

Russell Kelfer

Let's Make a Commitment

#1339-A

Series: Prayer: God's "Secret" Weapon

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

Let's Make a Commitment

Our gracious God,

We love you, but we understand that love is nothing more than our returning to You a tiny fraction of the love You have for us.

Herein is love, not that we loved You but that You loved us and gave Yourself as propitiation for our sins.

We come to You this morning and humble ourselves in Your very presence and in awe that You make Yourself available to us. We yet acknowledge that you have not only done so but that You have told us to come freely to the throne of grace and partake of grace and mercy in time of need.

We pray this morning, Father, that You would be our teacher and that Your Spirit would be our guide.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

It has been a most unusual journey. It began in a garden and ended in a prison. It began with sweat-drops of blood coming from God Himself and ended with a victorious anthem of intercession from a man chained to a Roman guard.

It began with a band of sleepy saints who could not so much as remain alert enough to pray while their Master faced the Cross. It ended with a letter to a church where the congregation was petitioning God for the wrong things. Yet, through it all, there has been a common thread. Our Father, who art in Heaven, wants to talk to us, and He wants us to talk to Him. The way He wants to do it has been what this series of lessons has been all about.

In our last study we got down to some of the basics. We need to be able to remember who to pray for, and how to pray for them, or Satan will erase them from our minds and we can't let him do that. So last week we looked at how to make a prayer notebook and we want to help you make one. It is an opportunity to keep a record of who God is, what God wants us to pray for, and of how and when we did it.

Let's Make a Commitment

You may or may not have done that; you may or may not have thought that it is even important. That's okay. In either case, we move on now to the real issue. The real issue is not whether or not you know how to pray better than you did seven or eight months ago when this whole thing started. The real issue is whether or not you are praying.

And so we progress to the most sensitive stage of our study. (We've told you that before but it gets progressively sensitive.) It's time to turn understanding into wisdom. It's time to do what we have been talking about for these many months. It's time to drive a stake in the ground and make a commitment to the Father where prayer is concerned. It's a new commitment for some of you.

As we proceed, let me remind you that the issue is not to create some legalistic form that makes prayer into a meaningless habit. It is, rather, to transparently create a groove in our hearts that leads us to the throne of grace. The plan must not become the prayer. But, oh, Beloved, without a plan, most people mean well but seldom follow through.

THE APPOINTMENT

First of all, there has to be an appointment. Do you have one? I mean, a regularly scheduled time to pray? This may or may not be at the same time as your Bible study time. It may or may not be the same time every day. But do you have an appointment to meet with God?

The "Without Ceasing" Mentality

Praying in Scripture takes two forms. The first is the "without ceasing" form. Paul told us to "pray without ceasing" in I Thessalonians 5:17. And all throughout the New Testament we are told to "pray always". Here are a few examples:

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; (Luke 18:1)

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:36)

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:18)

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus

Let's Make a Commitment

Christ, praying always for you, (Colossians 1:3)

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

(II Thessalonians 1:11)

In some cases, the inference is that whenever we pray, we pray for you. In other cases, the inference is we never stop praying for you. The key is that prayer is to be a way of life. It was never intended to be a switch that turns off and on. The reason many of us can't think of what to say when we get in the presence of God is because we spend so little time there. If we are literally to live a life of prayer, we may be shopping, driving, walking, working, or waiting; but our mindset should be one of communion with God. Praying in our secret place and praying continually work in tandem. As we shall see a little later this morning, we need to leave the quiet place without leaving the quiet place. And, perhaps, that needs explaining but we'll get to that in a few minutes. But for now, however, remember that for prayer ever to be in our lives what it was intended to be, we must be praying without ceasing.

But Satan, remember, is a seed-snatcher. He likes to take the seed of the Word before it takes root, and erase it from the computer of the mind as though it never existed. Sometimes we can make decisions concerning things like prayer and, without even realizing it, just never quite get around to doing it. You've known people like that, haven't you? One of them lives in the mirror that you look into in the morning.

