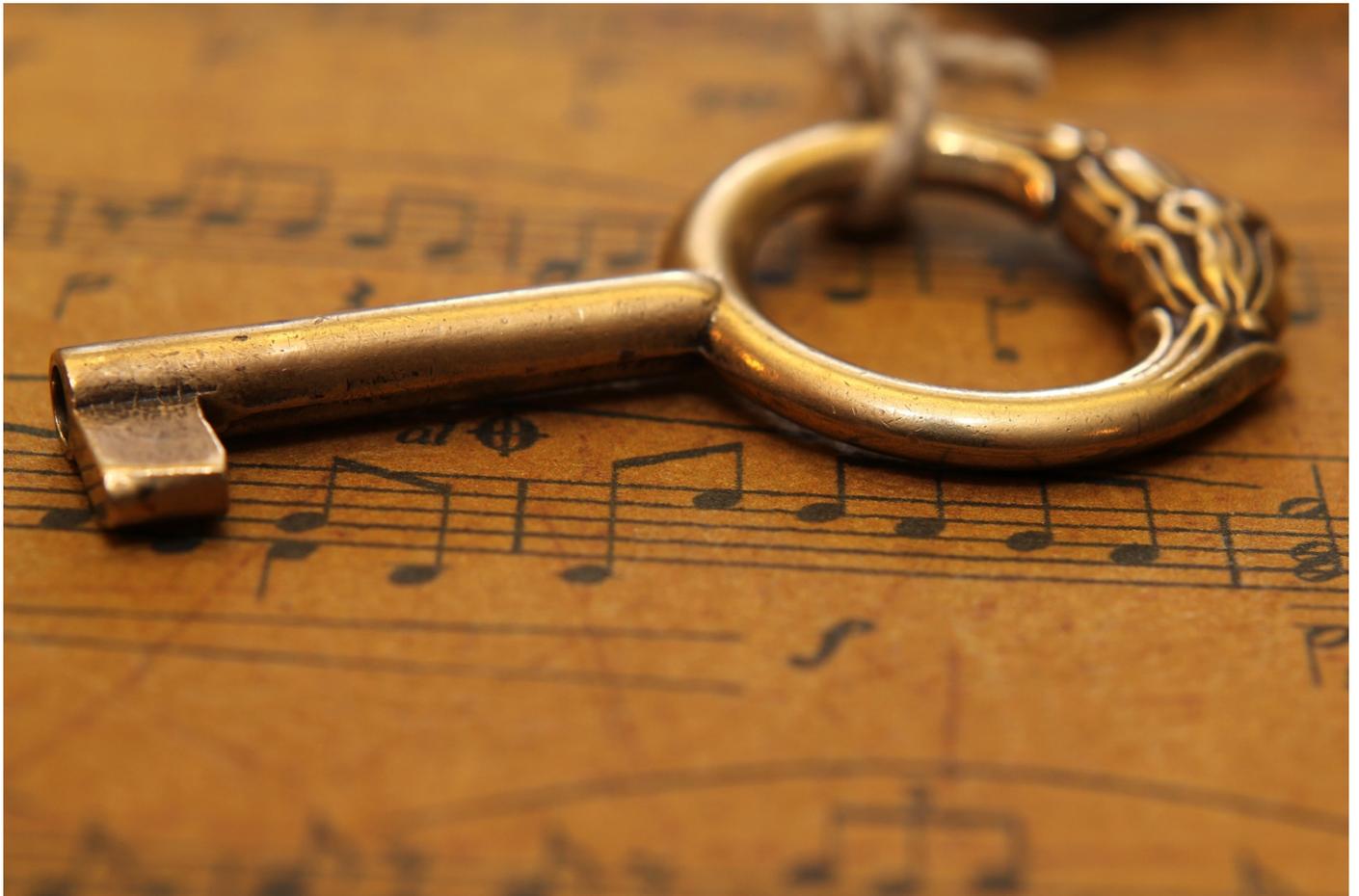
