

Gospelize Your Youth Ministry

An excerpt on the power of prayer, by Greg Stier (p.83-84)

*"Prayer
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human events."*

[...] I know that God doesn't answer every prayer with a "yes." I also understand that suffering is part of God forging and forming us into the image of His dear Son. But I also believe that we don't see a lot of things happen in our lives and ministries, because we don't really believe that prayer works like that.

Some preachers have even watered their prayer theology down enough to say, "The only thing prayer changes is us."

[...] Of course, prayer changes us. It makes us more dependent on Him, and less dependent on our own abilities. It causes us to empty ourselves, so that He can fill us and fuel us. But even a cursory reading of the Bible makes it clear that prayer unleashes the sovereignty of God to transform human events.

Moses prayed like prayer changed situations.

So did David.

So did Nehemiah.

So did Daniel.

So did Jesus.

So did His followers—see the book of Acts.

If the power of God is the water, then prayer is the spigot that releases it. God, in His sovereignty, has chosen that He will often change given situations as a direct result of prayer. When He says, "No," He's got a better answer for us than "Yes!"

As Jesus said in Matthew 7:9-11:

"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

God loves *to* give good gifts to His kids! And intercessory prayer is how God gives good gifts *through* His kids

[...]

God has given you the same privilege and opportunity in your youth group. You can collectively go straight to the King of kings and Lord of lords to present your requests to Him. You can intercede on behalf of the lost and each other. You can ask Him to provide for your "daily bread" and personal requests, and He WILL answer. Although He doesn't always answer with a "Yes," He always answers with what's best!

INTERCEDING FOR A FRIEND'S SALVATION

Dear God, today I am coming to you on behalf of my friend _____

I'm thankful that I have the chance to intercede in his/her life, and know that you hear me and that my prayers make a real difference.

God I pray that my friend will receive salvation. God it would be so tragic if he/she never receives you in his life. I can't imagine my friend not being with you for eternity. Please help my friend to respond to you, at this point, I know his mental barriers are gone, I know that he understands the gospel. But please help him to bridge the emotional gap. Honestly those emotional barriers are sometimes the hardest to overcome.

God please free his heart from the hold of his idols and desires that make him believe that you would not be a good master in his life. Help him to truly believe that your death on the cross does indeed cover all of his sins, and that he can truly be forgiven. Help him to have the courage to make that step that will change his eternal trajectory forever.

And God, please help me, to be that friend that can continue to love and be there for him, rather than simply pushing my own agenda of conversion down his throat. I pray that he will feel loved and not pressured by me.

God I pray for a miracle in my friends life. God I'm asking on his behalf that you would open up a space in his heart for your word and your offer of the gospel to get in there somehow.

INTERCEDING FOR YOUR CAMPUS

Dear God, I want to lift up my campus to you today.

Spend some time telling God honestly about the condition of your campus, some needs, some pressures, recent events, and the spiritual climate of the student body.

Lord I pray for the marginalized on my campus. Give me opportunities and the courage to show them how much you love them. Lord I lift up those who are stressed and overwhelmed. I pray that I could become a presence of peace in their lives. Lord I pray for those who have been conquered and defeated by addictions. Help me not to judge them but to love them and show them that you can forgive everything they have done.

Lord I pray that you would give me an opportunity to be your salt and light on my campus. Rather than simply feeling besieged by pressures, and just barely making it through each day, I want to become a source of love there. I want to be your ambassador on my campus, and allow Christ to make his appeal through me to the people on my campus.

God help me, and my Christian brothers and sisters on our campus to show the world your love through our relationships. I pray that we would show a compelling and attractive picture that would cause people to wonder and be curious and eventually turn aside to follow you.

Lord I pray for the students on our campus. Please help us to find opportunities to plant seeds in their heart that will lead one day to salvation.

INTERCEDING IN TRAGEDIES

Dear God,

I'm pretty crushed right now.

Spend some time explaining to God the tragic situation that occurred, either in your locality or on any scale.

God I pray for those who have been devastated by this recent event. I ask for your mercy on those who have lost their lives in this tragedy or for the families affected by what has just happened. Please grant them a peace that surpasses all understanding. Please comfort them and show yourself to be our own Emmanuel God, who is with us in every pain. We know you are mourning with them, that you grieved for your friends, and that you are not far from or unfamiliar with pain.

God I pray that the aftermath of this event wouldn't case numbness or escapism. Instead please allow everyone effected to go through the process of grieving and healing. God I pray against any deep seated bitterness or anger that could take root. I ask that you grant the community mercy and grace to be able to face this event how you would want them to. God give them the courage to face the days ahead when grief will overcome them and when pain returns and returns.

Lord God, even though this may seem far fetched in the moment, I pray that you would even use this tragedy as a way to bring people to yourself. Please redeem the grief and the pain, through causing people to question, to think and to turn to you.

For myself, help me to respond with generosity in prayer, in assistance, and in comfort in any way that I can.