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Dear Friends,

July is certainly a busy month starting with our national holiday and then vacations with people traveling. Our Pastor is on vacation this week and I've been asked to speak. Now my problem is that I have had two months to prepare for this message and I keep adding material so it became HUGE! I have had to trim it excessively so that it will fit in the normal time frame that a message should take. So after all the time I have given to this message it seems a waste to not share a bit of it with you.:-)

It is titled "What Does It Mean to Pray Without Ceasing?" using I Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

I found that Webster's Dictionary defines 'cease' as -to cause to come to an end gradually. The Greek word 'unceasing' means without ceasing, uninterrupted, without omission. In other words Don't stop praying!

Over the years, in my counseling, I have referred people to Luke 18:1-8 it's about Jesus teaching us to not grow weary or discouraged in pleading with God for heartfelt needs for ourselves and others. This same theme is also in Luke 11:5-10. Here are five prayers I pray nearly every day.

1) Matthew 22:37 *"You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength"*. My prayer for the past few years has been; 'Please teach me to love You with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength!

2) For a long time I have watched people as they serve others and I have become aware of how difficult it is to consistently be a servant to others especially with a good attitude.

Galatians 5:13 *"For you brothers, were called to freedom. Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity to gratify your flesh (through selfishness) but through love make it your habit to*

serve one another." My prayer is; Father give me a joyful servants heart.

3) Wisdom is an interesting subject! I consider an accurate definition as the proper application of knowledge especially spiritual knowledge.

James 1:5: promises us wisdom if we ask God and He will give it generously.

My prayer is God, You promised if I asked You would give me wisdom. HELP!

4) The need for the power to share Jesus enthusiastically!

Acts 1:8: Jesus gives us His parting words as He leaves going back to The Father. The Great Commission is that we are to be His witness to the entire world.

My prayer is that He would remove any obstacle, in me, that hinders others from coming to know Jesus and please give me opportunity, boldness and the words to share You with others.

5) Having a grateful heart. I have heard that if you are not thankful for the little things you will never be thankful for big things.

I Thessalonians 5:18: *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of Christ Jesus for you"*.

My prayer-Thank you!

So it seems appropriate at this time to tell each of you that Debi and I are very thankful for all your prayers and support. Alpha would not be here without you! THANK YOU and God bless You!

Richard and Debi