

CA 06 EMAW 06 THE REAL PURPOSE OF PRAYER

(MUSIC THEME)

FOSTER: You arrive home after a tough day at the job. As you walk to the mailbox you mutter to yourself, “Nobody understands the pressure I’m under to make all this work...and no one even cares.” You grab the mail and notice a strange looking envelope. Curiosity forces you to open it and look at the letter inside. It says:

“My son,

This is your Heavenly Father. Do you know how much I love you? Do not be deceived and do not be afraid because I will never stop loving you. You are my son! I am working in your life because you are my son. Cry out to me. I love to hear you pray. I created you so that we could walk together and talk together often. I reward those who earnestly seek me. You are my son. I love you as one of my children. Nothing can change that. Do not fear and do not be afraid. All your sins have been forgiven and they are swept from my sight.

Nothing you do will ever change how much I love you.”

Eternally yours

God

Welcome to Champions Arise. I’m Foster Braun and I’m here with Kent Darcie. Thank you for being with us today. If you received a letter like I just read, how would it change your day? Would you worry about things as much? Would people’s irritating ways be less annoying? Would you be as fearful of losing the love or attention of others? Receiving a message like this that assured us of God’s unconditional love would be great, but that would never happen in real life right?...or could it? Find out when we return to Champions Arise.

(THEME MUSIC IN - 5 S.)

(MUSIC THEME OUT)

FOSTER: Welcome back to Champions Arise. Kent, I’ve never received a letter like I just read, but there have been days I sure could have used encouraging words like that.

KENT: Me too. I think, as men, with the responsibility of being the spiritual leaders and providers of our homes, comes a heavy weight sometimes.

To hear that we are loved and appreciated, not for **how** we are doing, but for **who** we are, would satisfy our souls in a deep way.

But the letter we’re discussing is actually taken from the book, “*Every Man a Warrior*,” by Lonnie Berger. His point is, though this letter describes the wonderful things God provides for us, this letter also describes the **desire** God has to be in a close relationship with us.

FOSTER: I noticed that. It says, “*I created you so that we could walk together and talk together often.*”

KENT: Yes. That reminds me of Genesis 3 verse 8, which says, “*And Adam and Eve heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*” When I read that scripture, I imagine God walking in the Garden with Adam and Eve. That is an amazing picture to me of the joy God had being with Adam and Eve.

It’s like when we were first dating our wife and the joy we’d feel being with them. The completeness we felt when they’d put their head on our shoulder. When they’d look into our eyes with admiration and respect. How sweet that was.

FOSTER: And you're saying this is the type of relationship God wants to have with us.

KENT: Yes. And, if we're honest, this is the type of relationship we want to have with Him. We long to hear God say, "*Do you know how much I love you? I am working in your life because you are my son. I reward those who earnestly seek me. Do not fear. Nothing you do will ever change how much I love you.*"

And though we can't walk in the garden with God in the cool of the day, and we aren't going to receive a physical letter from Him like you read at the beginning of the program, we can have that wonderful, intimate, sweet relationship with God...in prayer. In fact, that is the purpose of our prayer.

FOSTER: To deepen our relationship with God.

KENT: Yes

FOSTER: Then I'm anxious to hear more about how this works, but for those who may have joined us late, this is Champions Arise. I'm your host, Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. We're discussing the real purpose of prayer in men's lives. We're using material from lesson 7 in Lonnie Berger's book, "*Every Man a Warrior*".

Kent, we've talked about the importance of quiet times over the last few programs in this series. Prayer is an important part of that, but so far, we've encouraged men to pray, and we've discussed what we should pray for, but we haven't talked about how to pray. I'm guessing, for some of our listeners, praying—beyond asking the blessing for their food—might be a new experience.

KENT: You're probably right. And Satan's demons will battle with us to stop us from **deepening** our prayers with God. They don't want us to have that strong, intimate, relationship with God. **They know** that a man who has a bond with God, has a stable home life, good relationship with his family, is a good employee, and is a valued member of society. So they will unleash every distraction possible to stop a man from praying. But we must pray. Fortunately, we just need to maintain the discipline of having our daily quiet time, and remember the three letters W-C-R.

FOSTER: W-C-R.

KENT: Yes. W stands for Worship. C stands for Confession, and R stands for Request. These are key elements in prayer.

FOSTER: Worship, confession and request. W-C-R. When you say worship, what do you mean?

KENT: Worshiping in prayer is praising God for who He is and who He is to us. When we praise God in prayer we might say something like:

"Jesus, I give you praise, glory, and honor. I praise You for who You are and I thank You for Your goodness to me." In Psalm 50 verse 23 God says, "*Giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me...*"

It honors God when we give Him thanks and praise. Also, whenever I'm feeling discouraged, I spend some time thanking the Lord and thinking about all that He has blessed me with. I feel better after that.

