

How to Live 3 of 12

God's Plan or Our Plan

#0253

Study Given by W. D. Frazee

Ministry of Healing, page 473: Near the bottom of the page you will find a sentence that begins with the word "often." It closes the paragraph of which it is part. Do you find it? What happens to our plans sometimes? That's because we're bad, isn't it? That's because we're off the track, isn't it? If we knew how to pray better, that wouldn't happen, would it? Let's read the sentence together:

"Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed"
Ministry of Healing, page 473.

Which would you rather have, your plans or His plans? A Christian is one who would rather have God's plans succeed. A non-Christian would rather have his own plans succeed. Which are you? There is no clearer test of whether you are really born again or not than this. Which do you wish God's plans or your plans? Now, this doesn't mean that it is wrong to have plans. We're told to lay plans. But we're also told to lay them at His feet. And then we may lay them aside or carry them out as His providence shall indicate.

I want to study with you this afternoon the prayer life as it relates to our practical experience in meeting problems, disappointments, disillusion.

"Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed"
Ibid.

Let's repeat that together:

"Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed"
Ibid.

Now, there are many people that have the idea that if you only knew how to pray enough, then you wouldn't have these disappointments. Did you ever hear of a book or a course called, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*? Did you ever hear of a book or a course or a theory called, *The Power of Positive Thinking*? There are all shades and grades of these theories going around. But the essence of a lot of them is this: that if you know how to manipulate things, yourself and other people and God, you can get what you want. So you had better learn how to pray so you can get your own way.

I have nothing like that to bring to you this afternoon. No, I'm so glad for it. The purpose of prayer is not to change God and get Him on your side so that you can play the ponies or play the stock market and come out ahead. No. The purpose

of prayer is to bring you and me into such harmony with God that we can accept problems and fit into them.

“Often our plans fail that God’s plans for us may succeed”
Ibid.

May we say that again together?

“Often our plans fail that God’s plans for us may succeed”
Ibid.

Now, with this setting, let’s turn to Luke 11:1. All together:

“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” Luke 11:1.

Now, who is this that was praying? Jesus. He was praying by Himself out in the woods somewhere. And the disciples came upon Him. You can read the comment on this in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, the chapter, “Asking to Give.” And as they came upon Him there praying, they were so impressed by His prayer, that quiet, silent, they just listened. And when He ceased, what does that mean, when He ceased? When He stopped, one of His disciples said unto Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Do you think they had never prayed in their life up till that time? Ah, my dear friends, if we could hear Jesus pray, we might say just what that disciple said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Now, don’t leave your text there for I’m not through with it, but turn to *Ministry of Healing*, page 509, in the middle of the page:

“We do not value the power and efficacy of prayer as we should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” *Ministry of Healing*, page 509.

Suppose that we would see Brother Owens, our farm manager, out here in a five-acre stretch just working at it with his hands trying to get it all stirred up to plant something. There are five acres and he’s working at it with his hands. And all the while over at the barn, there’s a plow with a tractor. We would say to him, “Man, don’t you know that you have something that can do that in a few hours? At the rate you’re going, it’ll take you a long time. The weeds will be growing again where you are doing this today by the time you get the field finished.”

May I ask you a question? How do you solve your problems? Or, do you solve them? Or do they just baffle you? Now, some people get ulcers from problems. Some get heart attacks. Some get nervous breakdowns. Some just get mokey and gloomy, depressed. There’re all kinds of reactions, for there’re all kinds

of people. What do you do with your problems? Or, do you have any? Well, if you don't have any today, be sure to get what we're studying, because you may have some tomorrow or next week.

"We do not value the power and efficacy of prayer as we should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish" *Ibid.*

Tell me, is there anything in your life that you wish were different?

"Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish" *Ibid.*

Is there anything that you wish were different in the home that you are a part of?

"Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish" *Ibid.*

Is there anything you wish were different in the church that you are a part of? When you sometimes, as you see certain trends in the church, say, "Oh my, I wish it weren't that way?" Well, what do you do about it? Do you wait hoping that the brethren up in Washington someday will do something about it?

"Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish" *Ibid.*

I want you, my dear friend and I speak to you personally and individually, to become a great problem solver. And the only way you will become a great problem solver is to have great problems to wrestle with. Some of these will be in your own life and experience. Some of them you will find in the experiences of others with whom God brings you in contact. But in each case, the twin tools are mentioned in this sentence. What are they? Prayer and faith, prayer and faith. And they will do what no power on earth can accomplish.

Would you like to make a very practical experiment? When you go home tonight and have your little time alone with Jesus sometime between now and when you go to sleep, I invite those of you who'd like to, take a little card and write down two or three or half a dozen things or people concerning whom you are especially burdened; perhaps, a problem or two in your own life. If it's something you wouldn't want anybody else to see, put it down in code so you and the Lord know about it. But however you do it, select some problems, one or two of your own in your own life, one or two souls that you are especially burdened for, and then set yourself, day by day, in the laboratory of prayer to work with God to solve these problems.

