

The Walk of the Redeemed in Christ - Part 4

TEXT: *“Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself... All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. herefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.*
((Daniel 1:8 & Daniel 6:7-11))

It was my desire to write on another aspect of the *walk* of the redeemed in Christ but the Holy Spirit persuaded me to pick up from where I left off last week on the issue of prayer. I believe it's safe to say that prayer is a multi-faceted discipline that affects every phase of the human life. Prayer is the life-blood of any true professing Christian in the kingdom of God. As prayer is the one and only access code to Heaven's Bank, it has become very crucial for God to examine the life that prays. God's never been careless as to whom he chooses to open the flood gates of heaven for in order to do spiritual exploits here on earth. The personal consecration or holiness of the life that prays is the first and the most important condition that attracts God to a prayer warrior or even a casual intercessor. God has always been attracted and attentive to the man whose prayer life is diligent, devout and for whom prayer is the controlling force of his *walk* or relationship with Him. God found one such man in Daniel, whose devout prayer life was the only fault that his watchful enemies could find in him. To the scorn or disdain of his enemies, the Bible says, Daniel prayed three times a day, supposedly morning, mid-day and night. I believe that, like most of us, Daniel ate three times a day as well – breakfast,

lunch and dinner, but he did not let his earthly food take precedence over his heavenly food (prayers). He led a balanced and a disciplined life of godliness, such that not even the threat of a bogus edict in a foreign country could cause him to deny his God our Lord. He was convinced that he was praying to an all powerful God “*who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to [His] power that works in us*” (Ephesians 3:20). So, he knew his prayers couldn’t be in vain. Halleluiah! Glory to God!

Before we came to know Daniel as a prayer warrior we first met him as the holy man in his namesake book, where in chapter 1 verse 8 he, “*Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he [the king] drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself*” because he revered and loved the Lord his God. It is quite safe to say that Daniel’s fear of defilement was the direct fruit of his devout prayer life. As a consummate prayer warrior, he knew he could not stand in the presence of the Almighty God to pray in a defiled or polluted state. Hence, Daniel took a stand against defilement which shook the heavens and moved God to bring “*Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs*”. Also, his consecrated prayer life inoculated him against the humongous trial of his faith which awaited him down the road. True and powerful prayer warriors like Daniel do not wait until trouble comes before they pray and seek God – they are always armed and dangerous with prayers. They pray fervently *without ceasing* because the character of Christ has been formed in them.

It was Daniel’s fervency in prayer that kept him on “his toes” because he was always conscious of who he was in the Lord. Because his prayer life kept him constantly in God’s presence, he was able to avert even *the little sins that easily ensnare us* (Hebrews 12:1). When any man or woman is deeply devoted to holy living and a sound prayer life, trials and temptations are easily conquered. We see it here in Daniel, when he was confronted with the issue of the *lust of*

the flesh, the Bible says, “*Daniel* [instantly] *purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself*” [with the king’s food]. The thing to be grasped here is that of his own volition and accord Daniel decided to abstain from the king’s enticing worldly buffet. Neither God, nor a pastor told Daniel not to eat the king’s food. Neither did the scripture explicitly forbid him from indulging himself. Truly, if he had eaten the king’s food, I suppose that he would not have sinned and probably would have been justified, after all he was a prisoner with little or no choice. But Daniel, out of his holy reverence to his God (whom he loved with all his heart and not with lip service), decided on his own to abstain totally from rich foods, one of those seemingly innocent pleasures of the world, in order that he would not be polluted by that worldly system. My brothers and sisters, Daniel’s notable course of action is best described as “consecration” an act of service which every person who has been genuinely redeemed in Christ must put into practice in order to *walk* more closely with the Most-High God.

To gain a little more insight on this particular element of prayer, read the following thoughts on consecration by E. M. Bounds in his book *the Essentials of Prayer*. He wrote, “Consecration is not so much setting oneself apart from sinful things and wicked ends, but rather it is the separation of self for holy uses from worldly, secular, and even legitimate things, if they come in conflict with God’s plans. It is the devoting of all we have to God for His own specific use. It is a separation from things questionable, or even legitimate, when the choice is to be made between the things of this life and the claims of God”. Furthermore, consecration pertains to the human side of holiness or sanctification. In reality, it is a self or man-made sanctification since real sanctification, in its strictest sense, comes only from the Lord. It is through the divine working of the blood of Jesus and Holy Spirit in our hearts that we become cleansed and sanctified. Man, cannot sanctify himself. Nevertheless, God does honor and reward man’s attempts at self-sanctification (consecration) so long as those attempts do not contravene the Word of God.

