

Are You Zealous for God?

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When you hear the word “zealot” what do you think of? Fanatic? Weird? Overly religious? Maybe an extremely emotional person? I think that most people would say of zeal that it’s just not who they are. Many people have a tendency to identify being zealous as an overly emotional or extreme personality type and would distance themselves from being labeled a “zealot.”

The Bible, however, looks at zeal not so much as an emotion, but as an expression of faith. You become zealous because you have come to know God. It is the awesome character and nature of God that creates zeal within those who worship Him. The more you know the Lord, the more you become zealous for him.

From this perspective, zealousness is more about earnestness toward God, consecration, and undivided service. To be zealous is to focus all our attention on one thing...or rather, one person...the person of Jesus Christ. Perhaps most important for followers of Jesus, to be zealous is not an option but a command. Consider these scriptures which speak of a zealous life:

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5).
- “Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart” (Ps.119:2).
- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Prov.3:5).
- “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13).
- “Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning” (Joel

2:12).

The greatest example of zeal is the One who knows the Father the best, our Lord Jesus. The prophet Isaiah spoke of the zeal of Jesus in Is.59:17: "He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak." In the gospels, John wrote: "His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me'" (Jn.2:17). Following in the steps of Jesus means becoming as zealous as He is.

Living the Christian life is not a casual attachment to religious activities. It is an all-out, loving desire to walk with Jesus day by day. With single-minded passion we draw near to Him and serve him with everything that is in us. Our prayer life moves from mundane requests to zealously seeing the purposes of God brought to earth by our cries of intercession. May it be said of us, as was said of our Lord, "Zeal for your house will consume us!"

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THE DEVIL GOES TO CHURCH

COMBATING THE
EVERYDAY ATTACKS
OF SATAN

FOREWORD BY HENRY BLACKABY

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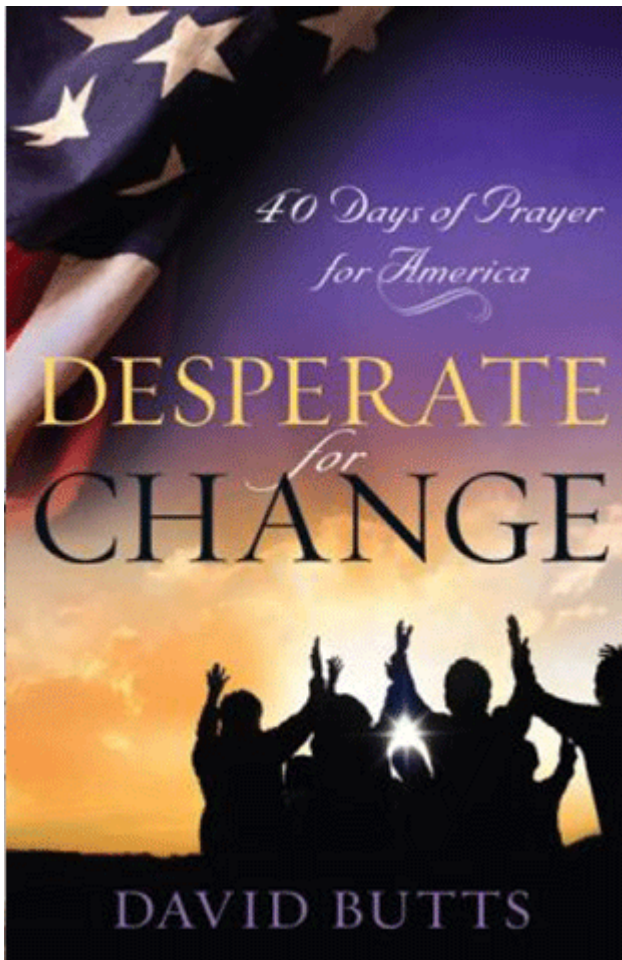




FORGOTTEN POWER

A Simple Theology for a Praying Church

DAVID BUTTS



When God Shows Up For Church

Dave Butts

Christians around the world are praying for revival. What exactly is meant by “revival”? Some think in terms of great meetings or tremendous evangelistic outreach. Others think more in terms of Christians who are encouraged and brought to a new level of commitment in their faith. Certainly Christians should be praying for revival, but what is it we are praying for and about?