Now, the reason I ask you to write those things down on a card is this: unless you do, you might forget to pray about them tomorrow. Or if six months from now they're all solved you might forget that you had prayed about them and something happened. As I go back through my files and pick up different cards like that, that I

have had at different times in my life it's a joy to me to check off one after the other things that have been done, problems that have been solved, and oft-times in unexpected ways. Some of them I'm still praying about, and that's all right. But this says:

“Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” *Ibid.*

This is the secret of how to live successfully, and I want you to be successful in life. I want you to be a great prayer.

Now, let's go back to our text in Luke. Will you read that verse with me again, the first verse? All together:

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” Luke 11:1.

Tell me, can this be taught? Apparently. If it can be taught, can it be learned? Certainly. Then you can learn to pray, and you can learn to pray successfully. Elijah did. Jacob did. Moses did. You can.

Now, who did the disciples ask to teach them? Jesus. Is He still in the business of teaching people to pray? Right.

Tell me something, suppose you didn't know how to swim and you wanted to learn, who would you be looking for? A good teacher, a good swimmer. Is that right? Another question, where would you expect to learn? Not here in the chapel, would you? No. I was thinking of it as we sat by the lake this afternoon. It is in the water and not on the land that men learn to swim. But suppose I get in the water and I begin to sink. What shall I say? “Well, I guess this is not for me. I guess I'm in the wrong place.” I'm in the only place to learn, is that right?

Jesus is in the business of teaching people to pray. But dear ones don't miss this! We will never learn to pray any other way than by praying. That's right. It is in the water not on the land that men learn to swim, and however awkward our movements in the water, the only hope of learning to swim is to get in there. And it's better to make awkward movements than none at all. Right?

And so in praying, no matter how awkward you sound, it's all right, Jesus, praise His name, is in the sanctuary and He takes those awkward prayers and shall I say, fixes them up. He adds the incense of His merits, His righteousness, and He prays to the Father and asks the Father to accept what we have presented in that awkward, bungling way in His name saturated with His righteousness. That's what makes our prayers acceptable to God. So we don't have to worry about how awkward and bungling they are.

Now, let's notice something else in this verse, very practical. It's by inference in the first verse. It's by inference in the second verse. It is this. Well, I'll let you see it in the text. What was Jesus doing when the disciples came upon Him there? Praying. What did He do, by and by? He stopped praying. He ceased. And then they said what? Tell me, did they know when He had stopped? Did they? Yes, there was a moment when He was praying, and there was a moment when he ceased, and those men there recognized it. Notice, they came upon Him in private prayer. Tell me this, do you gather that He was just thinking a prayer, or was He speaking? He was speaking. Was He using His brain? Was He using His lips? Yes, now, verse 2. I want you to see the same thought as He begins to teach them. All together the first line and a half:

“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say...” Luke 11:2.

Now, let me put something in that isn't there, so you see what I mean. “When ye pray, think.” “When ye, pray, meditate.” Is that what it says? When ye pray do what? Say. What do you think with? Of course, you have to use your brain and think in order to say anything, if the saying is worthwhile. But my point is, is it possible to think and never say anything? Oh yes, and some people have a hard time with this in prayer. Maybe you do.

I want to give you a little quotation that will help you. You may copy this down. It is in the book *Our High Calling*, page 130, just 10 words:

“Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you” *Our High Calling*, page 130.

All together:

“Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you” *Ibid.*

Again:

“Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you” *Ibid.*

Now, I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand, but just judging from the experience I've had with people over the years, I would say that to carry this out will represent a change in at least half of the class, it might be higher. And dear friends, if to you, secret pray has been silent prayer, you have a great discovery ahead of you, the power and blessing that comes through opening your lips, using your mouth, talking to God.

“When you pray, say, Our Father...” Luke 11:2.

Don't just think, “Our Father.” Say it. Now, it's all right to meditate. And there are times, of course, for silent prayer. When we're in the midst of a business engagement, we don't pray out loud with the busy world all around us. But oh, when we're alone with God, then we are to pray aloud where only God can hear us.

“Ah, but,” somebody says, “What’s the use of praying out loud? He can read my thoughts just as easy as He can my lips.”

Why, sure He can. But as we said in the beginning, prayer is not to change God. It’s to get us in shape to fit in with His providence. And watch this and don’t miss it! The more real our communion with God is, the more will be accomplished. And it becomes far more real to us that we’re talking to God if we talk.

Now, I have put on the blackboard what communion is. To talk while He listens and to listen while He talks, this is communion. Now, this can get to be a habit. I gave you this the other day. In fact, we’ve had it twice already, but I want to give it to you again:

“It is not always necessary to bow upon your knees in order to pray. Cultivate the habit of...”

What?

“... talking...”

Not just thinking.

“...with the Saviour...”

When?

“... when you are alone...”

And then?

“...when you are walking...”

And then?

‘...when you are busy with your daily labor’
Ministry of Healing, page 510–511.

Then it goes on that there are situations where your heart can be continually uplifted in silent petition for help that is people around you do not hear you pray. “Oh Lord, help me with this problem.” The patient in the sanitarium that you’re burdened for doesn’t hear you say as you go into the room, “Oh Lord, help me to help this patient.” But Jesus hears. The student up there in the elementary school doesn’t hear you say as you’re teaching, “Oh, Lord, help me to help this boy, this girl.” But Jesus hears.

