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Life has been super busy throughout the first quarter of 2006. Where has the time gone? We leaders are often caught up in the growing demands of leadership responsibilities. However, we must never forget that, in the midst of busyness, our real business is to know God and draw near to Him. (See James 4:8-10). Seeking the face of God is crucial for leadership success. It is only in His presence that we receive the strength to do our spiritual work.

TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

An old hymn keeps going over in my mind: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace." It's amazing how the busyness of leadership, and things of this world fade when we focus on seeking God's face.

HAVE CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART

"Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? **Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart...**He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob" (Psalms 24:3-6, *NIV*). I want to be part of such a generation—one that seeks God's face!

ASK FOR A RIGHT SPIRIT

I just finished reading Psalms 51 in my personal devotions. I've resorted to that chapter many

times in my ministry. It is imperative for each of us to keep our lives clean and pure. It is the only way that He can flow through us to bless our world. I often pray, "**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.** Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalms 51:10-11). I simply cannot survive without His Spirit directing me. In dealing with various leadership challenges that come our way we must always maintain a correct attitude, and a right spirit. It is not so much what happens to us that is important. It is more what happens in us. Experiences can make us better or bitter. I don't want a root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15) ever to develop in my ministry (or yours). It squeezes joy and spiritual vitality out of us. Occasionally, we all receive criticism from decisions we make. People sometimes get hurt and openly attack. Prayer and a humble spirit can rescue us and keep our attitudes right.

SEEK GOD'S FACE

We often think praying and seeking God's face are the same. They are not. Prayer often involves asking for something. We pray for wisdom, health, finances; salvation of loved ones, our nation, and for lots of other things. **We miss seeking God's face because we are busy seeking God's hands.** Seeking God's face is not asking God to do something. It is asking for His very presence in our lives. It is beseeching Him to draw near us and to linger, as we make every attempt to draw near to Him. I don't want to be

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like a child that constantly asks Daddy for an endless list of things. For me, seeking God's face is praying over and over again that I might be close to Him. I want desperately to be led by Him, have the knowledge of His will, and be used in His plan. I want to be like Him. It is in seeking God's face that we also enjoy the benefits from His hands. "The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing" (Psalms 34:10, NIV). As General Director of Foreign Missions, a fellow seeker of His presence, and your friend, I challenge you to routinely seek God's face, and to daily find time to pray. Prayer and fasting makes the difference. The message is simple, basic, and necessary: SEEK GOD'S FACE!

DON'T LET JESUS PASS YOU BY!

I recently preached a message entitled "He Would Have Passed Them By" in Lima, Peru. Mark 6: 48 reveals the storm was raging, Jesus would have passed the disciples by, but they cried out to Him. I just love how Jesus is willing to step into life's storms. He knows our intentions, desires, and needs before we pray. Then, why pray? I'm convinced that prayer really isn't so much for God, as it is for us. He desires for us to acknowledge three things: We have a need. We cannot supply the need. God can supply the need. As the song says, "If I never had a problem I wouldn't know that God could solve them, I'd never know what faith in God could do." Through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus. Have you?

PRAY – PLAN – PERFORM

(FROM A LEADERSHIP LESSON BY MISSIONARY NICK SISCO)

All of us are interested in performing with leadership excellence and possessing a plan that impacts our world. Performance is based on having a plan. Where does this plan come from? It is birthed in an atmosphere of prayer. God's agenda is discovered in prayer. It was common knowledge among the disciples that they would find Jesus praying during the early morning

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hours (Mark 1:35). When they needed Him, they knew to go to the place of prayer. Every time the Lord Jesus faced an important decision, He prayed. When it was time to choose His disciples, He prayed the entire night (Luke 6:12). We should not rush into decisions unless we are led by prayer. God gave us prayer so we could have conversation with Him, but we often change this by "saying prayers" and hurrying off without ever listening to what is on our Father's heart. Because Jesus was so often surrounded by crowds, He knew He must find a quiet place so He could clearly hear His Father's voice. Jesus had many people seeking to influence the direction of His life. His disciples wanted Him to go where the crowds were (Mark 1: 37). The crowds wanted Him to crown Himself king (John 6:15). Satan tempted Him to make compromises in order to draw a following (Matthew 4:3, 6, 9). Jesus knew that His mission was not to attract a crowd, but to remain obedient to His purpose.

It was prayer that set the agenda for Jesus' ministry (Luke 6:12). Success in God's kingdom begins with prayer. We pray. We plan. We perform. How can this be the equation for spiritual success? Prayer gives birth to a plan and that plan is ultimately confirmed by our performance! There is a difference between "saying a prayer" and praying. One is simply going through the motions or hurriedly saying a prayer to satisfy our conscience while the other touches the throne of God and accesses His power to plan and perform. Consider the story of the Defeat at Ai found in Joshua 7:2-14. The Israelites were sure the battle would be an easy one. Their thinking was faulty from the beginning. They planned without prayer. Watch out! Their performance was affected. The enemy struck them down and their hearts melted and became like water. Why? Their plans were not birthed in prayer, and the performance results were disastrous. This is a simple truth—and spiritual formula—for all of us to follow: **Pray – Plan – Perform.**

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