

# *What is Prayer?*

*Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian; not the thing that makes him alive, but the evidence that he is alive.*

*Oswald Chambers*

*Prayer is not conquering Gods reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness.*

*Phillip Brooks*

*Prayer is and remains always a native and deepest impulse of the soul of man.*

*Thomas Carlyle*

*Prayer is conversation with God.*

*Clement of Alexandria*

*Prayer is the spiritual gymnasium in which we exercise and practice Godliness.*

*V.L. Crawford*

*Prayer is the way the life of God is nourished.*

*Oswald Chambers*

*Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*Prayer is not merely an occasional impulse to which we respond when we are in trouble; prayer is a life attitude.*

*Walter A. Mueller*

*Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God.*

*Edwin Keith*

*Prayer is love's tender dialogue between the soul and God.*

*John Richard Moreland*

*Prayer is a means of adding power to the strength we already possess.*

*Harry Thomas Stock*

# The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer

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# Lesson One: A Biblical Overview of Prayer

## Introduction:

While the importance of prayer would be readily admitted by most Christians, most would also regretfully confess that prayer does not have the prominence in our lives that it deserves. Since we call ourselves 'Christian', Christ should be our example in all things (1 Peter 2:21:22). Is prayer as important to us as it was to Him? If we spend little time praying, or have little knowledge of how to pray, can we really claim that prayer is of great importance to us? Before we get very far in this study, I must admit that I am not an authority on this subject--only a fellow student in the school of prayer. I am painfully conscious of weaknesses in my own prayer life, and of the need to reach greater heights. When we come to a greater appreciation of the purpose and power of prayer, we will want to learn all we can about it (cf. Ephesians 6:18). That is the purpose of this series of studies. In this first study, we will give a biblical overview of prayer. This might be considered a 'general introduction' to the subject. We will do this by asking ten basic questions.

## I. Why is prayer so important?

1. Because prayer is communication with the Ideal Companion--God. He cares and wants us to be on 'speaking terms' with Him. He speaks to us. Do we to Him? We must glorify Him (John 14:13).
2. Because Satan is a real enemy (Ephesians 6:12-18).
3. Because God has designed prayer as a means for our obtaining, as an inexhaustible source of blessing (James 4:2, Ephesians 3:20-21).
4. Because the faithful of all ages have regarded it as one of the most important and useful of tools (Acts 6:4, Romans 1:9, Psalm 51, Genesis 18, Daniel 6)
5. Because of the very important place it occupied during the earthly life of our Lord (Mark 1:34, Luke 6:12). Note also Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:35).
6. Because we are commanded to 'watch and pray' in lieu of being tempted (Matthew 26:31).
7. Because it is the means by which a Christian receives mercy, and obtains grace to help in times of need (Hebrews 4:16).
8. Because prayer through Jesus is the way we can have fullness of joy (John 16:24, Psalm 16:11).

9. Because it is intimately connected with the removal of worry and the emphasis upon what God has given (Philippians 4:6-7, Luke 18:1).
10. Because of what it accomplishes in our study of the word of God (Psalm 119:18, James 1:5).

## II. What is prayer?

1. From a positive point of view it is the sincere desire of the heart expressed to God (Romans 10:1, Luke 18:30).
  - a. Biblical revelation is God to man and prayer is man to God.
  - b. Elements of prayer.
    1. Adoration praise (Matthew 6:9).
    2. Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesians 5:20).
    3. Confession (James 5:16, 1 John 1:9).
    4. Petition/supplication/Intercession (Matthew 7:7-11, 1 Timothy 2:1-3).
2. Prayer view negatively.
  - a. It is not a means of informing God and scolding man (Acts 15:18, Luke 18:9-14).
  - b. It is not a means of ministering to selfishness (James 4:1-4) --the 'greedy gimmies'.
  - c. It is not just a 'fire escape' in times of disaster (Proverbs 1:24-33, Zechariah 7:13).
  - d. It is not a way to get out of doing God's will (Matthew 7:21).
  - e. It is not an ultimatum issued to God--'If you'll just...'
  - f. It is not a memorized speech used over and over. We must remember the all sufficiency of God and our utter dependence on Him (2 Corinthians 3:5).

## III. When should we pray?

1. Without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Colossians 4:2, Romans 12:12, Luke 18:1-4, Psalm 55:17).
2. Practical suggestions of when to pray: When you get up, before meals, at set times during the day, keep a personal prayer diary, pray together as a family.
3. Pray until it becomes a habit. It must be something you cannot live without.

#### **IV. For whom should we pray?**

1. All people (1 Timothy 2:1-2, Acts 10:34-36).
2. Civil rulers. The nature or personality of the ruler has nothing whatsoever to do with our responsibility to pray.
3. Brethren (Philippians 1:9-11, 1 Corinthians 8:12, Samuel 12:23).
4. Gospel preachers (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Ephesians 6:18-19).
5. Sick (James 5:13-14).
6. Lost (Romans 10:1, Luke 23:34).
7. Enemies (Matthew 5:44, Acts 7:60).

#### **V. For what should we pray?**

1. Strength in temptation (Matthew 26:41)
2. Wisdom and understanding (James 1:5).
3. Unity (John 17:20-21).
4. Physical blessings (Matthew 6:11).
5. Forgiveness (Matthew 6:12).
6. Peace (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
7. Laborers (Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2).

#### **VI. What are the conditions of acceptable prayer?**

1. Prayer must be properly addressed (Matthew 6:9, Ephesians 5:20).
2. Prayers must be made in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17, John 14:13).
3. Prayers must be made in faith (James 1:5-7, Matthew 21:22).
4. Prayer must be made according to God's will (1 John 5:14, Matthew 26:39-42, Matthew 6:10)
5. Prayer must be prompted by pure motives (James 4:1-3).
6. Prayer must be sincere and fervent (James 5:16, Romans 15:30).
7. Prayer must be made with spirit and with understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15).
8. Prayer must be made with persistence (Matthew 26:44). In Paul's case (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

#### **VII. What are some personal conditions of acceptable prayer?**

1. Righteous/Holy (1 Peter 3:12, James 5:16).
2. Submissive (1 John 5:14-15, Matthew 6:10).
3. Obedient (1 John 3:22, John 9:31, Proverbs 28:9).
4. Humble (James 4:6, Matthew 6:5 and 8).

5. Forgiving (Matthew 6:12-14).
6. Abiding (John 15:7).
7. Living near to God (James 4:6)

### **VIII. What are some hindrances to acceptable prayer?**

1. Sin remaining in the heart (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:1-2).
2. Refusing to hear and obey (Proverbs 28:9).
3. Praying selfishly (James 4:1-4).
4. Idols in the heart (Ezekiel 14).
5. Wrong attitude toward spouse (1 Peter 3:7)
6. Harboring a grudge (Matthew 6:14-15)
7. Stopping our ears to the cries of the poor (Proverbs 21:13).
8. Doubt (James 1:5-7).

### **IX. Does God really answer prayer?**

1. YES! The Bible affirms this fact repeatedly (Isaiah 65:24) 'While they are speaking, I will hear. Psalm 118:5 'called in distress answered and set in broad place.' Psalm 120:1 'In my distress I cried to the Lord and he heard me' (Hebrews 4:16)
2. The example of Elijah (James 5:17), Hannah (1 Samuel 1), early church (Acts 12:15-19).
3. Five ways God answers prayers: Yes (James 5:17), No (Matthew 26), Wait (Jeremiah 42:4, 7), Giving something different (2 Corinthians 12:1-10), Giving something more (Ephesians 3:20-21). Peace to heart!

### **X. With what shall we conclude?**

1. Prayer is prohibitive against sin (Ephesians 6:13, 18).
2. Prayer will prevent apostasy.
3. Prayer will put us to work.
4. Prayer is peace giving (Philippians 4:6-7).
5. Prayer is personality changing.

## Lesson Two: The Matchless Teacher and Prayer

### Introduction:

*'Who, in the days of his flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His Godly fear'*

*Hebrews 5:7*

Christ is the matchless teacher. His teachings have stood the test of around 2000 years, yet they are relevant to us today. Jesus not only spoke as no man ever spoke (John 7:46). He prayed as no man has ever prayed. From the lonely nights spent in solitary prayer, to the examples of prayer given to the apostles, to the last words of Jesus on the cross, Christ's example in prayer is as comprehensive as his teaching on the subject. Careful study of the prayer life of Jesus will do much to convince us of the necessity, power, privilege and essentials of prayer. In this study we will focus on the example of Christ as He spoke with the Father.

Note: The whole testimony of the gospels leads to the view that Christ's deity in no way affected the reality of his human nature. The basic difference is He did no sin. His prayers were real and intense. He was just as dependant upon the Father for his all as we are today.

### I. A Summary of His Prayers

1. After the baptism of John (Luke 3:21)
2. Before his early Galilean ministry (Mark 1:35, Luke 4:42).
3. After the healing of a leper (Luke 5:16).
4. When He chose the twelve (Luke 6:12).
5. The feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:23).
6. The feeding of the 4000 (Mark 6:8).
7. Before Peter made the great confession (Luke 9:18-20).
8. Transfiguration (Luke 11:1).
9. Upon hearing the report of the seventy (Matthew 11:25-27, Luke 10:21-22).
10. Praying when asked to teach to pray (Luke 11:1).
11. Prayer of example ('Model prayer') (Matthew 6:5-16, Luke 11:2-4).
12. Raising of Lazarus (John 11:41-42).

13. When Greeks came to see Jesus (John 12:27-28).
  14. Jesus' prayer for himself, apostles and all who would follow (John 17:1-26).
  15. Prayer at the institution of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-27).
  16. Prayer for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).
  17. Prayers in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44) Three times.
  18. Prayers of the cross (Luke 23:34, Matthew 27:46, Luke 23:46) three times.
- \*Perhaps Matthew 19:13-15 indicates Jesus prayed for the children in this context.