The reality of it is more because when you have been alone with God, you have spoken, not just thought. Do you see? This is the thing. The more we actually talk to God every chance we get, the more our silent petitions will be real when we’re around other people.

“Cultivate the habit” *Ibid.*

I asked you yesterday, how do you cultivate a habit? By doing the same thing over and over. And the way you cultivate the habit of talking with the Savior when you are alone is to talk with Him when you are alone. And some of you’ve heard me put it this way:

Somebody says, “Well, I don’t think about it.”

Just do it when you do think about it. Try it these next 24 hours. Every time that Jesus brings it to your mind, say something to Him. If you are walking along the trail or the road and He brings it to your mind, say something to Him. Whatever you would say were He there in the flesh by your side.

“Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone” *Ibid.*

Now turn to Psalm 5:3. There’s a special time for God to hear our voice. Isaac Watts studied this Psalm and wrote the matchless hymn:

Lord, in the morning Thou shall hear
My voice ascending high;
To Thee will I direct my prayer,
To Thee lift up mine eye.

Now let’s read the verse he got it from. All together:

“My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up” Psalm 5:3.

Notice it isn’t just “My thought You’ll read in the morning, O Lord.”

“My voice shall thou hear...” Psalm 5:3.

We are speaking to Him.

“My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up” Psalm 5:3.

Again, I say, I want to be very practical. If you’ve not been in the habit of doing this and even if you have, you may find that as you try to pray to God audibly, your mind wanders and you wake up and find you’re not saying anything. You’re just thinking about something, maybe a thousand miles away. Incidentally, that’s one of the reasons for speaking to God, you will at least know when you quit, and you will know pretty soon. If you’re like me, you probably say, “Oh my, why can’t I keep my mind on this.” Don’t worry about it. Just start again, just like a child learning to walk.

“If the mind wanders we must bring it back, by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy”
Messages to Young People, page 114.

I’ve been working on it for quite a while. I haven’t mastered it yet, but friends, I know enough about it to know this is what I want. I want more and more of it, to just talk to God.

Now, Doctor was talking to us about the importance of sleep and rest. But some of you may have the problem that I have at times. That is, I may go to bed all right and go to sleep, but I wake up long before it’s time to get up. Then what? Well, I’ll tell you, friends. You can do two things that are just wonderful. This is a great blessing to learn in how to live. You can repeat Scripture, and you can talk to God. And God will listen to you at 2:00 in the morning.

And by the way, you don’t have to turn on the light to see what time it is, either. Don’t worry about that at all. You’re not keeping a diary of what time you woke up. No. Just lie there. It doesn’t make any difference whether it is two minutes or five minutes or thirty minutes, just improve the time, not laboriously, not restlessly, but restfully. You may never know just what minute you went to sleep. That isn’t important. Fill your mind with the Word of God. Let Him speak and you listen while He talks, and you talk while He listens.

David had this experience. He says:

“I [commune with] Thee in the night watches” Psalm 63:6.

There is something wonderful to do every minute of the 24 hours. We can live 24 hours a day. Nobody can give you anything more than that. Don’t settle for anything less. If Jesus gives you sleep, thank Him for it in the morning. If He gives you sweet communion in the night watches in prayer and listening to His Word as it rolls over in your mind from memory, thank Him for that. Prayer and faith are the great problem solvers.

“Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples”
Luke 11:1.

All right, let’s sing that verse again that we sang a while ago:

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Now, I want us to kneel here, and I want Brother Cansler to lead us in asking God to teach us this precious lesson of how to pray. Would you like to be included in it? Would you like to learn? All right. Let's kneel together.

[Brother Cansler prays.]

Our Father, our hearts rejoice that we have such a loving Master who chooses to teach us to pray today as He did His disciples when here on earth. And today, our hearts go out in longing to Thee. Lord, teach us to pray. Thou hast told us that if we call unto Thee, Thou wilt answer us. Thou hast told us, "Ask and it shall be given you." We plead these promises not because we're worthy, but because of our great need and Jesus' great righteousness. And we thank Thee that Thou hast made the truth simply beautiful and beautifully simple. Write these precious words in our hearts.

And as we see the lovely flowers and hear the sweet songs of the birds, see the beautiful green leaves on the trees and the lofty mountains as we walk the trails, may we audibly say, Thank Thee, dear Jesus. Oh, we know it will make Thy heart glad when we talk to Thee and then be still and listen for Thy voice to speak to us.

Lord, help us to talk less and pray more. Help us to talk less and pray more. We need Thy help. We plead for Thy Holy Spirit to bring deep conviction on our hearts and our minds that we'll spend less time in common talk and more time in communion and talking with Thee. Oh, help us.

We thank Thee that Thou art leading us. And teach each one of us to pray, and we know and are thankful that Thou art doing this, and that soon we will be walking with Thee as Enoch did of old and we choose that today. And we thank Thee in Jesus' wonderful name we pray, amen.

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