

Pray by the Rules

learning how to pray



Bruce R. Edwards

PRAY BY THE RULES

Understanding how to pray

By Pastor Bruce R. Edwards

PRAY BY THE RULES
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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2018

ISBN 979-8-89546-425-0

All Scripture quotations contained herein, unless otherwise noted, are the New King James Version of the Bible.

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DEDICATION - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is dedicated in loving memory of Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty who went on to be with the Lord in 2009. I had the privilege of setting under his ministry and serving as his Senior Associate Pastor for over 20 years. Victory Christian Center has touched the lives of thousands of people through the church, its Christians School, Bible College, and missions' outreaches. All to the glory of God.

Pastor Billy Joe was a mentor to me and tremendous influence on my life and ministry. His unwavering faith, spirit of humility, and integrity were an inspiration to me as a pastor. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to him. He taught me much about the Word of God, leadership, pastoring, and living a life of faith.

Much of this book is compilation of his teachings on prayer. I cotaught with him the Principles of Prayer in Victory College for many years. The chapters in this book are from the teachings, notes, and writings we shared in that course. Most of what is shared in this book is directly or indirectly from him.

I pray you will be inspired to a more effective life of prayer as read and study the pages of this book.

Be blessed,

Pastor Bruce Edwards

INTRODUCTION



Have you ever tried to play a game without knowing the rules? It can be difficult. Even more confusing is every game has its own rules. If you don't know the rules you won't be able to play the game. If you know the rules and you break them you will be penalized or disqualified. You need to play by the rules.

Growing up I loved playing sports. I played high school football, basketball, and baseball. After graduating from school, I played golf. Each sport had their own set of rules. They were all sports, but they had different rules.

In football you could run with ball, but in basketball if you ran with the ball it was a foul and you turned the ball over to the other team. In basketball it's against the rules to hit someone. If you do, you're called for a "foul" and the other team gets to shoot free throws. In football it's not against the rules to hit someone. It's important to play whatever sport you are playing by the rules of that sport.

Just like there are different kinds of sports there are different kinds of prayer. Ephesians 6:18 (NIV) tells us, "**And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests**". Notice that it says, "ALL KINDS". The Amplified reads, "ALL MANNER of prayer". Another translation says, "with EVERY KIND of prayer".

The Bible clearly teaches us there are several kinds of prayer – here's the thing, there are different rules that govern each type of prayer. If you don't how to pray according to the rules for the type of prayer you are praying, you will not see the results you want. Like sports each kind of prayer has its own rules. They are similar, but different. In sports it's important to play by the rules – with prayer it's important to pray by the rules.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

John Wesley, an English evangelist in the 1700's that led a tremendous revival movement and founded the Methodist church, made this statement about prayer, *"It seems God is limited by our prayer life – that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him."* Prayer is powerful! James 5:16b says, **"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."** Yet, the prayers of many Christians are not effective, they are not powerful. Why? It is because many believers don't know how to pray.

The power of prayer should not be underestimated. Prayer has the power to make a huge difference to our lives and the world around us. **"If we ask anything according to His will, He will hear us. And if we know that He hears- whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of Him."** 1 John 5:14-15

There's a story that goes like this... "Once there were two farmers who desperately needed rain. So, both of them prayed. However, only one of them prepared his fields for the rain.

Which one do you think trusted God to send the rain? - The one who prepared his fields for it. A lot of the time we are the farmer who prays for the rain to come but then doesn't do anything to prepare for it. Often, we have this sort of I'll believe it when I see it attitude, but God has called us to the opposite of that, when we pray.

"Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours." Mark 11:24

God never said it would be easy. In fact, the stories of faith in the bible were all very difficult. Lastly, faith is praying then preparing your fields for the outcome.

Prayer requires faith. Faith is believing without seeing. Faith is stepping out of the boat onto water. Faith is fighting a giant with just a slingshot and a rock. Faith is trusting God.

There is power in prayer, but how are you praying? What are you believing? In this course we will be studying the different kinds of prayer and the rules for each. You will learn how to pray so your prayers will be powerful and effective. The reason John Wesley was right in what He said about prayer is because God has given us authority (believers) in this world. He said, **“I give you dominion over all the work of My hands”** (Gen 1:26-27) As believers we can ask God for His help and when we do His power and anointing are released. **“You have not because you ask not”** (James 4:2)

So, let's begin to discover the authority and power God has given us in prayer.

EARLY MORNING PRAYER

THE BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

In the natural it's important to start your day with a good breakfast. The same is true spiritually. Early morning prayer is the breakfast you need for your spirit. We call it the “**breakfast of champions**”. A consistent life of prayer is the basis for a life of continual victories. You can be born again and know Jesus personally, yet fail to have a disciplined, consistent life of prayer, which is key to experiencing the overcoming victorious life God wants for you every day.

We read in the gospels how Jesus ministered to people late into the night, yet Scripture says He rose up a great while before day and found a quiet place where He could commune with His Father. Jesus knew that His personal victory was dependent upon communion with His Father.

At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.

And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

Mark 1:32-35

Why Early Morning Prayer?

Here are 7 reasons why you should pray at the start of your day.

1. Jesus did it.

Jesus set the example for us in prayer. He got up early in the morning and found a place where He could be alone to start His day with prayer. Scripture says that Jesus often went into a garden or into the mountains to pray. If Jesus needed to start His day with prayer, how much more do we need to start our days with prayer? He taught us that we could go into our closet alone and pray—wherever your closet or solitary place might be—in an actual closet, under your bed, or in your apartment, house, backyard or neighborhood! The important thing is to find a place where you can communicate with the Lord.

2. How you start your day has a great effect on how you finish.

If you start your day communing with the Lord, very likely you will be in communion with Him throughout your day.

Think about it. If you are going to paint a house white and you start out with green paint, you are going to be in trouble! Big trouble! The way you start out can have a definite effect on the way it will look in the end!

You may have a great time of worship, prayer, fellowship, and hearing the Word, but you cannot live on one spiritual meal a week. Your physical strength is in direct proportion to the energy that you take in through the food that you eat. It's the same way with communion with God. We need more than one spiritual meal a week to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

I live in the state of Oklahoma in the USA, when you travel on one of our turnpikes, if you don't start out the right direction, you could be in trouble. If you are going to Oklahoma City from Tulsa Interstate 44 is the best road to take, but when you get on I44 if you start out going northeast, you could end up in

Joplin, Missouri, instead of Oklahoma City. You might make good time, the car might run smoothly, and you might enjoy the scenery, but you will end up in the wrong place if you start out wrong.

There are places along the turnpike where you can get off and make a turnaround. You may lose some time, but you can make some changes. Even though people may have some bad starts, the good news is, there is redemption and we can turn around and go the right direction. Each day is a new day. Why not start out right instead of having to turn around in the middle of the day?

Let's assume you are going to take a flight to New York City. You if get on the wrong airplane you might end up in Los Angeles. There is no turning around at 35,000 feet in the air! Sometimes people are unable to turn around because of circumstances and situations.

When a sailboat starts out, the way the sails are set determines the direction the boat will go. The way you set your sails at the start of your day determines the course you will follow during the day. The good news is, if you set your sails to catch the wind in the right way, you will head on the right course, and there is a good possibility if you keep adjusting the sails during the day, you will reach the right destination. If you start each day right with God, you can enjoy the trip and wind up at the right place.

3. There are less chances for interruptions and distractions early in the morning.

It is important to start your day with prayer because many interruptions come in the middle of the day. Pray through your schedule each day. Pray through each thing that you know is going to happen. Ask the Lord for direction and ask Him to prioritize your activities.

Many people jump out of bed, run for breakfast, go to work and sometime in the middle of the day, they might think about God. But they might not, because the schedule is so demanding, there are so many people wanting their time and so many things that have to be done.

It's possible to go all through your day and not think about God until you pop your Bible open and have a word of prayer right before going to bed. I believe the crises people face can be solved if they will meet Jesus first thing in the morning,

4. Early morning prayer fills your spiritual tank with God's Word, so you don't run out of gas before the end of the day.

Just as you would fill your gas tank before you start out on a trip, you need to fill your mind with God's Word and prayer before you start your day. Then you are prepared for the reversals, emotional situations and bad attitudes that you may encounter during the day.

One of the reasons for a lack of control over appetite, anger and wrong thoughts could be because those things aren't set in order at the start of the day. All the frustrations and hassles we face could be because we haven't won the battle in prayer before we started the day. Problems arise and demands come up, and sometimes there is more demand than there is of you! You can only go so long with your exports exceeding your imports. If you don't fuel up on the Word and prayer before you start your day, you could reach a trade deficit! Some Christians are in that deficit. They know Christ, but there is more demanded of them than is being put back into their lives.

You can deplete a soil by continually growing the same crop on it year after year. I remember talking with a farmer who planted beans one year and then planted wheat on the same ground the following year for the replenishing of the soil. Just as the soil must be properly nourished, you need to build yourself back up. Too many people are running on empty.

Though God may be in your thoughts all the time and dwell on the inside of you through the Holy Spirit, there is just some-thing about setting aside time to be alone with Him.

5. It gives you fresh spiritual nutrition that you need each day.

You can't live on yesterday's spiritual food. In Exodus 16, the Lord told the children of Israel to get their manna before the sun

got hot on the ground. Manna is Living Bread—Jesus Christ. That means to get a fresh word from heaven from the Word of God before you start your day. There's just something about getting up early to gather your manna at the start of the day.

People who don't set their sails on God early in the day many times forget about Him during the day, and they go in the power of their own flesh.

When I recommitted my life to the Lord and truly desired to grow in Lord, I started beginning my day with prayer. At that time, I was in the Air Force and worked different shifts every two days. It wasn't the best situation, but I knew it was important for my spiritual well-being and growth to start the day with prayer. So, I had to make time for prayer.

No matter what your situation is, starting the day with prayer can help you prepare to face whatever the day brings. Prayer builds protection in our lives so that we do not become demoralized, depressed, or intimidated by what happens around us.

Over the years and in different stages of my life, I remember the times of prayer where I took time to be alone with the Lord before beginning the day's activities. The power of early morning prayer will be evident in our lives.

We had 2 businessmen in our church who were brothers they had a very successful company in the medical device industry. They have a huge company with many employees and many responsibilities that require their attention. Their testimony is that early morning prayer is the key to their success. They get up at 5:00 a.m. or earlier to seek God in prayer. He said, "There is no way I can make it through my day unless I meet God and spend time with Him the first part of the day." They have even incorporated prayer into their business. They start the day with prayer with their staff.

As a result, God has used their business to be a witness to the entire community. When you, as a businessperson, will seek God the first thing in the morning, then God will permeate your work and your business with His presence. If God's presence permeates your life, it will go right through into your workers and into your business,

and there will be honesty, integrity, faithfulness, loyalty and commitment.

Sometimes people tend to think that they are too busy to have early morning prayer. I believe it's just the opposite. The more demanding your schedule, the greater the need for early morning prayer.

One great preacher said that because the morning is the gate of the entire day, it should be well guarded with prayer. Starting your day with prayer anchors your whole day in God.

You don't have to look very far, even in Christian circles, to see that it looks like some people have all their moorings cut, their anchors severed and they are simply drifting on the sea of life with no purpose. They are unable to handle the daily challenges that come.

As a single parent, you need to be in prayer every day for God's wisdom in training your children. As a single person, you need to be in prayer every day to overcome the temptations you face. If you are married, you need to be in prayer every day to keep your marriage strong. Whatever your age or vocation, prayer is vital to success.

When the gate of your day is guarded with prayer, the devil won't be able to gain entrance into your life because you will be alert to his tactics. Without early morning prayer, however, people's minds and spirits aren't alert to the voice of God. But when you get up in the morning and God speaks to you at the start of your day, it will carry you, guard you and keep you on course with the Spirit of God.

To start your day without prayer is comparable to starting your day without washing and dressing. You wouldn't dare go to the job, the office, the business, or the plant without preparing yourself physically. Yet, how many people put more emphasis on the outer man than they do on the inner man? They are all dressed up on the outside, but on the inside, their soul is not guarded against the devil's attacks.

With what is happening in the world, unless we have our lives anchored in prayer on a daily basis, we will not be able to stand. Too many people have already been blown completely out of the water. They are shipwrecked in their faith because they have neglected prayer. They have neglected to spend time alone with God in His Word, in hearing from Him and in fellowshiping with Him.

If you don't start your day with God, the devil will come before you ever get out of bed and bombard you with negative, defeating thoughts. Before you get out of bed, you will have a schedule that ten people couldn't accomplish, and it is a weight on you all day long, trying to get through things that God didn't design or direct. But when you wait on the Lord early in the morning, God will clarify your priorities.

Too many people major on the minors and minor on the majors, spending their lives in things that are fruitless because they never got God's priorities. Managing our lives is one of the greatest needs we have in this hour.

A morning time of prayer and fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has meant everything in the world to me. My ministry would be weak, powerless and ineffective without it.

Is your Christian life powerful and full of the fruit of the Spirit? Is there success and blessing in your life that's spilling out onto the lives of other people? Or is it merely a treadmill that's going faster and faster and the incline is getting steeper and steeper and there seems to be no end?

To give God the first part of your day in prayer is part of the price of spiritual power and prosperity. It costs you nothing but an earnest desire for God's best. Why not give the best part of your day to God? If you give God your best and commit it totally to Him, you can expect God's best to come back to you.

6. You will get instruction and direction for your day. I call them orders from headquarters.

If you start your day with prayer and praising the Lord, you will receive revelation, instruction, wisdom, inspiration, strength, peace, and deliverance from temptation, refreshing and restoration.

Psalm 63:1 says, "**0 God, You are my God; early will I seek You....**"

Psalm 100:4 says, "**Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name.**"

The prophet Isaiah, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His under-standing is unsearchable.

He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall,

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:28-31

People faint and become weary when they do not wait upon the Lord in a time dedicated to prayer. When people talk about how weary they are and how difficult their spiritual life is, they are giving evidence that their prayer life has ebbed away, because Scripture says that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will exchange their weakness for God's strength. They will mount up with wings as eagles. Thank God that we can move from being turkeys to becoming eagles!

7. Giving God the first part of your day is a spiritual law of giving the first fruits.

If you give God the first part of your day, He will multiply time back to you.

Proverbs 3:5,6 says:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

God will guide the path you take if you pray over it. But if you don't acknowledge God and ask for His wisdom, He could be standing right in front of you with the answers to every problem you are facing, but you are too busy trying to solve your own problems and trying to make things happen in the flesh.

Scripture says, "**God resists the proud...**" (James 4:6). When you think you can handle your day without God, that is pride. God will resist you, and you won't have His blessings and His answers. Whatever you can do in your own ability is what will be done. But if you will say, "Lord, I humble myself, I need Your help today," He will give you grace. J

James 4:8 says, "**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you....**"

There is a teaching among secular corporate leaders that their most productive time is at the start of the day. They are encouraged to take time to be quiet and listen before they start their obligations.

The natural human spirit, when it is tranquil, will think of things that need to be done and will set things in order. How much more productive we will be with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Word of God, a tranquil human spirit and a mind that says, "Lord, I want Your divine direction today."

Is there a glow on your face and victory in your step when you hit your work? Or is there a growl? If someone speaks to you, is it like hitting the neighbor's dog with a stick or biting their head off?

God wants to speak to you in early morning prayer. If you take time to listen, you will hear God speak. Many people have said, "I haven't heard from God." I ask, "Have you listened? Have you given God an opportunity to speak to you?"

As you read your Bible and pray for God's will to be done, confess God's promises and listen, write down the things God is speaking to you. In this way, you will begin to manage your life every day. No one cares more about you than Jesus Christ, and if you will let Him direct your steps, the pathway He leads you on will cause you to prosper.

STOP THE DEVIL WITH PRAYER

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

John 10:10 tells us the devil is a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy your life. One of the most effective ways to stop the devil from messing with your life is with prayer! Through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, you have been given the victory over anything you will ever face. Yet, you must resist the devil in your daily walk, or James would not have mentioned it. The enemy has been conquered, but he still must be resisted.

The way to resist the devil starts with the word submit. To submit to God means to surrender to Him, to yield yourself fully to Him, to come under His authority. You can't have authority unless you are under authority. To submit means to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer. It means to believe, speak and obey God's Word. Submission could be stated another way: have faith in God. Hebrews 11:6 says, **"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."**

Prayer that stops the devil is based upon believing, speaking and acting upon what God says. Submission is not only to the written Word of God, but it is also to the spoken Word when we are under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

To resist the enemy means an active, willful decision to say "no" to the devil with your heart, mind, words and attitude. Every time you invite the will of God to be done in your life, you are saying "no" to the devil. Every time you praise God, you are saying "no" to the devil. Every time you obey the Word of God, you are saying "no" to the devil. In other words, you are making positive choices that literally evict the enemy! You are choosing the will, purposes and desires of God. When you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

There are people who will not submit to-God because they don't want to be under His authority. They have failed to realize that if you aren't under God's authority, you are under the devil's authority. There is no middle ground. People who are selfishly-ruled are Satan-ruled.

The Blood of Jesus

There is power in the blood. To be able to pray and stop the devil, you must believe in the power of Jesus' blood.

Hebrews 10:16-19 says:

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"

Then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.

You can enter into the presence of God with boldness, confidence and liberty to through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The devil and his demonic forces fear the "blood of Jesus". It was Jesus' blood that destroyed Satan's hold over you and me. It was His blood that ransomed us from Satan's authority. It was His blood on the cross that bought and paid for our total salvation, so when we come to God, we are coming through the blood of His Son. Every time we quote Romans 8:1, we are declaring the power of Jesus blood: **"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."**

If you do not believe in the power of Jesus' blood, you will not pray with authority. You will be reminded of what you have done in

the past, of your failures and shortcomings, and as a result, your prayers will be like a wet noodle. The devil knows when you don't know your authority. It takes the blood of Jesus to free you of guilt and condemnation. It takes an understanding of the blood of Jesus to know your sins have been remitted.

When you call on the power of Jesus' blood, you have immediate access to the heavenly Father.

The Name of Jesus

There is power in the name of Jesus. *To be able to pray and stop the devil not only do you need to believe in the power of the blood, you must approach the Father in the name of Jesus.*

In John 16:23,24, Jesus said to His disciples in preparation for His departure from them:

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

God wants you to have fullness of joy. He doesn't want the enemy to overrun your life in any area. The Bible says that the shield of faith quenches every fiery dart of the wicked (Ephesians 6:16). David the Psalmist declared, **"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"** (Psalm 23:1). He said, **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all"** (Psalm 34:19).

First John 5:18 says, **"He who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."** Psalm 91:10 says, **"No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling."** Isaiah 54:17 says, **"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn...."** Then, how much place should the devil have in your life? Absolutely none!

If you want to get something done, why don't you go over straight to the top. Go to Jesus! Go to the Father in Jesus' name! That name is above the head of every company. Go to the very top! He has authority, and when you go to the Father in Jesus' name, He will help you and give you the wisdom and the avenue to the provision you need.

Jesus already won a victory that is sufficient to give us complete liberty from the devil's work in our lives, but we have to enter into the type of prayer that will stop him. That's believing prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus has authority because...