Now let me ask you a question. (No answer expected.) Why do we go to work every day? We have a commitment. Our employers have made an appointment with us every morning at 8:00 a.m. Some days we don't feel like going. Do you stay home? You don't. Sometimes we feel like it, but other things crowd in, and it isn't as convenient to go to work as it was the day before. So what do we do? Stay home? Go fishing? No, chances are you go to work. Why? Because we made a commitment. In exchange for something called a paycheck, we made a promise to someone to whom we are responsible to put coming to work at 8:00 a.m. at the top of our list of priorities.

Now, ladies, why do you show up every day to pick up the children at school? Why not just wait and see if you feel like

Let's Make a Commitment

it? Some days it's just not convenient, but they are depending on you. You told them you would come. So, if you have to cut short an appointment or miss a telephone conversation or even miss a meal, you are there to pick them up. Why? you made a commitment. You love them, and because you love them you promised them that you would be there for them.

So these are two reasons we make commitments:

- because there are consequences when we don't and we've been told to do so, and
- because someone we love is waiting for us and expecting us.

Two good reasons, indeed.

The "Let's Make a Date" Mentality

We make commitments for at least two reasons; but when we make them, we have that motivation, either subtle or overpowering, that makes us keep that promise or fulfill that commitment. We said we would be there; we said we would do that, so we do.

And, Beloved, that is why to say that prayer is the most important discipline in the Christian life and yet not make a specific appointment with God that will keep us from overlooking it, just doesn't make sense. If it is the key to spiritual maturity, to spiritual fruitfulness, and to spiritual happiness, we're not likely to be faithful, or even as faithful, unless we make an appointment; and we are lying to ourselves and to God to say it is as important as we claim it to be.

Now I understand that physical priorities often have deliberate, specific consequences. If we don't show up for work, what happens? Bye, bye, we get fired or we get our pay docked or we get passed over for a promotion. If we don't pick up little Johnny from school, all kinds of things happen. And those things in and of themselves are enough to make us keep our appointments.

But in the spiritual realm, God has made the law of cause and effect far less dramatic and far less immediate for good reason. You can miss a day or two or three of prayer and nothing seems to happen. In fact, sometimes the day seems to go even better! There's a reason for that. It's called less spiritual warfare. Satan whispers subtly in your ear, "See, God doesn't expect you to pray so often. You're doing better than ever!" Satan likes to tie an

Let's Make a Commitment

experience or circumstance with God's approval or disapproval. Then, he manipulates those circumstances and experiences so that the less faithful you are, the less pressure you seem to have, at least for a while.

And we buy it. We allow our time in God's presence to vary and to wane. We determine that time in the presence of the King of kings is when we have spare time, or if and when some deep disaster strikes. Don't you love it when there is a national disaster and the television lens focuses in on the news media and on the people who are interviewed, and the people mention that they are praying? And we sort of scoff at it because we figure most of the time they can't even spell prayer. But, Beloved, we better not laugh because we're children of the King, and we have specific Biblical instructions as to how much we should pray and how often we should pray. We're to be praying all the time for all men fervently, and we should be in the presence of God worshipping constantly.

THE PLAN

So we need a time, a place and a pattern or most of us will have a prayer life paved with good intentions, and little else will happen. Let's make a commitment this morning. Let's make a commitment with a time and a place where we tell God we're going to meet Him.

Isn't it incredible? Think about it with me. Not only is the Creator-God, who framed the heavens, willing to wait for us to come to Him, He lets us pick the time and place.

Can you imagine calling the President of the United States and say, "Sir, I need to have an appointment with you, and he says just drop by whenever you are around. I'll stop what I'm doing and be available"? Or you call the Queen of England and say, "I'd like to have an appearance with you, Madam Queen"? And she would say, "Well, listen, you're important enough to me that any time you fly across the Atlantic, I'll be here. I'll just postpone whatever I have to do and be here. You are that important to me." Of course not.

