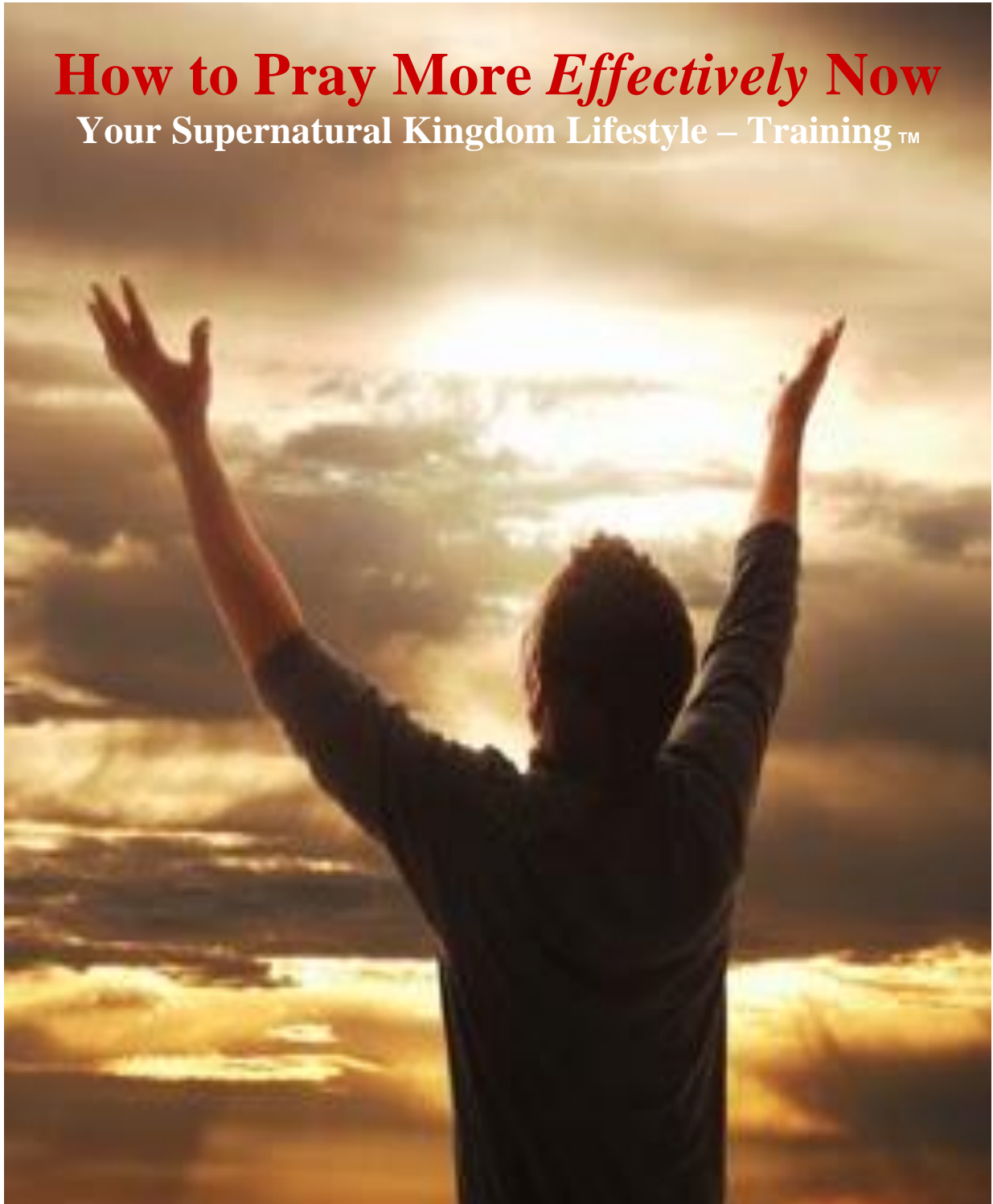


How to Pray More *Effectively* Now

Your Supernatural Kingdom Lifestyle – Training™



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Chapter One – BEGINING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

To pray more *effectively* you first need to know who the God you are praying to and how to be in a proper personal relationship with Him.

First you need to understand, "... *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" (Romans 3:23) We have all sinned. We have all done things that break God's laws and break His heart. There is no one who is innocent.

Second you need to know the consequences of your sin. "*For the wages of sin is death....*" (Romans 6:23a) The punishment that we have all earned for our sins is death. This is eternal separation from a Holy God! You would not want to wish this on your worst enemy!

Third you need to know, "...*but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23b) "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5:8) Jesus Christ died for us! Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross paid for the price for all our sins. Jesus' resurrection proves that God accepted Jesus' death as the payment for our sins.

Fourth believe, "*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*" (Romans 10:9) Because of Jesus' death on our behalf, all we have to do is believe in Him, trusting His death as the payment for our sins, and we will be saved! Romans 10:13 says it again, "*for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*" Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins and to rescue us from eternal death. Salvation, the forgiveness of sins, is available to anyone who will believe and trust in Jesus Christ, by faith, as their personal Lord and Savior.

The blessed results of salvation, "*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Romans 5:1) Through Jesus Christ we can have a relationship of peace with God. "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" (Romans 8:1) Because of Jesus' death on your behalf, you will never be condemned for your sins. Finally, we have this precious promise of God, "*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Romans 8:38-39)

It is very important to know that Jesus said that we must be *born again of the Spirit.* (John 3:3-5)

God *breathed* into man and gave him life. (Genesis 2:7)

Man has a soul consisting of his: mind, will, consciousness and emotions. This is separate from our spirit. All mortal flesh will die apart from the rebirth of the Spirit. (Genesis 6:3)

Jesus promised His disciples to ask God the Father to send them His *Holy Spirit.* (John 14:16-17)

Jesus breathed on them and said, "*Receive the Holy Spirit*" just as God did in the beginning to give His life to mankind. (John 20:21-22)

We each must receive the Holy Spirit to be *born again* of the spirit and to be saved. (Romans 10:8-10)

Jesus preached that we must all turn around, *repent of our sins and turn to God*. (Matthew 4:17; Mark 6:12)

To be saved from your sins each one must:

Admit that you have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23)

Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins, rose to life and will forgive you

Repent, turn from your sins and rebellion and return to the righteous ways of God

Confess with our mouth and agree that Jesus is your Savior, Lord and that God raised Him from dead.

Would you like to be born again of the Spirit, be saved and set free now?

If so, here is a simple prayer you can pray to God now. Saying this prayer is a way to declare to God that you are relying on Jesus Christ for your salvation. The words themselves will not save you. Only faith in Jesus Christ can provide your salvation!

"God, I know that I have sinned against You and am deserving of Your punishment.
But Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve on the cross so that through faith in Him
I could be forgiven of my sin, healed and set free.
Lord with Your help, I place my trust in You for salvation and be my Savior and Lord.
Thank You God for Your wonderful grace, forgiveness and the gift of eternal life! Amen!"

If you sincerely prayed to the Lord to be saved, then welcome to the family of God!

Now, find a Bible believing, disciple making, Christian fellowship who will teach you and guide you into you new life in Christ. Read your Bible, pray and learn how to grow and invest your loving and obedient relationship with the Lord.

Many people pray to be saved, but they remain at the entry to the kingdom and do not enter into becoming a supernaturally blessed mature follower, and disciple of Jesus Christ, a member of the family of God.

Jesus taught this parable about the seed planted in good soil

*That same day **Jesus** went out of the house and sat by the lake. **2** Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. **3** Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. **4** As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. **8** Still other seed fell on **good soil**, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. **9** Whoever has ears, let them hear."*

10 *The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"*

11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables:

*18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23 But the seed falling on **good soil** refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."* Matthew 13:1-10, 18- 23

We can help you to be planted in 'good soil' and grow and mature in your relationship with the Lord and in fellowship with other members a Kingdom Building Christian Community, the family of God.

I teach both children and adults 3 basic prayers:

Help me Jesus!

Thank you Jesus!

I love Your Lord

You can stay connected to the Lord in the spirit by repeating these prayer + Praise God!

Also ask for the wisdom and the strength to **obey** the Lord

Jesus said, *If you love me, you will **keep my commandments**.* (John 14:15)

A summary list of the 50 Commands of Christ to obey

1. Repent—*Matthew 4:17, Luke 13:3*
2. Let not your heart be troubled—*John 14:27, John 16:33, Matthew 6:25-26, Philippians 4:6-7*
3. Follow me—*Matthew 4:19*
4. Rejoice—*Matthew 5:12; 2 Corinthians 6:10, 12:10; James 1:2-4)*
5. Let your light shine—*Matthew 5:16*
6. Honor God's law—*Matthew 5:17-19*
7. Be reconciled—*Matthew 5:24-25*
8. Do not commit adultery—*Matthew 5:27-30*
9. Keep your word—*Matthew 5:33-37*
10. Go the second mile—*Matthew 5:38-42*

11. Love your enemies—*Matthew 5:44*
12. Be perfect, mature—*Matthew 5:48*
13. Practice secret disciplines including giving, praying, fasting—*Matthew 6:1-18*
14. Lay up treasures in heaven—*Matthew 6:19-21*
15. Seek first the kingdom of God—*Matthew 6:33*
16. Judge not—*Matthew 7:1-2*
17. Do not throw your pearls to pigs—*Matthew 7:6*
18. Ask, seek, and knock—*Matthew 7:7-8*
19. Do unto others—*Matthew 7:12*
20. Choose the narrow way—*Matthew 7:13-14*
21. Beware of false prophets—*Matthew 7:15*
22. Pray for those who spread the word—*Matthew 9:37-38*
23. Be as shrewd as serpents—*Matthew 10:16; Romans 16:19*
24. Fear God. Do not fear man— *Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4-5*
25. Listen to God's voice—*Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43; Mark 4:23; Luke 14:35; 1 Kings 19:11-13*
26. Take my yoke—*Matthew 11:29*
27. Honor your parents—*Matthew 15:4*
28. Beware of false teaching—*Matthew 16:6, 11-12*
29. Deny yourself—*Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34*
30. Do not despise little ones—*Matthew 18:10*
31. Go to Christians who offend you—*Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1*
32. Forgive offenders—*Matthew 18:21-22; Proverbs 19:11*
33. Beware of covetousness—*Luke 12:15*
34. Honor marriage—*Matthew 19:6, 19:9*
35. Lead by being a servant—*Matthew 20:26-28*

36. Make the church a house of prayer for all nations—*Mark 11:17*
37. Pray in faith—*Matthew 21:21-22, John 15:7*
38. Bring in the poor—*Luke 14:12-14*
39. Render unto Caesar—*Matthew 22:19-21*
40. Love the Lord—*Matthew 22:37-38*
41. Love your neighbor—*Matthew 22:39*
42. Be born again—*John 3:7*
43. Await my return—*Matthew 24:42-44*
44. Celebrate the Lord's supper—*Matthew 26:26-27*
45. Watch and pray—*Matthew 26:41*
46. Keep my commandments—*John 14:15*
47. Feed my sheep—*John 21:15-16*
48. Make and baptize disciples—*Matthew 28:19*
49. Teach disciples to obey—*Matthew 28:20*
50. Receive God's power—*Luke 24:49*

Links

Names of God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NscHCa395-M>

The Gospel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibWvN4JuK58>

Prayer Altars <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TP8bc8g2gJY>

Chapter Two – THE CALL TO PRAYER *

Introduction

This teaching will cover many topics related to more effective prayer:

- Its biblical foundations
- Its practical applications
- Its historical expressions
- Its significance in the generation when Jesus returns.

The aim in this teaching is threefold:

1. To give practical instruction on what to do to develop an **effective** life of prayer.
2. To give a biblical understanding of different types of prayer and the principles associated with them.
3. To give a big-picture perspective of what the Holy Spirit is doing in emphasizing prayer across the earth in this hour.

A simple definition of prayer: **prayer is “talking with God.”** It can take many forms, but all prayer is essentially a **two-way conversation** with the Lord that has life-changing results. What the Lord has to tell us is infinitely more important than what we have to tell Him.

We talk to the uncreated God of the universe; He listens attentively and with great affection. He responds by revealing His heart, giving us direction, blessing our circumstances, transforming our emotions, touching our loved ones, reviving His church, [His ekklesia, His called out, set apart, governing assembly of ambassadors of Christ] saving the lost, releasing justice, impacting society, and more. It is a great privilege and has many implications for our lives and the world. This response is worth whatever it takes to cultivate a strong and **effective** prayer life! We must contend to establish our prayer life because it will not develop on its own.

The Holy Spirit will help all those who desire to pray *more effectively*.

Our prayer life can progress from duty to discipline to delight.

Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would make His servants joyful in prayer. He referred to a new paradigm for prayer—prayer characterized by joy. We call this “enjoyable prayer.” Many of God’s people will be surprised by joy in communicating with Him. Enjoyable prayer is prayer that refreshes your heart! If it is not enjoyable, we will pray only intermittently—or not at all. *Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer...* (Isaiah 56:7)

All believers are called to grow in prayer

The Lord calls every believer to a life of prayer, both the new believer and the seasoned saint. The best thing any of us can do to improve our lives and our relationships is to grow in **effective** prayer.

Being a person of prayer is the most important calling in one’s life.

A higher calling than being a spouse, a parent, a pastor, a preacher, or a leader in the marketplace, we will all become far better spouses, parents, and leaders as we take time to grow in prayer. While not every believer is called to preach, each is called to pray. Prayer is not an optional activity as it is essential for our spiritual well-being. Are you ready to join the multitudes now being sovereignly stirred by the Lord to grow in prayer and begin a new chapter in your spiritual life? It is time to start.

Prayer involves connecting with the Holy Spirit who energizes us to love God. Our love for God causes us to overflow with love for others. Jesus made an absolute statement about our inability to walk in the fullness of our destiny in God without growing in prayer (John 15:5). He said that unless we abide in Him, we can do nothing related to bearing fruit or maturing spiritually. *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.* (John 15:5)

We cannot generate spiritual life. We experience it more as we abide in Christ. Just as it is impossible for us to jump a hundred feet even if we practice much, so it is impossible for us to generate spiritual life. It is not an issue of practice; we were not created to jump a hundred feet!

We were not created to have spiritual life while living independently of the Spirit.

The Spirit will move in a new and powerful way in your life as you take time to grow in prayer. The change may not happen overnight, but it will most certainly happen. The discipline of prayer will eventually become delight in prayer. Dryness in prayer will gradually be replaced by a vibrant dialogue with God that will change your life and result in many answered prayers.

Do not wait for a special spiritual experience to begin to grow in prayer. We grow in prayer by actually praying.

Beginners in prayer mature by praying more.

From duty to delight

In your early days, you may love Jesus, but dread spending time in prayer. You may see prayer as a necessary duty to endure if you want to receive more blessing.

You need to develop a prayer life if you want to experience the deeper things of God and enter into the fullness of your calling. You may read books on prayer. Especially those written by Leonard Ravenhill and E. M. Bounds, who wrote some of the classics on prayer and revival. After reading their books, you may be even more convinced of your need to grow in prayer, but the thought maybe daunting. Books may inspire, but you may feel guilty. You may feel spiritually “stuck” and desperate for a breakthrough.

