

Introduction: Prayer

I understand that prayer is not just a matter of duty and lists, something that we can check off each day that we have done. However, if we don't start there, if we don't discipline ourselves unto it as a matter of duty, we will not break through to the power of it. Without the call of duty we are not held to it. We are plagued and besieged on every side with internal enemies: laziness, sloth, forgetfulness, neglect, busyness, self-aggrandizement and self-dependence, faintheartedness, faithlessness – and the list could go on. Let us not juxtapose the one against the other. Duty, of which lists is a part, must be coupled with inspiration and the leading and empowerment of the Spirit. Is not the faithful keeping of duty itself a deep and empowered work of the Spirit? Indeed! For with such a host of weaponry arrayed against us out of the treachery of our own hearts, it is nothing short of the miraculous, supernatural power of God.

True prayer is a work of the heart, a sacrifice of love. It is, first of all, the manifestation of the Spirit in our lives. I know this. I understand that prayer is not just a matter of duty and lists, something that we can check off each day that we have done. However, if we don't start there, if we don't discipline ourselves unto it as a matter of duty, we will not break through to the power of it. Without the call of duty we are not held to it. We are beset and beleaguered on every side: plagued from within by the internal enemies of laziness, sloth, forgetfulness, neglect, self-aggrandizement and self-dependence, faintheartedness, faithlessness – and the list could go on; and besieged from without by the external enemies of busyness, amusements, worldly attractions and necessities – both legitimate and otherwise, the lure of things, the desire for success – distractions and time-devourers of every kind. Let us not juxtapose the one against the other. Duty, of which lists is a part, must be coupled with heart-felt inspiration and the leading and empowerment of the Spirit. Is not the faithful keeping of duty itself a deep and empowered work of the Spirit? Indeed! For with such a host of weaponry arrayed against us even out of the treachery of our own hearts, it is nothing short of the miraculous, supernatural power of God.