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# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## TWO MEN SERVE THE LORD

By Bill Hall

Two men serve the Lord. *The first* is motivated by his love for the local church as an institution. He enthusiastically supports its program of activities. He works diligently to get others to be baptized, for he is interested in this organization of which he is a part, and he wants to see it grow. He attends all the meetings, gives liberally of his money, and really does his part in support of the local church.

*The other* is motivated by his love for the Lord. He too works to convert others, but he does so because he is concerned for their souls. He too attends all the meetings, for in doing so he is drawn closer to the Lord whom he loves, and has opportunity to glorify His name. He also gives liberally of his money, for he loves the Lord and is interested in doing his part in financing His work. He loves the church and rejoices when it grows but his love reaches far more deeply than does that of the first man; in fact, he would serve the Lord if there were not another Christian on earth nor prospects that there ever would be another.

*The first man's* enthusiasm is dependent to a great degree on others. While the congregation is growing and active, his enthusiasm continues strong; but when problems arise, or his favorite preacher moves on, or some of his brethren don't pull their weight, or someone criticizes

him, or the congregation just generally faces a difficult period, his enthusiasm begins to wane, and he becomes “unfaithful.”

*The second man* is stable and unwavering. Brethren come and go; the congregation of which he is part has its periods of growth and periods of depression; problems arise from time to time; but this mans enthusiasm remains constant through it all, for it is centered on Him who never changes, the One who has promised, **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**

Let us take heed, then, how we build (1 Cor. 3:10). Perhaps the title of this article should have read, *“One Man Serves The Lord,”* for it is very doubtful that the first man serves the Lord at all.

*[Two Men: Articles on Practical Christian Living, pg. 9]*

## **BEGINNING EACH DAY WITH PRAYER**

*By Marshall McDaniel*

What are our first thoughts when we wake up in the morning? *I’m tired—I wish I could stay in bed. I’m hungry—I wonder what’s in the pantry. I’m in a hurry—I have so much to do today.* I wish I were more like David: **“In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch”** (Ps. 5:3). David was tired, hungry, and busy—same as us, but he gave priority to morning-prayer. I am ashamed to admit I have a problem with neglecting praying. I usually start working as soon as I get up, and it is mid-morning or lunch-time before I realize, *I haven’t prayed yet.*

Praying like David doesn’t just happen; we don’t just wake up and start praying everyday for the rest of our lives.

It takes determination and diligence. I am issuing a challenge to myself (and I hope you will join with me) that I will begin the next seven days with prayer. Then, I am going to do it again, Lord willing, (cf. 1 Thess. 5:17), because morning-prayer provides daily and eternal benefits.

**It gives us peace.** In the same Psalm where David promised morning-prayer, he also said, **“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning [or meditation]. Heed the sound of my cry for help”** (Ps. 5:1-2; cf. 55:12-19). God listens to our inward struggles—whatever troubles us. Even if we haven’t slept at all the night before because we were thinking about some difficulty, we can cry out to God, and He will provide His peace (cf. Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Jn. 1:7-9). When we bring our anxieties to the Lord in the morning, often the rest of the day will take care of itself.

**It gives us power.** **“Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. ... Turn to me, and be gracious to me; Oh grant Your strength to Your servant”** (Ps. 86:3, 16). Like David, we need God’s power throughout the day, and that starts with prayer. We will never have enough strength in and of ourselves; only God can provide it! **“Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”** (Matt. 26:41). **“Ask, and it will be given to you”** (Matt. 7:7). If we start out with prayer, God’s power will fortify our hearts throughout the day.

**It gives us purpose.** **“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this is man’s all”** (Ecc. 12:13). This is every man’s purpose, yet this lifelong duty can only be realized when put into daily components. Everyday must, therefore, start

strong: “The beginning is the most important part of the work” (Plato). “He has half the deed done who has made a beginning” (Horace). “A good beginning makes a good end” (English proverb). If we start out the morning talking to God, it will be much easier to live for Him throughout the day.

Prayer is an amazing privileged afforded to God’s children. Let’s determine that we will habitually commune with our Father—beginning each day with prayer. It will be one of the best decisions we make!

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**AM LESSON:**  
Don’t Leave The  
City Unguarded

**PM LESSON:**  
Garage Sale Grace

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**