And yet, God has made himself so available to us. And we don't have to be in a church or in a prayer chapel or in a group meeting to pray. All we have to do is to call upon His Name. So God has let us be the determiners of when and where we meet

Let's Make a Commitment

with Him. And doesn't that make it even worse when we tell Him we just can't find the time? Now think about it. God has opened His Day-Timer (calendar), laid it on the counter and said, "You fill in the time when you want to come to Me. I'll be available. You set the time and you set the place." And still we don't do it.

Well, let's look at it this morning.

First of all, we need a place. It doesn't need to be a religious setting.

It just ought to be:

- a- *Quiet*—we don't need our minds to compete with a television set.
- b- If possible, *a place where no one else can see or hear.* Jesus told us to enter into our prayer closet and shut the door. No one needs to know where we are and what we're doing. Sometimes that can't be helped. Sometimes it's a good testimony to our children. But usually, it's a temptation to glory in the fact that we're so spiritual if we're praying where others can see us.
- c- *Devoid of as many distractions as possible.* It's not good for me to pray in the office. There are too many things that need doing, too many reminders of things that grab for my attention, and too many things that will occupy the rest of the day and say, "hurry, hurry, hurry or they won't get done". Some think that outside is often better but many don't have that option. Wherever it is, don't give Satan any more ammunition to distract you than he already has.

Secondly, we need a time. You don't have to make it the same time every day, but chances are that if you don't, you will be less likely to make it. Make an appointment with God. Set a time and place, and you will be much more likely to keep it. An appointment not made is easy to break. Again, choose a time when the fewest distractions are likely to attack. For busy mothers, that may only leave 2:00 a.m. You say, "But surely God doesn't expect me to miss sleep." That was the same argument the disciples had in Gethsemane, wasn't it?

THE PATTERN

Finally, we need a pattern. There are so many of them and

Let's Make a Commitment

you probably have two or three of your own. Not everyone needs one, but I do because my mind wanders. If Jesus was offended by having a model or pattern, He wouldn't have turned to the disciples and said, "Pray like this," and given them a model. The model shouldn't become a substitute for the Spirit's direction, but rather the superhighway on which the Spirit moves along to take you where you need to go. There are so many patterns as you probably know but if you don't, I'll give you one. It is called ARIAS. ARIAS stands for:

Adoration

Restoration

Intercession

Abidning Rest

Singing hearts

We'll explain it in a moment. You choose one or use your own; but if you don't have one, here's a place to start.

Each word has a purpose. Each is sort of intertwined and they are in the order that they're in because it begins and ends with praise, with a sandwich in between that should lead us to surrender. That is what prayer is all about. Let's look at them very quickly:

Adoration

- You praise Him for Who He is (His attributes and His nature). Last week I gave you a list of some of them.
- You praise Him for what He's done, your Book of Remembrance (how He has moved in your life, how He saved you and the things He has done to demonstrate His love for you, for the children of Israel, and for others).
- You praise Him for what He's promised (you praise Him for His Word and the promises He has given you). Another way to phrase it is to praise Him for His Word, His Worth, His Works, and His Ways.

You may want to sing choruses of praise. You may want to read psalms back to Him. You may want to involve yourself by taking verses you've accumulated about His nature and worship Him through those verses. You worship Him for His faithfulness. You name those attributes; you don't just allude to them. You

Let's Make a Commitment

worship Him for the things He has done. You are specific about them. You are specific about the things about Him that cause you to worship.

Wouldn't it mean more to you if your children were to come up to you and say, "Dad or Mom, I love you because..." And then they tell you about something in your character or something in your life that they really love you for? Instead of saying, "Hi, Dad, Hi, Mom, I love you."

Tell God why you love Him. And then begin to praise Him for eternity. He's coming again. How often do you praise Him in your prayer time that He is coming again. No more pain. No more sickness. No more grief. No more sorrow. Picture the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. Visualize it. Enter it in your imagination. Worship Him as you do.