You may need a new perspective on prayer—on what prayer is and why the Lord insists on it. Began to see prayer as much more than a religious duty to endure. Learn that it is a place of encounter, a way to receive blessing, an expression of partnership with God, and much more.

Prayer is a place of encounter

At first you may think of prayer as a duty that is mostly results-oriented. Imagining that the Lord wants you to “endure” talking to Him to prove your dedication. I saw it as paying the price, and if I endured it long enough, He would give me the blessing I asked for.

First of all, prayer is about encountering God and growing in relationship with Him.

It is the means by which we most feel His presence and receive love from Him as we gain understanding of what He is like. In prayer we position ourselves to receive fresh insight into His heart as new desires are formed in our hearts. Prayer positions us to be energized to love—to love God and people.

The call to prayer is a call to participate in the love that has forever burned in God’s heart. From eternity past the Father has loved the Son with all His heart, and the Son has loved the Father with the same intensity. The primary factor in the Father’s relationships, both within the Godhead and with His people, is wholehearted love. The family dynamics among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are based on and flow in this wholehearted love.

This love is the foundational reality of God’s kingdom.

It is this very reality that we participate in as we grow in prayer—that is, participating in the family dynamics of the Godhead. We do this by receiving God’s love and responding in His love to the Lord and to people.

God’s heart burns with love. He calls us to experience it, and to enter into what we refer to as “the fellowship of the burning heart.” Salvation is an invitation to this fellowship.

Prayer is a way to receive blessings for ourselves and for others

We do not pray “just to pray.” Yes, we pray to commune with God, but we also pray so that things will change and God’s blessings will be released in us and through us. There is a point to our prayers. **Effective** prayer accomplishes much and leads to real results that release blessing. *The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.* (James 5:16, NAS)

Praying in faith is a God-ordained way to receive His blessing in both our internal lives and our external circumstances. Some think of prayer solely as communion with God, while others think of it only as the way to obtain more blessing in their circumstances. We do not need to choose one over the other; we can expect results from our prayers as we grow in communion with God.

Some believers have a passive, indifferent attitude toward receiving God’s blessings. They do not seem to care whether their prayers accomplish much in their own lives. They see this attitude as an expression of humility since they consider it selfish to want to receive blessings in “things.” Jesus never affirmed a passive attitude of indifference about receiving from Him.

It is false humility to disregard the blessings Jesus has ordained for His people.

The Lord waits to hear the prayers of His people (Isaiah 30:18-19)

The Lord longs to be gracious, that is, to release a greater measure of grace and blessing to His people. Receiving more from God is not about convincing Him to be willing to give us more. Rather, it is about God convincing His people to pray for more with confidence. *The Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits...to have compassion on you... 19 He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.* (Isaiah 30:18-19, NAS)

The Lord leads His kingdom by giving more in response to prayer because He desires a deep relationship with us.

In prayer we position ourselves to receive abundant grace and blessing. We must never imagine that we earn or deserve God's blessing because of our prayers. Rather, prayer is the place of receiving blessing in response to interacting with Him.

Some of God's promises for increased blessing are not guarantees, but are invitations to partner with Him in prayer.

If we fulfill the conditions—and prayer is one of the conditions—then the promises are guaranteed. Many of the promises in the Word include the conditional word “if”—if we call out to Him, then God promises to answer in specific ways. *If My people... will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.* (2 Chronicles 7:14)

The Lord opens doors of blessing and closes doors of oppression in response to prayer. We have authority in Jesus's name to stop demonic activity and to release angelic activity. *will give you the keys [authority] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” (Matthew 16:19)

God will not do our part, and we cannot do His part.

God requires that we cooperate with Him according to His supernatural grace. He gives us a dynamic role in determining a measure of the quality of life that we experience as we respond to Him in prayer, obedience, faith, and humility.

Praying with Faith

Jesus taught His disciples, saying, *“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”* (John 14:14). We are to pray in faith so that our prayers will actually produce results—believing that God will answer them by releasing a greater measure of His blessing and power.

Jesus emphasized the importance of praying with faith, or confidence: *...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.* (Mark 11:22–24)

Jesus affirmed the need for faith. He affirmed the Roman centurion who had great faith (Matthew 8:10), and He told two blind men, *“According to your faith let it be to you”* (Matthew 9:29).

A man brought his epileptic son to Jesus' disciples to be healed and complained that "they could not cure him" (Matthew 17:14-21). Publicly Jesus expressed pain over the "faithless generation" and then healed the boy instantly. Later, in private, when the disciples asked why they could not drive the demon out of the boy, Jesus stated the reason simply and categorically: "Because of your unbelief." He added that nothing would be impossible for those who pray with faith. 19 The disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief...if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by **prayer and fasting**." (Matthew 17:19-21)

Jesus was unable to do mighty works where there was great unbelief (Mark 6:5-6). He rebuked the unbelief of the disciples who did not believe those who had seen Him after He rose (Mark 16:14).

Prayer is a partnership with God

The Lord wants much more from His people than for them to be His workforce. God longs to have relationship with those who love Him and to partner with them in accomplishing His purposes.

God governs the earth in prayerful partnership with His people who reign with Him. *And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.* (Revelation 5:10)

Jesus is not just a King with power; He is also a Bridegroom with a desire for relationship. He has joy in our friendship and in our partnering together in the work of the kingdom with Him.

The essence of prayer is that we speak in agreement with God. Thus one important aspect of **prayer is telling God what He tells us to tell Him**. The Word shows us what He promises to release to His people, and we simply pray these things back to Him.

The importance of asking

One foundational principle of the kingdom is that God releases more blessing if we ask for it. He could release more to us without our asking, but He wants us to be involved in the process. ...*Yet you do not have because you do not ask.* (James 4:2)

The Lord knows our needs without our asking, yet He waits to give us many things until we ask Him for them. Many think or talk about their circumstances to others without actually asking God about them. It is easy to think about our needs without verbalizing them. God insists on us asking because the "asking" leads to a greater heart-connect with Him.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God... (Philippians 4:6)

Jesus called us to pray with perseverance for God's help and blessing. **He called us to ask and keep on asking, to seek and keep on seeking, to knock and keep on knocking.**

The verbs in the Greek are in the continuous present tense, indicating that we are to do this consistently.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
(Matthew 7:7–8)

Believers are exhorted to come to the throne of grace to experience more of God’s grace, which is already theirs in Christ. A greater measure God’s grace is available to all who boldly and consistently come to Him. Part of the breakthrough in our experience comes as we pray for it. We receive a greater measure of God’s grace, which renews our minds and emotions. *Let us...come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
(Hebrews 4:16)

A few principles to remember

Our prayers don’t have to be worded perfectly to accomplish God’s purposes. They are **effective because of the authority we have in Jesus**, which is based on His finished work on the cross. Therefore, our prayers are **effective** even when they are short, weak, and poorly worded.

Ninety-second prayers are valuable and **effective**. They matter and can connect our hearts with God while releasing His blessing to us. Do not put off praying until you have a full hour to pray. While you are rushing to an appointment, waiting at a stoplight, or standing in line at a store, you can offer ninety-second prayers that will make a difference in your life and the lives of others.

We must see the value of “weak” prayers. Some assume that because they do not feel anything when they pray, God must not feel anything. The truth is that we offer our prayers in human weakness, but they ascend to God in power because of the sufficiency of Jesus’ blood and because they are in agreement with God’s heart. Others believe that they are growing in prayer only if they feel good during their prayer times. They wrongly conclude that their prayers are meaningless when they feel dry and distracted.

Our prayers—**all of them**—are heard, even if we do not feel anything when we offer them. Do not measure your prayers by how you feel when you pray them but by the extent to which they are in agreement with God’s will and Word. Our weak prayer times may not move us, but they move the heart of God. We can have confidence that our prayers are heard regardless of how we feel while we are praying.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

Poorly worded prayers are valuable. The Lord values our prayers even when we do not say them in the “right” way. We come boldly to the “*throne of grace*” (Hebrews 4:16) not the “throne of literary accuracy.” The Lord hears the groan of the prisoner (Psalm 79:11; 102:20) as well as the eloquence of biblical scholars and powerful preachers.

Our private times of prayer and public prayer meetings may not move us, but they move the angels, and more importantly, they move the heart of God. Never measure your prayers by what you feel. When we pray in agreement with God’s will, our “weak prayers” move God’s heart.

While Cornelius was praying, an angel appeared to him with a message from God, telling him his prayers would be remembered forever (Acts 10:3-4). *...he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God*

coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!” 4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?” So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.” (Acts 10:3-4)

Prayer is a brilliant way to rule the universe. Why? Because when we speak God’s Word back to Him, it draws us into intimacy with His heart and unifies us with others who pray the same things. It humbles us and transforms us at the same time. In other words, the result of the Father’s ruling the universe through prayer is that His people are established in intimacy, community, and humility while engaged in partnership with Jesus to change the earth.

Chapter Three – THE FELLOSHIP OF THE BURNING HEART

The ultimate reality of the kingdom

Growing in prayer is deeply connected with embracing the first commandment.

The Spirit's first agenda is to establish the First Commandment in first place in the Church.

Jesus identified this as the highest priority to God and the first calling in our life and for our ministry. *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment."* (Matthew 22:37-38)

The command to love God with all our heart does not begin with us. It is one expression of the ultimate reality of the kingdom that existed long before the creation of the world, namely, God's heart burning with perfect love within the fellowship of the three persons of the Trinity.

The essence of how God thinks and feels is summed up in wholehearted love. The Lord has great power and wisdom, which He uses solely to express His love.

We understand the First Commandment best by seeing it in its eternal context of the fellowship in the Godhead, rather than seeing it as one aspect of kingdom ethics. God wants us to respond in wholehearted love because it is who He is and who He created us to be. We were created in His image for wholehearted love. It is the essence of salvation and our relationship with God.

One foundational premise in Scripture is that **God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God.** We must abide in and stay focused on this truth (John 15:9; 17:23). *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."* (John 15:9)

The love burning in God's heart has at least five distinct and deeply interrelated expressions.

1. God's love for God: Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all His heart.
2. God's love for His people: He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength. He loves the redeemed with the same intensity that He loves within the fellowship of the Trinity.
3. Our love for God: The Spirit imparts God's very own love to His people (Romans 5:5).
4. Our love for ourselves: We love ourselves in God's love and for God's sake.
5. Our love for others: We love others in the overflow of experiencing God's love (1 John 4:19).

These five expressions of love constitute what we refer to as the *fellowship of the burning heart*. Our greatest destiny is to participate in the burning love in the family dynamics of the Trinity.

Abide in love: To “*abide in love*” means to continually live in it and reflect on it. This requires that we stay focused on living in God’s love in its various expressions. We are to set our heart to go deep in our understanding of this.

Our primary life goal is to be focused on receiving and expressing God’s love.

We are to make this the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for a special season of revival to engage deeply in the love of God. “*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*” (John 15:9)

The essence of eternal life is to know God, which is more than just information, and speaks of experiential knowledge. Salvation is much more than escaping hell; it is an invitation to fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3), to participate in the fellowship of the burning heart. “*This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ.*” (John 17:3)

Examples include the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:32) and John the Baptist, a burning lamp (John 5:35) who prophesied of a baptism of fire (Luke 3:16) that was seen at Pentecost (Acts 2:3).

GOD’S love for GOD

The first expression of perfect love is found in the relationships within the Trinity. The Son loves the Father (John 14:31), and the Father loves the Son (John 3:35; 5:20; 15:9; 17:23).

There is One God who forever dwells in three distinct persons, who are coequal as divine persons. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each fully possess all of God’s attributes. Each person is different from the others in function and authority in their work, which is fully unified.

The way that God loves within the Trinity is the only way He loves us. He always loves in fullness. His love never diminishes or grows because it is infinite in measure and eternal in duration. He does not love us with only part of His love, for that would deny His character.

The union in the Godhead reveals the nature, quality, and intensity of His love. The relationships in the Godhead are the model and source whereby we relate to God and others. They give us a picture of what perfect love is, of how He relates to us, and how we relate to Him.

Jesus has joy and enthusiasm in His love for the Father. He is moved in loving the Father and being loved by Him. Jesus is not bored in His relationship with the Father. One implication of this is that Jesus’ enjoyment of His relationship with His people is an expression of how He enjoys His relationship with His Father.

GOD’S love for His people

Jesus declared that He loves the redeemed with the same intensity with which His Father loves Him (John 15:9). He said that the Father also loves the redeemed with this same intensity (John 17:23). Father, Son, and Spirit love the redeemed with all Their heart, mind, soul, and strength. “*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*” (John 15:9) “*...that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me.*” (John 17:23)

Love, by definition, demands an expression—to be shared and multiplied. God wanted others to experience the joy of the Trinity’s experience of perfect love.

God created human beings to participate in this glorious fellowship because He is love.

God does not lack anything; He has no need. He did not create humans because He was lonely or discontent or had an emotional need.

Our love for GOD

The Spirit’s first agenda is to establish the First Commandment in first place in us (Matthew 22:37-38). He loves us with all His heart and wants us to respond with all of our love. He wants us to bring our “all” into the relationship, not because He feels lonely and rejected when we love others, but because He is wholehearted love. He is worthy of our love. It is His inheritance to receive our love. We will only enter into our full inheritance (destiny) as we love God with all of our heart.

The Holy Spirit imparts God’s very own love to His people (Romans 5:5). We will not love God more by trying to love harder, but by seeing more of His love for us.

Jesus defined loving God as being rooted in obedience (John 14:15, 21, 23; cf. Deuteronomy 6:1-9). ***“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”*** (John 14:15)

The spirit of liberty: Liberty is found in the fellowship of the burning heart—it is being liberated on the inside to feel and express God’s love. It is being liberated from the spirit of condemnation, rejection, lust, dullness, and boredom. It is not about having freedom to live in compromise, e.g., “engaging in parties” that other believers do not feel right about engaging in. It is having freedom to live with an exhilarated heart as we encounter God’s heart in our daily walk.

OUR LOVE FOR OURSELVES

The redeemed are to love themselves in God’s love and for God’s sake. We love ourselves through the lens of the revelation of Jesus, His cross, and our great worth to Him. We have received the very gift of God’s righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). We have indescribable value and worth to Jesus. Seeing this changes the way we feel about God, our life, and others. *“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”* (Matthew 22:39)

Seeing ourselves and our new identity, destiny, and worth in God’s love empowers us to love ourselves in God. We will never love others more than we love ourselves in the grace of God.

The Bible calls us both to love ourselves (Matthew 22:39) and to hate our lives (Luke 14:26). We love who we are in Christ—our new identity in Christ and what we do in God’s will. We hate our lives—who we are outside of Christ and what we do outside of God’s will.

Bernard of Clairvaux called it loving ourselves for His sake—being jealous to be all that He called us to be, for His sake. Jesus does not want us to walk in false humility, which minimizes how much He enjoys loving us and His desire for us to enjoy being loved by Him. **We magnify Jesus as we love ourselves in agreement with His love for us and honor His “investment” in us.**

Jesus delights in who we are in the grace of God.

