

## **Personal Revival Resulting in Praying Family Members to Christ**

**Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-3**

**Intro:**

Evelyn Christenson has a wonderful book that I would recommend you read and have in your home library. It is entitled: **What happens when we pray for our families.**

**How many of you this morning have unsaved family members that need to come to Jesus Christ?**

What would it take for you and me to get so serious about their spiritual condition that we would begin to intensely pray about them getting saved?

Paul Yongi Cho says in his book: **Prayer: Key to Revival,**

**“I our church, we have committed ourselves to revival and church growth until the second coming of Jesus Christ. In 1982, we led one hundred and ten thousand people to Christ. Out of these new converts, we were able to absorb sixty thousand new members. Therefore, we gave other evangelical churches a total of fifty thousand members.**

**In 1983 we had a total of one hundred and twenty thousand new converts. Why are so many people**

**being saved within a single church? We have seen the importance of developing and keeping a prayer life. If we stop praying, the revival will wane. If we continue praying, I believe that all Korea can be saved.**

**I believe that the same level of revival can be experienced in your church. There is no land too hard for the Holy Spirit to work. There is no church too dead. There is no country too closed to the gospel. The answer is prayer.”**

Would you bow your heads with me and let's pray:

“Father God, this morning we confess that on the whole we are a prayerless and powerless people. Yes, we pray somewhat, but we haven't learned to really pray like your son Jesus. If we are to be like Him and desire to be like Him, we will begin to pray and Father I know that you want us to pray.

Would you touch us this morning and challenge us and change us to finally be moved to real and genuine prayer?

Change me life. Change people's lives here this morning to never be the same. Change our church that we will capture what it really means to have a genuine revival thru prayer.

Help us to hear the Word that You have given to us for this day.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Have you ever wondered after you have prayed and prayed and prayed about some family member's

rebellion or their lack of interest in the Christian lifestyle why God seemingly had not answered your prayer?

Why does it seem that so many of our unsaved loved ones are not interested in the Church or in a personal relationship with Christ?

Why is there such an open rebellion against God or even the old-fashioned convictions we use to have?

We must understand as believers that without a genuine change in their spiritual lives, our families and loved ones are lost and headed towards hell.

In Ephesians 2 it describes the sinful state of mankind.

***“It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us.”***

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson in his Seven Laws of the Learner gives these startling statistics about teenagers in America today. This quote is 14 years old and I believe we are a lot worse off today than when this was stated:

- 65% of all Christian high school students are sexually active.
- 75% of all high school students cheat regularly and think it is OK.
- 30% of all high school seniors have shoplifted during the past 30 days.
- 50% of teenage pregnancies are aborted, the young mothers killing their child.
- 3.3 million teenagers are alcoholics (1 in 9)
- 1,000 teens try to commit suicide every day.
- Up to 15% of high school students either have experimented with homosexual behavior or are living a homosexual lifestyle.

Dr. Wilkinson went on to list a major national magazine's seven big school problems of 1940 contrasted with today:

- The problems in school were talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, getting out of line, wearing improper clothing, and not putting paper in the wastebaskets.
- The problems in the 1960's when I went to school were very similar and I would add, we graduated in throwing erasers when the teacher stepped out of room. And I recall when the teacher caught us, he had a paddle and we get it.

Why do I mention all of this? Because if you have a child in school today or a child who is not that far away

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from graduating from school, that child faced things that most of us here never faced.

So parent, listen to me carefully, if you have a child or you have a brother or a sister, or a parent who is not living for God, you're not alone.

The vast majority of people in all the churches are experiencing what you are experiencing.

Folks, not listen to me carefully, it is very obvious that something is missing in our churches today.

And while it is true that believers at times are guilty of sins, could the main reason possibly be that even those who call themselves Christians really are not believers at all.

Could it be that what is missing in many professing believers lives is the fact that they have not received a new nature and still are living according to their old sinful nature?

The Apostle Paul addresses the answer to this problem in verses 4 and 5 when he says,

***4But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so very much, 5that even while we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!)***

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So the Prayer that all of us need to be praying is for our family members and loved ones to come to know Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior.