This is not imaginary living; this is the real world. You have been crucified with Christ. You are dead to this world's threats of death. You can begin to sing aloud: "Oh, death where is thy sting?" You can sing, "He's alive". You are alive. And you will be alive forevermore. And, Beloved, when that portrait of eternity has captivated you and when your eyes are focused on the eastern skies and you are expecting any moment for the trumpet to sound, then you are ready to continue to pray. In essence, you are praying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Restoration

And then comes the restoration. You see, as you spend time in the presence of God and behold the nature of God, you become increasingly aware of your own unworthiness, and well you should. And you begin to allow the Commander in the grandeur of His mercy to lead you to a sense of awareness of your sin. His holiness overtakes you. Who God is overtakes you. You are a sinner, redeemed by grace. So before you can venture further, you must be cleansed of your sin. Unconfessed sin should not be a once-a-day process of confessing sin. It should be continual. When we come into His presence, we worship Him. We don't always realize there are sins, things we have done, things we have not done, attitudes we have, thoughts we have that have broken His heart. And we begin to feel that we cannot venture further into the Holy of holies until we confess our sins. He is

Let's Make a Commitment

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, but we have to ask.

So we stop. We bow. We confess. Now the way I usually confess is not right. I say, "Oh, Lord, forgive me of all my sins. Amen." That's not confession; that's presumption. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to our hearts the specific things that have broken the heart of God. And then we quietly confess them. And this is important. We then acknowledge the aspect of God's nature you wounded. Otherwise, you're just confessing to an event or a circumstance and you'll do it again.

You were anxious. You were worried. What did you do? You violated His perfect peace. You did not trust His sovereignty. You got angry. You violated God's perfect love. You didn't trust His mercy. You were discouraged. You violated His precious grace. You didn't trust His comfort. You were lustful. You didn't trust His holiness because you violated His precious purity.

You ask Him not only to forgive you of the sin; you ask Him to forgive you for taking lightly the name of God. You bear that Name. That name is holy, righteous, gracious, merciful. Your sins defiled the name and defiled the name He gave you. Ask Him to cleanse you. Then imagine standing beneath a flowing fountain in the heat of the day. Allow your spirit to literally feel the cleansing flow of that fountain as it washes away your sin and cleanses and renews you until you fully recognize in your spirit what God has done.

Intercession

Only when that has taken place are you ready to intercede. Intercession is taking to God the needs of others and finally the needs of our own hearts and asking Him to hear our requests and answer them according to His precious will.

Our whole last lesson was strictly on how to do that, on how to intercede. We looked at having to divide our intercessory adventure into two categories: daily and rotating. And how to focus on the character needs of people and how those needs are based on the aspects of the character of God. So we won't review that this morning. But at the end of your time of intercession, then you come to God and you seek the specific needs in your own life, and then you apply the same character principle.

You say, "Okay, Lord, I would like this and this if it be Your pleasure. Do it, Father, in whatever way would grant me patience,

Let's Make a Commitment

self-control, peace, gentleness,” (or whatever needs you sense in your own heart). You say, “Well, this is going to take a lot of time.” Well, we hope so.

Abiding rest

You may want to visualize the people you are praying for. I think it's neat to make a prayer list with photos, if you have them so that you can look at the people. Open your eyes and glance at them and then close your eyes and ask God as you pray for them as people, not as names.

And then ask God to lay upon your heart anything He wants you to do to be a part of the answer to the prayer you are praying. Don't just pray for the Smiths on the mission field who are struggling to pay their medical bills. What if God laid it on your heart because He expects you help pay the medical bills. So you ask Him if you can be part of the answer.

As you pray for your pastor and other spiritual leaders, pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth the laborers. That is the will of God. We are to pray; God is to send.

