



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 10

December 31, 2023

No. 53

## Maintenance

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While I was going to college at the end of the 80's, I worked in a college maintenance department to help pay for school. There were a lot of things that needed to be maintained. Two of the buildings were built in the 20's, one in 1922 and the other in 1926. Needless to say those two buildings needed a lot of attention being 60 years old at that time.

One was a girl's dorm with many old pipes, sinks and bathtubs. There were a lot of maintenance requests for non-working lights, clogged sinks, dripping sink, nonfunctioning toilets etc. etc. Needless to say we could stay busy maintaining the campus.

Being a faithful Christian requires continuous maintenance or upkeep as well. Through the years of service our faith, zeal, diligence, study, and labors need to be maintained and cared for.

Consider these two passages from Paul to Titus.

*"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men". Titus 3:8*

*"And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful." Titus 3:14*

A Christian is God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul told Titus to be careful to maintain (do the upkeep) good works. Doing so a Christian continues to bear fruit. Paul also told Titus that maintaining good works is learned.

Three things come to mind in helping us learn to maintain good works.

#1 Knowledge – a knowledge of God's will.

*"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all". 1 Thessalonians 5:14*

#2 Selflessness – thinking about the needs of others

*"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others". Philippians 2:3-4*

#3 Steadfastness – sticking to the task of doing good works to please God.

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58*

If we are not careful we will find ourselves just kind of drifting along as Christian not really doing much of this or that. Good works are done purposefully else there would be no need to maintain them. May the Lord bless His people with the opportunities to do good works and bring Him glory.

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Mt. 5:16*

# Jesus, Teach Us to Pray

Allen Malone

Prayer is a learned activity. All of the New Testament writers address the subject — the evangelist Luke most of all. The pages of Luke-Acts are punctuated with the prayers and praying of the faithful. At the heart of Luke's Gospel is the familiar occasion when Jesus' disciples, having witnessed His praying, requested that He teach them to pray (11:1). We are blessed to have recorded in Luke not only the Model Prayer given in answer to their request, but numerous occasions when Jesus gave prayer-instruction through His teaching and example. The Spirit's catalogue of times, places and situations in which Jesus prayed reveal much to encourage and educate our praying.

First of all, Jesus' example teaches us that prayer is crucial to all other service. Though (because?) Jesus' earthly ministry was to be brief and busy, He *"often withdrew to lonely places and prayed,"* even (especially?) when *"crowds of people"* were coming *"to hear Him"* (5:15-16). Like Him, we should be praying servants.

Prayer was His priority in another way, too. Jesus prayed before. Prior to choosing the Twelve (6:12-13), He prayed all night — teaching us to pray before making decisions. Prior to feeding the 5000 (9:12-17), Jesus gave thanks — teaching us to pray before meals, and to express our gratitude to God. Prior to setting His face toward Jerusalem where He would die for our sins and be raised for our justification, He *"went up on a mountain to pray"* (9:51,28) — teaching us that our first step in seeking to save others should be prayer. Prior to His betrayal, arrest and trials, Jesus prayed repeatedly and earnestly (22:39-44) — teaching us to pray in the face of difficulty. Prior to breathing His last in death (23:46), Jesus prayed, *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*

In all of that praying, Jesus' example not only instructs but assures us. As He prayed alone and with others (4:42; 9:18, 28) we get to see that **prayer prompts providence**. In Jesus' life we see in startling clarity that God provides special help and comfort when His children pray. When Jesus prayed on the mountain before setting out for Jerusalem, Moses and Elijah appeared to discuss His departure with Him (9:30-31). When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, *"an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen Him"* (22:43). Indeed, these occasions show us that during prayer God often transforms His children. On one mountain Jesus was *"transfigured"* and on the other His anguish became resolve (cf., Mark 14:34, 42). And, as if to assure us that God will transform 'ordinary' people like us while we pray, Jesus' prayer-transfiguration experience in Luke 9 is followed by His disciples praying for evangelistic laborers in Luke 10 and becoming such laborers themselves (10:1-3). On top of all this, Jesus' intercessory prayers show us that prayer can also prompt God to provide for others. Especially noteworthy are Jesus' prayers for Simon in advance of his being *sifted as wheat* (22:31-32), and His praying for those who crucified Him even as He hanged on the cross (23:34).

It's within the context of all of this praying that Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. In addition to His familiar Model Prayer (11:1-4) are instructions such as, *"Pray for those who mistreat you"* (6:28), *"pray and [do] not give up"* (18:1), and *"pray that you will not fall into temptation"* (22:40, 46). Clearly Jesus' instructions serve to highlight what He did. He Himself is our Prayer Model, showing us that our prayers and lives should focus on God, address Him, praise Him, and express physical and spiritual dependence upon Him. **For the good of ourselves, those we love, and God's cause, let us read and meditate on Christ's life as we plead, "Lord, teach us to pray"!**