On the other hand, the Bible itself speaks of God's ordained consecration which is the "*vow of the Nazarite*". This vow involved men or women who were set apart for God's use. Vows of consecration, in most instances, were a temporary dedication for a specific time period and purpose. However, the vow of the *Nazarite* taken by men like Samuel and Samson, lasted their entire lifetime. There were essentially three restrictions that God imposed on the Nazarites - no haircuts, no drinking of alcoholic beverages and not going near any dead thing (**Numbers 6:2-6**). At a glance, in today's Christian world some may view these restrictions as legalistic but they were ordained restrictions by God. These prominent and visible restrictions were simply external symbols of an inward consecration and portrayed an extreme devotion to God. The *vow* gave the devotee a unique awareness of and inspiration to *walk circumspectly* with the Lord

The whole idea or inspiration behind the *vow of the Nazarites* was to alert any man or woman who desires to *walk* with the Lord that there is a serious price to pay when making that choice and that price is self denial. To be very honest, this is where "the tire meets the road" in the *walk* of the redeemed in Christ. Jesus said to his disciples, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*" (**Matthew 16:24**). Brethren, God will have nothing less than complete dedication and devotion to Him and neither can we have it both ways; serving God and yet still satisfying our worldly desires. Therefore, the burning question has to be, is Christ worth denying yourself for? What is Jesus Christ of Nazareth to you? Is He "nothing", just "something", or is he "everything" to you? We know that for the cold hearted unbeliever, Jesus is absolutely "nothing" and for the lukewarm believer, Jesus is "something" (perhaps a vending machine – in times of need or trouble), but for the truly redeemed and born again believer, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is "everything". If you say then, that He is "everything" to you, what

have you denied yourself for His sake? What price have you paid or are you willing to pay in order to pledge that He is indeed everything to you?

Our Lord has not asked us to do what he himself has never done. Can anyone accuse Jesus of not denying Himself and taking up His cross? Actually, He is the first Man to have ever done both without falling short of the glory of God. Our Lord demonstrated numerous attributes of self-denial in his brief ministry on earth. He, Jesus *being in the form of God* denied Himself equality with God; He took on the manner of a servant and *became obedient unto [His] death*. He denied Himself of all earthly pleasures as He languished in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights with no food, water or shelter. He was falsely accused, spat on and beaten by worthless sinners like you and I. Sinners forced Him to physically *take up His cross* and go to Calvary where he died for those same sinners, that they might have eternal life if they repented of their sins. Brethren, do you now have a glimpse of the price that is necessary to *walk* with the Lord? Can you see that even if we pay that price, we can never match or even come close to the price our Lord paid for us?

Paying a price or denying yourself is another way of saying consecrating yourself to *walk worthy* of the Lord that He may find you useful for His work. In these *last days* and *perilous times*, we are confronted with men and women who are *lovers of themselves* more than God with no desire for self-denial or consecration. It is for this reason that the Lord says, “*I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none*” ([Ezekiel 22:30](#)). The Lord had surveyed the entire land and *found none* worthy to stand before Him. Today, He’s disheartened that there are too many churchgoing Christians who are passing themselves off as prayer warriors, but they actually “wells without water”. He is crushed that modern-day prayer generals or coordinators are leading ministries and praying without being Holy Ghost-filled. Thus, it makes sense for the Lord to look for men and women who will *stand in the gap before*

Him for this perverse generation. Brethren, be honest, should we be really surprised that the Lord cannot find a man or woman worthy to *stand in the gap* before Him? Does this mean that with as many as are praying among us, we are not prevailing with God? The answer is simple; we must fully consecrate ourselves to God because such consecration expedites the answers to our prayers. The Bible says, “*Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him*” (John 9:31). The only prayer that a sinner can pray to get God’s attention is a prayer of repentance. Any other prayer is considered an *abomination*. Our Lord takes no pleasure in a *profaned* and *blemished* prayer life. I will say it again, the life or the soul that prays matters to God. The Lord desires a consecrated man for His service because prayer and consecration manifest fully the power of God as they come inseparably together in the same man. Prayer and consecration are as closely related as Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They are intimate and inseparable companions. God only commits to and relies on consecrated men and women because their prayers are the catalysts for God’s gracious and grand plan for salvation and redemption to the world.

Brethren, “*The harvest is truly plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest*” (Matthew 9:37-38). It is clear from our discussion so far why there are few laborers. It is my belief that only consecrated praying laborers will reap a *plenteous harvest*. Which are you – laborer or one that needs to be harvested? If you are an unconsecrated laborer or a prayerless laborer you are unfit for the kingdom work. In fact, you could be a hindrance, and causing delays for God’s harvest. Examine yourself! Are you fit to pray and labor in the holy God’s harvest or vineyard? Who made you a prayer warrior? You know all of your secret sins and the Lord knows them too. The Lord hates all sin – big or little, because sin separates man from God and makes our communion with Him fruitless. Therefore, repent and come out of your sin so your personal prayers

and prayers offered for you by others may not be hindered. God is saying to you today, *walk before me and be thou perfect*. God bless you. Amen