



# When We Pray, God Moves

This article is by **Nick Hall** from *Cry Out to the Lord*.

In Ezekiel 3, God tells Ezekiel to speak for Him—to warn the people, both the righteous and unrighteous, about what is about to come. So Ezekiel was obedient to the Word of the Lord, and he warned the people not to stray away from God. The call was urgent, but what happened next didn't exactly follow a logical action step. Right after calling him to speak to the people, God commanded Ezekiel to go home and wait for His command: *“Go, shut yourself inside your house”* (Ezekiel 3:24).

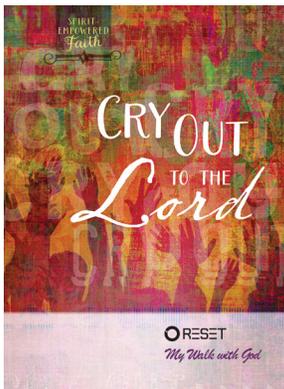
In the New Testament, we see the call to go by waiting. While the Great Commission of Matthew 28 receives the headlines, it was the waiting in Acts 1 that unleashed the power for the cause. So which is it? Are we going or are we waiting? In a task-driven world, it's easy for us to lose the priority of prayer in our drive for “the mission.” But Jesus never separated prayer from mission, and He commanded His disciples to follow the same pattern. Only prayer-fueled mission can truly bring spiritual transformation.

## MY PERSONAL WAITING GAME

Every year I share the gospel with hundreds of thousands of people. When God first put His call on my life, I couldn't wait to go. But God closed every door until my only ministry was prayer.

During my first semester of college, I studied faith, sought God, and felt the call of an evangelist. Many late nights, I would walk into the student chapel where several lights shined on a wooden cross. I would unscrew every light except one, leaving just enough light to see the cross. Then I would cry out to God on my knees, asking Him to use my life to awaken this generation to the reality of Jesus.

Looking back at it now, I understand why that first semester was so important. God was preparing me. He was breaking me. He was slowing me down to show me where true power came from.



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## PREPARE WITH PRE-PRAYER

A mentor of mine used to say, "We need to prepare our lives with pre-prayer!" We want to be used by God. We want Him to be pleased with the outcome of our lives. But the truth is: God isn't interested in the world seeing us; He wants the world to see Jesus in us. So we pray. And when we pray, God moves.

I believe we are either prayerful or we are prideful. In the flurry of well-intentioned activity, we lose sight on where our hope is truly found. Prayer is an avenue of surrender. Prayer lays down all of our agendas and says to God, "Your will be done." Prayer starts on a personal level. Before I can pray, "Jesus, reset this nation," or "Jesus, reset my family," I need to pray, "Jesus, reset me."

Prayer creates intimacy with God and others. God can change our circumstance, but first He wants to change our perspective, to fix our eyes on Him.



- M10. Living submissively within His body, the church, as instruction and encouragement, reproof, and correction are graciously received by faithful disciples

## LEARN to Encounter Jesus

Hebrews 3:1 tells us to fix our hearts on the person of Christ: "And so, dear brothers and sisters...think carefully about this Jesus whom we declare to be God's messenger and High Priest." To fix our hearts on Jesus is to relate intimately and lovingly to Him. It will mean focusing our spiritual eyes and the emotions of our heart on the person of Jesus, not just His position. It will mean moving beyond our rational beliefs about the historical Jesus to consider Him and all that He is as the contemporary and very present Jesus.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. Imagine Him sitting on the throne of heaven at the right hand of God. He is the King of kings; the earth is His footstool. Psalm 104:1 tells us that He is robed with honor and majesty. Let the eyes of your heart see the beautiful throne room, His majestic robes, and His royal stature. You see Christ's position and your thoughts align with the beliefs about the Savior, but you have yet to consider the person of Jesus.

Imagine Jesus saying these words just to you: "I am the One who sits on heaven's throne, but I love to call you My friend" (John 15:15). My name is the Most High, the King of all the earth, but you can come to Me any time you desire. I am ready to listen to what you have to say. In fact, I lean in to hear your prayers (Psalm 47:2; 17:6). I am your Mighty Savior. I am the One who has limitless power and unbridled strength, and yet I can't wait to show you grace. I deeply desire to give you compassion (Isaiah 30:18)."

This is the person of Jesus speaking to us. Consider Him and how He longs to love you, to relate to you. Take the next few moments to relate to Him.

*Lord Jesus, when I consider how You are the King of heaven and yet You want to relate to me, my heart is moved with \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*As I fix my eyes on You, I am grateful to You for \_\_\_\_\_.*



## INTIMACY CREATES BOLDNESS

Acts 4 contains one of the boldest prayers from the early church. After being arrested for preaching the gospel, Peter and John unite the believers—not to gossip or make plans for the best strategy of avoiding government regulations but to pray. *“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness”* (Acts 4:29).

Boldness doesn’t spring up out of nowhere. It comes when we have spent time with Jesus. *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus”* (Acts 4:13).

I believe that the Holy Spirit is God’s anecdote for fear. And God unleashes His Spirit as we meet with Him. Your intimate relationship with God results in a bold witness for God.



- L6. Consistent practice of self-denial, fasting, and solitude rest

### PRAY and Experience Scripture

*“My purpose is to give [you] a rich and satisfying life”* (John 10:10).

Ask God to bring you such intimacy with Him that a rich, satisfying life and bold witness are the result.

*Father God, with a grateful heart I cling to Your promise. Hearing Christ’s promise of abundant life gives me security and hope. Open the eyes of my heart so that I can draw closer to You each and every day. I want to see Your plans for bold witness through my life.*

### WHAT DOES THIS ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE IN DAILY LIFE?

One of my favorite encouragements that we use to link prayer and mission is a two-step process called “Keep 5.” The idea is simple and reproducible. On an index card or bookmark, write the names of five people in your life who need Jesus. Then take the following steps:

#### Step 1: Pray

Take five minutes to pray for those five people, that they would know Jesus. Five minutes. Five people. Simple enough!

#### Step 2: Go

Once we’ve prayed, we need to put feet to our prayers. The second part of the Keep 5 card is to look for opportunities to share the gospel with those five people. If we pray for opportunities, God gives opportunities! God is often moving all around us—our eyes simply need to be open to it.

If evangelism is hard for you, you’re in good company. Sharing your faith isn’t supposed to be easy; it’s supposed to demonstrate that power belongs to God, not us (2 Corinthians 4:7). Decrease so He can increase.

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