[He] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:7-11

When you use the name of Jesus name, you have used the highest name in heaven, on earth and under the earth. There is no other authority greater than the name of Jesus.

You and I have been given the power of attorney to use that name! Jesus was saying to His disciples and to you and me, "I am going away. I will send the Comforter [My Spirit] to you. Carry on business as usual, because I am giving you My name. I will never leave you. I will never abandon you. I will be with you always, to the end of the world."

There was a student on one of the college campuses here in Tulsa who was attacked by a would-be rapist. As he came at her she yelled the name Jesus and the attacker immediately stopped, turned, and ran away.

To pray to stop the devil, you must declare God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 says:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Because God's Word is a living entity, you can take it into your prayer closet. This is an aspect of prayer that many people have not entered into because they have not recognized the value of it. They pray, beg and plead, but they never come with the Word. If you will start your prayers with God's will, which is His Word, you will never pray amiss.

If you are approaching God for healing, come into agreement with His promises of healing in Isaiah 53:4,5, Matthew 8:17, and 1 Peter 2:24. You can pray, "Father, I am coming to You through the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus and with Your Word. You put sickness and disease upon Your Son, Jesus Christ, so I wouldn't have to bear it. By His stripes I am healed. Thank You for my healing now, in Jesus' name."

In the chapter on "Praying God's Word," we gave you much more information on the importance of praying God's Word.

Second Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...." So let's not be slack in possessing His promises. We possess them by believing and speaking God's Word in prayer and then acting as if it is so in our lives, even before the manifestation. Glory to God!

A PATTERN FOR PRAYER

Having a pattern of prayer to follow can be a great help for many people. It helps keep you focused and on track. I have learned a lot about prayer from my mentors early on and throughout my ministry. Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty, whom I served as his Senior Associate for almost 20 years taught me a lot about prayer. Most of this book is his direct teachings about prayer. In the 1980's Larry Lea wrote a book titled "Could You Not Tarry" that had a huge influence on my prayer life.

Probably the best pattern of prayer ever given is that of Jesus. He gave us guidelines for a life of prayer, which, if followed, will undergird us in the fulfillment of God's destiny for our lives. He is our example in prayer.

And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. Matthew 6:5

The word hypocrite has to do with an actor, a farce, something that isn't real, genuine, or sincere. Jesus was saying, "The hypocrites pray for the acclaim of men." You can go in the ditch on either side.

You can pray to be seen of men, or you can get to the point where you are paranoid and afraid that someone will see you praying. Jesus prayed with His disciples.

I have had people ask me, "Why do we pray corporately in the church?" We're not praying to be seen of men, but the primary motivation for corporate prayer is that one can put a thousand to flight, while two can put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30).

In Acts 4, after Peter and John were taken into custody and later released for preaching in Jesus' name, they returned to their

own company where they **"raised their voice to God with one accord..."** (Acts 4:24). They prayed aloud as a group.

There is nothing wrong with public prayer out loud, but Jesus basically said, "Don't be like the hypocrites who pray just to be seen of men." They wanted others to see them praying so they would be considered "spiritual."

Jesus continued:

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:6

Jesus wasn't saying that the only place to pray is in your closet. The idea He was trying to convey was to find a place alone for private prayer.

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Matthew 6:7

Maybe you learned to pray a set pattern of words and a repetition of praises. God is not impressed with vain repetitions, which is an "empty" recital of words!

John 4:23,24 says:

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

I interpret this to mean that we are to pray in genuine, heartfelt sincerity out of our spirit rather than recital from memory. Jesus was saying, "Vain repetition won't get God's ear."

Therefore, do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.
Matthew 6:8

If God knows everything we need before we ask, why should we ask? Why doesn't He just fix our problems? We are His children, we are in relationship with Him, yet we are told to ask.

When God made man in the beginning, He gave him dominion over the earth and placed him in a position of legal authority in the earth. When Adam and Eve sinned, that authority was transferred into the hands of the devil. Illegally, immorally and unethically by deceit, Satan became the god of this world's system. Jesus called him the prince of the power of the air in this world. Satan took authority by the default of Adam and Eve through sin.

At Calvary, Jesus regained that authority, for He said in Matthew 28:18, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."** As believers, we have been given the right and authority to call those things forth into the earth that are God's will for us.

Let's assume you are in a position of authority for the security of a building. If you don't see that the building is secured, even though you have the keys, the doors won't be locked. You have to lock them.

It's the same way in prayer. God has given us the keys---the authority—to bind and loose, but we have to do it (Matthew 18:18).

We have been given the responsibility to enforce the will of God in the earth. In other words, God has a plan, but it can only be enforced when we speak it forth. This is why we continually refer to the power of confession—the law of speaking God's Word and agreeing with God in prayer. It is crucial to say what God says, because God performs His Word (Jeremiah 1:12).

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, said, "It seems that God will do nothing except someone prays." The idea that is propagated in some circles is that God is sovereign so He can do anything He wants to do. In other words, "He can change His mind on a daily basis. He can alter His course. You never know what God is going to do, because He is sovereign." That is an extreme teaching, and out

of it comes, "It may not be God's will to heal you because He is sovereign." Regarding accidents and calamities, some people say, "God is sovereign. He chose to do that." Satan will rip you off in health and finances, and he will dominate your life and the lives of your children with this kind of thinking.

When you align this kind of thinking with the Word, you will see that it is inaccurate because God's Word says, **"I am the Lord, I do not change..."** (Malachi 3:6). **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"** (Hebrews 13:8).

God is constant. He does not change. He is love. He is a God of faith. His mercy endures forever, and it is new every morning.

Another inaccurate extreme of the sovereignty of God is, "If God has willed for people to be saved, they will be saved whether you do anything about it or not. Therefore, there's no need to witness, because God is going to save certain people."

God is a sovereign God, but He has sovereignly chosen to work in certain ways in the earth. One of the primary ways He works is in response to believing prayer. He said:

If My people who are called by My name 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

People who are into the sovereignty teaching say, "You can't just say God is going to do this, because you are putting Him in a box." I say, "If you can't, how do you know you are saved?" The Bible says, **"For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Romans 10:13). That's not putting God in, a box. That is obeying the Word of God and getting in His box!

Some people say, "To confess and declare things is like bossing God around." No! God is bossing us around! He is the boss. He is Lord. He is the One Who said to speak in alignment with His Word.

Prayer is basically taking God at His Word. It is believing and speaking in agreement with what God says. I believe that I receive when I pray.

Jesus said in Mark 11:24:

Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

When I pray in alignment with God's Word, I release my faith by saying, "Thank You, Lord, for meeting this need, for making this provision, for opening this door."

Our prayers are to be directed to the Father in Jesus' name.

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:13,14

The "ACTS" Prayer Pattern

There are several "patterns" of prayer. Sometimes I pray the "ACTS" pattern, which originated with the Navigators:

A = Adoration

C = Confession

T = Thanksgiving

S= Supplication

The Lord's Prayer

Another pattern of prayer is using the "Lord's Prayer" as a model. Jesus offered this pattern of prayer for the disciples: **Hallowed Be Your Name... In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.** Matthew 6:9

The Lord's Prayer is a "model prayer" rather than a repetitious prayer.

Hallowed means "exalted, honored, or revered." The Lord's Prayer begins with worship. Divine protocol for entering the presence of the Father is to start your prayer with praise and worship. In the natural, when you go into a statehouse or a governmental setting, there is a protocol of how to address the king, the president, or the leader.

I like to incorporate the Hebrew names of God as I pray. God reveals Himself by many names, so as you worship and honor Him, you are honoring Him as:

Jehovah-Jireh — Your Provider, Source and Sufficiency.

Jehovah-Rapha (or Rophe) — Your Healer, Health and Physician.

Jehovah-Nissi — Your banner of Victory.

Jehovah-M'Kaddesh— Your Sanctifier, Light and Holiness.

Jehovah-Rohi — Your Shepherd, Protector and Guide.

Jehovah-Shalom — Your Peace, Comfort and Security.

Jehovah-Shammah — Your omnipresent (ever-present) Friend.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu— Your Righteousness.

These are Old Testament names through which God reveal His character and nature. He was also called Elohim, the Lord exalted and most high, and El Shaddai, the God Who is more than enough.

Your Will Be Done... Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

You can declare your devotion to the King of kings and by the words of your mouth order your life by the rule of His Kingdom. You can declare, "Lord, Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

As a believer, you have been given authority and power, but it is up to you to use it and release it. God will perform His Word, and He will move in response to His Word when you speak it, because authority is released through words. Declare that His Kingdom has come in your life.

The will of God is that you would be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. The will of God is that you would be sanctified and separated unto Him –

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

God's will is that **"all men...be saved and... come to the knowledge of the truth"** (1 Timothy 2:4). God's will is that **"you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers"** (3 John 2). God's will is that governments would exalt Him. "Lord, let Your Kingdom come in every area of our lives."

I pray over my spirit, soul and body. When I pray over my spirit, I pray Galatians 5:22,23 because the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Pray Philippians 4:8 KJV over your mind:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Then pray over your body according to 1 Corinthians 6:19 20:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

As an example of how to pray over your mind and body, you can say: "Lord, Your will be done in my body. Lungs, heart, blood, immune system, cells, every part of my body, the will of God be done in you. Lord, I pray today that everything I think and do, and what I hear, see and act upon, would be according to Your will."

Then pray over your own family. I pray, "Lord, Your will be done in Chris, Jennifer, Jackson, and Bella and in Ryan, Erin, Caleb, Jonah, Tessa, and Eden's life. Your Kingdom come and Your will be done." I include my mother and other family members—praying for the Kingdom of God to come in each of us.

My wife and I pray for the will of God to be done in our businesses and ministry. We pray for the Bible University in the Dominican Republic and the City of Hope. We declare, "Lord, Your will be done." As you are praying this way, you can also focus on any area the Holy Spirit leads you to.

Lastly, I pray for leaders in the church and the government. In writing to Timothy, Paul said:

Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

For kings and all who are in authority may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. 1 Timothy 2:1-3

Why should we pray for government leaders? Where there is peace and quiet, the gospel can flow freely. In war torn country it is very difficult for the gospel to flow forth over, people are more open and receptive, does not produce an atmosphere for preaching. People pray in foxholes, but the Bible says to pray that we may lead quiet and peaceable life.

Scripture says, "**You will hear of wars and rumors of wars...**" (Matthew 24:6), but it also says, "**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...**" (Psalm 122:6). We are to pray peace in our lives and in our nations, so start by praying for peace to be done in your own government,

starting pray that Your will be done in the president, the cabinet, the chiefs of staff, the Congress, justices, the governors, state and local leaders."

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread...

Once you have prayed over yourself, your family, your church and your government, you are ready to pray "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" There are two aspects to this verse: 1) Revelation knowledge or spiritual bread and 2) Natural food. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He shall never hunger, and he who believes thirst" (John 6:35). In Matthew 4:4,

Jesus said, "**I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in be shall never thirst.**" In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceed from the mouth of God.**"

The bread of heaven is the revelation knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is what we are to live by. You can pray, "Lord, give me this day the portion of Your Word that I need." You can gather fresh manna from heaven every day. Six days a week the Israelites gathered fresh manna, and they had to gather it before the sun reflected on the ground. This is why we are to participate in early morning prayer. Before the sun gets hot on the ground, we can pray and receive fresh manna from heaven.

The second aspect of praying for daily bread is the natural food that we need. Sometimes we need bread to spend, so we should pray, "Lord, provide the finances we need!" This refers to being providing the things we need – housing, clothing, food, etc. Obviously, Jesus is revealing the will of the Father, and we are to pray, "Lord, give us this day our daily bread."

Forgive Us As We Forgive Others...

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

Prayer is to incorporate forgiveness, mercy and grace. "Lord, help me to be merciful. I forgive and release those who have hurt or offended me. I won't hold an offense." Then ask forgiveness for the

things you have done or said that were wrong and for the things you failed to do. Forgiveness of yourself and others is coupled together. Jesus further explained the principle of forgive-ness in verses 14 and 15:

For if you forgive men [others] their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment are common characteristics of people who have psychological problems. Happy people are forgivers. Miserable, depressed people are not. Regardless of what has happened to you, if you will forgive, you can have the joy of the Lord in your life. No man can take that joy away from you unless you choose to be unforgiving. If you forgive, you will live in the blessings of God. If you are merciful, you will obtain mercy. Forgiveness is a choice. The Kingdom of God is built on the principles of love, mercy and forgiveness.

Lead Us Not into Temptation...

And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one....
Matthew 6:13

James says:

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
James 1:13-15

James was saying, "Pray that you would not be led into temptation, but that you would be delivered from all kinds of evil."

That includes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, sexual and financial.

Jesus described the devil's characteristics in John 10:10: stealing, killing and destroying. As a child of God, Jesus has given you the authority to exercise your faith to be delivered from all kinds of evil.

Exalt the Lord!

Jesus ends the Lord's Prayer with a confession of exaltation to the Father. **"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"** (Matthew 6:13). The devil doesn't have the kingdom, the power and the glory. It belongs to God.

Everything that God is, He is to you. **"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"** (Luke 12:32).

You can pray, "Lord, thank You for letting me into Your Kingdom. Thank You for letting Your glory come into my life. It is Your will that I have the spirit of power, love and a sound mind. I am grateful, Lord Jesus, that You brought me into the Kingdom for such a time as this!"

PRAYING GOD'S WORD

This is probably the biggest key to prayer I can give you. The prayer of faith based upon God's Word will bring results in your life, because the Word of God is the will of God.

The integrity of God's Word must be established in your heart. This how you get to the point where you can trust God and pray according to His Word with faith. You must believe that God said what He meant and meant what He said. You must believe Matthew 24:35: **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."**

You must get to the point where you believe God's Word more than you believe the things you see or feel, more than what you hear 6:00 news, or the symptoms in your body, or what the educational process of the world and all the world's facts and figures say. You must believe God as the final authority in the earth.

The postmodern culture and secular humanism continue to attack the integrity of the Word of God. The public-school systems hammer at it day after day with evolution, which totally rejects God and the Bible account of creation.

It is true that there was a big bang, but it wasn't an accident! It was God's plan. He said, "'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). He spoke the earth, the firmament, vegetation, the sea creatures, animals and man into existence with the words of His mouth. (See Genesis 1 and 2.)

The enemy has sown seeds into people's minds that the creation story in Genesis isn't true, that man simply started as a one-celled being in a swamp and gradually crawled out like a frog from a tadpole to a frog and finally he walked upright. First, he was hunched over, and then he finally straightened up! They want people believe it was "goo to you" That is monkey business!

Man does not have an animal nature, but that's way people behave if they believe they came from monkeys instead of being

God-inspired creations who walk and talk with God on a daily basis. We are built to love, care and share the gospel. It makes sense to believe in God, and all the more when you see the emptiness of people without Him.

Numbers 23:19 says:

God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

First Kings 8:56 says, "**There has not failed one word of all His good promise....**" Not one word of God will ever fail, yet most of men's predictions fail. Some people say the Bible is irrelevant today, but they spend an hour a day reading the newspaper which is so irrelevant it has to be reprinted every day! The things of the world are temporal, but God is eternal. He never changes.

Second Corinthians 1:20 says:

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

All the religions of the world, except Christianity, have a big "no" on life. But Jesus Christ says "yes" to life, to freedom and liberty, to being everything you are intended to be, to your health, to your needs being met and to going to heaven! All of God's promises are "yes"!

When we settle it that God's Word is true and it is final authority, it isn't hard to pray according to the will of God. But if that is never settled inside of you, you will always be wishy washy in your prayer life.

Why Pray God's Word?

Jeremiah 1:12 KJV says, "**I will hasten my word to perform it.**" God is committed to fulfill what He already has

promised. If He has promised to do something, for someone who will believe His Word so He Second Chronicles 16:9 says:

For the eyes of the Lord run throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heal Him....

The King James Translation of this verse says:

For the eyes of the Lord run throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him....

God is waiting for us to believe, speak Word.

Hebrews 4:12-16 KJV says:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that manifest in his sight: but all things are naked opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We must establish everything we pray with the Word of God. Second Corinthians 13:1 KJV says, **"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."** If people would take the time to find a promise in God's Word before they offered a petition, they would have a lot more faith when they prayed. One

prayer based on the Word of God is more valuable than 10,000 out of your own ideas!

We are to come to the Father in prayer with the promises of His Word. Since the Word is alive and powerful, since Jesus has already gone to heaven and made a way for us and since His blood is on the altar, we can now obtain mercy and grace when we come to the Father in Jesus' name with the Word.

Psalm 37:4 says, **"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."** He will grant the desires of your heart, but He will also implant His desires into your heart.

You can know the will of God! How? Second Timothy 2:15 KJV says, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** As you study God's Word, you will have a revelation of His will for your life. John 15:7 says:

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

When the Word abides in you and you delight yourself in the Lord, you will pray according to His will.

If you need God's wisdom to know which person to marry, you can pray James 1:5,1 Corinthians 1:30 and John 10:3,27: "Jesus, You are made unto me wisdom, and ' sheep hear Your voice. I am Your sheep, and I pray, and I believe that I receive Your wisdom.'

As you pray, God will speak His wisdom inside of your heart. When you pray in line with God's Word, accuracy.

Sometimes people have said to me, "Would you agree with me in prayer?" Often, I ask, "What scripture promise are you agreeing with?" Many people aren't aware of the value of praying the promises of God.

Once you have established the integrity of God's Word, you can have confidence that God will fulfill His Word. Some people don't have confidence in their prayer life because they don't have confidence in the Word of God. It's time to clear the doubt and unbelief completely out of your life.

First John 5:14,15 says:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

In John 15, Jesus teaches on abiding in the Vine. He says, **"For without Me you can do nothing"** (v. 5). That goes for prayer. Apart from the Word of God, apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, praying for prayer's sake will accomplish nothing.

Pray the Answer

How can you pray the answer" Pray God's Word! When you pray God's Word, you are praying the answer at the start. Most people's prayer focus is on the problem. They rehearse the problem with all of its difficulties. They describe it in detail to God as if He doesn't know, and by the time finish they have eroded all of their faith, like letting air of a balloon.

While it is good to commune with the Lord, what really pleases Him is talking about who He is and what He has promised to do. "Lord, thank You that You are committed to me. You are El Shaddai, the God Who is more than enough. You are the God of abundance, Jehovah-Jireh. Thank You that You meet all of my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Doesn't sound better and more pleasing to God than, "God, this is a bum deal. Where have You been? I can't believe You've

left me hanging out on a limb like this. I'm broke, in debt and can't pay my bills. Where are you God."

When people talk that way, that ignores what God has done and provided. Listen, God has already given His Son and raised Him from the dead. He has already committed all that He has to you.

Sometimes people think, I'm going to be real honest. I'm just going to tell it like it is. This is a huge problem in the church today. I hear things like, "we need to be transparent" or "people need to be more real". Obviously, we should not put on airs or pretend to be something we are not and there are times to get things out of our heart, but the most honest, real thing we can lift up to God is His Word, because it is full of integrity. It will never change. Our thoughts and feelings may change before the sun rises tomorrow, but God never changes, so we can bring the Word in prayer to Him.

