

SCANNING YOUR DASHBOARD

WARNING LIGHTS
& HOLY HABITS

=====*for*=====

A LEADER'S SOUL

ROWLAND FORMAN

Dashboard Indicator #2

Am I Praying Less, or Praying More?

Caring for Your Own Soul

Effective leaders care deeply for the souls of others. Yet this often comes at the expense of their own soul's well-being—and sometimes that of their family as well.

Scanning Your Dashboard invites you to regularly attend to your inner life. Just as a driver watches the dashboard for warning lights and fuel levels, wise leaders learn to notice what is happening beneath the surface of their lives.

Each **Dashboard Indicator** in this mentoring resource pairs a Warning Light with a Holy Habit—helping you not only to recognize areas of vulnerability, but also to respond with practices that cultivate a healthy, Christ-dependent life.

A dashboard doesn't only warn you when something is wrong—it also reassures you when things are functioning as they should.

Begin by processing Warning Light #2 and Holy Habit #2 on your own. Then, if possible, meet with a mentor-friend or small group, to share what the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention.

Working with Warning Lights and then Holy Habits, helps you not only to see what you need to work on, but to step into a grace-filled response.

WARNING LIGHT #2.

PRAYERLESSNESS: *Am I too Distracted to Pray?*

This devotional is not an invitation to guilt, but to grace. Most sincere believers, when asked, “How’s your prayer life?” instinctively reply, “Not what it should be.” Rather than scolding ourselves or one another, a better question might be: “How can we help each other adopt prayer not as a duty, but as a way of life?”

Why is prayerlessness so prevalent? Warning Lights #1 and #2 travel together. Pride is the attitude; prayerlessness is the behavior that flows from it. Warning Light #1 asks, “Have I become too big for my boots?” This second danger signal asks, “Why have I stopped kneeling and substituted it with distracted busyness?”

At heart, prayerlessness is a subtle rewriting of Proverbs 3:5. Instead of *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding*, we live as if it says, “Lean on your own understanding first—and if all else fails, pray.”

Three biblical stories underline why prayerlessness is such a danger signal, particularly for leaders, but ultimately for all of us.

1 Samuel 13:5-14.

King Saul failed to inquire of the LORD during a critical confrontation with the Philistines. Impatient and pressured, he took matters into his own hands and offered the burnt offering himself—acting as a priest when he had no right to. Leaders must make decisions, often under pressure. When prayer is absent, we become vulnerable, like Saul, to making very unwise and very prideful choices.

Prayerlessness fosters prideful decisions.

Luke 22:39-46

In the Olive Grove at Gethsemane, Jesus twice urged three of his closest leaders-in-training, Peter, James, and John, to stay alert and pray so that they would not fall into temptation. Overwhelmed with sadness, they slept instead. They didn’t grasp how needy they were, and when temptation came, they failed.

The contrast between them and the holy Son of God, could not be more vivid. His entire life was marked by dependent prayer, and here, fully aware that the Cup meant bearing the sin of the world, he prayed and surrendered himself to his Father's will. Cyprian (c. 200-258) observed, "If he prayed who was without sin, how much more it becometh a sinner to pray."

Failing to pray opens temptation's door.

Mark 9:14-29

In Mark 9, the disciples attempted to heal a boy tormented by an unclean spirit, relying on skills that had worked before. Nothing happened. The father was disappointed; the disciples were perplexed. When they ask Jesus why they had failed, his answer became a life-defining lesson: *This kind can be cast out only by prayer.* That is certainly true when facing the impossible, but it is also true of everyday life.

How do we lead a vibrant growing church? Only by prayer.

How do we grow a family to God's glory? Only by prayer.

How do we maintain a close walk with God daily? Only by prayer.

When prayer is neglected, self-reliance goes into overdrive.

Reflect and Discuss

1. When you hear the term "prayerlessness" what is your response?
2. How does distracted busyness relate to less prayer in your life?
3. With which of the three examples of prayerlessness (1 Samuel 13, Luke 22, and Mark 9) do you most identify? Why?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I confess how easily prayer slips from the center of my life. Forgive me for leaning on my own understanding and turning to you only when I'm overwhelmed and desperate. Awaken in me a deeper awareness of my need for you and draw me to a life of prayer. I place myself in your hands. Without you I can do nothing. Amen.