Though many have given good definitions of revival, I still like this simple little description: Revival happens when God shows up for church. In a real sense, the Lord is always present when His people gather in His Name. But all too often His presence goes unnoticed. This definition recognizes the fact that when the people of God become aware of the Presence of the Lord, everything changes. Our worship services, our family lives, our evangelistic efforts, and our individual devotional lives will all be different when God shows up for church.

The Bible teaches us the amazing fact that God has come to dwell in us through His Holy Spirit. The Old Testament name given to the Messiah was Emmanuel...God with us. Colossians 1:27 teaches us the mystery of God – *“Christ in [us], the hope of glory.”* Jesus said, *“If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him”* (John 14:23). The Lord also made it clear that when two or more are gathered together, He would be there in our midst.

Much as the temple or the tabernacle in the Old Testament was

a place where the Presence of God was manifest on earth, so now the gathered Church becomes a place where His Presence is known. Our theology is clear on that fact. Unfortunately, our experience normally fails to match up to our theology. Most churches meet for worship, teaching and fellowship and leave again without truly being aware of God in their midst.

Praying for revival is praying for open eyes among the people of God. Lord, help us to see Jesus! Open the eyes of our hearts that we might know You and become aware of Your Presence here in our lives.

The experience of Israel under the leadership of Moses is a great teacher for the Church today as we cry out to God for revival. My friend, Terry Teykl, wrote a powerful book entitled *The Presence Based Church*. He writes, "As a result of their unique relationship with God, the Israelites became the original Presence based people. Under the leadership of Moses, and at God's bidding, they made the Presence the axis of their lives.

"The Ark of the Covenant was always located in the tabernacle at the very center of the camp. The 12 tribes were divided into four groups and stationed symmetrically around the Presence: three to the north, three to the south, three to the east, and three to the west. By day they saw the cloud that hung over the tent, and by night they would lie in the entrance to their own tents and watch the fire. As long as the Presence stayed, they stayed. But when the Presence moved, they followed. They were Presence led and Presence drawn" (Pg.89).

In Exodus 33, verses 13-17, there is a fascinating conversation between the Lord and Moses concerning His Presence. "*The LORD replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'*" Then Moses said to Him, "*If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with Your*

people unless You go with us? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" The Lord replied, *"I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."*

Moses understood how critical it was for Israel to stay with the Presence of God. When the Church today grabs hold of that fact, we will see revival. When the Church, like Moses, commits to going only where the Lord leads, then we will be making progress. It is time for us to cry out for the Lord to make us aware of His Presence.

Teykl offers great insight as to the effects of the manifest Presence of God:

"Where His Presence is being manifested, God's glory is evident. When the Presence fell on the Mercy Seat of the Ark, His glory filled the tabernacle to such an extent that no one could go near. His Presence was noticeable. Think about it. If God were to manifest His Presence in your church, shouldn't it be just as noticeable as it was in the tabernacle? Is not God that same God that descended in the Holy Place and rested among His chosen people in fire and cloud? Is He not the same God who, from the Mercy Seat, displayed His power and authority, guided and governed the Israelites, gave them victory over their enemies, demonstrated His favor and love, established His uniqueness and offered atonement for sin?

"Where God's Presence is being manifested today, the same results are evident. Humility and uncommon zeal characterize people of the Presence because they have seen His power and know of His authority in the earth. Where the Presence is, wisdom and peace prevail through His guidance. Pathways become clear and sound decisions are made. In the Presence, people gain victory over habits or emotions that have held them captive for years. Relationships are healed, lives are transformed, joy is evident and the powers of darkness are forced to retreat. In the Presence, many call on the name of

Jesus and are saved in response to the wave of supernatural love and grace that penetrates their spirits” (Pg.201).

