect His power unless we seek to obey and glorify Him day by day.<sup>146</sup> Hence, Spurgeon sought to live a holy life imitating Christ in every way. In his prayers, he asked God to reveal any wickedness in his life. He yearned to be a clean vessel. If there was one drop of blood in his body that was not His, Spurgeon prayed that God would let it bleed away.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>Dallimore, 81.

<sup>143</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 119.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>145</sup>Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch*, 131.

<sup>146</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 228.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, 180.

In order to keep ourselves from besetting sins, Spurgeon taught the importance of being daily “baptized into the Spirit of God.”<sup>148</sup> His statement “being daily baptized” seems synonymous to the biblical teaching that we are literally to be “being filled” with the Holy Spirit. To avoid grieving the Spirit, Spurgeon bound himself to reading, studying, and praying.<sup>149</sup>

Spurgeon recognized that “power is the special and peculiar prerogative of God and God alone.”<sup>150</sup> How does one receive this power? According to Spurgeon, you can only have the power of the Holy Spirit by prayer.<sup>151</sup> Then, the Holy Spirit blesses those He so chooses to bless, and “He will not be brought near by any process or method apart from asking. . . . Prayer is the great door of spiritual blessing, and if you close it, you shut out His favor.”<sup>152</sup>

Desiring supernatural power, Spurgeon routinely pled for the aid of the Holy Spirit in a sincerely broken manner.<sup>153</sup> As a result of his prayers for power, the Spirit was copiously poured out on his life. Success for Spurgeon was not wrapped up in great

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<sup>148</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 197.

<sup>149</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 1834-1854 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1898), 183.

<sup>150</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “The Power of the Holy Ghost,” *The Modern Whitfield: Sermons of the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon of London* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman and Company, 1857), 112.

<sup>151</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, “Ask and Have,” *Praying Successfully* (Pa.: Whitaker House, 1997), 39.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup>Stevenson, 92.

oratory but was due to the influence of the Spirit of God upon the people he addressed.<sup>154</sup> He fully believed that man cannot change his fellow man's will and sought the anointing of the Spirit Who has power to change a man's will.<sup>155</sup> After visiting Mr. Spurgeon one Saturday, Mr. Balfern, author of *Glimpses of Jesus*, concluded, "I learned that the secret of Mr. Spurgeon's success was that he was cradled in the Holy Ghost."<sup>156</sup>

### Prayer and Power in Preaching

If a preacher is going to be anointed from on high, he must be a man of prayer. Without the power of the Holy Spirit on one's message, he will not preach it with authority.<sup>157</sup> For effectiveness, every message should be bathed in prayer. When exegeting a text, Spurgeon recommended praying in the Spirit and lifting each word up to Him who gave it asking for illumination of understanding.<sup>158</sup> A prayer that Spurgeon prayed was, "Great Master, we thank You for the Book with all our hearts, and we thank You for putting the Book into words . . . open wide the door of the words that we may enter into the secret closet of the meaning, and teach us this, we pray you. You have the

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<sup>154</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 69.

<sup>155</sup>Spurgeon, "The Power of the Holy Ghost," 126.

<sup>156</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 181. During Spurgeon's guarded study time, Balfern showed up and said, "Tell Mr. Spurgeon a servant of the Lord wishes to see him." To this, Spurgeon replied, "Tell the gentleman I'm so busy with the Master, I can not see the servant." When he learned who it was, he was happy to see him.

<sup>157</sup>Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, 389.

<sup>158</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "Honey in the Mouth," *Holy Spirit Power* (Pa.: Whitaker House, 1996), 152.

key. Lead us in.”<sup>159</sup> After receiving divine insight, mount the pulpit “in prayerful weakness, [rather] than in self-reliant strength.”<sup>160</sup> Following this prescription of earnest communion, the message and messenger will be anointed.<sup>161</sup>

Spurgeon was sure that in and of his own strength, nothing great would be accomplished. Therefore, he cried out to God to fill him with the Spirit and had others interceding in the same manner. The outcome was providential as God manifested His power when Spurgeon preached. Full of the Word of God, the life of God, and the Spirit of God, Spurgeon could not have spoken to the hearts of others “had he not been in vital junction with the Spirit of the Most High.”<sup>162</sup>

To be honoring to God and experience victory for Him, our one necessity is to be endowed with power from on high. In the Christian life and the ministry, “the power of the Spirit is our power. The power of the Spirit is our might.”<sup>163</sup> With this understanding, Spurgeon sought to be God’s man. He was not excited by large audiences half as much as by the presence of the power of God. For example, when the Agricultural Hall was filled with more than twenty thousand people for five Sundays while the Tabernacle was being repaired in 1867, Spurgeon shared that nothing is more exciting than the Holy Spirit empowering the Word.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, 389.

<sup>161</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 103.

<sup>162</sup>Douglas, 146.

<sup>163</sup>Spurgeon, “The Power of the Holy Ghost,” 131.

<sup>164</sup>Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work*, 80.

Spurgeon saw the very life of his or any other ministry dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit. Spurgeon remarked if he had one prayer he could pray just before he died, it would be, "Lord, send thy church men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire."<sup>165</sup> This is the great need of the church today. When men are filled with the Holy Ghost, souls will be saved, and their testimony will go before them. Many writers have commented about the source of Spurgeon's power. One writer, George Lorimer, felt the most reliable reason for his power was his prayer life.<sup>166</sup> The reason for such a fervent prayer life was that Spurgeon felt prayer was the "most efficient spiritual agency in the universe, next to the Holy Ghost."<sup>167</sup>

### Prayer in the Midst of Trials

Spurgeon was an indefatigable preacher who bore fruit throughout his ministry despite periods of physical and mental anguish at times. Physically, Spurgeon suffered from gout, rheumatism, and Bright's Disease (a kidney disorder). Mentally, he battled with depression over crises in the ministry and his wife's poor health.<sup>168</sup> A panic in the Music Hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens on October 19, 1856, which resulted in seven people losing their lives and twenty-eight taken to the hospital, was, in Spurgeon's

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<sup>165</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 10 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1864), 614; quoted in Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 26.

<sup>166</sup>Lorimer, 61.

<sup>167</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The Minister's Plea," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 19 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), 603.

<sup>168</sup>Darrel Amundsen, "The Anguish and Agonies of Charles Spurgeon," *Christian History* 10, no. 29, 1.

opinion, the most influential trial of his life.<sup>169</sup> The panic occurred as some ruffians cried out “fire” in the midst of an assembly of approximately seven thousand people. A sudden panic was aroused, which brought about the above mentioned lamentable result. The tragedy seriously affected the nervous system of the twenty-two year old Spurgeon to the extent that he was prostrated in anguish of soul for twelve days before he resumed his schedule of meetings.<sup>170</sup> After spending a whole night agonizing in prayer dealing with tragedy and unfair accusations against him, Spurgeon was restored to peace of heart and mind for a while.<sup>171</sup> Years later, Spurgeon recalled the troublesome events that led him to cry out to the Lord for relief. He said, “I tremble at the mere idea of passing again through the eclipse of soul. I pray that I may never suffer in that fashion again unless the same result would hang upon it.”<sup>172</sup> He was willing to suffer if that would make him more Christlike and equipped to sympathize with the weary. Throughout his life, Spurgeon continued to suffer from periodic attacks of depression brought on by remembering the Surrey Garden tragedy. Spurgeon’s wife believed the incident had so affected his brain that any sudden movement or fright could disturb its balance.<sup>173</sup> Whether this diagnosis is true or not, Spurgeon spent a lot of time physically sick, which caused him to be weak and susceptible to low times of depression.

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<sup>169</sup>Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work*, 74. See also Drummond, 245.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid.

<sup>171</sup>Skinner, 51.

<sup>172</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 174.

<sup>173</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 101.



From his early teens, Spurgeon endured various physical ailments. Suffering from headaches, he often could not concentrate at church services and take in the message.<sup>174</sup> Later, in his ministerial life, he took frequent trips to Mentone to find rest for his mind and body. From Mentone on January 10, 1884, he wrote to his church, "I am altogether stranded. I am not able to leave my bed or to find much rest upon it. . . . I am aware I am dwelling in a body capable of the most acute suffering."<sup>175</sup> One time his depression grew so great that he suggested resigning to a leader in the church who responded, "We would rather have you one month in the year than any other twelve."<sup>176</sup> Factors that contributed to Spurgeon's depression included the Surrey Garden tragedy, physical maladies from childhood throughout adulthood, financial worries over the institutions, the poor health of his wife, and an arduous work ethic.

During all of his sicknesses, Spurgeon requested one thing for the restoration of his mental and physical strength--prayer. The Lord seemed to use his infirmities to cause the Tabernacle to become increasingly united and effectual in their prayers. As he wrote loving epistles to his church from Mentone, he would regularly request prayer. He coveted the prayers of his people. Spurgeon requested that the church pray for the restoration of his strength and that the prayer meetings "be better attended and ever more intense."<sup>177</sup> Spurgeon told his church he would rather resign his office than lack their

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<sup>174</sup>Day, 174.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>177</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 244.

prayers.<sup>178</sup> His insistence on prayer for his recovery, the affairs of the church, and souls to be saved proved to be a powerful ministry to his people who became a band of fervent, prayer warriors known throughout London for their protracted prayer meetings.<sup>179</sup> These meetings brought down the power of God on the Tabernacle and kept the church united while Spurgeon was out recuperating from sickness. Repeatedly, Spurgeon wrote back to his church thanking them for their prayers, which led to the Lord healing his body.<sup>180</sup> Spurgeon loved his people, and they loved him as witnessed by their prayers.

### Prayer and the Pastor's College

Spurgeon's heartbeat was to reach as many souls as possible for the glory of God. He sought to fulfill this mission by establishing many ministries in the Tabernacle. The Pastor's College, Stockwell Orphanage, Colportage Association, almshouses, Society of Evangelists, and approximately fifty-three missions, schools, and other entities were connected with the Tabernacle.<sup>181</sup> The Pastor's College was the first institution started by the pastor and was his favorite.<sup>182</sup> Within three months of his arrival at New Park Street Baptist Chapel, a number of promising young men began to be saved. A young

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 246.

<sup>179</sup>Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch*, 16.

<sup>180</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 246.

<sup>181</sup>Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*, 268-70.

<sup>182</sup>Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work*, 96.

successful street preacher, Thomas William Medhurst, sought Spurgeon's counsel and after giving evidence of salvation became the first student of the Pastor's College.<sup>183</sup>

Spurgeon visited and observed schools claiming to properly train men who were not mighty in the pulpit or their personal ministry. The problem Spurgeon discovered was an idolatry of intellect. He felt it was only "sanctified common sense that lead the church to the formation of a college. The Church ought to make the college the first object of its care."<sup>184</sup> Catching Spurgeon's vision, the church at first prayed for the students who were often engaged in the ministries of the Tabernacle and later supported the College with a weekly offering.<sup>185</sup> The goal of the Pastor's College was to provide learning for "those whom God had evidently called to preach the gospel."<sup>186</sup> The objectives included "the learning of the whole Bible and to know God by prayer and experience of His dealings."<sup>187</sup> Looking for clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, "Have you won souls for Jesus?," was the first question on the college application.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>Spurgeon, *An All-Around Ministry*, iv. Some of Spurgeon's congregation did not think T. W. Medhurst was fit to be the first student. When interviewed, Medhurst convinced Spurgeon he was called when he said, "I must preach, sir; and I will preach unless you cut off my head."

<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>185</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 125. See also Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*, 137.

<sup>186</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 148.

<sup>187</sup>Spurgeon, *All-Around Ministry*, 12.

<sup>188</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 149.

Encouraged by the success of the young soulwinning students, Spurgeon enlarged the number of students whom he supported with his own money at first.<sup>189</sup> Oftentimes, funds ran low, but Spurgeon kept the faith that God would continue to miraculously provide. Spurgeon would say, "If the Lord wills the work to be continued, He will send . . . as I wait on Him in prayer, the all gracious Provider will supply all my needs."<sup>190</sup> By faith and prayer, the Pastor's College commenced and continued.

Spurgeon enjoyed bragging on the Lord anytime he had a chance. When an authority came to rate the new college building, Spurgeon shared how the money for carrying on the work often came in direct answer to prayer. The deputation official told Spurgeon that was his idea, but the real truth is that certain good people who have confidence in you supplied the money.<sup>191</sup> Spurgeon responded, "There may be some truth in that remark; but if the good people did not think of me, God would send the devil with the money rather than let his cause suffer."<sup>192</sup> Spurgeon continually praised God for answered prayers.

Spurgeon also regularly praised God for the holy, sold-out, evangelistic students that He sent to the college, and Spurgeon prayed that God would continue to send self-denying preachers.<sup>193</sup> When thinking about the lands yet to be possessed, he said, "The

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<sup>189</sup>Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*, 136.

<sup>190</sup>*Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>191</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 154.

<sup>192</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup>Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work*, 100.

field is the world, and the prayer for more laborers is daily more urgent.”<sup>194</sup> His prayers were pleads for God to call missionaries out from the students and for each one to be a passionate soulwinner.<sup>195</sup>

Despite his busy schedule, Spurgeon found time to instruct the students and fellowship with them. With the cultivation of devotional habits a top priority, Spurgeon encouraged the men to intercede for one another once every day.<sup>196</sup> He also privately prayed for them individually and wrote letters of encouragement.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, he frequently requested the daily prayers of God’s people for the students.<sup>198</sup> Spurgeon knew the key to God’s anointing was much prayer. Thus, he asked for much prayer that the students who would have “wisdom, love, gentleness, firmness, and abounding spiritual power.”<sup>199</sup>

During instruction about their labors, Spurgeon taught the students to pray before preparing a well thought out discourse, and then pray over it while studying on their knees.<sup>200</sup> Never attempt any spiritual work without saturating it in prayer.<sup>201</sup> Spurgeon

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<sup>194</sup>Northrop, 121.

<sup>195</sup>Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work*, 102.

<sup>196</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 157.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid.