And if there is any doubt this morning that you are a genuine believer in Christ, then you need to simply pray that Christ will come into your life and change you and give you the assurance that you will know you've done what He told you to do.

Again Paul said in II Cor. 5:17 ***"17What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!"***

- When you become a believer you become a new person.
- You're not the same anymore.
- The old life is gone
- A new life has begun

Why am I telling you this? Because if you have no desire to pray for your family members or you haven't been praying for them, then most likely you haven't experienced the new life!

### **1. Is It a Real Salvation Experience?**

**Let me share with you this true story that I witnessed in one of my church where I pastored.**

I'll call the young man "Joe", not his real name.

During one of the invitations, Joe came forward and prayed to accept Christ as His personal Savior. He was baptized and came to church on a regular basis. At first he was faithful to be in all the services and then I watched him as he began to miss other services and I watched drift farther and farther away from God. He ended up on drugs and in trouble with the law. He no longer attended church. Instead he developed a bitter attitude towards the church criticizing the church. Joe went from sins to sins and grew further away from the church. He still claimed to be a Christian although he never attended church. Somewhere along the way he heard someone tell him that he was “eternally secure” in his spiritual life. He was told that he didn’t have to attend church to be a Christian. You see – this is lie straight out of hell. Friends, listen to me – the Word of God doesn’t teach that at all.

**The Fruits of a Believers life and life style is listed in the Bible.**

**Real Salvation will include such things as:**

**Church attendance** - Hebrews 10:25 says, *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

**Baptism** – Jesus said that we must *“Repent and be baptized.”*

**Learn of Jesus** – Matthew 11:29 *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ...”*

**Pray** – I Thess 5:17 says, *“Pray continually.”*

And the list goes on and on what Salvation really embraces.

I’m not here this morning to get you to doubt your experience with God, but I’m convinced that many people who profess to be a believer today in the church is not living the real life for God.

## **2. Repent and Believe**

**All the parents in this room know about children who have turned their backs on God and His church.**

Evelyn Christenson relates this story in her book.

She said, “As I talk with parents, I realize children turning their backs on all they have been taught is a very common occurrence.

One overseas missionary, agonizing over her own teenage daughter’s rebellion and plans to marry a communist, told me she believed that many young people brought up in the church really haven’t had a valid born-again experience.

They went through the proper classes, passed with their buddies, joined the church with the group.

“But was there ever real repentance and acceptance of Jesus not only as Savior but as their Lord?” she asked me.

This mother answered her own question with a sad, “I think not.”

### **Why is this so?**

You see it takes more than head knowledge of believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Even the demons believe that, but they certainly are not saved.

Somehow and tragically so – the church has reduced becoming a Christian believer to only accepting intellectually what the demons believe. – “That Jesus the Son of God came to earth, died on the cross, and rose again the third day.”

Friends, listen to me, it takes more than this.

### **Individual Belief a Scriptural Must What Jesus told us we must do!**

Jesus started His preaching with “*Repent and Believe.*” *Mark 1:15*

Personal Illustration of when I got saved.

I usually don’t use myself as an illustration, but I remember when I was a young boy and later when I came to rededicate my spiritual life to Jesus how I felt.

I remember listening to the preacher preach a message on sin in my life and my need to be saved.

I recall him preaching on the awfulness of hell and missing heaven.

I felt a feeling of fear and guilt for the life I was living.

When the invitation was given, I remember stepping out from where I was and went to the altar and knelt feeling like the sins of the whole world was on my heart.

It was an emotional time for me because I remember crying big tears and feeling that if Jesus didn’t take all my sins away, I would be eternally lost.

And so I repented of every sin I could think of and told Jesus I was sorry and I needed Him to come into my life – my heart.

And just like that – I felt a huge burden lift off of me and I knew that Jesus had forgiven me of my sins.

It was like I was a new person. I could relate to what the verse said, *17What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!*”

When I prayed to Jesus at the altar I knew in my heart that I had become a Christian believer.

I was ecstatic, thrilled, born again, forgiven.