## II. The Where of His Prayers

1. He prayed in solitude--solitude of time, place and spirit. Time: Two of Christ's most profound prayers (John 17 and those in Gethsemane were offered deep into the night). Note also Luke 6:12, Mark 1:35.
2. Secluded places--mountains, desert, garden favorites. (Matthew 14:13, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16, 6:12, John 18:2).
3. Even in the midst of crowds, our Lord had the ability and concentration that kept others from disturbing His solitude of spirit (Luke 9:18-20) Note the attitude of spirit:
  - a. eyes to heaven (John 11:41-42, John 17).
  - b. kneeling (Luke 22:41).
  - c. on face (Matthew 26:39).
  - d. hanging between heaven and earth (Cross).
4. Note the instruction of Matthew 6:6.

## III. The When of His Prayers

1. Great crisis and events were preceded by prayer (Luke 3:21, 6:12-13, Mark 1:35).
2. Prayer was made in the hour of his popularity, the time when many are self-sufficient and proud (Luke 5:16).
3. He prayed when under the great pressure of His work; prayer did not become a casualty because of busyness (Mark 6:31, Mark 1:32-33).
4. Great miraculous achievements were preceded by prayer:
  - a. feeding the 4000 (Matthew 15:36).
  - b. feeding 5000 (John 6:11).
  - c. Raising of Lazarus (John 11:41-42).
  - d. walking on water (Matthew 14:23-33).
  - e. Healing a boy (Mark 9:14-29).
5. Great achievements were followed by prayer (Matthew 14:23).



6. He prayed in times of deep joy (Luke 10:21-22).
7. He prayed in times of tremendous sorrow (Matthew 26).
8. He prayed when meals were served (John 6:11, et.al.).
9. He prayed in view of his suffering and death (Luke 9:18-28).
10. He died praying (Luke 23:46).

#### **IV. The How of His Prayers**

1. Jesus prayed specifically --He did not use generalities.
2. 7 words -'Father, I have glorified thee on earth'- Father's glory was His consuming passion.
3. Thanksgiving is constantly intermingled in his prayers.
4. Communion/fellowship - in this world's pollution of selfish sin, prayer is like a breath of fresh air to Jesus.
5. Intercession (Luke 22:31-32, Luke 23:34).
6. While He taught confession of sin, in His own prayers He had no sins to confess! (John 8:29). No occasion ever presented itself for him to confess wrongdoing.
7. He knew his prayers were answered (John 11:42).
8. Thirty years of living and serving, one tremendous act of dying (about six hours), and over 1900 years of praying (Hebrews 7:25). It was his prayerfulness that most impressed His closest followers (Luke 11:1).

#### **V. The Who of His Prayers**

1. Individuals like Peter (Luke 22:31-32).
2. Little children (Matthew 19:13-15, Luke 18:15-17).
3. Enemies (Luke 23-34, Matthew 5:44-45).
4. Himself.
5. All believers (John 17).
6. Pray that the Lord of harvest send forth reapers (Luke 20:2).

#### **VI. The What of His Prayers**

1. Taught disciples that prayer was necessary for them to cast out evil spirits (Mark 9:29).
2. Prayed Father would bless early Galilean ministry (Mark 1:35).
3. That Father would guide him in the selection of the twelve (Luke 6:12)
4. Thanked for revealing spiritual truth to others (Matthew 11:25-27).
5. That Father would be glorified (John 12:27-28).

6. That Father would glorify Him (John 17).
7. That cup might pass (Matthew 26).
8. That Father would keep, unite, sanctify, perfect and gather all believers into Christ (John 17).
9. That Father would send reapers (Luke 10:2).
10. That the Father's will would be done (Matthew 26).
11. That enemies would be forgiven (Luke 23:46).
12. That Father would understand suffering (Matthew 27:46).
13. That Father would receive His Spirit (Luke 23:46).
14. That Holy Spirit (Comforter) would come for apostles (John 14:16).

**Conclusion:**

1. Luke 8.1 takes on new meaning when we consider the prayer life of Jesus.
2. 1 Peter 2:21 we are not really like Jesus until we learn to pray more like Him.
3. I hope you'll keep/study this material in order to have a prayer life more like Jesus.

## Lesson Three: The Prayer of Example

*Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your Kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us fro the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom of power and the glory forever.  
Amen.*

### Introduction:

1. Matthew 6:9-13 commonly known as the 'Lord's prayer', was the first specific lesson Jesus taught his disciples on the subject.
2. They had seen and heard their Master pray, and it kindled in their hearts a keen yearning to enjoy the depth and closeness to the Father which Jesus enjoyed (cf. Luke 11:1).
3. Jesus answered them by giving this model or pattern of what prayer should be. In this passage, we face unequalled instruction concerning one of the most vital subjects in all of Christianity--prayer.
4. Much discussed, taught and written about, but never over done (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
5. The prayer of example has suffered greatly at the hands of some who would claim to be its friends:
  - a. Neglect it all together,
  - b. Recite it thoughtlessly,
  - c. Postpone its application to the distant future,
  - d. Just a few seem to see its full possibilities.
6. Jesus warned his disciples of two perils to avoid at all costs in prayer:

- a. Don't pray as hypocrites (Matthew 6:5),
- b. Don't pray as heathen (Matthew 6:7) - meaningless and empty phrases.
- 7. Failure to follow the Lord's counsel has done more to rob people of a rich prayer life than almost anything else.
- 8. This is not just a prayer to be recited:
  - a. The prayer is recorded in both Matthew 6 and Luke 11, and the wording differs somewhat. Why would this be true if this were intended to be a 'recited prayer'?
  - b. Luke 11 says, 'Teach us to pray' not teach us a prayer. (The two are different!)
  - c. Matthew 6:7 warns us against vain repetition in prayer. I would be inconsistent to say this and then require this prayer to be recited.
  - d. There is nowhere in the New Testament where this prayer is recited by anyone.
- 9. For the sake of arrangement, we will divide the study under two basic headings:
  - a. Distinctive characteristics--an introduction and study of the prayer in general, with outlines.
  - b. Instructive components--a more detailed examination of the prayer phrase-by-phrase.

## I. Distinctive Characteristics

- 1. It defines the spirit in which we should pray:
  - a. Unselfish - 'Our...'
  - b. Filial - 'Father...'
  - c. Reverent - 'hallowed...'
  - d. Loyal - 'kingdom...'
  - e. Submissive 'thy will be done...'
  - f. Dependant 'gives us...'
  - g. Penitent - 'forgive us...'
  - h. Humble 'Lead us not into...'
- 2. It is brief yet profound (only 55 or 66 words, depending on how you count the end of verse 13). No 'holy verbosity' here!
- 3. It is wonderfully comprehensive. Embodies in embryo every desire of the praying heart.
- 4. It is of universal application. Every need of humanity is included.

**THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH  
WE PRAY IS EVEN MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN THE  
WORDS WE UTTER.**

5. Reveals the priorities to be observed in prayer. Prayer is halfway through before any mention is made of needs and desires of the one praying.
6. God is bound to answer prayers that conform to the pattern of prayer here exhibited (James 5:16).
7. Outlining the Prayer:
  - a. Relationship Perspective
    1. Father/child 'Father'
    2. Deity/worshipper 'Hallowed be Thy name'
    3. Sovereign/subject 'Kingdom'
    4. Master/servant Thy will be done;
    5. Benefactor/beneficiary 'Give us'
    6. Savior/sinner 'Forgive us'
    7. Guide/pilgrim 'Lead u'
  - b. God's Glory/Man's Need
    1. God's glory (1st three elements)
      - a. Name
      - b. Kingdom
      - c. Will
    2. Man's need (2nd three elements)
      - a. Daily bread - depend on his supply
      - b. Forgive debts - depend on his mercy
      - c. Lead us not - depend on his power
  - c. Past, Present and Future
    1. Past - 'our debts'
    2. Present 'give'
    3. Future 'Lead us not'
  - d. Physical, Mental and Future
    1. Bread -- physical
    2. Forgiveness - mental/spiritual --relieving of guilt
    3. Temptation - physical/mental/spiritual
  - e. Outline for rest of study
    1. Paternity - 'Father';
    2. Priority - 'Hallowed'
    3. Program - 'Kingdom'
    4. Purpose - 'will'
    5. Provision - 'bread'

**PRAYER PUTS THE GLORY  
OF GOD ON DISPLAY**

**John 14:13**

- 6. Pardon - 'forgive'
- 7. Protection - 'lead us not'
- 8. Preeminence - 'Ties is...'

## II. Instructive Components of the Prayer

1. Paternity. What it means:
  - a. End of fear (Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:15).
  - b. Settles the matter of hope (1 Peter 1:3:9).
  - c. Means the end of loneliness, despair, etc. (We have a friend).
  - d. Settles the matter of selfishness - 'our'.
  - e. Takes care of matter of resources - 'in heaven 'not just location but elevation (cf. (James 3).
  - f. Settles the matter of obedience (John6:8),
  - g. Takes care of the matter of wisdom - He knows best! (Romans 8:28)
2. Priority - 'hallowed' How?)
  - a. When we truly believe He is (Hebrews 11:6).
  - b. When we know the kind of God He is (Psalm 34.8).
  - c. When we are constantly aware of His presence (Matthew 28, Hebrews 13, Matthew 18).
  - d. When we live obedient, loving lives to his glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).
3. Program 'kingdom'- further and spread. Heaven  
Matthew 6:33, Luke 16:16, Luke 17:21, Revelation 1:5-6, Colossians 1
4. Plan - 'will'- (What)
  - a. His comprehensive will (eternal scheme).
  - b. His compassionate will (conversion).
  - c. His commanding will (Acts 5:29, et.al.).
5. Provision - 'daily bread'
  - a. Substance - daily needs.
  - b. Source - God.
  - c. Supplication - give.
  - d. Seekers - us.
  - e. Schedule - this day.
6. Pardon - 'forgive' (What?)
  - a. Sin makes one guilty (Romans 3:19).
  - b. Forgiveness is only through Christ's death.
  - c. Repentance and confessing absolutely necessary (1 John 1:7-9, Acts 8:22).

