APRIL 2010





Impact Ministries "Changing the Way the World Sees God" 3516 S. Broad Place | Huntsville, AL 35805 | 256-536-9402 | www.impactministries.com

New Covenant Prayer: Everything Has Changed! By Dr. Jim Richards

The mention of prayer brings all sorts of images to mind: Elijah calling down fire, Daniel fasting and praying, or any number of occasions where Old Testament saints fervently called out to God. Therein lies our very struggle with prayer: nearly all of our models of prayer are from the Old Testament, based on the Old Covenant. The involvement of one automatically violates and neutralizes the other. The two are incompatible as a means of approaching God!

Our unwillingness to accept the terms of the New Covenant and clinging relentlessly to the Old has been a primary undermining of New Covenant faith. It has given rise to legalism, ritualism, and one of the most deadly compromises: Judaizers. The Judaizers were some of the primary opponents of the apostle Paul. They were willing to accept that Jesus could get you saved, but clung unremittingly to the idea that obeying the law made you righteous, thereby qualifying you for the promises of God, protecting you from the devil, and keeping you saved - all of which was tantamount to rejection of the finished work of Jesus: ignoring the cross and the New Covenant established in His blood!

New Covenant prayer must be based on the cross: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus! To approach God on any other basis than the blood (that which is implicit in Jesus' finished work) would be considered to have trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace. (Heb. 10:29) God has gone to incredible lengths to establish a New Covenant with a new priesthood, a new priest, better promises, greater provision, and completely different qualifications. Yet. we look to the Old Covenant model and Old Covenant prerequisites to understand NEW COVENANT faith! Therein is the unseen culprit in an impotent prayer life!

When Jesus came on the scene everything changed. While people still did the same things: prayed, worshipped, and had faith, to name a few, the provisions and the process for all of these changed. Those same words now have completely different meanings under a new contract. Those changes were prophesied throughout the Old Testament, modeled in the life of Jesus, and explained in the New Testament. They have realization in the finished work of Jesus, and Christ Himself was the model of what it would look like for man to do these same things with new provisions.

While Jesus did many of the same things that Old Testament believers did, it looked very different. Why? He modeled how men full of the Holy Spirit could function. He modeled how man under the New Covenant would function. Listen to this: *the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* (Matt. 7:28-29) He did the same things - but differently! They had seen people teach before, but never like this.

The same was true when it came to prayer. The disciples had seen people pray; however, they had never seen anyone pray like He did. They had been taught to pray from childhood, but they had never been taught to pray like Jesus prayed. His prayer life was like His teaching; He prayed with authority and it worked! They wanted it! Thus, they came to Him and requested, "*Teach us to pray*!" I believe we could safely add the phrase, "the way You pray."

Through the death, burial, and resurrection everything about prayer and faith changed! The Old Testament believer couldn't know with certainty what to expect from God. The provisions of their covenant/contract were not nearly as explicit as ours. They had to first determine God's willingness. We mistakenly confuse the term "the will of God" as used in the New Covenant with the "will of God" as used in the Old. The former was a question of willingness, the latter a question of the provisions of the last will and testament.

In the New Covenant Jesus came to establish His last will and testament. (Heb. 9:16-17) He received an inheritance from the Father and chose to make us all joint heirs. (Rom. 8:17) He enacted a New Covenant with completely different provisions and qualifiers than the Old; however, this covenant was also different in another unique manner: it wasn't a covenant that God made between all of mankind and Himself, but a covenant made between Jesus and the Father (Gal 3.16) Because this covenant was between Jesus and the Father it cannot be broken by our failures We don't qualify because of our performance, we qualify because of His

performance, and we are in Him; thus, what He has is ours!

In the Old Covenant men fasted and prayed to know God's will, i.e. His willingness. In this covenant we have a last will and testament that clearly explains our provision. For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. (2 Cor. 1:20, NIV) Additionally, we are qualified for every aspect of the inheritance of the Kingdom of light because we are in Christ. (Col .1:12) Hence. there is no need for laboring neither to know the willingness of the Father nor to inquire concerning our individual status. New Covenant prayer asks with the assumption that it is given based on the finished work of Christ!