Does that sound a bit like revival to you? It does to me. I’m praying for an increased hunger for His Presence in my life, my family, and my church. As God answers that prayer, we will begin to see an increased awareness of the activity of the Lord in the midst of His people. Join me in praying for God to “show up for church.”

(c) Harvest Prayer Ministries

-Dave Butts is the president of Harvest Prayer Ministries and the author of several books.

Praying for Peace

Are You Zealous for God?

Growing up in the sixties and seventies gave me a firsthand view of the peace sign used by anti-war protestors and many others. Those two fingers signifying peace was all about being against war. Though being against war is good, the peace that Jesus speaks of is far more than the absence of hostilities. The peace of Christ is more about what is happening inside of you than what is happening around you. Ultimately, biblical peace is all about the presence of Jesus being lived out in your life.

When Jesus comes walking among His people, nothing

remains the same. His presence brings His peace. Anxiety and fear have no place to hide when Jesus is near. Knowing of the fear of the Apostles, Jesus' first words to them after the Resurrection were, "Peace be with you" (Lk. 24:36). He is still saying that to His followers today. In the midst of our fears, worries, and anxieties, the Son of God is still speaking His peace.

Jesus warned us that in this world we would have tribulation. That's why it is so important for us to draw near to the Lord in prayer. When we do so, He promises to draw near to us (James 4:8). In His presence there is the peace we so desperately need. When Jesus makes a promise, you can count on its fulfillment. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (Jn.14:27).

If you are feeling troubled or afraid, embrace this promise of Jesus today so that His peace may overcome the turmoil of the world and rest within your heart.

Pray: Lord Jesus, Your word says that if I will draw near to You in prayer then You will draw near to me. Please fulfill Your word and allow me to know Your nearness today. You have promised to give me peace as only You can give. I know I can't find peace in this world, but only in You. Please keep reminding me that Your peace dwells within me because that's where You have come to dwell.

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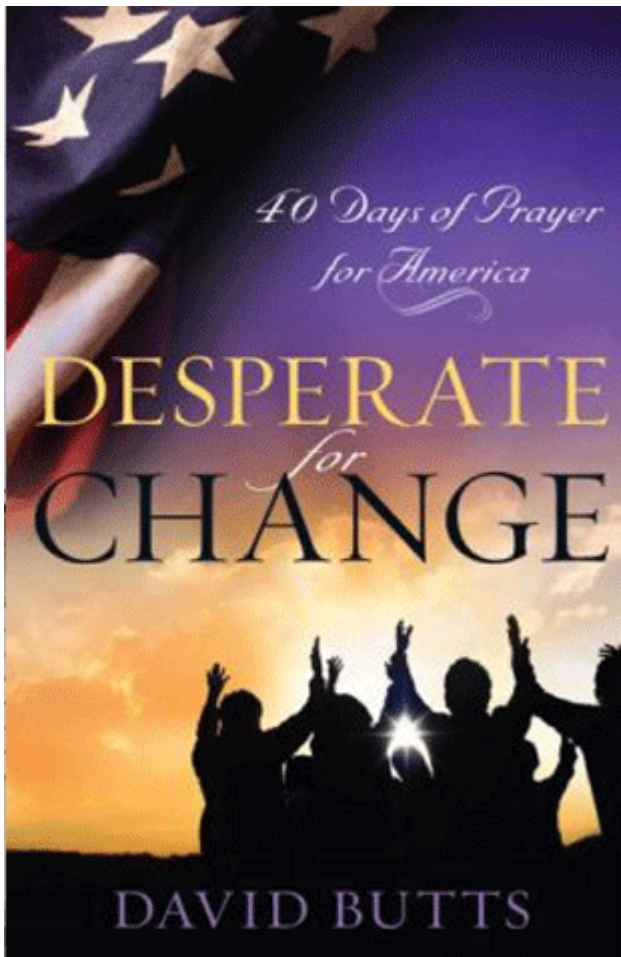




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Is Ceaseless Prayer Really Possible?