- d. Forgiving one another is essential to our being forgiven.
- 7 Problems, Provision, Plea and Prerequisite (Why?)
- a. Such is the character of the saints (Matthew 5:43).
  - b. Because it follows the Lord's example (Luke 23:34).
  - c. Because it expresses one of the highest virtues in man (Proverbs 19:11).
  - d. Because it delivers us from chastening (Hebrews 12:5-11).
  - e. Because it gives us protection - 'lead us not' - the Shepherd cares!  
(1 Corinthians 10:13).

## **Lesson Four: Prayer and Our Worries Over People**

### *(A Lesson in Intercession)*

#### **Introduction:**

1. When 'eaten' and 'gnawed' on by worry over others, intercessory prayer is the antidote. Worry is a cheap substitute for prayer.
2. E.M. Bounds - 'Talking to God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still.'
3. The vast amount of worry that exists today is evidence enough that there is too little intercessory prayer (cf. Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 5:44, Luke 22:32, John 17).
4. Intercessory prayer is a vital aspect of a healthy life (Note Romans 15:30, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 1:9-11) - ours and those for whom we pray.
5. God enlists our prayerful partnership for the accomplishment of His will - this should be a cause of both awe and alarm (due to how little time we spend interceding for others in prayer).
6. In this study, we will examine six great truths concerning intercessory prayer.

#### **I. The meaning of intercessory prayer**

1. 'A pleading with one party on behalf of another, usually with a view of obtaining help for that other; (New ISBE Volume 2. P. 858).
2. The Greek verb occurs in Acts 25:24, Romans 8:26-27 (Holy Spirit), Romans 8:34 (Jesus), Romans 11:2 (Elijah) and Hebrews 7:25 (Jesus).
3. The Greek noun occurs in 1 Timothy 2:1 and 4:5.
4. The Greek expressions basically mean, 'to fall in with a person, to draw near so as to converse freely, and hence to have freedom of access (J. Oswald Sanders). See also Ralph Earle, p. 385.
5. Intercession then is completely unselfish and altruistic aspect of prayer.
6. Inherent in the Biblical meaning of intercession are three basic concepts:
  - a. Aspect of Affection (we 'feel' for someone).
  - b. Aspect of Approach (we 'see' the privilege of entering God's presence).
  - c. Appeal to Authority (we 'ask' the King for His aid).
7. Intercessory prayer is going to the Father on behalf of another and receiving the resources of the eternal One on that individual's behalf.



## II. The privilege of intercessory prayer

1. William Law - 'Intercession is the best promoter of true friendship, the best arbitrator of differences, the best cure and preservative against unkind tongues, and all anger and haughty passion.'
2. Intercession is prayer should be natural. There is a social aspect to life that must not be overlooked or underestimated (cf. Luke 2:52, Romans 14:7-8, 1 Corinthians 12:20-21, 26).
3. Intercession in prayer is a privilege because of striking mutuality in all our lives. There are a number of strands that connect all of us together - God, our real purpose in being alive, birth, death, joys sorrows, etc.
4. Intercession in prayer is a privilege because it is a great way for us to empathize with one another (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:25-27). Illustration: When a person is sick and gets a shot, we typically administer the shot in a member of the body that is healthier, where the infection may not exist or isn't as strong.
5. Intercession in prayer is a privilege from a personal perspective. It keeps us humble and puts us to work in implementing what we can do for others. We emphasize the individual and his liberty so much we may fail to emphasize the 'body concept' of Christianity. We are dependants! Dependants on other's toil, thoughts and actions. Why not their prayers too?

## III. The purpose of intercessory prayer

1. Because of concern and love for friends and family.
  - a. Abraham for Lot (Genesis 18:23-33).
  - b. Manoah for Samson (Judges 13:8-20).
  - c. Job for his children.
2. Because it is our duty as priests (1 Peter 2:9).
3. Because of the personal burden we feel for others (cf. Exodus 31:11 ff.).
4. Because our Lord commanded it (Matthew 5:44, 9:38)..
5. Because the intercession of God's people is behind the advance of the Word (e.g. Acts 4:31, 16:25).
6. Because the Lord practiced it (1 Peter 2:21-22, John 17:1-26).
7. Because minds/hearts must be moved if God's glorious will is achieved. Men are hard to move! (Matthew 7:7-8).
8. Because circumstances are never exactly the same after we have interceded (James 5:16)
9. Because of the help and strength it imparts to others (James 5:14-16).

10. Because of the severity of the Lord's judgment may be averted (Numbers 14:11-38).
11. Because it gives deliverance (1 Samuel 7:3-9).
12. Because it provides blessings (Numbers 6:23-27)
13. Because through it restoration may be obtained (Job 42:7-13).
14. Because it can encourage repentance (Luke 23:34, Acts 7:59-60, Romans 10:1- 4).

#### **IV. The characteristics of intercessory prayer**

1. Pleading and persistent (Genesis 18:23-33).
2. Specific (Genesis 24:12-15, Luke 22:32).
3. Intense (Genesis 32:31-32).
4. Supports so as to gain victory (Exodus 17:9-15).
5. Grief-filled (1 Samuel 15:11).
6. Confession (Nehemiah 1:4-11).

#### **V. Great examples of intercessory prayer**

1. Abraham (Genesis 18:22-33).
  - a. Selflessness of his intercession
    1. Lot and family
    2. But the whole city too
  - b. Spirit of his intercession.
    1. Holiness 'came near'.
    2. Reverence - Note 27, 30, 32.
    3. Persistence - he prayed three times.
  - c. 'Supposition' or his intercession.
    1. Argument.
    2. Application
  - d. Success of his intercession.
    1. Got all he asked.
    2. Quit asking before God quit giving.
    3. Lot's house left something to be desired spiritually.
2. Moses (Exodus 32:7-35)
  - a. Four experiences.
    1. Refused suggestion to be father of a great nation (v. 10)

2. Suggested offering self as sacrifice (v. 30)
  3. Declaration that he positively would not go on alone (33:15).
  4. Observation of God's glory (34:6).
- b. Four agonies:
1. Would their sin compel God to destroy?
  2. Could their sin be forgiven?
  3. Would God still be with them as guide?
  4. Could the broken covenant be restored?
3. Jesus (John 17:1-26)
- a. We share His life (1-5).
  - b. We know His name (6-12).
  - c. We have His word (13-19).
  - d. We share His glory (20-26).

## **VI. The benefits of intercessory prayer (To the one praying)**

1. Gives grater reliance upon Father (2 Corinthians 3:5).
2. Provokes us to work (James 2:14-16).
3. Adds greater wisdom and understanding (James 1:5)
4. Makes us relate to others better (1 Corinthians 12).
5. Removes bitterness (Matthew 5:44).
6. Gives assurance (Hebrews 6:11).
7. Makes us more like the Lord (Romans 8:29).

## *A 'Hand' In Remembering Who to Pray For*

**Your Thumb is nearest to you.** So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest ones to remember. To pray for our loved ones is , as C.S. Lewis once said, a 'sweet duty.'

**Next is the Pointing Finger.** Pray for those who teach, instruct or heal. This includes doctors, teachers and preachers. They need support and wisdom for pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.



**The Third Finger is the tallest finger.** It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry and administrators. These people shape our vision and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

**The Fourth Finger is our ring finger.** Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need our prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

**Last comes our Little Finger,** the smallest finger of all. Which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, 'the last shall be greatest among you'. Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

## **Lesson Five: A 'Star Pupil' in Prayer**

*(Prayer in the Life of Paul)*

### **Introduction:**

1. We learn best when we see truth expressed in human personality. In nothing is this more true than in prayer. If not, why did the disciples ask Jesus how to pray in the first place? (Luke 11:1)
2. Of all the people who have ever lived, few indeed have excelled the apostle Paul in the depth and effectiveness of their prayer lives.
3. This is an application of 1 Corinthians 11:1 '...as I follow Christ'.
4. Paul sets a marvelous and stimulating example as a 'star pupil' in the school of prayer.
5. We should be eternally grateful to the Father for His infinite wisdom in giving us the insight into prayer that He does from the life of Paul.
6. Five great thoughts concerning the prayer life of Paul.

### **I. Conviction and Paul's prayer life**

1. Conviction - 'a fixed belief on the basis of available evidence'.
2. Paul nowhere in Scripture goes into deep detail concerning the need to defend the reasonableness of praying. He simply is convicted about its essentiality, and assumes it is part of the life of a growing Christian (Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Philippians 4:6-7).
3. To Paul, prayer was a natural expression of the relationship which exists between God and those who belong to Him. Perfectly normal for children to converse with their father!
4. It was Paul's conviction that nothing was beyond the reach of prayer except that which was out of the will of God.
5. Study your own prayers! How much time do you honestly invest getting your heart in tune for conversing with God? Do your prayers reflect careful and reverent thought? Do they reflect devout meditation? Are they haphazard, careless and lacking in real depth? Too many of us have a 'how's the weather' approach to talking to God!

## **II. Catalog of Paul's prayer life in Acts**

1. Prayer during the three day interval between the Lord's appearance and his conversion (Acts 9:11).
  2. Prayer when Paul and Barnabas were chosen to go on first missionary journey (Acts 12:2-5).
  3. Prayers as elders appointed and in commendation of brethren to grow (Acts 14:23).
  4. Prayer at a 'prayer meeting' and in healing a demoniac (Acts 16:13, 16)
  5. Prayer in a prison while in stocks (Acts 16:25, 34).
  6. Prayer with Ephesian elders in his 'farewell' ( Acts 20:36).
  7. Prayer on the shore of Tyre when warned by brethren not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:5).
  8. Prayer prior to and after a shipwreck (Acts 28,23-38).
  9. Prayer for the sick and fever-stricken (Acts 28:8,15,28).
- NOTE: Prayer is often associated with fasting (cf. Acts 13:3, 14:14,23)

## **III Communication of Paul's prayer life in the Epistles**

1. Prayer for saints and Rome and for a prosperous journey to see them (Romans 1:8-15).
2. Prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:15-17).
3. Prayer and the heart-felt burden for Israel (Romans 10:1).
4. Admonition to prayer as a continuous ministry (Romans 12:12).
5. Prayer for like-mindedness among brethren (Romans 15:5,6).
6. Admonition to strive together in prayer (Romans 15:30-33).
7. Prayer for Satan's conquest and for grace (Romans 16:20).
8. Doxology of Romans (Romans 16:20).
9. Prayer of thanksgiving (1 Corinthians 4-9). Corinthians should have prayed this too!
10. Paul's ways and prayer (1 Corinthians 4:17, 2:1-5).
11. Prayer and sexual relationships in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:5).
12. Prayer in spirit and understanding (1 Corinthians 7:5).
13. Prayer as a benediction (2 Corinthians 1:2-4).
14. Prayer concerning 'thorn' (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
15. Prayer that Corinthians do 'honorably '(2 Corinthians 13:7).
16. Doxology of 2 Corinthians (13:14).
17. Prayer for perception and power (Ephesians 1:15-20).