Godly living is incredibly important! In fact, it's so important that in this New Covenant we have God's grace, His ability, and His power, to live in righteousness. All the more, we have the gift of righteousness deposited within us. It's no longer a goal to be attained; it's a source to which we should yield. With all of its value, our works righteousness isn't our source of qualification. **His righteousness** is our qualification.

Vain imaginations prompt us to look to our own obedience. We vainly put our hope in our own performance. This carnal logic has kept the church paralyzed since its inception. Based on Paul's teaching in 2 Cor. 10:4-5, vain imaginations are any doctrinal positions that aren't rooted in the **obedience of Christ**. The carnalminded cloak their disbelief of faith righteousness in the vanity of works righteousness. As noble as it sounds, it's simply a rejection of the finished work of Jesus.

In the Old Covenant faith was trust in a fair and just God; but that faith was something that looked to the future in hope of what God would do in response to faith. In the New Covenant faith never looks to the future, it always looks to the past. It looks to the finished work of Jesus. We aren't trying to get God to respond to us because of our *amount* of faith. We're simply responding to God by trusting what He did in Jesus.

In Matt. 18:18, Jesus said, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This passage is most frequently quoted completely out of context and applied to the devil.

One of the most commonly asked questions I've received over the last twenty plus years is, "If Jesus has done everything for us, how do I pray?" The New Covenant is more than just the second half of your Bible; it's the changing of everything: there are better promises with completely different qualifying factors. Everything about relating to God changes because the covenant (contract) has changed. The Old and New Covenants are full of the same words: faith, righteousness, sanctification, and prayer just to name a few; however, although the words are the same their meaning, application, and processes are radically different.

We can't follow the model of the Old Covenant believer because they had a different agreement. All prayer must be based on the finished work of Jesus. Because we have ignored the finished work of Jesus we look to the Old Testament to understand prayer and the result is not only a denial of faith but a subtle promotion of legalistic endeavors that take us away from New Testament faith, the promises of God, and the cross of Christ.

In this new series, New Covenant Prayer: Everything Has Changed, you will:

- * Break free from the drudgery of legalistic prayer
- * Experience the limitless power of the prayer of faith
- * Never wonder about the will of God
- * Revolutionize your communion with God
- * Revitalize every aspect of your prayer life
- * Supercharge your faith

New Covenant Prayer will bring an end to boring, regimented endeavors to prayer and will launch you into a life of natural flowing prayer! It will end the wondering, wavering, begging, and pleading. Everything you know about prayer will be translated to a New Covenant model based on the finished work of Jesus.

The Prayer Organizer

The Prayer Organizer is a powerful tool designed to provide a pattern for New Covenant Prayer. The disciples came to Jesus and said, "Teach us to pray." The issue wasn't that they didn't know how to pray, but the only model of prayer they had ever seen was based on the Old Covenant. They had never seen anyone pray as Jesus did, with authority. Because we have ignored how Jesus said to pray and have followed the way Old Covenant believers prayed we don't

have vibrant, effective prayer lives. Our ineffectiveness in prayer is primarily the result of seeking New Covenant promises on the basis of Old Covenant requirements. Instead of looking to the cross and embracing the finished work of Jesus, we ignore the cross of Christ and look to the Old Testament models of praver.

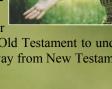
The Praver Organizer follows Jesus' model and bases every aspect of our praver life solely on who we are in Jesus, what we have in Jesus, and the fact that we are qualified for every promise of God in Him. A powerful process of transformation takes place as you base every prayer on the finished work of Jesus.

As you follow the principles set forth in The Prayer Organizer and the companion series, New Covenant Prayer: Everything Has Changed, you will write God's Word on your heart in a way that makes you immovable in your faith. Hundreds of thousands of people testify to a brand new life, an abounding faith, and a transformed heart as a result of using The Prayer Organizer to learn to pray as Jesus taught.

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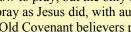
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Learning to Pray

In 1982 I faced some of the greatest challenges in my life. I had never embraced the legalistic philosophies I had been exposed to in my Christian walk, but I had been influenced by them. I had just broken free from the control of a dominating organization whose definition of spiritual authority was expressed through carnal control. At the same time I was facing monumental personal struggles. Adding to all of it, I was in the throes of a physical battle for my life.

