

Releasing  
The  
Power

of  
*Prayer*

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Welcome to this Study.

Releasing the Power of Prayer is a Six-Week Series of Lessons to help you increase your prayer life.

- If you are just starting as a Christian believer, you

will lay a

great foundation for praying prayers that get answered.

- If you are a seasoned prayer warrior, you will

refresh yourself in

your mission of prayer. And you will gain some new ideas to energize your prayer sessions.

God's great plans for you will begin to manifest as you seek Him with all of your heart.

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## Releasing the Power of Prayer: Know Your God

*Pray without ceasing I Thess 5:17*

In scripture, we see many times that we are told to pray. Jesus spent many hours alone in prayer. Throughout the gospels, we see Him rising early and staying up late in order to pray.

So it must be important. And the more we understand about prayer, the more we are effective in it.

When we learn about prayer: what it is and why we pray, we enter into a new realm with God. He has designed us – and His creation – in a way that prayer is a significant part of His plan

That’s what this study is about. All of us want to be more effective in prayer. We want our prayers answered and we want to fulfill what God has called us to do.

In the following lessons we will talk about

- **How to Know God,**
- **The Power of the Word,**
- **Growing Your Faith,**
- **Spirit-filled Prayer**
- **Making Decrees**
- **Putting It All Together.**

As you study the material and follow through with the assignments, your prayer effectiveness should increase. And your faith will rise as to why you are praying at all.

Plus, you’ll see more and more of your prayers answered!

Let’s get started.

In Acts 17:23, as the Apostle Paul is speaking to the Athenians, he notices an altar which reads “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” He realizes that he has found a good place

to start his communication with the people, so he stands up and says, *Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects. (Acts 17:22)*

Then Paul introduces the Athenians to the real God of the Universe.

Paul continues by explaining that the one true God is who created all things and gave breath to all men. He even *set the boundaries of people and nations, determining their appointed time in history. (Acts 17:26)*

Well, today, we might think that we have come far from that. However, there are still many -who don't know the real God – even among Christian groups. Some think of Him as being mean-spirited and demanding. Others know that He loves them, but they think He is just pulling the strings of life, and they aren't sure what He is going to do next.

One of the great privileges of being a Christian is that we get to know our God. It's true that His magnificence is beyond anything we are capable of understanding, but as we walk with Him, we get to know Him better and better.

He *set the boundaries of people and nations, determining their appointed time in history. (Acts 17:26)*

By spending time reading and meditating on the Bible, and by spending time listening to God, we grow in our ability to understand Him. We get to know who He is, what He desires from us. We also learn how we can live with faith in our present world.

As we do this, we learn the power of what we say to Him. Our prayers. Why we pray, and how to pray effectively. Then we also learn how our conversations with God leads us to decree what He wants us to speak into the atmosphere. (An important, though often misunderstood, part of what we call *prayer*).

A lot to cover. So, let's get started!

First, who is our God?

When we look at the very first chapters of the Bible, we get some insight.

God created everything – including man. He blew His breath into Adam, and placed him in a garden where everything was provided. (Gen 2:15) It was perfect. God then charged Adam with two main directives. First, He must guard the garden, protecting it from intruders - namely the devil and his crew. And second, he had to cultivate it: tilling the soil, continuing to plant, and looking after all that God had provided.

God blessed Adam and Eve, saying, *Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen 1:28)* The plan was for Adam to continue to plant and expand until the entire earth was inhabited by God's people.

Then there was this: the essential thing. God gave man freewill. There were two special trees in the garden. The *Tree of Life* and the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Adam was allowed to eat from every tree or plant God made – except for the second tree. If he ate from that, he would die. (Gen 2:16-17)

The two trees represented two kinds of life. God was giving Adam free will. He could choose the life he wanted. The first tree represented the best life. God's Spirit would be flowing through Adam, and He would be living His life with God. God's plans and purposes. God's provision.

The second tree was a life apart from God. Adam could make his own decisions, live his life as he wanted, and dismiss God from his life. In other words he could "Do his own thing!" "Look out for Number One!" Decide what *he* thought was good and evil – apart from God's design.

We know that Adam and Eve made the wrong choice, and we have been paying for that decision ever since.

Yet God had a plan, and it was going to take many years – even centuries - for it to come into fruition.

First, he had to find a man who could come into covenant with Him. Man had free will on the earth, and God – by His own choice – was going to continue to allow that free will. So, He needed a man who would be His partner in bringing the needed change.

He needed a man who would have faith in Him. And He found Abram, whom God later named Abraham.

What made Abraham so special? He believed God, and he was obedient because of his faith. *Then he believed in the Lord and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:6)*

God called Abram to leave his own country and his relatives to go into a faraway land. And Abram obeyed, taking only his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. Travel was hard, and Abram knew that he would never see his family again, but he obeyed anyway.

When he finally got to the new land, he realized that he had to live in tents for the rest of his life. He personally would never be able to settle down in the land God had promised. Yet he didn't turn back. Abram continued to obey God and believe Him for his destiny.

Then, even though Abram and his wife had no children, God promised him a son, saying that through that son he would be the father of many nations.

And Abraham believed God. That's what God was looking for: someone who would believe Him.

Abraham was 75 years old when God made that promise, and he had to wait 25 more years before the promise came true.

But he continued to believe God.