18. Prayer for inner fullness (Ephesians 3:14-21).
19. Prayer for all as the warrior's reserve (Ephesians 6:18-20).
20. Prayer for thanksgiving for Philippians (1:3-11).
21. Prayer and peace of mind (Philippians 4:6-7, 19-23).
22. Prayer for praise for Colossians (1:3-8).
23. Prayer for a seven fold blessing (Colossians 1:9-14).
24. Prayer as fellowship (Colossians 4:2-4 13,17).
25. Prayer as remembrance for Thessalonians (1:2-3).
26. Prayer for return visit (1 Thessalonians 3:9-13).
27. Prayer to be without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
28. Prayer, Praise and perfection (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).
29. Prayer concerning worthiness of calling (2 Thessalonians 1:3, 11-12).
30. Prayer concerning stability and comfort (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 16-17).
31. Prayer concerning the word and protection (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5).
32. Prayer to be made for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-4).
33. Prayer for the ministry of Timothy (2 Timothy 1:2-7).
34. Prayer for the household of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16-18).
35. Prayer for his enemies (2 Timothy 4:14-18).
36. Prayers and trust for release (Philemon 22).

#### **IV Characteristics of Paul's Prayer Life**

1. Prayers are full for Jesus Christ. Some prayers are cold and dry because there is too little of Jesus in them! We must have 'fire in our bones'-- irrepressible praise!
2. Unceasing. No one prays like Paul without taking the time required to grow in prayer, (Colossians 4:2).
3. Thanksgiving. Ephesians 5:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
4. Unselfish. Abound in knowledge (1 Thessalonians 1:3-11), filled with it (Colossians 1:9-12), prove worthy of calling (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12), be clean from sin (2 Corinthians 13:7).
5. Affectionate and sincere (Romans 10:1).
6. Covetous (in highest and noblest sense). Romans 15:30-33).
7. Strenuous (Romans 15:30).

## **V. Concerns in Paul's prayer life**

1. The will of God (Acts 9:11).
2. The souls of men and glory of God (Acts 13:2-3)
3. Prosperous journey to help the saints (Romans 1:9-11).
4. Removal of handicap (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
5. Great ministry for Timothy (2 Timothy 1:3-7).
6. For sick (Acts 28:8 ff).
7. For nation that was lost (Romans 10:1).
8. For welfare of the church (repeatedly) - intercession.
9. While in prison suffering, he rejoiced in prayer (Acts 16:25)

### **Conclusion**

Are you on your way to becoming a 'star pupil' in the school of prayer?



## **Lesson Six: Praying With Power**

*(8 Ways to Enrich Prayer)*

### **Introduction:**

1. A great prayer life is not measured by how much we get from God, but how much of Him gets into us and our daily circumstances and relationships (Luke 11:1)!
2. Reader's Digest has a long section entitled, 'It Pays to Enrich Your Word Power'.
3. Every conscientious Christian should realize that it pays even more to enrich your prayer power!
4. How can we maximize our prayer life? How can we pray with greater power? How can we grow closer to God through prayer? These are important questions that certainly involve our attention (cf. Philippians 4:8, Psalm 49:3).
5. To enrich our prayer lives, there are at least eight elements or ingredients that we must ever strive to give their proper place.

### **I. The ingredient of praise/worship**

1. Remember Luke 11:2 and the prayer of example.
2. Prayer begins with God! The concerns and interests of God came first. This ought to revolutionize our praying!
3. Worship - 'the act of giving honor, reverence and adoration to God as He has revealed Himself in Christ and in the scriptures'. (Note Revelation 5:12.
4. Prayer is an avenue of worship, and worship flows from love. Where there is little love, there will be little worship.
5. How much time is spent in prayer simply praising and adoring God for who He is, for the perfection and greatness of His own character? This is one reason why the Psalms should be so precious to us. Note Psalm 34:3 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.' Consider Psalm 145 for example:
  - a. The Greatness of God (3-6).
  - b. The Goodness of God (7-10).
  - c. The Government of God (11-13).
  - d. The Grace of God (14-20).

6. Perhaps we all should come to God more in prayer for nothing else that just to come to Him, for we love Him so - just to be in His presence and to praise Him.
7. John 4:24 - not mere profession or pretense. Matthew 4:11 - Let not man put asunder! True worship will lead one to loving, sacrificial service. One can never be a substitute for the other.

## **II. The ingredient of thanksgiving**

1. We are all tempted to take God's blessings for granted, and to fail to give Him thanks.
2. Thanksgiving is an integral part of prayer, not just an accessory or after-thought.
3. 'The glad and appreciative acknowledgment of the benefits and blessings God gives, either to ourselves or to others.'
4. Worship and adoration in prayer should naturally lead us to thanksgiving for the wondrous gifts He has lavished upon us!
5. Gratitude and appreciation are important in human relationships, and it is surely no less important in our relationships with our heavenly Father (Psalm 118:1, 103:2).
6. The example of Jesus in this regard:
  - a. John 11:41 - grave of Lazarus
  - b. John 6:11 - feeding of 5000
  - c. Luke 10:21 - return of seventy
  - d. Luke 22:19 - thanks for the cup.
7. Lamentations 3:22-23. They were unconscious of many of our blessings and therefore they went unacknowledged. Illustration: A sick young boy said one time: 'I have experienced the most fun I've ever had in my life. I was able to breathe freely for about five minutes.'
8. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Ephesians 5:20 - 'all sunshine makes a desert.' Father does truly know best.

**WE SHOULD BE  
THANKFUL FOR THE  
FURNACE, THE HAMMER  
AND THE SWORD**

## **III. The Ingredient of Contrition**

1. Involved in the concept of contrition are three basic concepts:
  - a. sincerity
  - b. humility
  - c. confession of sin.

2. Sincerity - prayer takes in the whole man. It takes the whole man to truly pray (physically, mentally and spiritually). Prayer affects the whole man in its gracious results (See I Thessalonians 5:23-24)
3. Humility - God puts a great price on humility of the heart. Humility doesn't mean thinking mainly or yourself; it simple means not thinking selfishly - period.
4. When contemplating the greatness of God, our smallness should be ever so evident! And our awe that He cares so much for us.
5. Luke 18:9-14, James 6:6-7.
6. Our egos must be set low before our prayers can ever rise high. Our prayers must have much of the 'dust' of humility on them before they can ever have much of the glory of God in them!
7. Humility must be in the praying character as light is in the sun. As a ship is made for the water, so humility is made for prayer.
8. Confession - 'to say the same thing, to admit or declare oneself guilty of what accused of.' (Psalm 32:1-5, 1 John 1:9)
9. No one suffers from self-righteousness who truly spends much time emphasizing this in prayer!
10. Psalms - the place where God is praised most in the Old Testament. It is also the place where penitence is mentioned most.

#### **IV. The ingredient of Consecration**

1. Involves devotion and dedication.
2. 'Devout' in Acts 8:2, 10:2, 22:12 and also in Luke 2:25
3. Prayer promotes a spirit of devotion, and devotion is a wonderful incentive to powerful praying.
4. May work at religion with order, precision and force of machinery. Too often it is with heartlessness of a machine. Pray without praying, sing without singing, go to assembly without worshipping.
5. The great 'lack' in many people's lives is the spirit of devotion and dedication that puts life and purpose into our souls.
6. Too busy to commune with God in prayer? Then you are too busy! May even be too busy doing 'church work'.

## **V. The ingredient of petition**

1. Note 1 Timothy 2:1.
2. Greek word literally means 'to beg, to lack.'
3. Hebrews 4:16 - pleas for the supply of a definite need keenly felt. Specific situations in view.

## **VI. The ingredient of intercession**

1. Have already dealt with at length. But 'to fall in with a person, to draw near so as to converse freely, to have freedom of access'.
2. Aspect of affection, access of approach, appeal to authority.
3. The letter received from a mother to pray for her son.

## **VII. The ingredient of compassion**

1. Jesus having it (Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 18:27, 20:34).
2. I Peter 3:8 - Having compassion for one another.
3. I John 3:7 - shut up bowels of compassion.
4. Jude 22 - have compassion, making a difference.