<sup>198</sup>Northrop, 134.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>200</sup>Spurgeon, “Let Us Pray,” 22.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid.

informed the men that not many minutes should ever pass without a prayer being lifted up.<sup>202</sup>

### Prayer and His Family

Only eternity will reveal the importance prayer played in the Spurgeon family. Susannah Thompson was present for Spurgeon's first sermon in London. Amused by his style of dress, she heard very little of what he said in his first sermon. Saved one year prior to Spurgeon's arrival to pastor New Park Street Baptist Chapel, Susannah had grown spiritually cold. Meeting at deacon Olney's home, a godly leader in the church, Susannah and Charles discussed her relationship with the Lord, and she was awakened by the pleadings and warnings of his voice.<sup>203</sup> Their friendship grew steadily as they discussed about spiritual matters. This friendship seems to have climaxed on June 10, 1854, while both of them were in attendance at the opening of the Crystal Palace. While watching the recession, Spurgeon pointed to a chapter entitled, "Marriage," in a book he had been reading. The chapter on marriage began:

Seek a good wife of thy God, for she is the best gift of His providence;  
Yet ask not in bold confidence that which He hath not promised: Thou  
knowest not His good will; be thy prayer then submissive thereunto, And  
leave thy petition to His mercy, assured that He will deal well with thee.  
If thou art to have a wife of thy youth, She is now living on the earth;  
Therefore think of her, and pray for her weal.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 196.

<sup>203</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 6.

<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

After she read this opening, Spurgeon then leaned over and whispered in her ear, “Do you pray for him who is to be your husband?”<sup>205</sup> Thus, the first romantic gesture Spurgeon extended involved prayer. Throughout their courtship, Spurgeon repeatedly asked for her earnest prayers by beseeching her to “pray for me my love.”<sup>206</sup> He baptized Susannah in February 1855, and they were married in January 1856. Their love for one another was only exceeded by their love for God.

As a spiritual leader in his home, Spurgeon was a role model. As a child, he had excellent examples to learn from and follow. Spurgeon’s lineage included two generations of praying parents.<sup>207</sup> Hence, he had been a person of prayer since his early childhood. He first had devotions at his grandparents as a small boy,<sup>208</sup> then with his parents in Colchester,<sup>209</sup> then at a boarding school,<sup>210</sup> and at Cambridge.<sup>211</sup> This foundation led Spurgeon to be faithful in leading devotions with his family. Susannah witnessed a spiritual loyalty that radiantly manifested itself in her husband’s life. Susannah once shared, “We had family prayer, whether we lodged in some rough inn on the mountains, or in the luxurious rooms of a palatial hotel in a city; and this blessed

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<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 18, 23, 26.

<sup>207</sup>Stevenson, 24.

<sup>208</sup>Carlile, 11.

<sup>209</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 67.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 185.

abiding in Christ, . . . was to him the natural atmosphere of his soul; he lived and breathed in the presence of God.”<sup>212</sup>

William Williams, a Pastor’s College student and close friend of Spurgeon, was refreshed by the family prayer hour in the Spurgeon household. Spurgeon read a portion of Scripture and presented a brief exposition. Along with many hearers, Williams appreciated Spurgeon’s public prayers, “but his prayers with the family were to me more wonderful still. . . . Mr. Spurgeon, when bowed before God in family prayer, appeared a grander man than when holding thousands spellbound by his oratory.”<sup>213</sup>

Spurgeon preached on prayer repeatedly and felt that it was too often neglected. This neglect reaps dire consequences. Spurgeon compared prayerless homes to homes without a roof. He exclaimed, “We can not expect blessings on our homes if we have none in our families.”<sup>214</sup> Spurgeon further prayed that his congregation would not imitate those who had given up family devotions.<sup>215</sup>

Spurgeon’s faithfulness to God lovingly affected his family. Susannah respected her husband to the extent she nicknamed Charles “Tirshatha,” which is an ancient Persian word meaning, “Your Reverence.”<sup>216</sup> She continually interceded for Charles’ safety and health. Often, Spurgeon would be out late preaching, and Susannah would be at home

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<sup>212</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, 103.

<sup>213</sup>William Williams, quoted in Arnold Dallimore, *C. H. Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 179.

<sup>214</sup>Spurgeon, “Ask and Have,” 35.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid.

<sup>216</sup>Drummond, 230.



praying that God would keep her husband's precious life safe.<sup>217</sup> At other times, Mrs. Spurgeon would enter into his study, fall down on her knees, and cry out in earnest prayer for his recovery.<sup>218</sup> Reliance upon God in prayer was a constant practice in the Spurgeon home.

Because of Charles and Susannah's generous giving, they often had little money. Mrs. Spurgeon raised money to buy books for preachers, and Charles invested most of his money in the Pastor's College and orphanage. When a financial crisis arose, they took the shortage to God and prayed for His provision. Right after they were married, taxes were due, and they did not have enough money. After considering what could be done, Susannah said, "We laid our burden before the Lord, entreating Him to come to our aid."<sup>219</sup> Within a day, twenty pounds were delivered in answer to the Spurgeons' prayers. This was the first miraculous provision from the Lord for the couple. They were humbled, and Susannah suggested that "perhaps this first blessed deliverance was the foundation stone of my husband's strong and mighty faith . . . he depended wholly on the Lord, his trust was perfect, and he lacked nothing."<sup>220</sup>

Spurgeon's leadership in family devotions and prayer in his public ministry left a powerful impression on the minds of his two boys, Charles and Tom. While attending

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<sup>217</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 187. See also Drummond, 232.

<sup>218</sup>Lorimer, 147.

<sup>219</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 184.

<sup>220</sup>*Ibid.*

boarding school, they started a prayer meeting with their fellow students. In a letter, they happily informed their father. Spurgeon immediately wrote back sharing,

One of my sweetest joys is to hear that a Spirit of prayer is in your school, and that you participate in it. To know that you love the Lord, and are mighty in prayer, would be my crowning joy; the hope that you do so already, is a happy one to me. I should like you to preach; but it is best that you pray; many a preacher has proved a castaway; but never one who has truly learned to pray.<sup>221</sup>

Convinced that prayer is the key to the power we need in order to live for the glory of God, Spurgeon's personal prayer life was "the most prominent aspect of this many sided man."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 3, 281.

<sup>222</sup>Day, 222.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COMPARING SPURGEON'S AND MOODY'S PRAYER LIVES

Dr. Theodore Cuyler, a friend and a fellow minister of Moody, gave this estimate of him: "Dwight L. Moody was undeniably the most extraordinary Gospel preacher that America has produced this century, as Spurgeon was the most extraordinary that Britain has produced. Both had all Christendom for their congregations."<sup>1</sup> How was Moody able to travel approximately one million miles, address more than one hundred million people, personally deal with tens of thousands, establish schools, evangelistic associations, and conferences throughout the world? The inner source of his power was the same source as Spurgeon's power--prayer. Moody and Spurgeon both knew the vital necessity of Divine intervention if a great work for God was to be accomplished. Moody's understanding of intercessory prayer was indelibly impacted when he visited his friend, C. H. Spurgeon, in England. Spurgeon rejected credit for any great work and said, "If you want to know part of the secret of this work, look below the speaker's platform of this church--for there, while I preach are my deacons praying for God's visitation and power."<sup>2</sup> Moody often recalled Spurgeon saying, "Any man can win great

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<sup>1</sup>A. T. Rowe, *D. L. Moody: The Soul-Winner* (Anderson, Ind.: Gospel Trumpet Co., 1927), 82.

<sup>2</sup>Harry J. Albus, *A Treasury of Dwight L. Moody* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 38.

victories with a band of prayer warriors like I've got."<sup>3</sup> Both Moody and Spurgeon realized that if a man is going to make an eternal difference in the world to come, he must be touched by the Omnipotent hand of God in this present world.

Moody admired Spurgeon to the degree that he was labeled a Jonathan to Spurgeon by one of his biographers.<sup>4</sup> Moody delighted in visiting Spurgeon's church and read all of Spurgeon's works he could find.<sup>5</sup> After his first visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1867, Moody was impressed most by Spurgeon's prayer. Moody felt Spurgeon possessed such access to God that he brought down power from heaven.<sup>6</sup>

Conversely, Spurgeon admired Moody. They became close friends as Spurgeon followed Moody everywhere he went during his visits and meetings in England.<sup>7</sup> At first, their friendship was one of mutual admiration. However, as they were better acquainted, they developed a deep affection for one another. Spurgeon publicly stated his love for Moody, and Moody responded that he loved Spurgeon a thousand times more than Spurgeon loved him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1936), 107. Day suggests that because Spurgeon had a full beard, Moody also grew one.

<sup>5</sup>Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 594.

<sup>6</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Pastor in Prayer* (Greenville, S.C.: Ambassador, 1997), 2.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1892), 209.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Moody had a deep respect for Spurgeon and turned down the first invitation Spurgeon extended to preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Moody considered the request an honor but replied, "If they will not turn to God under your preaching, 'neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'"<sup>9</sup> Spurgeon also publicly endorsed and supported Moody, which boosted attendance at mass meetings in Britain.<sup>10</sup> Spurgeon even preached in some of Moody's meetings. Moody sent a letter that began, "Ten thousand thanks for your help last night."<sup>11</sup> Moody continued by asking Spurgeon to assist with the meetings on a regular basis for a period of sixty days on the West End of the county while he preached on the East End.<sup>12</sup> A clearer understanding of the feelings that Spurgeon felt towards Moody can be inferred in his last statement at the time of Moody's departure back to America in 1872. Spurgeon told his people "that they would never look on his like again."<sup>13</sup>

Ironically, when comparing the lives of Moody and Spurgeon, the Metropolitan congregation did witness the likes of Moody in many ways on a weekly basis. Similarities abound between Moody and Spurgeon, and their ministries often mirror one another. In their early lives, both men had praying mothers who were instrumental in

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<sup>9</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 4, 1878-1892 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1899), 169.

<sup>10</sup>John C. Pollock, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1963), 153.

<sup>11</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 169-70.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>James Douglas, *The Prince of Preachers: A Sketch, A Portraiture, and A Tribute* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 74.

shaping their spiritual understanding. Moody said that most good men have praying mothers.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Spurgeon, Moody did not have a praying father because his father died before he was four years old.<sup>15</sup> Spurgeon also had praying grandparents. Parental support is vital, especially in the area of spirituality, if a child is going to grow up knowledgeable and readily receptive to a spiritual life.

Both men also had limited education. Spurgeon, who graduated from high school and attended Cambridge for a while, was better educated than Moody, who attained a fifth grade education. Neither man attained any formal Bible college or seminary training. However, both men placed a high importance on proper education and began their own colleges for the purpose of practical training for the ministry. Unlike Moody, Spurgeon required the higher prerequisites of Greek and Hebrew. Like Moody, Spurgeon's desire was to train lay people (wealthy or poor), and send them out to win their world for Jesus. Both men possessed a distaste for training that led to dead orthodoxy. Bible college and seminary teaching today needs to follow their model of producing men and women who possess a deep spirituality, an insatiable hunger for souls, a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and the filling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

A love for souls was another common trait discovered in these men's lives. They were soul conscious throughout their ministries. Both men felt the greatest joy in the world was to see a lost person come to know Christ. This is the natural desire of one who

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<sup>14</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 247.

<sup>15</sup>Douglas, 73.

<sup>16</sup>William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Gradison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), 273.

is maintaining a close relationship with Jesus in prayer. Drummond contends that it was Spurgeon's longing for souls to be saved that influenced Moody to speak to one person about his soul everyday for the rest of his life.<sup>17</sup> Several biographers considered him the best soulwinner they ever knew.<sup>18</sup> Spurgeon further commented that Moody would have never preached with great power if he had not lived a spirit-filled life of communion with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus.<sup>19</sup> The effectiveness of any message is based upon the time one has spent alone in prayer. Moody's life shows that private fellowship with God is essential for any man to be anointed for service. When asked about the success of his ministry, Spurgeon simply said, "My people pray for me."<sup>20</sup>

The main ability that Spurgeon and Moody are known for is their preaching. Consistently maintaining naturalness, the intense and aggressive businesslike presentation of Moody was not to be found in Spurgeon's manner of delivery.<sup>21</sup> Spurgeon possessed great rhetorical ability and a powerful voice. He spoke in a colloquial manner that could easily be followed and understood.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Moody spoke with very poor grammar and his messages were poorly developed, simple, and straightforward. Although very different in their preaching style, they reaped similar

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<sup>17</sup>Drummond, 594.

<sup>18</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1928), 300.

<sup>19</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Pa.: Whitaker House, 1995), 43.

<sup>20</sup>Douglas, 144.

<sup>21</sup>Lewis Brastow, *Representative Modern Preachers* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 400.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

results. Thousands upon thousands of people came to know Jesus in a personal relationship.

What was the key to their success? The prayer lives of D. L. Moody and C. H. Spurgeon sheds light on the undergirding power of every area of their ministries. Yes, they were talented, but more importantly, they prayed for God's power to use their God-given gifts to the greatest degree possible for His glory. In answer to his prayer, Findlay said Moody was "transformed by power beyond himself."<sup>23</sup> A reporter at one of Moody's meetings also wrote, "It is God's power" that is igniting the atmosphere of Moody's meetings.<sup>24</sup> In reference to Spurgeon's success, Moody exclaimed, "It is not Mr. Spurgeon, after all, it is God."<sup>25</sup> If we can connect our weakness to God's strength as Spurgeon did, we can be a blessing to the world.<sup>26</sup> Like Moody, Spurgeon viewed prayer as the "secret source of power with God and man."<sup>27</sup> According to Spurgeon, man has the answer to his inquiry of the secret of Spurgeon and Moody's success--prayer.<sup>28</sup> Continually, both men prayed for power and could be heard requesting, "Please, pray for me!"

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<sup>23</sup>James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 226.

<sup>24</sup>William Haven Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1875), 331.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Shindler, *From The Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 209.

<sup>26</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 247-8.

