

## **For the Love of God and Country** **Excerpt – Part Six**

*“If my people, which are called by my name,  
shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face,  
and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven,  
and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”  
2 Chronicles 7:14*

I have discovered that there are at least two things that are required for effectual prayer: attitude and motive. And, I have noted that attitude has a lot to do with the “altitude” that my prayers have. Have you ever heard the expression, “I didn’t feel like my prayers got any higher than the ceiling!”? If so, you might want to check your attitude.

One of the first messages I remember hearing from my pastor when I was very young was based on the scripture found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”* Of course, this was an instruction and invitation to the Children of Israel after Solomon finished building the house of the Lord. However, it is very applicable to today and to our subject of praying for our nation. How? It identifies the attitude that is required to receive from God – humility.

In our day, humility is not a highly acclaimed attitude; but, that is not the case in the kingdom of God. Moses was highly exalted based on his meekness, or humility. God even met with him *“face to face.”*<sup>1</sup> In Proverbs 22:4 we find the declaration, *“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.”* James 4:6 states, *“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”* While 1 Peter 5:5-7 instructs, *“be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*

What does being humble, or humility, mean in this case? It basically means that you acknowledge that you are not God. It is an attitude of submission, yielding to the authority of God and honoring Him as the master. It means that you accept His ways of being and doing even though you might disagree. You see, submission is not submission if your opinion and your ways match His. Submission speaks of yielding to His authority even though you have a different idea.

Humility also speaks of honor – treating God with respect and deference. We “bend our knee” both literally and figuratively. God is worthy of our respect. We might be His sons and daughters, but we still do not have the right to be haughty, arrogant, or demanding when we come into His presence. He is the one with the power and the might to effect a change. We are coming to *Him* for favor, asking *Him* to use His power and might on our behalf even though we do not deserve it. It would be unseemly to ask with impudence and disrespect.

God is clear about His response to pride and insolence; it is resistance. Of course it would be! I have a child that is going through a stage of being demanding and insolent. When that attitude comes from her, I just want to walk away and let her deal with everything herself. I am just so amazed that she would even consider treating me in that way! After all, I am her parent and provide richly for her. (Does this sound familiar? I think God probably thinks the same thing about us sometimes.) I don’t “feel like” helping her, giving her gifts, etc. I resist or take offense. Now, don’t get me wrong, I don’t hate her or want bad things to happen to her. I am just unwilling to respect her wishes and bow the knee to her. It is just not happening!

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 12:3, Deuteronomy 34:10

But, if I have that response as an earthly parent, imagine how God feels as our Heavenly Father. I am so glad that He is both merciful and gracious! However, both the letters of James and Peter tell us that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Since we are powerless over the circumstances and situations that confront our nation and our government, it would behoove us to do things God's way in order that His power might be active on our behalf. Don't you think?

I want to be able to cast the care of this thing over on Him and know that He will care for me. How about you? (By the way, I do know how to be merciful and gracious to my daughter as well, so I act out of that instead of acting out of offense. I am doing my best to learn from my Heavenly Father.)

All those years ago, when I listened to my pastor, I heard the injunction to be humble, pray, seek God, and turn from a wicked way as a demand to the Israelites. Today, I hear it as much more. It is a description about the most powerful position we can assume when we have a request to present before God, especially a request that concerns so many people. It is the correct position, and attitude, to get the attention of our Lord and receive the answers we are seeking. Yes, we can go "*boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*"<sup>2</sup>: **and**, we need to remember whose throne we are invited to and give honor where honor is due. Being humble is the appropriate and the most profitable position.

Sometimes, my opinions and my wants attempt to take precedence over my "good sense." Who in their right mind, including myself, would have the "bad sense" to think they know more and better than Almighty God? Exactly! So, our challenge is to keep our opinions and wants under the authority and power of God. In other words, we need to find out what God wants us to say and do at "the throne of grace", then act according to His guidance and direction.

This then, leads us to the next requirement for effectual prayer. However, before we go on, let's make a decision – kill off all the alternatives – and commit to yielding to God's plan and purpose. If we know that it is His will, we will not be unhappy with the results – not in our elections or in our governments. We simply acknowledge God as our Lord and put our trust in Him; He will not disappoint!

Additional Scriptures: Proverbs 3:5-10

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<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 4:16