

work may be slow. Sickness and disease may afflict them. Finances may be short. The government may hinder them. Discouragement may torment them. Angry people may threaten them. When these or other burdens afflict our missionaries, they may be tempted to worry, complain or become bitter.

- a) When you read their prayer letters, put yourself in their shoes. Pray that they will trust the Lord, as did the Psalmist. (Psalms 56:3) "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*"
 - b) We must pray that they will obey God and cast their burdens on the Lord. (Philippians 4:6-7) "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"
- 2) The Apostle Paul specifically ask believers to pray for his protection from opposition. (2 Thessalonians 3:2) "*And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*" (Romans 15:30-31) "*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints.*" Our missionaries will face opposition. They may face life-threatening dangers. One of our duties is to pray for their protection and encouragement.

Conclusion: Our missionaries are in need of prayer for their personal lives, for their work, for their people, and for their provision and protection. God may not call you to the foreign mission field, but He has called you to give and to pray for our missionaries. Specific prayers for our missionaries are far more effectual than simply praying, "God bless the missionaries." Will you take the challenge to begin praying more specifically for our missionaries?

(1 Thessalonians 5:25) "*Brethren, pray for us.*" Let that request press on your heart this evening.

Song: Give Me a Passion for Souls - 306

Praying for Missionaries

22 May 2022 AM – 1Thessalonians 5:25 – Missions – Scott Childs

Introduction: The Apostle Paul, the first NT foreign missionary wrote, (1 Thessalonians 5:25) "*Brethren, pray for us.*" That is the heart's cry of every biblical missionary. The biblical work of missions is beyond human ability. Moving to a foreign mission field, many missionaries face obstacles they would never have faced had they ministered in their homeland. Thus, in a special way, our missionaries need our prayers.

You will never pray effectively for our missionaries until you strive to get to know them. Learn their names, their location, and their situation. Read their prayer letters. Highlight their prayer requests. Try writing to them.

Transition: Today, in our morning and evening services, I want to highlight four areas in which our missionaries need our prayers. We need to pray for their personal lives, for their work, for their people, and for their provision & protection.

1. Pray for our Missionaries' Personal Lives

a. Pray for their walk with God

- 1) Each of our missionaries are people just like you and me. Before a person can accomplish anything for God's glory, he or she must have a flourishing walk with God.
- 2) Think about the struggles you have with maintaining a close fellowship with God. Each of our missionaries face the same challenges, and perhaps a few more.
- 3) Ask the Lord to help each of our missionaries (husbands and wives) to spend quality time each day studying the Bible to feed their own souls and quiet time alone with God in prayer. (2 Timothy 2:15) "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"
- 4) As you pray for your own heart, pray that our missionaries may have a passion for God like the Psalmist. (Psalms 63:1) "*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*"

b. Pray for their marriages

- 1) God designed marriage to be a harmonious team. Two cannot walk together in harmony if they are not agreed (Amos 3:3).
- 2) Ask God to give each missionary couple a sweet harmony, faithful purity and mutual support. Living on a mission field places tremendous stress on a marriage that requires both husband and wife to be fully committed to God's mission call.

c. Pray for their children

- 1) Missionary kids (MKs), often struggle. They did not choose their location, their isolation or a host of other things. They face a temptation to rebel against mission life.
- 2) They were born sinners, just like your children. They, too, must trust Christ for salvation. They need our prayers.

d. Pray for their parenting

- 1) God wants parenting to be the top priority in every home. Parenting takes **time** and **patience**. We often seem to be short of both.
- 2) Ask God to help each missionary couple to make it their top priority to rear their children biblically. (Ephesians 6:4) "*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture [disciplined training] and admonition [warning] of the Lord.*"

e. Pray for their cultural adjustments

- 1) On some mission fields, living quarters are primitive, cramped, or uncomfortable. Cultural smells are a challenging adjustment.
- 2) Often missionaries must learn a new language. This takes time, humility and effort. Missionaries face a temptation to live like people back home and to possess all the conveniences of home, living far above the local people. This often isolates them from those they desire to reach. A wise missionary will seek to adjust to the culture whenever appropriate. Paul said, (1 Corinthians 9:22) "*To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*" Missionaries need our prayers for this.

- 2) We can and OUGHT to pray that God will meet the financial needs of our missionaries, **but it is difficult, if not impossible, to pray for this if we are unwilling to give to help meet that need.**
- 3) I believe that God expects Christians to support their local church. I personally believe that tithing is still God's primary method for giving. **Grace Giving for Missions** is giving beyond the tithe specifically for missions. If you wait until you feel you are financially stable enough to tithe and to get involved in **Grace Giving for Missions**, you will never give. Give to God out of worship, obedience and love. Trust Him to meet your needs. Jesus said, (Luke 6:38) "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*"

b. Missionaries have friendship needs

- 1) David, during his years of hiding from King Saul, had a true friend in Jonathan. (1 Samuel 18:1) "*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*"
- 2) The dearest friend of a married missionary ought to be his or her spouse. I praise God for my faithful wife.
- 3) However, I believe that if God gives a missionary another close, loyal friend, to whom he can confide and seek counsel, that is a priceless treasure. Pray that God will give each of our missionaries such a friend. (Proverbs 17:17) "*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*"

c. Missionaries have spiritual needs

- 1) Pray that our missionaries will experience God's peace during burdens. We all face burdens. Our missionaries are no exception. Paul wrote in (Acts 14:2) "*But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.*" **The devil will oppose our missionaries. People will criticise them. The**

b. Ask the Lord to send more labourers

- 1) Virtually every country needs more Christian labourers. (Matthew 9:38) "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"
- 2) Jesus seemed to indicate that the primary problem of reaching lost souls is not with the unbelievers, but with the believers. Too few are willing to become labourers.
 - a) Parents ought to be praying that God will call their children as missionaries or preachers.
 - b) Christians ought to be praying seriously about God's call on their lives. I agree with the preacher who said, "God has not called every Christian to the foreign mission field, but every Christian ought to struggle with the possibility."
- 3) We too must pray that God will save men on the mission fields and challenge them to be faithful and willing to help the missionaries. Pray that God will raise up faithful men for training.