<sup>27</sup>Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*, 119.

<sup>28</sup>Douglas, 144.



After describing the ministries of D. L. Moody and C. H. Spurgeon, it is crystal clear they believed in the divine sovereignty of God. While their individual giftedness was visible in their respective ministries, each man was successful because of the common denominator of prayer, a factor which was present throughout the various seasons of their lives. Repeatedly, they communed with God in order to receive His power. Whether they were pastoring, doing evangelistic work, leading their institutions, or having devotions, there was a clear truth intimated by their practice and endorsement of prayer. Moody and Spurgeon knew God heard and answered their prayers; therefore, they prayed about anything and everything. Nothing was too small or too large for their prayers. In reference to prayer, Spurgeon sums up a shared belief with Moody by exhorting:

To suppose that temporal things are too little for our condescending God, is to forget that He observes the flight of sparrows, and counts the hairs of his people's heads. Besides, everything is so little to Him, that, if He does not care for the little, He cares for nothing. . . . Blessed is the man to whom nothing is too small for God. . . . He placed all the details of our life under heavenly care, and we are glad to commit all things to His keeping.<sup>29</sup>

Based on the findings of this descriptive study, it is evident that nothing took the place of prayer in the lives of D. L. Moody and C. H. Spurgeon. Both men realized that great preaching, gifted singing, academic degrees, and intellectual prowess cannot take the place of prayer.

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<sup>29</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The Promise Used for This Life," *According to Promise* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 102.

## CHAPTER SIX

### PRAYER IN THE EARLY LIFE, CONVERSION, AND CALL OF BILLY GRAHAM

#### **The Influence of Prayer in Graham's Early Life**

Billy Graham believes “whenever God is going to do any kind of work, He always begins by prayer.”<sup>1</sup> Prior to his birth and proceeding throughout his life, Graham has been immersed in prayer. Billy Graham was born on a dairy farm on November 7, 1918. He was born of the Spirit in 1934, sometime around his sixteenth birthday during a revival preached by Mordecai Ham.<sup>2</sup> Receiving Billy as a blessing from God, Graham's parents, Frank and Morrow, prayed he would be a preacher.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Frank's prayers at the family altar left no doubt that he wanted his unfulfilled ambition of becoming a preacher to be his son's calling.<sup>4</sup> Frank desired to be a preacher but did not sense a call from God. Frank and Morrow taught Billy and his brother, Melvin, and their two sisters, Catherine and Jean, to love Jesus with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. Graham

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<sup>1</sup>John C. Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966), 55.

<sup>2</sup>Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 29. Many writers attempt to pinpoint a date for Graham's conversion. However, Graham does not give a specific date.

<sup>3</sup>David Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (Waco: Word Books, 1971), 12.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956), 70.

often recounts his mother's and father's godliness and remarks, "I only hope that I might have as effective an influence on my children as my parents had on me."<sup>5</sup>

Seeking to please their heavenly Father everyday, Frank and Morrow established a daily time for Bible reading and prayer the first day they were married.<sup>6</sup> This time of devotion was not hindered by the arrival of their children. When Billy learned how to read, he had his turn at reading the Bible during family devotions and reciting sentence prayers his mother taught him.<sup>7</sup> Billy's first memory verse was Prov. 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." By the age of ten, he had memorized the shorter Catechism from number 1: What is the Chief end of Man? through number 107: What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?<sup>8</sup> This study, coupled with the devotions led by his parents daily, made a deep impression on Billy.

Although faithful to their devotions, Morrow's sister, Lill, and her husband, Simon, prayed for Frank and Morrow to have an even closer walk with the Lord. Lill lovingly told Morrow that she needed to delve deeper into the Word of God. Morrow heeded her suggestion and joined a Bible class that met each morning to study the Word and pray. Her relationship with Jesus blossomed beautifully.

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<sup>5</sup>Lockard, 12.

<sup>6</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 19.

<sup>7</sup>Lockard, 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 13.

During this period of rapid spiritual growth in Morrow's life, Graham's uncle, Simon Barker, spent hours talking to Frank about the Lord. Frank Graham maintained a "strict moral code and rigid ethical behavior" but was complacent spiritually and seemed to attend church more out of discipline than a desire to grow in his relationship with God.<sup>9</sup> At times, Frank seemed interested in what Uncle Simon shared; and at other times, he seemed bored. Nevertheless, Billy's father listened to his brother-in-law's spiritual advice.

About this time in 1932, Billy's father nearly died when he was struck in the face by a piece of wood flying from a saw. While hovering between life and death for two days, prayers were lifted up by many people, including Morrow's Bible class friends and family members. Morrow mentioned how lonely the family felt kneeling in prayer without her husband present.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Morrow groaned in prayer as she cried out for God to restore her husband to good health. By the third day, his health seemed to be returning. Thankful for Frank's miraculous recovery, Morrow exclaimed, "I got down on my knees beside his bed and thanked the Lord for answered prayer. I knew Frank was going to get well, for the Lord gave me perfect assurance about it."<sup>11</sup> This accident and Frank's corresponding recovery awakened Billy's parents and their devotion to Bible

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<sup>9</sup>Graham, 23.

<sup>10</sup>Morrow Coffey Graham, *They Call Me Mother Graham* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming Revell Company, 1977), 31.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

reading, praying, and raising a godly family.<sup>12</sup> Graham recalls his parents' faithfulness and says, "Thank God for our Christian upbringing."<sup>13</sup>

However, Graham has not always been so appreciative. He became "restless and resentful" in his teenage years.<sup>14</sup> "His hero was Babe Ruth, not Jesus Christ."<sup>15</sup> Feeling spiritually dead, devotions and church became boring to him, and he viewed dedicated Christians as "fanatics."<sup>16</sup> Despite this attitude, Billy Graham could not escape the prayers of his mother and father, which played a big part in preparing him to receive Jesus.

#### Prayer and the Conversion of Billy Graham

In May of 1934, a group of Christian businessmen met on Frank Graham's farm to pray for the spiritual welfare of Charlotte, North Carolina. In the group was Vernon Patterson, who prayed that "out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth."<sup>17</sup> Dr. Mordecai Ham was asked to hold the campaign in the fall of 1934. In an interview, he explained that the invitation for the meeting was not from pastors but from a group of godly laymen. Before calling Ham, the fifty

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<sup>12</sup>Pollock, 4.

<sup>13</sup>Billy Graham, *The Christ-Centered Home* (Minneapolis: The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1961), 1.

<sup>14</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 29.

<sup>15</sup>Grady Wilson, *Billy Graham as a Teen-ager* (Wheaton, Ill.: Miracle Books, 1957), 7.

<sup>16</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 24, 29.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 24. Betty Frist, *My Neighbors, The Billy Grams* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 196.

laymen, including Frank Graham, met in much prayer. While praying and fasting for fifteen hours, these laymen cried out, "Lord, send someone to shake this city . . . really shake it, and the whole state and by midnight they had prayed for a work of God that would be felt around the world."<sup>18</sup>

Billy showed no interest in the revival meetings at first because he was busy playing baseball every night. However, God providentially used Albert McMakin, a dairy farm worker, to invite young Billy Graham to the crusade. McMakin described Dr. Ham as a "fighting preacher" because of his intense denunciation of sin. This description of Ham, along with published excerpts of accusations of immorality at Central High School, captivated Graham's attention. The next night, Graham attended the meeting, along with approximately five thousand other people. He fell under conviction when Ham insisted that there is a great sinner in this place tonight. Graham concluded that his mother had been telling the evangelist about him.<sup>19</sup> Graham had planned not to return until he felt restless the whole night and the next day. Returning to hear a message on the love of God, Graham became a regular attender at the meetings. Graham and Grady Wilson joined the choir because they grew tired of Ham's accusatory stare and his bony finger pointing right at them.<sup>20</sup> Night after night, Graham attended the meetings; and finally, he could not resist the drawing of the Spirit any longer. Feeling like he was

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<sup>18</sup>Armin Gesswein, "How Billy Graham Was Converted," *Christian Life* (September 1957): 32.

<sup>19</sup>Wilson, 14.

<sup>20</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 28.

dragging a ball and chain around his ankles, Graham went forward one night in 1935 as the congregation sang “Just As I Am” and “Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe.”

A tailor named J. D. Prevatt, who was a friend of the family, came forward, and after putting his arms around Graham, shared the gospel in a way Graham could understand what he needed to do.<sup>21</sup> Prevatt prayed for Graham and guided Graham in a prayer to receive Christ. Graham describes his moment of decision with these words:

Intellectually, I accepted Christ to the extent that I acknowledged what I knew about Him to be true. That was mental assent. Emotionally, I felt that I wanted to love Him in return for His loving me. But the final issue was whether I could turn myself over to His rule in my life. . . . For all my previous religious upbringing and church activity, I believe that that was the moment I made my real commitment to Jesus Christ. No bells went off inside me. . . . I simply felt at peace. Quiet, not delirious. Happy and peaceful.<sup>22</sup>

His father came over to hug him just after making the most important decision of his life; and when he arrived home, his mother told him she was proud. Graham’s life had been radically transformed, and God was going to speak through him to transform multiplied millions of lives. At bedtime, he knelt down for the first time in his life without being told to do so. He desired to talk to God and prayed, “Lord, I don’t know what happened to me tonight. You know and I thank You for the privilege I’ve had tonight.”<sup>23</sup> The next day, the trees, the grass, and everything else seemed to have a new look and a new meaning.

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<sup>21</sup>Pollock, 8.

<sup>22</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 30.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

With a new song in his heart, Graham even began singing hymns while he milked the cows and did chores. He especially appreciated the few minutes he had alone in the morning and evening for “quiet talking to God in prayer.”<sup>24</sup> Excited about his relationship with Christ, Graham invited fellow students to the revival meeting and shared his testimony at a prayer meeting in Charlotte.<sup>25</sup>

### **Prayer and Graham’s Call to the Ministry**

Soon after Graham’s conversion, his mother spent time each day devoted to Billy and “the calling” she believed was on his life.<sup>26</sup> Frank and Morrow wanted to see Billy go to college. However, Billy’s teacher informed Mrs. Graham that he was working too hard on the farm, his grades were poor, and he is not going to graduate. Morrow fell on her knees in the living room and cried out, “Oh, Lord, that can’t be true, You’ll just have to do something. . . . Lord, You are preparing him and You are educating him for something.”<sup>27</sup> He passed his grade and thought about applying to the University of North Carolina. However, two young evangelists from Bob Jones College and a speech given by Dr. Bob Jones at Graham’s high school influenced him to enroll at Bob Jones College. When he made the decision to attend a Christian college, his parents joyfully responded that their prayers had been answered.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>25</sup>Wilson, 19-20.

<sup>26</sup>High, 71.

<sup>27</sup>Graham, *They Call Me Mother Graham*, 17.

<sup>28</sup>Wilson, 24.



Bob Jones College stressed Bible reading, prayer, evangelism, and very stringent standards. After one semester, Graham was frustrated with the strict rules and expressed his discontent and thoughts about transferring in a meeting with Dr. Bob Jones. Jones rashly called Graham a failure and said he saw more failure in his future.<sup>29</sup> Disheartened with school and by these comments, Graham wrote to his mother, "I know that I know Jesus Christ, but I've lost my feeling. I can't seem to get anywhere in prayer. I don't feel anything."<sup>30</sup> After his first semester at Bob Jones College and much prayerful consideration, the decision to transfer was made. He relocated to Florida Bible Institute in 1937.

Shortly after arriving at Florida Bible Institute, Graham wrote home telling his mother that he enjoyed reading the Bible for the first time and felt closer to God than ever before.<sup>31</sup> This was an answer to the prayers his parents lifted up everyday after lunch down on their knees on their bedroom floor.<sup>32</sup> Throughout his college days, Graham said he could feel the prayers of his loved ones.<sup>33</sup> These prayers were especially needed as he faced a relational crisis and the calling of God on his life to be a preacher.

In his second year at Florida Bible Institute, Graham fell in love with Emily Cavanaugh. He spent as much time as possible with her, especially on Sunday nights at

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<sup>29</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 41.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Graham, *They Call Me Mother Graham*, 41.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 44.

Tampa Gospel Tabernacle. He wound up asking her to marry him by way of a note. She responded that she would have to think about his proposal over the summer break. When school started in the fall, Emily seemed to be interested in getting married. However, when the annual spring class night rolled around, she refused to wear Billy's corsage. During a break in the gathering, Emily explained to Billy that she was in love with Charlie, a mutual friend who often played tennis with the couple. Graham was crushed and sought solace from Dr. Minder, dean of the Florida Bible Institute. Like never before, this incident forced Billy to lean on Christ and to grapple with God's calling on his life. Kneeling in prayer, he promised to wholly devote himself to the Lord's work.

After a stirring chapel sermon several weeks prior to this break up, God began dealing with Billy about going into the ministry full time. He loved to tell others about Jesus, and he enjoyed every opportunity to preach. People readily responded to his invitations to receive Jesus, and his classmates affirmed his ministry. However, the question remained, did he want to preach the rest of his life? One night while walking on a nearby golf course after God had dealt with all his excuses, Graham prostrated himself on the green and sobbed, "O God, if you want me to serve you, I will."<sup>34</sup> Since that night in 1938, Graham's purpose of preaching the gospel to the world was established. The final two years at the Institute afforded him many opportunities to preach in area churches. He began a habit in his senior year that greatly empowered his preaching. Each day he took a long walk and prayed that God would make great use of his life.<sup>35</sup> At

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<sup>34</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 53.