*Without becoming weak in faith, he (Abraham) contemplated his own body, now as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able to perform.*

*(Romans 4:19-20)*

Isaac was indeed born, and Abraham eventually became the father of a great nation: the nation of Israel.

*Abraham was fully assured that what God had promised,  
He was able to perform*

For nearly 2000 years, God cultivated this group of people to understand Him and to be the family through which His ultimate plan would be fulfilled. He gave them laws for their health and safety. He also gave them rituals of worship and plans for a tabernacle. And He demonstrated His Power and Presence by many miracles. All of these things were like types and shadows of what was to come.

He promised these people that Yeshua, the Messiah, would come and restore all things. (Isaiah 53)

And, indeed, He did come: The Messiah, Jesus (Yeshua). The One who was to be the Second Adam, who would bring mankind back to God's original plan. Eventually, God's spirit would once again live inside of man.

Jesus came to the earth through a miraculous birth. The Son of God and the Son of man. God's Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, and she gave birth to Jesus, the Messiah. (Luke 1:38)



Jesus grew up as any other Jewish boy, though obviously very special. Then when He was about 30, He started His ministry – and for three years, He demonstrated God’s purposes for His people. He healed the sick, raised some dead, and taught people about His Father God.

Throughout His time of ministry, Jesus infuriated the religious leaders. He was showing their corruption and hypocrisy. Finally, they had Him crucified on a cross. Yet they had played into God’s hands.

When Jesus went to the cross, He took the sin and rebellion of all mankind and paid the price for it. He descended into hell and defeated the devil. After three days, He arose from the dead, and lives today in Heaven. He is now seated next to his Father God.

**When we receive the Messiah, Jesus, we make the choice that Adam didn’t. We accept His sacrifice for our sins and we choose to live our life with God’s Spirit flowing through us. And not “doing our own thing.” We choose the *Tree of Life* and not the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*.**

Now when we receive Jesus as our Savior, God’s Holy Spirit comes alive in our spirit, and we are born again. *We are new creations. Old things are passed away, and all things become new. And all of these new things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself. (II Cor 5:17-19).*

There is a saying that the *Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.*

This is true. Once you have God’s Spirit alive in you, you can understand the many symbols from the Old Testament. When you look at them, you begin to see more clearly what God’s plan was then – and what His plan is now.

You find yourself many times saying, “Oh, now I see. That’s what that means.” Our loving Father has given us many ways of knowing who He is – and what His plans are for us now.

Well, who is He? From reading God's Word, you will find that:

1. God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. All of nature was designed by Him. And so were you.

2. He is all-knowing – all the time. He knows the big plans He has for His people. He also knows the little details of your life. Jesus said, *Not even a sparrow falls from the sky without God knowing it. (Matt 10:29)*

3. He is all-powerful. There is nothing which God cannot do. (He won't cross your will, just as He didn't Adam's. However, He will continue to work with you in order to bring you to your right choices).

4. He always tells the Truth. (John 1:14)

5. He always shows mercy and grace to those who follow Him. (John 1:14)

6. God's Love never stops. (I Cor 13:8)

7. He Keeps covenants with mankind. Through the death of Jesus, God cut a covenant with Him. Then all of the people who accept that sacrifice for their own, are also in covenant with God. That means you, if you are a Christian. You give Him permission to work in your life in a greater way than those who haven't come into covenant with Him. And you have the blessings Abraham had. (Heb 9)

When you know God and realize Who He is, and how much He loves you, you can pray more effectively. Through Jesus, He brought you back to Himself.

Your prayers are not you begging God to do what you want. He already wants the best for you. Your prayers should be full of faith because you know He loves you and wants to protect you.

**Assignment:**

This week, there are several scriptures which you can meditate on about God. (They are noted in the lesson). Read these scriptures carefully and meditate on them as you go about your day. Notice the areas in the teaching which you find difficult. Those are the ones you should go to.

Write down your thoughts to discuss with the group.

Especially think about some concepts which have hindered you in your life with God. Do you trust Him? Do you believe that He wants the best for you?

Are you born again? Have you wanted to follow Jesus closely?

Is anything holding you back?

**Notes:**

## Releasing the Power of Prayer: What is God's Word?

*For the word of God is quick, alive, and sharper than any two-edged sword, able to judge the thoughts and the intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12)*

Melanie was addressing an audience about the significance of God's Word. In young adulthood, she had read some books which downplayed the truth and significance of the Bible, and she had become skeptical about the validity of the Word. After all, men wrote it, she thought.

Later Melanie had given her life to Jesus, and was trusting Him for answers. After her miraculous salvation experience, she was beginning to believe God's Word. Then one night her belief was cemented forever. On this special night she had a dream, and immediately knew that it was from God.

She saw a room full of people who had been kidnapped and held by evil captors. They were despondent, but had no way of escape.

God's voice asked in the dream, "How would you like to give these captives a note which would be a perfect plan of escape? It would be a coded message which the guards wouldn't understand, but the captives would be able to decipher so that they could break free."

Needless to say, the lady responded in the dream, "of course, I would like to give them a plan of escape."

God's voice was then clear. "That's what I have done with my Word. The whole world is held captive by the evil one, the Devil. My Word, the Bible, is a plan of escape sent to my people. Demons don't understand it, but My People do, when they seek Me for their answers. They will be able to share the plans with others, for their escape also."

Melanie woke up and sat up in bed.

This was amazing. It was so clear.

