

## VICTORY OVER PRAYERLESSNESS

by, Andrew Murray

1

### Victory Over Prayerlessness

Andrew Murray

If in an earnest Christian's life there is little heart in prayer, a sense of failure in witnessing, a lack of joy and peace, with little relish for the Word, he may be living under the law and not under grace.

There is a great difference between law and grace. Law demands; grace bestows. Law commands but gives no strength to obey; grace promises and performs all we need to do. Law burdens and casts down and condemns; grace comforts and makes strong and glad. Law appeals to self to do its utmost; grace points to Christ to do all. Law calls to effort and strain and urges us toward a goal we never can reach; grace works in us all God's blessed will.

Instead of striving against failure, the first step should be to fully accept the failure as well as one's own impotence, and with this confession to sink down before God in utter helplessness. There that one would learn that unless grace gives him deliverance and strength, he never could do better than he has done. Grace must work all for him. He must come out from under law and self and effort, and take his place under grace, allowing God to do all.

We have so often resolved to pray more and better, and have failed. We have not the strength of will some have, with resolve to turn around and change our habits. The press of duty is as great as ever it was; it is so difficult to find time for more prayer. We do not feel real enjoyment in prayer, which would enable us to persevere; we do not possess the power to supplicate and to plead as we should. Our prayers, instead of being a joy and a strength, are a source of continual self-condemnation and doubt. We have at times mourned and confessed and resolved, but to tell the honest truth, we do not expect, for we do not see the way to any great change.

As long as this spirit prevails, there can be little prospect of improvement. Discouragement brings defeat. No teaching from God's Word as to the duty, the urgent need, the blessed privilege of more prayer and of effectual prayer will avail while the secret whisper is heard: there is no hope. Our first care must be to find out the hidden cause of the failure and despair, and then to show how divinely sure deliverance is.

We must receive into our heart the divine promise with the response it met with: *"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God"*(Jer. 3:22). We must come with the personal prayer, and the faith that there will be a personal answer. Shall we not even now begin to claim it in regard to the lack of prayer, and believe that God will help us: *"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed"* (Jer. 17:14).

## VICTORY OVER PRAYERLESSNESS

by, Andrew Murray

2

Feebleness and failure in prayer is a sign of feebleness in the spiritual life. What everyone who desires to pray more faithfully and effectually must learn is that his whole spiritual life is in a sickly state, and needs restoration. He will then see the need of a radical change in his whole life and walk if his prayer life, which is simply the pulse of the spiritual system, is to indicate health and vigor. Prayer is meant to be as simple and natural as breathing or working to a healthy man. The reluctance we feel and the failure we confess are God's own voice calling us to acknowledge our disease, and to come to Him for the healing He has promised. What is the healing of the disease of which the lack of prayer is the symptom? We cannot find a better answer than is pointed out in the words, "*Ye are not under the law, but under grace*" (Rom. 6:14).

The great danger is living under the law, and serving God in the strength of the flesh. With the great majority of Christians it appears to be the state in which they remain all their lives. Here lies the reason for the lack of holy living and power in prayer. All failure can have but one cause: men seek to do themselves what grace alone can do in them, what grace most certainly will do.

Grace is not only pardon of, but power over sin; grace takes the place sin had in the life. As sin had reigned within in the power of death, grace reigns in the power of Christ's life.

The Apostle Paul gives us a picture of a believer's life under law, with the bitter experience in which it ends: "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Rom. 7:24). His answer to that question is: "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...*" (Rom. 7:25). This shows that there is deliverance from a life held captive under evil habits that we have struggled against in vain. Deliverance is by the Holy Spirit giving the full experience of what the life of Christ can work in us: "*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*" (Rom. 8:2).

The grace of God can bring us into and keep us in the liberty of the Spirit. We can be made free from the sad life under the power that led us captive, so that we not do what we wanted to do. The Spirit of faith in Christ can free us from our continual failure in prayer, and enable us in this, too, to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.

Oh, be not hopeless, be not despondent! What is impossible with man is possible with God! What you see no possibility of doing, grace will do. Confess the disease; trust the Physician; claim the healing; pray the prayer of faith, "*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed*" (Jer. 17:14). You too can become a man or woman of prayer, and pray the effectual prayer that availeth much (Jas. 5:16).

*Herald of His Coming.*

*Edited and abridged from The Ministry of Intercession by Andrew Murray.*