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**Michael Catt on Prayer**

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These days, when people hear the name Michael Catt, they may immediately think of the amazing films that Michael’s church has produced in recent years. With films like [*Facing the Giants*](http://www.facingthegiants.com/home.php)*,* [*Fireproof*](http://www.fireproofthemovie.com/) and the soon to be released [*Courageous*](http://www.courageousthemovie.com/home)*,* Sherwood Baptist Church is bringing biblical principles right into the homes of today’s families.

Michael Catt, however, is more than simply one of the names behind these films. He has been the [pastor at Sherwood](http://www.sherwoodbaptist.net/templates/cussherwoodbc/details.asp?id=33770&PID=402912) since 1989. He is the founder of the ReFresh Conferences, which focus on revival and the victorious Christian life. He is also a prolific author.

I have asked Michael to spend just a few minutes with us today to talk about his book, [*The Power of Persistence*](http://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/books/products.asp?p=9780805448689).

**Thom Rainer:***Why did you write this book?*

**Michael Catt:** It took me a while to think about a book on prayer. After all, there are thousands of books on prayer that have been printed through the ages. However, a lot of what is written today is a “name it, claim it” kind of praying, sort of like having a magic wand where we can treat God like a genie in a bottle or an ecclesiastical bellhop. As I studied and preached on prayer, I discovered an underlying theme: prayer must be persistent. It has to be focused, passionate, and, in a sense, confidently desperate. God is attracted to weakness, not to those who try to tell Him how to handle His business.

**Thom Rainer:***Whom does this book benefit the most?*

**Michael Catt:** About half of the book deals with prayer principles and specific stories in the Bible. Then, in the second half, I try to address areas where people have concerns. As a pastor and conference speaker, I often get questions about how to pray for prodigals, for children, for the lost, and so on. These are all good questions, and hopefully I’ve provided some insights from my own experiences, the experiences of others, and the stories of Scripture to give people a handle on these issues.

I didn’t write this book as a doctrinal thesis. I wrote it as a pastor and as one who has come to realize the significance prayer plays in the success of a church. I’ve been at Sherwood for twenty-one years, and the first year I was here, we started our Intercessory Prayer Ministry. It is foundational to all we do.

While we are known as "the church that makes movies," anyone involved in that process knows that it was in a prayer environment that the dream was birthed. We pray over every aspect of our movie ministry from story line to casting, shooting, and editing. We begin every day on set with prayer and have prayer teams stationed throughout the set, praying over actors and those working behind the scenes.

Our partnership with [LifeWay](http://www.lifeway.com) came out of a desire that all we do in our relationship to one another be birthed and maintained in a prayer environment. I’m very grateful that you took that request seriously. It’s been obvious; as we’ve grown in this relationship that God has given us, in a prayer environment, a kindred spirit and like-mindedness.

I believe what God has taught us about prayer will benefit those who understand that doing things in the energy of our flesh and just trying harder isn’t making our churches or families any stronger. We need to understand that prayer is central to the way God works. It’s not that we manipulate Him in prayer, but that we bend our will to His will in prayer.

**Thom Rainer:***What are your readers saying about this book?*

**Michael Catt:** Although prayer is one of the areas where we struggle the most, I find that people are looking for tools to help them in their prayer life. I’ve heard from parents, particularly younger parents, who are struggling with how to raise their kids in a world filled with terrorism, crisis, and fear. I’ve had countless people tell me the chapter on praying for the lost has helped them pray specifically for their lost family members, neighbors, and friends.  One of the transformational things a church could do would be to establish a prayer ministry where the community is prayed for and people are prayed for by name. For several years at Sherwood, we would call every person in the phone book and ask them how we could pray for them. It was amazing the opportunities we found for ministry. I’ve had a number of pastors who have used it as a basis for sermon series on prayer, which I find encouraging. Anything we can do to get people to raise the level of their praying is beneficial.

**Thom Rainer:** *Thank you, Michael, for being with us today. I encourage folks to read The Power of Persistence and the entire ReFresh series.*