She got out of bed and went into the den, holding her Bible in her hands. She was in awe. Suddenly, Melanie realized that the Bible was one of God's greatest miracles.

Melanie began to see that this miraculous book answered all of her questions. About God. About Jesus and His Holy Spirit. About her life as a Christian. When we look at her experience, we can understand better just what the Bible is.

There are many aspects to the Bible. First, we know that it is the Truth. Every word of scripture is God-breathed. *(II Tim 3:16). Every word is for instruction, for correction, and training in righteousness.*

As you read the word of God, you gain insight. Into yourself and your attitudes. Into others, why they act as they do, and how we should treat them. You also gain insight into God Himself: how He operates. What He desires. What God's plans are for us and the rest of the world. And, of course, you gain knowledge about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

In this teaching, we are going to look at God's Word as it applies to prayer.

The Bible is actually the foundation of every part of our prayer life.

*God's Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. Able to judge the thoughts and intents of our heart. (Heb 4:12)*

Let's take a look.

One reason we pray is because of our free will. In the last lesson we talked about this, but let's review. Right from the start, God gave Adam and Eve the right to choose the kind of life they wanted to live.

In Genesis, God put two important trees in the garden, so that Adam could have a choice. There was the *Tree of Life* and there was the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. God told Adam that they could eat from any of the plants He had created – except from that second tree. If they ate from that, they would die – and be cut off from God’s Spirit in their lives.

We know that Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and disobeyed God. Thus a curse came upon the earth, and the God-breathed spirit within the two died. They were now mere human beings without God’s Spirit ruling their spirit.

There are some people who think that God is just running everything in the world. It’s true that God’s overall plan will come to pass, but He is not forcing individuals to follow His path. Every man has free will. He can choose God – or not. People are not robots.

That’s why God tells us to pray and ask. *When we ask, we receive. When we seek, we find what we are looking for. When we knock, He opens to us. (Matt 7:7).*

It’s true that He brings many surprises to us. However, the more of our own free will we relinquish to Him, the more He will surprise us with blessings.

So we need to pray, but what do we pray?

*I John 5:14 says that if we pray according to His will He hears us, and if He hears us, we know that we have our requests.*

Then what is His will? The Bible shows us.

Throughout the Bible, God shows us that He keeps covenants with people on earth. The covenants are sort of like contracts – with love. He finds people who believe Him and who want to be His faithful friend. Then He cuts a covenant with them so that He has more sway in their lives. There are many examples. The most significant one in the Old Testament is Abraham.

As we’ve said, God has given freewill to mankind, He doesn’t force Himself. He draws and allows people to decide how much of Him they want in their lives.

Abraham proved that He wanted God all the way. He believed what God spoke to him, and that made God consider him righteous.

In Deuteronomy 28:1-14, we see the Blessings of Abraham, which are an extension of Abraham's covenant. These are the promises God has made to Abraham's descendants if they will follow Him faithfully. The blessings include prosperity, healing, and abundant life.

In Galatians 3:13-14, we see that Jesus became a curse for us so that the Blessings of Abraham could come upon us: the gentile followers of Jesus.

**So clearly, if we are following Jesus, these blessings are God's will for us.**

We don't have to wonder, as people do sometimes, if God wants us to be sick. The answer is, "no, He doesn't!" He clearly wants us well. He wants us to have the blessings of Abraham.

We look at Jesus and He shows us God's will. Many people came to Jesus for healing. He never said, "No." He never turned them away. He knew that God's will was for the people to be healed.

As we read more of the Bible, we see what a great, loving God we have and we want more of Him in our lives. We realize that *The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus has come so that we could have life – and that more abundantly. (John 10:10)*

*God's will is for our abundant life*



So, one reason we pray is because of our freewill. Now we need to grow our faith. Jesus told us again and again that we needed faith in our prayers.

*Believe that you will receive and you shall have what you desire. (Mark 11:24)*

*So Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)*

There is a power in God's Word – beyond the natural. It's not just history or information, it's supernatural. When we start to not only read it or hear it, but to meditate on it and then read it some more, something miraculous happens. That's the second "hearing" in this verse. It's more than hearing, it's knowing. It's what we call revelation knowledge. We not only hear what God said, we realize that it's true. We believe it. We have faith in it.

Do you remember when Jesus said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear?"

My guess is that everyone standing there had physical ears. Jesus was talking about something else. He was talking about faith ears. Ears which hear what God is saying, and believe what He says.

The more you meditate on God's Word, the more you hear it and believe it. It's like God Himself is speaking to you personally. That's when you know that this is yours. Your belief goes very deep. Even if you don't see it with your natural eyes, you know God said it and it's coming to pass.

And now let's go deeper.

We know that God created everything. The earth, the stars, the heavens, angels. Everything was created by Him.

*In these last days, He (God) has spoken to us through His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:3)*

And how did He do it? Did He wave His hands around or jump up and down? No, He did it with words. He *spoke* the world into existence. God said, "Light Be!" And light was!! Then one by one, He spoke the other elements into existence, including the animals.

