

“PRAY WITHOUT CEASING”—Really?

Impossible, you say. We all need time to eat, sleep, and do many things just to keep alive. How could anyone pray without ceasing?

Paul not only said we should do it (1 Thessalonians 5:17), but he claimed that he himself did this. He wrote that he prayed without ceasing for the Thessalonian believers (1 Thessalonians 1:3; and 2:13). English translations say “constantly” he prayed for them—the same word as in 5:17 translated where it is translated “without ceasing.” Certainly Paul’s life was more filled with a variety of activities than most of ours. Yet he made room for praying without ceasing.

How can that be? Outside the New Testament this word (“without ceasing” or “constantly”) is used of someone who has a hacking cough. That person is not always audibly coughing, but the tickle in his or her throat is constantly there. Likewise to pray without ceasing or constantly does not mean we are always verbally saying prayers (or even thinking prayers), but the urge is always there.

Why is this important for us to do? Simply because if and when I pray constantly it reminds me how dependent on our Lord I am in every circumstance of daily living.

Try it!

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