Friends, what happened to me and you who are genuine believers, Paul says in Colossians 1:13-14 *13For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14in whom we have redemption,[a] the forgiveness of sins.*

**So, What should we pray for our unsaved family members?**

**We must pray that they will see their sinful condition, repent, and truly receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.**

**Jesus told Nicodemus what he had to do to become a Christian believer when He said, “*You must be born again.*”**

Being an American doesn't make you a Christian.

Attending church does not make you a Christian.

Being a member of a Church does not make you a Christian believer.

Belonging to a certain family who attends church does not make you a Christian.

Being “baptized” as a baby when you were brought before the Church and the pastor prayed over you does not make you a Christian today.

Being a good person does not make you a Christian

Friend, listen to me carefully, the only way you and your family members can be Christian believers is to first **“*Repent and then Believe*”** as Jesus told us to do.

**Story:**

**Evelyn Christenson relates this story so very well:**

“It was our daughter Jan’s first child. She searched my face for an answer as she asked, “Mother, how can I be absolutely sure Jenna will be saved and go to heaven with me?”

“You can’t be absolutely sure, Honey,” I replied, “God gave your precious little baby a Free Will just like He gave everybody else on earth.”

With tears in her eyes she cried, “What can I do then? Can’t I do anything about it?”

And Evelyn replied, “Oh, yes, Jan, there are many things you can, and must do.

First, you yourself must live your Jesus in front of her every minute. In all you do and say, she must see Jesus living in you. You must teach her the things of God and surround her with music and stories about Jesus. You must keep her encased in a good church family.”

And Jan replied to her mom, “This is what Chris and I promised God we would do at the important time of dedicating our infant – but really ourselves – to God.”

“But Jan, by far the most important thing you will do for her is PRAY. Pray continually that she will find Jesus as soon as she is old enough to understand. Although God gave Jenna a free will, He will move her heart in proportion to your praying. PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!

Parents – No one can make the decision for your child, not even you.

Jesus won't force that decision on anyone.

Although Jesus wept over a lost Jerusalem, longing to gather them to Him like a mother hen would gather her chicks, he did not.

Although He was weeping over those born into Jewish families, they chose not to follow Jesus.

There is nothing that will guarantee our children's salvation, that is strictly a personal decision that a person must make – no matter who their parents are or what ritual or rite of passage they have gone through.

But Mom and Dad, your life before them and your living for Jesus Christ now – will have a lot to do in their decision when they get older and understand.

### **3. Train Up A Child Proverbs 22:6**

*“Train [a] a child in the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

In today's society I am astounded by parents who honestly feel they have brought up or are bringing up their children in *“The way they should go.”*

Their gods have been money, careers, social status, or pleasures instead of the godly lifestyle the Word of God dictates.

I haven't been there in their homes, but I sense in the home life there is self-centeredness instead of the biblical caring for others.

There is the amassing of treasure on earth instead of in heaven, putting the body above the soul in priorities – **ALL OF THESE THINGS DIRECTING THE CHILD AWAY FROM, INSTEAD OF TOWARD, GOD AND HIS CHURCH.**

**On the other hand, there are Christian households where the children are trained to go God's way and still the child goes wrong.**

All of us know the parable of the famous New Testament father whose son became the famous prodigal son.

I find no condemnation directed towards the father.

Listen to this true story: “I was discussing these matters with our daughter Nancy. She commented, “Mother, the danger of a good Christian home is that the children learn to say all the right things and learn all the right Scriptures – but they may never internalize them into their own lives. And they may never make their salvation personal.”

When parents have done their very best, but still the children turn their backs on everything the parents have taught them and they rebel and they pick friends that horrify the parents – it is time to reevaluate their child’s actual relationship with Jesus.

We must never falsely give our children the assurance they are believers when they walk away from God.

#### 4. The Prayer for Salvation

The Prayer for salvation is the most important prayer we can pray for our family and loved ones.

We as believers must be persistent and at times agonize in prayer for our children and our family members.

#### **Illustration:**

I don’t remember how many years I have prayed for my brother Victor and his wife Kathy and their children to become genuine Christian believers.

About three weeks ago they went to the altar at the Mt. of Praise Camp Meeting and got saved.

I’m sure my Mom and my Dad and my brother Bill and my sister Sheila all persistently prayed for Victor and Kathy.

I remember my mother praying when I was young.

