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**PREPARATION THROUGH PRAYER**  
**(Acts 1:9-14)**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS IS AN AMAZING RECORD** of how God worked in and through the early church, and one of their most important activities was prayer. While Jesus was with His disciples, little was recorded of them praying because they could talk directly to Christ. But after His ascension, they immediately gathered in the upper room and “devot[ed] themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:14).

Talking to God was their means of preparing for the work He had for them. Jesus had told them the Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13). Then after the resurrection, He instructed them to stay in Jerusalem until they were “clothed with power from on high” (24:49). Without the Spirit, they were not adequate for the Great Commission even though they’d spent time with Jesus. And if they needed the Spirit’s power, so do we.

To the degree we’re willing to admit our absolute helplessness to do God’s work, the Holy Spirit will empower us as we pray. When we are devoted to prayer, the Lord begins to work in our heart, preparing us for service. He gives us the Spirit’s boldness to speak God’s Word (Acts 4:31) and the courage to face any persecutions that might result (v. 29).

God is looking for believers who understand the importance of prayer and realize the only way to fulfill His calling for the church is through His supernatural power. Christ’s church is not grown through programs, seminars, and conferences, but through the humble prayers of saints who gather together in utter dependence upon Him. That’s when God’s power is released and His will is accomplished. AMEN.

~ Dr. Charles F. Stanley

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20*

