

Election Spiritual Warfare Prayer - Pastors and Spiritual Leaders

In preparing for today's prayer letter, I came across the following article by **Larry Taunton** - who is an Evangelical Christian, a widely respected public cultural commentator, and who has written a number of books*. Here's a portion of his article entitled **"The Salt That Has Lost Its Savor: The Woke Church and the Undoing of America"**:

A generation ago, pop star Bonnie Tyler famously asked the question, "Where have all the good men gone?" Since then, the situation has only gotten worse, Bonnie. As C. S. Lewis noted, men in the Western world have largely been emasculated, and men in the Church are seldom an exception to this decades-long trend. To stand strong for one's faith in Jesus Christ and push back at a culture that, in the words of Isaiah 5:20, "call[s] evil good and good evil" is today seen to be "divisive," "unloving," "bigoted," and "intolerant."

This is because evangelicals in the English-speaking world have confused Christ's command to love others with being civil, as if that were an attribute of God. (It isn't.) As a consequence, a superficial, self-righteous, good-for-nothing pietism that prefers tone to truth and style to substance has displaced authentic Christianity in many of the roughly four hundred thousand churches in America. This doctrinal malpractice has given us a generation of men, Christian and otherwise, who are what Lewis called "men without chests."

Don't know the sort of Christians I am talking about? I'll give you a hint. They are the sort who will, upon reading this article, take great offense at what I have written here and waste no time in letting me know it, but are not particularly offended by the sixty-one million children murdered in the holocaust of abortion

since 1973 by universities that are incubators of radicalism, by Democrats who are compiling a “hit list” of Trump supporters, or by the godlessness of the Marxism they openly advocate, which has killed no less than 125 million people in the twentieth century alone.

Too many Christians today are risk-averse. They prefer the safety of the family life center to engaging the culture in any way that might cost them something. God forbid they might sacrifice their wealth or comfort, endure the social media mob, or be excluded from the neighborhood barbeque. To such Christians, the “woke” messages of pastors... are a justification to do what they were inclined to do anyway: nothing.

But that doesn’t strike me as Christian at all. C. S. Lewis called Christianity a “fighting religion.” Think on that. These days, such a statement strikes a somewhat absurd note with a generation that has never known war, privation, or suffering in defense of anything, much less of noble ideals. For them, Jesus has been reinterpreted to meet a lifestyle preference. One might wonder if they truly know Him. Because when Jesus said to turn the other cheek, he did not mean to turn a blind eye. And the highest calling of a Christian is not to be civil; it is to be salt and light.”

I believe Larry has accurately described the dysfunction of many churches in America. And the reason I believe they’re in the condition which Larry clearly articulates is because of their pastoral leadership. Leadership author, John Maxwell has an axiom for this, “*people do what people see.*” And Jesus put it in these words found in **MATTHEW 10:24-25a**: *A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.* We should not be surprised, because God’s Word has told us such times would come.

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.*

I am not saying that every pastor has been compromised, but too many have been. There seems to be three groups of spiritual leaders: The Compromised, The Paralyzed, and The Energized. These are broad categories and generalizations, which means not everyone fits into one of the categories nicely, but I'm trying to give a realistic overview from a pastor's perspective.

The Compromised are those pastors, denominations, and Christian organizations that embrace a non-Biblical worldview. For example, generally speaking, they ordain homosexual pastors, embrace LGBTQ+, host drag queen story hours, and teach a Christianized version of Critical Race Theory under the name of "social justice." They categorically deny the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the literal physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the authenticity of the miracles in the Bible. Ultimately, they even deny that Jesus Christ is the Only Way to Eternal Life. These people are Christians in name only. They are what the Bible calls apostates.

The Paralyzed are those pastors who are afraid to engage what's going on around them for fear that they will be criticized for being divisive or unloving or insensitive or bigoted. These are primarily the kinds of pastors that Larry Taunton was discussing above. They fear social rejection and especially the possibility that their church may have members that angrily leave and abandon them, which is very emotionally painful stuff. Even more concerning is the fact that it can also be financially devastating to lose members. The prospect of financial devastation is often an additional source of fear. So, the paralyzed pastors take one of two pathways. Either they ignore the situation altogether and continue with business as usual, refusing to engage any cultural/political issues by claiming the churches stay out of politics. ...

Or, the other pathway is to try to straddle the fence by agreeing with portions of both sides of the visions in conflict. They either don't understand the irreconcilable nature of the differences between the two sides today or they think they can smooth them over with half-baked compromises which only inflames the frustrations of both sides. The fundamental problem at the core of the Paralyzed Pastor is that they fear man more than they fear God. They also mistakenly think that it is their responsibility to make sure everyone just gets along. They are unaware that we are in a time of spiritual warfare battling over the soul and future of the church and nation. This necessitates that sides must be chosen, and lines must be drawn. In the words of Jesus in **MATTHEW 10:34-36**: *Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. 35 I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in law against her mother-in-law. 36 Your enemies will be right in your own household!* There comes a time when peace cannot be achieved. That time is now.