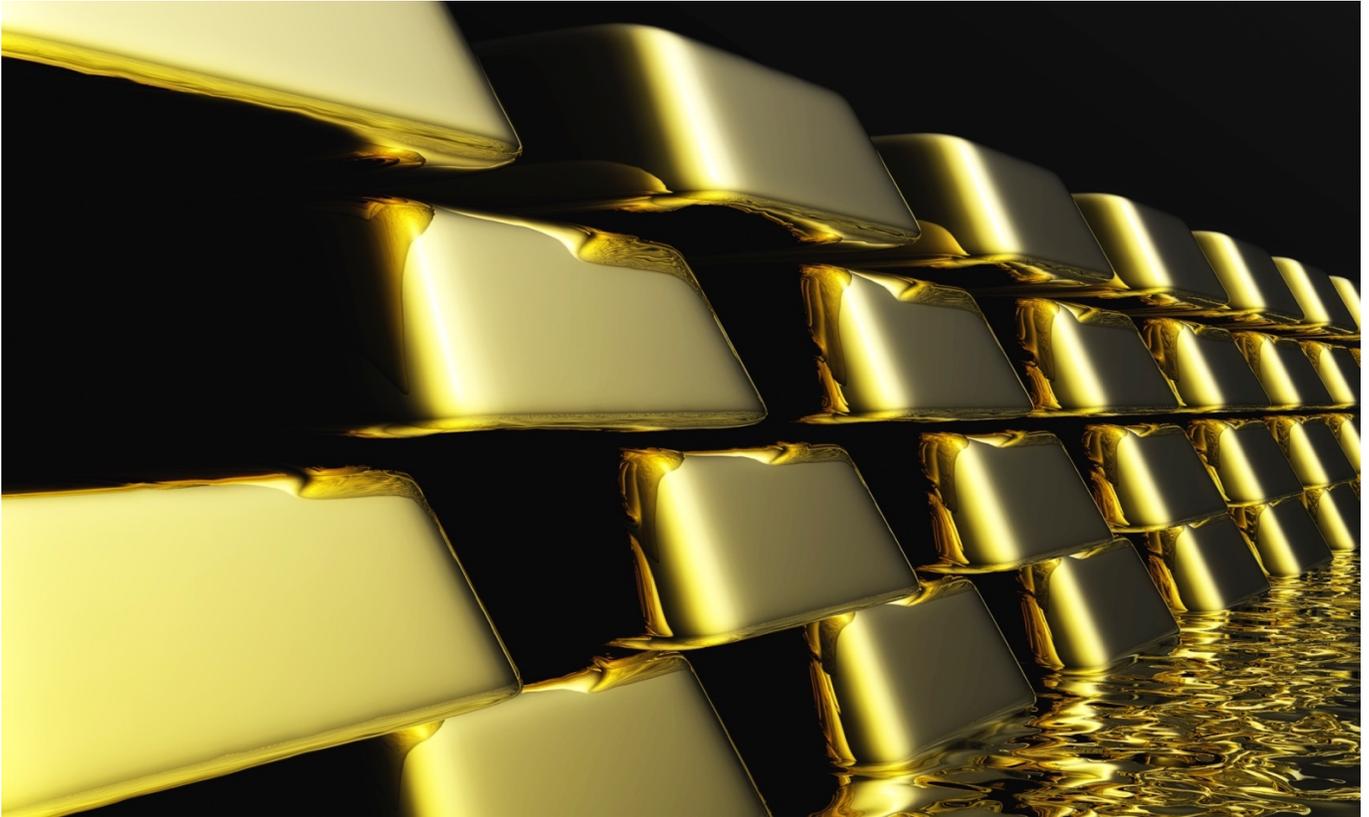