Now we come to the exciting part. You say, “I thought that was exciting.” But it gets better. Having worshipped, confessed and interceded, now close your eyes and visualize God with His arms open wide, saying to you,

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and
I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

Meditate on verses or on a thread of verses that remind you of what it means to rest in Christ. I believe that this is the missing ingredient in most of our prayer lives. We will sometimes worship. We will always intercede, especially for ourselves. But how seldom do we then stop and before we get up from our knees, go back to God and say, “Wait a minute, Lord. You are the vine. We're the branches. The branches cannot bear fruit except they abide in the vine. We can of our own selves do nothing'.” (John 15:4,5). And so before we can embark on the day's journey, we must come and enter again into that rest. He has people He wants us to meet today. He has crises He wants us to be victorious through. He has a life He wants us to share. And only when His power is flowing through us can it happen.

So the next phase of our prayer time ought to be to rest. I don't mean to go to sleep. I don't even mean rest from your labors.

Let's Make a Commitment

I mean to be at rest in your labor. Resting is a heart attitude. It has to do with letting go. It has to do with letting God take control of the day. What we would have planned might have been more comfortable for us but less fruitful for the kingdom. We give it to Him. So each time we pray it's important at the conclusion of our prayer, by an act of the will, to enter again into the rest of God.

How many of you do that every day? Beloved, it's the key. You might take II Chronicles 20 again as your measuring stick. In II Chronicles 20 use verses 12-17. Verse 12 is our request and then God answers us. It says,

We ask —

O our God, ...we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. (II Chronicles 20:12)

God answers —

Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves. Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord. Fear not, neither be dismayed. Go out against them, for the Lord will be with you. (II Chronicles 20:15,17)

Then we pray, "Thine is the kingdom and Thine is the power and Thine is the glory". It is the grand finale of our entrance into the Holy of Holies. We beheld God, confessed to God, and took the heart needs of others and of our own to God. Now, before we rise from our knees, we say, "Wait a minute. You are the Commander of the ship, not us. We are passengers. You are the Captain. We are grateful to be on board. Wherever You want to go today, Lord, we will go. Whatever You choose, we accept." That's prayer.

Singing hearts

Now the last part and this is equally important—you get up from your knees and you begin to sing and to praise. Now if you sing like I do, you make melody in your heart. That's what God looks at anyway. You begin to sing. Otherwise, Satan will begin to infiltrate your mind with all of the negatives he has been saving up because he's angry that you've been spending so much time with God. II Chronicles 20 goes on, beginning with verse 19,

And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of

Let's Make a Commitment

Israel with a loud voice on high.

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.
(II Chronicles 20:19-22)

They were smitten? By whom? By God. Their job was to set themselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. And when they began to sing and to praise, God took that as His cue and began to take care of the enemy. So you enter the fray with a song in your heart and with praise on your lips, praising Him for the beauty of His holiness or the grandeur of His grace or the marvel of His mercy or the awesomeness of His strength. And as you do, make melody in your heart to the Lord. So your prayer time will be over, but it will actually just be beginning.

Hopefully, you will have an aspect of God's nature so focused in your mind, so that all day long, you will think about it. You will think about His sovereignty holding you in His arms, and His joy filling you to overflowing. The battles will come. The problems will stay. The stresses will ebb and flow, but you will be riding on wings of glory, Beloved. You will be energized and resting at the same time. You'll be filled with power, but resting in that power, not manufacturing it yourself. So the prayer you began praying at dawn should last all day—not the memory of it but the continuance of it.

So you go on to work. And you intersperse your singing with more adoration as you drive to work, more intercession, more abiding, more confession. You pray as you drive, as you work, as you wait. You pray naturally whenever a decision confronts you or opposition awaits you or conflict consumes you. You don't listen to Satan's lies because you don't have time to. You are too busy praying.