<sup>35</sup>High, 82.

the end of his walk, he dropped to his knees thanking God in advance for answering his prayers.<sup>36</sup>

Graduating in May 1940, Graham felt God leading him to attend an accredited liberal arts school named Wheaton College. This move was an answer to four years of praying by his mother. Morrow confessed, "I've been praying perhaps as a selfish mother, that the Lord would lead Billy either to Wheaton College or to Moody Bible Institute."<sup>37</sup> Wheaton was intellectually and spiritually challenging for Graham as he diligently studied and took his first pastorate at Western Springs.<sup>38</sup> However, the most significant event of Graham's college life was personal. Soon after arriving at Wheaton, Graham heard about "the most beautiful girl" on the campus and her spiritual discipline of rising at 5:00 A.M. to spend two hours in scripture and prayer before going to class.<sup>39</sup> He looked forward to meeting Ruth McCue Bell, daughter of a missionary surgeon, who spent the first seventeen years of her life in China.

After hearing Billy pray in a room next to where she was praying, Ruth knew she had listened to someone who knew how to talk with God. Shortly after officially meeting him and going on their first date to a Christian concert of sacred music, Ruth knelt beside her bed and told the Lord, "If I could spend the rest of my life serving God with Billy, I

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Graham, *They Call Me Mother Graham*, 38.

<sup>38</sup>High, 111. Each day at Wheaton started in prayer.

<sup>39</sup>Ronald C. Paul, *Billy Graham: Prophet of Hope* (N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1978), 44. See also High, 114.

would consider it the greatest privilege imaginable.”<sup>40</sup> Many years before she met Billy, Ruth had put her dream for a husband in the following prayer poem.

Dear God, I prayed, all unafraid  
 (as we're inclined to do)  
 I do not need a handsome man  
 But let him be like You;  
 I do not need one big and strong nor yet so very tall,  
 nor need he be some genius,  
 or wealthy, Lord, at all;  
 but let his head be high, dear God,  
 and let his eye be clear,  
 his shoulders straight, whate'er his state,  
 whate'er his earthly sphere;  
 and let his face have character,  
 a ruggedness of soul,  
 and let his whole life show, dear God,  
 a singleness of goal;  
 then, when he comes  
 (as he will come)  
 with quiet eyes aglow,  
 I'll understand that he's the man  
 I prayed for, long ago.<sup>41</sup>

Ruth also requested that if I get married, I want my husband to be so tall when praying on his knees that he reaches heaven.<sup>42</sup> Billy was the man she had asked God for so long ago. He wanted to please God more than anyone she ever met with real purpose and dedication in his life.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Pollock, 25.

<sup>41</sup>Frist, 58.

<sup>42</sup>Patricia Cornwell, *Ruth, A Portrait* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1997), 52.

<sup>43</sup>Pollock, 26.

Ruth's looks and spiritual discipline captivated Billy. With Billy, it was love at first sight. He remembers the light in her face the autumn day they met.<sup>44</sup> Their relationship quickly turned serious. Despite all that was going right, Ruth still was unsure because she felt called to return to China as a missionary in Tibet. Billy prayed about the matter and told Ruth that the Lord leads me and you are to follow.<sup>45</sup> After graduating from Wheaton in June of 1943, Ruth and Billy Graham were married on Friday, August 13, 1943, in Montreat, North Carolina.

Several years later at the concluding service of a Boston crusade, Ruth was introduced to Emily Cavanaugh, to whom Billy was unofficially engaged at Florida Bible Institute and who left him for a friend who had a promising future. Ruth said, "I've thanked the Lord so often for answering my prayer about a husband. Now I can thank you for having made it possible for Him to answer that prayer with Bill."<sup>46</sup>

Billy and Ruth have been a mighty team for God for over fifty years. Graham says he used to describe heaven from the Book of Revelation. But now he thinks, "Heaven is like being married to Ruth."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>High, 114.

<sup>45</sup>Paul, 44.

<sup>46</sup>High, 123.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 124.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### EVANGELIST BILLY GRAHAM'S ANOINTED MINISTRY

#### Prayer and Soulwinning

Talking to people about their soul's eternal destiny is a burning desire that God has given Billy Graham. Most Christians have a fear of witnessing and fail to share Jesus with people. However, after trusting in Christ and studying the Gospels, Graham discovered that Jesus' vocabulary included two often repeated words: come and go.<sup>1</sup> Driven by the indwelling compulsion of the Holy Spirit and the Great Commission of the Holy Bible, Graham seeks to share the Gospel with lost people all over the world. Evangelist Billy Graham has addressed more people about Jesus than anyone else in history and explains, "My main motivation as an evangelist is obedience to a divine command and recognition of a God-given gift."<sup>2</sup> His ministry clearly shows that he has one passion--to win souls.<sup>3</sup> Seeking to be successful in the calling God has placed on his life, Graham credits prayer as the number one need in reaching others for Jesus. He

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<sup>1</sup>Billy Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984), 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>3</sup>John C. Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966), 20.

recognizes that “people, methods, and materials are instruments, and it is only through prayer that these instruments become effective by the empowering of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

God blesses each person with certain gifts to use for His glory and the advancement of His Kingdom. Graham displayed a special ability to sell Fuller brushes the summer after his high school graduation. He often passed his goal of selling brushes by lunch and continued to diligently work into the night. Feeling a call to immerse himself into evangelism, he redirected his energies into winning souls and has seen blessed success. Grady Wilson, a childhood friend and associate evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, insists that “He [Graham] is ‘sold’ on Jesus Christ and as a result can ‘sell’ other people on Him.”<sup>5</sup>

Graham clearly understands the inward craving that he or anyone else possesses to see souls saved comes from the Holy Spirit’s desire to love others to Jesus through the witness of every child of God. Whether he is involved in crusade or personal evangelism, Graham realizes the importance of the intercessory prayers of other believers for the power of God’s anointing on his life and ministry. In fact, Graham rationalizes his continual requests for intercessory prayer partners by mentioning Paul’s recruitment of prayer support from the Ephesian church that holy boldness may be given to him to make known the mystery of the Gospel (Eph. 6:18-19).<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Graham quickly

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<sup>4</sup>Sterling W. Huston, *Crusade Evangelism and the Local Church* (Minneapolis: World Publications, 1984), 45.

<sup>5</sup>Grady Wilson, *Billy Graham as a Teen-ager* (Wheaton, Ill.: Miracle Books, 1957), 22-3.

<sup>6</sup>Graham, 39.

rejects credit for results as the Holy Spirit uses many people and factors in drawing individuals to a relationship with Jesus. Emphatically, he asserts, "Billy Graham did not win these people to Christ."<sup>7</sup> Etched in his memory are the words of a friend who believed Christians need to remain humble before God realizing that all drawing power and genuine decisions come as a result of the Spirit of God wooing people.<sup>8</sup> In short, Graham does not seek personal fame and popularity but simply desires to be obedient to His Master Who has called him to be a fisher of men.

Hence, if Graham knows of a soul to be won to Christ, he says, "I'm under orders by the Lord to go try to win that soul to Christ."<sup>9</sup> Graham's passion for souls is exhibited wherever he ministers. During his first crusade in England, he took advantage of every public speaking opportunity, but he also made time for private times of personal soulwinning. During his first weekend in London, Graham strolled through the neighborhood of Elephant and Castle and personally witnessed to various classes of people including men, women, and youth in the streets, markets, and working class districts.<sup>10</sup> Billy Graham teaches that personal evangelism empowered by prayer is the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>9</sup>Mary Bishop, *Billy Graham, the Man and His Ministry* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1975), 32.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Thomas Cook, *London Hears Billy Graham* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1954), 78.



most effective method of outreach and that a larger evangelistic event is successful only if much personal witnessing has occurred.<sup>11</sup>

One result of Graham's ministry is a rekindling of devotion to soulwinning by Christians. Whether you are exposed to the Graham ministry by way of television, attending one of his crusades, or reading one of his books, you will be challenged to trust in Christ and share Him with others. Realizing sowing the seed of the Word of God is indispensable to reap a harvest of souls, Graham exhorts Christians to plant the Word of God through their witness and water it with prayers and loving concern.<sup>12</sup>

Operation Andrew, named for the disciple of Jesus who led his brother, Peter, to the Lord, is one primary tool that Graham employs to involve people in evangelism. One side of a prepared card provides seven spaces for names who need Jesus, and the other side provides ways to effectively reach them. Praying to God to draw them to a saving knowledge of Jesus is the primary method prescribed. In *Day-by-Day with Billy Graham*, a daily devotional book, Graham encourages his readers to call unsaved people by name in prayer asking God to show them how to obediently share the Gospel and tell what God has done for them.<sup>13</sup>

Sharing the Gospel will entail supernatural opposition, and immediate decisions are never guaranteed for anyone including Billy Graham. During a World Congress on Evangelism in Amsterdam, Graham walked the streets presenting the Gospel with no

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<sup>11</sup>Huston, 36-7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>13</sup>Joan Winmill Brown, comp. and ed., *Day-by-Day with Billy Graham*, June 30 (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1976), 15.

decisions made for Christ. He was discouraged and spotted a group of Africans from the Ivory Coast witnessing to a Dutch student. Joining the group, Graham listened intently as they shared from the scriptures, and he left encouraged saying, "I had never heard a better witness in my life."<sup>14</sup> Although considered by most people as Christendom's greatest evangelist, Billy Graham has always maintained a teachable spirit.

With a God-given passion to win people to Christ, Graham seeks to instruct believers in the basics of effective witnessing. Through his books, *Decision Magazine*, pre-crusade "Christian Life and Witness" classes, sermons, congresses on evangelism, and schools of evangelism, Billy Graham and his evangelistic team share concepts, tools, and ministries to bring people to commitment for Christ. The Bible teaches that some are called to be evangelists, but all are called to evangelism. Believing that "God needs our time, our talents, our witnessing, and our money, today more than at any time in history," Graham exhorts believers to recognize their responsibility as partners with God.<sup>15</sup> He encourages believers to "always pray" for opportunities to witness and for God's leading in what to say.<sup>16</sup> Graham also shares the following hints for soulwinning.

First, your life itself is an important part of your witness. . . . Be honest, sincere, amiable, and a person of integrity. . . . Second, become interested in others and they will listen to you. Jesus was the friend of sinners and often sat in their company. Let them share with you their problems, heart-aches, and cares. . . . Third, you are not presenting a formula,--but the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fourthly, put the stress on the love of

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<sup>14</sup>Graham, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup>Brown, September 26.

<sup>16</sup>William Thomas, *An Assessment of Mass Meetings as a Method of Evangelism--Case Study of Eurofest '75 and Billy Graham in Brussels* (Netherlands: Radopi Press, 1977), 191.

God rather than on the fact that man is a sinner. It is true that one does not recognize that he needs a Savior until he sees that he is a sinner. But one does not begin there. . . . Fifthly, be simple. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:1-2) that he decided to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Don't commit the error of thinking that you have to build solid intellectual or philosophical arguments in order to impress people.<sup>17</sup>

In the area of soulwinning, Graham practices what he teaches Christians to do each day. He sets out to tell individuals and crowds about the Greatest Person Who has ever lived-- Jesus. Listening to his beckoning voice and observing his daily lifestyle, you see he is a committed Christian who believes what he is teaching and is trying to win as many souls in every way, at anytime, and in every place he can.<sup>18</sup>

### Prayer and Powerful Preaching

Billy Graham's evangelistic sermons are developed as the Holy Spirit bears witness with his spirit during seasons of Bible study and prayer.<sup>19</sup> Five-thirty to six-thirty in the evening during a crusade is the usual time Graham is alone with God bathing his life, thoughts, and sermon in prayer before he preaches.<sup>20</sup> Graham protects his private prayer time, because he depends solely upon Christ for a great harvest to be reaped. Journalists and other observers readily acknowledge Graham's discipline of spending time pleading with God for men prior to pleading with men for God. Robert McMahon,

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>18</sup>George Burnham and Lee Fisher, *Billy Graham and the New York Crusade* (Grad Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1957), 39.

<sup>19</sup>Donald Waite, *The Evangelistic Speaking of Billy Graham* (Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976), 62.

<sup>20</sup>Helen Kooiman, *Transformed: Behind the Scenes with Billy Graham* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970), 76.

a columnist for the Glasgow Daily Record, wrote the following letter at the conclusion of a Graham crusade.

Dear Billy, Sorry you are going. In some ways, we saw so little of you. I'm glad it was like that in some ways. I suppose the secret of Billy Graham must be those morning and afternoon hours when nobody can keep you from God in prayer and Bible reading. Maybe, it is just that your priorities are a little more sensible than most of ours. You always have time for God.<sup>21</sup>

Graham's dependence upon God seems to have been established at the outset of his ministry. While attending Florida Bible Institute, Graham was given the opportunity to be a supply preacher for a church on the Gulf shore. Along with Ponzi Pennington, a fellow student and soloist, Graham felt the morning service was dry and unsuccessful. Graham and Pennington spent the whole afternoon praying on the dirt floor of the host family's garage.<sup>22</sup> At the night service, Graham mounted the pulpit prayed up; during the invitation, thirty-two of the one hundred in attendance came forward making decisions for Christ. With a prayerful attitude each time he preaches, Graham's invitation has been consistently characterized by multiple decisions. Customarily beginning each sermon with prayer and maintaining a heart full of prayer and thanksgiving,<sup>23</sup> Graham shares the Gospel and stands back praying with a childlike expectancy watching droves of people come forward and realizing he is viewing a miracle in which he plays a very small part.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Burnham, 22.

<sup>22</sup>Pollock, 21-2.

<sup>23</sup>Sherwood Wirt, *"Billy": A Personal Look at Billy Graham--The World's Best Loved Evangelist* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1997), 209.

<sup>24</sup>Alan Levy, *God Bless You Real Good: My Crusade with Billy Graham* (New York: Essandess Special Edition, 1969), 117.

After people pray to receive Jesus, Graham offers personal counsel about their new life. He explains to new converts that taking up the cross and following Jesus includes living a separated life of discipline, Bible reading, study, and prayer.<sup>25</sup> While highlighting the vital necessity of prayer for Christian growth, Graham describes the difficulty of personal prayer at first. Lovingly, he explains to new believers that

In the beginning you will not be able to pray very fluently, yet it is important that you begin immediately. The first prayer you pray may be something like this: "O Father, thank you for saving my soul." You will soon find that you are praying about everything. Soon your prayers will be constantly in your subconscious. This is when you begin to pray without ceasing.<sup>26</sup>

Calling on God everywhere and all the time will keep us continually in touch with Jesus Who will instruct us how to please Him.