Man was the only creation which was hands-on. He was creating someone in His image. Then He breathed His breath into man and man became a soul, with God's



life in him. *(Hebrews 11:3) By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*

*In these last days, God has spoken through His Son, Jesus.*

As Jesus walked the earth, He demonstrated the same thing. Jesus laid hands on the sick, but He often just spoke the word. When someone was sick, He said, “Be healed.” When He caused people to rise from the dead, He spoke to them also. “Daughter, arise” (Mark 5:41) “Young man, I say to you, ‘arise!’”(Luke 7:14) When you read the Bible, if you aren’t tuned in to notice this, you could miss it. Our world is a Word universe. God’s spoken Word is what makes things happen. *He upholds all things by the Word of His power. (Hebrews 1:3)*

*Angels hearken to the voice of God’s Word, performing His Word.(Psalm 103:20)*

When we start seeing this, we realize that what is often called our prayer life should be called our decreeing life. (We’ll talk about that later).

But here is the caveat. We don’t just speak any old thing. We speak what God says – and when He says to speak it.

Our speaking the Word of God is right in line with our listening to Him and praying the Word. As we grow in this mission, He will give us other things to say – other than just quoting scripture. But these things will never be contrary to the Bible.

The Bible is actually the foundation of every part of our prayer life.

We have covered a lot of ground in this lesson. We've talked about the power of God's spoken word to produce. We've also talked about how faith comes from meditating on God's Word – and allowing it to become part of you.

**Assignment:**

Look up the scriptures mentioned in this teaching. Read the context.

Read and meditate on Deut 28:1-14. Notice the parts that you especially need in your life? Prosperity? Blessing of children? Healing?

If you want more understanding, read the rest of the chapter. You will see what the curse brings. And you are not under the curse, as a child of God. A born again believer. So put a big “no!” by those verses which you denounce.

If you really want to expand your faith in the Word, go to [Blueletterbible.org](http://Blueletterbible.org) and search for “word” in New Testament. You will see how significant the Word of God is to your understanding, your prayer, and every aspect of your life.

**Notes:**

## Releasing the Power of Prayer: Faith is Essential

So far we've talked about knowing God and about His Word. If you have been involved in this training, you are well on your way to increasing your faith.

This lesson is going to dig deeper into faith. Faith is essential for effective praying.

Jesus said, (Mark 11:22-24) *Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.*

*Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.*

So what is it? What is real faith? The basic answer is that faith is believing God and His Word, and it's essential for effective prayers.

There is a story about a circus entertainer who visited a small town. He installed a wire from one three story building to another – across an intersection. A crowd gathered, of course, to see what he was doing.

The man pulled out a unicycle and approached the flimsy ladder attached to the wire.

With a loud voice, he announced his intentions. "I plan to ride this unicycle across the wire between the two buildings."

The crowd gasped. It was so high up in the air. This was awesome! An even greater crowd gathered.

"How many of you believe that I can do it?"

Many hands went up in the air – and lots of nods and cheers.

"Who would like to ride on my shoulders?"

All the hands went down quickly.

“No one?”

One small boy raised his hand and ran toward the entertainer.

This boy *really* believed. He had faith!

That story demonstrates what true faith is all about. Most Christians generally believe the Bible and say that they believe every word. Yet when major issues come along, they aren't so sure. They still say that they believe – and maybe think that they do, but real faith isn't there.

That one little boy had faith. The rest had what we might call Mental Assent.

So what is this mental assent? It's agreeing with our mind, but not with our spirit. Real faith is not just agreeing. *It's knowing.*

Faith is something which is supernatural. There is a gift called a “gift of faith,” which comes to people, but that's not what we are talking about. We are talking about the kind of faith which all of us can have when we apply God's principles.

*Real faith is not just agreeing, **It's knowing** God will do it.*

To better understand faith, let's look at Abraham. We know that God promised him a son – and he believed God. That's what made God account him as righteous.

As we study Abraham's life, there are several things we can notice to help us understand faith. How did he have faith? He didn't have the written word to develop faith – and he wasn't born again. If we look at the encounters with God, we see how God was developing his faith.

In Gen 12:1, God spoke to Abram and told him to leave his family and go into the land God showed him. He would bless him and make him a great nation.

So Abram obeyed God and did what he was told. Now you have to remember that Sarai, Abram's wife, was barren. She had not been able to have any children. Yet Abram still believed that God would make him a great nation. (Probably his faith was not as strong as it would become later).

When he arrived at the new land, Abram built an altar and called upon the Lord. There were times when he would move about the land. He would always build another altar. It's obvious that Abram was constantly recognizing God in his life. Recognizing Him and remembering what He had said to him. **He would be the father of many nations.**

#### **Abram Showed Kindness to Lot.**

As time went on, because Abram and his nephew, Lot, were both so rich, their farm workers began to argue. There were so many cattle and sheep, the men were arguing over the farmland. So Abram gave Lot first choice on some land, saying that they would separate their flocks. Lot chose the best land, which included Sodom, and Abram was happy with that. He would have Canaan.

God began to give Abram more visuals to increase his faith.

After Lot separated, God told Abram *look up and see as far as you can. (Gen 13:14)*

*I have given this nation to your descendants. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth. I have given it to you. (Gen 13:16-17)*

*I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth*



When Abram looked out over the landscape and walked around his territory, he was reminded of God's promise. Then he could reach down and grab a handful of dirt. God said that his descendants were going to be as many as the grains of sand.

So as Abram's faith was growing, he moved to Hebron, and built another altar. Always reminding himself of God and His promise.

Next, Sodom was invaded, Lot was taken captive, and Abram gathered his men to rescue him.

As Abram was returning from the successful recapture of Lot and the spoils, he encountered Melchizedek, a priest of God Most High.