Isaiah 55:8,9 says:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

If you stopped right there, you could say, "There is no way that we can know the will of God," but Isaiah goes on:

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:10,11

We know God's will by His Word and by His Spirit. Colossians 1:9 says, "That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

Isaiah was saying, "The moisture that is in the clouds comes down to the earth in the form of rain. My ways and My thoughts that are in heaven come down upon the earth in the form of My Word. As the rain waters the earth and causes it to bring forth, bud, reproduce and multiply, so My Word, when it rains down in your heart, will bring forth My ways, My thoughts and My ideas. I will cause My words and My ways to bud in your life."

Genesis 1 says that every living thing has a seed within itself that will reproduce after its own kind. We see this in the animal kingdom, in the plant kingdom and in humanity. Each reproduces after its own kind. Likewise, God's Word reproduces after its own kind.

The Word of God on salvation will reproduce salvation. The Word of God on healing will reproduce healing. The Word of God on peace will reproduce peace. Begin to pray the promises of God's Word and believe that He is answering and fulfilling His Word on your behalf and on behalf of those for whom you are praying. God is going to fulfill His will in the earth. That's why we should pray, "Lord, Your will be done," when we don't know what the will of God is. Jesus prayed it in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done. Luke 22:42

Jesus would be our Substitute, and He would be made a curse for us. He would die in our place, so He prayed that it would be removed from Him, but He added, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." We see the humanity and the divinity of Jesus come together when His spirit yielded to the Father's will. Because Jesus was submitted to the divine call, He submitted His body and mind to the Holy Spirit and basically said, "I will do it."

If you know the will of God for your life, then you can pray with authority. For instance, when Jesus came to minister to the

sick, you never find one time in Scripture where He lifted His eyes to the Father and said, "Father, if it be Thy will, let this blind man be healed." Why? Because Jesus already knew the Father's will was to heal. and He was committed to being an instrument of healing.

The leper questioned God's willingness to heal. He said, **"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean"** (Matthew 8:2). He was saying, "I know You've got the ability to heal me, Lord, but are You willing?" Jesus answered, "I am willing; be cleansed" (v. 3). The will of God was established in the area of healing. You can know the will of God in every area of life from. His Word.

If you want your prayers to be effective pray the answer. However, most of the time people pray the problem. They say "Oh, Lord, I've got this terrible problem. I just can't get over it. It's too much. When you pray the problem and the difficulties, that's all you are going to see. You won't be able to see the answer because the problem will block you from seeing anything else. But... if you will begin to pray, "Lord, I thank You for sending the answer. Thank You for providing for me. Thank You for Your abundance." The problem will be overshadowed by faith because you have put the answer right before you. When you pray God's Word, you are praying His will and you are praying the answer. As you pray the answer from God's Word, the problems you face will be swallowed up in victory!

Praying the Answer Brings the Manifestation

As blind Bartimaeus sat by the road begging and he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out, **"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** (Mark 10:47). When Jesus asked Bartimaeus, **"What do you want Me to do for you?"** (v. 51), Bartimaeus didn't spend thirty minutes describing how long he had been blind. He didn't take the time to go into all the details of how he lost his sight. He simply responded to Jesus, **"That I may receive my sight"** (v. 51). Jesus said, **"Go your way; your faith has made you well"** (v. 52).

If you will pray the answer by praying - speaking the promises of God from His Word—you will see answers manifest more quickly.

If you are praying for finances, start with Jehovah-Jireh, the God Who sees ahead and makes provision: "My God supplies all of my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

You can pray the promise of Luke 6:38: "Because I give, it will be given unto me, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into my bosom. For with the same measure I use, it will be measured back to me."

Pray the promise of Psalm 37:25 and Psalm 23:5: "Lord, thank You that I will not be begging bread. Thank You for Your provision. You are the God of abundance. You are El Shaddai, the God Who is more than enough. Thank You that You provide a table for me in the presence of my enemies."

Every time you think about sickness or disease, a problem, or an answer that you need, you can say, "Father, thank You for sending Your answer. Thank You for the provision of it. Thank You that I have it."

How do you handle worry and anxiety? Think about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Philippians 4:8).

Many of the things we have received and accomplished as a family and in our Church have come about by praying the Word. One time our church was believing for a piece of land to build an outreach center on in the poorer are of our community. As Pastor Billy Joe began sharing the vision we began to pray and call that land forth. Through a series of divine connections and miracles - 2 ladies who were not a part of our church called and gave us the land right where we were believing. Today we have an outreach center called the Tulsa Dream Center that shares the gospel of Jesus Christ and provides education for children, clothing, food, after school care and other services to families of the community.

Another time our church received land (100+ acres) and provision for buildings for a camp facility where hundreds of boys and girls are ministered to every year. We believed for the camp a long time, but the manifestation final came by praying. God will give you the desires of your heart when you delight yourself in Him!

Believe You Receive According to Your Words

A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; from the produce of his lips he shall be filled.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:20-21

Believing that you receive according to what you speak works for life or for death, for positive or for negative, for good or for bad. What are you speaking?

Jesus had something to say about our words, too:

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Matthew 12:34-37

The law of receiving what you speak worked with the children of Israel in Numbers 13 and 14. I'm sure you remember the story. Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan God had promised the Israelites.

Ten of the twelve men came back with an evil report of inability to take the land. Only two of the twelve, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a good report: **"Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it"** (Numbers 13:30). The ten men said, **"We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we"** (v. 31). Though majority opinion in this case was wrong, the Lord said, **"Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you"** (Numbers 14:28).

Be sure you are speaking what God says! God is not obligated to perform your word – He is obligated to perform His Word!

Hold Fast the Confession of Your Faith

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. Hebrews 10:35,36 KJV

What the writer of Hebrews is saying is, "Your confident faith will have a great return, but you have need of patience." Some people have a negative connotation of the word patience, but Scripture talks about it as "perseverance, endurance, or steadfastness."

Patience undergirds just as columns strengthen a long beam across a building, so it won't collapse. Patience and endurance undergird your faith in the time you are standing on the Word, waiting to see the manifestation to your prayers.

Verse 36 in the New King James Version says, **"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise."**

The key answered prayer is to do the will of God, then have patience because you will receive the promise. Don't collapse, don't cave in or become double-minded, but hold fast the confession of your faith, and you will receive God's promises.

God's provision will intersect your obedience. If you stop short in your faith, the provision will be there, but it will be out of your reach.

But if you obey, after you have done the will of God, you will receive the promise!

What is it you are believing God for? What is it that you need? Don't give up. Don't quit. Find God's promise for it, because it's the promise that God will fulfill. After you have done the will of God, you will receive the promise. So, what do you do from prayer to manifestation? Hold fast the confession of your faith!

Your profession (or confession) should go something like this: "Father, I thank You that Your Word is working. Thank You that You meet my every need. Thank You for the manifestation of healing in my body. Thank You, Lord, for all my family being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank You, Lord, for strength. Thank You for tuition money. Thank You, Father, that I have the mind of Christ. Thank You for redeeming my life from destruction. Thank You, Lord, for giving me a new heart. Thank You for an abundance of Your mercy and grace. I praise You, Lord Jesus. I exalt and magnify You."

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Begin to rejoice in the Word of God. You have believed that you receive, so begin praising the name of Jesus for His answers!

People who don't understand the confession of faith say, "What am I going to do?" You are going to hold fast the confession of your faith. That means you are going to keep your words—all of them—aligned with what God promises you in His Word. Then you are going to praise Him!

Pressure comes to get you off of your confession, and it comes against you in your mind. That's why Jesus said men ought always to pray, and not to faint or lose heart (Luke 18:1). When the circumstances are bad, the problems have been evident for so long, or the difficulties seem so complex, the mind begins to dwell on how tall the giant is instead of how big God is!

With Saul and David, one meditated on the problem and the other meditated on the solution. One hid in fear, and the other went out and whipped the giant! Saul had fainted, but when David came on the scene, the Word inside of him was greater than the words outside of him!

Which report are you going to believe? The report of the Lord Jesus, or the report of the world? The eternal report of the Lord written in His Word is greater than any temporal report of the world!

There are reports every day coming at us through the television, social media, and newspaper. They share their stories and paint pictures of all kinds of problems, troubles, and disasters. They sensationalize and exaggerated practical any and every event. Often people who read and listen to these reports are gripped with fear and worry. My wife and I have had to work at not allowing ourselves to become focused on the negative reports and news. Instead we have determined to keep our focus on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

This does not mean we stick our head in the sand and ignore what is going on in the world around us, we just choose to believe that God is bigger than any problem or situation and put our trust in Him. We need to choose to believe the report of the Lord. Who's report will you believe?

THE EPHESIANS PRAYERS



Praying the Word of God is the most effective way to pray, because to pray the Word is to pray the will of God. God's ways and thoughts come to us from heaven – *they rain down upon us* by the Word of God. That's the analogy Isaiah draws in Isaiah 55:10 and 11. Just as the rain and snow come from the atmosphere above us and they produce on the earth, in the same way, God's Word rains down His thoughts, ideas and ways into the earth so we can know them.

While the Bible clearly says, "His ways and thoughts are above us," it doesn't stop there. The Bible also goes on to say: **"God has brought His ways, His ideas and thoughts into the earth by the seed of His Word."** This means we can know God's ways, ideas and thoughts by reading His Word.

We know from what Jesus said in Mark 4:14-20 that if we will hear the Word, believe it and receive it, we will be good ground and will be blessed in the earth.

"The sower sows the word.

"And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

"These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

"And they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

"Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,

"And the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

"But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

God sends forth His Word, and those who believe it and lay hold of it will be good ground. We will bring forth fruit in our lives by obedience to God's Word.

Through God's Word, we begin to understand God's ways and thoughts. It's the same way in prayer. Many people have asked, "What should I pray? How can I pray more effectively? How can I pray something that will get results?" if you pray God's Word, you will get results, because His Word reveals His will, plans and purposes.

The best thing to do is find out what God is doing and do it. Then you won't even have to pray that it be blessed, because God automatically blesses what He initiates. That's like someone praying for their finances to be blessed. If they aren't a tither, they have negated the channel through which God plans to bless them.

The Ephesians 1 Prayer

We shared some patterns of prayer in an earlier chapter that can help us pray. The apostle Paul gives us a prayer in Ephesians 1 and another in Ephesians 3 that every believer should pray every day. They provide another pattern or guide for praying God's Word. First, let's look at Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23:

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul was saying, "I am praying that your inner man would become stronger and that you would be much bigger on the inside than you are on the outside, that you would be flooded with revelation knowledge and light and that Christ would stand up in you so when people see you, they see Jesus. When you touch someone then Jesus has touched them."

Your Ephesians 1 prayer could go something like this:

Thank You, Father; that because I am in Christ Jesus as a born-again believer; You have given me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You.

The eyes of my understanding are being enlightened that I may know the hope of Your calling in my life and the riches of the glory of Your inheritance for me. Thank You, Father, for enlightening

my understanding to the exceeding greatness of Your power toward me, according to the working of Your mighty power, which You worked in Christ when You raised Him from the dead and seated Him at Your right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, in this age as well as in that which is to come.

Thank You, Father, that You put all things under Jesus' feet and made Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is Your Body.

Holy Spirit, reveal Jesus Christ in me. Bring to my remembrance everything Jesus said. Strengthen me in my inner man, that there would be no weakness on the inside of me, no character flaws, no place for the enemy, no depression, no discouragement, no fear; no doubt, no lust, no anger; but that love, faith, joy and peace would rule in my inner man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

I want to encourage you to pray this prayer every day.

The "spirit of wisdom" means an ongoing unveiling or a continual revelation. The Holy Spirit will give to you the spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that Jesus will become unveiled to you.

Ephesians 1:3 says we have already been blessed "**with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**" In other words, everything we will ever need pertaining to this life and the life to come has already been provided through Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve committed sin in the garden of Eden, man lost the position, righteousness, eternal life and authority he once had, but in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He regained what was lost. He redeemed us, so from a natural standpoint in creation and from a supernatural standpoint in the spiritual realm, through the resurrection, everything we need naturally and spiritually has already been provided for us in Jesus Christ.

No wonder Paul asked the Father to give us "**the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**," (Ephesians 1:17) because "**in Him we live and move and have our being...**" (Acts 17:28). In Christ we have the fullness of life.

Paul's cry was that we would understand Jesus Christ, and it should be our heart's cry that we become like Jesus.

Jesus was already crucified, resurrected and ascended to the Father, and He had sent the Holy Spirit. Paul was praying that our hearts would be flooded with light.

Many people are "in the dark" in their relationship with Jesus Christ. They may have heard about Him, but to them He is a stained-glass Jesus or a historical Jesus. Many people can quote historical facts, but they don't have a revelation of what Christ did as it relates to their lives.

As a young boy I went church and Sunday School and as a young man I would read the Bible, but I didn't have revelation of what the Word of God was saying. Then one day I heard someone explain salvation to me. The light bulb came on and I understood what it meant to be saved and how to be saved.

A few years after getting saved and being taught more about how the Bible I began to understand that God's Word is true, but every man is a liar (Romans 3:4). I remember discovering I could believe the truth of God's Word and speak it over natural facts and circumstances that were contrary to the Word, and if you stood by the Word, God would change the natural circumstances.

Until the Word becomes revelation to your inner man, as opposed to head knowledge, you won't be changed. This is why Paul prayed that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened.

To know "the hope of your calling" is to know that you have been called into the family of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have been called into eternity to live with God the Father in heaven. Every person who hears the voice of Jesus Christ and responds to it will hear that calling.

Paul prayed that we would understand "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance" in us. An inheritance is that which someone is given legally from someone who dies. Jesus' death took place at Calvary. Jesus not only died, releasing the inheritance to us, but He arose from the dead. That means He is now the Advocate, the Lawyer, or the Trustee Who will insure that the inheritance gets to the rightful heirs.

Wouldn't it be wonderful in all inheritance cases if the one who died could come back and make sure everyone received what was coming to them? In the natural, the big arguments come in when people can't figure out the intent and purpose of the person who made out the will.

Jesus rose from the dead to make sure we know our inheritance. He sent the Holy Spirit as the earnest deposit of His inheritance to us. Through all eternity, God will continue to unveil the riches of Jesus Christ, for we have only begun to understand the glorious, marvelous redemption that is in Christ.

We have inherited Jesus' name, and we have inherited His life. It's no small thing to have the zoe life of God flowing in our veins! It's no small thing to have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

Every promise in the Bible is a part of our inheritance, and all that we walk upon by faith we will have in our lives.

Paul also prayed that we would understand the exceeding greatness of God's power toward us who believe. Paul was saying, "I want you to know how much power has been made available to you. This power is according to the working of His mighty power."

The two aspects of this power are:

1. Authority, like a policeman directing traffic has authority because a chief, a mayor and a city system have invested authority in him, with a badge and a uniform signifying that authority. He can stand up in the middle of a road, hold up his hand and cars have to stop. That is authority because of position.

2. Dunamis is explosive power, ability and might. It is one thing to have the authority, but it is another thing to have the

awesome power inside of us to speak and see sicknesses and diseases removed.

The power Paul was talking about is the same power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. Some people pray, "God, give me power to resist the devil." Paul is saying, "When you were born again, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead was put inside of you." If you knew the power that was on the inside of you, you wouldn't complain about depression, discouragement, or "the devil did this or that."

Through the years I have made the decision not speak about negative things or what the devil has done. I don't want to give the devil any airtime. I have had people upset at me. They say, "Come on, be real. There's got to be things going wrong." My response is, "God is doing great things in our lives. Heaven has broken loose upon us. The enemy flees from us." I choose to say what God says. I don't deny anything that may have happened that's bad I just realize God's promises are better.

James says if you humble yourself and submit to God, you can expect the devil to flee. Why say anything else when you have the resurrection power of God working inside of you? To say anything else is to contradict the revelation of Jesus on the inside of you.

I'm not saying that we don't have to resist the enemy, for James 4:7 says, **"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."**

If no resistance was needed, James wouldn't have mentioned it. Paul wouldn't have mentioned resisting the fiery darts of the enemy with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit if no resistance to the devil was needed (Ephesians 6:16,17). Peter wouldn't have mentioned the need to be sober and vigilant because the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour if no resistance to the adversary, Satan, was needed (1 Peter 5:8).

Each of these men talk about the devil from the aspect that he has already been defeated and conquered, which he has and which is the view we are to take, but they do say that we must resist the devil.

Paul continues the Ephesians 1 prayer, "**And He** [God the Father] **put all things under His** [Jesus'] **feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...**" (vv. 22,23). If Jesus has had all things put under His feet and you are part of the Body of Christ, then the principalities and powers of the devil are under your feet!

The bottom line is, "Did Jesus do enough? Did His blood pay for all of your sins? Did He really defeat the devil, or is that yet to happen?" Colossians 2:15 says Jesus disarmed the devil of his authority, power, might and dominion. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He said, "**I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death**" (Revelation 1:18 KJV).

In Matthew 28:18,19, Jesus said:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

If Jesus has all authority and you are in His Body—the Body of Christ—then Paul was saying, "I am praying that you will get a revelation of what Jesus has already done for you." We aren't going to a victory, but we are proceeding from a victory! It has already been won. We are walking out a victory that has already been accomplished! We are enforcing Satan's defeat, which has already been accomplished. That's why we must keep our words in line with God's Word.

At the heart of Paul's prayer, he was saying, "I pray that you really know Jesus, not with denominational eyeglasses, not with traditions of men, not with the elements of the world, but that you would know Him as the resurrected King!"

The Ephesians 3 Prayer

Victory in life is absolute if we appropriate the provision Jesus has already made for us.

Effective prayer is simply agreeing with God. If you find out what God's will is in His Word and you agree with it and ask for it to be done, you can be assured God will release the power to bring it to pass, because He initiated it. His plans are blessed. The

Ephesians 3 prayer is found in verses 14-19.

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Verses 14,15

Who has the family name? Jesus has the family name, and the whole family of God in heaven and earth has been named after Him. The word Christian means "little Christ." If you call yourself a Christian, you are calling yourself "one like Jesus Christ," because you have His life and nature in you and you are following Him.

We are part of a worldwide Body, or family, in heaven and in earth. The believers who have already died are just as real, alive, active, and a whole lot more alert and turned on than we are, because they see Jesus face to face. That's why grieving over a loved one who has gone on to glory is only a temporary thing for a believer. We're not to sorrow as the world sorrows, because we have a promise of resurrection.

That doesn't mean you won't miss a person, but it's the same as if someone says, "I am moving to Arizona." You may cry a tear over their leaving, but you know you will see them again. You will see loved ones again who have gone to heaven, because we are part of the same family.

Paul continues:

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. Ephesians 3:16

The inner man of people who are born again but who don't feed on the Word, don't pray and don't obey the Word, is very weak. They know Christ and they know what to do and how to do it, but they are incapable of doing it because their inner man is so weak.

Jesus said in John 3:7, **"You must be born again."** When you are born again, like a newborn baby in the natural, you aren't born fully mature. You are born as a baby. Peter said, **"As new-born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"** (1 Peter 2:2). The King James Version calls it, **"the sincere milk of the word...."**

Jesus said, **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"** (Matthew 4:4).