I had left formal ministry in 1981, yet I was fully committed to winning the lost, helping people, supporting missions, and doing those things that were meaningful, but I was finished with what I had seen of "ministry." The politics, control games, sensationalism, ego, and straight out religious legalism was not what I had "signed up for." Previously I had spent years ministering on the streets with great success; I never felt I needed a pulpit as a place to reach people. In fact, I pretty much saw the pulpit as a place that alienated me from those I hungered to reach!

Although I was facing a plethora of issues, any of which would have been adequate to "bury" the faint of heart, my eyes were on the goal. One of the most important things we must do in every situation is to identify the **critical factors**. Do first things first. Before anything else, deal with the issues that can bring about the most important changes. For me the top critical factors were: 1) Reconnect to the love of God and 2) Get healed!

During this time I quit my job. The experimental drugs that were keeping me alive were affecting me in ways that were as damaging as the help they were bringing. At best, they were a "stay of execution." While on the one hand they prevented an uncontrollable infection from becoming much worse, they were destroying my kidneys. With the agreement of my wife, I decided that I would spend the same time praying that I normally spent working. For me, it was the only option for healing and a quality of life that was acceptable.

It was during this time that God taught me how to pray based on the New Covenant. I have spent the past 20+ years teaching these principles to others whose lives have been equally transformed. Creating *The Prayer Organizer* was never intended to be a commercial endeavor. It was simply the means used as God taught me to pray, experience the miraculous, and ultimately assume my new identity in Christ and live my dreams. Here are some of the key elements I learned:

All New Covenant prayer had to be based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Everything I prayed and believed had to be clearly based on and could in no way be in conflict with what Jesus did at the cross. If it was provided through His resurrection I had no basis to ask God to do it. To ask Him to do what He had already done in Christ was a declaration of my unbelief in His resurrection. If it was done I could only acknowledge it to be so.

I couldn't ask God to take from me or protect me from what He had already resolved in Jesus. I couldn't blame Him for my circumstances. I couldn't ask Him to take sin, sickness, or any other destructive element away. I could send it away, but if Jesus had already taken it I couldn't pretend to be in faith by asking God to take it away.

The two cornerstone Scriptures for this approach to prayer are 2 Cor. 1:20, *All the promises of God are yes, in Him* and Galatians 3:13 *Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law having been made a curse for us.* Based on these two Scriptures I had every right and responsibility to take hold of the promises and to send away the curses. These issues were resolved in Christ. It was God's sovereign choice. There was nothing for me to pray or ask, I could only acknowledge.

I had to pray in a way that influenced my heart. It had to be **present tense**. The promises of God are now. My heart operates in the now. I had to pray in a **positive manner**. In other words, I had to speak the answer, the end result, based on Scripture. And I had to make it **personal**. I couldn't pray in a generic way.

I had known since my earliest days of seeking God that everything He would do in my life would be done through my heart. God is a heart God. He looks on the heart. He works in the heart. Faith is a matter of the heart. Even in those days I knew that which doesn't affect the heart is only temporary.

I had to know the difference between faith and persuasion. Many people in the Bible depict a journey whereby they became persuaded to believe God. When they became fully persuaded they reached their end goal. Until that time they usually wandered in search of the end goal. Unfortunately, we have erroneously made the wilderness journey a part of the normal Christian life. In fact, we think it's the place God deliberately takes us to teach us. The wilderness is for those who aren't yet fully persuaded. God doesn't take us there; we choose the wilderness route while we resolve our unbelief.

Paul prayed that we would understand and believe this inheritance we have "in Him." Since the early 1970's I had been working through what it meant to be "in Him!" With a highlighter I had color-coded every identity passage in my Bible. I could flip through the pages of my Bible to prav and acknowledge hundreds of what I called identity Scriptures. I knew that what we had from God was all in Him. My knowledge of what we had in Him and my consciousness of being in Him would be the catalyst that caused me to experience the in Him realities!

By this time I was beginning to understand the dynamics of biblical meditation. I saw that experiencing the promises of God in our heart always involved some meditative process. The words of the English translation don't clearly set this forth, but it's a reality that screams in the original languages of the Bible. All transformation involves a meditative process. It is reflection, considering, pondering, imagining, and thinking that activates the heart to experience the very thing we are praying. Until it's experienced with all the emotional impact of an actual event it isn't yet real to the heart.