**This was a powerful exchange, since this priest represented Jesus. (As is noted in Hebrews). He** came out of nowhere and offered Abram bread and wine. (Kind of like communion).

*Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of Heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High Who has delivered you from your enemies.*

*Abram then gave the priest a tithe. (Gen 14:18-20).*

Notice that Melchizedek called Abram "of God Most High." His walk with God was so close, it's like he belonged to him. They were acknowledged as partners.

Then the king of Sodom wanted to give Abram the spoils of the war, but Abram refused. Only God would be his provider.

What we see is an incredible relationship developing. Abram is becoming totally dependent on God. For everything. For his life. For his wealth. For an heir.

In Gen 15, God continued to speak to Abram. Abram was thinking that maybe someone who was born in his house could be his heir, but God said, *No.*

*This man will not be your heir, but one who will come forth from your own body he shall be your heir. And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the*

*Heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, so shall your descendants be. **Then he believed in the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:4-6)***

During the next part of the chapter, God cuts a covenant with Abram – and, as Abram falls into a deep sleep, God gives him a dream showing him what is to come. God’s promise of possessing the land won’t come for 400 years. But He has a plan, and it will come to pass.

As you read about these encounters, you can see a relationship growing. And a deep, deep faith. *On that day, God made a covenant with Abram saying, To your descendants I have given this land. From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. (Gen 15:18)*

*As the number of stars, so shall your descendants be.*

Now Abram missed it several times. He took some trips and was afraid of the Pharaohs, so he put Sarai in the king’s harem. He also listened to Sarai and tried to fulfill his prophecy by himself. He had relations with Sarai’s maid, Hagar, and gave birth to Ishmael. Both of those mistakes caused a lot of problems. Yet God still remained faithful to Abram and the promise. And Abram, for the most part, remained faithful to God.

When Abram was 99 years old, God appeared to him again, and strengthened the promise. He changed Abram’s name from Abram (High father) to Abraham (Father of many nations). He also instituted the covenant marker of circumcision. Abram was to circumcise every male in his household. All the relatives. All the servants. They were to have that sign of the covenant.

So Abraham obeyed. He was now officially considered the Father of Many Nations as his new name signified. And Sarai’s name was changed also. No longer was she



to be Sarai (argumentative), but Sarah (princess). It was a new day – and about a year later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac – the son of the promise.

There is more to the story, but we are going to stop here and attempt to grasp what God is showing us in this word. How can we use Abraham’s example in order to grow our faith. We can see some things which Abraham did and which God did. Things which would increase Abraham’s faith. Things which might help us increase our faith.

- First, let’s notice that Abraham had a close relationship with God. He sought Him and honored Him. We see him again and again setting up altars to honor God and worship Him. It wasn’t just a “give me a son” type of relationship. Abraham honored God and obeyed Him. When God said, “Leave your homeland,” Abraham did. When He told him to circumcise his household, he did that too.

So he had a relationship and he obeyed.

- Second, we see that God over and over gave him visuals to back up the word and make it real. He said to walk the land and look at the horizons. All of that would be his.

God also showed him the dust of the earth. Every grain of sand would stand for another descendant. And the stars in the sky. Each star was another sign of God’s promise.

- Third, you see that there were several encounters – all reenforcing God’s word. Abraham would be the Father of many nations.

- Finally, we see the name change. When God changed Abram’s name to Abraham (Father of Many Nations), every time he introduced himself he would say, I am *the Father of many Nations*. Every time Sarah would introduce herself, she would say, *I am a Princess*. Every time others would speak their names, the same would occur.

God Himself gave Abraham a vision to look at: the sand, the stars, and the land to walk. And He gave them both declarations in their new names. Every time Abraham said his name, he was declaring that he was the father of many nations. And every time Sarah said her name, she was declaring that she was a princess. Young and beautiful!

**And it came to pass. Just as God said it would.**

*Abraham means the Father of Many Nations*

A couple of scriptures in the New Testament help us see the significance of these things.

Romans 4 speaks of how Abraham's promise was not just to the Jews, but to everyone who has faith in God. And how Abraham was able to have the faith required.

Abraham is our father of faith. The Passion Bible says it well:

*I have made you the father of many nations.*

*He is our example and father, for in God's presence he believed that God can raise the dead and call into being things that don't even exist yet. Against all odds, when it looked hopeless, Abraham believed the promise and expected God to fulfill it. He took God at His word, and as a result he became the father of many nations. God's declaration over him came to pass:*

*"Your descendants will be so many they will be impossible to count."*

*In spite of being nearly one hundred years old when the promise of a son was made, his faith was so strong that it could not be undermined by the fact that he and Sarah were incapable of conceiving a child. He never stopped believing God's*

*promise, for he was made strong in faith to father a child. And because he was mighty in faith and convinced that God had all the power needed to fulfill his promises, Abraham glorified God.(Romans 4:17-21 Passion Bible)*

What we see is that Abraham knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God was going to do what He said. That's faith. Not just mental assent. That's real faith. Now how can we apply this to us today? Has God given you promises? Yes. In His Word.

Galatians 3:13-14 says that the blessings of Abraham are ours now. Remember, you can find those in Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

Isaiah 53 is a chapter which tells us what Jesus did for us on the cross. He bore our sickness and sorrows so that by His stripes we are healed.

Throughout the scripture, as you are reading, you will find words which jump off the page. They seem to speak to you personally.

Start with those verses..