The writer of Hebrews talked about milk and solid food or strong meat in the believer's life:

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:13,14

Jesus said to His disciples when they encouraged Him to eat after His confrontation with the woman at the well:

"I have food to eat of which you do not know ... "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:32,34

"Strong meat," as The King James Version says, is to do the will of God. Many people think strong meat is some strange revelation that only a few sophisticated intellectuals can comprehend. "Strong meat" isn't sitting around listening to some new revelation. It is to do God's will as Jesus said. Jesus was a soul-winner. He led the woman at the well who was drawing natural water to a place where she could

receive living water! Being a soulwinner is "strong meat." Paul prayed that we would **"be strengthened with might through His [God's] Spirit in the inner man"** (Ephesians 3:16).

We are strengthened in the inner man by the milk, the bread and the meat of God's Word. We are also strengthened by praying in the Holy Spirit. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:4, **"He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...."** To edify means "to build up or strengthen."

We are strengthened by doing what is right. An inner character development takes place when we do what is right, while the inner man of people who do what is wrong and violate their conscience is weakened.

Love strengthens a person. People who are cruel, unmerciful and unforgiving have a weak inner man, because where envy and strife exist, there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:16). When you walk in love and refuse strife, bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness, your inner man will be strengthened.

Paul was saying, "I pray that you will be strengthened in your inner man so that you will refuse evil and be strong enough to help someone else." The strong are to bear the burdens of the weak (Romans 15:1). Some people say they have arrived at a certain place where all of their needs are met. They are blessed, happy and going through life not realizing that when they reach a point where they are blessed, they have an obligation to bless someone else. When we are strong, we have an obligation to strengthen others.

We are to become givers, not takers, and set a priority in our lives, "I am going to be a giver. I will be a stream, a conduit, a vehicle, a vessel for the glory, power, goodness and graciousness of God to flow through." When you have to stretch your faith, your inner man is strengthened. In our church we have had to stretch our faith many times as God has helped us to grow. We have had to buy land and build buildings. We have had to start different areas of ministries as God led us to expand our outreach. Each time it has taken faith. As we have prayed and believed God we have grown spiritually, we

have become stronger in our faith. In the natural, when you stretch your muscles with weights and you continue to increase the weights, your muscles will become stronger.

The reward of faithfulness is more responsibility. As you are given more responsibility, your faith muscles and your inner man will be renewed and strengthened. One man said, "I'm a thousand times bigger on the inside than I am on the outside." Don't ever judge a person by their outward appearance! A little child can have his inner man so strong in the Word that his prayers are answered immediately. A frail little lady of 85 pounds who knows how to pray and intercede can bring heaven and earth together. Some people who are big hulks on the outside are shriveled up on the inside with no love, joy, or peace.

When you consider someone for marriage, judge the inward person. Are they people of character? Is their spirit strong? Are they full of love, faith and power? When prayer is needed, do they go get someone else, or are they ready to pray? When it comes time to worship, do they have their hands in their pockets counting squares on the ceiling? The person who is strong in his or her spirit is a strong worshipper. Your inward man will affect your outer countenance. Proverbs 18:14 says, **"Who can bear a broken spirit?"** The strength of a man's spirit will sustain him in an attack. If you are strong on the inside, it doesn't matter what comes on the outside. You can stand up against it. That's why you should feed your inner man. Some people feed their outer man but starve their inner man. You ought to fast the outer man and overload the inner man with the Word of God! Take an overdose of the Word!

Luke 21:34 NKJV says:

But 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.

This is talking about living a life "in excess", particularly in relationship to lust, food and drink." Their stomach has become their god. To bring the body under control, the inner man needs to be strengthened and the mind renewed.

Second Corinthians 10:5 KJV says we can bring our thoughts under control.

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

It's an effort to build your inner man strong enough where you listen to the voice on the inside instead of the voice on the outside. The flesh will always try to go the opposite direction of your spirit, but if your mind is renewed with the Word of God, you will tell your body what it is going to do.

Fasting is good for you, not only so you can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit more clearly, but because it is a time where you say, "Body, you are not going to eat." The body says, "I am, too. You're not going to starve me." But you say, "No, body, you are under the subjection of the Holy Spirit. You are under subjection to the Word of under my mind. I have a born-again spirit, a renewed mind and a submitted body."

Many people struggle to walk in victory, because their spirit man is not strong. When you continually hear, study and meditate upon the Word, you've got a tiger in your tank as far as your spirit man being built up and strengthened! Instead of a weak kitten purring, a roar is coming, because the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is standing up on the inside of you!!

The Holy Spirit says, "I pray that Christ would dwell in your hearts by faith, that you would be rooted and grounded in love, that you would be able to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of Christ's love and that you may be filled with all the knowledge of God."

When you are strong on the inside, you can walk in love and forgiveness. People who can't forgive an offense that has been done to them are not strong enough in their inner man. A person who is strong on the inside is quick to say, "I forgive you" when an offense comes.

Your spirit can become so strong that you, like Stephen, will cry out to the Father when an offense comes, "**Lord, do not charge them with this sin**" (Acts 7:60).

Pray Ephesians 3 on a daily basis for others as well as for yourself. Your Ephesians 3 prayer could go something like this:

I bow my knees to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Thank You, Father, for granting me, according to the riches of Your glory, to be strengthened with might through Your Spirit in my inner man.

Lord Jesus, You dwell in my heart through faith. Being rooted and grounded in love, I am able to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of the Father's love, so I may be filled with His fullness.

PRAYING THE WORD AMISS

We shared how important it is to pray God's Word when we pray. It is one of the most important rules of prayer. When God directs you to do something, then you will have faith to do it. This is what I call "Spirit-directed faith."

Abraham didn't say, "I think it's about time I leave Ur of the Chaldees. This place is getting shabby and run down. I think I'll go to Palestine." No! God initiated the call to Abraham. When we talk about the faith of Abraham, he had something to base it on, because God already had spoken. I call it "Spirit-directed faith."

It's the same way with Elijah. He could say it wasn't going to rain for three and a half years because God had spoken to him. Though Elijah had faith, it was out of response to what God had already said that he prayed and reaped the exact manifestation of what he spoke in prayer.

There have been times that the Lord has spoken us to do something that in the natural didn't make sense. Family members and friends questioned us and tried to talk us out of it, but every time the Lord provided. People said it had to be God because there is no way you could have done that if it wasn't God. God never ceases to amaze us. We had to have faith, but the key was: God spoke it. We don't tell God what to do, He tells us what to do. He will direct our steps if we will listen and obey. He directs us, and we just follow through and hold fast the confession of our faith. Faith comes by hearing God's Word, that doesn't just mean His written Word. God is still talking, if we will listen and hear the voice of God, we can have faith to do what He speaks to us to do too.

When the Lord told us to go to Bible College, I didn't get that direction from some Bible verse. The Spirit of God spoke it to me and then we had to make a decision whether we would obey God or not. It didn't make sense in the natural. I had a successful insurance business, we were living in a nice house, our children were happy in

the school they were in. Now God says sell the house and move to Tulsa, Oklahoma. I had faith for what God had spoken.

When I graduated from Bible College I was offered the pastorate in a growing church that just finished paying off their new church building in very nice community in Missouri, but the Lord spoke to me to stay in Tulsa and he would open the door to be able to minister to thousands. I had faith to stay put because God spoke it. Sometimes God will say go, sometimes He will say stay. We just need to hear and obey.

It is important to remember anything He speaks will always agree with the Word. It will never be contradictory or in violation of the Word or the principles and counsel of the Word. God is still speaking, and when you have the word of the Lord, then you can act.

Many people who have criticized the word of faith have either not heard accurately or they are swayed in their beliefs because of people who have misrepresented faith. In most cases, people have not heard correctly. People who are critical of the faith message often say, "You can say whatever you want to, and it will come to pass. Just speak it, and it will come to pass." That is not true. When God speaks, then we speak it and it comes to pass. What God says, we can say, and it will be fulfilled.

Faith is prompted by the Spirit of the Lord. Logos is that which the Spirit has written, as opposed to rhema, that which is spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

For example, in Isaiah 7:14 it says a "**virgin shall conceive....**" An unmarried woman could start confessing this Scripture, but it would be ridiculous because God's Spirit spoke it only to Mary. It was a word just for her. Other people have gotten in the ditch about Judas. The Bible says after Judas betrayed innocent blood (Jesus' blood) and threw down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple he had been given for his part in the conspiracy, he "**went and hanged himself**" (Matthew 27:5). Luke 10:37 says, "**Go and do likewise.**" God's Spirit isn't telling you to go and hang yourself as Judas did, but both of these verses are in the Bible. They were accurately recorded, but you can't pull Scripture out of context and receive an accurate account of what is being spoken.

Judas violated God's principles and desecrated his own life by selling the Son of God to crucifixion. What happened to him was the result of his own actions. You can learn this certainly isn't something you want to confess over your own life. This is why we must "rightly divide" the Word of God. We need the anointing of the Holy Spirit to know what God is speaking to us.

As a pastor I have dealt with situations where people have shared how they were believing and confessing certain things for their lives; some for certain people to marry them, others for people to give them money, and still others for several other things. Then when it doesn't happen; the person they were confessing to marry marries someone else and the money does come... they wonder why. They say I was confessing, naming and claiming this or that ... and that's exactly why criticism of has come. God's Word has to be directed by Lord; otherwise, you will claim things out of your own desires.

James said, **"Ye ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts"** (James 4:3) The key thing to discern is, "What is the will of God?"

People make the mistake of trying to pursue fame, fortune, power, position and prestige by speaking portions of the Word erroneously. It is sad to take the message that saves, delivers and heals and pervert it to cause a bad report in the world. Just because a few people have done some ridiculous things, however, doesn't mean we are to give up on believing and speaking the Word of God. That which is spoken in line with the Word of God will come to pass for good in our lives.

USING THE NAME OF JESUS IN PRAYER

The name of Jesus is the name above all names. No other name is higher than the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is your key to heaven's storehouse. It is the key that unlocks all the blessings of God.

The privilege to use the name of Jesus in prayer comes out of a proper relationship with Him. We are to speak in His name as His instrument in response to His directives.

Jesus said:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." John 14:12

I believe one of those greater works today is that we have the privilege to preach Jesus Christ and see people born again. Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, calmed the storms, raised the dead, caused maimed limbs to grow out and withered hands and paralytics to be healed and brought deliverance to the demon-possessed and the mentally deranged.

In speaking to those who were in relationship with Him, Jesus said:

"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

John 14:13,14

Submission to Authority Releases Authority to You

I believe people have flippantly used the name of Jesus without having a proper relationship with Him. What happened to the seven sons of Sceva is a good example of this.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."

Also, there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.
Acts 19:13-16

Apparently the seven sons of Sceva had seen or heard of miracles as a result of using the name of Jesus, and they said, "Let's try it." They "tried" using Jesus' name with a man who had an evil spirit.

The key to the defeat of the seven sons of Sceva by one man possessed of a devil was: They used the right formula, they used the right words, but they were not "in" the name of Jesus, meaning, personally, they weren't in relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of having no viable relationship with Jesus, they were literally using the name of Jesus in vain. To them, the name of Jesus was merely a catch word. If you are in the name of Jesus, the devil knows who you are.

If you're not in His name, he also knows who you are. The devil knew that the seven sons of Sceva didn't have the authority that

Paul had in the name of Jesus. Authority is based on being under authority.

When the Roman centurion came to Jesus to seek healing for his servant, he said to Jesus:

"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

"For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" Matthew 8:6-10

How did the Roman centurion have what Jesus called "great faith"? He had it because he was under authority. He had been given authority, and he understood authority.

If you understand that God has authority and you submit to His authority, then you will receive the delegated authority Jesus has given you as a believer. The seven sons of Sceva were not in the name of Jesus. They had no authority in Jesus' name because they weren't under His authority.

Abiding in the Word

To abide in Jesus Christ is to abide in God's Word. John 15:7 puts this scriptural principle in an even clearer light:

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

To be in the name of Jesus is to be in the Word of God. According to Psalm 138:2, God's Word is magnified above His name.

If you are going to relate to the name of Jesus, you have to be identified with the Word of God—abiding in it, dwelling in it, walking in it, submitted to it and committed to obeying all of it. Some people want to obey only the parts which please them.

I have met and talked with many people who will embrace the promises of God's love and goodness, and praise God for all His promises, but when it comes to fully surrendering their lives and will to God they resist it.

We must accept all of God's Word, not just parts of it. We're talking about being **in the name**. We're talking about being immersed and submitted to all of God's Word. Commit to the light that you have. Submit to what you understand of the Lord. Then, as you grow in Him, you should make deeper commitments.

If you are delighting in the Lord, that means you are delighting in the Word of God. If you are feasting in God's Word, then you will have right desires that are in agreement with the Word. You will be able to discern and divide. The Word divides between the soul and the spirit, and you will be able to see whether a desire is soulish and selfish—out of your mind and emotions— or out of your spirit which is dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 119:130 AMP says of God's Word:

The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.

The entrance of God's Word into your mind and heart brings light. It divides so that you can ask anything in the name of Jesus. When you are hooked into the name of Jesus, you are abiding in the Word of God, and you have surrendered your life to the Lord trusting Him in every area of your life.

Bring Forth Fruit That Will Remain

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. John 15:16

Jesus is speaking of the authority in His name. The fruit He desires is answered prayer. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23). In John 15:16 KJV Jesus said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...."

We are to bear many kinds of fruit. The fruit that will remain is fruit that is birthed by prayer in the name of Jesus. What you bring forth by your own abilities, you can take the credit for, but if you have asked for it in Jesus' name, then the Father will be glorified when the prayer is answered, such as with souls being saved.

In John 16:23,24, Jesus said:

And in that day, you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Think of it. Jesus, the Son of God, walked with the disciples every day. Anything they had need of, they could ask for. When there wasn't anything to feed the multitude, Jesus took a little boy's sack lunch and fed 5,000 with it. When there was a storm and the disciples were about to sink, Jesus stopped it with the words of His mouth. Whatever they needed; He was there to provide it.

In these verses, Jesus was telling the disciples that He was going to leave them, but He assured them that He would send the Comforter Who would guide them into all truth. Jesus would give them His name to use after He was crucified, resurrected and ascended to the Father. With His name, the disciples could go

directly into the Throne Room of the Father. Today, we can go directly into the presence of the Father, too, simply by using the name of Jesus.

Jesus said, "**Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full**" (John 16:24). Fullness of joy comes when you receive answers to prayer. When Greg came to Christ, we had joy unspeakable and full of glory! We had been praying to the Father in the name of Jesus on Greg's behalf.

How Did Jesus Get His Name?

Jesus got His name in three ways: obedience, resurrection and inheritance.

First, Jesus received His name and the power that's in it by obedience.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:5-11

Every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord, whether in this life or in the next, whether in heaven or in hell. The best time to do it is in this life through salvation—accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Second, Jesus got His name by the resurrection from the dead.

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:19-23

The name of Jesus is above everything that has a name. It is above sickness and disease, poverty and lack and anything else that has a name!

Third, Jesus got His name and the power in His name through inheritance.

"He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). That means the name of Jesus is more excellent than the angels, any human being, or any demon spirit. Just as you got your name from your parents, Jesus inherited His name, a royal name, from His Father.

Power of Attorney in Jesus' Name

You and I, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been given the power of attorney in Jesus' name. In legal terminology, we have been given authority to act for Jesus Christ by using His name.

Jesus said of His followers, which includes you and me:

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; They will take up serpents; and if they drink any-thing deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. Mark 16:17,18

Jesus was saying, "Everything I have been doing, you will do." It's called, "Carry on business as usual in My name."

If you are going to go somewhere and you want business to go on as usual, you can confer upon another person the right to sign checks, enter into contracts, receive goods, negotiate business and carry on whatever needs to be done, if you specify it in a legal document. When you are gone, your name can be used by the designated person to whom you have given the legal power of attorney.

Jesus was saying, "While I'm gone, you take My name and heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out devils. Demonstrate My authority. When you are vitally linked into My name, you are abiding in the Word, you have submitted your life and surrendered it under My authority, then whatever you ask the Father in My name, I will do it. You will be acting in My stead."

The power of attorney is legalized spiritually in us when Jesus abides in us through the Person of the Holy Spirit. We can't just take His name. We are in His name. We have wrapped our lives in His name. We have surrendered and submitted to His name. Therefore, when we take the name of Jesus and lay hands on someone in that name, we break the power of homosexuality, drug addiction, immorality, alcoholism, uncleanness, perversion and any other form of evil.

God is saying, "I will use My power to bring to pass the words that you speak when you are operating in My will in accordance with My Word, in Jesus' name."

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is not as familiar to Christians as the Father and the Son are. In fact, I grew up in the United Methodist Church and never heard anything said or taught about the Holy Spirit – good or bad.

The first time I heard about being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” and praying in tongues I was totally ignorant. I had never heard anything about it. Then someone began to teach me from the Word of God. I saw things in the Bible I had never before. I began to read and study about the Holy Spirit and it changed my life forever.

You can put on denominational eyeglasses that literally cause you to look at the Word and not see what the Spirit of God is saying. People sometimes have the idea that praying in the Spirit is simply praying with an excited attitude, a heightened spiritual awareness, or with more intensity. Prayer in the Spirit is defined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.

Paul said, **"Pursue love...."** Immediately following that, he said, **"And desire spiritual gifts..."** (1 Corinthians 14:1). If we understand this verse properly, spiritual gifts are not for our own consumption. They are to bless other people. If you really love other people, you will want the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to bring what is needed on the scene—the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, the working of miracles, the gift of faith, the gifts of healings, or tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy.

Paul goes on in verse 1 to say, **"But especially that you may prophesy."** Prophecy is the anointed revelation word of God that comes by the Holy Spirit.

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; how-ever, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. (1Cor. 14:2)

When you are speaking in tongues, you are addressing God. You are speaking mysteries. Things that are not known in the natural will flow up out of you as you speak in the Spirit. When you pray in tongues, you are speaking to God, but when you prophesy, you are speaking to men.

When you are speaking in tongues, no one comprehends what is being said unless there is someone to interpret.

On the Day of Pentecost, the 120 in the upper room spoke in tongues and told the wondrous works of God. It was a sign and a wonder. It verified to them that God was in their midst. It opened their hearts for Peter to preach the great Pentecost message that Joel had prophesied of the latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit and that they should repent and believe on Jesus Christ. As a result, many were saved.

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 1 Corinthians 14:3

People who don't believe in the gifts of the Spirit will always identify prophecy as inspired preaching, but prophecy is an anointed word that comes directly from God. Many can preach from God's Word, read a scripture, explain what it means and admonish the people to act on it, but it takes the operation of the gift of the Spirit to prophesy. Prophecy is a supernatural gift.

Edification means "to build up." To exhort is "to challenge someone to do what God has spoken." To comfort is "to minister the presence of the Holy Spirit in the mercy aspect of God."

