

## Dangerous Prayers

### Lesson 7

## SEND ME (Part 2)

*Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said "Here I am. Send me." (Isaiah 6:8 NLT)*

### Chapter 3.5 Daily Nourishment

But, before you think you can pray "send me" and be done, let me warn you: this isn't a one-time dangerous prayer you pray and then you go on with your life. This is another prayer of daily submission to God—Search me, Break me, Send me.

Why are these daily prayers? Because when you submit your life to Christ, your spirit comes to life. You are born anew, and your spirit is connected to God's Spirit. From that moment on, there is a war going on within you (see **Romans 7:14-23**).

Paul calls it a battle between your flesh and your spirit. By flesh, he's not talking about your skin. Paul is referring to our sinful nature. Our old nature wants to do what's easiest for us. Our new and spiritual nature wants to do what glorifies God. And those two natures square off against each other multiple times a day for as long as we live. Paul described this to the Galatians, saying, "For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want" (**Gal. 5:17**).

1. The Holy Spirit inside you says, "live for God." Your flesh says, "live for yourself."
2. When God calls, the part of you that is selfish says, like Jonah, "I'm not going," or like Moses, "Send someone else."
3. How do we live submitted to God when our flesh wants us living for ourselves? How do we overcome our selfish tendencies and live selflessly for Christ.
4. The answer lies in daily submission. Daily we should feed our spirits, because what we feed grows. If you water and fertilize your houseplants, they will grow. If you feed your ego, your ego will grow. What you feeds grows. And what you starve dies.
5. So feed your spirit daily. Give it nourishment by reading the Bible. Spend time in God's presence by praying. Enjoy God's goodness by engaging in fellowship with other believers. Hear God's voice by reading the Bible.
6. Starve your sinful self. Rather than getting what you want, give up something you may want, for something you want even more—a God glorifying life. Deny the desires of your flesh, saying no to what you know is less than God's best. Run away from something that would tempt you to do wrong.

The author tells the story of what happened to a close friend, "Travis."

From finding and looking at his dad's hidden stash of Playboy magazines, Travis developed an out-of-control addiction that followed him into adulthood and marriage. When asked about his secret viewing habit, he brushed it off with justifications like, "Every guy looks" and "At least I'm not doing something wrong."

For years Travis struggled in his marriage and with his porn addiction. When the church created the YouVersion Bible app, an app that you don't just have to read but it will also read to you aloud, he no longer had an excuse. When he tried to quit his daily dose of adrenaline-infused visual entertainment, he discovered that he was more trapped than he realized. After confessing his problem to his wife, he joined a support group for sex addicts, and they quickly pointed him to God's power-packed-promise of freedom. The apostle Paul declared boldly, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). That's all Travis needed. He memorized that verse. He declared it daily. He put a tracking device on his computer, canceled his cable channels, and put strict locks on his phone. With the help of God's Word, a praying wife, and good friends, Travis has been porn-free for over four years. And it started with God's Word giving him the strength to overcome.

**Insight:** When you start to avoid what hurts you, what happens? Over time, your spiritual side grows stronger. And your selfish side starts to die.

Your prayers will deepen, mature, and grow. Instead of just, "Bless me, help me, or do this for me," your prayers become God-centered and others-focused.

**Insight:** When you become available to God, he might ask you to go to Africa as a missionary, but it's far more likely he will invite you to be a missionary at your job.

When you fully submit to God, he will certainly ask you to do things that may seem simple and small. You may even wonder, why don't I get to do something big, something important? And, God may show you that the small things are often the big things. The simple acts of love often lead to the biggest changes in life.

### Chapter 3.6 A Single Act of Faith.

Pastor Groeschel said that after four or five different times, he and his wife, Amy, started journaling consistently. Someone gave them a journal that they loved. It was a five year journal that only had five or six lines to write on daily. If it happened to be July 28, they could see just above the day what happened on July 28 the year before and the year before that. The highlights of five years of their lives were stacked on top of each other on a single page.