He wants us to love the person that He loves. He wants us to enjoy how much He enjoys us—to delight in how He delights in us. *But you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...5And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.* (Isaiah 62:4-5) *19He delivered me [David] because He delighted in me.* (Psalm 18:19)

We must receive what the Word says about the activities we perform in God's will, though many are small and go unnoticed by others. In fact, most of our love and service to Jesus consists of small acts, but they move His heart, and He will reward us forever for them!

Eternal rewards are about Jesus expressing publicly how He feels about the way we love Him in this life.

"Well done...you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." (Luke 19:17) *21 "You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things."* (Matthew 25:21)
"Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly...he shall by no means lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42)

Ask the Holy Spirit to let you see what He sees and to feel what He feels when He looks at you.

When we know that His eyes are on us, we feel no need of striving to get the eyes of people to recognize our accomplishments; we do not need the time and attention of the powerful and popular people, because we already have the love, time and attention of the most glorious Man. Author C. S. Lewis wrote, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."

Self-hatred results in a deep sense of rejection that damages our ability to love and receive love. God desires to fully liberate our heart from self-hatred so that we do not wish we were someone else, but are genuinely thankful for being who He made us to be (with our own specific calling).

Loving ourselves includes not despising our appearance, gifting, or assignment, no matter how small.

We thank Jesus for who we are in Him and for the unchangeable aspects of our appearance, abilities, personality, and life circumstances—family, parents, nationality, etc. The Lord wants us to enter into the feelings He has for us. Some believers need to repent of longing to have another's calling, gifting, family background, appearance, etc.

OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS

We are to love others in the overflow of God's very own love (John 15:12).

This is a dynamic expression of the fellowship of the burning heart. The Lord wants us to enter into what He feels about others—it will change the way we see people and how we respond to them. *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* (John 15:12)

The first and second commandments, to love God wholeheartedly and love others as we love ourselves, are deeply connected to each other and cannot be walked out separately.

We are to love believers who mistreat us, because God loves them as He loves us. We will forever delight in one another in the way in which God loves and delights in His people. Our love for others must extend beyond loving only the people who enjoy the same things that we enjoy. We must not only love the “cool” people, those who are popular and powerful and can enhance our status, etc. Stronger believers are to actively love weaker believers out of a heart of genuine compassion, rather than “loving them” in order to gain something from them.

Chapter Four - CHARACTERISTICS OF *EFFECTIVE* PRAYER

Introduction

Prayer is first about relating to God, but is also about results that serve God's will on the earth.

There are different ways to pray, see future chapters, but here we will look at the characteristics of prayer that is **effective** or that makes a difference and accomplishes its intended goal. "It is not enough to begin to pray...but we must patiently, believingly *continue* in prayer until we obtain an answer." George Müller

James, the brother of Jesus, was known as a great man of prayer. He gave the church invaluable insight into this subject. He emphasized effective prayer and what it accomplishes. It is the destiny of every believer to release the power of God through his simple prayers.

*The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up...16 The **effective**, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain...18And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain...* (James 5:15-18)

James taught that the prayer of faith heals the sick (v. 15) and that it accomplishes much (v. 16). Our prayers accomplish much more than we can gauge with our five senses.

Our perspective on life changes dramatically when we believe that our prayers really make a difference.

James highlighted four characteristics of effective prayer: prayer rooted in faith; prayer in the context of good relationships; prayer from a lifestyle of righteousness; and prayer that is earnest.

Prayer rooted in faith is prayer that is rooted in a threefold confidence in God.

- 1. It is prayer with confidence in Jesus' authority** over sin, sickness, and Satan.
- 2. It is prayer with confidence in the blood of Jesus** that qualifies weak people such as us to be vessels that release His power and receive His blessings. We boldly enter God's presence by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19). We are not to shrink back due to shame or guilt, for He has given His own righteousness to us as a free gift (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- 3. It is prayer with confidence in the Father's desire to heal, set free, and bless His people** by the power and work of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). *If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?...13If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!* (Luke 11:11-13)

Prayer rooted in faith: Jesus emphasized the importance of praying with faith (Mark 11:22-24). *I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.* (Mark 11:24)

1. Our faith is anchored in the knowledge of Jesus' authority over every power that exists. *Jesus...saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18)*
2. We are to pray with faith that our prayers will actually produce results as God answers them by releasing a greater measure of His blessing and power. Jesus affirmed the need for faith. He affirmed the Roman centurion who had great faith (Matthew 8:10), and He told two blind men, *"According to your faith let it be to you"* (Matthew 9:29). Jesus was unable to do mighty works where there was great unbelief (Mark 6:5-6). He rebuked the unbelief of the disciples who did not believe those who had seen Him after He rose (Mark 16:14).
3. A man brought his epileptic son to Jesus' disciples and later complained that they could not cure him (Matthew 17:14-21). When the disciples asked why they could not drive the demon out of the boy, Jesus stated the reason simply: *"Because of your unbelief."* *The disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"* *20Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief...if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move..."* (Matthew 17:19-20)

Prayer in the context of good relationships: In teaching on **effective** prayer, James exhorted us to confess our sins to one another (James 5:16). We follow this exhortation most often in context to strong relationship with others. Some are committed to growing in relationship with others, but are content to have a weak prayer life. Others are committed to grow in prayer, but are content to have weak relationships. The Bible sets these two values as complementary, not competing.

- **A strong prayer life will eventually lead to strong relationships with people.** Prayer is not about being anti-relational or antisocial. True prayer has the opposite effect. It is all about love—loving God and people. People of prayer should be the most energized in love.
- **The Lord cares so much about relationships that husbands must honor their wives so that their prayers are not hindered.** The measure of a husband's effectiveness in prayer is connected to the measure with which he honors his wife. He can pray with eloquence in public, but if he speaks in unkind ways to his wife in private, his prayers are hindered. *Husbands...giving honor to the wife...that your prayers may not be hindered.* (1 Peter 3:7)
- 1 Peter 3:7 is significant for the global prayer movement. As the prayer movement matures, so the emphasis on honor in marriage will increase, especially honor for wives.

Prayer from a lifestyle of righteousness: Commitment to a lifestyle of righteousness is essential to cultivating an effective prayer life (James 5:16). This biblical condition is often minimized, even by some who are deeply involved in the prayer-and-worship movement today. *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* (James 5:16)

1. **The righteous person is any believer who sets his heart to obey Jesus as he seeks to walk in godly character.** Setting our hearts to obey is very important, even if we fall short of mature, consistent obedience. You may never meet a person who is so mature in righteousness that he is above all temptation and never falls short in his walk with God.

- The prayers of a “righteous person” include the prayers of imperfect, weak people who sincerely seek to walk in righteousness even as we stumble in our weakness.
- **The Lord responds to His people because they seek to keep His commands and do the things that are pleasing to Him.** *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.* (1 John 3:22)
- **Prayer is no substitute for obedience.** Some people imagine that if they pray and fast more, they can walk in a little immorality or be dishonest in their finances or slander people who do not treat them in the way they want. They think that being extra zealous in the spiritual disciplines will balance out areas of persistent compromise. *And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.* (Isaiah 59:2)
- **There is a relationship between our lifestyle and our ability to enjoy prayer.** Prayer is far more boring and difficult if we seek to live one part of our lives as if it belonged to God and another part as if it belonged to us. (Matthew 5:8). Ongoing, willful compromise in our lives greatly hinders our prayer life and our capacity to agree with God in prayer.
- When we come up short in our obedience, we must acknowledge it and confess it, rather than seeking to rationalize it. We call it sin, we repent of it, and we freely receive God’s forgiveness. Then we “push delete” and stand with confidence in God’s presence.
- Walking in obedience is not about seeking to earn the answers to our prayers; it is about living in agreement with love because God is love. Some who teach on prayer overlook the necessity of obeying God. It is more popular to emphasize only our authority in Christ without mentioning the necessity of setting our heart to obey Jesus.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21)

Prayer is about connecting with God in relationship, and not about informing or persuading Him. He is looking for conversation and dialogue with us. Some believers think that by praying more they earn the answers to their prayers. God wants us to talk with Him more because He loves relating to us. We do not earn answers to prayers by either our persistence or our obedience.

EARNEST PRAYER

Prayer that is earnest: is one of the primary and most important biblical conditions of effective prayer. *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.* (James 5:17)

The work of the kingdom is based on who Jesus is and what He did on the cross.

It is not based on how we feel. God answers our prayers because of the blood of Jesus and His desire to partner with His people. If we measure ourselves by a wrong idea of what passion or earnestness in prayer is, then we will be tempted to pray much less.

First, earnest prayer comes from a heart that is engaged with God. To be earnest implies that we are not praying by rote or just going through the motions. It is the opposite of speaking our prayers mindlessly into the air. We are to focus our minds toward the Lord when we pray.

Second, earnest prayer is prayer that is persistent (Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11: 5-10; 18:1, 7). The Greek word *proseuche*, translated as earnestly in James 5:17, literally means, “he prayed with prayer,” which is an idiom expressing persistence in prayer.

- Elijah refused to be denied answers to prayers that were in agreement with God’s will.
- We must never stop asking and thanking God for the answers of the prayers that are offered in His will until we see them with our eyes. We must be persistent. We are to pray “*with all perseverance*” (Ephesians 6:18) and to “*labor fervently*” (Colossians 4:12) in prayer.
- Jesus taught a parable emphasizing persistence in prayer (Luke 11:5-10). The Greek verbs for “ask,” “seek,” and “knock” are in the continuous present tense (v. 9). Thus, we are to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking. *...yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. 9 So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* (Luke 11:8-9)
- When we highly prize something, we seek the Lord for it with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13). When we ask casually, with little effort to focus our minds on the Lord, or when we stop praying for something that is in God’s will, we show that we do not value it very much. *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.* (Jeremiah 29:13)

Earnest prayer doesn’t have to be loud. We should not conclude that our prayers are ineffective or that we lack earnestness simply because we do not have a loud, aggressive public prayer style.

- Passion in prayer is not mostly about energy and volume; it is about being engaged from the heart with the Lord while praying and persevering in faith without quitting. So keep at it and do not draw back, even if your prayer style is softer than that of others.
- Some conclude that they lack the necessary “passion” for God to answer them because they do not express themselves with great emotion or volume. If we define earnest prayer by shouting, then maybe about 99% of our prayers would be classified as non-passionate prayer, because most of our prayers are offered as whispers from our hearts throughout the day.
- Hannah prayed for a child with great anguish because of her barrenness. She wept as she spoke from her heart so softly that Eli the priest could not hear her (1 Sam. 1:13, 27).
- The NKJV translators used the word *fervent* in James 5:16 to convey the concept of earnestness. This word is not found in Greek manuscripts. It was inserted because the translators sought to emphasize the strength of the word “earnestly” in James 5:17.

Earnest prayer doesn’t depend on what we feel.

Some draw back in their prayer lives because they think they must feel God's presence when they pray. Thus when they feel discouraged or tired, or when they simply feel nothing, they assume their prayers will be of no effect, and they stop praying. Good news! our prayers are effective even when we are discouraged, or not in a good mood. We offer our prayers to the Lord who is in a good mood and is not tired.

Weak people can pray earnestly.

Elijah was a weak man with a nature like ours. He was prone to fear and discouragement, and he faced the same temptations that we do; yet his prayer life was effective (1 Kings 17-19). James emphasized this to give us courage to pray in our weaknesses. *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain...18And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain...* (James 5:17-18)

If we ask anything according to God's will, no matter how difficult it is, God will answer us. For God to "hear" our prayers means that He approves of them, no matter how impossible it seems. *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* (1 John 5:14)

We must not assume that a prayer is outside of God's will when we don't receive an immediate answer to it. God may answer in a different way or different time than we expect (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The delay of answered prayer is designed to provoke earnestness in us to continue to seek Him.

THE DIVINE AND HUMAN SIDES OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

The divine side of **effective** prayer is Jesus's work on the cross and His power being released through us. We receive God's favor as a free gift. When we combine agreement with God as seen in our believing, righteous, earnest prayer, then we experience more of what is freely given to us by Jesus. God doesn't love us more when we live in greater agreement with Him, but He is able to use us more, and we are able to experience a greater measure of blessing in our life.

The human side of **effective** prayer is coming into agreement with God, living and praying in accordance with His will, heart, and priorities.

- **As we pray with faith**, we pray in agreement with God's authority and Jesus's work on the cross.
- **As we live righteously**, we live in agreement with God's character.
- **As we pray persistently**, we live in agreement with God's priorities.

Effective prayer is earnest prayer that is in agreement with God's will and is offered in faith in context to building strong kingdom relationships and walking in righteousness.

The characteristics of **effective** prayer include the following conditions:

- **Faith** (Matthew 21:21-22; Mark 11:23-24; 1 John 5:14-15)
- **Right** relationships, including husbands honoring wives (1 Peter 3:7)

- **A righteous or holy life** (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2; 1 John 3:19-22)
- **Earnestness or persistence** (Isaiah 30:18-19; 62:6-7; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8; James 5:17)
- **In accordance with the will of God** (1 John 5:14-15)
- **In the name of Jesus** (John 14:13-14, 26; 16:23-24)
- **Pure motives** (James 4:2-3)
- **Boldness** (Hebrews 4:16)
- **Forgiveness** (Matthew 6:15; 5:23-24)
- **Prayer of agreement or unity** (Matthew 18:19-20)

OUR PRAYERS REMAIN EFFECTIVE FOREVER

Our prayers accomplish much in this age and in the age to come.

The prayers of God’s people avail much or accomplish much (James 5:16). The challenge is in not being able to measure fully right now the extent to which our prayers impact us, other people, and the nations.

All the prayers prayed in God’s will throughout history are stored in bowls near God’s throne.

The bowls of prayer will one day be “full” (Revelation 5:8). The fact that the bowls of prayer in heaven “fill up” implies that **God does not forget our prayers**. We may forget them, but God does not.

When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders... each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (Revelation 5:8) Then another angel...was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints...before the throne. (Revelation 8:3)

The Lord will never forget the love we show toward Him in ministering to others in prayer or in other acts of service (Hebrews 6:10). He would consider it an “injustice” if He forgot anything we do in love for Him. Knowing that our “weak” prayers are not forgotten motivates us to persevere.

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Hebrews 6:10)

Synergy of the ages

There is continuity between what we pray and do now and what happens in the age to come.

Our prayers avail so much that they remain effective, or “alive,” in God’s sight long after this life. I assume that they “live” forever in God’s heart. Even the prayers from the distant past—from thousand of years ago—are still effective in God’s presence. Prayers we offer today will still be effective in the distant future, hundreds or thousands of years from now.

The prayers for revival and justice did not “die out” after they were partially answered by the revivals in history. Our prayers have a significant, partial release in our generation and a greater, more complete release in the future, even in the age to come.

Chapter Five - PRAYER OF FAITH AND THE AUTHORITY OF BELIEVERS

The importance of growing in Faith

David was zealous to experience all the benefits of God's grace available to him (Psalm 103:1-5). The fullness of our covenant blessings will come in the resurrection and the age to come.

We must not draw back from experiencing all the blessings that God ordained for us in this age.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: 3who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, 4who redeems your life from destruction... (Psalm 103:2-4)

We do not always know the "measure" of covenant blessing that we will receive in this age, so be encouraged to seek for a "double portion" of whatever blessings you are currently receiving.