HOLY HABIT #2:

DEPENDENCE: *Praying as Your Way of Life*

If your desire as a Christian leader is to be more like Jesus, then nothing will shape you more deeply than a life of prayer.

Why? Because to be like Jesus is to live dependently. And Jesus' dependence upon his Father was expressed constantly through prayer.

Luke peppers his Gospel with glimpses of Jesus at prayer. He opens a window into his prayer-shaped life:

As he was praying heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him ...
(Luke 3:21-22)

In prayer, Jesus was affirmed by the Father and empowered by the Spirit. And this was no isolated moment. After healing many, Luke adds: *Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed* (Luke 5:16).

He chose his disciples after a night of prayer (Luke 6:12). On the eve of his crucifixion, he withdrew to Gethsemane with three trusted friends and prayed (Luke 22:39-45).

If Jesus—the holy Son of God—lived this way, how much more must I cultivate this habit of dependence?

Jesus' life was so saturated with prayer that one day, while he was praying, one of the Twelve asked him, *Lord, teach us to pray ...* (Luke 11:1). Their request reminds us that prayer is not just instinctive; it is learned. In response, Jesus gave them two anchors for a life of dependence.

Firstly, he offered a model prayer, which we know of as the Lord's Prayer. This prayer begins by exalting God's name and kingdom, then moves on to making request for daily needs, forgiveness and protection.

Secondly, he urged them to ask and keep on asking, because prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of his highest willingness.

If prayer is to become a holy habit, it helps to begin with small, life-giving practices—many of them modeled by leaders in Scripture. I've found these helpful to make my prayer life more intentional.

Practices that May Become Habits:

Meditative Prayers. As you open your Bible each day, pause at each verse and turn it into a spoken or written prayer. It's like praying God's thoughts back to him.

Spontaneous Prayers. Simply pray as things happen. Rather than fretting because your mind is distracted every time you pray, turn each of those cares into prayers. If, like David, you are deeply anxious, as in Psalm 55:3, turn to Jesus who knows all about that (Hebrews 5:7). If you've been betrayed by your best friend (Psalm 55:12-16) turn to Jesus who understands all about betrayal. *Cast your burden on the LORD and he will sustain you ...* (Psalm 55:22).

Periodic Prayers. Pray before, during, and after each daily event. For example, if you've scheduled a mentoring session, ask God for a sense of his presence as you travel to it. During the meeting, send a quick prayer to heaven, expecting God to give you the answer. Nehemiah set us this example when he needed the right words to say to a pagan king. (Nehemiah 2:2-5). After your time together, thank God for the wisdom he gave you.

Scheduled Prayers. Like Jesus, choose a private spot or quiet place to meet with your Heavenly Father. Like David, schedule a time each morning to bring your requests before God (Psalm 5:3, 55:17), stop what you are doing at noon to send prayers to heaven, and pause every evening to review the day. Daniel was a great role model of this practice (Daniel 6:10). These practices are not prayer-duties. They are gentle pathways—ways of moving slowly to a life where prayer becomes as natural as breathing: a holy habit of dependence. Maybe try one of these practices this week.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. When you think about Jesus praying so often, what does it reveal to you about his life of dependence on the Father?
2. Which kind of prayer comes most naturally to you right now: meditative, free, routine, or scheduled? Which feels hardest?
3. What is one moment in your daily leadership rhythm where you could simply “send a quick prayer to heaven,” like Nehemiah?
4. As you reflect on Warning Light #2 and Holy Habit #2, what has the Holy Spirit been saying to you? What steps will you take?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing me what a life of dependence looks like. Teach me to pray—not as a duty, but as a habit of closeness with the Father. When I feel anxious, distracted, or empty, remind me that I can turn to You.

May my prayers become as natural as breathing—a quiet pathway back to Your presence throughout my day. I want to live more like You. Form this holy habit in me I pray. Amen.

The 7 Dashboard Indicators

- Indicator #1** Am I Drifting, or Abiding in Christ?
- Indicator #2** Am I Praying Less, or Praying More?
- Indicator #3** Am I Proudful, or Humbly Serving Others?
- Indicator #4** Am I Running on Empty, or Learning Unforced Rhythms of Grace?
- Indicator #5** Am I Slipping Morally, or Guarding my Heart?
- Indicator #6** Am I Isolated, or Investing in Others?
- Indicator #7** Am I Pretending, or Leading with Integrity?



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