As he journaled, he started to notice that many of his days were similar. Last year, on the same day, he was doing the same thing. Most days he was doing the same thing. He would go to meetings, study, preach sermons, work out, and have family dinner. Although he did have the joy of being used by God as a pastor, so much of that is a result of his "job," not just regular faith in following Christ.

A. During one of his dangerous prayers of submission, God prompted him to add one small thing to his life that has made a big difference. Since we cannot please God without faith (see **Heb. 11:6**), He believed God asked him to simply do one thing daily that takes faith. That simple challenge changed the way he lived.

**Insight:** Instead of existing passively, start living aggressively, watching for opportunities to exhibit faith.

- 1) When he met a guy that seemed discouraged on a flight, He talked to him and did his best to lift his spirits. Then he felt prompted by God to do more than just talk.

Dangerous Prayers, Craig Groeschel, Author, Zondervan; King James Open Bible, Thomas Nelson, Inc.; The Daily Walk Bible, NLT, Tyndale House Publishing, Inc.

- i. He wrote him a note and included two different verses from the Bible.
  - ii. Rather than just hearing encouragement, He wanted the man to have a recorded version that he could revisit.
- 2) Another time, when he and his wife were in the grocery store shopping, they saw a woman with three children meticulously examining the prices, sorting coupons, and adding the amounts on her phone calculator.
- i. Knowing she was obviously strapped financially, as an act of faith, Pastor Groeschel and wife, had one of their children take her some cash with a note that simply said, "God cares about you and wants to meet your needs."
  - ii. They didn't know how God used that in her life, but believing that He did changed them.

At first, doing something daily that takes faith may seem daunting or even overwhelming. But once you start, not only will you enjoy it, but you may even sense God transforming you from someone with a self-centered faith to someone with a self-sacrificing, God-glorifying, other-centered faith.

Insight: Your faith acts don't have to be big, intimidating, or newsworthy. They can be simple, unassuming, and even performed in secret.

- It's simply a matter of being willing, being open, being attuned to God, and risking more.
- Take the focus off yourself and notice the needs of others.
- Listen with your heart and not just your ears. Read between the lines and look for ways to serve.

What if you told God you were available? And you looked for at least one opportunity daily to do something that required faith? Instead of living a *meh* life, small acts of faith teach us to depend on God. They draw us close to Him. They build our trust.

Pray just one dangerous prayer. Risk just one act of faith.

### Chapter 3.7 Your Will Be Done

Not long after Pastor Groeschel began taking at least one faith risk each day, he said that he expanded the way he prayed for God to use him. Instead of simply asking God to send him, He personalized it. Since God created every part of the body, he started taking time to pause, pray and devote specific parts of his body to God.

He states that this short prayer to God energized him spiritually, it empowered him emotionally, and it emboldened him to do God's will. His dangerous prayer of dedication varied each day.

I encourage us to follow the Spirit's leading as we dedicate ourselves to the Lord. Remember that in the model prayer that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 6:10** reads, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

- A. Let's look at a few examples from his prayers of dedication.
- 1) "Heavenly Father, because you gave Jesus for me, I give my whole day to you today. Every part of me is yours. Take each part of the body you created and consecrate it for your purposes today."
  - 2) **The mind:** "Please guard my thoughts. Help me take captive any thought that is not from You to make it obedient to Christ and all Your Truth."
  - 3) **The eyes:** "Lord, I give you my eyes. Help me to look on things that are pure and honoring to You. Protect my eyes from lusting after the temporary pleasures of the world."

- 4) **The ears:** “God, guard my ears. Protect me from listening to any lies from the evil one. May I only hear Your voice, Your Spirit, Your truth guiding me.”
- 5) **The mouth:** “God, set a guard over my mouth. May every word that I speak be pleasing to you.”
- 6) **The heart:** “Lord, help me guard my heart, as I know it can easily deceive me. Purify my motives in all I do.”
- 7) **The hands:** “God may my hands be your hands in the world today. I devote the work of my hands to you.”
- 8) **The feet:** “Lord, direct the steps of my feet. May Your word be a lamp directing all my steps.”