We are to pray in faith so that our prayers will actually produce results.

Keep believing that God will answer them by releasing a greater measure of His blessing and power. The "prayer of faith" results in releasing God's blessing. It includes prayer with confidence—in the authority of Jesus over sickness and the works of darkness, in the blood of Jesus to qualify weak people to be vessels to release His power, and in His desire to bless His people.

And the prayer of faith will save [heal] the sick, and the Lord will raise him up... (James 5:15)

Jesus taught on faith as a foundational kingdom principle (Matthew 8:10, 13, 26; 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 15:28; 16:8; 17:20; 21:21; Mark 2:5; 4:40; 5:34; 9:23; 10:52; 11:22-24; Luke 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25, 48; 12:28; 17:5-6, 19; 18:8, 42; 22:32). As we believe Him for more of His promises, we will experience more of God's activity and provision for us, and we will enjoy our relationship with Him more. Jesus was unable to do mighty works where there was great unbelief (Mark 6:5-6).

Jesus said to the centurion, "...as you have believed, so let it be done for you." (Matthew 8:13)
Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." (Matthew 9:29)

We intentionally cultivate growing in faith by hearing and speaking God's word (Romans 10:17). We want to avoid two extremes—humanistic positive thinking that has faith in human ability instead of God, and unbelief that ignores cultivating faith in what God promised in His Word.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Faith is the substance of what we possess in the spirit before it manifests in the natural.

Biblical promises are like a "title deed" to what we already possess in the spirit. *Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for... (Hebrews 11:1)*

When Scripture states that God hears our prayers, it means that He approves of our requests. When we pray according to God's promises and His will, we can have confidence that He approves of the request. It is at this time that we "receive" the request in the spirit realm.

This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

OUR PRAYER REQUESTS: TWO WAYS (Mark 11:24)

Jesus described how faith operates. He indicated that we receive our prayers in two ways. First, we “receive” them in the spirit realm (v. 24b), and then “have” them in the natural (v. 24c).
“...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart [because of evidence from the Spirit] but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural].” (Mark 11:23-24)

We need to be aware of the distinction between the spiritual and the natural realms to understand how faith and prayer work together. We engage in faith for God’s promises or requests that we have “received” in the spirit. Jesus spoke of continually believing that we have received the “title deed,” in the spirit realm, to our requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm.

FIVE PRINCIPLES IN PRAYING IN FAITH

Five principles related to having a biblical perspective for praying with faith. There is no place in Scripture that provides a 1-2-3 guide to prayer. We present these five steps as a biblical framework to help us understand how faith and perseverance relate to prayer.

Step One: Verbalize your requests to the Father. Many think about a prayer request without actually praying for it. God knows our needs (Matthew 6:32), but requires that we ask Him for them. Asking causes us to connect with His heart and to recognize specific blessings as His answer to our prayers. Asking causes us to know that what we say both moves His heart and matters to Him. *...in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God... (Philippians 4:6) Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (James 4:2)*

Step Two: Receive your requests in the spirit realm. When Scripture states that God hears our prayers, it means that He approves of our requests. When we pray according to God’s will, we know that He approves of the request, so we are to receive it in the spirit realm with confidence. *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)*

- **God has already given us every spiritual blessing that exists in the heavenly realm** (Ephesians 1:3). These blessings include the indwelling Spirit, the right to use Jesus’s authority, the promise of God’s provision, protection, and direction to do His will, and more. *Father...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)*
- We often pray for things that are not specifically promised in Scripture, but that are not in opposition to the Word of God either. For example, a person may pray that it will not rain on their wedding day, or that they will be accepted as a student at a prestigious university, or that they will be accepted on a worship team, or get the job they applied for.

Step Three: Engage in faith that you have received what you asked for. Jesus spoke of the necessity of continually believing that we have received the “title deed” (in the spirit realm) to our prayer requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm. *“Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural]”* (Mark 11:24).

Step Four: Ask with persistence (Luke 11:8), or thank God, or remind Him of His Word (Isaiah 62:6). We ask the Lord to release a blessing in a greater measure in the natural realm, or we thank Him for it or remind the Lord consistently of what He has already given us in the spirit realm. *“...you who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; 7and give Him no rest until He establishes [what He promised]...”* (Isaiah 62:6-7, NASB).

- In prayer, **put the Lord in remembrance of His Word** and what He has given us in the spirit realm in Christ—that which He has promised to give us related to our circumstances. *Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case...* (Isaiah 43:26)
- Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about conversing and connecting with Him relationally. We believe God has approved of our prayer and released it to us in the spirit realm; therefore, we never stop reminding Him of it and thanking Him for it.
- Jesus emphasized the value of perseverance in asking Him to release His blessings in a greater measure in the natural (Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:5-10; 18:1, 7). Jesus taught a parable (Luke 11:5-10) to show the value of **asking with perseverance**. The verbs Jesus used are in the present continuous tense, meaning that we are to ask and keep on asking (v. 9). *...because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs... 9ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find...* (Luke 11:8-9)
- We ask persistently that the request be manifest in a greater measure in the natural realm. We do not ask God to give us the spiritual blessings that He has already given to us in the spirit realm; rather, we ask Him to release them in a greater measure in the natural realm.
- **We should never stop asking, reminding, and thanking God until we see the answers to our requests with our eyes.** Paul called us to pray with all perseverance. We do not earn answers to prayers by our persistence or obedience. *...praying always...being watchful to this end with all perseverance...* (Ephesians 6:18)

Step Five: Receive your requests in the natural realm. Prayers that are in God’s will are always answered in God’s timing and way, so do not give up too quickly if the answer is delayed.

Faith grows by hearing and speaking God’s Word. We are to confess the Word over our heart and our circumstances and against the works of the enemy. We ask with persistence (Luke 11:8), or thank God, or remind Him of His promises (Isaiah 62:6) for what He has given us in the spirit realm.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

The gospel has qualified us to freely receive God’s love, power, favor, and many other benefits. We experience these benefits by faith—confident agreement—in Jesus’ work on the cross.

...the gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation [from the penalty and power of sin and Satan] for everyone who believes... (Romans 1:16)

On the cross, Jesus gained victory over Satan for us, removing his legal right to torment us. *Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [His death and resurrection]. (Colossians 2:15) For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might **destroy the works of the devil.** (1 John 3:8)*

We have been transferred to God's kingdom and qualified to freely receive new benefits. *He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom... (Colossians 1:13)*

Jesus gave authority to His Church [His ekklesia] over the works of Satan. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government (backed up by the military). *I give you the authority...over all the power of the enemy... (Luke 10:19)*

We have the **keys** or authority in Jesus' name to bind or stop demonic activity and to loose or release God's power (Matthew 16:18). *I will give you the **keys of the kingdom**...whatever you bind on earth will be [shall have been] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be [shall have been] loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)*

Satan's attacks will continue unless we resist them using our authority in Christ. We take our stand against the devil, resisting him by speaking the Word to him. *Therefore **submit to God.** Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)*

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith... (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Walking in victory includes an element of "wrestling" in our resistance of Satan's attacks. We must maintain the ground we take from the enemy, knowing that demons return to attack again (Matthew 12:43-45). We employ the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit by speaking God's Word. Satan's fiery darts strike people as irrationally heightened feelings of fear, anger, lust, oppression, anxiety, etc. We resist demonic influences by declaring the Word against them. *We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...in the heavenly places...¹⁶taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...¹⁷Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... (Ephesians 6:12-17)*

Chapter Six – ABIDING IN CHRIST: CULTIVATING UNION WITH GOD

The all to union with God

John 15 is a highpoint in the Scripture in terms of our relationship with God. Jesus is the vine, the source of life, and we are the branches, the expression of His life. Jesus' main biblical exhortation was to *"abide in Me"* (v. 5, 9c) so that we may bear fruit that remains forever (v. 16). *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me [talks to Me], and I in him [I talk to him], bears much fruit... 16I chose you...that your fruit should remain..."* (John 15:5, 16)

Jesus chose us to bear fruit that would remain forever (v. 16).

This is a most glorious reality for weak and broken people, that through the activity of the Spirit in us and through us, we can do things or bear fruit that God esteems forever. Our life becomes epic as we diligently press into a lifelong journey, knowing that He longs to be deeply engaged with us and that He sees, is moved by, and remembers all that we do in our quest to commune with Him in obedient love. Eternal rewards are about Jesus expressing how He feels about the way we loved Him in this age.

Bears fruit: We bear fruit inwardly in our character and outwardly in our ministry and service to others in the grace of God—godly character (Romans 6:22; 7:4-5; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Hebrews 12:11; 13:15; James 3:18) and ministry and service (John 4:36; Romans 1:13; 15:28; Philippians 1:22; Colossians 1:5-6). Fruitfulness includes possessing love, humility, and purity and then inspiring others to the same.

Transforming union with God has two elements—We abide in Christ, and Christ abides in us.

Abiding in Christ: The main activity of a believer related to growing in God is abiding in Christ. It involves three things: talking with God, applying His promises, and obeying His leadership. Talking with God is the core activity of abiding. It starts here, but includes more. Abiding in Christ includes drawing on Him and reaching out to Him as our source of life and leadership.

- **Talking with Jesus: The Christian life is an ongoing dialogue with a real Person.** He has much to say, but He allows us to set the pace of the conversation with Him. If we start the conversation, He will continue it as long as we do. When we stop it, He stops it and waits until we begin again. Abiding in Christ involves an ongoing conversation that consists of many 10-20 second exchanges, strengthened by longer prayer times.
- **Applying His Promises:** Applying the promises of His Word in the Bible empowers us to bear fruit. Shame, fear, and rejection rise up to challenge what He says about loving, forgiving, healing, providing for us, etc. We must apply the promise of the Word to our hearts by confessing the truth and resisting lies against it when feeling shame (Romans 8:1; 10:10).
- **Obeying His leadership:** Jesus promises to manifest His presence to those who obey Him (John 14:21-23). Only in the context of obedient love does He reveal the deep things of His heart. We must love God on His terms. Obedience is an expression of our love for Him.

“He who...keeps [My commands], it is he who loves Me...I will manifest Myself to him...23If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... We will come to him.” (John 14:21-23)

Our spiritual capacity to feel and experience God’s love increases as we obey Him (Matthew 5:8). We do not earn God’s love or blessing by our obedience.

We position ourselves to receive, express, and experience more grace by setting our heart to walk in obedient love.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

Christ abiding in us: There are two aspects to Christ abiding in us:

- First, He abides, or lives, in our spirit instantly at our new birth.
- Second, He abides in our hearts progressively as He manifests His presence in our soul, or heart, renewing our mind and emotions.

Paul spoke of Jesus *“dwelling in our heart,”* abiding in us by His manifest presence, (Ephesians 3:17), and of Christ being formed in our hearts (Galatians 4:19). We are to open our heart to God (Revelation 3:20).

...that He would grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith... (Ephesians 3:16–17)

Christ abiding in our hearts: This involves at least three activities of the Holy Spirit in us. The indwelling Spirit teaches us about Jesus’ heart, Word, and will, inspires us with courage to keep diligently seeking God, and empowers us by renewing our mind and emotions to live in obedient love. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would flow like a river out of our hearts to inspire, direct, and transform our mind and emotions and to minister to others in power (John 7:38).

Some only emphasize our legal position with Christ—our justification by faith (Romans 3:21-31). Others emphasize our living condition with Christ—our participation with His indwelling life.

Our legal position before God is based on us freely receiving Jesus’ righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our living condition, our behavior, is based on our response to the Spirit’s leadership (John 15:5).

Practical ways to enhance our *“abiding in Christ”* relationship with God is to talk to Jesus by **pray-reading the Word** and by fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit.

PRAY-READ THE WORD: HOW TO TALK JESUS

Mike Bickle, Director of the International House of Prayer Missions Base in Kansas City, teaches that, “Pray-Reading the Word” has had the greatest impact on growing his spiritual life in the Lord.” Learn as he shares his experiences. Free notes on How to “Pray-Read” the Word, at: mikebickle.org.

Talking with God is the core activity of abiding in Christ.

Bible study is to lead us into conversation with God by giving the “conversational material” for our prayer life. It is simply speaking the truths of the Word back to Him as we read it. This makes prayer enjoyable.

Talking to God as we *pray-read* the Word is a practical way to strengthen our abiding in Christ.

Take words with you, and return to the LORD. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips [words of obedient love].” (Hosea 14:2)

There are two broad categories of truth related to pray-reading the Word.

1. Scriptures that focus on **promises** to believe in God’s Word are passages that declare truths such as God loves, forgives, leads, protects, provides for us, etc.
2. Scriptures that focus on exhortations to **obey** God’s Word are passages that command us to walk in purity, bridle our speech, serve others, give time and money to God, etc.

We dialogue with God as we read the Word by praying back to God promises to believe.

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (John 15:9)

- **First, we thank God for a particular truth.** We turn these truths into simple declarations of thanksgiving or trust. Say, “Thank You that You love me as the Father loves You, and that You forgave me.” Or declare, “I trust that You will lead, provide, and protect me.”
- **Second, we ask God to reveal or release more about a specific truth to us.** For example, pray, “Jesus, reveal to me how much You love and forgive me and the certainty of Your provision,” or, “Father, release Your promised guidance, provision, and protection,” etc.

We dialogue with God as we read the Word and pray back to God exhortations to obey.

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (John 15:9)

- **First, we commit ourselves to obey God** in the specific way set forth in a biblical passage. Make declarations of resolve to obey the Word as you read passages about obedience. Declare, “I set my heart to abide in You, to obey You with my speech, time, money, etc.”
- **Second, we ask God to empower us to obey** a particular truth seen in Scripture. Ask God for help by giving you wisdom, motivation, and power to obey in specific areas. For example, pray, “Father, help me to abide in You, to control my speech, to use my time and money in obedience.” “Lord, strengthen me to love You even as David did.”

We will pray-read the Word ten times more if we **schedule time for it**. If we pray-read only when opportunity presents itself, then we will not do it nearly as much. Pray-reading the Word does not earn God’s love; it positions us to receive more. One way of fitting more scheduled times of pray-reading the Word into our schedule is to forego some activities that take up our free time.

FELLOWSHIPING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

In prayer, we can focus our mind on God in two ways—on the Father who sits on His glorious throne (Revelation 4) and on God the Holy Spirit who lives in our spirit (Romans 8:9). Paul referred to the blessing of fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit who dwells in us (2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1). ... *and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* (2 Corinthians 13:14, NAS)

Our fellowship with Him includes talking to Him. He will not force us into the conversation. But once we begin the conversation, He will talk back to us in various ways, including giving us subtle impressions (1 Kings 19:11-13) or sensitizing our emotions to feel His nearness, etc.

The core reality of the new birth is that the Spirit comes to live in our spirit as a real person.

The Holy of Holies is now in our spirit. The Spirit flows from within us (John 7:38). It is translated as our belly (KJV) and, more accurately, as our heart (NKJ) or innermost being (NAS). *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.* (1 Corinthians 6:17) *“He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”* (John 7:38, KJV)

The language of our mind is images. Scripture describes God as light (1 John 1:5). Thus I think of the Spirit as the Shekinah glory of God dwelling in my spirit. When I talk to Him, I picture a bright, diamond-like glorious person shining in my spirit. I am sure that is not exactly how it is.