Praying in Tongues Edifies and Strengthens

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 1 Corinthians 14:4

Paul is drawing a contrast between prophecy and tongues. He is not saying to do away with tongues. Sometimes people say, "The Corinthians were one of the most sinful groups of people, and they had one of the most worldly churches. They operated in the gifts

of the Spirit, and since Paul had to correct them, tongues aren't relevant for the Church today. Tongues are just for carnal churches."

They also took communion, so if you use the argument that tongues aren't necessary in the Church today, then you need to throw out communion, too. First Corinthians 11 gives instructions on communion. Many churches today have a problem understanding what God is saying. Paul wrote to explain communion, the gifts of the Spirit, the operation of love and how tongues and interpretation are to operate supernaturally in a church service.

When someone prophesies under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in a known language, everyone can understand it and be edified spiritually. Do you ever need to be built up? If you're not up, you're not going to help anyone else get up. If you're not spiritually strong, you will have difficulty ministering strength to other people. That's why praying in the Spirit in an unknown tongue is such an important part of our prayer life.

Paul is not saying, "Do away with tongues." This is what many people say who don't believe in tongues. First Corinthians 14:5 supports the argument that Paul was not discrediting tongues. **"I wish you all spoke with tongues...."**

In Mark 16:17, Jesus said, **"And these signs will follow those who believe...they will speak with new tongues."**

Acts 2:4 says that the 120 in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost, which included Jesus' disciples, **"were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."**

Acts 10:44-46 indicates that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles in Cornelius' household, and they spoke in tongues:

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God....

In Acts 19:2-6, the disciples at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit as Paul laid his hands on them. He said to them,

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul continues to explain the importance of speaking in tongues:

I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Notice the phrase, "unless indeed he interprets." Prophecy is elevated over tongues in the public assembly, except when there is an interpretation. Tongues and interpretation are equivalent to prophecy.

Though people don't understand the "tongues" portion of tongues and interpretation, they will understand and be edified by the interpretation. The interpretation is a prophetic, supernatural utterance that comes from the Lord, and it will edify, exhort and comfort.

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? 1 Corinthians 14:6

Anyone who moves in the prophet's office can bring a revelation from God. Preaching and teaching are basically the dissemination, distribution, or impact of knowledge and doctrine, but Paul separates these. He says:

Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?

So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 1 Corinthians 14:7-9

If I speak a message to my congregation in tongues, I would be edified, but they would not be blessed. It would be like blowing an instrument, but there would be no distinction in the sounds, no harmony, no flow, no pattern and it would make no sense.

Paul was saying, "If a trumpet sounds a distinct sound that everyone recognizes as the sound for battle, they will prepare for it." He was emphasizing the importance of having an interpreter when a message is given in tongues. He wasn't saying to throw out tongues but to put tongues in its place.

There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 1 Corinthians 14:10-13

Paul was saying, "If you are so zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to edify, build up and strengthen the whole church." He didn't say, "Stop praying in tongues." He said, "If you are going to pray in tongues, pray for an interpretation, because when you have an interpretation, the whole church will be edified and blessed.

" For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 1 Corinthians 14:14

Paul defined praying in the Spirit as praying in an unknown tongue. When you pray in tongues, you only have half a loaf, because your understanding is unfruitful.

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. 1 Corinthians 14:15

Paul is encouraging believers to pray in their understanding and pray in the Spirit. Pray for interpretation when you pray in the Spirit, and you will move over into praying in your understanding and revelation will come.

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? 1 Corinthians 14:16

You can bless and give thanks to the Lord in the Spirit, but no one else will know what you are doing.

For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. 1 Cor. 14:17

Praying in tongues is a proper, accepted and beneficial way to give thanks, but other people will not be edified without an interpretation.

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all. 1 Cor. 14:18

Paul spoke in tongues more than the entire Corinthian bunch. Obviously, he wasn't saying, "Quit." He was saying, "I am doing it in the proper time personally and privately. I am speaking to God and giving thanks in the Spirit. I am communing with my Father and blessing Him. I am speaking mysteries unto Him."

Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 1 Corinthians 14:19

Paul was saying, "When I stand up to minister, I would rather speak in a language you can understand than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue, because five words you can understand will help you more than ten thousand you can't understand."

We experienced this in our Russian crusades. I could preach all day to those people in English, and I would be blessed because of the Word coming forth, but they wouldn't comprehend a thing. A young man who speaks both Russian and English interpreted so the people could comprehend what I was saying.

Paul is saying, "I would that all of you spoke with tongues." You may be questioning, "Do you have to speak in tongues to go to heaven?" No. You must believe in Jesus Christ and believe in His shed blood, believe He died for you, He was raised from the dead, declare Him Lord and live out His lordship in your life.

You don't have to pray in tongues, tithe, serve the Lord in some type of Christian service, or praise and worship Him. But you will be blessed if you praise and worship the Lord. You will be blessed if you serve the Lord in a practical way in service to other people. You will be blessed if you give tithes and offerings. You will be blessed if you pray in the Spirit and in other tongues.

When we talk about praying in the Spirit, we are talking about the supernatural anointing and utterance in other tongues which builds you up. When you are built up, you can build other people up.

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray with Accuracy

Romans 8:26 KJV gives us another aspect of the importance of praying in the Spirit:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself [Himself] maketh inter-cession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

When Paul talks about infirmities, many people think he is referring to sickness and disease. In this verse, he is not talking about sickness and disease. **Infirmity, as used in this verse, refers to weakness or natural, limited human ability.** When we have areas where we lack, we don't understand, or we aren't capable of achieving in our natural ability, the Holy Spirit helps us. In other words, the Spirit of God will take hold in the area where we are weak and will strengthen us.

In verse 26, Paul identifies one area of weakness: **"For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought...."** There are two aspects of this thing: 1) We don't know what to pray for; and 2) We don't know how we ought to pray. Those are weaknesses or infirmities.

Some people offer a prayer like this: "God bless the president, my family, China, and Lord, reach Africa." After ten minutes, they are done, because they don't know what else to pray. Paul is saying that it is a weakness (or infirmity) to not know what to pray for or how to pray, because God moves in response to our prayers. If we can't pray and we can't take hold of the blessing and power of God, there is a limitation.

Paul says, **"The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"** (Romans 8:26). There

are utterances that we won't know how to express in a known language. They will come out in another tongue as the Holy Spirit utters those things through us.

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes inter-cession for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:27

The Spirit of God, Who dwells on the inside of you, will make the intercession if you allow Him to pray through you.

Remember, Paul said, **"If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays..."** (1 Corinthians 14:14). In Romans 8:26, Paul is saying, "The Spirit of God takes hold of our spirit, and utterances that cannot be expressed in our known language begin to flow out of us."

The Holy Spirit knows three vital things: 1) He knows your heart; 2) He knows God's heart; and 3) He knows all about the situation or person for whom you are praying. Not only does He know what to pray for, but He knows how to pray for it. His prayer won't be a hit and miss prayer. It will be according to the mind and will of the Father. It won't be contradictory to you, because the Holy Spirit is linked up with your spirit and knows your spirit. Therefore, when you pray in the Spirit, you are praying a prayer of perfection, a prayer of accuracy, a prayer of strength that you cannot pray in your weakened ability as a human being without the Holy Spirit's anointing, help, revelation, insight and utterance.

When you pray in the Spirit, you go beyond your natural limitations and pray according to the mind of the Father.

Praying in Tongues Brings Rest and Refreshing

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the benefit of praying in another tongue:

For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, To whom He said, "This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest," and, "This is the refreshing...." Isaiah 28:11,12

Not only does praying in the Spirit build your faith, but it can move you into a place of rest and refreshing.

Built Up to Build Others Up!

Jude said:

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Verse 20

When you pray in the Spirit, you build yourself up. It's not a selfish thing to be built up in your spirit man. People go to church on Sunday to hear a sermon to be built up. People read the Bible to be built up. People take time alone with God in prayer to be built up spiritually.

Jude says when you pray in the Spirit, you become stronger in your faith. We know that **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17).

The second aspect of what Jude was saying about praying in the Spirit is found in verse 21:

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

When someone consistently prays in the Spirit, the Spirit of God keeps drawing him back to righteousness.

It's like a thermostat. If your thermostat is set and you open a door and hot air comes in, the thermostat will cause the air-conditioner to kick in to make the room cooler, even though hot air is coming in. Similarly, when the enemy brings something against your life to turn you off, turn you away, or get you off track, the Spirit of God—your internal thermostat—will kick in. When you pray in the Spirit, your spirit will rise up and throw off what the devil tries to bring against your life.

You will keep yourself in the love of God by praying in the Spirit, because you give place to the Spirit. You are communing with

Him and giving the Holy Spirit the right to dominate your heart. When you pray for the interpretation, you are giving Him the right to dominate your mind, too.

Your spirit can be deflated when you listen to ungodly music or conversation or when you are in ungodly places. In other words, certain environments will grieve your spirit. Arguing, strife, negativism and depressed and cynical attitudes will repress your spirit.

The spirit of the world wants to bring your spirit down, because when you are down in your spirit, you aren't going to witness. You aren't going to be a shining light. You aren't going to let the love of God flow through you. Instead, you will hide your light under a bushel. But when you start praying in the Spirit, you will counter all the junk that's in the world. I believe we need this oil in our lamps!

When you look at the five wise and the five foolish virgins and the oil in their lamps or lack of it and the fact that the Holy Spirit is referred to as oil, there is a strong possibility that the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit could have been what Jesus was referring to when He spoke about keeping our lamps trimmed. One way we can allow that to happen is by praying in the Spirit. It will keep your faith built up, and it will help to keep you in the love of God.

If you don't read the Word, which keeps your faith built up, praying in the Spirit won't automatically compensate for failure in this area or in any other area. In the same way, in keeping your-self in the love of God, if the Spirit of God prompts you to quit doing something and you don't obey, it won't produce the end result that is desired.

Jesus said:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." This He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:37-39

Rivers of living water out of your innermost being refer to the flow of the Spirit of God. A part of that flow is the prayer language of the Spirit. Isaiah called it "stammering lips, another tongue, a rest and a refreshing."

In Ephesians 6:18, the final piece of the believer's armor that is mentioned is, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...." **Praying in the Spirit is very specifically defined in Scripture as "praying in other tongues."**

When you are edified by praying in the Spirit, you can edify other people. As you go with the flow of the Holy Spirit, God will quicken you to pray for others. There have been many times through the years while praying in the Spirit the Holy Spirit has brought to mind someone to pray for – a pastor, family member, or church member. I didn't know exactly what to pray for so, I would pray in the Spirit for the person. On several occasions I have spoken with one of these people and they would relate to me a situation they were going through and the time would correspond to the time I was praying for them.

Along with the other benefits of praying in the Spirit, you will be strengthened in boldness to witness as you pray in other tongues.

THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

There is awesome power when you come into agreement with other believers in prayer. We know that one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30).

In the natural, when people combine their efforts in work, what they accomplish corporately is far greater than what they can do individually. The multiplication factor enters into it. It's the same in prayer as in business. Corporations can do the same thing with their impact when they are flowing together in agreement and in cooperation with others. Many times, their profit margin and impact on certain markets can be multiplied by a corporate effort.

The foundation for the prayer of agreement is found in Matthew 18:15-20.

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. Verse 15

What is the goal of telling someone their fault? To tell them off, set them straight, or knock them back a lick? No! It's to gain your brother or sister, because if there has been an offense against you, then there is a breach or a breakdown—a place where the enemy can come in.

Notice, Jesus says the first step in resolving a difficulty is to go to the person alone. It doesn't say, "Talk to your best friend about it. Confide in your husband or wife about it. Confide in your minister about it." It says, "Go and talk with that person alone."

Many of the world's problems, difficulties in relationships, negotiation breakdowns and problems in churches and families would be resolved if this step were taken. When the objective is reconciliation and restoration, then the attitude that comes across will produce an atmosphere where reconciliation and restoration are possible. The attitude is so important. When you go to some-one and say, "You're wrong, buddy," do you think there will be a

reconciliation? It's not likely! But if you approach it by asking, "Could you explain to me what happened?" or "Why did this take place?" you create an atmosphere free of hostility where restoration can take place.

Some people's greatest exercise is jumping to conclusions, running down their neighbors and pitching a fit. Make an effort to get the facts. Some people spend their lives being upset or angry with people, which will eat away at them like a cancer. "Go to the person alone" is a prelude Jesus gives to the prayer of agreement.

But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Matthew 18:16

The principle of two or three witnesses, found in both the Old and New Testaments, is to establish or verify something. This doesn't mean to go and get your two meanest, biggest friends. I believe it means to go with two people who are objective and who will hear and understand both sides.

We I am counseling people that have differences or conflicts, it could be a married couple or staff members in our church or even students in our school), when the first person tells their side of the story, you wonder why the other person doesn't just change and ask for forgiveness. Then, when the other person shares their side of the story, you wonder if they are talking about the same situation! There also is a difference when you hear people tell something in private and when you have them tell it in front of someone. It's amazing how stories change!

A person who has a chip on his shoulder or an emotional need in his life may receive something that is said or done with a wrong attitude when nothing is meant by it.

In the world, the principle of using two or three witnesses is called arbitration. All parties agree to a group of people who will objectively hear both sides, and they agree to abide by the decision of that group.

This is what Jesus was teaching. Take your difficulties before two or three other people and let them help you understand it. Then either or both parties should make any necessary adjustments.

And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Matthew 18:17

This doesn't mean that every Sunday morning we should hear all the grievances before the entire church congregation. This would make the church a courtroom, and it would destroy the anointing in the service. I believe Jesus is talking about the leadership of the church. In other words, tell it to the representative leader of the church to whom you are submitted.

When we have a situation in our church that can't be resolved between the parties involved it is brought before those who are in spiritual leadership over the particular area involved. If someone refuses to be reconciled, then they are acting in unforgiveness, and in the spirit of unforgiveness, they are acting like an unsaved person. Saved people are forgivers!

Jesus said, "**But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector**" (Matthew 18:17). Does that mean you are going to trample on them and talk ugly about them? No! When an unsaved person treats you wrong, you pray for them. Bless those who persecute you. Pray for those who spitefully use you. Your prayers will be hindered if you don't deal with unresolved conflict with others.

This is what Peter dealt with in 1 Peter 3:1-7:

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, When they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely out-ward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight

of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned them-selves, being submissive to their own husbands, As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Treating people wrong and not reconciling relationships will break down the power of your prayer life. I have heard people say, "I have prayed and confessed the Word. I am tithing. Why isn't it working?" Usually I ask, "Have you checked your love life? Are you walking in love toward other people? Have you reconciled your differences?" Just because someone is mad at you doesn't mean you have to be mad at them, or just because someone is having an argument doesn't mean you have to have one with them. It can be a one-sided deal. Make every effort to reconcile.

Follow the steps Jesus gave:

1. Go to the offender alone.
2. If he/she will not hear you, take one or two objective people with you.
3. Then, if the offender refuses to listen, go to the proper leadership in the church.

Then pray for the offender: "Lord, I forgive, release and bless _____ . I want this completely out of my spirit. Every time I think about _____ , I am going to thank You that You are working in them." In this way, you protect your own spirit.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "**Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.**" The issues or forces of life are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithful-ness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23).

Protect your spirit, for out of it flow the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If your spirit is clogged up with unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment, then the fruit won't flow as freely as it should. Love, joy

and faith won't flow freely, so you stand to lose your joy, get out of love and stop the effectiveness of your faith because your relationships with people have broken down.

I want to encourage you. It doesn't matter what other people have done. You can reconcile on your side of the fence! Hebrews 12:14 says, "**Pursue peace with all people....**" Pray that even your enemies will be reconciled to you. Proverbs 16:7 says, "**When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**"

Offenses will come, but how you deal with them is what determines what will happen in your life. Deal with them with God's grace.

Joseph couldn't be stopped from reaching the highest promotion God had planned for him, in spite of three major offenses in his life. His brothers sold him, he was maliciously slandered by Potiphar's wife and he ended up in prison.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph summed up the whole ordeal:

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

What God has planned for you cannot be stopped by what other people do against you. Joseph could not be stopped because he kept on forgiving. He kept rising to the top. He rose to the top in Potiphar's house, and they put him down. At the bottom of the prison, he rose to the top again. And then forgotten, he rose to the top from prison to prime minister in one day. Glory to God!

When someone offends you, you cannot stay in neutral. If you do, the offense stays in you. But if you'll go the second mile joyfully and turn the other cheek, then you have actually planted a seed of love into that person's life.

In ministry I have been disappointed and hurt by people we have poured into and loved. There are those who have said something negative about my wife. In these situations, it would be easy to take offense and get defensive about, but we have chosen to

walk in love. We declare Proverbs 16:7: "Lord, You said if our ways please You, You will make even our enemies be at peace with us."

Most of the time the situations turn for the good. In the ministry you get calls or emails often from someone who not happy about something – the message you preached or something the nursery or children's church die or the way an usher treated them. You need to make up your mind that you are going to let those things "roll off you like water rolls off a ducks back".

One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was, "If you don't get bitter, you will make it." We try to always choose to "get better". Bitterness often is at the root of marriage problems, troubles in the church, and other relationships. If people would practice the principles Jesus gave for reconciliation in Matthew 18 most those situations would be reconciled.

Many times, when people strike out at you, they've got a problem in some area of their life, and you just happen to be the scapegoat—the one who gets hit with it. People who are bitter do strike out. That's just a fact. They have hurts in their lives, but we are called to heal bitter waters. At the waters of Marah, God showed Moses a tree to cast into those waters and make them sweet (Exodus 15:23-25). We still have that tree! It's called Calvary—the cross where we die to ourselves and we lift up Jesus Christ!

Binding and Loosing

Jesus said:

Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 18:18

What is Jesus talking about? He just got through dealing with forgiveness and reconciliation. Now He's talking about binding and loosing. Many of us have been taught verse 18 out of context. In context, when you forgive people on the earth, you loose the power

of heaven upon their lives. When you don't forgive or reconcile with them on earth, you stop the power of God from ministering to them.

Reconciliation and restoration are loosed when you forgive someone, but people are bound by an offense when an attitude of unforgiveness prevails.

I have ministered to many people over the years who have come to the altar for prayer at the end of one of our church services. It maybe they have an illness, or they may be dealing with an emotional problem or some other thing that they need ministry for. Many times, the root of their problem is unforgiveness. It may be with a parent who abused them or a spouse that has mistreated them or some other situation in the past they just haven't dealt with. In some cases, they have carried the burden for many years

Often, I will ask them about their past and if there is something that they have not been able to forgive. When they come to the realization that they need to forgive their dad or their ex-spouse or a former boss or even a pastor or someone in ministry and they genuinely release and forgive that person I have watched many people get healed emotionally and even sometimes physically. There is power in forgiveness.

Whatever you loose in the earth is loosed in the heavenlies. There is power in what we do in the earth with forgiveness. The setting of Luke 6:36-38 is forgiveness:

Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

In the way you give, it will be given back to you. Show mercy and mercy will be released into your life and into the lives of others.

In Matthew 18:19, 20, Jesus is still speaking in the context of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Agreement is more than simply saying to someone, "Agree with me." It is agreement in the Spirit. Are you in agreement with the Lord? You can't have the power of God working in your life if you aren't in agreement with God. What does that mean? If you are in bitterness and resentment, you aren't in agreement with Jesus. Before you agree with another person, agree with Jesus Christ, and make sure your spirit is in agreement with God's Word and His will.