## **VIII. The ingredient of trust**

1. James 1:5,8
2. Proverbs 3:5-7
3. Psalm 37:5
4. Proverbs 16:3

## **Conclusion**

1. If you long to know the Lord better and to share with the Father your deepest concerns, these suggestions will help you along the way.
2. 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

***Dear fellow Christians:***

*I am writing to request a very special favor. My son is in trouble, spiritually and I am asking that you pray for him. His name is Don. There is no doubt in my mind that he knows the difference between right and wrong, it is just that when he got out on his own, he decided to break the rules, give in to peer pressure and walk on the wild side. He has been a very unhappy person for some time now and I need all the help that I can get to get him to see that for real happiness, he needs Jesus.*

*I am not making an appeal to those who say, 'There's no need to pray for him, he has to make the changes himself. No one can do it for him.' I am appealing to these who truly have faith that prayer can make a difference, those who really believe that God can reach down and touch Dan's heart and make him see that he needs to get back to his Christian values.*

*Time and time again, I have seen in bulletins and other publications, parents asking for prayers for their child who has some dreaded ailment, such as cancer, but very few times have I seen a plea throughout the brotherhood from parents who have a child who is spiritually sick. Friends I am asking that you bring Don before God in prayer, to heal him spiritually, that he might enjoy abundant life.*

*I know I have not said this as well as many could have said it, but I hope you understand what I am asking. Please don't pray for him just once and forget about him, but pray for him throughout the coming new year.*

*In Christian Love,  
Don's mother*

# Lesson Seven: The Name that Charms Our Fears

## *(Prayer in the Name of Jesus)*

### **Introduction:**

1. The expression 'in the name of Jesus' is not just some formula or mere formality for ending a prayer.
2. It is one of the most wonderfully comprehensive expressions in all the Bible.
3. It is extremely significant that in our Lord's farewell discourse to His disciples He mentioned at least six times the importance of praying 'in My name.' (John 14:13- 14, 15:16, 16:23-27).
4. One thing is certain - prayer is impotent and worthless if it is not offered in Christ's name!
5. Can there be any doubt that the Lord was trying to impress His followers concerning the privilege and power of prayer offered in His name?
6. In this study, we will examine three fundamental themes which will better help us understand what it truly means to pray in the name of Jesus.

### **I. Analyzing the passages**

1. There are several passages that are very pertinent to trying to discover the richness of 'in the name of Jesus' meaning
2. John 14:13-14 - Note four thoughts from this passage:
  - a. Privilege - 'whatever'- universal term.
  - b. Presentation - 'ask in my name'- in accord with His person and character.
  - c. Promise - 'I will do it.'- Assurance, after all this is mentioned twice!
  - d. Praise - 'that the Father be glorified in the son'
3. John 15:16
  - a. Appointment - chosen (apostles and application to us (2 Thessalonians 2:13-15).
  - b. Abiding - 'go and bear fruit, that I should remain'- This was told to the apostles and us again.
  - c. Asking - 'whatever you ask the Father in my name, He will give you'
4. John 16:23-28
  - a. Two meanings for 'Ask'
    1. In 23a and 26 - to ask or to make a request
    2. In 23b, 24 and 26b 'to request something of a superior.'

- b. Two times - 'now' and 'that day'.
  - c. Two situations - figurative language vs. plain language.
5. John 20:31 - life in his name.
  6. Luke 10:17 - demons subject in his name (cf. Acts 16:18).
  7. Acts 2:21 - salvation in His name.
  8. Ephesians 5:20 - giving thanks always in His name.
  9. Colossians 3:17 - do all in His name.

## II. Acknowledging the priorities

1. General meaning - to pray 'in the name of Jesus' both an action and an attitude; it is to pray in harmony with all that Jesus is and all that He has done for us.
2. Specific acknowledgments:
  - a. Realization - pray in accordance with all Jesus' name stands for as Son of God who died for our sins (Philippines 2:9-11, John 14:6, John 1:11-12).
  - b. Representation - appeal to the Father upon the basis of Christ's sacrifice and work as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:25). See also 1 John 2:1-2. The One who 'represents' us is Jesus
  - c. Attestation - our own inability to properly solve our sin problem, or to provide for ourselves (Matthew 5:3, James 4:10, 2 Corinthians 3:5).
  - d. Consideration - prayer that is consistent with the holy, righteous and sovereign character of God (1 Peter 1:15-16, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Matthew 5:8, James 5:16, et. al.).
  - e. Identification - request of the Father what Jesus would desire. Our desires are His, our mind is that of Christ (Philippians 2:5), our walk is in harmony with His (1 Peter 2:21-22), Matthew 26:39-42).
  - f. Glorification - our sincere desire is that the Father be glorified (Matthew 5:13-16) John 14:13, 27:4).
  - g. Appropriation - prayer offered in the knowledge that God will answer accordingly (Matthew 21:22).

## III. Applying the results

1. Testing our results in prayer:
  - a. Has what I have been asking for been through the light of Scripture?
  - b. If I receive the request, would I draw closer to the Lord?
  - c. Does this seek the ultimate and eternal good of all involved?
  - d. Will this expand or strengthen the church of God?

- e. Is it something God will enjoy too if He grants it? (Psalm 106.15)  
God's pleasure (Psalm 16:11, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 13:20-21,  
2 Corinthians 5:9).
2. Prayer in Jesus' name is one of the greatest blessings of fellowship with God, for it lifts the one praying into unity and oneness with the Son of God Himself.
  3. 'In the name of Jesus' is the most influential phrase in the Bible. Is there any more so? Such is its power and importance.
  4. To use someone else's name means we are not acting by our own power or authority. See the vivid contrast of Luke 18:9-14. See also Esther 8:7-8.
  5. The point is that Jesus entrusts us with His name so we might have access to the riches of heaven!
  6. We might entrust our checkbook to a spouse but never an embezzler.
  7. Before going to heaven, Jesus committed His interests to frail and failing men. He signed over the 'power of attorney' to us to use His name in drawing on the bank of heaven for any supplies necessary for the welfare of His work. What resources are thus at our asking!
  8. Prayer in the name of Jesus overcomes our fears. The question of questions: 'Does this thing or individual have greater power than Jesus?' 'Will you give God the fear and allow Him to give you the courage to overcome it?' Fear is the outward manifestation of worry and our own insufficiency. Grim reminders of the past. See 1 John 4:18-19, Revelation 1:17-18.
  9. His name gives us assurance (1 Thessalonians 1:5, Hebrews 6:11, 10:22).
  10. Every prayer should be prayed 'in the name of Jesus'. When the prayer is public, the fact that the prayer is being offered in Christ's name should be stated (where this is done in the prayer makes no difference). But further, the fact that the prayer is being offered 'in Jesus' name should be written all over our hearts, thoughts and actions not only during our prayers, but throughout our lives! Then we truly can say 'amen' and be one too!



## Lesson Eight: Prayer in the Valley of Decision

*(Knowing God's Will and Prayer)*

### Introduction:

1. 'Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decisions' (Joel 3:14)
2. Decisions, decisions - we all have to face them. Some are not all that important; others are exceedingly so.
3. Conscientious Christians want to make the right decisions. We long to both know and do the Lord's will.
4. Note how this relates to prayer: Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him' (1 John 5:13-14). In this passage, God promises to answer every prayer that is in accordance with His will. The implications of this statement are beyond comprehension!
5. Consider also:
  - a. 'Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the Lord's will is' (Ephesians 5:17).
  - b. '...that you maybe able to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God ' (Romans 12:2).
6. Herein lies the problem for us. It is not always easy to know what the will of God may be in a given matter. Further, many Christians do not know how to truly seek God's guidance for determining what His will may be. One thing is sure, however, the will of God cannot be improved!
7. Six promises worth holding onto:
  - a. Instruction - 'I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you' (Psalm 32:8).
  - b. Counsel - 'With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory (Psalm 73:24).
  - c. Guidance - 'For thou art my rock and my fortress; for Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide me' (Psalm 31:3).
  - d. Direction - (Proverbs 32:3).
  - e. Establishment - 'Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established' (Proverbs 16:3)

- f. Execution - 'Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it' (Psalm 37:5).
8. God is even more concerned that we desire and walk in His will than we are!
  9. Most of worry so much over matters. How many of us are so concerned about the will of God concerning our decisions that we invest 5 minutes a day asking Him to show us His will?
  10. A very common question - 'How can I know God's will?' The question exposes more that we'd like to admit. It reveals not-existent, inconsistent or childishly adolescent communion with God.
  11. We don't have to be alone in the valley of decision! (See Philippians 2:12-13, Hebrews 13:20-21).
  12. Want to share '10 P's in a pod' for desiring and applying the will of God when in the valley of decision. No one principle alone may give you clear direction, but the combined sense of direction they provide usually proves unmistakable.

## **I. Presentation**

1. Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Contrast Jonah (1:1-3) and David (Acts 13:22) concerning direction and the will of God. Lord delights to reveal His will to those who act upon what His will is.
2. Practical questions:
  - a. Can you think of any reasons why God would not want you to make this a 'yes' decision?
  - b. Will you have to do something contrary to what you know is right?
  - c. Can you put the Lord first if you do this?
  - d. Will this bring you close to your personal goals in glorifying Christ?
  - e. Will it give you more opportunities to shine for the Lord?

## **II. Prayer**

1. Remember 1 John 5:14.
2. True prayer is not just asking God what we want; it is asking Him what He wants! It is the way of redirecting the aligning our desires to the will of God
3. There are times we honestly don't know for what to pray, except Romans 8:26 and Matthew 6:10. Note: Not Thy will be CHANGED rather, Thy will be DONE.
4. Consider Matthew 26:39-44. John 8:11. The struggle of two natures. Hebrews 5:7, Matthew 11:26 - 'Even so Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.'

5. Those who rush to God only during times of major trial are often made to wait so they can reevaluate their own relationship with the Father.

### **III. Principles**

1. Psalm 119:105. Our consciences must be tied to the word of God.
2. It is our responsibility to search out what is revealed. What does God's word have to say about this matter? (Isaiah 8:20, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **IV. People**

1. Proverbs 15:22 - 'Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.' Think of Isaiah 9:6.
2. The 'body principle' (1 Corinthians 12:14).
3. Do you choose foolish or wise counselors? (Rehoboam in 1 Kings 12:1-15)

### **V. Providence**

1. Romans 8:28-29. Like Hebrew, only read backwards!
2. Sometimes that which we believe to be providential confirms or rejects what we are considering. Acts 16 and going to Macedonia.

### **VI. Patience**

1. It is nonsense to the highest degree to think we can excel at the art of getting guidance from God without being willing to set aside time for it.
2. If God is not moving fast enough for you, slow down and don't run ahead. Fruit of the Spirit is patience (Galatians 5:22-23) (cf. James 4:15, Isaiah 40:29-31). Prayer is not just talking to God, but waiting until our hearts are quiet enough to receive what He has been waiting to say.