We walk in the Spirit only to the measure that we talk with the Spirit.

Therefore, we will not obey the Spirit or walk in the Spirit any more than we talk to the Spirit. The only way to overcome lust is by dialoguing with the Spirit. This is the same truth as abiding in Christ. *I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* (Galatians 5:16)

One of my favorite prayers that I use most often is asking the Spirit to let me see what He sees and feel what He feels about my life, my family, and many others, as well as what He sees and feels about Jesus, the Church, the great harvest, the nations, the end times, and more.

T-R-U-S-T

When talking with the Spirit, I often use the acronym: T-R-U-S-T. In talking with the Spirit, take time to linger, speaking slowly and softly with short, simple phrases, occasionally whispering affectionate statements of your love for Him, while praying in the spirit gently and intermittently, and as you journal. (For free notes on Fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit and T-R-U-S-T, see mikebickle.org)

T–Thank You: We turn our attention inward to recognize the Spirit’s presence simply by thanking Him for His indwelling presence. Pray, “Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your bright presence in my spirit.”

R–Release revelation of Your glory: Ask the Spirit to release revelation of the realm of God’s glory and heart. Pray, “Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see the realm of Your glory and to encounter

Your heart.” ...*Father of glory, may give to you the spirit...of revelation in the knowledge of Him...*
(Ephesians 1:17)

U–Use me: Ask the Spirit to use you more in the spiritual gifts to minister to others (1 Corinthians 12:7-9). Pray, “Holy Spirit, release a greater manifestation of Your gifts and power through me to help others.”

S–Strengthen me: Ask the Spirit to strengthen your mind and emotions with His might or power. ...*be strengthened...through His Spirit...17that Christ may dwell in your hearts...* (Ephesians 3:16-17)

T–Teach me: Ask the Spirit to teach you about God’s Word, will, and ways by giving you wisdom and creative ideas for every area in your life, including how to steward your money, manage your time, prosper in your relationships in your home, church, office, ministry, and to walk in purity and health both physically and emotionally. Ask Him for new ideas, to order your steps, and to open doors of opportunity. 26“*The Holy Spirit...will teach you all things...*” (John 14:26)

Chapter Seven – A PRACTICAL PLAN TO GROW IN *EFFECTIVE* PRAYER

Introduction

There is more to developing a consistent prayer life than loving God; there are practical matters.

I understand the difficulties involved in developing a consistent prayer life because I have struggled through them. But by God's grace, I have been able to maintain a consistent prayer life. I will share a practical plan to help you grow in prayer, a plan that has helped me for many years.

1. **Set a schedule for regular prayer times.** A schedule establishes when you will pray.
2. **Make a prayer list.** A prayer list helps you to focus on what to pray.
3. **Cultivate a right view of God.** A right view of God causes you to want to pray.

I was struggling in college to establish my prayer life. A leader suggested that I schedule a time each day and make a prayer list. He assured me that doing these two things would change my prayer life over time. He was right! I was hesitant at first, but his counsel to me worked.

If you schedule time for prayer and make a prayer list, you will pray ten times more than you do now. I have made this statement for more than forty years. People usually do not believe it, and some even argue against it. Nevertheless, I continue to say it because I have proved the truth of it in my own life and witnessed the results of others applying the plan in their lives.

SCHEDULE A PRAYER TIME

We must be intentional about developing consistent prayer lives.

There are many demands on our time. Therefore, if we do not set our schedules ourselves, others will set them for us, and the result will be very little time for prayer. It is of the utmost importance that we schedule time for prayer. It sounds simple, but setting a regular time will profoundly impact your prayer life.

Of course we will not keep our schedule 100 percent of the time, but we will keep it more often than we do not. I feel good if I show up to start my scheduled prayer times eighty-five percent of the time. I do not always stay in prayer the entire time that I set out, but I set my heart to show up to start it, and then I go from there.

Treat your prayer time as a sacred appointment, and try not to miss except for emergencies.

I do not limit my prayer life to my scheduled prayer times; I pray “on the run” during the day, which is part of abiding in Christ. You will sustain an “abiding dialogue” throughout the day much more consistently if you have regular times to talk to God set into your schedule. It may be necessary to tweak your schedule at times to keep it working with other things in your life.

There are 168 hours in each week. If we use ten hours a day to sleep, eat, and dress (seventy hours a week), that will leave us about 100 hours a week for work and other things. With creative scheduling, most people can find an hour or more a day for prayer if they really want. Pray and consider 'tithing' 10% of your time to prayer and Bible study each week.

MAKING A PRAYER LIST

I recommend that you prepare a prayer list—or several lists. This is a simple tool that can help keep us focused during our prayer times. Often when I begin to pray, my mind is blank. I need a little “jump start” to help me focus, so I use prayer lists, which I have found invaluable. I was 18 years old when I made my first prayer list; over forty years later I still use lists because I still need them. I do not limit my prayers to the things on my lists, but use them simply as a guide.

I depart from them at any time I feel led to pray in a different direction. I enjoy praying with the inspiration that comes from the leading of the Spirit, so I seek to follow His prompting.

I have three prayer lists—for my personal life, for people and places, and for justice issues.

Personal life: This includes praying for my own heart, ministry, and circumstances (physical, financial, and relational). I use the acronym FELLOWSHIP in praying for my heart.

People and places: I keep a list of individuals, ministries, and cities that I pray for regularly. I pray for individuals (family and friends), ministries (including my local church), missionaries and mission endeavors, etc. I pray for the destinies of specific cities such as Jerusalem and Cairo, and for nations in great need such as Egypt, Syria, Haiti, Russia, North Korea, Israel, and so on. I spend extra time praying for Jerusalem as Scripture exhorts us to do so (Psalm 122:6; Isaiah 62:6).

Those in authority: We are to pray for people in authority over our city and nation (1 Timothy 2:2).

For justice: This is a broad topic that includes governmental and social issues such as the ending of abortion, human trafficking, and unfair educational systems. My list sometimes includes situations related to economic injustice, water rights, civil unrest (terrorism, riots, etc.), natural disasters (hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, drought), disease (AIDS, tuberculosis, etc.), social crises (for example, famine and genocide), and more.

Some protest that it is legalistic to schedule time for prayer or use a prayer list. It can be, but it does not have to be. We step into legalism when we seek to earn God's love by praying or obeying rules.

The good news of the gospel is that we don't have to earn it; God offers His love and grace freely.

Consistency in prayer—talking to the Lord regularly and with focus—simply positions us to sit before Him more often so that we can actually experience more of His free grace in our life. What Jesus freely offers in grace and what we actually experience are often two different things.

Setting regular times for prayer is not an attempt to earn God's love; it is a reflection of our desire to take control of our schedules to **make prayer a priority**. I urge you not to fall for the age-old lie

that automatically calls all discipline “legalism.” This lie has robbed many of the blessing of a consistent prayer life. Being aimless or passive is not what liberty in grace is about.

you...have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh... (Galatians 5:13)

Scheduling time for Him is an expression of both my love for Him and my hunger for more. It is not an attempt to earn love from the One who gives His love freely and abundantly.

CULTIVATE A RIGHT VIEW OF GOD

Cultivating a right view of God is another essential aspect of growing in prayer. Too many believers have a wrong view of God. For example, they live under the wrong assumption that God is either an angry taskmaster who forces us to pray and endure conversation with Him to prove our devotion to Him or a stoic God who has no interest in our lives.

God is actually a tender Father who deeply loves His children, and Jesus is a Bridegroom King filled with desire for His people.

As we know and believe the biblical truth of God as our tender Father and Jesus as the Bridegroom King, we are energized to seek God and experience new delight in our relationship with Him.

Our prayer lives become very different when we come to Him with the confidence that He enjoys us. It is enjoyable to talk to someone who really likes you!

We grow in our passion for God by understanding His passion for us as it awakens passion in our heart for Him. Encountering the father heart of God is foundational to growing in prayer. Jesus prayed that His people would know that the Father loves them just as He loves Jesus!

...that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:23)

We have “*received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’*” (Romans 8:15). In Hebrew Abba is a term of endearment for a father, much like “Papa” in our culture; it indicates respect, but with affection and intimacy. The understanding of God as “Abba” and the knowledge of our identity as His children equip us to reject Satan’s accusations that we are hopeless failures.

The truth that Abba-God enjoys us, even in our weakness, gives us confidence in prayer.

As His sons and daughters, we can approach His throne with confidence and without shame or hesitation. John prophesied of “*the Spirit and the bride crying out, ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’*” (Revelation 22:17, 20).

- As **sons of God** we are positioned to **experience God’s throne**—as heirs of power (Romans 8:17).
- As the **bride of Christ** we are positioned to experience God’s heart—His emotions. Jesus is a King with power and a Bridegroom with desire (Isaiah 54:4-12; Jeremiah 3:14; 31:32; Hosea 2:14-23; 3:1-5; Matthew 9:15; 22:1-14; 25:1-13; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17).

The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' fiery emotions for His people and His commitment to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty with them.

In November 1995, I had a prophetic dream in which the Lord spoke audibly to me as I stood on the stage in a large auditorium of young adults. He said, "Call the people 'Hephzibah.'" The Hebrew name, Hephzibah, means "*the delight of the Lord.*" We can be confident in God's love, knowing He delights in relating to His people as a bridegroom delights in his bride (Isaiah 62:4-5). *...you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...5as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.* (Isaiah 62:4-5)

How we view God determines how we approach Him in prayer.

If we view Him as aloof or angry, we will not want to pray very much. When we see Him as a tender Father and passionate Bridegroom who desires for us to come to Him, then we will pray much more.

TOO BUSY TO PRAY?

Most of us feel that we are too busy to pray, but the truth is that we are too busy not to pray. We cannot afford to carry out our responsibilities while living spiritually burned out. **The Lord calls all of His children**, no matter what occupation—lawyer, doctor, maintenance man, athlete, carpenter, accountant, teacher, homeschooling mom, and so on—**to have a real prayer life.**

Some worry that if they take time to pray, they will lose valuable time to love and serve their families, friends, churches, or businesses. **People who pray regularly will love their families, friends, and neighbors more**, because their hearts will be energized by the Spirit, and their negative emotional traffic will diminish, enabling them to love more deeply and consistently.

The best thing husbands and wives, dads and moms can do for their marriages and families is to grow in prayer.

The same is true for pastors and godly leaders in the marketplace. It is not a question of choosing either work or prayer; we are to engage in both in proper balance and in the right order. Jesus is our example, and He did not permit ministry to others to hinder His prayer life, nor did He allow His prayer life to hinder His ministry to others.

Jesus valued prayer: Even after He had ministered long hours in preaching and healing the sick, He still departed to a lonely place to pray—to commune with His Father and be strengthened. If praying was that important to Jesus, then how much more important should it be to us? *So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.* (Luke 5:16) *46And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.* (Mark 6:46) *He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* (Luke 6:12)

TIME FOR BOTH GOD AND FOR PEOPLE

We have enough time to go deep in God and to relate well to people. We do not have to give up our prayer times to fulfill God's will in our responsibilities related to our jobs and families. I have

found that most of us can “steal” time for the kingdom from the time we spend on recreation and entertainment and still have time for our jobs and families. There are some exceptions.

We must be fiercely determined to grow in prayer because our culture has grown increasingly busy and noisy, crowding out the ability to create “sacred space” for fellowshiping with God. However, even with busy work and school schedules, most of us have more time than we realize.

If we do not schedule our time, others will seize it, and we will live in the tyranny of the urgent, giving ourselves to whatever social event, need, or crisis presents itself to us in the moment.

Some live at the whim of everyone and everything that comes their way, but when they look back over the years, they sadly admit that many of those pressures, opportunities, and “urgent matters” were not connected to their destiny in God or the assignment He had given them in life.

By living by what is important—instead of the tyranny of the urgent—we can live without regret.

Some would be wise to downsize their lifestyles to make time to connect with God. Eliminating some of the nonessential activities we engage in is better than downsizing our time with God.

Ask the Spirit to help you know the best way to spend your time in each season of your life.

Paul exhorted lethargic believers in the church at Ephesus who were spiritually asleep to awaken and shake off their spiritual lethargy so that Christ would shine on them.

*Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and **Christ will shine on you.** 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time.* (Ephesians 5:14-16, NAS)

- Christ’s “shining” on them refers to the Lord releasing His presence to touch their hearts.
- **We do not earn God’s presence, but we do position ourselves before Him to experience more of it.** Paul challenged them to do this by spending their time wisely as the way to experience Christ shining on their heart. In other words, using our time rightly in prioritizing prayer is connected in a practical way to the measure in which we experience Christ shining on our hearts by His manifest presence.
- Instead of saying, “making the most of your time,” some Bible translations say, “redeeming your time.” To redeem our time is to use it with the utmost care so that we may grow in God and extend His kingdom. It involves setting godly and wise priorities for the use of our time.
- **Time is a non-renewable resource in our life.** Once we spend that time, we cannot get it back.

Our time can “purchase” eternal things that last forever. Establishing time for prayer is one way that we can redeem our time. We can invest our time in a way that will lead to our hearts being awakened from the death of passivity to experience more of the “light of God’s presence.”

Writer and philosopher Henry David Thoreau recognized the importance of using our time wisely. He wrote, “As if you could kill time without injuring eternity.”

We must be careful to invest each day wisely.

The godly, healthy, biblical call to “sacred aloneness” allows us to grow in love. It energizes us to love God and to love people for the long haul.

Being connected to Jesus at the heart level through prayer is the lifeline that enables us to sustain ministry for decades without burnout.

We can find time for prayer by avoiding the tendency to waste time with idle talk; too much television, social media, or recreation; and an excess of networking, to help our ministries or businesses grow.

We have to say no to certain things, even some good ones, in order to have time to grow in prayer. Time for prayer will not suddenly appear in our schedules. We have to seize it by saying no to some legitimate activities.

When Martha wanted her younger sister, Mary, to stop sitting at Jesus’s feet and help her prepare the meal, Jesus corrected Martha by telling her that Mary had chosen the good part.

Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part...” (Luke 10:41–42)

During our prayer times it is important to turn off our phones, our email, and other social media. The person who is overly stimulated with information and communication will not connect with God in the same way as when he turns off his devices during times of prayer.

Our culture is over-stimulated with information and visual images, draining us emotionally. Our emotional energy is limited, just as our physical energy is. In the same way that we need to rest after physical exertion, we also need to rest from being over-stimulated emotionally.

PEOPLE WITH A STRONG PRAYER LIFE VALUE RELATIONSHIPS

A strong prayer life will eventually lead to strong and healthy relationships. People who most value their relationships with God and others are those who desire to love with greater depth and consistency. Therefore they are people who desire to grow in prayer.

Prayer is all about love. It is not antisocial. We must draw back from the over-activity that hinders our ability to love God and people.

It is a paradox because it takes time with God to grow in relationship with God and people. Only emotionally uncluttered people who cultivate a quiet heart are able to grow in relational depth. Some blame their antisocial tendencies on their prayer lives, but this is a dangerous cop-out.