Graham consciously and constantly strives to draw attention to the person of Christ. Therefore, he repeatedly refers to the prayer life of Jesus during His earthly sojourn. Jesus was the supreme model of a person dedicated to prayer. Retiring regularly to the Mount of Olives for prayer and rest, Jesus habitually spent time alone in an attitude of prayer.<sup>27</sup> Jesus, the Son of God, who was sinless during His life, spent an entire night in prayer. Graham addresses his listeners by establishing that they have broken everyone of His commandments and then asks, "How long has it been since you

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<sup>25</sup>Kooiman, 138.

<sup>26</sup>Billy Graham, *World Aflame* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 174.

<sup>27</sup>William Griffin and Ruth Graham Dienert, comps., *The Faithful Christian: An Anthology of Billy Graham* (New York: McCracken Press, 1994), 148.

spent fifteen minutes in prayer?”<sup>28</sup> If Jesus prayed frequently, Christians should also frequently pray. If there are tears in heaven, it will be ours because we prayed so little and received so little of all that God wants to give to His children if they will simply ask.

Christian homes all over the world are under attack by Satan. His desire is to break up every marriage and leave the family in ruins. Broken by the splintered homes in America, Graham often addresses the family. In his message, “Husbands, Love Your Wives,” he straightforwardly informs husbands of their spiritual responsibilities in their homes. Graham asks,

Do you have daily prayer in your home? Is there daily Bible reading in your home? Is grace said at the table at every meal? . . . You are God’s representative in the home, and if you are not obeying God in having Bible reading and prayer which we call the family altar, it is your fault, and God will someday hold you responsible.<sup>29</sup>

Opening your Bible and reading a Psalm or Proverb coupled with a short prayer will make a huge difference in your family. Your personal faith will increase (Rom. 10:17) and God will answer your prayers.

Often interwoven in his messages are attention-grabbing illustrations about prayer. One illustration describes a judge who sat in a senator’s office all morning. When the senator came out, the judge asked if he could meet with the senator for a minute. The senator replied that if Jesus needed a minute this morning, I could not give it to Him. The senator then walked out of the building onto the steps of the senate and fell dead. Graham chides, “This was the sin of Sodom; it is the sin of many who are here

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<sup>28</sup>Burnham, 90.

<sup>29</sup>Billy Graham, “Husbands, Love Your Wives,” *The Christ-Centered Home* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1971), 23.

tonight. You don't pray much. You don't read your Bible. You don't live for Christ! And you don't have time for God."<sup>30</sup> It is a shame that when we have little trouble we have much trouble praying; but, when we have much trouble, we have little trouble praying.

Graham places a great stress on divine intervention for solving problems and reduces human effort to the disciplines of prayer, soulwinning, and Bible study. His emphasis on prayer is contagious and his associate evangelists often preach about prayer. In London, an associate evangelist's first Bible reading was on "Blocked Prayers" (James 4:3), which presented four reasons prayers fail: "First, it is because of unworthy asking; second, because of unkept allegiance; third, because of an unimpassioned approach; and finally, because of an untrustworthy attitude."<sup>31</sup>

Although Graham underscores the spiritual discipline of prayer in his messages, he clearly teaches that salvation is received by trusting in Christ alone. Message after message, he presents that you must be born again by grace through faith in Jesus. Sometimes he asks audiences if they were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict them. He dismisses any wrong notions about what makes a person a Christian. He points out that one who prays is not necessarily a Christian, because he has seen many Hindus pray.<sup>32</sup> Praying does not make a person a Christian, but a Christian will pray to know God better and to receive His strength and blessings.

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<sup>30</sup>Levy, 96.

<sup>31</sup>Cook, 84.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas, 197.

In preparation for his first evangelistic campaign in Palatka, Florida, Graham prayed for direction, and God seemed to immediately deal with his heart about evangelism. Graham's prayerful heart cry was to be a great soulwinner not a great preacher.<sup>33</sup> John Pollock observes some of Graham's earlier preaching as too loud, fast, and dramatic often making him appear like a windmill as he flailed his arms and hands.<sup>34</sup> Cecil Northcott reported from Britain that

he leaves behind in the memory no memorable phrases. As an orator, he is flat and dull. Where then lies his power? Plainly, he is being used as a channel of communication. There is no other explanation. There are many things that Billy Graham is not. There is one thing that he is--a man of God.<sup>35</sup>

God's anointing is on Graham as He blesses those whom he so chooses to bless; and He blesses Billy Graham's dependence on Him and His Word.

### Prayer and the Bible

A brief study of church history clearly shows the giants of Christendom's pulpits proclaiming and depending on scripture for their authority. The Bible is also Billy Graham's foundation for ministry as he authoritatively declares, "The Bible says," repeatedly throughout his messages.<sup>36</sup> Graham's mother, Morrow Coffey Graham,

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<sup>33</sup>David Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (Waco: Word Books, 1971), 18.

<sup>34</sup>John C. Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1969), 20.

<sup>35</sup>Cecil Northcott, "Billy Graham in Britain," *The Christian Century* 71 (March 31, 1954), 412.

<sup>36</sup>Billy Graham, "Biblical Authority in Evangelism" in *Christianity Today* (October 15, 1956), 6.



instilled a deep reverence for God's Word in her son's heart. Mrs. Graham taught Billy that the Bible is God's written instructions to His children and is essential for spiritual growth and total well-being.<sup>37</sup> During his childhood, the influence of the Bible as taught by his parents, through his pastor and Sunday school teachers and others, left an indelible impression on Graham's life. Although at times he seemed restless during sermons and ready for Sunday School to adjourn shortly after entering the class, the Word of God was branded upon Graham's heart.<sup>38</sup>

After trusting in Christ and experiencing success in evangelism, Graham began to doubt the inspiration of the Bible in 1949 as some of his friends raised questions he could not answer. Seeing what he thought were apparent contradictions and bombarded by skeptical questions, especially from a friend named Chuck Templeton, Graham began to wonder if God cared about humanity. Does He hear and answer prayer? High in the mountains outside Los Angeles just before a crusade, Graham wrestled with his doubts as he walked along a trail in the woods. In desperation, Graham surrendered his will to the living God of the Bible.<sup>39</sup> Graham recalls that he placed his Bible on a stump and knelt down crying out, "O God, there are many things in this Book I do not understand. But, God, I am going to accept this Book as Your Word by faith. I'm going to allow my faith to go beyond my intellect and believe that this is Thy inspired Word."<sup>40</sup> Graham's

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<sup>37</sup>Morrow Coffey Graham, *They Call Me Mother Graham* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming Revell Company, 1977), 60.

<sup>38</sup>Wilson, 12.

<sup>39</sup>Graham, "Biblical Authority in Evangelism," 6.

<sup>40</sup>Levy, 94.

ministry burgeoned when he accepted and unreservedly preached the entire Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God.<sup>41</sup> Whenever Graham speaks, “another voice,” which is the voice of the Holy Spirit, illumines and applies the Bible to the lives of his listeners.<sup>42</sup> In an interview with David Frost, an English talk show host, Graham underscored the importance of a vertical relationship with God in prayer and Bible study before he could have a horizontal relationship of power in his presentation of the Word.<sup>43</sup>

Without equivocation or apology, Graham preaches the divinely authoritative Word of God. At the beginning of a crusade, he urges people to bring or buy a Bible. Forthrightly, Graham exclaims he is not going to tell them what the politician, philosopher, or diplomat has to say, but he will teach what the Bible says.<sup>44</sup> Listening to Graham preach, the audience often hears prayer, the Holy Spirit, and the Ten Commandments mentioned in his sermons.<sup>45</sup> Whatever Graham preaches, he supports over and over again with Bible verses.

A comparison with other major Protestant preachers' messages in 1960 revealed that Graham averaged twenty-four references to the Bible in each of his sermons during a three-day crusade as opposed to a combined twenty-three Bible references by fifteen

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<sup>41</sup>Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1956), 38.

<sup>42</sup>David Frost, *Billy Graham Talks with David Frost* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1971), 73.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Waite, 99.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 57.

ministers in their messages.<sup>46</sup> Graham realizes, “God has not promised to bless our eloquence or our human energy, but He has promised to bless His Word. Time after time in my ministry, I have quoted a Bible verse in a sermon sometimes without planning to do so in advance and had someone tell me afterward that it was that verse which the Holy Spirit used to bring conviction or faith to him.”<sup>47</sup> Hence, Graham often preaches a simple outline filled with supporting scriptures causing the hearts of men to melt and trust in Christ.<sup>48</sup>

Graham counsels new Christians to begin their days reading the Word and praying to God. The Bible is the compass and firm foundation upon which our lives are to be built. Graham also exhorts new believers to turn their television sets off and read the New Testament.<sup>49</sup> He calls the Bible his Harvard and Yale and spends a lot of time reading and memorizing the Word.<sup>50</sup> Describing his Bible study, Graham said, “I personally read five Psalms (they teach me about my relationship with God) and one chapter of Proverbs (this teaches me about my relationship with fellow men) in addition to other daily Bible reading.”<sup>51</sup> Study it, meditate upon it, memorize it, and trust its promises.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>47</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 19.

<sup>48</sup>Graham, “Biblical Authority in Evangelism,” 6.

<sup>49</sup>Billy Graham, “How to Live a Christian Life,” *Christianity in the World Today* (July 22, 1957), 28.

<sup>50</sup>High, 17.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas, 198.

Addressing evangelists, Graham highlights Jeremiah's spiritual discipline of daily Bible study and prayer. Graham asks, "When do you make time to read and study God's Word--not books about God's Word? Do you make time for God's Word everyday? Jeremiah did."<sup>52</sup> This was only half the secret of his godly life. The other half involved the time he spent alone in prayer. What do you do when you are alone? Who you are in private will determine who you are in public. Jeremiah was powerful because of diligent study of the Bible and time spent alone in prayer.<sup>53</sup> Graham's effective communication of God's Word also comes as a result of his communication with God on a regular basis.

Anointed with unction from on high and a heart full of expectancy that God will bless His Word, Graham simply preaches Jesus Christ. Graham feels if the Apostle Paul could explain his secret for communicating the gospel, he would say, "I preach Christ: He is the key which unlocks the door of the human heart, and He must be the center of our message."<sup>54</sup> Attenders at Graham's crusades listen to more than just another speaker, they hear an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Even though the Bible contains sixty-six books, composed by thirty-nine different men, covering more than fifteen centuries, Graham points out that its central theme throughout is the redemption of man through Jesus

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<sup>52</sup>J. D. Douglas, ed., *The Calling of an Evangelist: The Second International Congress for Itinerant Evangelists, Amsterdam, The Netherlands* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1987), 140.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 140-1.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 131.

Christ.<sup>55</sup> God faithfully blesses Graham's preaching and utter dependence on Him as he lifts up Jesus.

Converts at Graham's crusades may differ in age, social class, religious affiliation, and educational attainment, but each one of them relates their conversion to the Bible that Graham faithfully proclaims.<sup>56</sup> Graham has discovered that people are desperately hungry to hear the Word, and in his Bible-centered preaching, he cries out with a clarion voice, "Thus saith the Lord."<sup>57</sup> The Holy Spirit then draws people using God's special revelation. One man reports he felt a powerful stirring in his soul and that his wife felt the same effects as Billy proclaimed the Word of God.<sup>58</sup> This couple was among the droves of people who came forward just as they were and left never to be the same again.<sup>59</sup> Praise God for a man who bathes his messages with scripture and prayer.

### **Prayer and the Power of the Holy Spirit**

The spiritual discipline of prayer and the words, "I'm praying for you," echoed by millions worldwide are two primary reasons Billy Graham's ministry has been mightily blessed.<sup>60</sup> Graham insists, "Happy is the person who has learned the secret of coming to

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<sup>55</sup>Robert O. Ferm, *Persuaded to Live: Conversion Stories from Billy Graham Crusades* (N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1958), 56.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 188-9.

<sup>57</sup>Graham, "Biblical Authority in Evangelism," 6.

<sup>58</sup>Ferm, 57.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>T. S. Settle, comp. and ed., *The Faith of Billy Graham* (Anderson, S.C.: Doke House Publishers, 1968), 7.

God daily in prayer.”<sup>61</sup> Few people have learned to develop a disciplined prayer life. For effective ministry, Christians need to realize that it is not by might, nor by strength, but by the Spirit of God (Zech. 4:2). To obtain the Spirit’s power, we must ask for it and totally rely upon God as He blesses those whom He so chooses to bless. In an interview about his prayer life, Graham shared that God has taught him to pray unceasingly throughout the day while driving the car, taking a shower, or flying in a plane.<sup>62</sup> If you are too busy to pray, then you are too busy. “A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.”<sup>63</sup> There is no shortcut to obtaining the power of God on your life. You must daily spend time alone with God for success in ministry.

It was while attending Bible College in Florida that Graham began hungering for the fulness of the Spirit in his life. After hearing a passionate, Spirit-filled preacher named Stephen Olford, Graham approached him and inquired why he did not give an invitation. Graham explained his readiness to come forward and his desperate desire for greater unction from on high. Olford spent several hours showing Graham what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life and the command to be filled with the Spirit. Graham cried out in prayer, “Lord, I don’t want to go on without knowing this anointing you’ve given my brother.”<sup>64</sup> The next day, Graham continued his talk with Olford and began to humbly bow daily and hourly to the sovereignty of Christ

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<sup>61</sup>Billy Graham, *The Secret of Happiness* (Waco: Word Books Publishers, 1985), 41.

<sup>62</sup>Wirt, 99.

<sup>63</sup>Brown, June 30.