Do what Abraham did. He had the word spoken to him by God, but he continued to develop his faith in that Word.

- He honored God and stayed close to Him. Everywhere he went, he built an altar to God.
- He walked the land God had given to him – reminding himself of God's promise.
- He observed the grains of sand and the stars – which God had said represented his descendants.
- He developed his character in his dealing with Lot.
  - He honored God with the King of Sodom by refusing the spoils. Only God was his provider.
  - He spoke his new name – the Father of Many Nations. Every time he said it, he was reminding himself of God's promise.

Now remember, Abraham didn't have the Bible. He was going on the spoken word from God. We have the privilege of the Bible being written to us. We have many promises given to us. Yet we can't apply all of the word at once.

It's best to think of one area you need to improve right now.

Is it healing? Your children? Finances?

There are scriptures for every need you may have. Start with Deuteronomy 28:1-14. Or find scriptures which speak to your need.

Now don't take that word and just start meditating on it. Start with worshiping God. Get really close to Him. Listen to His voice as he brings instruction and correction.

Now you are ready to meditate. But always remember that our blessings come from Zion – that place of intimacy with God.

Write those scriptures out and put them on your mirror or your refrigerator. And look at them. Speak them to yourself as you go about your day. Your voice speaking those words and the visual reminders help increase your faith.

The day will come when you will go from *hoping* it's true to *knowing* it's true.

That's when you are ready to receive the promise. God is faithful. His promises are true. And your prayers mixed with faith – real faith – will produce results.

**Assignment**

This week read the entire story of Abraham. Genesis 12- 23.

The story covers a lot of ground. Many twists and turns. The main thing to grasp is that Abraham was blessed exceedingly, but he was always humble and willing to obey God in all things.

Think of some things you learn from this story. Are there any lessons?

Follow through with finding the promises to you. Write them out and place them where you can see them. Look at them often and speak them aloud.

Thank God for these promises and continue to look at them, speak them, and thank God.

**Notes:**

## Releasing the Power of Prayer: Holy Spirit Prayer

The last lesson involved Abraham and how his faith brought God's promises. Yet Abraham didn't have the benefit of the Messiah or the Bible. We do have that benefit. Throughout the Old Testament, God spoke to the Jews about a Messiah who was coming to the earth. He was going to bring deliverance to all.

For a quick recap:

They didn't quite understand how this was going to come about, but these Jews were looking forward to the day. And the day came. Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem.

That was not quite the dramatic appearance of a king they had hoped for. In fact, many Jews were in disbelief. So he was crucified at the hands of the High Priest. (He truly became the Passover Lamb). For three days He was in hell, paying the price for the sin of all mankind who would believe. On the third day, He arose from the dead and for the next 40 days appeared to His friends. Finally, He rose to Heaven in a cloud, telling His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for something to happen. They would be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but they didn't know what that would look like.

### **Something did indeed happen!**

120 believers were gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were praying and waiting as Jesus said, but they really didn't know what they were waiting for.

Wow! Were they surprised!

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all in one place. Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what appeared to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4)*

These people were baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues.

Now there were God-fearing Jews from many nations, and they heard people speaking in their own languages.

With the baptism of the Holy Spirit, boldness came on Peter, and he stood to address the crowd. He recognized that this was what had been prophesied by the prophet Joel.

*In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out My Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.  
Your young men will see visions,  
Your old men will dream dreams.  
Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days  
And they will prophesy. (Joel 2:28-29)*

A boldness came on Peter – something he had never demonstrated. Before Jesus died, Peter had denied him out of fear. Today was different.

Peter stood before the people and testified of Jesus. He explained the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He reviewed scripture and showed how it had been fulfilled. 3,000 people were saved that day. Very impressive.

This is the first time the Holy Spirit baptized God's people, and it became very clear that something significant had happened to them. And speaking in tongues was a major part of it.

As we go through the New Testament we see Paul and others talking about speaking in tongues. There are tongues which speak other known languages. (As the day of Pentecost) There are tongues and interpretation in church meetings. (1 Cor 14:13) Then there are private tongues for your personal edification and for prayer. (1 Cor 14:4; Jude 20)

We are going to be talking about the third one of those.

## A Holy Spirit Boldness fell on Peter

So why pray in tongues? (Some people call this 'praying in the spirit').

For those who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and received their prayer language, this experience is often pivotal in their lives. As you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit is praying through you. In other words, God himself is praying through you. As you increase your prayer life, you will see things you never saw before. Things in the Word. Things about yourself that need to change. Or things about yourself that God wants to increase.

*But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 20)*

When we pray in the Holy Spirit, we are building up our faith. God's Holy Spirit is praying through us, speaking God's Words and giving us insight. As we continue to pray in the spirit, we will understand God's Word better. Meaning and clarity will jump off the page for us, just like it did for Peter on the day of Pentecost.

There are times when we have issues and just don't know how to pray. That's a perfect time for tongues. Take a look at what Paul said to the Romans.

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans (tongues). And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people according to the will of God.*

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)*

Look closely at these verses. The Holy Spirit

- Knows our hearts – our desires and needs



- Knows God’s Mind and His will for us
- Prays through us according to the will of God.

And in that way is causing all things to work together for the good of us and those we are praying for.

Interestingly, when you are praying for others, God is searching their hearts also. The Holy Spirit, who is God’s Spirit, is the One who is praying God’s perfect prayer.

This is miraculous, isn’t it?

