

Towers ministry – short reads

“**Short reads**” look at specific parts of the intercessory life within the towers. They are just four or five pages long designed to cover one issue.

Intercessors - the Gethsemane character

The greatest intercession of all time was that offered by Jesus in Gethsemane. So it is inevitable that serious intercessors will come to Gethsemane many times. What kind of character does intercessor need to survive these very hard testings that Gethsemane always brings?

1. Do not trust people

It's a natural human desire to want friends. But in Gethsemane intercessors must put their trust in God, and God alone for survival. No human agent can help. Jesus knew this. Knowing what was in the heart of man and knowing God, he trusted in God alone for his help and strength. He had to leave his friends at the gate.

Intercessors must face Gethsemane alone, trusting alone in God to sustain and save us.

2. Embrace the loneliness

Being alone with God has a long history:-

Elijah knew it.	(1 Kings 17:2-6)
Habakkuk knew it.	(Habakkuk 3:17-18)
Paul knew it.	(2 Corinthians 11:23-33)

None of these people liked the loneliness, but each knew that it was their appointed path, and found the strength to walk in it. The Gethsemane character welcomes and embraces the loneliness and this is a hard choice to make. If intercessors cannot accept the loneliness and isolation which is the Gethsemane experience, perhaps they are not called to the towers.

3. Understand the nature of the battle

In Gethsemane, the battle is always the same, even if it takes many forms. It can be summed up in this way - God says “go!” The enemy says “no!” Once this battle line has been drawn, then the old battle of “self-versus God” is fought out again in the heart and life of the intercessor. The enemy does all he can to stop Gethsemane prayer, and the intercessors have to have a strong enough character to resist him and obey the voice of the Lord. This looks so easy to read, but in practice it is very painful. Emotions are stretched tight, twisted and hurt. Lives, health, family, work and play all come under attack.

This is the nature of the intercessory struggle in Gethsemane. Jesus struggled in the heat of this battle. An angel had to come to strengthen him. As it was for him, so it will be for towers intercessors. They have to fight this battle many times, with little or no earthly support – perhaps on some occasions with hostility from earthly friends. Why must it be this way? Because this is where Jesus won his battle, and it is where Towers intercessors win theirs.

4. Know the spiritual weapons

A soldier is only as good as his weapons, and he has to know them intimately. For prophets, called again and again to Gethsemane, knowing the weapons is vital to survival. What should we know?

The power of the sacrifice.

John wrote “Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

It is the sacrifice of Jesus which breaks the power of the enemy. Intercessors have to learn to draw on the strength of that sacrifice. They have to know how to release the power of the blood of Jesus, and how to take their stand on the lamb who was slain.(1 Peter 1:19: Revelation 5:6) How do they do this? They need to share in the Lord’s Supper, they need to know the Scriptures, and how to apply them to themselves and to the battle they are fighting. Here are some Bible passages which will help -

John 1:29
Mark 14 – 16:8
1 Peter 1: 18-19
Hebrews 9:14
Colossians 2:13-15
1 John 1:8-9

Teaching about the blood of Jesus is not so common these days. But our forefathers spoke of “calling down the power of the blood.” This is something every intercessor must know how to do.

Crucified to the world

The Bible says “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

The enemy will use everything worldly to trap and defeat intercession. But what can he do against those who has crucified everything in the world, and lives only for Christ? Intercessors have to crucify self, (Mark 8:34) love of money, (1 Timothy 6:10) any desire for security in the flesh, (Matthew 6:19-21) any longing for recognition, (Matthew 5:11-12) physical needs, (Matthew 6:28-33) and sexual needs (Matthew 5:27-28).

5. The power of the word

The Bible says, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes:” (Romans 1:16) And again “At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2: 10-11)

Part of an intercessor's strength is in the word of God. It is need it so much in times of crisis. But in times of crisis, sometimes it is not possible to read it. When I was in hospital, I was too ill to read. That's why every intercessor must be very familiar with the Bible, knowing it by heart, and using it daily. Then when the crisis comes, they will not be unarmed.

6. The victory of the cross

The Bible says “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

The army that goes into battle knowing that it has conquered is conquering and will conquer will win. This confidence in the victory of the cross gives strength to all intercession.

7. The spiritual weapons of Ephesians 6: 10-17

The Bible says “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.”

These weapons are part of our basic equipment. We must be familiar with them, and how to use them.

Stand firm

Sometimes in Gethsemane, there is nothing to do, and nowhere to turn. The pressures are so great, and it's impossible to make any progress. At these moments, Intercessors have to take Habakkuk's position - “Though the fig-tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.” (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

St Paul puts it this way:- “Therefore put on the full armour 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.” (Ephesians 6:13)

In other words, when all else fails, just stand firm and wait. It's hard to do, but I encourage all intercessors in this discipline. The day for moving will come. In the meantime, obey and wait. Sometimes I find it hard to stand for just a day. Then I change my tactics, and try to stand firm for an hour, a half an hour, or even ten minutes. All I have to do is to hold out against the enemy, and he will have to fall away from me. I am the victor in Jesus Christ.