<sup>64</sup>Wirt, 28.

and the power of His Word.<sup>65</sup> Graham credits this divine appointment as one of the major turning points in his ministry. From that day forward, he determined not to just talk about the power of Jesus but to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>66</sup>

The Holy Spirit is the “other voice” people must hear or there will be no such thing as the supernatural work of conversion (John 6:44). We must be in constant dependence on the Holy Spirit to reach others for Jesus. Graham fully understands this reality and says he is no great preacher and that “if God should take His hands off my life, my lips would turn to clay.”<sup>67</sup> The Holy Spirit, not our eloquent speeches or polished oratorical abilities, is the great communicator. In order to have His power, we must pray. Graham acknowledges that many people want to do a great work for God, but few want to spend hours in prayer, which opens the doors of heaven and releases the supernatural power of God.<sup>68</sup>

Christendom’s roll call of spiritual giants reveals that any person mightily used by God has been a man or a woman who travailed in prayer and was burdened for the lost world. Jesus is our role model pray-er. The disciples did not ask Jesus to teach them how to preach, but they requested that He teach them how to pray. Jesus spent many hours in private communion with His Father. If Emmanuel, God with us, felt He needed

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>66</sup>Huston, 36.

<sup>67</sup>High, 17.

<sup>68</sup>Billy Graham, *Unto the Hills* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), 8-9.

to pray, we definitely need to follow His example and--pray.<sup>69</sup> One of Billy Graham's favorite prayer promises from Jesus is that, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."<sup>70</sup> Jesus commands His followers to go forward with His power.<sup>71</sup> Hence, with faith Graham asks for, receives, and goes forward with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Graham lists three keys to usefulness and prayer: (1) humility; (2) realization that sanctification is in Christ; and (3) dependence on the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> Graham is well aware of personal frailties and imperfections. He believes that when God uses someone who is not educationally qualified or weak according to the world's standards, it is to demonstrate that God's power is the secret of success in His work.<sup>73</sup> Realizing the expectation of success in his life and ministry by countless numbers of people, Graham confides, "I go crawling on hands and knees begging the Lord to help me. And as I get older, I feel more and more inadequate--and more and more dependent on the Holy Spirit."<sup>74</sup> As the song lyrics go, Graham knows and lives like he can't even walk without God holding his hand.

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<sup>69</sup>Brown, June 30.

<sup>70</sup>Griffin, 145.

<sup>71</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 24.

<sup>72</sup>Graham, *Unto the Hills*, 329.

<sup>73</sup>Harold Myra, "What Billy Graham Needs," *Christianity Today* 36 (November 9, 1992), 13.

<sup>74</sup>"Billy Graham and the Barefoot Evangelists." Interview on Amsterdam '86. *Christianity Today* 30 (July 11, 1986), 22-3.



Graham consciously allows God to order his steps, to control his actions, and to speak through him. As a channel of communication for God, authors, journalists, and religious leaders worldwide recognize that “Graham accesses a drawing power that can not be measured in a test tube.”<sup>75</sup> A power from on high has clearly reached down to touch this North Carolina farm boy with a charismatic magnetism inexplicable outside the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup> Ruth Graham, along with Wheaton contemporaries, feels people are not impressed by Graham’s earnestness or gestures but by the voice of Someone other than Billy Graham speaking.<sup>77</sup> This is the still small voice of the Holy Spirit.

Following the 1957 New York crusade, a television executive was asked to give an evaluation of the meeting. He was not able to report an opinion other than the meeting was so powerful that he was on cloud nine most of the time, and he did not note the technicalities of the service.<sup>78</sup> Biographer Mary Bishop asserts that Graham stands alone as the world’s best known evangelist because “he has the power of God behind him.”<sup>79</sup> Offering a rationale for her brother’s success, Graham’s sister quips there is no way to humanly explain it apart from the providence of God.<sup>80</sup> In agreement throughout his

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<sup>75</sup>Burnham, 81.

<sup>76</sup>Stanley High, “What Has Billy Graham Got?,” *Reader’s Digest* 67 (November 1955), 30.

<sup>77</sup>Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography*, 27.

<sup>78</sup>Burnham, 86.

<sup>79</sup>Bishop, 27.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

ministry during interview after interview, Graham humbly boasts only in God's power assuring, "I didn't do it, God did."<sup>81</sup>

Eternally grateful for the intercessory prayers of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Graham considers praying as essential as breathing.<sup>82</sup> Not depending solely on his personal prayers, Graham regularly appeals for intercessory prayer partners. As a result, millions of people pray for this evangelist and praise God for his spiritual leadership.<sup>83</sup> Unprecedented numbers of lost people are being reached by Graham's ministry as a saved remnant cries out to God, and Graham depends on the Holy Spirit to woo and win the masses of lost people he addresses.<sup>84</sup>

Billy Graham's national emergence occurred during the September/October 1949 Los Angeles crusade. In cooperation with Christ for the Greater Los Angeles area, one thousand churches representing many denominations planned for a three-week revival. Catching America's attention with three nationally known figures trusting in Christ, this revival was extended. The three men who came to know the Lord were Stuart Hamblen (television star), Louis Zamperini (former Olympic athlete), and racketeer Mickey Cohen. Graham insisted that the only difference between the Los Angeles crusade and

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<sup>81</sup>Burnham, 40.

<sup>82</sup>Betty Frist, *My Neighbors, The Billy Gramams* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 197.

<sup>83</sup>Settel, 7.

<sup>84</sup>Huston, 48-9.

his previous meetings was more prayer.<sup>85</sup> The crusades have never been conducted again without mammoth prayer support. Graham has been asked many times the “secret” of his worldwide ministry. Consistently, he earnestly remarks, “I am convinced that in heaven credit for all that has been accomplished in the power of God’s Holy Spirit will go to those hundreds of thousands of Christians who are faithful in prayer for us. They have the most essential part in our ministry. As I preach the Gospel, they pray.”<sup>86</sup>

Graham is genuinely humbled by the individuals and masses who pray for him. While in London, a stranger came and interrupted a conversation Graham was having with a friend and remarked that she prayed for him every day. Graham was encouraged and when sitting down said “Just think she prays for me every day. How very kind of her to tell me.”<sup>87</sup> An example of corporate prayer support was also exhibited during the London crusade in 1954. In answer to prayers all over the nation, there was a manifest movement of the Spirit of God. United in effectual prayer, Christians tarried in intercession as Graham entreated the lost to look to Christ alone. Following Graham’s instruction to emulate Jesus’ example of praying all night, there was a special moving of the Holy Spirit.<sup>88</sup> Graham was increasingly heartened when he received cable messages that one thousand Japanese missionaries were praying for the meetings, there were prayer

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<sup>85</sup>High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, 43.

<sup>86</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 69.

<sup>87</sup>John C. Pollock, *Billy Graham* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1966), 247.

<sup>88</sup>Cook, 40.

groups in South America, South Africa, and Kenya, and a governor in the United States had begun a prayer gathering for the crusade.<sup>89</sup> God's power was manifested in England as a result of the Christians seeking the face of the only One who alone can bring revival. Drawn by a deepening work of the Holy Spirit felt by all who attended the meetings, multitudes passed through the valley of decision to ascend to the mountaintop of a joyful relationship with Jesus.

During Graham's crusades, he regularly tells the media and those in attendance that the multitudes coming forward to receive Jesus is proof that there is power in prayer. Pleading with God to move before he gets to a meeting place, Graham continues to show his need of God before he preaches. Prior to one message, he prayed, "We pray that the message tonight will be Christ honoring and will be directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit and may many respond and give their lives to the Savior, for we ask it in His name. Amen."<sup>90</sup> At another meeting, he displayed full reliance on the Holy Spirit by asking, "May God set us ablaze with fire from off the altar. May the Holy Spirit descend on us in mighty Pentecostal power. This is the Word of the Lord: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts'" (Zech. 4:6).<sup>91</sup> At the end of his messages, Graham humbly stands back with a prayerful attitude after inviting people to come and receive Jesus because he knows the invitation is totally dependent on God.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>90</sup>Waite, 96.

<sup>91</sup>Douglas, xv.

<sup>92</sup>Griffin, 5.

### Personal Prayer Life of Billy Graham

Christians often ask how does Graham maintain a spiritual high and the anointing that is on his life. Graham quickly tells them about his quiet time. Bible reading and prayer are two indispensable spiritual disciplines Graham daily observes. On national television, Graham told David Frost that he keeps up his guard against Satanic attack by prayer and Bible study. As a doctor of souls, he prescribes these spiritual disciplines because if you wish to make the devil tremble, get down on your knees; and to make him run, quote him a verse of scripture.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Graham prioritizes his time each day to commune with God. He practices what is described as “the presence of God” in an almost ceaseless fashion.<sup>94</sup> To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus, all Graham wants is to be like Him. He openly acknowledges, “I have failed many times, but with all my heart, I am praying that I will continue to grow and be like Jesus.”<sup>95</sup> Graham has learned that the secret to a happy, dynamic, powerful, victorious Christian life is constant conversation with God 168 hours a week, 24 hours a day. Hence, when he gets a few minutes free, he often reads a pocket-sized New Testament or seeks conversation with God. In an interview with biographer Stanley High, Ruth Graham explained, “if you see your wife all day you don’t have special times to talk to her and then talk to her only at those times.

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<sup>93</sup>Frost, 26.

<sup>94</sup>High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, 37.

<sup>95</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 271.

With Billy, it is pray without ceasing.”<sup>96</sup> A healthy devotional life reaps the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Graham declares there is no shortcut to obtain the Holy Spirit’s power in ministry, and we never arrive spiritually to the point we no longer need His power.<sup>97</sup>

Although Graham is a spiritual giant in Christendom and is respected worldwide, he knows defeat lurks right around the corner if his prayer time diminishes.<sup>98</sup> Hurried devotions make a weak faith, feeble convictions, and questionable piety. To be little with God is to do little for God. Graham has done great things for the glory of God and won his wrestling match with pride by prayer.<sup>99</sup> From his days at Wheaton College to the present day, Graham is known as a humble, consecrated, soulwinning man of prayer.<sup>100</sup>

Providentially, it was Billy Graham’s praying that first caught the ear of Ruth. Usually you catch someone’s eye, but Graham’s passionate praying captured Ruth’s heart. At Wheaton College, she was in a room praying with some fellow female students. Then, all of a sudden in an adjacent room, Ruth heard the voice of a man praying with an earnest tone she had not previously heard. Totally dependent on the Holy Spirit, Graham cried out with a burdened heart for the lost people of the world to be reached for Jesus.

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<sup>96</sup>High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, 37.

<sup>97</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 83.

<sup>98</sup>High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, 37.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Gerald Strober, *Billy Graham--His Life and Faith* (Waco: Word Books, 1977), 24.

Ruth said, “she knew this man knew God in a very unusual way.”<sup>101</sup> Over the last six decades, Ruth has seen the Holy Spirit continue to speak through Graham to impact the world like no other evangelist in history. Just as Ruth heard only Billy’s voice on her first informal meeting of him, Betty Frist, a longtime neighbor of the Grahams feels like Ruth’s prayer for Billy would sound like this: “Thank you God that You used him in such a powerful way as a challenger to Satan. Thank You for his character, his pleasant personality, and his appearance. Now blot him out and let the people see only You.”<sup>102</sup>

It has been said that Graham has mastered the art of praying without ceasing better than anyone.<sup>103</sup> He maintains an attitude of constant prayer as his quiet time is not limited to morning and evening devotions.<sup>104</sup> Graham says, “I have so many decisions to make each day, and so many problems, that I have to pray all the time.”<sup>105</sup> He begins and counsels others to start the day off on a right foot by saying the Lord’s Prayer and throughout the day send up a minute prayer to heaven every hour.<sup>106</sup>

Throughout his daily routine, Graham can be seen praying. Pacing the floor while dictating an outline to his secretary, Graham will suddenly stop and begin to pray

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<sup>101</sup>Lockard.

<sup>102</sup>Frist, 70.

<sup>103</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 273.

<sup>104</sup>High, 37-8.

<sup>105</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 273.

<sup>106</sup>Billy Graham, *Answers to Life’s Problems* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), 223.

seeking guidance and confirmation that his message is from the Holy Spirit.<sup>107</sup> Early in his ministry, Graham practiced and prayed all day before he preached at night. Hence, he mounted the pulpit exhausted. “His mind refused to relax at night. Light sleeping became the insomnia which has troubled him ever since.”<sup>108</sup> When he cannot sleep at night, he often gets up and walks under the stars to pray over problems, people, and his future preaching opportunities.<sup>109</sup>

During a Los Angeles crusade, he got up some mornings as early as five o’clock and would go to his friend, Grady, to ask him to pray with him.<sup>110</sup> They cried out for God’s wisdom, anointing, and direction. Later, before going to London, Graham read extensively about his sermon topics; and while walking mountain trails, he prayed that God’s will would be accomplished in London.<sup>111</sup> At a cottage close to his mountain home, “Graham would pray and pray and pray believing deep in his soul that God would bless and honor His Word if he preached it faithfully.”<sup>112</sup> Like Jesus, prayer is a centerpiece discipline in Graham’s personal life.

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<sup>107</sup>High, 98.

<sup>108</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 24.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 273.

<sup>110</sup>Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 155.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 213.



It was in Billy's personal time of prayer that two great magazines were born and a radio ministry was underwritten.<sup>113</sup> *Christianity Today*, an evangelical magazine covering theological and current topics, was first published in 1956. *Decision*, Graham's evangelistic ministry magazine, was first published in 1960. The first "Hour of Decision" radio preaching program played on one hundred fifty stations on Sunday, November 5, 1950. Radio evangelism was introduced to Graham by Walter Bennett of Chicago and Fred Dienert of Philadelphia who were partners in the Bennett Advertising Agency. After turning them away a couple of times, Graham believed God wanted him to start a radio program, but first he needed twenty-five thousand dollars. Graham knelt by his bed and put out a "Gideon's fleece":

Lord, You know I'm doing all that I can. You know I don't have any money, but I believe we ought to do this. You know, Lord, I have a mortgage on that little house in Montreat. Lord, I'll take the little I have and put another mortgage on. Lord, I don't know where the money is, and if I did know where it is, I'm too busy to go out and get it. I feel the burden for it, but it's up to You, and if You want this, I want You to give me a sign. And I'm going to put out the fleece. And the fleece is for \$25,000 by midnight.<sup>114</sup>

That night he presented this request to his audience, and twenty-four thousand dollars was given after the service. Apparently, the fleece had not been reached. However, just before midnight, Graham arrived back at his hotel to find two more pledges totaling one thousand dollars. Graham was amazed and bowed his head in a silent prayer of thanksgiving. Turning to the elevator, he saw Walter and Frank who were supposed to be on a flight back to Chicago. Graham told them, "God has answered

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<sup>113</sup>Wirt, 102.