Prevailing in Prayer - *5 Keys*

Winning in the place of prayer is an absolute essential if we are to realize the fullness of God's desire for mankind. This includes revival in the nations, renewal in the church and restoration in culture and society. This is an inspiring sentiment I know, but is it practical and can it be a reality in your life and ministry? Here's a few things to know ahead of time...



Understanding the *Priority* of Prayer



If God is the foundational and central pillar in His Kingdom, the singularly most important and beautiful revelation of all time, then interacting with the deep things of His person would be the highest priority for humanity, the pinnacle of His creation. This interaction defines the fundamental nature and high priority of prayer. Prayer is intrinsically relational and interpersonal. Whether we are talking about forms of intercession, petition, thanksgiving, praise, deep-unto-deep communion or simply just speaking God's word back to Him we are interacting with a real person who is deeply committed to us and who longs for us to know Him fully. Many of us have a tendency to minimize prayer to simply the means by which we get the things we need, even legitimate things like protection, provision and justice. And while prayer is the primary way that the work of the Kingdom goes forward, even our work is to be done in partnership with Him. Prayer is the conversation that takes place deep within the heart of those partners as they labor together in love to bring forth a mature expression of their commitment to one another. The open exchange of mature love is the end-goal of perfected prayer in any generation.

The *Secret Place* of Prayer



Our prayer life is not a secret to God. There is nothing about us that He does not already know or nothing which concerns us that He has not already considered. In Matthew 6:6, when Jesus mentions the secret place of prayer, He is referring to the hidden places of our heart which we bare only to God as one might reserve the most intimate of personal detail for the most cherished of relationships. Intertwined in the glorious drama of the narrative contained within the Song of Solomon the great King exclaims with joyous confidence, ***“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed!”*** The delight expressed at proclaiming the imagery of this enclosed garden, this sealed fountain, pictures the fiery heart of God revealing to humanity the overwhelming compulsion of God to know and be known, to search and be searched out and to revel in the endless joy of discovering and experiencing the triumphs of eternal love. This hidden place of prayer that Jesus endorses is laced with the promises of being seen, relished in and highly rewarded. An invitation into a secret and devotional life in God represents the highest honor one could ever hope to receive.

Building on the *Word*



The scripture is foundational to the beliefs and practices of every Christian, without exception. It is from the pages of these ancient texts that the building blocks of our faith are composed. I often teach that the scripture is our doorway into the knowledge of God. It is the very testimony of His glory and the transcript of His heart written down for us to carefully behold and consider. When we think about prayer most of us don't think about the Bible. Prayer is typically given its own peculiar distinction and itemization as are many things within the panorama of spiritual priority. I choose to remember the words of the apostles in Acts 6:4 as they begin to internalize the ministry of Jesus and form their own conscious identity as those authorized by Heaven to establish the Kingdom of God in earth. ***"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word..."*** For Peter, James and John this phrase represented far more than a mere creedal assertion. The melding together of prayer and the scripture formed the bedrock for all that the apostolic community would become corporately and all that would fuel each of the apostles in their lifelong pursuit to walk worthy of their Lord and of His testimony.

Corporate Prayer



“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” This well-known portion of Psalm 133 sits nested in an overtly priestly context. Let me explain. The imagery used in this psalm describes Israel’s first high priest, Aaron, and the oil of consecration represents the ministry of the Spirit which sets him apart to God in a way unique to any and all of his countrymen. The Holy Spirit desires to release the anointing upon a people that function collectively as a priesthood. The ministries of beholding His glory and worshipping Him are at the core of what it means to be His priestly people (2 Cor.3:18). But there’s more. Through this short psalm, God is giving insight into the nature of what He longs to crown with His presence. A people fascinated with Him are anointed to behold Him and to begin to grow up together in the glory of His image, to the full stature of Jesus Himself (Eph.4:11-16). It’s in the context of ministry to the Lord together that God releases the activity of His presence which touches our inner man with strength and causes the people of God to respond with deep commitment to one another (Eph.5:17-21). The experience of His presence is our priestly reward.

Persistence in Prayer



“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” -Luke 18:1. This simple editorial phrase provides us a valuable window into the vast nerve-center of prayer. First of all, it reveals the propensity for humans in our intrinsic weakness to draw back from the call to prayer because we get discouraged. Secondly, it reveals God’s heart and method for helping us to walk in victory. Because God is good and because He longs to make wrong things right He encourages us to continue to press in and pray because the prayers of a just man are powerful and effective (James 5:16). The book of Daniel gives us a glimpse into the way that prayer impacts the supernatural realm of angels and demons (Dan.10:12-21). Simply put, prayer releases angels to contend against devils and win. When there is victory over devils people are set free. Prayer also releases the power of God into the lives and situations of people who are then required to respond, and truthfully, this takes time. People don’t typically turn over night. When Jesus encourages our diligence in prayer it is because He is a God of process. Persistent prayer opens doors for the work and wonder of God to go forward in power.