You do not need to engage in every social event that comes your way just because you value relationships. You will have to say no to some of them, but the relationships you maintain will be healthier.

When we lack quality time with God, our quest for deep relationships with people often results in disappointment, frustration, and a sense of loneliness, even in the midst of social activities.

To have the highest quality of relationships, we must take time to connect with God

We simply do not have the emotional resources to relate well unless our hearts are energized and filled with peace by the Holy Spirit. It is not the taking of time for prayer that lead some into unhealthy isolation and avoidance of relationship, but rather fear, shame, and other emotions.

Conclusion: If we will take the necessary time for prayer and implement the three practical steps outlined in this session for developing our prayer life—setting a schedule for regular prayer times, making a prayer list, and cultivating a right view of God—we will find that we will grow not only in prayer, but also in love for God and for people with strong relationships.

Chapter Eight – RELEASING THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH INTERCESSION

The majesty and mystery of intercession: agreement with God

Intercessory worship is the primary means by which God has chosen to release His power on earth in this age and in the age to come.

Through intercession God's people express their agreement with the Lord. In worship we agree with who He is, and in intercession we agree with what He promised to do.

The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)

- **Worship and prayer flow together before God's throne and contribute to what God does on the earth.** When the "golden bowls of prayer" are full in heaven, then Jesus will open the seals or release His end-time judgments against the Antichrist. *...the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders...each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and open its seals...we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:8-10) |...the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne... 4the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God...5Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth [releasing judgment]... (Revelation 8:3-5)*
- **The Lord uses intercessory worship to release His justice** (vengeance against His enemies). *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth...7to execute vengeance [justice] on the nations...8to bind their kings with chains..., and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. (Psalm 149:6-9)*

The majesty of intercession: God has chosen intercession as the primary means by which He releases His power. Jesus intercedes forever (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34). *25He always [forever] lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)* 1. Through intercession, Jesus releases His power to rule and possess the nations (Psalm 2:7-8). *7I [Jesus] will declare the decree: The LORD [the Father] has said to Me, "You are My Son... 8Ask of Me [intercession], and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance..." (Psalm 2:7-8)* 2. He operated in the principle of intercession by speaking the Word to create the earth (Genesis 1).

The mystery of intercession: Intercession is simply to tell God what He tells us to tell Him as the means of releasing His power. It is profoundly simple. Its mystery lies in its "weakness," simplicity, and accessibility to all. Intercession is God's brilliant strategy for including the saints in ruling with Him in power.

JESUS CREATED THE EARTH: THE PRINCIPLE OF INTERCESSION

The principle of intercession was expressed at creation: The Father's plans were spoken by Jesus, and then the Spirit released power. The Father has many plans in His heart and ordained that Jesus speak them out in intercession. We see Jesus's work in the phrase "and God said" ten times in Genesis

- Jesus is identified as the Creator who said, “*Let there be light*” (John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9). *The earth was without form, and void...the Spirit was hovering over the...waters. 3God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 9God said, “Let the waters...be gathered together...” and it was so...11God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass...and it was so.”* (Genesis 1:2-11) *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...* (Psalm 33:6)

Jesus sustains and holds together the created order by speaking the word of His power to the Father (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2-3). God “brings us forth” in blessing and power as Jesus speaks His Word over our lives (James 1:18). *These are examples of how intercession is expressed by Jesus. 3...who [Jesus]...upholding all things by the word of His power... (Hebrews 1:3) And in Him all things consist [hold together, NIV, NAS]. (Colossians 1:17)*

When Jesus articulates the Father’s thoughts, He functions as the Living Word. One reason why Jesus is called the Word (John 1:1; Revelation 19:13) is because He brings God’s ideas into existence in the natural world by speaking.

Jesus acts and rules by speaking the Word of God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God [Jesus]... 3All things were made through Him... (John 1:1-3)

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He spoke God’s Word to resist each temptation (Matthew 4:1-10). *He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” ...6 said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down...” 7 Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD ...’” 9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You...worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD ...’” (Matthew 4:4-10)*

The word of God functions as the sword of the Spirit, striking Satan’s domain (Ephesians 6:17).

The sword of Jesus’ mouth refers to His power being released by the commands of His mouth. He uses the sword or rod of His mouth to judge and remove all that resists Him (Isaiah 11:4; 49:2; Revelation 19:15). *Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. (Ephesians 6:17) And He [the Father] has made My mouth like a sharp sword...” (Isaiah 49:2) He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth... (Isaiah 11:4)*

The Lord has chosen to govern the earth in partnership with His people. Lord puts His words into the mouths of His people so that forever they may “speak in agreement with Him” to release His power on earth—this is a principle of intercession. This one aspect of the new covenant.

“...this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is up you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth...from this time and forevermore.” (Isaiah 59:21)

The Lord put His words in the mouth of Jeremiah to bring about His purposes in the nations. *“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. 10 See, I have this day set you over the nations... to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.” (Jeremiah 1:9-10) This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night...then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8)*

JESUS RELEASES GOD’S JUSTICE IN RESPONSE TO INTERCESSION

Justice is God making wrong things right and is released in connection to speaking God’s Word through night-and-day prayer. Jesus, the ultimate social reformer, was the first to connect justice to night and-day prayer. Prayer confronts the source of injustice in the spirit realm.

Shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night? 8 He will bring about justice for them speedily. When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”
(Luke 18:7-8; NAS)

Examples of God’s justice, His judgment or salvation, that makes wrong things right:

- **Healing:** God’s judgment on sickness is seen in the manifestation of healing power.
- **Revival:** God’s judgment on compromise is seen in the Church being revived by the Spirit.
- **Soul-winning:** God’s judgment on the kingdom of darkness is seen when people get saved.
- **End-time judgments:** God’s judgments against the Antichrist’s governments and their actions
- **Righteous legislation:** God’s judgment on unrighteous laws, including abortion laws.

We do not merely pray for the work that we do in the kingdom—prayer is part of our work. Oswald Chambers wrote, “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; **prayer is the greater work.**”

In our personal lives, we speak God’s Word against injustice and Satan’s lies that assault our hearts or the hearts of others. In this way we release strength to others called “encouragement” as it puts courage in their heart. God releases healing in this same way as we speak His Word over the sick.

WEAKNESS AND WISDOM OF INTERCESSION: SEVEN BENEFITS

God uses things that men consider weak to triumph over the things that men consider mighty.

God uses those who embrace the so-called “weakness” of praying to triumph over human might. Our prayers are often offered without us feeling God’s power, yet they ascend before God in power.

...God has chosen the [so-called] weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:27)

1. Renews our faith—Speaking God’s Word in intercession causes us to internalize His Word and thus renews our faith, draws us into intimacy with God, and transforms us. God’s words are spirit and life—they impart God’s life to us (John 6:63). Each time we say what God says, it marks and changes us. Each time we receive a small impartation of His life, which illuminates our mind and tenderizes our heart. This process renews our faith. As a programmer rewrites lines of code when developing a program, we “rewrite lines of code” in our heart by speaking God’s Word. *The words that I [Jesus] speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)*

2. Increased understanding—Intercession releases spiritual insight (Ephesians 1:17). As Daniel prayed, Gabriel visited him and gave him “skill to understand” spiritual things (Daniel 9:20-23). *...the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know... (Ephesians 1:17-18) Now while I was speaking, praying...and presenting my supplication before the LORD ... 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel...22 said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved...understand the vision... (Daniel 9:20-23)*

3. Release of God’s power—Intercession releases God’s power and justice as it **changes the spiritual atmosphere of cities** (Luke 18:8). When Daniel prayed, angelic activity increased and demonic activity was hindered in the spirit realm (Daniel 10). There is an irrefutable law we observe in history, that **revival is released in a far greater measure when night-and-day prayer is offered.** *However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:21) “...Daniel...I have come because of your words. 13But the [demonic] prince of...Persia withstood me twenty-one days...Michael [archangel]...came to help me... (Daniel 10:12-13)*

4. Love and Unity—Intercession is a practical expression of loving people as it releases deliverance for the needy and unites our heart to the people and places for which we pray. *This will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer... (Philippians 1:19) You also helping together in prayer for us ... (2 Corinthians 1:11)*

5. Multiplied blessing—Intercession for others causes God’s blessings to multiply by returning back on the life of the intercessor. **Every prayer to release God’s blessing and power on another is a prayer that God also returns back on you and your family.** The law of the kingdom requires that we always receive more than what we give away by faith (Luke 6:38). *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure...and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38)*

6. Long-term impact—Intercession makes a long-term impact. Our prayers for people and cities have an impact both now and in the age to come. The prayers of the saints from history are stored in a bowl near God’s throne and make an impact in the end times (Revelation 5:8; 8:1-6).

7. Inheritance—Intercession gives us an “inheritance” in the people and places for which we pray. We have a spiritual investment with a sense of ownership, as well as eternal blessing and joy in all the people and places that we regularly pray for and serve (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20For you are our glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)*

Intercession is God’s strategy for including the saints in ruling with Him in power.

The activity of intercession renews our faith, transforms and draws us into intimacy with God, increases understanding, releases God's power, expresses love, leads to unity, multiplies our blessing, has long-term impact, and increases our inheritance.

Chapter Nine – THE VALUE OF USING THE BIBLICAL PRAYERS

Introduction

When you intercede, almost always use the prayers of the Bible. The prayers that Jesus, Paul, and Peter prayed are recorded for our benefit. We refer to them as the “apostolic prayers” because they are the prayers that Jesus prayed as our chief apostle (Hebrews 3:1) and that the Spirit gave to the apostles. Including doxologies, there are about thirty apostolic prayers (see a list of these on mikebickle.org).

The apostolic prayers are a valuable gift to the church being the prayers that burned in God’s heart and give us the language of His heart. He never changes, so be assured they still burn in His heart.

These prayers are guaranteed! They are like checks already signed in heaven and waiting only for a cosigner on the earth to be cashed. They are as relevant today as they were in the early church.

APOSTOLIC PRAYERS ARE GOD-CENTERED

All the prayers in the New Testament are God-centered prayers; each one is addressed to God. Not one apostolic prayer is addressed to the enemy. God-centered prayer, including spiritual warfare prayer, is the model set forth in the New Testament. It is the model the early church used in resisting and dislodging demonic forces and cultural strongholds (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

All the prayers of Jesus that are recorded in the Bible were directed to the Father (John 14:16; 17:5, 11, 15, 25). Jesus taught His disciples to direct their prayers to the Father (Matthew 18:19; Luke 11:2, 13). The apostles’ prayers also teach us to address the Father when we pray. In the “warfare epistle” Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he addressed all his prayers to the Father (Ephesians 1:16–17; 3:14, 16, 20).

APOSTOLIC PRAYERS ARE POSITIVE

The apostolic prayers are positive prayers asking God for the impartation of positive things instead of the removal of negative things. For example, Paul prayed for love to abound instead of asking for the removal of hatred (Philippians 1:9). He prayed for the impartation of unity instead of praying against division (Romans 15:5). He asked for peace to increase instead of fear to be removed (Romans 15:13). He did not pray against sin but asked for an increase of holiness, purity, and love (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). Even Paul’s requests to be delivered from evil men are positive in focusing on the deliverance of God’s people rather than on exposing or bringing down the evil men persecuting them (2 Thessalonians 3:2).

One reason God established “positive prayers” as the norm in the New Testament is to enhance unity and love in the church. Some pray “negative prayers” that focus on sin in the church or its leadership; often such prayers feel judgmental and angry. Others in the prayer meeting do not agree with the view or tone that was expressed in the negative prayer, so the prayer results in creating an unnecessary division among some of the people at that prayer meeting.

The Lord knew that praying for the impartation of positive virtues, instead of focusing on removing negative characteristics, would unify intercessors and heal some of the negative emotions against the church in the very people praying for the Church.

You may notice a change in your life as you pray for the church using apostolic prayers with their positive language. Little by little you may become more positive in your emotions and developed more mercy and kindness in your heart toward weaknesses in the church.

The positive focus that comes from using the apostolic prayers can also help us to operate in faith. The apostolic prayers provide us with good theology for a victorious church. A man once asked, "Why do you believe the church will be victorious?" Look at the prayers of Jesus and the apostles for the church. Theology on a victorious church and revival may be formed, partially, by praying the New Testament prayers. These prayers were given by the Spirit, so we know they will be fully answered. The church will walk in great power, purity, and unity before Jesus returns.

Positive apostolic prayers facilitate unity, impact our emotions, and build our faith. The Father is the "Great Psychologist." He designed these prayers to help human hearts flow well and work together in unity with a spirit of encouragement and faith.

APOSTOLIC PRAYERS ARE USUALLY FOR THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

The vast majority of the apostolic prayers are focused on strengthening of the church, not on the lost or the transformation of society. This does not mean that God is ambivalent about the lost or society or that we are not to pray for these things. The only prayer in the New Testament that is focused on the salvation of the lost is Romans 10:1 where Paul prayed for Israel that they might be saved.

The vast majority of the apostolic prayers are for the strengthening the church, because God's primary plan to reach the lost or to impact a city is by anointing His church with power and love. When we pray for the whole church in a city to be revived in love and power, the answer to these prayers will have an immense impact on the lost. Many unbelievers will inevitably come to Jesus and society will be changed as the church in that city walks in the power of the Spirit.

We see this principle at work in the city of Ephesus. The preaching of the Word of God was so powerfully anointed that its influence "*grew mightily and prevailed*" across Ephesus (Acts 19:20). God's strategy was to raise up a large, anointed church with congregations across the whole city that would win a great harvest in all Asia. What happened in Ephesus was so powerful that everyone who lived in Asia "*heard the word of the Lord*" from Paul and others in this church.

...so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus...20So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10, 20)

Considering the limited communication and transportation systems of the day, it seems likely that for all in Asia to hear the Word, they had to hear it not only from Paul, but also from many believers who were a part of the large church at Ephesus that was inspired by Paul's anointed preaching.

When preachers are anointed and the church is revived, the saints will speak the Word and do the works of the kingdom with great consistency and a multitude of unbelievers will come to Jesus.

We do well to labor in prayer for an increase of the measure of the Spirit's anointing on the church, knowing that a harvest will surely result.

No power can prevent the lost from coming to Jesus in great numbers when the church is revived and operating together in the anointing of the Spirit.

We are to pray for the whole church in our area, not just for our ministry or congregation. Thus we ask the Lord to visit a thousand congregations with His power in the region.

The Lord loves the whole church—every denomination and congregation that proclaims Jesus.

He wants His people to love the whole church and not to write off any ministry, but pray for them. We will love those for whom we pray consistently. God knows that we will love the church more as we pray for it regularly.

God's divine strategy is for the hearts of the intercessors to connect and grow in love towards the church in the region for which they consistently pray.

It is easier to love the lost in a city or nation because we do not know most of them. But some are quick to become frustrated and impatient with the churches in their own city because they actually know the believers in them. Therefore the Lord calls us to pray for the church so that we will love it while we are working to bring the lost to Jesus and impact society. He doesn't want us to despise the churches in our city because of their weakness; He wants us to love both the church and the lost.