All of these factors combined to forge a prayer life that was more an experience of worship than trying to convince God to respond. During this time I saw that at the root of the words worship and praise there's a word in both the Greek and Hebrew that means "to say back!" Worship says back in full trust that which God declares to be so. Unbelief asks God to do what He declares He has done. Faith declares it as a fact. Faith is immovable about the fact; after all, faith has already experienced the reality in the heart!

Faith is the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) Faith is "being sure." This being sure is the proof of ownership; it's immovable. All of these together harmonize the thoughts of the mind, the feelings of the heart, and the truth of God's Word into an unquestionable, immovable reality, an absolute proof of ownership.

Faith knows the promise to be true because we have evidence. Faith is never blind. We believe that for which we have the most evidence. We have the evidence of God's Word. We have that Word seen and experienced in our heart. We have the witness of the Holy Spirit assuring us and giving us grace. At some point in time we have more evidence for God's promises than we do for the circumstances that deny them.

Day by day as I prayed based on the New Covenant model of prayer, I became surer of that which up until then was not seen with my eyes. Like taking vitamins that strengthen your body a little at a time, daily my heart became more and more persuaded. When I was surer of being healed than of being sick I could no longer be sick. As I became convinced of my *Continued on page 6*

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Faith and Grace: The Perfect Marriage

From the time of the apostle Paul there have been those who tried to abuse God's grace and mercy; some thought it was a free pass to an irresponsible life. Likewise, among those who embrace the message of faith have been an innumerable number who attempted to use it to feed their own greed.

Today there is a world-wide revival of grace, peace, and faith-righteousness. This movement is being built on the shoulders of the great men and women of faith who have gone before us. It isn't a movement that opposes that which has gone before us, but a fulfillment of the faith movement.

- * Faith without grace is dead works
- * Grace without faith is powerless
- * Grace without righteousness is permissiveness
- * Righteousness without grace is self-righteousness

Every aspect of the finished work of Jesus is a gift of grace received by faith. There is no conflict between the two and there is no life of God (zoe) unless both are in complete harmony.

Faith and Grace: The Perfect Marriage will bring together two pieces of faith: the miraculous and the victorious living, like nothing you have ever heard.

Hear what people are saying:

- For the first time faith really makes sense to me
- Now my faith works effortlessly
- I didn't feel like I had even heard the Gospel until I had faith and grace together
- I live in a level of personal victory I have never known
 - Nothing has changed my life as much as knowing faith and grace

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New Covenant Prayer cont.

This Scripture doesn't mention the devil and has nothing to do with him: it's about the authority of man on Planet Earth.

When man became a sinner he didn't lose the authority God gave him in Planet Earth, but two devastating things did happen. First, he began using that authority in a destructive manner, independent of God's wisdom. Second, those who desired to see God's work on Earth had, through fear, lost their confidence to use their authority in God's behalf. Jesus taught and modeled how righteous man should use his authority. The Amplified Bible does a wonderful job at translating this Scripture more closely to the original. Whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven.

Heb. 11:1 says that *faith is the* substance (being sure) of things hoped for... The Greek word "things" literally means, "things accomplished." New Testament faith is never trying to make something happen, but always looking back and being immovable about that which has been accomplished and declared by Jesus' finished work to be either lawful or unlawful. Since the fall man had wrongfully asked God to do in Earth what He had given us the authority and responsibility to do. As Ps. 115:16 clearly states, the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men. Our authority should be based on what God has declared to be lawful and unlawful. Under this New Covenant that's clearly portrayed in Jesus' last will and testament.

We should declare it to be unlawful for any part of the curse to remain in our life. Gal. 3:13 says *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.* God has made the provision. The New Covenant is enacted; the spiritual law is in place! The question is, when the curse occurs will we allow it? In New Covenant prayer we don't ask God to do what He has already done in Jesus.

The Old Covenant believer asked God to remove the curse. They didn't understand their authority and they hadn't been freely delivered from the curse. We, on the other hand, look back to the cross of Christ and boldly declare, "You cannot stay. I will not allow it, in the name of Jesus It has been declared unlawful in Heaven; I declare it unlawful on Earth."

Likewise, the absence of any of the blessings and promises is not a matter for which we should beseech God. We must declare the end from the beginning. We must assume our right to health, healing, prosperity, peace, and all other New Covenant provisions by expressing our faith in that which God has declared as legal on Earth! Asking God to do what He has done through the finished work of Jesus is not humility; it's the epitome of pride, arrogance, and unbelief. To ask God to do what He has already done in Jesus isn't a prayer of faith but a declaration of doubt!

