

## Praying for our Lost Loved Ones Gary Frazier

When you realize time is short and either Jesus will come or your loved ones will die you will want to be certain that everyone you love and care about knows the “Good News” of Jesus. There is no way we can keep the news of forgiveness and restoration to ourselves. We want to give it away to our loved ones, even if they are not receptive. This is often the case. It is often said that the hardest people to talk to about Jesus are our loved ones. Why? Because they know us and they know we aren’t perfect. In addition, they fail to understand that when we were Born-Again into God’s family we didn’t get perfect; we got forgiven. It’s hard for unsaved folks to realize that as a follower of Jesus our lives are “under construction.” In our obedience, God is working to shape us into the image of Jesus, and that task will take the rest of our earthly lives. But let me hasten to add, if you do not care for the soul of your loved one, it is doubtful anyone else will. Therefore, I believe we have the responsibility to do all within our power under the anointing of God’s Holy Spirit to reach those we love. If we will model the love, forgiveness and joy found in Christ it will create a hunger in their soul.

### *Prayer and the Armor of God*

I want to suggest how to effectively pray for our loved ones. First, we must understand there is a spiritual battle being fought over the souls of all people. If you do not believe every person who dies without Jesus steps into a literal hell, you will never be a true prayer warrior. Once we accept this truth, we then begin to understand what the Scriptures mean:

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

The Word of God tells us we have weapons with which to fight, but that they are unconventional, rather they are spiritual. These spiritual weapons are used to virtually tear down strongholds that have been built up in the lives of our loved ones. What are strongholds and how are they torn down? Strongholds are those areas of our lives where we have allowed the devil to gain access. In many cases, these areas are pride, sexual addiction, and fantasies, love of material things, quest for fame, acceptance, or any number of things. God informs us that it is these strongholds that keep one from coming to Jesus. However, we can fight against these and demolish them through intercessory prayer. This is the weapon of our faith against which no person can stand, including Satan and the demons of hell.

How do we fight the devil? The answer to this is also found in the Scriptures:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*

Ephesians 6:10-18

Here we learn that the warfare is prayer. The enemy is the devil. The objective is the stronghold in one's life. The strategy for victory is the Armor of God. But, we must first be willing to fight. That is, we must care enough to engage the enemy. Many simply do not have the will, the resolve to fight. We then must clothe ourselves with the armor of God. This is difficult and here's why. We cannot put on the armor of God unless we ourselves are spiritually clean before God. This means we must allow God to shine His searchlight into our life and come clean about areas that are not in line with His objective, that is, becoming like Him. Scripture says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). God cannot fight through a dirty vessel. Once we are clean, we can then go to battle clothed in truth. The first step is to ask God to reveal to us the particular stronghold that is keeping our loved one from Him. If we are serious about this and seek an answer from God, He will speak to our heart and supernaturally reveal the stronghold. Once this is identified, we then begin to apply scriptural truth to stand against it. That is, we search for Scripture to use against the stronghold, just as Jesus did when tempted in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) and we pray this scripture in behalf of our loved one. For example, if God reveals that a spirit of pride is the main stronghold, we can pray the following:

*Dear Lord, your word says you hate pride and arrogance (Proverbs 8:13).*

*That pride only breeds quarrels (Proverbs 13:10). That pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18). That the cravings of a sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, come not from the Father but from the world (1 John 2:16). Therefore in the strong and powerful name of Jesus I tear down this barrier of pride and demand that it depart from my loved one.*

This is how we use the weapon of Scripture to tear down strongholds. Most people pray and ask God to save their loved one not understanding God is not the problem! He died for your loved one. Your loved one is the problem. Will the loved one embrace Jesus? He or she may not; there are no guarantees. However, once they are set free from the spiritual bondage of the enemy, there is every reason to believe and claim them for the kingdom of God.

Once we are clean, once we have engaged in spiritual warfare, then it is time to boldly witness in a spirit of love. As we listen to God speak to our hearts, we will hear Him say it is time to GO. There comes a time when we must put legs to our prayers. Let me illustrate. Several years ago, my wife, Sandra came to me and said she felt it was time to go and visit a certain member of her family who lived out of state. She had been engaging in intercessory prayer for some months and now God said GO. She went, not knowing how she would be received, but in obedience and love. She phoned me within twenty-four hours to share the exciting news of how her loved one had trusted Christ and been born again. It doesn't always work like this, but in the last few years we have now seen twenty-eight, (as of this writing) of our unsaved loved ones trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Why do we pray? Why do we go? Because Jesus is coming and time is running out.

One final word: Never, never give up! Keep fighting because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4