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Devotional

A Broken Spirit



Day 39/101
Through the Psalms
By Derek Prince

> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
> you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
> a broken and contrite heart,
> O God, you will not despise.
> (Psalm 51:16–17)

Through his own personal agony, David has come to a new understanding of what it is that God really requires from man. First, God is not interested in externals – represented here by "offerings" and "sacrifices." This does not necessarily mean that God never requires any external observances of religion. Many other passages of Scripture indicate that at times He does. But it means that these are not the things He requires first and foremost. If our religion contains nothing more than such external observances, then God takes no pleasure in them.

Always, God looks below the externals. He looks to the motives and to the attitude of the heart. What does He look for there? "A broken spirit," David tells us, "a broken and contrite heart." These are strange words to our ears these days. What does it mean that God desires a broken spirit? Does He want to beat us down and humiliate us? No, I am sure that is not His purpose.

What, then, is a broken spirit? I believe it is a spirit that has come totally to the end of itself. It makes no claims, offers no arguments. All independence, all self-will, all self-righteousness have been purged out. Such a spirit turns simply and solely to God, trusting not in its own merits, but only in God's infinite and unmerited mercy.

If we will permit Him, God knows how to produce this brokenness of spirit in each of us. He treats each of us as individuals. He never violates our personality. He uses only the precise degree of pressure needed to achieve His end.

"For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men" (Lamentations 3:33).

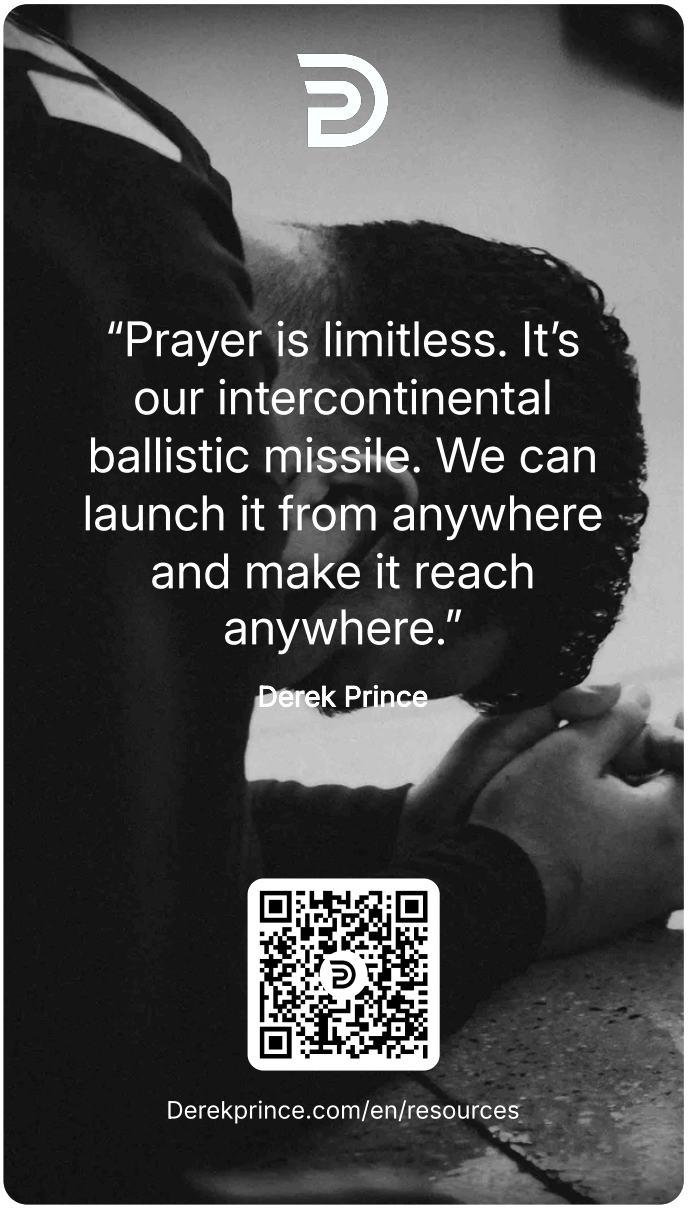
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