

The Ministry of Spirit-Empowered Prayer for the Lost

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“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Romans 8:26 ESV

The critical ministry of God-breathed, Spirit-empowered intercession on behalf of lost humankind has historically been at the forefront of Pentecostal mission. However, I dare say that it is becoming a diminished and less recognizable activity in the Church both here in the US and increasingly around the world. Paul says in Colossians 1:28–29, in what I consider his life’s mission statement, *“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”* The Greek word for “struggle” here is *agónizomai*—I agonize, but not alone; it is His Spirit working in me. Paul avows that he has power to “strive” in the Spirit for those without Christ, but only as Christ works in him and by him.

Sometimes in our independent, self-realizing culture we overestimate our abilities and grossly underestimate the Spirit. I fear in the midst of our narcissistic faith—our therapeutic religion—that we’ve forgotten what our primary mission is. The work of evangelism and the victory of seeing the lost come to Christ are primarily won in deep intercession and Spirit-empowered prayer. My tendency is to want to go to battle with Joshua in the field, but I’m learning that the intercessors on the hill—Moses, Aaron and Hur—require much more of my time and attention.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?

ACTIVATION

- Pray with the Holy Spirit. Pray in tongues and ask for an interpretation so that you can also pray with your understanding.
- Pray for lost people you know who need Jesus in their lives. Pray for their hearts to be softened and their circumstances to point them toward Jesus.
- Pray for the Word of God to be active in the lives of unbelievers. Pray for a release of God’s Spirit who will woo many people to His heart.

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:13; Mark 11:24; Luke 10:2; John 17:20–23