In the New Covenant we pray in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus isn't a magic formula that makes things happen. The name of Jesus is our reminder that all we say and all we pray must be based on His finished work, i.e., all for which His name stands! While many things look identical in Old Covenant and New Covenant prayer, all the internal reasons have changed. In the New Covenant Jesus became the central factor in every aspect of our life, worship, faith, and prayer!

This article is based on the latest series, *New Covenant Prayer: Everything Has Changed*. See details about this series on page 3.

Learning to Pray

Continued from page 5 prosperity, I could no longer live in lack. When I became more conscious of being *in Him* I couldn't help but treat people more like He treated them.

Out of that victory emerged a tool. For months I taught people by modeling. In time I wrote it out in ways that I could mail to people. Finally, in 1984 I organized it into what we now call *The Prayer Organizer*. Since then hundreds of thousands have used this model to develop a life of New Covenant Prayer. *The Prayer Organizer* and the series *New Covenant Prayer: Everything Has Changed* will give you the resources and plan to renovate your prayer life into a vital experience of faith, love, worship, and life.

Join the Social Media Revolution!

A good fisherman always goes where the fish are biting and uses the right bait! Social media, i.e. Facebook, MySpace, and other internet venues are where people go to communicate and connect. If we want to reach people we have to go where they go.

For the last several years I have prepared to use the internet as a key way to reach and develop people. When I first began I had no idea how we would do it or pay for it. There wasn't even the technology to do much of what I wanted to do; but it exists today, and we have it!

You can use social media to connect your friends to the message of grace, peace, and faith righteousness by sending links and messages to them. Here are some ways you can keep yourself encouraged and reach out to your friends.

Facebook

Our Facebook community already has over 14,000 fans who read daily quotes, connect to articles, and will soon be able to participate in streaming media. Sign up today at facebook.com/Dr Jim Richards.

Twitter

As often as I feel an inspiration I will send it out over Twitter. This is a way to keep others encouraged and connected to the promises of God throughout the day.

Streaming Video

People around the world are using our web broadcast as the teaching for their home Bible study.

Ipod APP

You can download a free ipod app that connects you to everything we do to encourage and minister to others.

Check out our web page to sign up for our blog, podcast, and other social media resources.

impactministries.com

2010 - 2nd Annual *Exclusive* World Changer Weekend!

As World Changers we've all committed to invest in the world and as a team I've committed to invest in you! I've been waiting to announce the dates for World Changer Weekend until I knew I had something meaningful to share. You know how I am; I'm not interested in just having another meeting! I want o do things that are *world changing*. And the world gets changed when we change the way we see God, ourselves, and ultimately the way we see others! Unless I think it's life changing, count me out. I couldn't bear to waste your time with just another meeting!

Well it happened! Today in a discussion with my assistant, Margie, the small pieces of inspiration that had been floating around in my head converged into insight as she was sharing with me. In a matter of minutes I knew what I need to share with you.

Managing Your Treasure

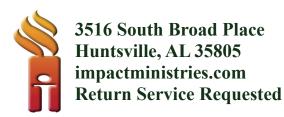
This will be a *hands on* workshop where we learn to manage the things we treasure to reach our life-fulfillment goals. You'll learn life-changing strategies for managing your life, time, relationships, and resources! We won't just deal with behavior, we're going to the heart of it: your core values. Just think about the things you value - no, I mean *really* value. I'm not talking about valuing your mate, I'm talking about core beliefs like valuing feeling loved. Or think about money; it isn't the money you value but what you expect it to bring to you.

It's our core values that drive our lives. Without a single conscious thought we'll make life-dominating decisions and never realize why. Simple! Values! Trying to manage our behavior without understanding our values is like attempting to navigate the a ship on the ocean without a compass; you're never really sure where you're going!

Here's some of what I know you'll learn:

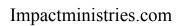
- Why you are attracted to certain types of people
- How to get along with those people
- Why you enjoy talking to certain types of people
- Why you're not compatible with some people
- How to enjoy every minute to the fullest
- How to make more money with less stress
- How to save money and be happier
- How to find the right career
- How to endure difficult circumstances
- How to live in immovable faith
- Much, much more...

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