When you really want the power of agreement with another person, you need someone whose spirit is flowing with your spirit, so you don't simply come into a mental agreement. You need to have a spiritual heart agreement.

I believe the reason there is such a great attack on marriages is that there is no other agreement on the face of the earth more powerful than that of a husband and wife. Two people in perfect agreement with the Spirit of God make a three-fold cord, and Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "**A threefold cord is not quickly broken.**"

As a person planted seed in Victory's building fund toward the fulfillment of their own vision, they asked me to come into agreement with them for their vision. I said, "I don't have your vision, and God hasn't spoken to me about what you are to do, but I can agree with you in my spirit for the will of God to be done."

When you don't know specific information that may be needed to come into prayer agreement with someone, you can always agree for the will of the Lord to be done.

The Power of Agreement Used in a Negative Way

In Genesis 11:6, the power of agreement worked in a negative way when the people determined they were going to build a tower to reach up to heaven. The Lord had to stop them, so He came down and confused their languages.

And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them."

They had one mind, one language and one vision. They weren't saved, nor were they building the tower for God, yet God was saying, "There is power in their human ability that whatever they set their hand to do, they are going to do it unless I stop them." God stopped them because it was an agreement of evil.

In the natural realm, great feats have been accomplished in corporate structures when there has been agreement. God created man to have dominion in the earth, and in some cases, man has taken that power and perverted it or defaulted in its use. God's original plan was that man would have dominion to bring the earth under control for His glory.

The building of the tower of Babel reveals to us the power of unity. If you ever get a group of people into unity for a purpose and you get them into prayer, nothing will be restrained from them if they are in agreement with God. There is awesome power in such agreement.

UNITED OR CORPORATE PRAYER

There are several illustrations in the Bible of the effectiveness of united or corporate prayer, both in the Old and New Testaments. Here are a few examples, the principles of which are still relevant for today!

Old Testament Examples of United or Corporate Prayer

1. Esther and Her People Saved Through United Fasting and Prayer

In the book of Esther, a decree was prepared by Haman, an official in the king's court, the intent of which was to destroy the entire Jewish culture. The incident which incited Haman to pre-prepare such a document was that Mordecai, a Jew and the man who had raised Esther after her parents died, would not bow or pay homage to him.

Esther had been placed in a position of authority inside of the palace where she could intervene in this situation and reverse it for her people, although she had to jeopardize her own life to do so. She knew she couldn't even attempt to intervene for her people, the Jews, without united fasting and prayer to uphold her. At her request, Mordecai and the Jewish people came together in united fasting and prayer.

Once Esther learned of the decree, she received Mordecai's admonition:

"Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet

who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:13,14

Esther's response to Mordecai was:

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" Esther 4:16

Up until this time, Esther's identity had been hidden. She had been selected to be the queen because of her great beauty, but she kept it secret that she was a Jew.

When Haman, a wicked and evil man, convinced the king to sign a decree certifying that all the Jews would be killed, the king didn't really understand what Haman was doing. Haman was his trusted administrator, and all Haman told him was that there was a group of people who were causing trouble and violating the laws, and he would put up his own money to exterminate them if the king would sign the decree. The king signed it.

Esther became motivated real quick to stand in the gap before the king for her people when she realized she, also a Jew, would not be able to escape death either. Sometimes people have to be motivated with the benefits to gain and the losses to be avoided.

The Jews began to fast and pray for Esther's to use her position as Queen to go before the king. However, there was a law that anyone who went into the inner court of the king without being called would be put to death **"except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live..."** (Esther 4:11). The Jews were tapping into the power of united prayer.

As a result of Queen Esther's favor with the king, she invited Haman and the king to two banquets. At the second banquet, she revealed to the king that someone had plotted to kill her and all of her people. Haman was exposed, and he and his sons were hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai while Mordecai was honored. Because of united fasting and prayer, an entire nation was saved.

The goal of united prayer is to seek the Lord for His help and direction. To "seek the Lord" means to go after Him with all of your heart so His will can be accomplished, and His promises attained.

Because Mordecai, Esther and the Jews sought the Lord, their planned extermination was reversed. Letters were prepared and Esther 8:11 says,

By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions.

Verse 16 says, **"The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor."** That happened because of united fasting and prayer!

2. Jehoshaphat and the Israelites Delivered Through United Prayer

A similar situation happened with Jehoshaphat and the Israelites who were surrounded by three enemy armies. Jehoshaphat was a man of God, and he didn't know what to do but pray.

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.

Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi).

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court,

And said: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to with-stand You?" 2 Chronicles 20:1-6

United prayer doesn't mean that no one prays a singular prayer. As the group was united in seeking the Lord, their prayer was recorded. Evidently there was a time when people stopped and one man expressed the heart cry of the multitude. Wrapped together in one man's prayer, their plight and cry for divine intervention were brought before the Lord.

God doesn't get bothered by everyone praying at once. If He does, He's in big trouble, because there are millions of people all over the world praying at once. He hears individual prayer as well as corporate prayer all at the same time. There are times when one person needs to take the heart cry of what everyone has prayed in corporate prayer and bring it before the Lord.

"Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?" 2 Chronicles 20:7

Jehoshaphat was putting God in remembrance.

"And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying,

"If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our distress, and You will hear and save." 2 Chronicles 20:8,9

Jehoshaphat was rehearsing the commitment God made to them.

"And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—

"Here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit." 2 Chronicles 20:10,11

Jehoshaphat's only hope was in God. He knew that without God's help, not only was his neck at stake, but everyone else would be slaughtered, too. He said to God:

"O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." 2 Chronicles 20:12

We have no might or power in our natural ability against the enemy we face in this hour. We have all might and power in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, but in our natural ability, we don't have the goods to match a former archangel of God who is now bent on destroying the earth and all of its inhabitants. In our natural man, we are no match against the devil. Jehoshaphat said, "Lord, our eyes are on You!" When we get our eyes on the Lord, then we will know what to do.

Jehoshaphat, an anointed king, was rehearsing His condition. He had a covenant with God, but in his own ability, he could do nothing, so he reminded God, "We are no match against this army without Your help, Lord." I think it would be good every day if we remembered that we are dust in our natural ability and that without God, we can't make it.

Jesus rephrased this in the New Testament: **"Without Me you can do nothing"** (John 15:5). Jehoshaphat was saying, "Without You, Lord, we can do nothing. We need Your help."

Jehoshaphat's prayer wasn't a negative prayer. He was simply stating the conditions, rehearsing God's commitment to him and welcoming His help. Let's bring this into the now.

How do you pray when you've got three armies coming up against you? Maybe you've got leukemia, tuberculosis and heart problems—three armies coming against you at once. Maybe you have gone through a divorce, you have been abused as a child, or you are without a job.

You have had problems in your past, you have problems in your present and you know there are problems ahead of you in your future. You've got three armies arrayed against you at once with one intent: to annihilate you. Satan and his forces have come to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). That's what these armies had come to do. That's why we can take stories from the Old Testament, and relate them to where we are at this very moment in time. These things were written as an example for us to learn from.

Jehoshaphat and the Israelites cried out to God and fasted, prayed and came into agreement. Jehoshaphat's battle wasn't with flesh and blood, and neither is ours. It was with principalities, powers and rulers of the darkness in heavenly places.

Amos 3:3 says, "**Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**" Just having a crowd doesn't necessarily produce power nor does it guarantee power. When people are focused on Jesus and they come into agreement, there will be positive results.

God instructed Habakkuk to "**write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it**" (Habakkuk 2:2).

Everyone needs to know why they are praying and the goal toward which they are praying for united prayer to be effective. That means someone has to declare it. Jehoshaphat stood up and declared it.

When people are together, but they are praying in different directions, you don't have corporate, united prayer. It's like trying to move a large couch. It is a lot easier for five people to move it than one. One person simply can't do it, but if five people come at the same time, they can do it.

It is the same way in prayer. If everyone will focus on a singular thing at one time, the united energy will be far greater than the addition of all of our energies going in separate directions.

In other words, if one person tries to lift something, he exerts all of his energy. But if you take the same amount of energy and combine it corporately on a singular object, it will move. That's the power of united prayer. Nothing will be restrained to those who have one mind and are speaking the same thing. Whatever they put their hand to, it will happen.

New Testament Examples of United or Corporate Prayer

The power of united prayer and the same prayer principles that worked at the tower of Babel, with Esther and with Jehoshaphat, are also found in the New Testament.

1. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

In Acts 1, Jesus told the disciples to gather in the upper room and **"wait for the Promise of the Father..."** (Acts 1:4). He was speaking of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

"For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Acts 1:5

Acts 1:15 indicates that 120 people were gathered in the upper room, which included Mary, the mother of Jesus, the disciples and the brethren of Jesus.

Acts 2:1 speaks of one of the greatest miracles in the Bible.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Can you imagine 120 people in one accord in one place? They were in unity, agreement and harmony.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:2-4

The great events that took place on the day of Pentecost were preceded by people coming into unity. If churches want the power of God today, they must have this same unity. To the degree that people will come into one accord, the Spirit of God will be poured out in like measure.

Peter stood up and said:

"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "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, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. " 'And on My menservants and on My maid-servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy." Acts 2:16-18

Then Peter said:

"Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:36-39

Maybe you have been in places where there was disagreement and disharmony and there was an outpouring, not of

the Holy Spirit, but of different spirits—strife, division, fighting and bickering. When we come into agreement, God's Spirit will move. People will be saved and delivered. That's what happened in Acts 2. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then Peter stood up and preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and 3,000 people were saved.

We should pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives daily, for the boldness to speak God's Word and for the harvest of souls to be loosed into God's Kingdom.

2. Lame Man Healed

In Acts 3, Peter and John went down to the temple gate and ministered healing to a lame man. As a result of this man's testimony of healing, 5,000 more people were saved.

Peter and John were headed to the temple together for corporate prayer when this miracle took place. They participated in corporate prayer on a regular basis.

When people pray, not only will people be filled with the Holy Spirit, not only will the Word be spoken with boldness that brings about salvation, but it will also produce an atmosphere for miracles. Corporate prayer will bring the power of God on the scene to meet every need.

Peter spoke to the lame man, "**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk**" (Acts 3:6).

Verses 7 and 8 indicate the lame man's response:

Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

There are four parts to the miracle:

1. Corporate prayer.
2. The lame man's healing.

3. The man's testimony of his healing.

4. Five thousand people were born again.

The Church began with signs, wonders and miracles. There is no reason for us to stop it in this day and hour. If they needed signs, wonders and miracles then, how much more do we need them now? Thank God for medicine and education, but they cannot meet all of the needs of the human race. We need the power of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

As a result of this miracle and the testimony of it, Peter and John ended up before the authorities. They were called in on the carpet, because they had caused a ruckus in Jerusalem by declaring...

"And His name [Jesus' name], through faith in His name, has made this man strong...Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Acts 3:16

The high priest rebuked Peter and John and told them not to speak any more in Jesus' name.

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

"Who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things?

"The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.'

" 'For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together "

To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done." Acts 4:19-28

Peter traces two experiences: one of David and the other of Jesus. David was faced with all types of obstacles and adverse, negative circumstances, and he cried out to the Lord, "Why do the nations rage?" David is the one who said:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:1,4

David knew that God would fight for him. Though an army would encamp round about him, he knew God would be with him. He declared that in his prayer.

Peter said that all the people were gathered together against him. He was saying, "I'm in the same position David was in. I'm in the same position You were in, Jesus." You may be in that position today. The enemy has come, and his plan is the same as it always has been: to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Obviously, what Peter and John had done went against the grain of the kingdom of darkness. It challenged the devil, and they were persecuted for it.

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, "By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." Acts 4:29,30

This is an hour when we need to pray for holy boldness. Many have prayed for other people to change or for circumstances in the land to change. Peter didn't pray any of that. He said, "Lord, let something happen on the inside of us. Grant that Your servants will be bold."

Peter prayed for the people's lives. He wasn't praying for the religious leaders who had threatened him, for those who were going to make laws to intimidate, threaten, or curtail their ministry activities. He said, "Lord, let Your healing miracles happen." We need to pray for miracles, signs and wonders—obvious manifestations of the supernatural—that will give credence and evidence that Jesus is alive.

Reversing Negative Situations

The prayer of Esther was that she would have favor with the king so the Jews would be saved. In Jehoshaphat's case, prayer was for supernatural deliverance in battle. On the day of Pentecost, they were praying for the promise of the Father. They didn't fully understand what it was, except He had said the Holy Spirit would come. They didn't know how He would manifest or what was going to happen, but they prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31

When people come together in one accord in unified prayer, the whole place will shake with supernatural signs, wonders and miracles.

After the Holy Ghost came on them, they weren't intimidated by the leaders who had threatened them.

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. Acts 4:32

Now we see something else. After they were filled with the Holy Ghost, not only did they speak the Word with boldness, but a spirit of love, unity and compassion for one another came inside of them.

The supernatural manifestations of the power of God should bring us closer together and give us more compassion for one another.

Verse 33 says, **"And with great power the apostles gave wit-ness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all."**

Acts 5:12-14 says:

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.

And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

When there are supernatural signs, wonders and miracles it will result in the salvation of lost people.

They brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a

multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.
Acts 5:15,16

United prayer initiated these miracles. The believers were in agreement in the face of opposition, and God brought the miracles.

When we come into corporate prayer, not only does the Holy Spirit come, not only do miracles happen and people get healed, not only is the Word preached with boldness, resulting in people getting saved, but when we pray in a united way, the Holy Ghost speaks.

We find an example of this in Acts 13:1,2:

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

United prayer doesn't have to be the church body. It can be a group of people coming into agreement anywhere, praying for God's will to be done.

The family unit is the most powerful unit that can come into agreement in united prayer. No one can get closer than a family who lives together, who are joined together naturally by blood and supernaturally by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Prayer of Petition

The “Prayer of Petition” is by far the most common kind of prayer. Most of our prayers tend to lean toward asking God to give us what we want or need. This is scriptural, of course, because He told us in Matthew 21:22, “... *ask in prayer, believing.*”

The “Prayer of Petition” is also referred to as supplication. These prayers include requests for our personal needs. We ask God for the needs that concern us: e.g., physical (natural), financial, spiritual, emotional, etc.

The prayer of petition must be a prayer of faith. It is you praying for yourself, not someone else praying for you or agreeing with you in prayer. When you pray the prayer of petition “by the rules”, believe that you receive. If you will do that, you will have what you ask for. God is concerned about our needs and He wants to meet them for us. ***“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”*** Mark 11:24

It is important to know that it is God's will that our needs — spiritual, physical, and material — be met. Some people think they should conclude every prayer with the words “I fit be thy will.” This is not a proper rule for the prayer of petition. This is a rule for the prayer of consecration. (see the next chapter)

We must be mindful that that what we are requesting (asking) God for should be in accordance with His will and purpose. His will is revealed in His Word, so our prayers should be in line with His Word. The Prayer of Petition is a prayer supported by evidence and facts based on the known will of God through His Word.

When we pray His Word, He hears us and when He hears us, we will have what we ask for. ***Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*** (1John 5:14-15)

One additional note remember God already knows what we have need of before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). Ultimately, the prayer of petition is a privilege that comes with being in relationship with a loving and caring Father. It is a prayer that refuses to be moved by what it sees. It is a prayer that will not allow negative circumstances to dictate whether or not you believe that what you prayed will come to pass.

The Prayer of Consecration

In Luke 22:41-42, we see outlined the prayer of consecration and dedication: "***And He [Jesus] was withdrawn from them (Peter, James and John) about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."***

Jesus wanted to do what the Father wanted Him to do. It was **NOT** a prayer of petition. It was not a prayer to get something or to change something. Because in those kinds of prayers we already have God's Word concerning them. We **know** (*should*) what His will that is – that His will is to meet our needs, to heal us, to guide and direct us, etc.

This was a prayer of consecration. When we consecrate our lives for God's use, to go anywhere and do anything He wants us to do, we pray this kind of prayer. In a prayer of consecration and dedication we pray, "If it be thy will."

You pray that God's will would be done when you don't know His will or don't know if an alternative path that appears is equally "correct" or godly. In the absence of direct instructions, the prayer of consecration and dedication says you will allow God to set your direction or make your decisions. "Nevertheless, not my will, but Your will be done"

We should be willing to go anywhere and do anything God has called us to do, whether it is to pastor, to be a missionary, go into business, or to do or be anything else He wants us to be. Believe me, He will let you know what direction He wants you to go.

The Prayer of Intercession

In many places they call all prayer "intercession". They think it is the only effective kind of praying. However, as we have been sharing there are many "KINDS" of prayer and each kind of prayer has its own purpose and rules. The Bible is very clear on this.

In reality, the most effective prayer is the prayer the Holy Spirit inspires us to pray for what is *needed at the moment* — whether it is the prayer of agreement, the prayer of faith, the prayer of praise and worship, or some other type of prayer. Often different kinds of prayer will work together much like the fingers on a hand. For instance, supplication, which is an earnest, heartfelt request, is used in intercession.

The reason we are teaching about the different kinds of prayers and the rules for each is to help you have a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about each type of prayer so your prayers will be more effective. It is not to limit or confine your prayer to just some set of rules and regulations.

Be careful to **NOE** get too bogged down in the rules or you can lose the true spirit of prayer by becoming too legalistic and clinical in your praying. It's more important to recognize and learn to flow with the Holy Spirit in prayer than merely to know correct prayer terminology. However, when equipped with true Biblical knowledge about the different kinds of prayer, you can cooperate more fully with the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit always works in conjunction with the Word.

Intercession Defined

The prayer of intercession is very important, powerful, and needed. Intercessory prayer is not a prayer of praise, or is it about

your troubles, or about your needs. Instead, it is a pointed, persistent pleading on behalf of someone else for a deep need.

Prayers of intercession are offered on behalf of other people - your friends, family, leaders, co-workers, etc. Intercession is standing in the gap in prayer. To be effective, intercession needs to be made at the prompting of the and under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Examples in the Bible

The Bible gives us several examples of intercessory prayer. Here are a few:

- One of the earliest examples of this type of prayer is found in Genesis 18 when Abraham pleaded with God for the well-being of the people of Sodom. Instead of being overcome with his own needs, Abraham prayed for those around him.
- Moses is also known for interceding on behalf of others throughout his life. In fact, Pharaoh requested that Moses pray for him in Exodus 8:28, "Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.'" Later in Exodus 15:25, Moses petitioned God on behalf of the Hebrew people: "Then Moses cried out to the LORD..." Moses prayed for others with urgency and boldness.
- Several of Paul's prayers of intercession are recorded in the New Testament. In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul prayed for the believers: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God."
- The church prayed fervently for Peter while he was imprisoned. Acts 12:5 says, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

- 1 Timothy 2:1-5 exhorts us to pray for others: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
- Jesus is the greatest intercessor of all time! Here are some of His prayers:
 - Jesus prayed for Peter - Luke 22:32 says, "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
 - Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him. Luke 23:34 says, "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots."
 - Jesus prayed for His disciples and for Believers throughout eternity in John 17.