And it all began when you made that appointment with God

Let's Make a Commitment

and kept it. That set the tone for the day and set the temperature of your heart to God's setting. It fine-tuned your thoughts Godward so that your spirit soared and you refocused your heart on the perspective of God. That same day could have begun with good intentions, but no prayer. The children overslept. The phone rang seven times. The car didn't want to start. It had a low battery. Satan wanted you to have one, too.

But suppose the appointment with God was so important to you, that you set your alarm for an hour earlier than usual. Suppose it was so vital in your priorities that you let the phone ring until you were through. When the car didn't start, the batteries of your own heart were already fully charged. So instead of anger, you began to sing and to praise. God's problem. My victory.

Don't you see, Beloved? An appointment with the King is a privilege! What an honor! What a responsibility! But what a shame it is when the God who framed the universes makes Himself available, and we can't find time to work Him into our schedules.

That brings us to the key point in this lesson. So what are we going to do about it? Are we going to drive a new stake in the ground? Are we going to become, somehow, more accountable to someone, so that when the enemy begins to chip away at our consistency, we won't bow to the pressure? It's up to you.

It's up to you, and it's up to me. The truth of the matter is that God does not attach the same immediate cause and effect in the spiritual realm as He does in the physical realm. We can stop praying or miss a day or miss several days, and still seem to be functioning okay. But we're not. There may be no visible, tangible evidence, at least to others, that your time in the presence of God has changed. Think about it with me for just a minute. The One who died for you called you on the phone, and you put Him on hold. Would you do that? The One who lives to make intercession for you, sent a fax saying, "I need to hear from you," and you tore it up. Would you do that? The One who is coming again in clouds of great glory for you has written a love letter saying, "Pray without ceasing," and you tore up the letter.

You say, "I'd never do that." You did the day you missed your appointment with God and thought nothing of it. You did that the day you decided you didn't need to pray every day or pray all day long because you determined it violated your spirit of freedom.

Let's Make a Commitment

Beloved, listen to me. You are free. You are free to pray more and more. You are free to pray any place any time, but you aren't free not to pray if you want to please God.

THE PROMISE

So, what do you say? I say, let's make a commitment. I know some of you don't need to do this. You are faithful and consistent and intense in your prayer life. You need to pray for the rest of us. The rest of us need to stop what we are doing and get alone with God and make a new agreement before the seed-snatcher comes and takes away the seed of the Word, which is being sown in our hearts.

I'm going to ask some of you at least, to consider going out this afternoon, out in the yard or up on a hill or out in the country or into your office or into your bedroom or anywhere and get out your heavenly appointment book and write down by every day "Appointment with God: non-cancelable. I will be there."

We need to pick a time and a place that under regular conditions that you can always make. Maybe it will be 5:00 in the morning. Maybe it will be late at night. It may be two or three times a day if your day, if your life is that splintered. But be creative. Can we be creative when we want to get in a golf game? Or we may want to go fishing or even cut the grass. We find a way. We can be glued to a time frame if there is a television program on or, forgive me, a basketball game we just can't miss. Nothing will stop us. Aren't we tremendously creative? We'll leave church early, cancel dinner with friends, put off a business task...anything, because there is only one chance to see that game. Now don't look so innocent. For some of us it will happen today, won't it?

But when it comes to God, we think He is so available, He won't mind if we skip a day or postpone this week or cut the time in half because our favorite TV program is coming on. We think surely God wouldn't want us to interrupt the NBA finals for something like prayer. I hate to tell you this, Beloved, but the NBA championship won't matter in heaven. What will matter are the spiritual champions that develop by spending time alone in the presence of God. So it's time some of us make a new commitment to pray. There is a sample below.

My Commitment to Pray

Because my God is the most important person in all the world to me, and because He has issued a personal, open, binding invitation to me to come to Him and fellowship with Him in prayer,

Therefore I _____ (fill in your name), on this day _____ of the year _____, I do hereby submit to God's desire and commit the remainder of my life to a scheduled, regular time of daily prayer, to be followed by and surrounded by an unending life of prayer. (If you don't want to make an unending commitment why don't you make it for a month and then renew it?)