### **VII. Persistence**

1. Luke 18:1; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
2. Continue until you believe it is best to stop.

### **VIII. Proceed**

1. There's a time to slack off and a time to surge ahead.
- 2 Revelation 3:7-8.
3. 'Are you seeking God's will?'

4. Two of the greatest frustration causers:
  - a. Trying to put the brakes on someone who plunges ahead with utter disregard for God's will.
  - b. Trying to blast someone into motion when the time and place of God's will are obvious.

## **IX. Peace**

1. Philippians 4:6-7.
2. Acts 12:5, 16:25.
3. We may not experience uninterrupted peace constantly, for after all, life on earth is a war. It all boils down to the fact that war has never been noted for being easy.

## **X. Praise**

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
2. Praise God for being the One who is in control of time, and for loving us enough to guide us.

### **Conclusion:**

1. 2 Corinthians 5:7.
2. Does it dim your vision of Jesus? Does it take away from the relationship with the King? Does it make you desire Him less? If so, it is not right for you!
3. God's will won't take us where His grace won't keep us (I Peter 4:10; 5:10).

## **Lesson Nine: When You're Tempted to Give Up**

### *(Persistence in Prayer)*

#### **Introduction:**

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - often we glibly speak of 'praying without ceasing' when we are quite apt to quit.
2. Nothing distinguishes the children of God so much as prayer. Further, persistent prayer is not merely a matter of want or need, but of sheer necessity.
3. While it may seem surprising or puzzling to many, God is moved to answer our prayers in response to a persistence that will not take no for an answer. Please remember prayer is more than a habit or duty, it is a yearning for closer communion with God. (cf. James 5:16).
4. Too often we are tempted to give up rather than be persistent in prayer!
5. Persistent Prayer - 'enduring continuance in prayer which involves tenacity and effort in purpose.' 'The pressing of our desires upon God with urgency and perseverance; the praying with that tenacity and tension which neither relaxes nor ceases until its plea is heard, and its cause won.'
6. This is a Biblical concept, though one often neglected among Christians. Consider four thoughts pertaining to persistence in prayer.

#### **I. The Purpose of persistence**

1. Why would God want us to be so persistent in asking? Why doesn't He just grant our requests, as He is well able to do?
2. Not a totally fair question. About like asking, 'Since God knows what we need and want anyway, why bother to pray?' God wants us to and we need to.
3. Answer to question persistent prayer can be answered in much the same way.
4. We can be assured there is no reluctance on God's part to give us what is really good. He doesn't have to be coaxed because He is not mean or unwilling. See Matthew 7:7-11.
5. Herein lies the answer. It is not God who is under test, but our own spiritual maturity. God does not always grant what we ask immediately because we are not yet in a fit state to receive what we think we must have.
6. There may be a lack of yielded-ness, or some failure to master some previous spiritual lesson. While God doesn't deny the request, He withholds the answer until, through persevering prayer, the end He has in view is achieved.

7. God's delays are always delays of love not meanness. Men would pluck their blessings green, but God would have them ripe.
8. Why God might delay answering a request:
  - a. May be asking without greatly caring about the issue. Laxity and no passion, Philippians 2:12-13
  - b. May be asking out of selfishness, and God's delay is necessary to purge us of that attitude, James 4:1-2.
  - c. We may subconsciously be unwilling to pay the price involved in the answering of our prayers.
  - d. We may be misinterpreting what God is doing in our lives in answer to our prayers, 2 Peter 1:5-11.
  - e. God's apparent delay may be to secure our humble dependence upon Him to a greater degree, Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

## **II. The Parables illustrating persistence**

1. Luke 11:5-8 (note context). 'Parable of Three Friends'.
2. If even a self-centered and ungenerous human being to whom sleep was more important than his friend's need will reluctantly rise at midnight and help because of that man's persistence, how much more will God?
3. Luke 18:1-8 'The Unprincipled Judge'.
4. This judge is heartless and unprincipled, but still made sure the widow was treated fairly due to her persistence. How much more will the Christian be speedily vindicated in the court of heaven, where we have an advocate whose character is the very opposite of the judge in the parable?
5. In both parables, Jesus is careful to show the loving and merciful character of God in contrast to the uncaring friend and unscrupulous judge.

## **III. The principles of persistence**

1. Devoted - Matthew 7:11, Philippians 1:21.
2. Dependant - 2 Corinthians 3:5, Romans 12:3.
3. Direct - Hebrews 4:16, James 1:5-8, 1 John 5:14.
4. Definite (specific - some prayers are so general they can fit any and all occasions).  
Note 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
5. Disciplined - Psalm 62:5 'My expectation is from Him.'
6. Determined - Luke 11:10-11.

#### **IV. The Promises Through Persistence**

1. Rulers and nations can be influenced (1 Timothy 2:1-3, Proverbs 14:34).
2. Wisdom among the brethren is increased (Ephesians 1:16-17, James 1:5-8).
3. Unity among brethren is strengthened (1 Corinthians 1:10, John 17:20-21)
4. The gospel is spread (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5).

#### **Conclusion**

1. Noting Abraham, Genesis 18:16-33 and Elijah, I Kings 18:42-45. Six times in seven verses.
2. We need more '7 times' pray-ers.
3. Persistence in prayer moves God, and develops greater spirituality for those who so act.

## Lesson Ten: Pleading the Promises

### Introduction:

1. We through Jesus Christ have been granted 'exceedingly great and precious promises' (2 Peter 1:40).
2. In the promises of Scripture we find 'unreachable riches' (Ephesians 3:8 - wealth beyond our wildest dreams!)
3. Yet to due the fact many of us fail to prayerfully appropriate the promises of God, we live in comparative spiritual poverty.
4. Every promise of Scripture is a writing of God, which may be pleaded before Him with this reasonable request, 'I know You will do as You have said'. The creator will not cheat the created. The heavenly Father will not break His word to His own child (Hebrews 6:18-19, Titus 1:2)
5. Many Christians are not pleading the promises!

### I. The character of the promises

1. Promise - a written verbal declaration that binds the person who makes it do or forbear a specified act.
2. When used of God, it is His pledge or undertaking to do or refrain from doing a certain thing.
3. These promises form the basis of the prayer of faith (cf. James 5:16, 4:1-2)
4. It is through prayer and faithfulness that promises are turned into facts and reality.
5. The validity of a promise depends on the character and resources of the one who makes it. God's character makes His promises dependable. See I Kings 8:56 - 'not one word of His good promise has failed.' See also Hebrews 10:23 'He who promised is faithful.'
6. God's promises are bund up in His character:
  - a. His truth - lying is impossible.
  - b. His omniscience - knows all things, so cannot be deceived or mistaken.
  - c. His power - makes everything possible.
  - d. His unchangeableness - doesn't vacillate.
7. When we can go to God in prayer armed with His promises, we can do so with utmost confidence (Hebrews 4:16) See Romans 4:20-21)



## II. The range of the promises

1. 'Exceedingly great and precious promises' (2 Peter 1:4) - hath granted denotes a permanent bestowal from above. In Jesus all the promises can have their fulfillment (cf. Acts 13:32 ff.)
2. 'Exceedingly Great' - due to the excellence of their contents, lit., the very greater, the greatest.
3. 'Precious' - of great worth, due to the riches involved.
4. It is worthy of note that all the universal terms of the English language - whatever, whenever, wherever, whoever, all, any every - are repeatedly used in connection with prayer (cf. 1 John 5:13-14, John 14:13-14, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
5. What encouragement! God's promises cover the whole range of human need. There is no conceivable circumstance of life for which there is not an appropriate promise waiting to be claimed.
6. When reading Scripture we should be alert to discover what God has promised to do, and we should lay hold of His promise (Acts 6:4).
7. Promises for:
  - a. Adversity.
  - b. Prosperity.
  - c. Peace.
  - d. Guidance.
  - e. Protection.
  - f. Strength.
  - g. Deliverance.
  - h. Joy.
8. Think of the blessings assured in some of the great prayer promises:
  - a. Anything is possible within the will of God (Mark 9:23).
  - b. Adequate grace is available for every need (Philippians 4:19).
  - c. Help is assured in time of need (Isaiah 65:24).
  - d. The limitless ability of God is within our disposal (Ephesians 3:20).
  - e. Tranquility flows from prayer (Philippians 4:6-7).

## III. Turning promises into facts

1. In the practice of prayer, it is important to distinguish between promises and facts. They may often seem alike, but a more careful pondering will reveal an

important difference. It's a distinction much often more that academic; it proves to be life transforming.

2. We are to believe and accept as true every revealed fact of God's word.
3. We are to plead and claim the fulfillment of every promise of God's word.
4. If a statement of fact, faith accepts without question. If a statement of promise, faith fulfills any conditions attached and then pleads it in full confidence of its being fulfilled.
5. A fact calls for our praise; a promise calls for our claiming.
6. The function of praying in faith is to turn God's promises into facts. (e.g. Matthew 18:20- promise or fact? Ephesians 1:3 - promise or facts? Both are facts: we simply have to believe and enjoy the reality in our experience.

#### **IV. The claiming of the promises**

1. Promises of God must be claimed in faith (Hebrews 11:33). In many cases, condition is attached to the promise. Our role - to fulfill the condition, claim the answer and confidently wait for it.
2. Our attitude toward the promises:
  - a. 'Come short' - Romans 3:23.
  - b. 'Stagger' or 'waver' in them - Romans 4:20. Risk too great or promise seems too good to be true.
  - c. 'Fully assured' - Romans 4:21.
3. 2 Corinthians 1:20.
4. 'Amen' is my response of faith - my expression of confidence that the promise will be fulfilled.