4. Pray for our Missionaries' Provision & Protection

a. Missionaries have financial needs.

- 1) When we think of foreign missions, we often think of their **financial** needs.
 - a) It takes money to travel, to eat, to live, to buy a vehicle, to rent a home, to rent meeting places, to purchase tracts and Bibles, etc. Mission work takes money. That is true. We cannot escape that reality.
 - b) It was true even in the first century. Paul commended the Philippian church, saying, (Philippians 4:16) "*For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.*" Just three verses later, Paul assured those faithful mission supporters that God would meet their needs because of their generosity. (Philippians 4:19) "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*" Be careful to keep this promise in context. It is a promise ONLY to generous Christians.

f. Pray for their isolation

- 1) Missionaries, especially new ones, feel like a fish out of water. They are strangers among foreign thousands.
- 2) They miss their friends. They may feel homesick. Communication may be poor. Place yourself in their shoes to help you pray for them with empathy.

g. Pray for their health

- 1) On many mission fields, health conditions and sanitation are poor. Malaria and other parasites are prevalent. Pray that God will give our missionaries physical health.
- 2) The devil often uses discouragement to cripple missionaries. Pray for their emotional stability. Ask God to encourage their hearts. Consider writing just a very short note of encouragement to each missionary.

2. Pray for our Missionaries' Work

a. His study preparation

- 1) Our missionaries are preachers. Preachers must study many hours each week to prepare spiritual food for their congregations. Ask God to show them what to preach. Pray that they will have wisdom as they outline and develop each sermon.
- 2) Pray that the missionary will prepare diligently. Because a missionary often has no one watching him, he may get careless about his studies. He needs our prayers.
- 3) Ask God to bless their times of prayer.

b. His correspondence & office work

- 1) Missionaries, due to the nature of their ministry, have extra correspondence and office work to do.
- 2) Ask the Lord to give them grace to keep up with this.

c. His outreach ministry

Here are six outreach ministry needs that every church-planting missionary has and for which we must pray.

- 1) He needs an open door for the word, to speak the Gospel. (Colossians 4:3-4) "*Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*" Paul knew

that if God did not open a door for the Word in a village or town, he could not speak it as he ought. That is true for our missionaries as well.

- 2) Missionaries need words from God, so they might have the freedom to speak boldly to their listeners. This was Paul's prayer request to the Ephesian believers. (Ephesians 6:19-20) "*And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*"
- 3) As our missionaries witness and preach, they need God to cause his Word to run swiftly to the hearts of the listeners and that it might be glorified in bearing fruit unto salvation. Again, Paul gives this prayer request to the Thessalonian believers. (2 Thessalonians 3:1) "*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*"
- 4) Our missionary needs dependence on God for power. Jesus said, (John 15:5) "*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*" Pray that God will stir the hearts of our missionaries to depend more on Him.
- 5) Listen to the words of Jesus. (Mark 16:15) "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Going to a foreign part of the world presents cultural barriers. Language, customs, foods, smells, and even taboos differ. *Once I caused listeners to blush when I said something in Pidgin that was fine in the USA, but inappropriate in PNG.* Ask God to help our missionaries overcome cultural differences.
- 6) Training national leaders is a challenging part of mission work. (2 Timothy 2:1-2) "*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" Pray that God will give wisdom in training nationals. [End AM]

3. Pray for our Missionaries' People

a. Pray for the lost in their area

Apply last week's message on *Praying for Unbelievers*.

- 1) Satan is actively opposing our missionaries. He is actively blinding, binding, deceiving, overpowering, and keeping the lost of their country in darkness. Many times, this is openly obvious in third-world countries.
 - a) It is very true in PNG.
 - b) It is also very true in Ghana, West Africa.
- 2) Our missionaries' task is like the one God gave to the Apostle Paul. (Acts 26:18) "*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" Ask God to enable them for that task.
- 3) Pray specifically that God will bind the devil as our missionaries share the Gospel (Mar 3:26-27).
- 4) Plead the passion of God (Luk 19:10), the promises of God (Joh 1:12), and the power of God (Heb 7:25).
- 5) Ask the Holy Spirit to convict as Jesus said He would, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come (Joh 16:7-11).
- 6) Ask the Lord to open the hearts of the unbelievers, as he opened Lydia's heart in Philippi (Ac 16:14).
- 7) Ask the Lord to give our missionaries opportunities to share the gospel with those for whom they are praying (Pro 11:30; Dan 12:3).
- 8) Pray that our missionary will know how to share the Gospel clearly in the native's language. Our missionaries, the Otuteis, do not have this barrier because they are natives of Ghana. The Childs, Dagans, and Herringsons all face this language barrier.
- 9) When a missionary shares a specific request, pray specifically for that request. When you get involved in helping a missionary with housing, finances, or prayer, you are partnering with him. (3 John 1:8) "*We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.*"