God is a brilliant strategist! He directs us to pray for the harvest by asking Him to visit the whole church—the local churches—in our area with His great power. It is no coincidence that most of the New Testament prayers are for the church!

THE FOCUS OF OUR INTERCESSION

Two of the primary requests Jesus exhorted us to make of the Father when we intercede are for the release of a greater measure of the Holy Spirit and the release of a greater measure of justice.

"...how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13) *"...will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night...?"* (Luke 18:7 NAS)

As believers, we received the indwelling Spirit at our new birth (John 3:3-5; Romans 8:9-11). Thus we do not pray for the Lord to "give us" the Holy Spirit in the sense of the indwelling Spirit; rather, we ask Him to release a greater measure of the ministry of the Spirit in and through us.

Scripture refers to a greater measure of the Spirit on the church as a *"greater measure of grace."* In Scripture this increase is referred to as *"a greater grace"* (James 4:6); *"great grace"* (Acts 4:33); *"grace . . . abundant"* (1 Timothy 1:14); *"full of grace"* (Acts 6:8, NAS); *"growing in grace"* (2

Peter 3:18); and “*grace . . . multiplied*” (2 Peter 1:2). *But He gives a greater grace.* (James 4:6, NAS) *...with great power the apostles gave witness...and great grace was upon them all.* (Acts 4:33)

We pray for the release of a greater measure of justice. Justice can be defined as God making wrong things right. There are two sides to justice: **salvation** and **judgment**. We see the salvation side of justice when God’s people are healed and delivered. We see the judgment side of justice when the wicked—those who rebel against God’s righteous ways—are stopped, removed, and even punished.

THREE PRAYER THEMES

Follow three prayer themes, regardless of what type of prayer we offering to God. The three general prayer themes are the release of the gifts, fruit, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of the prayers and promises in the Bible fit into one of these three general prayer themes.

The gifts of the Spirit: Praying for a greater release of the gifts of the Spirit involves praying for the release of God’s power, including His **supernatural** favor, provision, and protection. We ask for a greater measure of God’s power to be manifest in our lives and in the people or places we pray for. *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one ...8for to one is given the word of wisdom..., 9 to another gifts of healings..., 10 to another the working of miracles...* (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

The fruit of the Spirit: Praying for a greater release of the fruit of the Spirit refers to asking for God’s character to be formed in the lives of others. We ask that the fullness of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 (God’s love, joy, peace, patience, etc.) be established in those we pray for.

One of the ways to pray for a person to have more fruit in his character and to be more godly is to ask the Lord to release a spirit of conviction and a spirit of wisdom and revelation of God to him. Being convicted of sin and understanding the truth of who God is will result in an increase of the fear of the Lord and fascination with Jesus and thus the formation of godly character in that person. *... He [the Spirit] will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:8) *...may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.* (Ephesians 1:17)

The wisdom of the Spirit: When we pray for a greater release of the wisdom of the Spirit, we are asking for an increase of understanding and insight into God’s plans, will, and Word for others. Paul prayed much for spiritual wisdom and understanding for others (Colossians 1:9-10). Praying for wisdom includes asking the Spirit for dreams and visions that give insight into His will for our lives as well as insight into His plans for a city, business, church and nation (Acts 2:17-19).

These three themes cover the vast majority of the biblical promises related to praying for people or places.

Over years, we developed prayer lists by applying these three prayer themes to our prayer requests. In other words, pray for a greater release of the gifts, fruit, and wisdom of the Spirit when you intercede for other people or places, when offer up personal petitions for yourself, and during devotional prayer ask the Holy Spirit to help you love, obey, and worship Jesus more.

You may use these three themes as a “grid” to help focus your prayers for yourself and others. Nearly every prayer request can be classified under one of these three themes.

Ask for the fruit of the Spirit or godly character to be established in people as the Spirit convicts them of sin and righteousness, reveals the knowledge of God, and releases more of the beauty, love and fear of the Lord to them. Ask for the wisdom of God to be given to them so they would walk in God’s will and plan for their lives. And ask for the gifts of the Spirit—the **supernatural** power, favor, and protection of God—to be released to and through their lives and ministry.

For the practical application of these prayers see additional notes on mikebickle.org.

Chapter Ten – MOST FAMOUS PRAYER: THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE MODEL PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

What a gift and privilege it is to learn about prayer from the One who is the greatest teacher and who had the greatest prayer life!

Jesus gave us a model of prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) based on what God is like and on the nature of the kingdom. It covers all the foundational basics that are expanded upon throughout Scripture. Jesus told us the things that we must know and keep central in our quest to grow strong in prayer.

In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Matthew 6:9)

Jesus pointed out six requests that we should pray.

The first three focus on God's glory, His name, kingdom, and will. The second three focus on man's needs, physical, relational, and spiritual.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Jesus' teaching on prayer starts with a strong focus on who God is to us—our Father in heaven. Foundational to a strong prayer life is a right view of God as our heavenly Father. A. W. Tozer declared that a low view of God has been the biggest problem in the Church in every generation. As we pray, we must intentionally take time to recall who He is according to His Word.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Matthew 6:9)

In the time of Jesus, the Jewish people saw God as a transcendent creator and King. They trembled before His great power. Jesus taught them that God their creator was also their Father. "*In heaven*" points to the Father's powerful transcendence. Jesus combined these two ideas about **God—He is both powerful and personal**. He associated God's fatherly love with His heavenly power, His transcendence with His tenderness, and His exalted place in glory with bowing down so low.

God is a Father who longs for a relationship of deep partnership with us in which He trains, His disciplines, provides for, protects, and directs us with tenderness. God is deeply personal, yet terrifying in His majesty. We are to draw near to His tender heart with confidence, love, and humility. He expresses the fullness of the glory of what fatherhood means. Some neglect this revelation and depersonalize God, presenting Him as majestic, but distant, cool, and even harsh.

We are awed by our Father in heaven, who longs for relationship with people like us.

We will know the truth about Him as our Father much more as we see glimpses of His transcendence. C. S. Lewis wrote of God as being "beyond personality."

Our: He is not only my Father, He is our Father. Our prayer requests are tempered with the reality of who we are to God as one family. They also become inclusive as we are to pray for the whole family of believers and not for ourselves only.

Revelation 4 is one of the great passages on the Father's beauty and throne. I see four categories, each having three themes. These twelve details have many implications.

1. **The beauty of God's person:** how God looks, feels, and acts (4:3)
2. **The beauty of God's people:** the Church enthroned, robed, and crowned (4:4)
3. **The beauty of God's power:** manifested in the lightning, thunder, and voices (4:5a)
4. **The beauty of God's presence:** His fire on lamps, seraphim, and the sea (4:5b-7; 15:2) *A throne set in heaven...3 He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne...like an emerald. 4 Around the throne were twentyfour thrones...I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns... 5 From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne...6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal...around the throne, were four living creatures...8 they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty..."* (Revelation 4:2-8)

Jesus set the context of intimacy with God within His sovereignty and majesty. Some only see Him as a tender Father without seeing His heavenly glory. Others see His heavenly glory without seeing His nature as a Father with deep love. Some only see Him as a Father who is personal and tender, without trembling before His transcendence. They portray God as a familiar and fun-loving buddy. These views are based on bad, shallow theology and very little personal experience of God.

PRAYING FOR GOD'S GLORY (Matthew 6:9-10):

THREE REQUESTS

Petition #1 Praying for God's name to be hallowed: This petition is that God's majestic name be hallowed or acknowledged as holy (transcendent and pure) on earth just as it is honored in heaven. God's name refers to His person, character, and authority.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Matthew 6:9)

We ask God to break in with power to cause more people to acknowledge the truth about Him. Many take God's name in vain. Some use God's names in a joking way or in expressions of contempt and anger.

- We pray that the Father receive the highest place in our life, heart, and worship.
- We revere God's name by not asking for anything against His will or that would defame His glorious name. The very thought of His name stirs awe and holy fear in all who understand.
- God-centered Christianity prays hallowed be Your name, or "Help us to honor Your name." We pray, "Lord, work in me and others, so that we acknowledge Your greatness."

Petition #2 Praying for the kingdom to come: This petition asks for an increase of the kingdom, which is the place where God’s Word is obeyed, His will is done, and His power expressed. The kingdom is manifested when the sick are healed and demons are cast out (Matthew 11:5; 12:28).

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

- The kingdom of God is manifested in part in this age and in fullness when Jesus returns to earth. The kingdom is “already, but not yet”—it is already here, but not yet fully here (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17, 23; 6:10, 33; 10:7; 12:28; 13:11; 16:18-19; 19:12; Mark 4:11, 26; 9:1; Luke 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:16, 29-30; Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30-31; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20).
- This is not a prayer for the Father’s universal, heavenly sovereignty to be exercised, for it is always in force, even if men do not accept it. This is a prayer for God’s saving power to be greatly increased or openly manifested on earth so that even unbelievers can see it.
- We pray for the manifestation of the kingdom to increase openly on the earth. The Lord gives more if we ask for more—the act of asking develops relationship, and this is what He wants.
- Seek to know what God is doing in your generation, and then throw yourself fully into it.
- It includes **being kingdom-minded in our lifestyle** and in our attitudes towards others. Therefore we are to work together with other believers, instead of being focused with a territorial attitude on our own sphere of authority and influence.

Petition #3 Praying for God’s will to be done: This request includes our personal obedience in the context of His kingdom purposes. His will consists of His commands and our ministry assignment.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

PRAYING FOR OUR PERSONAL NEEDS (Matthew 6:11-13):

THREE REQUESTS

The next three requests are for our needs—physical (daily bread), relational (forgiveness), and spiritual (deliverance from evil). Jesus commanded us to bring our personal requests to God in prayer. These prayers express our dependence on God in every area of our life. Some conclude that prayer for such things are “selfish,” so they neglect to make personal petitions.

Petition #4 Praying for our daily provision: This request is for our daily provision, protection, and direction (spiritual and physical). Bread refers here to our daily natural needs. *Give us this day our daily bread.* (Matthew 6:11)

- We do not pray to inform God of our needs (Matthew 6:7-8), but to enhance our relationship with Him and to express gratitude (Psalm 50:15).

- Asking God for our needs does not free us from the responsibility to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10). He meets our needs in part by giving us the ability and the opportunity to earn a living.

Petition #5 Praying for forgiveness: This petition concerns our relationship with God and people. The proof that we have been freely forgiven is that we gladly forgive others. The man who knows he has been forgiven is compelled to forgive others.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

Jesus did not say, “Forgive us our debts because we forgave our debtors.” We must compare Scripture with Scripture to see the truth more clearly. Believers are freely justified by faith, so we ask for forgiveness to restore our fellowship with God (1 John 1:9), not to be saved from hell. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful...to cleanse us from unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9) *He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean.* (John 13:10)

Petition #6 Praying for deliverance from evil: The sixth petition has caused much discussion. Since God never tempts anyone with evil (James 1:13), why would we ask God to lead us not into temptation? We pray that God leads us to escape from tempting situations. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* (Matthew 6:13, NIV, RSV)

Many agree that Jesus was using a figure of speech to express the same thing in two different ways— leading away from temptation and being delivered from, or escaping, evil. This is clear when we read both parts of the one request—to lead us not into temptation and to deliver us from evil. The second half of the request defines positively what the first half expresses negatively.

Jesus urged the apostles to pray that they enter not into temptation (Matthew 26:41; Luke 22:40). To enter temptation speaks of something far more intense than the general temptations we all face. It is a specific storm attacking us, a time when three components come together—when demonic activity is heightened, our lusts are aroused, and circumstances are optimum for sin. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.* (Matthew 26:41) *Satan has asked for you [Peter], that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me...* (Luke 22:31-32)

There are “opportune” times when demonically-energized temptations hit us like a storm. Praying before “the storm” of temptation hits expresses humility that depends on God’s strength and acknowledges our weakness. These “pre-temptation prayers” for help are a pre-emptive strike against Satan’s attack against us. We can reduce the temptation by praying this way. The devil ended every temptation...*he departed from Him until an opportune time.* (Luke 4:13) *Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* (Luke 21:34-36)

David prayed for deliverance from sinful situations even before they occurred (Psalm 19:12-13). *Cleanse me from secret [unperceived] faults. 13Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless...* (Psalm 19:12-13)

Chapter Eleven – PRAYER AND PROPHETIC PROMISES

Introduction

It is the Father's pleasure to release the kingdom to and through His people by prayer (Luke 12:32). 32 "*Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" (Luke 12:32) Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of His willingness. —Martin Luther

One way to intercede for a greater manifestation of the kingdom is to contend for the fulfillment of prophetic promises—biblical prophetic promises, contemporary prophetic promises, and personal prophetic words—particularly those related to revival.

The foundation of our ministry must be on Jesus and our relationship with Him as confirmed in the written Word of God. We do not base our ministry on personal prophetic words. We must never receive prophetic promises that do not honor the Word or that contradict it. The Scriptures are the final authority on all matters of faith, including prophetic promises. All contemporary or personal prophecies must be confirmed by the Spirit as well as two or three witnesses (2 Corinthians 13:1).

Prophetic promises are often invitations rather than guarantees. There is a dynamic relationship between prophetic promises and persevering prayer. As our faith is stirred by God's promises, we are energized to sustain prayer for the full release of these promises. Prophetic promises help us persevere in our faith and obedience so that we do not draw back in times of pressure and difficulty.

Paul exhorted Timothy to fight the fight of faith according to the prophetic words that were given to him (1 Timothy 1:18). We value biblical promises most, but we should not neglect personal prophetic promises that are confirmed by the Spirit. They help us to persevere with faithfulness in our ministry assignments for the Lord and not to quit when it is difficult and small. *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.* (1 Timothy 1:18)

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD: THREE STAGES

First, God initiates what He wants by declaring it in His Word and stirring our heart to believe for it.

Second, we respond in obedience and prayer with faith, speaking God's will back to Him.

Third, God answers our prayer by releasing what we pray for into the natural realm.

The Lord is over the whole process of releasing revival. He sends prophetic encouragement to stir His people to persevere in prayer and faith, and then the Spirit helps them to pray. The Lord then answers the prayers by releasing His blessing in a greater measure. It is a glorious cycle! Revival starts with Him, prayer is initiated and sustained through Him, and the glory goes back to Him. *From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory.* (Romans 11:36, NAS)

BIBLICAL PROMISES FOR A GREAT OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I am convinced that the greatest outpouring of the Spirit in all history will be released just before Jesus' second coming. The body of Christ worldwide in the generation in which the Lord returns will participate in the greatest revival ever to occur. In this great revival the Holy Spirit will release the types of miracles recorded in Acts and Exodus, combined and multiplied on a global scale.