As a believer, you have an opportunity to not only benefit from intercession, but also to daily intercede for others.

How Intercessory Prayer Works

Intercessory prayer is not about getting God to follow our plan, but actively praying for the strongholds in other people's lives to line up with God's Word. It's a battle against evil spiritual powers that requires courage and diligence. In fact, Paul reminded the church to "pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere" (Ephesians 6:18).

This type of persistent intercessory prayer opens the door to bring about deliverance and deeper growth. As you actively speak against the enemy's designs, stand on the promises of God, and remind God of His Word. The enemy's attacks are thwarted. Light

flows into areas where there was previously darkness (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). So, don't give up even when the answer is not yet visible. Follow the example of the Apostle Paul who said, "So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you" (Colossians 1:9).

One word of caution: As you pray for others, it's important to not take on the burden of the problem yourself, as that can be spiritually damaging. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon cautions believers to guard our hearts above all else (Proverbs 4:23). So be vigilant to intercede for the rebellious, the addicted and the hurting, but guard your own heart against undue emotional strain and burdens.

How to Use Intercessory Prayer in Your Life

Be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit about situations going on in the lives those around you – family, co-workers, friends, etc. The Lord has woken me up in the middle of the night and put a person or situation on my heart. I may not know exactly what is involved, but there is something inside of me that is troubling me or simply bugging me. I will begin to pray for the person or situation, interceding for them.

How about your community or country and the political leaders? What about your church and the pastors? Are there situations, decisions to be made, etc.? Those are all perfect situations in which to apply intercessory prayer. Begin praying for them and continue praying, even when you are tempted to give up.

Prayer can be challenging because we don't always see the answer, but that is no reason to stop. "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (James 5:16). Stay motivated and encouraged to persist in prayer, even when things haven't changed in the natural. God is constantly at work in the supernatural, and your intercessory prayers are not in vain!

Another benefit of intercessory prayer is that it brings about a deeper abiding in God in your personal walk with the Lord.

PRAYING FOR FAMILY SALVATION

You have the authority to pray for your family. The same principles of praying for family salvation presented in this chapter are applicable in praying for the lost of any community, culture, or nation.

Jesus said, **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"** (Matthew 24:35). Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so what is written in God's Word is not just the will or whim of man, but it is the revelation of God coming through men so we might know God's will and purpose in the earth.

When we base our prayers on God's unchanging promises, we will receive His answers to our prayers. Acts 16:31 says:

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

If you are a born-again believer, God has given you a promise in this verse that your family members will also believe and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

God loves families. He started with Adam and Eve. It was His plan that they have children, subdue the earth and take dominion over it. Although they had a problem in their home, with one son killing another, that didn't stop God. He raised up another righteous seed.

The knowledge of God was passed on to Noah. During Noah's day, all the people around him rejected God. They absolutely refused Him. Nothing could reach them, so God said, **"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them"** (Genesis 6:7). This is a type and shadow of what will ultimately happen to people who live in the world today who reject God. God destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth through a flood, except for Noah and his seed. **"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"** (v. 8).

God promised He would not destroy the earth again with a flood, but He spoke in the Word through Peter that there would be an everlasting fire for those who reject Jesus Christ.

The good news is, seven days before the flood, after building the ark, the word of the Lord came to Noah to gather his family and enter into the ark.

"Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation..."

"For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." Genesis 7:1,4

The Bible doesn't say a lot about Noah's family being righteous, but it says Noah was righteous. He believed God and built an ark in obedience to God's directions. Obviously, his wife and kids helped him during those many years of construction. They believed and entered the ark under Noah's leadership.

When the final penalty for all the wicked is released from God and the final judgment day is gone, I am believing that your family will be in the ark of salvation.

Most people have some folks in their family that they don't know if they are the kind of people God even wants to save! Maybe some of your family have wondered about you, too! Be encouraged about your family's salvation.

God chose Abraham and said He was going to bless him and through him, He would bless the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). He blessed him with a son, Isaac, who had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. God is interested in families, and His blessing extends out-ward to your relatives. The blessing of God includes the salvation of every member of your family.

First Timothy 2:4 says God **"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."** That includes your

family members and relatives! "All men" means all of the human race. It is God's will that every man, woman, boy and girl be saved.

Not everyone is going to be saved, but that does not change the will of God. He sent Jesus to die on the cross, to be buried and raised from the dead so **"whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Romans 10:13).

Second Peter 3:9 says:

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The reason Jesus hasn't already come is because of His mercy. He is longsuffering, and He doesn't want anyone to be lost, so He is speaking to us to reach out and share His love with others.

Looking back through history, we know there are people who did not respond to the gospel, but that doesn't change God's will for all people to be saved. Remember, it was God's will that Adam and Eve be obedient, replenish the earth and take dominion. They violated God's will, so we have to understand that though men may fail, it does not change the will of God.

"Open Their Eyes To See You, Lord"

Second Corinthians 4:4 tells us that the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of those **"who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them** [and they would believe on Jesus Christ]." The spiritual blindness Paul is speaking about in this verse keeps people from seeing the truth.

The good news is, you, as a believer, have authority and power to pray for the blindness to be removed. In praying for the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "I pray for the eyes of your understanding to be enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). In other words, he was praying that the lights would come on in your house! If the

spiritual lights are out in someone's life, you can pray for the blindness to be removed and for the light to shine in, in Jesus' name.

There have been several testimonies in our church of people who have prayed for family members to get saved. There was grandmother in our church who prayed for and sent letters to one of her grandsons that was lost. This young man had problems in his life. He had gotten into drugs and other situations that were causing him and his parents all kinds of trouble. This grandmother continued to pray for that grandson. She prayed for several years. She would ask us to pray for him. Whenever I asked her how he was doing she would always say. "The Word is working."

She prayed for Godly people to cross his path and witness to him. She prayed that his eyes would be opened and his heart softened. Every time she got a negative report from her daughter about him she would always, "thank Jesus that the Word was working" She never gave up on him. One year she invited him to one of our Easter Illustrated messages. Every year we do a huge production reenacting the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus during Easter week.

He came to one of those services and when the program was over he came forward to give his life to the Lord. His life was changed forever. He began coming to our men's ministry meeting – "Every Man's Victory" and was delivered from his drug habit and began serving the Lord. His life was changed forever. His grandmother's prayers made a difference.

Don't give up, no matter the situation. Regardless of what life style or how young or old or impossible the situation may look continue to pray. Prayer based upon God's Word will prevail!

After His resurrection, Jesus walked on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples who didn't recognize Him.

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him.... Luke 24:30,31

You can pray this passage over the lost: "Lord Jesus, open their eyes to know You."

Verse 45 of this same chapter says Jesus opened the eyes of the disciples to understand the scriptures that prophesied His resurrection.

If we will mix faith with God's promises, believing and speaking them, God will perform them. He will fulfill His promises.

Acts 2:17 says, **"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, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams."** Mix faith with this promise that your sons and daughters will prophesy, and hold fast to it.

Proverbs 11:21 KJV says, **"The seed of the righteous shall be delivered."**

Isaiah 60:1-4 says:

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the. Lord is risen upon you.

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side.

To mix faith with these promises, begin to declare:

Father, thank You that Your Word says the seed of the righteous will be delivered. You made me righteous by Your blood, not by my own works, but by the gift of righteousness. My children

are delivered, in the name of Jesus. They are set free. Lord, You said my sons and daughters would be nursed at my side.

Thank You for the privilege of nurturing them with Your Word. Thank You, Father, for pouring Your Spirit out upon my seed—my sons and daughters. Your Word will never depart from their mouth, from the mouth of their children, or from the mouth of their children's children.

You can put agreement with Acts 2:4 for your children to be filled with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. **"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."**

In Mark 16:15-18, Jesus said:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

"They will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Whenever Jesus gave a commission to go out and share the gospel, He also gave authority to cast out devils. Satan is the god of this world, and he has blinded the minds of the lost, keeping them from seeing the truth. You can loose the power of the Holy Spirit upon unbelievers, and bind the power of the devil and the wicked spirits off of them, in Jesus' name. You can take authority and command the wicked spirits to leave them and stand against the powers of darkness, even if the person is miles from you.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have authority to pray and command the wicked spirits that have held people captive to be removed. Jesus said, **"How can one enter a strong man's house**

and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matthew 12:29).

We have to take authority over the strong man who has tried to wrap himself around a person's life and hold them back from salvation. We have been given authority to break the bands of the enemy and loose the captives. Many times people understand the principle of binding the devil only in relationship to some type of demonic oppression, but we need to see it in relationship to soulwinning.

Loose the Spirit of Repentance

We had some graduates from our Missions School go to Oaxaca, Mexico to establish a Bible School and missions base. It was an area with strong religious spirits and many different people groups. They would pray for their spiritual eyes would be open to see Jesus. They began to pray and bind the strong spirits of religion from the people and to pray for an open heaven so they would be free to respond to the gospel.

They would pray for their minds to be open and that the spirits of fear, torment witchcraft, and bondage to be broken. Then would declare the Word of God over that area and loose the spirit of repentance for the Holy Spirit to convict of sin and reveal Jesus to them.

They have seen incredible result is that area. Today 20 years latter they have a mission base that has established well over 100 churches in the villages of the state of Oaxaca and train pastors and leaders who minister to thousands of people every year.

Unless a person repents and turns around, they won't be saved. They must have a heart change. When we pray for it, God will give repentance in people's lives.

Pray for Jesus To Be Lifted Up

Jesus said, "**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself**" (John 12:32).

We know Jesus was speaking about His death on the cross, but many people have never had Jesus Christ lifted up in their mind. They have not been introduced to the real Jesus. They have seen religion, denominationalism, ideas and hypocrisy. When they see the real Jesus lifted up above the fog of what man has said about Him, they will accept Him. The devil has blinded them from seeing Jesus' love and from understanding what the cross is all about.

You can pray, "Father, help _____ to know that there is no greater love than Jesus' love when He paid the ultimate price with His life so they wouldn't have to go to hell."

John 6:44 says, "**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him....**" You can pray, "Father, draw _____ with the cords of Your love. Mighty Holy Spirit, come upon _____'s life, in Jesus' name."

You may be in a situation where you have family members who are on drugs or involved in a cult. God's power can break through those things. Lift up Jesus and declare His name. Don't give up on your loved ones.

Pray for Laborers

You can pray for laborers to cross the paths of the lost.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:35-38

Your relatives and friends are part of God's harvest. To pray laborers across their pathways, you can declare: "Lord, send them tracts, books, tapes, videos, people, billboards, bumper stickers and radio and television programs. Every time they turn on the television, Lord, let the preacher point his finger at them and tell them, 'Get saved.' When they tune in the radio, Lord, let it stop where someone is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank You, Father, that they are hearing a witness of Your Word."

Right after we got married my wife's aunt Titi would send us books every month. They were books about the Holy Spirit and serving God. My uncle Bob would talk to me about Jesus and living our lives for him. One of the books was titled "They Speak in Other Tongues". I read that book several times. It spoke to me. It inspired me.

Others would come across our path and share their testimonies about how Jesus was working in their life. As a result, I recommitted my life to the Lord and my wife got saved. We were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began a whole new journey with God.

Years later we found out they and others had been praying for us and they were praying for God to send labors across our path to witness to us. Praise God for the Holy Spirit using people to share His good news.

Our church would hold crusades in the subsidized apartment communities in our city. We would pray for these outreaches and part of those prayers were to pray for God to send labors to help bring in the harvest. I would go and help set up the tent and go door to door inviting people to the nightly meetings. Many times, residents would say, "We have been praying for God to send revival to our apartment community." As we pray for laborers, God will send them.

I have had many people share testimonies of how they were saved, healed, or delivered because of someone praying for them. Someone was faithfully praying for them and believing God for their salvation. Sometimes they were praying for many years, but God honored their faith. I want to encourage you, don't give up! I can tell you we have had many people saved because of someone's prayers.

One of those people was Charles Story. He used to lead our prison ministry. His testimony is powerful. He was a tough nut to crack with the gospel. Years ago, his wife Rosemary, started coming to our church. She began to learn how to pray and stand in faith for Charles to be born again. Six weeks after she began praying, Charles came to church on Mother's Day and gave his life to Jesus Christ. For many years he was the only minister who is allowed to go on death row in the McAlester, Oklahoma, prison and hold services each week for the prisoners.

I want to encourage you to be a witness. Sow the seed of witnessing to someone else in the same way you expect someone to witness to your loved ones. You may not see the fruit of your efforts immediately, but if you hold fast to the confession of your faith, the seed of the Word will work on them.

Whenever the opportunity arises step out in faith and share the good news. Keep your eyes open. It may be as simple as asking a person if they know Jesus. Some of us plant, some water, and some harvest. Some people will mock and laugh when you witness to them, but remember, you are an answer to somebody's prayers. What you sow in prayer, you will reap back in your own life.

When I teach and minister to people on praying for others to get save the question I get is, "Don't they have a will of their own." The inference what good does it do pray for someone else if I'm going against their will? Well, don't you think God knows they have a will of their own? Why would He say, "Pray for laborers," if He knows they have a will of their own? It's very simple. God is in the will-changing business! When you were born again, you had your will changed from darkness to light. Even as good as Nicodemus was, Jesus said, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). That requires a decision.

The point is, God can work on a person's will, so get your mind off of their will and onto God's will. Let God deal with their will. People can get hung up on the issue of another person's will to the point that they won't even pray for the lost.

Jesus Is the Answer!

Jesus is the Answer to every need. He delivers, saves, heals and restores, regardless of a person's past. True repentance and a genuine salvation experience will cause you to **"go and sin no more"** (John 8: 11).

Sinners have not believed because they have been blinded to the truth, or they have not heard a bold witness of the truth. It's time to pray the devil off of their back and the blindness out of their eyes. Pray for Jesus to be lifted up in their midst. Pray for the Spirit of God to convict them and pray laborers to cross their path every day. Pray that they will get a vision of heaven and hell, realizing that there is an eternal judgment.

I am convinced that the person who really sees Jesus with the devil off his or her back and understands there is a heaven and a hell will be motivated to receive Jesus Christ.

We come into agreement with Your Word, Father, that it is Your will that the lost be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. We pray that You would be exalted in their midst, Lord Jesus, drawing them unto You in this hour like a holy magnet! We command the darkness and blindness, deception and delusion to leave them now, in the name of Jesus. Let Your light flood them with a knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and understanding, Lord. Thank You for moving in their lives, in the name of Jesus.

It's time to move from petition to rejoicing and thank the Lord for His deliverance and salvation of the people for whom you have been praying.

THE PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15) We’ve been created to worship God – to give Him praise and thanksgiving. When we praise and worship God, we are in communion and fellowship with Him. We’re not just spectators standing on the sidelines or up in the grandstands praising someone unrelated to us, but we are in vital union with Him. The prayer of praise and thanksgiving should be incorporated with all the other types of prayer.

Paul said in Ephesians 1:3:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

That means everything we need to live our lives victoriously has already been provided through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's blessings have already come to us in Christ Jesus. We receive those blessings as we take a position in faith.

We know that the people who walk in the counsel of the Lord are blessed.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.
Psalm 1:1-3

There are specific things we must do to inherit the blessings of God, but everything that we need has already been provided. Peter spoke the same thing from a different viewpoint:

As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.

2 Peter 1:3

According to this scripture, God has already given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. Verse 4 contains the key to obtaining the things God has already provided.

By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is through the promises in God's Word that we partake of what God has already provided. So how do we get it out of the realm of the unseen world into our everyday lives? God reveals what He has provided through His great and precious promises.

That's why our prayer lives must be wrapped around the promises of God. When the revelation of what God has done for us comes to us, then we must take the promises, stand on them, believe them, declare them and God will bring them to pass in our lives.

When you were born again, I'm sure you heard John 3:16:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus went to the cross and paid for our sin, sickness and poverty 2,000 years ago. He's not going to the cross again. Redemption and eternal life have already been provided, but when do you find out about it? When someone relates that truth to you, or when you hear it through the Word. To the degree that you believe and obey the Word, you receive what God has already provided.

One of the greatest things you can do is get books that contain the promises of God and take your Bible and note every promise that God has written down. Then thank God for His promises.

Paul said:

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

The prayer of faith incorporates praise worship and thanksgiving. If your prayer of faith doesn't end in praise, worship and thanksgiving, then it really isn't the prayer of faith.

Philippians 4:6,7 TLB says:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank him for his answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

How can you make a prayer with thanksgiving if you don't know it is going to come to pass? We must believe God's promise in 1 John 5:14,15:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. Jesus said in Mark 11:24:

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

If you believe that you receive when you pray, when should you give thanks? The moment you offer your prayer! Offer it with thanksgiving and praise, and begin to worship God for the answer,

incorporating an attitude that acknowledges that God has already provided everything you need.

Hebrews 13:15 says:

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Paul said, "**Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**" (Philippians 4:4). In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul said, "**In everything give thanks....**" How can you give thanks in every-thing unless you believe that God has already provided everything you need? That regardless of what happens in the natural, God has already made full provision for you? Once you understand this, then you can offer prayers that are filled with praise.

One of the ways the Lord helped me understand this in my life was when I was flying a small plane years ago. You taxi down the runway, but you aren't off the ground until the point of liftoff. The Lord said to me, "A lot of people are taxiing in their prayer life. They are just taxiing around the runway. They haven't lifted off the ground yet! They are going through the motions in prayer. They may even be checking the ailerons, the flaps, the wheels and the gauges, but there is no liftoff."

There comes a time when you have to lift the nose of that plane and accelerate. Then it comes off the ground! It's the same way in your prayer and praise life. There is a time when you must accelerate, lift your wings and begin to praise God for the manifestation of His promises. You say, "I don't feel like it." Your feelings have nothing to do with it! It's your faith that will make the difference.

Stay Jesus-Focused and Promise-Focused!

Paul gave the Philippians a key on how to stay focused after offering their prayers and praise. It's a key for us, too.

Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.

Philippians 4:8 TLB

What you think about during the time frame of your prayers and praise and the manifestation of your answers will determine whether you receive or not. The battle has to be won in your mind. See your answers coming to pass. Many people lose the battle in their imagination. They don't see it coming to pass.

Many people say, "What you say is what you will have." I want to add something to that: "What you see is also what you will have," because what you see in your mind will ultimately affect what you say. That's why the enemy comes with lying imaginations.

Thank God for His promise in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

Casting down arguments (The King James Version says "imagination") and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The victory over the enemy has already been won for us through Jesus Christ. Jesus has already been raised high above the wicked spirits and principalities that are in the heavenly places. He is the Head and we are the Body, so we are not under the authority of the demonic principalities and powers. We are above their authority, because Ephesians 2:6 says God has **"raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."**

How do we then come against the wicked spirits that are in heavenly places? Through believing the Word of God, through the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of Jesus' shed blood. All of those agree: the name, the Word and the blood.

Spiritual warfare is not putting on Army fatigues and trying to punch out the devil. I don't think very many Christians have the revelation of what Jesus has already done. Jesus has already won the war. He defeated the devil two thousand years ago.