God’s *Holy Spirit prays the perfect prayer*

There are many testimonies of people praying in tongues, and the results they have brought.

Amanda was praying for her 20 something daughter, Lisa, who was drinking heavily. The daughter had resisted any attempts at counsel, in fact would become angry if her mother approached the issue. Amanda continued to pray. One night the Holy Spirit woke this mother in the middle of the night and prompted her to pray in tongues.

Amanda followed directions, but really didn’t even know for what or for whom she was praying. She just recognized an urgency to pray. Her prayers continued through the night and into the next day. All in tongues. She didn’t know what she was praying for – just that the Holy Spirit was directing her to pray.

Miraculously, she didn’t need to know. The Holy Spirit was praying God’s perfect prayer.

Two days later, the daughter called. She had had an “ah-ha” moment, and was checking into a rehab. (The ah-ha was God waking her up to the reality).

That's what praying in tongues can do.

Or what about this?

Bobbie Jean Merck, an awesome woman of God, had a meeting scheduled in Guatemala. This was many years ago when the Guatemalan President was a Christian. He had invited her to come and speak to his cabinet – as well as others.

Two days before the group was scheduled to fly to Guatemala, the Guatemalan military attempted a coup and surrounded the President's home. Needless to say, the trip was off. The president's life was in danger.

The Lord spoke to Bobbie Jean and gave her some direction.

She was to gather her prayer team. They were to meet and pray in tongues for 7 hours. There was to be no known language. Only tongues. If they received some information from the Lord, they were to write it down, but there would be nothing but tongues for 7 hours.

So they did that, as strange as it may have seemed. They were obedient.

At the end of 7 hours, something miraculous happened. The army took up their arms and left. No reason was given. They just left. And the president was safe.

Bobbie Jean knew that it was through their prayers. That's what praying in tongues can do. When God prays, things happen.

It's important to listen to the Lord's direction. He awoke one woman in the middle of the night. With Bobbie Jean, He said to pray for 7 hours. He will guide you – and it won't be the same direction every time.

So as you pray in tongues, you are building up your faith. You are gaining insight into His Word – and into the lives of those for whom you are praying.

*When you Pray in Tongues, you Build up your Faith*



You are also praying according to the will of God. You are bringing about the change for God's perfect will to be implemented.

What a gift!!

Now here's the question. Do you have your prayer language? (Do you pray in tongues)?

If not, God wants you to have that gift.

*Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?*

*If 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)*

Your Heavenly Father wants you to have this Gift

There was a doctrine which came out at the end of the 19th century which said that tongues were not for now. But that was error. God didn't say that. You can't find that in the Bible. Men who didn't have their Holy Spirit prayer created that doctrine.

We need everything that God has for us. In these times, we need all the gifts more than ever.

So let me encourage you to ask God for this gift. Sometimes people have others lay hands on them and they receive their prayer language. Other times people just receive this gift when they are alone in prayer.

As you read the book of Acts and see all the miracles that they experienced, you see that there is much more that we can have.

God's love for us is so abounding, He wants us to have every gift that He has.

## **Assignment**

Read and meditate on Romans 8:26-28, Jude 20, I Cor 14:18

Read Acts 19:1-7 This passage shows the difference in believing in Jesus (being born again) and receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss all of these passages with your group.

Review the advantages of praying in tongues.

**Important: I Cor 12:4-11 Paul lists the different gifts which are given when people are gathered. This reference to tongues is not the same as your prayer language. This reference is speaking of various tongues in a church setting...This is not talking about your prayer language.**

**Notes:**

## Releasing the Power of Prayer Through Decrees

To review, we briefly talked about God's decrees earlier. Let's look again.

In the beginning, God said, "Light Be!" And light came into being. Then He continued to call other elements into existence. As He spoke, things happened. God created through His spoken word.

*By faith we understand that the universe was formed by God's command so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible. (Hebrews 11:3)*

Jesus demonstrated the same. He said, "Be Healed." And people were healed. He said, "Rise and walk!" and the lame man rose and walked. He said, "Lazarus, come forth!" and Lazarus came forth out of the grave.

When you look at what Jesus did, you realize that He spoke the end result. He never prayed for God to heal people. He spoke God's healing.

What Jesus was doing was what we call "decreeing the Word."

*The Universe was formed by God's Word*

As you grow in your prayer life, there will be times when God will speak to you – or you will get an unction to say something. Then you will speak the end result. There will be times when He will give you a word from the Bible to speak. Other times He may give you other words, but it will never be contrary to the Word. At first, this may seem presumptuous, but keep doing it, and you will see results.

Read Ezekiel 37:1-10

God took Ezekiel in the spirit and showed him a valley of dry bones. Very dry bones.

Then God said, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

Ezekiel said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

Then God spoke to Ezekiel and said to prophesy to the bones. He continued to prophesy until the bones began to rattle and they were coming together with flesh, tendons, and skin coming on the bones. Yet there was no breath in them

Then the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy for God's breath to come upon the bones and breath life into them.

They rose up, a mighty army for God.

This was a dramatic vision given to Ezekiel. It's a prototype for the decrees we are talking about here.

When God first established the earth, He gave mankind dominion over the earth. He said for Adam to rule over the earth, and he was to do that through his words. That ability was hindered in the fall of man – though words have never stopped being important. They just weren't as powerful.

Jesus restored what Adam lost, and we now have that right as Christians. (You might say a responsibility instead of a right).