The Bible contains many promises related to the end times. Jesus is coming back for a glorious church that walks in holiness without any blemish or compromise (Ephesians 5:27). 27...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:27)

Promises found in the Scriptures confirm that the body of Christ worldwide will see various expressions of revival in the end times. I identify five:

- We will see the emergence of a victorious, unified, anointed church that is full of God's glory. 22The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. (John 17:22)
- The Church will live in love, humility, and purity as a Bride who is fully prepared for the Lord by living according to the **Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew 5-7; Revelation 19:7). 7 "...the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:7)
- John prophesied a great end-time harvest from every nation, tribe, and tongue (Revelation 7:9). I expect this great ingathering of souls to exceed one billion new souls coming to Jesus. 9...*behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...14These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb.* (Revelation 7:9-14)
- **The spirit of prophecy will operate in the Church** and rest on every believer. 17*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...* (Acts 2:17)
- The body of Christ will fulfill its primary calling to make disciples as we win the lost and build His Church—a kingdom community expressing the two great commandments to love God and people and fully engaging in the **Great Commission** (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:19). 37... *You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...38This is the first and great commandment. 39The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (Matthew 22:37-39) 19*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always...* (Matthew 28:19-20)

We embrace a tension as we pray for the full release of the Lord's prophetic promises of revival—we experience a partial release of power now, while earnestly praying for the fullness of the Spirit.

Some who pray for an historic outpouring lose sight of ministering in God's power in the present, while some who are ministering to people on a regular basis now lose sight of contending in intercession for an historic breakthrough of the fullness of all God has promised. They pour out all their energy in ministry and do not have zeal to contend for a greater breakthrough in the future.

We can walk in the measure that God has ordained for us now as well as seek for the fullness of what He has promised. We can heal the sick and win many to Jesus now, even before the time when great multitudes will come to Jesus in the fullness of end-time revival with power.

We are to take hold of God's power today while we contend for the fullness for tomorrow. In other words, we can have a "present-tense relationship" with Jesus and experience His power now in our ministry and at the same time pray for and anticipate the fullness of all that God promised.

GOD'S WORD TO ME IN CAIRO, EGYPT IN 1982

Mike Bickle shared his dramatic experience with the Lord. My confidence in an end-time outpouring of the Spirit became a very personal issue to me one night in September 1982 in Cairo, Egypt. I experienced a life-changing encounter in the Holy Spirit.

The Lord spoke to me in what I call the "internal audible voice." I was overwhelmed with a sense of God's presence. It came with a powerful feeling of cleanness, power, and authority. I wanted to leave, but I didn't want to leave. I wanted the experience to be over, but I didn't want it to be over.

The awe of God flooded my soul as I felt a bit of the terror of the Lord. I trembled and wept as God communicated to me in a way I had never experienced before and have not experienced since.

The Lord simply said, "**I will change the understanding and expression of Christianity in the whole earth in one generation.**" I received the Spirit's interpretation—**God Himself will make drastic changes in Christianity across the whole world**, and this reformation-revival will be by His sovereign initiative and for His glory.

I knew by the Holy Spirit that the phrase "**the understanding of Christianity**" meant the way Christianity is perceived by unbelievers. In the early Church, people were afraid to associate casually with believers, partly because of the **displays of supernatural power** (Acts 5:13). Today many unbelievers consider the Church irrelevant. God will change the way unbelievers view the Church. Once again **they will witness God's wonderful yet terrifying power in His body**. They will have a very different understanding of Christianity before God is finished with this generation.

I also knew by the Spirit that the phrase "the expression of Christianity" meant the way the body of Christ expresses its life together under Jesus' leadership. God will bring about dramatic change so that **we function as a unified, holy people in the power and love of God**. What happens when we gather together as the body of Christ will change over the course of one generation.

He will use His people who are serving in many different denominations and ministry streams in the body of Christ. He loves the whole Church and will use all who want to be used by Him.

In Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), saying that in the last days God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh or on all the nations. 16But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...17"It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...19I will show wonders in heaven and signs in the earth...20before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD." (Acts 2:17-20)

Pour out My Spirit: This great, final global revival will have multidimensional expressions. It will be a “movement” not characterized by one activity such as an evangelism movement, a healing movement, a prayer movement, a unity movement, or a prophetic movement. It will be all of these and more. This progressive outpouring of the Spirit will change many things. Above all, the Spirit will impart passion for Jesus as the first commandment is established in first place in the Church.

All flesh: At the time that Joel gave this prophecy, many of its ideas were new to Israel. The anointing of the Spirit had been given to only a few people in the Old Testament era, usually older Jewish men who were kings, judges, or prophets. However, Joel prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh: Jew and Gentile, men and women, young and old.

Wonders and signs: Prophetic ministry will involve more than inspirational prophecies. There will be angelic visitations, visions, signs and wonders in the sky, and more. The Spirit will be poured out in power as foretold in Joel 2 and cited in Peter’s first sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

Last days: To understand God’s end-time promises in the Scripture it is important to differentiate between the terms the last days and the end times. The last days began on the day of Pentecost and will continue until Jesus returns. I use the phrase the end times to refer to the final decades of the last days and synonymously with the generation in which Jesus returns.

Many Old Testament prophecies about God’s kingdom are fulfilled in at least two ways and two time frames. First, a partial, local fulfillment like that which occurred in Acts 2. Second, a total, global fulfillment of all that was promised in the generation in which Jesus returns.

This is what was spoken: Peter quoted the prophecy and saying, “this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Yes, the outpouring at Pentecost was “that which was spoken by Joel,” but it was not all of “that which was spoken by Joel.” The Spirit fell on only 120 people in Jerusalem and touched 3,000 more (Acts 2), while Joel spoke of the Spirit being poured out on all flesh with great signs and wonders that would be seen in both the earth and the sky (Joel 2:28-31).

Jesus spoke of the kingdom not only as if the kingdom had fully come but also as if it was still yet to come. As George E. Ladd puts it, the kingdom of God is both “already” but “not yet”—it is already here but not yet fully here. The Bible teaches that the kingdom came to earth in part with the first coming of Christ, but that **the complete manifestation of biblical prophecies concerning the kingdom of God will occur at the end of this age when Jesus Christ returns again.**

Chapter Twelve - PRAYER ALTAR STRATEGY

Notes based on the book **Prayer Altar: A Strategy that is Changing Nations**

By John Mulinde and Mark Daniel

The Prayer Altars Strategy - God has used a strategy to advance His kingdom, draw His Presence, and break the powers of darkness over territories. These biblical truths can be applied to our lives and families with the same impact that God used through out the centuries.

Abraham invited the *Presence* of God into a pagan land by building **Prayer Altars** across the land promised by God. **David** built an altar to the Lord to draw His *Presence*.

Jehoshaphat - What to do when you do not know what to do? Pray, fast and seek the Lord. Listen, obey and praise God! (2 Chronicles 20) The battle is the Lord's. Follow His *Presence* into battle.

Spreading the Net of Prayer - **Prayer Altars** are changing entire nations. **Prayer Altars** have implication in every Christian family, church and business, impacting a territory by the Holy Spirit through prayer.

Build Me an Altar - Darkness is in the world. God is provoking us not only to see the darkness that is coming. He is stirring a desire in His people to seek Him. The Lord says, "Create an environment for Me." God taught Abraham to take possession of the land by building a network of **Altars**.

The Abrahamic Strategy - Everywhere that Abraham went in that land, he raised an **Altar**. Darkness and light can not dwell together, there is no neutral ground. Isaac was sustaining the claim over the land by building and maintaining **Altars**. The practice of building **Altars** went on for generations.

What is a Prayer Altar - 6 aspects of a biblical **Prayer Altar**

A Spiritual gateway – an Open Heaven (Genesis 28:10-16; John 1:51)

Our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13)

A priority in our lives (Mark 12:30)

Intimate communion with God (Revelation 19:7)

A place of sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2)

A place of continuous fire (Leviticus 6:13)

We draw His presence by ministering to the Lord - Magnify the King

(Genesis 1:1, 16 Revelation 4:8 Habakkuk 2:14 John 17:3)

Our faith is proportional to our knowledge and understanding of God. We seek to live and dwell in the presence of God, in communion and connection with His life.

As priests at the altar of the Lord, we are called to minister to Him.

Spend 2 - 3 hrs in His Word and worship so your heart can breakthrough all obstacles coming against you.

We come into the *Presence* of the Lord by fully setting our affections on Him.

Pray, surrender and submit to God as Lord and King. We declare who God is. Our souls and hearts are drawn closer to Him and connect in deeper ways to His heart as we praise and exalt Him.

Hallowing the name of the Lord – Proclaim His Names. We make everything about Him.

Proclaim the Word of God over yourself, your family and your community

As we minister to the Lord, we experience His *Presence* in a deeper ways for longer and longer periods of time. We make God’s Word the centerpiece of our life.

We draw His presence by saturating in the Word – Like sponges we absorb what we saturate in.

The Word of God has the highest importance in the kingdom and the government of God.

The way God choose to reveal Himself is through His Word. There is no way to build an altar without the Word of God saturating our souls. Create the Time to saturate in the Word. Start by reading large parts of the Bible, perhaps 5 or 10 chapters every day.

Pray for the Purposes of God, because there is nothing else worthy of giving your life to.

Establishing a Personal Altar – **Prioritize, be intentional, set a specific time, come into His presence in extended times with Him and truly commune with Him.** Avoid distractions, divisions, distractions

The Word, read the whole Bible, saturate in the Word

Establishing a Family Altar – **The main idea of a family altar is to establish an atmosphere in the home where the tangible *Presence* of God is touching every area of life.** The marriage altar is a very powerful foundation for a strong and godly family. When the **family altar** is strong, it will have an influence on the family for generations to come

Testimony of Uganda - **Every single ministry, denomination and church has a particular anointing. Come together in unity of purpose. God requires us to unite to receive the fullness of revival.**

In coming together, there will be greater corporate anointing on the people because of the unity. It must be the **whole body of Christ.**

God is calling for every individual Christian to start praying, every Christian family, church and workplace to establish a **net** over our entire nation. Every knot in the net as a **Prayer Altar.**

“Call upon My *Presence.*” You will only find success in what you are doing in the physical realm after you have won the battle in the spiritual realm. Prayer Altars are powerful. They can push back darkness, change spiritual atmosphere of cities and nations. Altars can open heaven.

Which kingdom will prevail? - All prayer is spiritual warfare. At the altar, we build an atmosphere to draw the kingdom of light.

Darkness is the spiritual force that comes when people reject the will of God. It gives legal authority to the devil to influence our lives negatively.

What is darkness – Choosing not to follow God’s will results in darkness.

Our minds are the gateway that allows darkness in or keep it out. Our minds are the battle field.

The altar that is most active, either holy or unholy – will control the territory.

The Priesthood - The altar opens a gateway between the spiritual realm and physical realm. This makes the altar a vital aspect of life. **A priest is a person who will oversee and control the gateway between the spiritual realm and the physical realm.** There are holy priests, whose purpose is to stand before God to minister at the altar.

In every land there are two priesthoods: an unholy priesthood and a holy priesthood.

An effective and holy priesthood draws the presence of God into the land.

Nothing is more important than coming into communion with God, our Lord.

Each of us is called to take our position as a priest of the Lord, standing in the gap for our various nations.

We need to teach our families and fellow believers that we are all priests.

The effect of the Priesthood on Society as foundation of family and marriage, economic, government, laws, values in society, corporate mindset of the land

The culture, media, education and entertainment of the land reflect that unwritten code. This inner law is actually governed from the spiritual realm. The media is simply reflecting what has happened in the spiritual atmosphere.

God created man so he may rule over the earth (Genesis 1:26)...

The priesthood that prevails and influences the spiritual realm has authority to truly affect which direction the city or nation is going in.

The one who ministers at the altar has the key to what will happen in the physical world.

As we open up the spiritual gates and draw the presence of God, there is no limit to what He can do in our lives, families, churches and nations.

Living in the Presence of God - We were meant to live in the presence of God. God created man in His own image. We can communicate with God and receive His divine flow of wisdom. It is in that communion that we begin to see Him for who He is. We begin to know His heart and character.

The deeper the communion, the deeper the revelation. The deeper the revelation, the deeper the surrender and trust. It is in this divine communion that we can fulfill the calling of God on our lives and the destiny for which we were created.

Our altar is meant to be a place for us to come expecting to encounter the *Presence* of God, where we are establishing an atmosphere for our hearts and our lives in which we can walk in communion with God.

Christians have to live in the *Presence* of God. Christians can only thrive when we live in the presence of God. Seeking to continually remain in the *Presence* of God is the key to Prayer Altar.

This ongoing *Presence* of the Lord creates a continuous open heaven surrounding you. You will maintain that fire so that the heavens remain open. Your prayers will not be hindered.

Someone who walks in the *Presence* of God carries revival. Prayer becomes an adventure.

The key difference between a quiet time and an Altar before the Lord is the *Presence* of God.

This altar will change every aspect of you and your life.

The altar brings fourth sacrifice and covenant exchange - **Sacrifice: an act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to God.**

In this atmosphere, you are much more sensitive and aware of God's heart. You will see things in your life that are not honoring to God. You will want to get rid of them. He is drawing us deeper into His presence. Live lives fully given over to Him.

The altar as a place where we offer up sacrifices and experience covenant exchange.

The greater the impact of your altar in the territory, the higher the price that will be required. (Romans 12:1)

Your life is not your own; it belongs to Jesus Christ. We no longer plan our future, but submit to walk with God and follow His ways and commands. We no longer live for ourselves; we live for Christ. (Galatians 2:20)

Our human nature is corrupt and spiritually blind; it can not please or obey God and is powerless to take hold of spiritual truths. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The offering is taken to the altar daily

Establish the life style of an altar, of coming into the *Presence* of God on a regular basis.

Covenant is the basis of man's relationship with God. The way He works is by finding people who will commit to serve Him and His purpose in their nation. God only relates to men by covenant. The foundation of Christianity is covenant relationship with God. In covenant 2 become one, like in a marriage, God has bound Himself to us in covenant

Until you seek to connect with God's purposes for the nation, you will never understand how to fight for the nation.

God tells us to pray for His Purpose and not our problems.

God is calling us to give ourselves fully to Him. God says, “I want you to trust Me to take care of you and your children. He opens up His work and purposes to us, so that we can go forth to carry out His purposes. He invites you to join His purposes and then binds Himself to you in covenant.

The Altar brings forth prophetic insight and a platform of breakthrough - It is critical to tune your ear to the voice of God

It is only as we live by prophetic insight and divine revelation that we can do the work of God.

A lifestyle of the Prayer Altar develops the ability to live in the *Presence* of the Lord, which we call His abiding *Presence*. The altar is not limited to prayer time or devotional time. It is a lifestyle of being before the Lord and living in His presence.

The Prayer Altars we build and maintain give us a platform to break strongholds and push back darkness.

The more time we spend in the *Presence* of God, the more we become confident in His ability to lead us, guide us and provide for us. Our God is a covenant keeper. As we trust in God and depend on Him, He can accomplish things that we could never accomplish. God begins to cleanse you at the altar so the enemy doesn't have the legal right to attack you.

Once you see it and repent of it, you realize how blind the darkness has made you. You will be amazed how much darkness there was. Build your faith to believe for so much more!

The Lack of a Holy Altar allows darkness to prevail - Human strength cannot stand against the wickedness of this generation. We will not have breakthrough in our cities and nations until we address the unholy altars by revelation and knowledge.

We must remain aware that what we do not destroy will destroy us. What we do not overcome will overcome us.

The Land is taken by force. We are supposed to take the land for the Lord, but the land can't be taken by mere words and preaching. One of the keys to successful Prayer Altars is seeking the *Presence* of God.

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