FOSTER: You know Kent, for me, Hebrews 13:15 comes to mind, *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”*

KENT: There are a number of scriptures that talk about praising God, but the important thing to remember is it honors God, and praising Him cleanses and prepares our hearts and minds to go deeper with God.

FOSTER: So W is Worship. C is Confession.

KENT: Yes. After we worship God, we must confess our sins to Him. Confession is simply admitting your weaknesses and sin and asking God to forgive you. Many of us are familiar with the Lord’s Prayer where it says, *“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* [Matt. 6:11] But some men don’t realize how important this is. Some actually think sins, (or at least little sins) are no big deal. But they are. In first John verses 8 – 10 the Apostle John writes about people that think that way. He wrote:

“If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.”

FOSTER: If we deny our sins, we’re calling God a liar.

KENT: That is what the Bible says.

FOSTER: I don’t think I’d want to do that.

KENT: Neither would I. Confession is very important. But once we’ve worshiped God (the W in our prayer reminder) and confessed our sin before Him (C), we can come to Him with our requests. That’s the R in our WTC prayer acronym. Making requests is asking God for wisdom in financial matters, in family matters, and in other relationships and events in your life. Making requests is asking God to “give us our daily bread.”

Making requests is also praying for one another. The Apostle Paul wrote about this important part of prayer in his first letter to Timothy. In chapter 2 verse 1 He writes, *“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.”*

Paul also wrote in Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”*

So making requests is an important part of our prayers to God

FOSTER: Also, I want to let our listeners know that if you missed our last program, I encourage you to listen to it. Kent and I had a fascinating discussion on why men don’t pray. These two programs together provide a good overview of prayer.

KENT: I agree. And I want to encourage men who are listening and thinking, *“I’ve never prayed like that before. Praying for my food at the dinner table is all I’ve known. Sometimes I’ll pray the Our Father, but that’s it”*. Relax.

My friend, that’s ok. It’s not about how we pray. The W-C-R method is just a tool to help us get going. The key is taking the time with God.

It took years for me to learn that what God really wants is to spend time with me. We’re busy men. Our wife wants to spend time with us. Our kids want to spend time with us. Our boss wants to spend time with us. And we forget, that God wants to spend time with us... Isn’t that an amazing thought? God...wants to spend time...with us! And we **need** to spend time with Him. So this is a skill we want to develop.

In some ways, learning to pray can be a lot like when we first started dating our wives.

FOSTER: You like that analogy, don’t you!

KENT: Yes. It’s interesting how often it fits. So leave me alone. I’m on a roll !

FOSTER: (laughter)

KENT: (laughter) But think about it. When we first dated our wives, we weren’t sure what to say. We didn’t want to say the wrong thing, because we wanted her to like us. But as we talked more and more it became easier to share. And as, “like” turned to “love” we’d talk even more—and at a deeper level. And then as the years pass and our “love” grows to “mature love,” we enjoy a trusting relationship and can talk and share freely.

It’s similar with God and prayer. Maybe in our early years as a Christian, or if we’re just starting our practice of prayer, our prayers are mostly about asking God for stuff. And that’s OK. He’s trying to teach us that we can really trust him and that his promises are true. But as we grow and mature and spend more time with Him, our prayer life should also change to a more spiritually adult relationship. Hopefully, twenty five years into our marriage, we aren’t having the same superficial conversations we used to have when we first dated. The same is true with our prayer life with God.

FOSTER: That makes sense, but our time is coming to a close, so let’s review where we’ve been.

KENT: Well, we started by realizing that the purpose of prayer is to deepen our relationship with God. And we acknowledged that for some, a deeper prayer life was a new experience, so we broke prayer down into three areas: Worship, Confession, and Requests. Or W-C-R. And we want to encourage men that deepening our prayer life is a process. But a process that is entirely worth it.

The moment you start understanding how sincerely and deeply God loves you, and wants to spend time with you, it will forever change your relationship with Him.

FOSTER: And that is one of our goals here at Champions Arise: to see men’s lives forever changed by the power and love of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

(MUSIC THEME IN)

CLOSING

(MUSIC THEME OUT)

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed the purpose of prayer. The material for this program is from lesson #7 in the book "Every Man a Warrior," by Lonnie Berger. His book can be used by individuals, small groups, or in a class at your church. For more information on his book or to hear this or any of our previous programs in this series, visit our website at www.championsarise.org. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

(MUSIC BUMPER OUT)