No one ever taught my mom how to pray.

There were no prayer seminars and “how-to” books available to her.

She just listened to the older saints in Wednesday night prayer meetings – and she started praying.

I remember my mom kneeling at my bedside at night every night before Bill and me went to sleep and Mom would tell us a Bible story and then sing a song with us and then pray with us before we went to sleep.

I recall Mom praying for Dad to get saved and Dad did get saved through the prayers and the pleading of Mom to give his heart to Jesus.

I was only 6 maybe 7 when heard my Mom’s zeal for Jesus and her fervent prayers that brought results through the years.

And I know my Mom still prays for every one of her children.

Right now I know My Mom is praying for every one of her grandchildren to come to know Jesus as their personal Savior.

The Bible clearly states, ***“God ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth.” I Tim 2:3-4***

*II Peter 3:9 reads, “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promises, as some understand slowness, He is patient towards you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*

The Most Important thing that any parent or anyone in this church should do is Pray for a family member’s salvation.

### **Concluding Comments:**

So why don’t we pray for our families?

What is causing the lack of effective prayer in the church today?

Why is it that we find it difficult to pray even a half hour?

Andrew Murray says,

**“What use do we make of this heavenly privilege? How many there are who take only five minutes for prayer! They say that they have no time and that the heart desire for prayer is lacking; they do not know how to spend half an hour with God! It is not that they absolutely do not pray; they pray every day – but they have no joy in prayer, as a token of communion with God which shows that God is every thing to them. If a friend comes to visit them, they have time, they make time, even at the cost of sacrifice, for the sake of**

**Enjoying conversation with them. Yes, they have time for everything that really interests them, but no time to practice fellowship with God and delight themselves in Him! They find time for a creature who can be of service to them; but day after day, month after month passes, and there is no time to spend one hour with God. Do not our hearts begin to acknowledge what a dishonor, what a despite of God this is, that I dare to say I cannot find time for fellowship with Him? If this sin begins to appear plain to us, shall we not with deep shame cry out: “Woe is me, for I am undone, O God; be merciful to me, and forgive this awful sin of prayerlessness.”**

Are you carrying a burden for any of your family this morning?

In the beginning of this sermon I mentioned to you the need for a great revival to come upon all our churches.

A revival would include we believers getting to the intensity of prayer and the salvation of our family members.

Folks, we are so busy doing things; seeking pleasures, fulfilling selfish desires, just running all day long with hardly any thought about eternity with Christ.

Too tired to pray. Too busy to pray. And believe me when I say this – this is a ploy of the enemy the Devil to keep the church and it’s believers from praying.

Because Prayer is where the Power of God comes from.

Paul Yongi Cho says, **“I hope that men and women of God will get serious enough about revival to get serious about their prayer life... Having studied church history, I realize that revivals must not only be prayed for to begin, but they must also be prayed for so that they may be maintained. Once continuous and fervent prayer is forgotten, the impetus of the revival spirit is lost and all that is left is the momentum of the past.**

**What do I mean by the impetus and momentum of a revival that sees the believer renewed spiritually and the lost come to know Jesus Christ? Driving an automobile is a perfect example of how these two principles work. Impetus is the force that is generated in a car when you step on the gas pedal. By applying this force, the car will stay in motion.**

**However, if you take your foot off the gas pedal, the impetus, or the force, will no longer operate; yet, the car still keeps moving. What causes the movement of the car without force? The movement is generated by momentum. The movement of a car under momentum is different than under impetus. The momentum of the car does not maintain movement, so that eventually the car will come to a stop.**

**When the Holy Spirit brings a genuine revival (to believers and the unsaved are born again), as an answer to our prayers, the impetus of the revival must be maintained for there to be a continuation of that revival. If prayer is forgotten, the revival will**

**move from impetus to momentum. Eventually, the special visitation of God will end up as a monument of the past.”**

Believers, do you understand what I just read?

Are you willing to join with your pastor in reviving prayer in the Pataskala Church of the Nazarene, until all of its' believers will be renewed spiritually – Filled with the Holy Spirit – and then as a result – we will have intercessory prayer that will move God and the unsaved and unchurched will come to be born again and get involved in His church?

**Invitation:**