<sup>114</sup>Levy, 61.

prayer. We have the \$25,000. We'll take this as a step of faith."<sup>115</sup> With a "rapid-fire delivery" of the Bible and illustrations from current events, Graham's broadcast employs "fast, hard hitting . . . straight evangelism calculated to stir the Christian and win the person outside the church to Christ."<sup>116</sup> Countless numbers of people have trusted in Jesus and grown in their faith listening to this program.

Answers to prayer and opportunities that have arisen because of Graham's intense, personal prayer life have deeply impacted individuals affiliated with him. In fact, a great dependence on God is manifested by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Team members begin each day with ten minutes of silent prayer and Bible reading at their individual work areas.<sup>117</sup> They also gather at least once a week sharing special prayer requests and praise reports during a chapel service. God's hand is on Billy Graham because of the dedication to prayer in his evangelistic association and personal life.

### **Prayer and Crusades**

Some men minister behind the pulpits of their local church. Others minister on a street corner in a prison, at a retirement home, or at their place of work. God has chosen to use Billy Graham in crusades conducted in large stadiums and massive edifices throughout the world. What is a Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade? A Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade is a united effort of Christians in an area seeking to bring the gospel

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<sup>115</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 179.

<sup>116</sup>Levy, 61.

<sup>117</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 243.

of Jesus to every person's attention in that area.<sup>118</sup> From city to city and country to country, Graham clearly communicates the purpose of the crusade is "to lead lost men and women to personal faith in Christ as Savior and Lord."<sup>119</sup> Unprecedented success has followed Graham's evangelistic crusades.

When asked what is the secret of success behind the crusades, Billy Graham replies, "1. Prayer. 2. Prayer. 3. Prayer."<sup>120</sup> Graham is convinced a crusade will be successful only if it is "born in prayer, bathed in prayer, and built on prayer."<sup>121</sup> Graham possesses a total dependence on God. He does not believe he can save souls, but God will save souls through his preaching of the Word. After being asked if he had a feeling of success, Graham responded, "I think success is a relative term. From God's point of view, I'll have to wait till I get to heaven and get the full report. . . . From my point of view, whenever the gospel is proclaimed, it's successful!"<sup>122</sup>

If there has ever been a minister who could boast about personal accomplishments, Billy Graham is that man. However, he is perhaps the most humble man this author has studied. Considered by many as the most incorruptible evangelist ever who made Christianity intelligible to all, Billy Graham openly acknowledges his frailties and inadequacies. He feels, "The Lord has always arranged my life so that I

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<sup>118</sup>Billy Graham, quote on The Cove Pictorial Display, Asheville, North Carolina.

<sup>119</sup>Robert Walker, "Behind the Scenes at New York," *Christian Life* 19, no. 3 (July 1957): 11.

<sup>120</sup>Douglas, 131.

<sup>121</sup>Huston, 44.

<sup>122</sup>Graham, The Cove Pictorial Display.

have to stay dependent upon Him--I just have to stay dependent because I have severe limitations."<sup>123</sup> Graham believes that God will save souls if he is prayed up, prayed for, and preaches the gospel.<sup>124</sup> The success of a crusade is always dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Graham insists the power is not in him, but God is answering the prayers of multitudes of Christian people all over the world. "Man is an instrument; the power is of God, and the praise is His alone."<sup>125</sup> Graham diverts all attention from himself to Jesus. He looks forward to taking any honors he has received and handing them over some day to Christ when he sees Him face to face.<sup>126</sup>

Alone with the most beautiful face there has ever been (the face of Jesus), Graham will see an unknown massive number of faces he has had the privilege of leading to the Lord. During his ministry, he has preached the gospel to more people in person than anyone in history.<sup>127</sup> God used the 1949 Los Angeles crusade to catapult Graham's ministry into the national spotlight. Since then, he has led hundreds of thousands of individuals to make a decision to receive Jesus. While Graham uses many methods of outreach, his primary venue of ministry is his crusade work.

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Don Hoke, "New York Crusade: God Was There," *Christian Life* (September 1957): 11.

<sup>125</sup>Frank Gaebelein, "This is How We are Preparing for the Crusade," *Christian Life* 19, no. 1 (May 1957): 12.

<sup>126</sup>Graham, *The Cove Pictorial Display*.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid. Graham has spoken to over 210 million people in more than 185 countries. Hundreds of millions more have been reached by way of the media.

As one would expect, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is highly efficient. However, "it is an organization whose members are looking constantly to God in prayer and are working with selfless abandon."<sup>128</sup> Every crusade is a team effort involving the evangelist, the Graham team, many local Christians, and churches. An executive committee, composed of local clergy and laity, is the incorporated policy-making body. The Graham team poses as consultants to the executive committee and trains the operational committees.

The operational committees include a prayer committee (to enlist the prayer support of Christians throughout the area, individually and in groups), a counseling or follow-up committee (to enlist counselors and other personnel to deal with inquirers who come forward in response to the evangelist's invitation), and an Operation Andrew committee (to encourage Christians to bring the unchurched to the crusade meetings).<sup>129</sup>

The committees mentioned above are the ones detailed in this work. However, there are several other additional committees that are organized during a Graham crusade (i.e., music, ushers, finance, etc.).

In 1950, Willis Haymaker, a former banker and worker with Billy Sunday, Gypsy Smith, and Bob Jones, joined the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association team as a crusade organizer. He taught that prayer should come before everything else. He organized massive efforts of prayer wherever Graham preached. Haymaker believed that prayer and repentance are "God's blueprint for revival or spiritual awakening."<sup>130</sup> In agreement with Haymaker, Graham established a policy that there must be the

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<sup>128</sup>Gaebelein, 12.

<sup>129</sup>Graham, The Cove Pictorial Display.

<sup>130</sup>Pollock, 69.

supplications of multitudes of Christians before he conducts a crusade.<sup>131</sup> During their citywide campaigns, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association team stresses that “prayer is an indispensable element.”<sup>132</sup> Thus, as much prayer as possible is organized in advance of a crusade.

Graham says the difference between the Los Angeles crusade in 1949 and his previous crusades was that the Los Angeles crusade was rooted in the prayers of God’s people.<sup>133</sup> Prayer meetings were established eighteen months prior to the first service. Christians were involved in all day and all night prayer meetings. Examples of prayer support for the Los Angeles crusade also included the formation of one thousand prayer groups who placed placards in their windows bearing the invitation, “Pray for Revival Here.” Eighty thousand women met for fifteen minute prayer meetings in ten thousand homes in the morning.<sup>134</sup> By the time the crusade began, wired messages from all over the world signified the senders were praying.<sup>135</sup> Small groups of prayer warriors were also praying in choice locations for the crusade and a special visitation from God. When the campaign ended, the report given by executive secretary, C. C. Jenkins, showed three

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<sup>131</sup>Carolo Dullen, *W. F. “Billy” Graham’s “Decision for Christ”: A Study in Conversion* (Rome: Typis Pontificine University, 1971).

<sup>132</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 125.

<sup>133</sup>*Revival in Our Time* (Wheaton, Ill.: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 17.

<sup>134</sup>Pollock, 252.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

thousand professions of faith in Jesus, three thousand rededications to Christ, and three hundred fifty thousand people had attended the seventy-two meetings.<sup>136</sup>

A part of every segment of society in Los Angeles seemed to be immersed in prayer. Students prayed in Christian colleges, business people prayed at their workplaces, families prayed at their homes, and churches gathered to intercede for this crusade.<sup>137</sup> Even an eighty-five year old woman named Pearle Goode began interceding for Graham's ministry. Goode became known as Billy Graham's "prayer warrior." Despite poor health conditions, Mrs. Goode attended over forty-three of Graham's crusades worldwide. While attending the Los Angeles crusade, God spoke to her through Graham's sermons, and she told God, "I want to devote my life to following Billy Graham and praying for him."<sup>138</sup> In response to the tremendous prayer support and God's blessing on the crusade, Graham declared: "The mightiest force in the world . . . called prayer, undergirded me and brought the blessing of God from Heaven to Los Angeles."<sup>139</sup>

Invitations to preach from all over the United States and the world began to pour into Graham's office. As he started his evangelistic ministry full time in 1950, Graham's team sought to make each host crusade city the most prayed-for city in the world.<sup>140</sup> The

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>137</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 155.

<sup>138</sup>Kooiman, 106.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>High, 44. During the Scotland crusade, Glasgow was referred to as probably the most prayed-for city in Christian history. In 1955, there were 2,800 prayer groups

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association always looks for more prayer at each crusade and often remarks on the amount of prayer support. In England, Graham had prayed and been prayed for to the extent he felt that however simple and full of mistakes his sermon was, God would still mightily use it.<sup>141</sup> During the India crusade, the Graham team reported five thousand people praying every hour of the night. Graham sensed God's anointing on his life. When he stood up, Graham explained "he felt the concentrated prayers of thousands of people all over the world."<sup>142</sup> In reference to the England crusade, a reporter shared, "Graham's preaching was nothing compared to the prayer power around the world."<sup>143</sup> Graham does not claim to be a great preacher. He considers himself an ordinary preacher who attempts to share the gospel the best way he can, and God sees fit to honor it.<sup>144</sup> Providing a rationale for the success of the England crusade, Dr. Martin, Bishop of England, actually gives the reason for success at all of Graham's crusades: "The secret of this remarkable crusade was primarily the great volume of prayer which had been mobilized and maintained all over the world and in that setting a word of the Lord has been spoken, which was central in Christ as Savior and Lord."<sup>145</sup>

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and 100,000 prayer partners pledged to pray for the all-Scotland crusade. Then, in 1957, New York City was said to be the most prayed-for city in the world. See Gaebelein, 13.

<sup>141</sup>Pollock, 153.

<sup>142</sup>High, 192.

<sup>143</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 223.

<sup>144</sup>Graham, The Cove Pictorial Display.

<sup>145</sup>Cook, 90.



### Prayer and the Invitation

At the conclusion of his message, Graham quietly gives the invitation. Any individual wishing to receive Jesus is invited to come forward. The invitation is the most crucial time of the crusade. This is the critical moment at which the prayers of the world have been focused.<sup>146</sup> One by one, they begin to come to the front as the Holy Spirit draws them to make a decision. The invitation's response is the most-studied feature of Graham's crusades, because it marks Graham's ministry as so very different and successful. Graham asks people who come forward to bow their heads and pray. A typical prayer is, "Oh Lord, I'm a sinner. I am sorry for my sins. I am willing to turn from my sins to receive Christ the Savior by professing His love. From this moment on, I want to follow Him and share with Him in the fellowship of His Church. In Christ's name. Amen."<sup>147</sup>

Immediately after praying with the inquirers, Graham shares a survival plan for new converts. He encourages them to: "1. Read your Bible daily; 2. pray daily in private and go to prayer meetings in your church; 3. tell someone else about Christ daily; and 4. join a local church of choice and attend regularly."<sup>148</sup> Next, the new converts are dealt with by trained counselors. The Graham team has established certain qualifications before a person can serve as a counselor. The number one requirement is the personal

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<sup>146</sup>Walker, 13.

<sup>147</sup>Dullen, 43.

<sup>148</sup>Waite.

worker must be saved and living a victorious Christian life.<sup>149</sup> There are nine training periods that knit the counselors into a unified team as they stress the daily devotional life and memorization of scripture necessary for soulwinning and counseling.

One inquirer described his feelings as he went forward and proceeded to the counseling room. He was terrified but touched by the earnest prayer of the counselor. He was unable to resist the gospel and received Jesus. He said, "I couldn't help wondering what the next day would be like but as I awakened the next morning, I said, 'Thank you, God,' for I knew a miraculous change had taken place. I was a new person."<sup>150</sup>

#### Impact of Crusades

The crusades not only touch individuals, but they affect churches, the business world, and the overall atmosphere of a city. Prior to, during, and after a crusade, churches regularly report definite evidences of spiritual awakening. Believers gather together for nights of prayer during the crusade and oftentimes continue their prayer meetings afterward. New converts also excitedly tell friends about their newfound faith. One pastor said, "A climate for evangelism has been created such as I have never seen before."<sup>151</sup> Previously apathetic Christians have become concerned about other souls and pray that the invitation time may be the hour of decision for those without Jesus.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Gaebelein, 13.

<sup>150</sup>Ferm, 96.

<sup>151</sup>"Churches Come to Life." *Christian Life* (September 1957): 22-4.

<sup>152</sup>Larry Love, "This I Saw," *Christian Life* (April 1958): 14.

Pulling all area denominations together for a massive effort creates a buoyancy and a strong bond of fellowship among Christians.<sup>153</sup>

The power of prayer also charges the atmosphere of the crusades' host cities. Television personalities watch the Graham team live out their belief and say, "If this is what Christianity is, I want it."<sup>154</sup> A taxicab driver in New York tells a rider, "God bless you sir. I'll be praying for you as you listen to Mr. Graham."<sup>155</sup> Impressed and shocked, the rider trusted in Christ a week later after one of the meetings. Even Graham's critics say, "I sincerely have and will continue to pray for Billy Graham. I cannot pray that God will bless his methods which the Word of God condemns. However, God's Word will be proclaimed, the way of salvation made plain and souls will be saved."<sup>156</sup> The vast amount of prayer undergirding the crusades creates a palatable spiritual climate for lives to be reached and cities to be changed.

