

Prayer for Ministry

A Call to Spiritual Reformation, Week 10

Chapter 12 Overview

- I. Introduction (205-09)
 1. Limited nature of book
 2. Uniqueness of Paul's prayer in Romans 15 as compared to others prayers previously considered
- II. Paul wants this prayer to be offered with earnestness, urgency, and persistence (209-12)
 1. Emotive expressions
 2. Appeals to their submission to Christ and the love given by the Spirit – an appeal to their Christian experience
 3. Prayer as part of the Christian's struggle
 4. The diminished attention to spiritual warfare in the West, and the changing reality
 5. The reality of spiritual struggle
- III. Paul solicits prayer for himself, in connection with his own ministry (212-19)
 1. Other places where Paul solicits prayer for himself: Eph 6:12, 18-20; 1 Thess 5:23-25; 2 Cor 1:8-11; Philem 22 (cf. Col 4:2-4)
 2. Paul asks for prayer for two things
 1. That he might be rescued from unbelievers in Judea
 - a) Paul's experience of opposition and persecution from Jews
 - b) Not based in anti-Semitism
 - c) Rejection of Christ is willful disobedience, moral rebellion, and "the unbelievers in Judea" are literally "the disobedient in Judea"
 2. That his service in Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints there
 - a) Paul "does not expect all the Christians in Jerusalem to understand, let alone approve, all that he has done" (216).
 - b) "Some people are not very good at receiving things – especially from those who are regarded as inferior. It take grace to receive gifts in the right spirit ..." (216)
 3. Application to similar needs today
 1. Pray that Christian leaders might be rescued from the opposition of outsiders who try to destroy their ministry
 2. Pray that Christian leaders might find that their Christian service is acceptable to those to whom they minister

IV. For Paul, prayer for his ministry envisions further ministry (219-21)

1. E.M. Bounds: “One of the constitutional enforcements of the gospel is prayer. Without prayer, the gospel can neither be preached effectively, promulgated faithfully, experienced in the heart, nor be practiced in the life. And for the very simple reason that by leaving prayer out of the catalogue of religious duties, we leave God out, and His work cannot progress without Him” (221)

V. Finally, it is important to learn that some of Paul’s prayers were not answered as he would have liked (221-24)

1. God’s grace in unanswered prayers leads to worship

Discussion Questions

1. Are your prayers for others characterized by earnestness, urgency, and persistence? If not, why not?
2. To what extent does love for the gospel and for gospel outreach drive your prayers? How can you improve in this area?
3. Do you feel some of your prayers have not been answered? Have you received answers you did not expect? What light can you shed on your experience?
4. Think through particular hurdles Christian leaders face in your church or group, and prayer (preferably with others) for these leaders.