# Lesson Eleven: Post-Mortem on Unanswered Prayer

## Possible Reasons for Failure in Prayer

### Introduction:

1. While I hope this series on prayer has greatly helped you to pray more powerfully, perhaps it has also made you feel a little bit lonely, and even angry at times.
2. Maybe we have the feeling that for some time God has neither heard nor answered our prayers. Our emotions run from guilt to fear. Why? Regardless of how deep we are spiritually, there are occasions when prayer seems like a drawn-out monologue.
3. We must come face to face with the reality that it seems too many of our prayers go unanswered.
4. When a good businessman looks at the books, and finds he is not making any profit, he knows some changes are in order. Shall we be any less prudent in our handling of spiritual matters?
5. A Post-mortem is required. 'An evaluation or discussion occurring at the death or end of something'.
6. Some people naively refuse to ever examine their prayer life (2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Philippians 2:12).
7. They may simply say, 'Well, I guess it wasn't God's will after all' and may never give it another moment's thought.
8. A post-mortem on prayer requires the asking and answering of some very honest questions:
  - a. Am I sure my request is in harmony with God's will?
  - b. Did I really pray 'in the name of Jesus'?
  - c. Did I truly pray in faith expecting God to answer?
  - d. Have I be praying from selfish motives?
  - e. Have I been fervent and persistent in my prayers?
9. God is more honored when we honestly face and confess our failures in prayer than when we negligently ignore them. Think about Achan in Joshua 7:19.
10. Behind every unanswered prayer is a reason which we must discover ourselves. Nobody can find out what the reason is better than you!

## **I. Perhaps our faith has been resting on an improper basis**

1. Might upset us, but could it be that we unconsciously substitute faith in prayer for faith in God?
2. Mark 11:22, John 14:1-2. If our faith is directed upward to Him to Whom we pray, it will not stumble even when He does not do precisely what we ask.
3. I believe in the power of prayer because I believe in the power of God. I do not merely believe in the power of God because I believe in Prayer's power.
4. In spite of the popular motto, it is not prayer that changes things, but God who changes things when we conform to His will.
5. Hebrews 11:6 verses faith in faith. True faith cannot exist apart from the object on which it is focused.

## **II. There may be in our hearts a sympathy with sin**

1. This will short-circuit and sabotage our prayer life as quickly as anything (cf. James 5:16).
2. Psalm 66:18 - 'Regard'--doest not mean 'look at' but 'hold onto, to cling'. A lot of people expect great things to happen in prayer who never determine to make a clean break with sin. The willingness of heart to make things right (Luke 18:9-14).

## **III. Perhaps the motive behind the prayer is not pure**

1. James 4:3 - wrong motives.
2. God nowhere promises to answer self-centered and selfish prayers.
3. He does not promise to gratify all our selfish desires (cf. Acts 8:18-24).

## **IV. Our prayers may go unheeded due to a condemning heart**

1. 1 John 3:20-22 - sometimes conscience right, sometimes it is wrong. Uneasiness sometimes arises, even when we are doing our very best.
2. If there is a matter we know to be out of sync with the Lord, we ought to correct it. Until we do, we are hopelessly hindered.
3. Why not ask God to reveal to you if there is some real but unrecognized sin that is thwarting you relationship with Him?
4. May be justified in concluding that the obscuring cloud originates from enemy territory (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

## **V. We may be suffering from a bitter and unforgiving spirit**

1. Mark 11:24-25.
2. If I fail to do so, will be unable to pray powerfully.
3. Note Proverbs 28:9.

## **VI. Perhaps there is a problem in our marital relationship that has not been addressed**

1. See 1 Peter 3:1-7
2. Show me a husband and a wife having serious problems and I'll show you a husband and wife who do not really pray together. Prayer is usually the first casualty on the road to divorce!
3. Don't misunderstand! May maintain a form, but what of the power, joy and spirituality of it? (2 Timothy 3:5).

## **VII. Sometimes our prayers become the outlet for unbelief and despair rather than faith**

1. James 1:5-8.
2. Lay the burden down, then pick it up again!
3. Psalm 37:5, 7 - 'Commit' and 'rest'.

## **VIII. Our Prayers may go unanswered because of our refusal to help those in need**

1. Proverbs 21:14.
2. Isaiah 1:17, James 1:27.
3. To neglect such makes us completely unlike Jesus!

## **Conclusion**

1. In one sense, all the prayers of Christians are answered.
2. Sometime we may have prayed for things that may not be best for us, or are not in keeping with the Lord's timing for us. It is good to mention this when we pray.
3. If you prayers seem dead and lifeless, isn't a post-mortem necessary?

## Lesson Twelve: Fasting and Prayer

Introduction: Fasting was a regular part of the life of those who lived in the Bible, yet the practice is almost totally forgotten today. Much of that may be due to our society's focus on self satisfaction and self absorption. This study will focus on the practice of fasting in God's Word and will examine whether or not today's Christian should fast or not.

### Fasting in the Old Testament:

Judges 20:26	As a sign of mourning and repentance after defeat in battle.
1 Samuel 7:6	As a sign of repentance and renewed dedication to the Lord.
2 Samuel 1:12	As a sign of mourning for the death of the leaders of Israel.
2 Samuel 12:21-23	David fasted for his newborn son while he was sick, but stopped after the son had died.
1 Kings 21:9, 12	A fast was proclaimed to commemorate a religious occasion
1 Kings 21:27	Ahab fasted as a sign of repentance to the Lord
1 Chronicles 10:12	Fasting was done by Israel to mourn the death of national leaders
2 Chronicles 20:3	Jehoshaphat fasted as sign of repentance
Ezra 8:21, 23	Ezra fasted as a sign of mourning and as a way to have God answer prayer
Ezra 9:5	Ezra fasted as a sign of repentance
Nehemiah 1:4	Nehemiah fasted because of his great concern for his people
Nehemiah 9:1	Israel fasted as a sign of repentance
Esther 4:3	The Jews fasted because of great grief and sorrow
Esther 9:31	The Jews fasted in order to have God answer their prayer
Psalms 35:15	The psalmist fasted as a sign of humility before God
Psalms 69:10	The psalmist fasted in order to bring himself under control
Psalms 109:24	The psalmist fasted due to great sorrow in his life
Isaiah 58:3-6	God rebuked the Israelites for fasting but not following him
Jeremiah 14:12	The Lord says he will not listen to hypocrites who fast but remain unfaithful.
Jeremiah 36:9	A day of fasting was proclaimed to show the people's repentance
Daniel 6:8	The king fasted because of great sorrow
Daniel 9:3	Daniel fasted to encourage the Lord to answer his prayer
Joel 1:14	Joel consecrates a fast of repentance for Israel
Joel 2:12, 15	Fasting was a sign of the people's repentance and dedication
Jonah 3:5	The people of Nineveh fasted to show their repentance

- Zechariah 7:3, 5     The Lord rebukes those who have fasted but still remained unfaithful
- Zechariah 8:19     The Lord will change the day of fasting to a day of joy and peace

### **Fasting in the New Testament**

- Matthew 4:2           Jesus fasted in preparation for his ministry
- Matthew 6:16-18     Fasting should not be done to impress others, rather it is done to serve God
- Matthew 9:14-15     Jesus is asked why his disciples do not fast, he responds that they have no reason to but they will soon.
- Matthew 17:21       Some difficult spiritual works can only be accomplished by prayer and fasting
- Mark 2:19-20        Jesus states his disciples do not fast because he is with them, but a time of fasting is approaching
- Mark 9:29           Some spiritual works can only be accomplished by prayer and fasting
- Luke 5:33-35        Jesus states his disciples don't fast when he is with them, but a day of fasting is coming
- Luke 18:12          The condemned Pharisee claimed his fasting twice a week as proof of his spirituality
- Acts 10:30          Cornelius fasted for four days in order to have his prayer heard by God
- Acts 13:2-3         The church at Antioch fasted and prayed as they prepared to send Saul and Barnabas on a Missionary Journey
- Acts 14:23          Paul and Barnabas fasted and prayed as they encouraged the churches on their Missionary Journey
- 1 Corinthians 7:5    Sexual relations are to continue in marriage unless both members consent to a short period of prayer and fasting
- 2 Corinthians 6:5    Paul refers to times of food deprivations as "fastings"
- 2 Corinthians 11:27 Paul refers to times of food deprivations as "fastings"

## **What is the Deal With Fasting?**

Fasting today is usually done primarily for health reasons (diet), but in Scripture was always centered on a spiritual purpose. In other words, if you fast to lose weight, you are not going to accomplish anything spiritually.

In scripture, fasting usually involved abstaining from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water.

Rarely in Scripture, an absolute fast was engaged in. This fast involved abstaining from all food and water. These were engaged in for short times and under extreme circumstances, Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9. These were not meant to ever last for more than three days.

The only regularly scheduled, required fast in the Old Testament Law was the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 23:27. This was to express sorrow and remorse over sin.

## **Is Fasting Commanded Today?**

There are two passages which pertain to this:

Matthew 6:16

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, fasting is listed between giving and prayer.

Two practices expected today in the church.

But notice that this is not a command, merely instruction as to proper exercise of a practice common to the day.

Matthew 9:15

The most natural interpretation of this passage is that fasting would occur in the Church Age. We see this practiced in Acts 13:2.

But notice that regular schedules for fasting are not given. It appears that fasting can be done by individuals and congregations as they see the need.



## **The Purpose of Fasting**

Our motive must be to please God, not our fellow man, Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting must be done to worship God, Luke 2:37, Acts 13:2. Israel had done this wrongly, Zechariah 7:5

Fasting Will Teach Us:

Humility, Psalm 69:10

God's sustenance, Matthew 4:4, Colossians 1:17, John 4:32-34

Balance in life, 1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Psalm 55:13

The power of intercessory prayer, Daniel 9:3

God's guidance in life, Acts 9:9

## **If You Fast**

Start small, skipping only one meal a day.

Don't begin your fast with a large meal, rather have a small meal including fruit and juice.

When you break your fast, once again have a small meal with fruits and juice rather than a large meal.

Abstain from fasting if you are diabetic, have heart problems or are pregnant.

## Lesson Thirteen: Prayer and Revival

### Introduction

1. Revival cannot occur with there first being powerful, united praying. (Note 2 Chronicles 7:17, Isaiah 57:15).
2. No Christian is greater than his prayer life, and no congregation is greater than its emphasis on prayer.

The preacher who is not praying is playing.

The people who are not praying are straying.