Are You Zealous for God?

Have you ever wondered how to respond in a practical way to Paul's admonition in I Thessalonians 5:18 to "pray without ceasing"? Some of you may have some of the same questions I have wrestled with over the years: How do you do that? What do you pray about continually? Is this even possible?

One extremely useful way to do so in my daily prayer life came to light for me with this one verse: *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his Law he meditates day and night" (Ps.1:2).*

Psalms 1 shows us that unceasing prayer begins with an attitude... delight. That which delights you will be that which you desire and seek after. The Psalmist speaks of the one who has found delight in the Law or Word of the Lord. Rather than looking at prayer as a duty, we should consider looking at it as a delight. A changed attitude changes everything!

Next the Psalmist tells us that this man meditates on the Law (Word) day and night. Here's the connection to praying without ceasing. The man who delights in the Word of God will be the one who meditates on it day and night. It becomes like breathing to him – something absolutely necessary for life. The Word fills his thoughts and quite naturally those thoughts come before the Lord.

As we look to this model of one who meditates on the Word of God day and night, we realize the Spirit of God has given us an extremely practical way to pray without ceasing. The content of our prayers will be formatted by the Word of God. We begin to think on the Word (meditate) as we go through the day and the Lord births within us the prayers He desires us to pray. Prayer is no longer a requirement or even a scheduled event. It is a lifestyle of delighting in the Lord's Word and continually talking with Him about that Word. Take this to heart and you will find that it is indeed possible to pray without ceasing!

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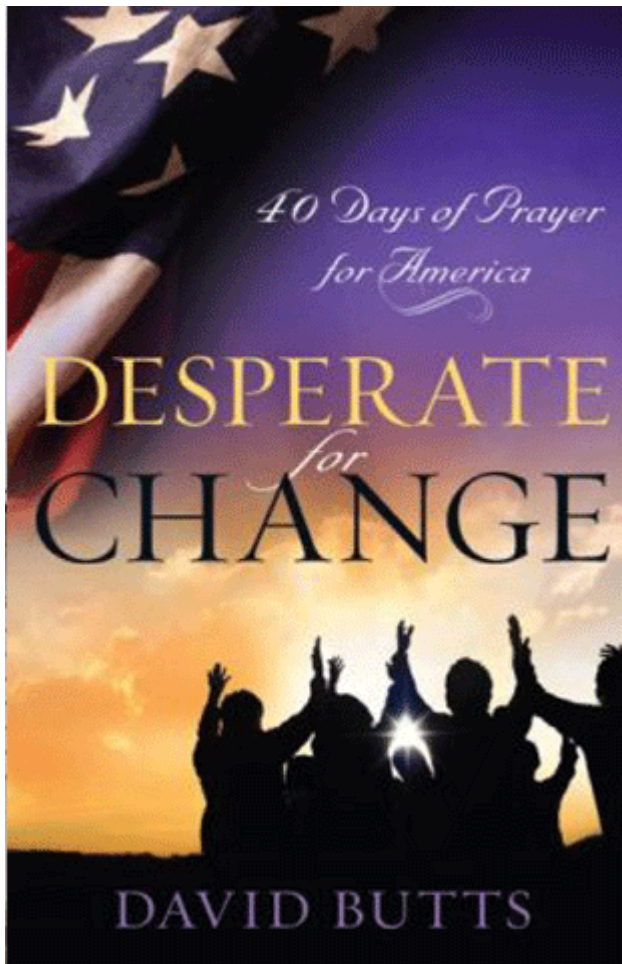
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**Praying into the Second
Coming of Jesus**

Are You Zealous for God?



Dave & Kim Butts with Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt.24:14).