B. The point is not that these exact words be prayed every day or every time you pray. But, the hope is that we surrender more of ourselves to God each day. Make your own words of prayer. Pray what is on your heart and give yourself to be used by God.

C. The words may change, but the intention behind them always remain the same: “God, may your will be done through me today.”

### Chapter 3.8 Now What’s The Question

As we look at the next to the last section of this study, Pastor Groeschel tells an interesting story.

A seasoned preacher described how each week, after the Sunday service, he’d stand by the door of the church to greet people as they left for their cars. He described the joy of hugging the grandmas and high-fiving the younger kids week after week. The pastor admitted openly that he loved when his parishioners would praise his message, complimenting him on how God used him to speak to them.

But, the pastor describes an encounter he had with a guy named Matt that he’s seen regularly at church but had never gotten to know well. Matt was probably in his midforties, graying slightly around the temples. Lines around his eyes indicated he might have had some challenging years in his life, but his warm smile and confident handshake led the preacher to believe that Matt was probably in a better season in life at the moment.

- Then one Sunday after service, Matt grasped both of the pastor’s hands firmly and said, “Pastor, I want you to know that my answer is yes. Now what’s the question?”
  - The pastor looked at Matt curiously. *Poor guy, what’s he talking about? The answer is yes? What does that mean?* Not wanting to make it awkward, the pastor grinned at the man, nodded and said, “Thank you, Matt. God bless you.”
- The same thing happened the next two Sundays. But, the third time, the pastor asked Matt if they could meet and have a cup of coffee. Matt smiled, gave the pastor his business card with his contact information and said, “Of course, we can have coffee! I told you my answer is yes.”

They met the next Tuesday at a coffee shop. After finishing the small talk, the pastor leaned in slightly and said, “I’ve been wondering about what you said to me. What do you mean the answer is yes?”

Matt shared his story:

- a) Matt had not always been the man he was today. He had done a lot of bad things in his life and hurt a lot of people. He was addicted to alcohol, pornography, and gambling. The addictions ruled his life. He betrayed his wife, crushed his children and caused a lot of pain. Matt choked up, and the pastor could see tears forming in his eyes.

- b) Assuming they were tears of pain and regret, the pastor was startled to hear Matt say, “But I’m thankful now for those low times. Because that’s what helped me to be open to Christ. You see, when I hit rock bottom, a friend invited me to church. And that’s when I heard you preach about the grace of Christ.”
- c) When the man said the word Christ, the tears started to flow. Matt continued telling his story without even trying to hide his obvious emotion. “At first, I just listen, not sure if I could believe it was true for me. But after a few months, I invited Christ into my life and He changed me.”
- d) At that point, the pastor couldn’t keep his own tears back. The two men sat there silently for a moment. Both changed by the same Savior. Both grateful for the brief, holy moment they shared together over a cup of coffee.

Then the Matt said, “Pastor, that’s why I want you to know my answer to you is always yes. Because of how Jesus changed my life through our church. I will always be available to him and to you.

- “Mow the church yard, I will be honored.”
- “Need money to help a single mom, I will give without hesitation.”
- “Need someone to drive a widow to church, I’m your driver.”
- “Pastor I want you to know that my answer is yes. So just let me know the question.”

Now that’s the heart of a person that God can use.

Such openness is the essence of this dangerous prayer. When Isaiah experienced the presence of God, he became aware of his own sinful brokenness. Then the seraph touched his lips with the flaming coal and God forgave his sin. Because of God’s goodness, God’s grace, and God’s love, Isaiah’s response was bold, Send me. Notice, Isaiah didn’t ask for any details. He didn’t ask God where or when, or what would happen.

The conclusion of the book is entitled *Disturb Me, Lord*. It is about the prayer of an English sea captain, Francis Drake (1540-1596).

*Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves; when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little; when we arrived safely because we sailed too close to shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity, and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new earth have dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizon of our hopes; and push back the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.*

This we ask in the name of our Captain, who is Jesus Christ. Amen!