The Energized are those pastors who can see clearly the struggle that is at stake and are willing to pay the price necessary (financially, socially, emotionally, and relationally) to engage the spiritual war with intensity, focus, and passion. The Energized Pastor understands that the nature of the gospel is being challenged; the purity of the church, both in doctrine and morality is being polluted; and the ability of the church to be a authoritative spokesman for God and truth in our culture is being muted. As a result of these things, he is able to embrace the darkness on the horizon that he sees coming - but instead of being filled with fear, he rises to the challenge, knowing that when the darkness comes, the light of Christ shines even more brightly. He lives by the motto of **PROVERBS 28:1**: *The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the **righteous are bold as a lion**.* With courage he speaks biblically, boldly, and clearly against the fierce spirit of the age known as antichrist.

As we approach today's prayer, let's remember we are praying that God would uphold the spiritual integrity of spiritual leaders and pastors.

That He would move on behalf of God's people by taking the necessary action that would result in the growth and health of the churches and their spiritual leaders. For the Compromised, we pray for mercy, repentance, or removal from ministry. For the Paralyzed, we pray for a fresh anointing of God's Spirit, so that they can recover their voice and their original calling. And for the Energized, we pray that they would have God's wisdom, discretion, and protection as they lead the people of God into deeper levels of faith, trust, and confidence while equipping God's people to boldly, with courage, speak the truth in love as they live out their Christian faith unashamedly in this time.

Additionally, for those who are energized, God-fearing, and committed to righteousness, we are praying that God will bless them, protect them, and increase their influence in our communities so that they would be able to grow in their capacity to share the gospel, strengthen God's people, contribute to human flourishing, and be instrumental in the expansion of the Kingdom of God in this generation. Spiritual leadership requires exceptional integrity and character. Psalm 15:1-5 gives us a description of what God is looking for in a person of exceptional character. As you meditatively read through these verses, if God brings to your mind a spiritual leader, pray for them that God would grow them in these many areas.

Our scripture reading is:

PSALM 15:1-5

PSALM 15:1-5 *Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? 2 Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. 3 Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. 4 Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts. 5 Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Such people will stand firm forever.*

Our prayer focus will be on... Pastors and Spiritual Leaders

(List any other groups or persons here)

The scripture we will be praying today is:

1 TIMOTHY 4:11-16

Today's passage from God's Word is focused on pastors and spiritual leaders. Please feel free to add any other spiritual leaders that you want to bring before God in prayer.

*Read through this passage (1 Timothy 4:11-16) **reflectively** at least one time (you may want to read it a number of times in different translations) and modify accordingly, then pray it.

1 TIMOTHY 4:11-16 *Teach these things (Biblical Truth) and insist that everyone learn them. 12 Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 13 Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. 15 Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.*

Here is an example of what today's prayer might look like (you are free to use any style or arrangement you like, as long as you incorporate 1 Timothy 4:11-16):

"Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You today, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. My heart is heavy for those who bear the load of spiritual leadership in Your church. ...

I know that Christian leaders are a unique and special target of the evil one. So, I want to lift before you today my pastor and the other spiritual leaders of our church. I pray that they will be faithful in teaching the things of God and encouraging everyone to learn Your truth. I pray that they will not fear anyone thinking less of them because they are young or inexperienced. I pray that they would be an example to all believers - in what they say, in the way they live, in the way that they display Your love, in way they express their faith, and in the purity of their lifestyle. I pray, Lord, that they would be faithful in communicating the Scriptures and sharing the truth of God's Word with us, so that we would be encouraged by it, and so we would grow deeper in our understanding of it. I pray that they would not be so busy doing the tasks of the ministry that they neglect the special Spirit-empowered gift that You have given to them for the purpose of doing Your work in the power of Your Spirit. I pray that they would throw themselves fully and completely into the calling You've laid upon their life and the tasks that You have assigned to them in Your church. I pray that as they do these things, that they will see fruit and progress in their own personal spiritual growth in a way that it is evident to everyone who knows them personally. Also, I pray that they would be faithful and careful with how they live their lives and communicate Your message, so that they do not stray from the Gospel or the truth of Your Word. Father, please use the ministry of our pastor and spiritual leaders to bring many people to salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, dear Father, I ask that you would, through the power of your Holy Spirit, anoint those pastors who are fearful of speaking up and standing publicly for righteousness. Please grant them a spirit of courage, boldness, and an unrelenting faith in You, so that they can be an instrument of your righteousness in this crucial time. And for those pastors who have compromised themselves, I pray that You, through Your Holy Spirit, would show them great mercy by bringing them to a deep conviction of their sin, a heartfelt repentance, and return to You with a passion for the purity and truth of the Gospel, so that their souls might be recovered and/or converted. I ask that they might become voices of righteousness. I humbly lay these requests before You in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believing them to be consistent with Your will, ...

for it is your will I seek not my own. **Amen.**”

I hope you found this example helpful. And as I said before, you're free to use whatever format you like.

This concludes today's prayer. If you have prayed this prayer sincerely, then you have completed your eighth day in the heat of the spiritual war that we're engaged in! God Bless You!

Until tomorrow, let's stay Faithful, Grateful, and Humble!

*Larry Taunton's most recent book is *Around the World in (More Than) 80 Days: Discovering What Makes America Great and Why We Must Fight to Save It.*