3. Many, if not all, would agree that the church is in need of revival. In no place is this seen more than in prayer.

*We have organizers; few agonizers.  
We have players and payers; but few pray-ers.  
We have many singers; few clingers.  
We have much fashion; little passion.  
We have many interferers; few intercessors.  
Failing in prayer, we fail everywhere!*

4. Let's not five truths concerning prayer and revival.

### I. The meaning of revival

1. Revival has reference to 'renewed zeal to obey the Lord due to a profound sense of repentance and love'.
2. Revive means to 'live again more vigorously'.
3. Both concepts are closely related to the idea of zeal - 'intense enthusiasm for something or someone'.
  - a. Zeal for what God thinks/feels (Numbers 25:11, 13).
  - b. Zeal for others salvation (Romans 10:1).
  - c. Zeal for reformation of our own character (2 Corinthians 7:11).
  - d. Zeal for good works (Titus 2:14).
  - e. Zeal to know Christ (Philippians 3:4-16).
4. Three key words in revival - vision, revision, and passion!
5. No text better illustrates this better than Isaiah 6:1-9.  
'Woe' - verse 5, word of confession.

'Lo' - verse 7, word of cleansing.  
'Go' - verse 9, word of commission.

An upward vision - saw Lord (1)  
An Inward vision - saw himself (5)  
An outward vision - he saw world (8,9)  
Vision of holiness - God Almighty (1)  
Vision of hellishness - undone...unclean (5)  
Vision of hopefulness - Who will go for us? (8)

6. In this hour, when the 'average' church knows more about promotion than prayer, has forgotten consecration by fostering competition, and has substituted propaganda for propagation - the meaning of revival becomes even more imperative.

## **II. Cause of revival.**

1. God (1 Timothy 6:13)
2. Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:45).
3. Holy Spirit (John 6:63).
4. God's Word (Psalm 119:25 – word 119:50 – life).
5. God's precepts (Psalm 119:93).

## **III . Conditions of revival**

1. Humility - 2 Chronicles 7:14.
2. Fervency - James 5:16.
3. Broken heart - Psalm 34:18.
4. Confession - Psalm 66:18.
5. Repentance - 2 Corinthians 7:10, 2 Timothy 2:19.
6. Surrender - Romans 12:1-2.

## **IV. Example of revival through prayer Acts 23-31**

1. The preaching of the apostles had been so influential that the Jewish leaders sensed a dangerous challenge to their authority.
2. Threatened Peter and John severely (4:13 ff.).
3. Sensing the seriousness of the situation, the believers turn to prayer.
4. Ingredients that made the prayer effective:

- a. One in heart (24) - prayer thrives in that kind of atmosphere.
- b. Remembered character of God (24).
- c. Specifically acknowledged God's control over the nations - He is sovereign (25-28).
- d. Pled through their relationship to Jesus (30).
- e. Offered specific requests (29-30).
- f. Prayer was powerfully acknowledged (31) - 1 John 5:14-15.
- g. Received all asked for (31).
- h. Served with great power (32-35).
- i. Fostered deeper fellowship and sharing (32).

## **V. Blessings of revival**

1. Renewed strength - Genesis 45:27.
2. Joy - Psalm 85:6.
3. Refreshments - Judges 15:19.
4. Renewal - Psalm 71:20
5. Possible even in trouble - Psalm 138:7.
6. Source of fruitfulness - Hosea 6:1-3, 14:7.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Got any rivers you think are uncross able? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? God specialized in things thought impossible and He can do what no power can do!
2. A sinning man will stop praying, and a praying man will stop sinning!
3. Our praying needs to be pressed and pursued with an energy that never tires, a persistency that never stops and a courage that never fails.

## **Appendix A**

### **Does God Hear the Prayer of Sinners?**

John 9:31 'Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him.'

Proverbs 1:28-30 'Then they will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently, but they will not find Me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the way of the Lord, they would have Me of My counsel and despised My every rebuke.'

Isaiah 59:1-2 'Behold the hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.'

Proverbs 28:9 'He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.'

1 Peter 3:12 'For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'

### **For What Should the Sinner Pray?**

#### ***Not for God to Love Him:***

John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish.'

#### ***Not for Light, Because:***

Psalms 119:130 'The entrance of Thy word gives light....'

#### ***Not for Understanding, Because:***

Psalms 119:130 'The entrance of Thy word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.'

***Not for the Spirit, Because:***

John 14:16-17 'and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.'

***Not for Christ to Come Unto Him, Because:***

Matthew 11:28 'Come to Me all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

***Not for God to be Reconciled to Him, Because:***

2 Corinthians 5:20 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.'

***Not for Grace, Because:***

Titus 2:11 'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.'

***Not for Pardon, Because:***

Isaiah 55:7 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.'

***Not for Conversion, Because:***

Psalms 19:7 'The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.'

***Not for Faith, Because:***

Romans 10:17 'So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.'

***Not for Salvation, Because***

Acts 11:14 'Who will tell you words whereby you and all your house will be saved.'

James 1:21 'Wherefore laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.'

Mark 16:16 'He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.'

***Not for the New Birth, Because:***

1 Peter 1:22-23 'Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love for the brethren, see that you love one

another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.'

***Not for God to Send His Saving Power, Because:***

Romans 1:16 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believes.'

***Not for God to Purify Their Hearts, Because***

Acts 15:9 'And put no difference between us and them, purify their hearts by faith.'

***Not for God to Purify their Soul, Because:***

1 Peter 1:22 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.'

***Not for Freedom from Sin, Because:***

Romans 6:7 'But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.'

John 8:32 'And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'

***Not for Religion, Because:***

James 1:27 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.'

***Not for God to Accept Him, Because:***

Acts 10:35 'But in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.'

***Not for Remission of Sins, Because***

Acts 2:38 'Then Peter said to them 'Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.'

***Not for Repentance, Because:***

Acts 17:30 'And the times of ignorance God overlooked; but not God calls all men everywhere to repent.'

*Not for Mercy, For:*

Proverb 28:13 'He that covers his sins shall not prosper; but he who confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.'

*Not for God to be Willing to Save Him, For:*

2 Peter 3:9 'God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

Ezekiel 18:32 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him who dies, says the Lord God; therefore turn yourself and live.'

*Not for Sanctification*

John 17:17 'Sanctify them through truth, Your word is truth.'



*The following information was compiled from*

## **C.R. Nichol's Bible Encyclopedia, 1949**

What is the Bible definition of Prayer? 'My hearts desire and prayer.' Romans 12:1 Prayer is the hearts desire, expressed. 'Whatever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.' Colossians 3:17. 'Let Him ask in Faith without wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro. Let not that any think that he will receive anything of the Lord.' James 1:6-7. 'And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.' 1 John 5:14

To sum up:

1. A sincere desire of the heart expressed.
2. The desire expressed in faith.
3. The desire expressed in the name of Christ.
4. This desire expressed according to His will.

If we pray in this way, our prayers will be answered. Asking according to His will is asking as He will for us to ask. Since I am to ask in His name (by His authority and will), and must ask in faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God, it is necessary to study the Word of God and learn what He will for me to ask for; and then pray in faith, or my prayer will not be answered.

Prayer must be in faith. Since the man without faith cannot pray in faith, it is strange to me that some teach the sinner to pray for pardon; and at the same time tell them that they are saved the very moment they have faith in Christ.. If the sinner is saved the moment he believes in Christ, he cannot pray for salvation, unless he prays before he has faith. James says that the man that asks without faith receives nothing of the Lord, James 1:7. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. It is not possible then to ask in faith until you have been taught the Word of God.

Man must come to God to be saved. 'he that comes to God must believe.' Hebrews 11:6 The sinner must be taught the word of God and believe it before he can come to God. If the sinner must pray, at what point must his prayer begin? Not

before he is taught the Word of God, for that would be praying without faith; and James says such a man will not receive anything from the Lord. Men must be taught before that can pray to God acceptable. If sinners are saved the moment they believe, I am anxious to know then they are to pray for salvation. If he is saved when he believes, and believes before he prays, then he must be saved before he can pray.

Sinners are in the power of Satan (Acts 26:18), in darkness (Colossians 1:13) in the world. You know there is no God, Christ, hope or promise for those in the world. Listen: 'Wherefore, remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh...that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.' Ephesians 2:11-12. Of His disciples, Jesus said, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' John 17:16. Again, 'You're are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world.' John 15:19. Some ask the sinner who is 'far off'-- from God, Christ, without hope, strangers to the covenants of promise--to come to the alter and pray for God to bless them? Remember: 'All the promises of God in Him (Christ) are yea, and in Him, Amen' 2 Corinthians 1:20. You must be in Christ to have the promises. It is useless to ask God to bless you while you are in the world. In the world you are in the power of Satan, in darkness, and if God blesses you there He blesses in the world. All the blessings are in Christ--not in the world.

Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant NOT of the world. Hebrews 10:24. Being the mediator of the New Covenant, and since, 'no man comes to the Father but by Me.' John 14:6, you see the sinner cannot approach God by prayer, while in the world, unless he can approach God without mediation; and if he can, it will leave Christ out; but Christ says, 'no man comes to the Father but by Me.' Christ being the mediator of the New Covenant, only those in the New Covenant--in covenants relationship with God--can approach God through Him and be blessed. The sinner must be taught the word of reconciliation--hear and learn of God, Christ and salvation; and that he can only approach God through mediation--that Christ is the Mediator; that by lovingly obeying the gospel (word of reconciliation), he comes into covenant relationship with God; that in the covenant, God blesses in Christ. Instead of trying to reach the blessing while in the world, by prayer, men should, by faith, obey God's truth, and by so doing reach the blessings in the New Covenant.

Christ is the mediator of all such. Some say by teaching these things we are being selfish and do not want others saved. We want the sinner saved, but we know he can only be saved in God's way. Our love and respect for God's law is too great to allow us to ask God to set aside His law and save the sinner--sinners can be save only by obeying the commands of Christ. 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' 2 Corinthians 5:11. Contrast this with the action of men who try to 'persuade' God. The beg God to bless the sinner, the he may obey. We persuade the sinner to obey God that he may be blessed.