

PRAYER LESSON 208

Wrestling in Prayer

Do you ever work up a sweat praying? Do you find prayer to be physically exhausting at times? Paul wrote about a man named Epaphras in his letter to the Colossians. He said about him in Colossians 4:12-13, **He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you.** Epaphras was doing the hard work of prayer for the Colossians. What could “wrestling in prayer” possibly mean? I’ve watched wrestling on television, but I don’t think that is what Paul had in mind. Wrestling indicates a struggle of some kind. What do you suppose that struggle was for Epaphras?

I’m really not sure, but I can give you some insight based on my own experience. I have disciplined quite a number of individuals. Many of them accept Christ easily and begin living a new life style as well. However, others find the pull of the world so strong that it is hard for them to change. They accept that Christ died for their sins, but find it hard to respond to that gift of salvation by living the born-again life. They keep their old friends and continue to do the same things they did before.

I try not to beat them over the head about this, but I continue to instruct them from God’s word and I pray for them. I pray that the Spirit of God will infect them in such a way that they will want to change. When this change is slow in coming my prayers get more and more desperate. I begin to wonder if they really are saved, so I pray even harder. In fact, I do work up a sweat while praying. I’m sure my struggle is minor compared to that of Epaphras, but nonetheless it is a bit like wrestling.

So, don’t be afraid to do the hard work of prayer. For you it may be different than for me. But recognize that God does respond to persistence in prayer.