### **Prayer and the Immediate Family**

Billy Graham desires for his home to be filled with happiness and unity. To ensure this atmosphere, Graham prescribes,

Make Christ the center of your home. A home is like a solar system. The center, the great sun, holds the solar system together. If it were not for the

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<sup>153</sup>June Alder, "New Enthusiasm Grips N. Y. Christians," *Christian Life* (September 1957): 34.

<sup>154</sup>Walker, 12.

<sup>155</sup>Ferm, 44.

<sup>156</sup>Duke Church League of America, comp., *Billy Graham: Performer? Politician? Preacher? Prophet?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Church League of America, 1978), 30.

sun, the solar system would fly to pieces. Unless the Son of God is put at the center of your home, it too, may fly to pieces.<sup>157</sup>

Your family circle knows whether Christ lives in you and through you. Hence, Graham endeavors to set a Christlike example in his home. He beckons parents who will not live God-honoring lives for their own sake to live a godly life for their children's sake.<sup>158</sup> As would be expected, the family altar was the central and most important equipment in the Graham home.<sup>159</sup> Billy or Ruth daily read a portion of scripture and explained it to the children. Franklin once interrupted his dad's explanation of the scriptures saying, "Daddy, let's not talk so much and pray more."<sup>160</sup>

The Graham children learned at an early age to present their requests to a prayer-answering God. They received intense spiritual training at church and at home. Graham believes that 90 percent of the problems parents have with children can be solved by getting them to church every Sunday, praying daily, and saying grace before meals at the table.<sup>161</sup> The Graham children were taught that God does not put his children on hold, their prayers should be according to His will, and if their prayers are to be heard, sin must

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<sup>157</sup>Brown, November 14.

<sup>158</sup>Cort R. Flint and the Staff of Quote, comp. and ed., *The Quotable Billy Graham* (Anderson, S.C.: Doke House, 1966), 99.

<sup>159</sup>Frist, 195.

<sup>160</sup>Burnham, 19.

<sup>161</sup>Settel, 30.

be confessed.<sup>162</sup> They also learned important scriptures on prayer (Ps. 66:18; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:14; James 4:3; Phil. 4:6; John 15:7; and John 16:24).<sup>163</sup>

The prayers the Graham children prayed were precious and very often influenced by their father's ministry. During the Los Angeles crusade, Ruth's mother wrote to the Grahams and shared a prayer that Gigi had offered up for Mickey Cohen. The prayer beckoned, "Dear Jesus, Thank you for the meetings, and dear Jesus, thank you for Mickey Cohen. Make him good and make him let Jesus put His blood in his heart."<sup>164</sup> During another time of family prayer, Franklin thanked God for his dad and the crusade team in New York and closed with, "and thank you for mommy staying home."<sup>165</sup> This prayer voices Graham's great sacrifice of separation from his family for the ministry of reaching others for Jesus all over the world.

Over and over again, Graham had to say goodbye to his dear wife, Ruth. One observer noted that he parted with no great show of emotion, a light hug, and a kiss. Graham, however, says, "Many times I've driven down the driveway with tears coming down my cheeks not wanting to leave."<sup>166</sup> Asked about her husband's frequent departures and continual absence, Ruth replied, "I would rather spend two weeks out of the year with Billy than any other man full-time."<sup>167</sup> When Billy is at home, he and Ruth

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<sup>162</sup>Frist, 120.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 152.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 704.

<sup>166</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 29.

<sup>167</sup>Graham, *The Cove Pictorial Display*.

enjoy one another's company. Ruth is a devoted, spiritual wife dedicated to her husband, children, and God.

When Billy was away, Ruth led the time of devotions. Her prayers were practical and down to earth. God was made real to the five children as Ruth prayed for their daddy and individual concerns.<sup>168</sup> Bea Long, a maid and second mother figure, assisted Ruth with the children from the time they were very young until her retirement. When the children gathered to read the Bible and pray, Bea sometimes led the devotions. One of the boys once commented, "Let Bea pray, she prays short and good."<sup>169</sup> Bea's friendship and help were greatly appreciated as Ruth had her hands full parenting five children.

Billy believed that one main reason the Lord guided and protected him and his family through the years was the prayers of his mother and father.<sup>170</sup> Following his parents' model of child-rearing, Billy and Ruth agreed to raise their children with a "prayer and a paddle."<sup>171</sup> Ruth cried out to God to help her keep the children out of the spotlight. The Grahams did not want their children to suffer from personality abnormalities as a result of living a "fish bowl" kind of life.<sup>172</sup> Ruth and Billy also prayed "that God would mercifully spare their children any sowing of wild oats."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Frist, 116.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>170</sup>Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, 711.

<sup>171</sup>Frist, 91.

<sup>172</sup>Burnham, 20.

<sup>173</sup>Patricia Cornwell, *Ruth, A Portrait* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1997), 184.

Whenever the children disobeyed, they would usually find their mother at home praying for them. Such was the case with Franklin when he came in past his curfew, Ruth usually waited up for him. Sometimes at 4:00 A.M., her light would still be on as she was praying for Franklin.<sup>174</sup>

Billy often referred to the Graham's rustic mountain home as "the house that Ruth built" because she planned its construction and secured the logs necessary for it to be built.<sup>175</sup> What Billy said about the physical building of the home could also be said of the spiritual building of the Graham home. Do not misunderstand this statement. Billy Graham was the spiritual leader of his home; but he was often away, and the responsibility of maintaining a godly home rested on Ruth's shoulders. She prayed, "Dear Lord, we've prayed and planned and built this house, and here we pause, for You alone can by Your presence hallow it and make this house a home."<sup>176</sup> Since it was difficult for Ruth to set aside a time for prayer, she tried to maintain a constant attitude of prayer. Ruth talked to Christ as she would a friend throughout the day while she cooked, cleaned, washed, and did other chores.<sup>177</sup> To keep her priorities in order, Ruth has a framed motto hanging near her sink, which reminds her to continually "Praise, Pray, and Peg Away."<sup>178</sup> Ruth was often so busy with the children that she did not stop to pray.

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<sup>174</sup>Frist, 94.

<sup>175</sup>Levy, 36.

<sup>176</sup>Ruth Bell Graham, comp., *Prayers From a Mother's Heart* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 11.

<sup>177</sup>High, 129.

<sup>178</sup>Frist, 49.

Instead, she prayed on the move asking, “Lord, forgive me that I have so little time to spend on my knees. Raising children and running a busy house, I have to do most of my praying ‘on the hoof,’ as it were. But, Lord, You know my heart is kneeling.”<sup>179</sup> God honored Ruth and Billy’s prayer requests for the salvation of their children. Billy proudly tells people, “We have five children, and with thanksgiving, and praise, and glory to the Lord--and to Ruth--they are all dedicated believers.”<sup>180</sup>

Reflecting on his life, Graham says he cannot begin to describe the thousands of times he has felt lonely. Although he had a wonderful revival team and met many new people, they could not take the place of his family or home. Sometimes he wondered why God did not call him to be a pastor so he could stay in one central place. Graham spent quality time with his family when he returned home, but a large quantity of time was sacrificed in meetings worldwide. Graham regrets not spending more time with his family. He asserts, “If I had my life to live over again, I would spend a great deal more time with my family.”<sup>181</sup> After years of saying “yes” to meetings that he should have turned down, Graham now says “no” to many invitations in order to spend time with his family.<sup>182</sup> Billy and Ruth’s family is now significantly larger than their two sons and three daughters. They also have nineteen grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren who bring much joy to their lives.

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<sup>179</sup>Graham, *Prayers From a Mother’s Heart*, 25.

<sup>180</sup>Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists*, 96.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*



Any ministry that has been mightily blessed can be traced back to a kneeling figure. Thus, prayer is the greatest concern of the Graham organizers. Graham asks for Christians to pray that he will be hidden behind the cross until people see only Jesus.<sup>183</sup> After more than six decades of ministry, he continues to have a great vision for world evangelization. People worldwide should continue to pray fervently for him. Graham may be weaker in some ways; but when undergirded with prayer, he can be as effective as ever.

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<sup>183</sup>Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 175.

## CONCLUSION

### Implications for Contemporary Preachers

Although the effectiveness of prayer cannot be measured in a test tube or by scientific analysis, the eyes of faith can clearly see the correlation between prayer and the unfolding of events. Possessing an acute awareness that they could not succeed without the divine aid of God, Moody and Spurgeon came boldly; and Graham continues to come boldly to the throne of grace. This close study of their lives reveals that not only were they preachers *par excellent*, but they were first prayers *par excellent*. Prayer did not take a backseat to their preaching. Instead, they looked into the face of God in prayer before they looked into the face of men to preach. Similarities beneficial for personal growth in ministry and one's walk with Jesus abound in the prayer lives of Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham, whose ministries span from the 1800's to this present time in 2000. A study of their prayer lives leads us to consider some of the implications for evangelical ministers and laity. Contemporary preachers can find the following implications in the prayer lives of D. L. Moody, C. H. Spurgeon, and Billy Graham.

1. Preachers must make prayer a vital part of their home and family lives. Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham were raised in Christ-centered homes that instilled the daily disciplines of reading the Bible and praying during devotions. Throughout their ministries, Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham expressed deep appreciation for the Christian training in their early years that became the foundation upon which they built their lives. Not forsaking their upbringing, Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham also established daily devotions in their homes, which kept their families close to God and to one another. Today, preachers should also stress the

importance of family prayer and lead in regular times of prayer in their homes. Prayer is necessary in the development of a Christian personality, or successful Christian living, or accomplishing anything worthwhile in Christian service.

2. Preachers must depend more upon prayer than upon formal education for effectiveness in ministry. Neither Moody, Spurgeon, nor Graham graduated with a seminary degree. They were not against higher education that led to a deeper understanding of the inerrant Word of God, to holier living, and to increased soulwinning. In fact, Moody and Spurgeon started their own Bible schools; and Graham has schools of evangelism, which he regards as probably the most important ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Perhaps the Holy Spirit did not lead them to attend seminary because they would have been so busy (like many today) studying deep theological questions and arguing about the validity of critical inquiries as to the dates of the books of the Bible that they would have left the Christless masses alone. In the twenty-first century, preachers should still seek God's calling on their lives and not man's calling. It is not necessarily God's desire for His messenger to get a particular degree because he has the ability. God may want to use your ability and time for a greater eternal purpose. If you do not possess a sure call to Bible college or seminary, God wants you to depend on Him. God can train you equally as well and give you all the credibility needed to do His will for your life. If God does call one to higher education, it is absolutely essential to remember that knowledge is not power, but power comes from spending time with God in prayer. Along with Spurgeon, seek a degree in prayer with God above every other degree the world has to confer.
3. Preachers must enlist others to pray for the effectiveness of their ministry. Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham readily acknowledged that all their strength rested in prayer. Spurgeon believed that with his people's prayers he could do anything but without their prayers he could do nothing. Moody often telegraphed or wrote his college asking the professors to cancel class and intercede for him along with the masses he organized for the support of his meetings. One of the requirements before Graham does a crusade is the recruitment of intercessors for his meetings, which often numbers in the thousands. Great preachers and pastors have faithful groups of praying Christians by their sides. In answer to the prayers of intercessors, preachers will sense a renewed spirit of confidence, clarity of thinking, wisdom in preparing messages, an ease and freedom in the pulpit, and an anointing on their lives and

ministries. Preachers will receive unclaimed blessings in heaven waiting to be showered upon them if they will gather prayer support by asking people to pray for them.

4. Preachers must pray in order to be effective soulwinners. Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham sought to win as many souls as possible to Christ. They viewed soulwinning as the happiest activity in the world. If individuals left their services lost, it was not because their souls were unwarned and unprayed for by the church. Prayer draws a preacher closer to his personal Savior and inadvertently intensifies his yearning to see souls saved as Christ burdens his heart for the lost. Boldly approaching the throne of grace, a preacher can request divine assistance in soulwinning, and Christ will impart the holy boldness and spiritual courage necessary to share the gospel. To be obedient to the teachings of the New Testament, a preacher must see that prayer is to be offered for those who are yet to believe (John 17:20); for the capacity to clearly and confidently communicate the gospel (Eph. 6:19); for the growth of the kingdom (Matt. 6:10); and for a harvest of conversions (Matt. 9:38, Rom. 1:9-13). People may not come to hear a sermon, but they cannot stop a preacher from praying. The lost may seem too far away. However, prayer can reach them. Pray to God for the souls of man, and His Spirit will woo the spirits of men.
5. Preachers must pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to be present in their ministries. Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham all agreed they would rather quit the ministry or die than lose the power of the Holy Spirit on their lives. Spurgeon often made his way to the pulpit whispering that he believed in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible commands every Christian to be being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is God's will to anoint every preacher if he will live a holy life and ask for God's power on his life. Without the unction of the Holy Spirit, a preacher's message will be ineffective. Unless the Holy Spirit blesses the Word, successful completion of our task of preaching for eternal results is absolutely impossible. The Holy Spirit must regenerate. If the Holy Spirit does not speak to hearts when a preacher speaks, nothing will be accomplished. All the usefulness of a preacher depends on the power of God resting on his life. Without the power of God, a preacher's life and ministry will be miserable.
6. A preacher must pray privately for effectiveness in preaching. Moody, Spurgeon, and Graham went forward for God on their knees. While they did not spend long hours in prayer, seldom did

an hour pass that they did not pray. Their lives seemed to be in continual conversation with God. Getting into the closet with God before we go into the conflict for God and hiding ourselves with God before we show ourselves for God is essential for effective preaching. Preachers must acknowledge their weaknesses and inadequacies and cry out to God in prayer for power to live victorious Christian lives and have fruitful ministries. Preaching is powerless until the preacher has prayed and been filled with overflowing power. Our role model example, Jesus, used many verbs such as "I send," "I seek," "I hear," "I love," and "I honour." But, "I pray" stands out among all the verbs He used and when a preacher prays, he is most like our great Intercessor--Jesus.

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