*Jesus Restored what Adam Lost.*

Now here's the thing to watch for.

When God set up the world, He said the Sun would rule the day and the Moon would rule the night.

The sun represents the Son – God Himself. He is the source of all light. The moon represents mankind. We rule in the midst of the evil world. Yet we don't have a light of our own. The only light we have is a reflection of the light of the Lord.

What causes the moon not to be full? The earth stands in the way, blocking part of the sun. In the same way, our flesh – our selfish desires – can block the fullness of Jesus.

We want to be full moons, don't we? Representing Jesus in fullness.

Imagine a world where every decree anyone made would come to pass. That would be a crazy, mixed-up world. One person would decree rain for their crops. The next door neighbor would decree no rain so their son could play ball.

So it would start raining. Then stop. Then start. The stop.

Nothing in the universe would be stable if selfish decrees were to rule the world.

Our decrees aren't just any old thing we want in a selfish sense. Our decrees should be what God is saying either through the written word or a word He has spoken to us personally.

So how do we apply this? Just as Jesus did. We decree God's will; not our own. And His will for us is exceedingly good!!

When we are praying for our children, we decree:

*It is written: All of our children are disciples taught of the Lord and great is their peace and undisturbed composure. (Isaiah 54:13)*

*It is written: This is the covenant I will make with you. I will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love Me with all your heart and your soul so that you may live. (Deut 30:6)*

*It is written: This is the covenant I have made with you: the same spirit that is upon you and the word that is within your mouth shall not depart from you nor your seed nor your seed's seed from this time and forever. (Isaiah 59:21)*

When we are praying for our health, we decree:

*It is written: By the stripes of Jesus I am healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*



It is written: *None of these diseases shall come upon you. (Deut 28)*

When we are praying for finances, we decree:

It is written: *And my God shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)*

It is written: *Wealth and riches shall be in your house. (Psalm 112:3)*

It is written: *God will command the blessing upon your barns and your storehouses and bless all the work of your hands. (Deut 28:8)*

*We Decree God's Will, Not Our Own Will, and Angels will Hearken to that Word*

Those are some examples of decrees you can make. Of course, as you talk to the Lord and listen to Him, He will give you words to say. To decree.

Now here is something which is interesting. Psalm 103:20 says that *angels hearken unto the voice of God's Word to perform it.*

It doesn't say they hearken unto God's Word, but to the *voice* of God's Word. So as you speak God's Word in faith, the angels are busy performing that word.

As you continue making these decrees, you will grow more comfortable with it.

And you'll see great things happening.

**Assignment:**

Decide one area of your life that you especially want to improve. Your health, your family, your marriage, your children. Or any other area.

Find scriptures which speak to that area of your life, and begin to decree them.

Meditate on these scriptures. Write them down and put them in places where you will see them daily. Speak them some more.

Faith is really important when we talk about decrees. Though all words are important, words of faith are the ones which produce, and these words come from God – either directly through His Word, or through Him speaking directly. (And always in accordance with His Word).

**Notes:**

## In Conclusion:

We've covered a lot of ground. We've talked about

- Knowing God
- The importance of having a relationship with Him. Of truly knowing Him as your Father and your friend.
- The significance of God's Word
- The importance of praying in faith.
- The power of praying in the Holy Spirit
- Decreeing God's Word.

Even though we've mentioned lots of aspects of prayer, there is always more to learn. You will want to continue to study God's Word and spend time with Him. As you do, you will grow in your ability to pray and have your prayers answered.

As you pray, you will emphasize one aspect at one time and another aspect at another time. Let the Lord guide you as you put these things together.

If you aren't certain about one of the items we studied, go back over the notes and read the Bible verses mentioned. Let the Lord speak to you and show you how to proceed.

As a final note, I would like to leave you with a scripture.

Isaiah 55:9-11

For as the heavens are higher than the earth;  
So are My ways higher than your ways.  
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and snow come down from heaven  
And do not return there without watering the earth  
And making it bear and sprout.  
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth;  
It will not return to Me empty  
Without accomplishing what I desire;  
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

This passage is so profound and should encourage us to always pray.

Think about a desert. Why is it dry? No rain. Why is there no rain? There is no evaporation. No pools of water to evaporate into the air. In places where you have large bodies of water, you have lots of rain...because there is lots of evaporation.

God compares His Word to the water He has provided to the earth, like a giant pool of water. He has sent it for a purpose. When the word is sent back to Him, (like evaporation) it will return to the earth and produce God's purpose. (Like rain and snow).

*Pray Without Ceasing*



Are there things we see in the Word which we don't see in our lives? Evaporate that word. In other words, pray that word. Remind God of His Word. And remind the angels of that word. Send it back to God. That's what He wants you to do.

So pray without ceasing, always thanking God for His Word and His faithfulness.

This prayer journey is an exciting and fruitful one.

May you be richly blessed as you continue!

## **Assignment**

You have completed the course, but there may be some areas which are harder to understand. Review those lessons and be ready to discuss your questions with your leader or group.

List two areas in your life which need special prayer. Find scriptures which bring faith and understanding. Pray those scriptures. Ask God for these to be performed and decree them out loud.

Meditate on the scriptures you need. Write them down and look at them often.

Be patient. Sometimes things happen quickly; sometimes they take longer. Be patient and be persistent. Know that if God promised something, and you believe it, it will happen.