May I suggest to you that this massive, world-changing event, which Jesus told us to watch for, happened during the funeral of Billy Graham. In every nation, even those we call closed nations, the funeral of the world's greatest evangelist presented the gospel of the kingdom with clarity and power. Oh, yes, I know that there is still much evangelism ahead of us. But it is a mopping up operation after the gospel has gone around the world.

If this is the case, and I strongly believe that it is, then we are living in amazing times that require much of us. Prayer

must move to the forefront of every initiative of the Church as we work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Living toward the end of the end of days means we must draw closer than ever to the Lord in intimate prayer and receive our clear marching orders from Him. We should expect to see a Spirit initiated revival in the Church.

The death of an astonishingly effective evangelist like Billy Graham often brings the question of who will take his place. We are often drawn to the Old Testament story of the mantle of Elijah being passed to Elisha and we ask who will receive the mantle of Billy Graham. The answer is, "No man!" It is a mantle for the Church to wear as we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. Prayer and evangelism are to become a lifestyle for the whole Church as we move out of our comfort zones and into the war zones of front line Christian living!

There is a wave of prayer that is moving across the face of the earth right now. It is prayer that is focused, not on receiving what we want from God, but on the advance of His Kingdom. In Billy Graham's latter years he gave himself more and more to prayer. That is a picture of what needs to happen in the Church right now. We must give ourselves more and more to prayer as we cooperate with God in His work on earth.

As God prepared the earth for the first coming of Jesus two thousand years ago, He placed in Jerusalem two older saints, Anna and Simeon. They gave themselves to prayer in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. God is doing the same thing today in preparation for the return of Jesus to planet earth. He is raising up his saints who will give themselves to prayer that paves the way for the coming of Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I want in on that prayerful mission that will see the triumphal return of Jesus in His timing and in His way!

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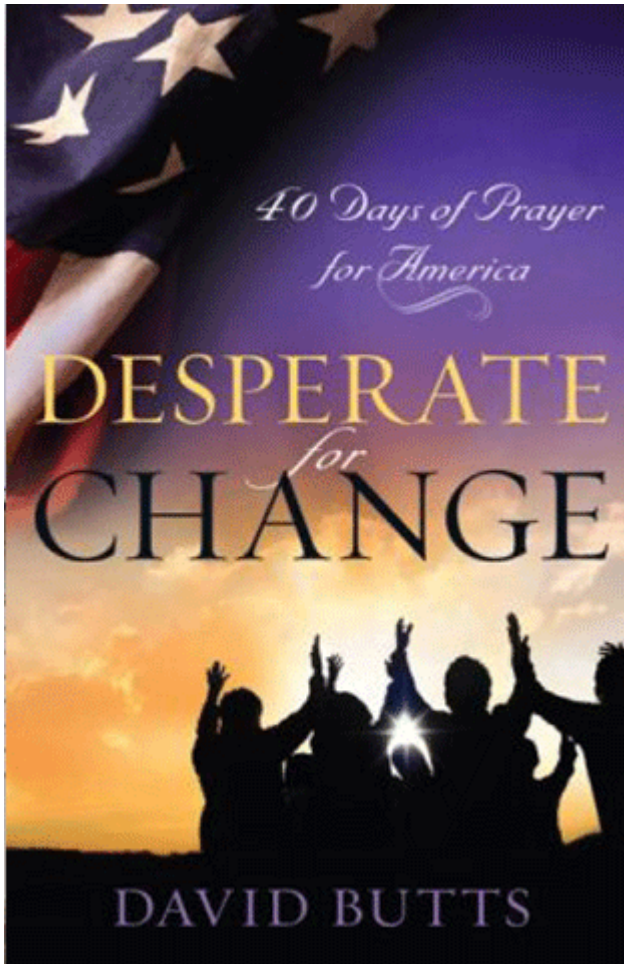
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*40 Days of Prayer
for America*

DESPERATE
for
CHANGE

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