

How I Received a Breakthrough Anointing in Prayer

When I came to Christ in January of 1978, I was the kind of person who could read the Bible for many hours, but I had a hard [difficult] time praying for more than a couple of minutes.

All that changed in June 1978 when I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. Within a few months, I was able to pray for a long time without getting bored.

Occasionally, while I was praying for something, my heart started getting weighed down with the burden of the thing I was praying for. It was so heavy with the sense of why I was praying that I had a difficult time having a conversation with someone. I could barely do anything else but pray, because my mind and heart were so preoccupied with this intense weight or burden.

When this “spirit of prayer” came on me, the kind when my whole being was engulfed in prayer, I would try to alter my schedule and steal away from all regular work and the company of others. I would get alone and pray until the burden of the thing I was praying for would lift off me, and my heart would be filled with the peace and assurance of God. Through the years this spirit of prayer would only come upon me occasionally. Then it would come upon me for days at a time—then weeks. Most of the time I couldn’t even use my known language (English) and after some years, the intensity of the burden even transcended “speaking in tongues” with most of my time spent groaning in the presence of God, knowing that I was standing in the gap for something.

Before I go on, I want the reader to realize something

important: You can pray anytime you want, but you can't make [cause] "the spirit of prayer" to come upon you. You can't just decide that you want to go into "travail." It comes upon you only when God wills it to happen, usually when you begin to intercede for something and you strike a "nerve" in the spirit. God enlarges your heart, and you begin to pray supernaturally with an intensity that can only come from God.

It got to the point in the late 1980s that I realized about 95 percent of the time when I began to pray I would tap into God's heart for the thing I was praying for and then I would go into travail with varying degrees of time spent praying fervently according to the need.

I remember a time in the early '90s when I went to a conference hosted by an apostolic network. A pastor I had only met a few times before was driving me there.

We had a five-hour drive ahead of us, and he asked me to pray traveling mercies for us before we started out. Well, I not only prayed for traveling mercies, but an incredible burden for the conference and the network came upon me, and I went into intense travail for the entire five-hour trip. I couldn't help but wonder what this pastor thought of me when I not only prayed in tongues but began moaning and groaning because of the intense weight of the purposes of God on my soul. I figured God knew what He was doing when He put it upon me and I threw "caution to the wind" and then—you know what—the spirit of travail came upon him as well.

When I arrived at the conference, the burden of God for the week-long meeting was so great that I prayed about 12 hours a day—mostly with groanings too deep for words (Rom. 8:26-27).

My heart was so heavy that I couldn't go to a single session or workshop. I had to force myself to go to the evening plenary sessions. I literally felt what God felt about the ministers, the conference and what God wanted to do for

eternal fruit. At one point the travail of my soul was so great that I had to get people to take turns watching in prayer with me to help me bear the burden.

God showed me, after two days of intense prayer and travail, that the Wednesday and Thursday evening plenary sessions would be the most powerful the network had ever seen, catapulting ministers into the purposes of God way into the rest of the decade. Sure enough, the Wednesday night meeting was so powerful that it lasted until midnight.

The Thursday night meeting ended at almost 1 a.m. Friday; there was a powerful demonstration of praise, worship, prophecy and consecration to the mission field. All of these hours agonizing in prayer were worth it when I saw the marvelous way the Lord poured out His spirit and visited those ministers.

I have been living with this kind of prayer lifestyle for years, not knowing it could ever accelerate. But then came Jan. 2, 1997.

As I said earlier, this spirit of prayer first came on me occasionally, then more frequently. (Most of the time it came after I initiated prayer and intercession.) But on Jan. 2, 1997, the spirit of prayer came upon me so mightily, it didn't even wait for me to begin to pray. I didn't even know why it accelerated on that particular date.

I must confess, many times to prevent the spirit of travail from coming on me, (so I could lead a somewhat normal life), I would purposely not even pray, consequently not giving it a chance to come upon me. That particular day I woke up with it upon me. This went on day after day, week after week, month after month. In the back of my mind I was thinking: I will pray it through, and it will leave me.

I found that I had now entered into a lifestyle of travail, with a spirit of prayer upon me anywhere from three to eight

hours every day. (This lasted almost exactly three years until the beginning of January 2000). I had to alter my busy schedule to accommodate all the time I needed to be in prayer so I could function and fulfill the destiny of God. Altering my schedule had been no easy task in light of the fact that I have a family that includes five children, a growing church, and an apostolic ministry to my city and various parts of the nation and world.

Instead of waiting for it to leave me, I have embraced it, and now I wouldn't want to live any other way. The past two years since around 2012, this spirit of prayer usually comes upon me in the middle of the night so that every morning I wake up with an intense burden of prayer upon me that I push through until the weight on my soul is lifted. It frequently comes upon me again by late afternoon and then before I go to bed.

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