With God as my witness, I plan to meet with the King of Kings on a regular basis, each day at _____ (time). I plan to begin by meeting Him at _____ (place).

Should anything come between me and this appointment, I will immediately contact God, ask His forgiveness and ask to reschedule.

I would like to be accountable to do this.

Therefore, I am asking _____ (person) to check up on me and see that I have been faithful. By God's grace, I will become the kind of praying believer God intends me to be.

Signed _____

Now I know that is just something you do. Signing a name onto a piece of paper doesn't solve anything. But it is a motivation, Beloved, in our coming to grips with the importance of the matter and the accountability of the matter. And we are more likely to do it if we commit ourselves to do it before God.

Now if you choose to do this, it is between you and God. Put it somewhere where you will see it regularly but others won't. Maybe put it inside your Bible. Maybe put into your desk drawer folded. It mustn't become an emblem of spirituality you parade before

Let's Make a Commitment

others, but it's a reminder to you that you made a commitment to God and you want to keep that commitment, and He expects you to.

You see the reason for naming someone to check up on you is because many of us allow Satan to use the "gradual-erase" method of keeping us from being faithful. How many of you know what the gradual-erase method is? Here is how it works.

Satan won't say to you, "That was a dumb idea, you don't want to pray." He doesn't do that. He will just let something happen one day to let it slide. Then about three days later, a crisis will take place at the exact time you were going to pray, and you remember that you missed one time last week and the house didn't burn down, so maybe you're just being legalistic anyway. That's what you think. A week later, two days get interrupted and that commitment gradually erodes until the reason you made it evaporates just like your faithfulness does.

Let's make a commitment, Beloved. Let's drive a stake in the ground today and do something about becoming prayer warriors. I would remind you that is where the spiritual battles in our lives, in our churches and in our worlds will be settled. It won't be in committee meetings or board meetings. They will be settled in the corner of a closet somewhere day after day as you and I meet with God for adoration, restoration, intercession, and abiding. It will be multiplied as we get up from our knees, singing and praising God, that though our prayer time is over, it is just beginning. For as we leave the prayer closet for the war zones of life, the song God planted there as we lingered in His presence, like the sweet aroma of flowers in spring time, becomes the quiet, gentle reminder through the day that God is; therefore, we are in perfect hands. Let's make a commitment, then. It's only the beginning. But, by God's grace, it could be the beginning of the most wonderful journey of our lives.

With this we close.

Let's Make a Commitment

LET'S MAKE A COMMITMENT

Let's make a commitment,
A commitment that we will pray.
That we will meet with our loving God
Every single day.

That we will pick a time and place—
An appointment, if you will—
When regularly, without excuse,
We're willing to be still.

Willing to adore Him,
To praise our precious Lord;
Worshipping for Who He is,
Praising through His Word.

Praising Him for what He's done,
The ways He's shown His love;
The miracles that day by day
He sends us from above.

Willing to confess our sins,
To face what we have done,
The things that broke the fellowship
That bind us to the Son.

Willing then to intercede,
To take before His throne
The needs of those we pray for
Till like Him they have grown.

Willing to but lay ourselves
Before Him in each test
And quietly then enter in
To Heaven's earthly rest.

Then, with hearts o'erflowing,
We'll leave the quiet place,
Singing, praising, living life
Beholding His dear face.

In quiet confidence we'll walk
Through all earth's grimy sod
Just because we took the time
To be alone with God.

Let's Make a Commitment

Let's pray.

Our Father,

We come to You this morning and ask Your forgiveness. For some of us it is a lack of faithfulness you still see when You have given us an open Book and said, "Come".

By Your grace may we not trample under foot the generosity of Your Spirit again. But may we make a commitment to You and then, by Your grace, may we keep it. May we be wise in our lives where prayer is concerned.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer

(05.22.18.dvd)