Today he goes about like a roaring lion. (1Peter 5:8) Our assignment is enforce the victory Jesus won. One day Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and ultimately cast into the lake of fire, but we are not going to do it. The archangel, Michael, is going to do it. (Rev. 20:1)

Some of the teachings on spiritual warfare in regard to prayer are coming from people who don't have a revelation of what Christ has already done. When you understand that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you won't get into bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness, the Bible says you will give the devil no place (Ephesians 4:27). You can't cast out, kick out, vomit out, or beat out the bitterness, resentment, or unforgiveness that is in a person. The person needs forgiveness, not deliverance. There have been times when I have seen people beat on someone and scream, "We command that thing to come out." Many times when I encounter this type of situation, God will give me a word of knowledge, and I'll ask the person, "Have you forgiven?" In such a case, if they will forgive, they will be set free.

The fiery darts of the devil that come at Christians are usually thoughts, feelings and imaginations that come to the soulish realm. They will work through the flesh to try to arouse the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, but you can defeat them by believing the Bible.

In spiritual warfare, two of the greatest things you can do that will stop the devil are to believe the Bible and praise God for what He has already done. That is warfare, because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. The strongholds we are pulling down are in people's minds. To pull down the thoughts and imaginations that

have become strongholds in your mind, renew your mind to what God has already done through Jesus Christ, and start praising God for His Word.

What happens when we believe the Bible—when we believe the promises of God? God performs His Word. God says in Jeremiah 1:12, **"I am ready to perform My word."**

We must become Jesus-focused and promise-focused rather than problem-focused. Keep the Word in your mouth rather than the world. Declare what God has done rather than what the devil is doing. Focus on light rather than darkness.

You can stand in a dark room all day and say, "Darkness, I command you to get out of here." You can roll on the floor, scream, beat and get a hundred people agreeing for the darkness to go. One little four-year-old can come in and flip on the light switch and the darkness will go. If one person will believe the Word, he can put thousands of the enemy's works and effects on people's lives to flight in one moment.

Jesus said, **"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"** (Matthew 17:20). Jesus said in John 14:30 KW, **"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."**

Prayer is simply agreeing with what God has already done. It is taking His Word—His promises—and saying, "Father, according to Your Word, You have redeemed me from the curse. Thank You, Father, that my steps are ordered by You." That's a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. "Thank You, Father, that I am Your sheep. You said Your sheep would hear Your voice. I refuse to hear the voice of a stranger."

There are people who come to the altar at our church who have been praying for years, trying to cast the devil's thoughts out of their mind. They ask, "Please pray for me. I have these harassing thoughts." If they would spend just five minutes a day confessing and acknowledging that they do not hear the voice of a stranger, but they only hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, their life could be

radically turned around. When you accentuate the positive, you will eliminate the negative! When you turn the light on, the darkness goes. Keep the sword of the Spirit in your mouth, declaring it daily.

If a person sins, he needs to repent. If a person has been ugly, he needs to get it out of his life. I am not talking about just confessing sin and not dealing with it. When a person confesses, "God meets all of my needs," that doesn't mean he goes and lays on a park bench and waits for the money to fall off the oak tree!

When you are confessing for a good mate, it doesn't mean you don't take a shower or brush your teeth in three days. You need to be the kind of person that you are looking for.

If you are confessing healing, you don't go swimming in Minnesota in January. You would have to cut a hole in the ice to do it, and that wouldn't make a lot of sense! In other words, when you confess God's Word and thank Him for His Word, there are corresponding actions that must be matched up with the confession.

Habakkuk had something to say about praising God regardless of natural circumstances.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.... Habakkuk 3:17-19 KJV

We can rejoice in the midst of our circumstances, because God is our strength—not the economy of the nation or what is happening in the natural.

Since God is our Shepherd and strength, He will do something for us regardless of natural circumstances. He will cause us to ride upon the high places of the earth, as Isaiah prophesied:

Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth,

and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isaiah 58:14 KJV

When Jonah was in the whale's belly and took that Mediterranean cruise, he said:

"When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the Lord. And my earnest prayer went to you in your holy Temple.

"(Those who worship false gods have turned their backs on all the mercies waiting for them from the Lord!)

"I will never worship anyone but you! For how can I thank you enough for all you have done? I will surely fulfill my promises. For my deliverance comes from the Lord alone."

And the Lord ordered the fish to spit up Jonah on the beach, and it did. Jonah 2:7-10 TLB

As Jonah thanked and praised the Lord, he was delivered from the whale's belly!

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving will bring God's hand of deliverance on the scene in your behalf! Prayers of praise and thanksgiving should be a part of your daily lifestyle!

BREAKTHROUGHS IN PRAYER



The name of my ministry is “Breakthrough for you”. I have a heart to help breakthrough the barriers and challenges that are keeping them from experiencing the abundant life Jesus came to give us. (John 10:10) It’s time for you to get the breakthrough in your prayer life! Acts 12 gives a graphic picture of what happens when believers pray and when they don’t pray.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. So, when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Acts 12:1-4

James, the brother of John, one who had left his nets to follow Jesus and was close to Jesus, was killed. Peter was imprisoned. It was very clear that Herod intended to kill Peter just as he had killed James. The anger of the people had been stirred up, and what Herod had done to James pleased the people. But something happened to save Peter’s life.

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. Acts 12:5

Continual prayer was offered to God by the church in Peter’s behalf.

And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were

keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him.... Acts 12:6,7

Remember, chains and bars can't stop angels! They have access to all places. An angel came and stood right beside Peter.

And a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.

Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me."

So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord....
Acts 12:7-10

Wal-Mart didn't have the first automatic doors! God had them ahead of everyone. That gate opened of its own accord.

And they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."

So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate.

But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." Acts 12:10-15

They had the same problem Peter had. While Peter thought it was a vision, they thought it was an angelic vision.

Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.... Acts 12:16,17

The same spirit that was in Herod is in the world today, and Christians in various parts of the world are targeted, like Peter, to be destroyed. But when believers pray, a standard is raised up to stop the work of the enemy. Sickness, calamity, tragedy, divorce, division and execution are stopped when believers pray. We are in a serious time on the earth. This is no hour to take lightly our protection, deliverance and salvation.

James, a mighty warrior of God who could have reached many people on the earth, was taken out early by the enemy's plan.

There are no lost people in heaven to witness to, no demons to cast out, no sick people to be healed. We are in the earth for a holy, divine purpose, and that is to witness of Jesus Christ, the Savior, Healer and Deliverer. We are on the earth to fulfill God's purposes and plans.

Jesus said that God's plan for us is good. His plan is for an abundant life, but the devil's plan is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

I want to challenge you to stir yourself up in prayer on behalf of other members of the Body of Christ—for people who are in distress and are going through struggles and difficulties or battling a

sickness or disease. It's time that we stop the works of darkness. Because constant prayer was offered by the church for Peter, God intervened by sending an angel. There is no clearer picture in Scripture of the effectiveness of fervent prayer. One man was killed early, and another was spared. Does that mean God had a better plan for Peter than He had for James? No! Too often people lay the blame of negative situations on the sovereignty of God.

There are several misunderstandings about the sovereignty of God. One of them is that God did not have a plan for Adam and Eve to disobey Him in the Garden, but God gave man a free will. Saul disobeyed and Judas betrayed the Lord, but they each acted out of their own free will.

John Wesley said that it seems God will do nothing except someone prays. God made the earth, put man in it and gave us authority in Jesus' name to dominate the earth. Adam and Eve sold out to Satan. History has proven the devil's nature, which is to steal, kill and destroy.

When Jesus came, He destroyed the devil's power and regained the dominion that was lost. To all who will believe in 7 Jesus Christ, make Him Lord, put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, gird up their loins with truth, put the Good News of peace on their feet, take the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) and begin to pray in the Spirit, they can stop the devil's will from being done.

Why would Jesus teach us to pray, "**Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**" (Matthew 6:10) if the will of God automatically is done? Why would we pray this if everything that is going to happen is God's will? A lot of junk is going on in the world which is not the will of God.

It's not the will of God that people go home prematurely. Some people have missed God's plan for their lives. God sovereignly chose to give man free will, and He has sovereignly chosen to work through the faith of people who believe Him. That's why Jesus could say to sick people who received His healing virtue, "Your faith has made you whole." Many people could have touched Jesus and

received their healing, but only those who turned their faith loose received of Him.

God has a plan for your life. Early morning prayer, prayer in the daytime and prayer in the evening time are essential to make sure that His plan is fulfilled in your life.

If your life is not anchored in Jesus Christ through prayer and a relationship with Him, Satan and his forces will attempt to knock you off track, to abort God's plans for you and bring depression, discouragement and defeat.

Constant, fervent prayer will bring you through to victory. When the church rose up in constant prayer for Peter, Satan's plans were stopped.

The Lord has all power and authority, but He has given believers the right to pray and release His power into the earth. Prayer is listening, communing, hearing the voice of the Lord and being built up and strengthened. But there is another aspect to prayer where you declare the will of God to be done with your own words. Remember, His Word and His will are one and the same.

The Word is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). When you declare, "Lord, Your will be done," then you become the establishing witness on the earth. Jesus has entered into heaven with His blood, and the covenant that has been made for us is for-ever settled. But you have to make the declaration, "Jesus, You are the Lord of my life, and I will not bow my knee to the devil."

It is established in heaven that Jesus is Lord and that He defeated the devil. Jesus is Lord of heaven, earth and all that is under the earth, but He is not Lord in your life until you declare, "Lord, Your will be done in my life." It is the same way with healing. It is established in heaven that Jesus bore our sicknesses, carried our diseases and redeemed us from the curse. It is a settled fact, but you have to take an immovable stand on the Word of God and establish it on the earth. God watches over His Word to perform it.

To stand upon the promises of God, you must declare them with your mouth: "Thy will be done on the earth as it is in heaven."

How much sickness is in heaven? None! How much sin is in heaven? None! That is God's will on earth—no sickness, no sin, no fear, no torment. He wants the peace, joy, light and life of His Kingdom in the earth, so we have to declare it.

Some people have said, "I've declared it, and it's not working." That's because two things are coming out of your mouth: 1) You are declaring God's Kingdom, and 2) You are declaring that it isn't working. You need to undo the negative and begin to say, "Whether I see it or feel it, God's Word is working in me."

Hebrews 10:23 KJV says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." James 1:5-8 says:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The reverse of verse 8 also is true: A single-minded person is stable in all of his, or her, ways and will receive whatever he, or she, asks of the Lord.

James 5:14,15 says:

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Notice, it's not the prayer of doubt, the prayer of wishing, or the remembrance prayers that are effective. The prayer of faith is based on the written Word of God. Someone who knows the promises of God, lays claim to them, prays and believes he, or she, receives the moment prayer is offered, will receive of the Lord.

Simply defined, the prayer of faith is Mark 11:24: "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Believe you receive when you pray—not when you see it or feel it.

The other part of the definition of the prayer of faith is found in 1 John 5:14,15:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

To ask according to God's will is to pray the promises of His Word. Pray what God has already spoken and written. You can find the promises of God on any subject from childbirth to dying, to believing God for the salvation of loved ones, to strength and wisdom. Every area that relates to your life is covered in His Word.

In James 5:14,15, it is evident that forgiveness and healing come together through the prayer of faith. Then James says, **"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed..."** (v. 16).

I have watched people receive their healing as they pray for someone else. What you give out will come back to you. What you sow you will reap. When you bless someone else, God's blessings will come back to you.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (v. 16). James is talking about heartfelt, genuine, sincere prayers that make great power available in the earth. If we ever needed great power, it is in this hour.

If you have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ, the devil wants to tell you that your prayers don't count. But your prayers have as much power with God as the most well-known Christian speaker in the world. Why? Because we gain access to God by the blood of Jesus Christ, not by great talents and abilities.

Anyone made right by the blood of Jesus Christ has great power available. How great is it? Great enough to send an angel into a prison and loose a person guarded by dozens of soldiers!

That means with God's power we can pray for someone out of a coma or be healing of cancer and off of a death bed. That means it could deliver someone out of harm's way or when a thief tries to break into their house.

Constant prayer was made to God for Peter by the church, and God sent His angel to deliver him. God still has angels' available to bring answers to our prayers.

There is an invisible release of the light of God the moment we pray. As we pray, an angel could be ten thousand miles away delivering a missionary.

Matthew 21:22 says, "**And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.**" When you know something is God's will, then you can have faith to believe it.

There is something about God—He likes His own ideas! You can pray over your own ideas for a long time, but you get one little idea from Him and you won't have to pray very long before you see a breakthrough!

YOU CAN SPEAK TO YOUR MOUNTAINS

Now is the time to speak the Word of God to the mountains in your life and see them removed—whether it is a mountain of sickness, lack, division, torment, oppression, or some other challenge.

On one of Jesus' final trips over the Mount of Olives before His betrayal and crucifixion, He taught His disciples:

Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.

And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

So, they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den for thieves.' "

And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

When the evening had come, He went out of the city. Mark 11:12-19

Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem on the same route they had taken into Jerusalem, up over the Mount of Olives, down to the little town of Bethany. He taught, ministered and spoke each day in the temple.

Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

So, Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

"For assuredly, I say to you, 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.

"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:20-26

There are many wonderful thoughts from this passage of scripture. Often overlooked is the parallel between the fig tree and the nation of Israel. Jesus came to the fig tree, and it was supposed to be bearing fruit. It wasn't so He spoke to it and it withered.

Jesus came to the nation of Israel, and it was supposed to be bearing fruit—the fruit of a righteous, holy nation. He came to the temple and found it a den of thieves. What He had done to the fig tree, He did in the temple. He overthrew the money changers and spoke to them that their house would be left desolate.

It was only a few years later, 70 A.D., after Jesus had spoken it, that the Roman general Titus surrounded the city of Jerusalem and destroyed it.

In Scripture, we are likened to trees. The trees of the field shall clap their hands (Isaiah 55:12). Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches (John 15:5). He is looking for fruit in our lives—the fruit of answered prayer, the fruit of souls being won to Christ, the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

On one occasion when this parable was told, the landowner said, "Let's destroy the tree." Then the word came, "No, give it one more year. Let's dig around it, fertilize it and see if it brings forth fruit." Thank God, He is merciful!

Jesus left us an example that we are to follow. He left us a pattern of faith. In verse 14, He spoke to the tree, and the disciples heard it. In other words, it wasn't one of those whisper things. He spoke out loud. Nothing happened visibly at that moment. As you release your faith, nothing may happen visibly at that very moment.

But when Jesus returned by this same route some 24 hours later, the fig tree had dried up from the roots. In the natural, it is impossible for something to dry up that quickly.

Then Jesus commanded, "**Have faith in God.**" Romans 12:3 says, "**God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**" Romans 10:17 says, "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" Hebrews 11:6 says, "**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**" Hebrews 11:1 says, "**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**"

It has been said, "Faith is the title deed to that which is invisible." Corrie ten Boom said, "Faith is the radar that sees through the fog." Thank God for Holy Ghost radar! Faith sees things and catches an image of them, even though they may be beyond natural sight. The image of it is imprinted in us by the Word of God.

Then Jesus said, **"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain..."** (Mark 11:23). Jesus was using the terminology of speaking to a mountain as a figure of speech, saying, "If you have a problem, a difficulty, an obstacle that is like a mountain, you can speak to it to be removed."

Jesus was saying that you can speak to any mountain-size problem to be removed and it has to go. Maybe your mountain is sickness or disease, depression, discouragement, fear, dismay, or financial lack.

Notice Jesus did say pray about the mountain. He didn't say complain about the mountain. He said "speak to the mountain. Most people talk about their mountain, they call their friends and talk about their mountain and even evaluate their mountain. They take samples of their mountain and compare it with other people's mountains. Then there are mountain conferences or dialogues where people get together and discuss their mountains! There are mountain therapy sessions where everybody brings their mountains together.

Jesus didn't say that we are to discuss our challenges. He said, "Speak to them!" He was saying, "Speak directly to your mountains." Speak to cancer. Speak to financial lack. Speak to the rebellion in a child. Speak to the animosity in a situation.

How do we get to the point where we believe that what we say will come to pass and that when we speak to our mountain, it will be removed? Jesus said **"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you"** (John 15:7).

One of the primary keys to your confidence in prayer is to know that what you are speaking is the will or Word of God.

God said to Joshua:

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Joshua 1:8

If you are going to speak against sickness and disease, you need to settle it in your heart that sickness and disease are not from God. One of the reasons people don't get miracles when they speak is, they aren't fully convinced that God didn't give it to them. You must understand which side God is on. Faith that is based upon God's Word will work in speaking to your mountains.

Some people have let their mouth run in every direction. They say any old thing they think. They give everybody a piece of their mind until they have no peace! Their words are out of control, and idle words are spoken. If you are going to speak to your mountains and see them removed, then you will have to get control of your tongue. Your tongue has the power of life and death in it (Proverbs 18:21). You can be snared by the words of your own mouth (Proverbs 6:2).

When I first heard the message on the "power of our words" I made up my mind to put a guard on my lips. I would only speak positive, encouraging, and life-giving words. My wife and I decided to help each other only speak words of life.

People speak negative things over their life like, "I'm dying to get there; I'm an accident looking for a place to happen; "I am afraid I am coming down with a fever." They will speak negative words over others like, "You'll never amount to anything", "You're such a loser; "You're so stupid".

People will say, "I didn't mean it." Well, if you didn't mean it, why did you say it? Faith is a force that aligns your spirit, soul and body with God's Word. When you speak God's Word, there is a release of mighty power.

If you can't say anything positive and full of faith, save your words. No matter what the circumstances are, refuse to bow the knee of your confession to the lies of the enemy.

David heard the giant Goliath, "I am going to feed you to the birds of the air." David had been meditating day and night out on the fields while caring for his father's sheep. He knew his covenant with God. He had been singing the songs of the Lord, and out of his spirit came a rock before the rock ever left the sling! The rock of God's

Word was hurled at Goliath. Remember, the little rock in his sling followed the path of the rock that had already come from his lips.

The miracle of finances released into your life will follow the path of the Word that you have already spoken. Healing in your body will follow the path of the Word and the faith that have been released from your lips. David countered the fear that was spoken to him from Goliath with the Word of God.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. "Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." 1 Samuel 17:45-47

David's words were backed up by Almighty God. When the devil speaks a word and you respond to it with God's Word, there is an immediate encounter.

God's blessings are greater than the curses of the enemy. The life that is in you is greater than the darkness that is in the world. The word of healing that you speak is greater than cancer. It is greater than the sickness or disease that tries to come against you. The word of God's blessing is greater than the word of lack and poverty. Respond to your giants of challenge with God's Word!

The conditions you must meet to receive God's blessings are that you do not doubt in your heart but believe that what you say (or pray in line with God's Word) will come to pass. "Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24). If you believe everything you say will come to pass, it will shorten your conversation!

Faith is more than a formula. It is a relationship with God. It is a desire to bring God's will into the earth. When you decree a thing by the Word of God, He will bring it to pass (Job 22:28).

This kind of mountain-moving faith will not work in an atmosphere of unforgiveness, but it will work in an atmosphere of God's love. You can confess until you are blue in the face, but if you are bitter with your sister-in-law, mother-in-law, Grandma, or anyone else, it will not work. If there is a blockage because of unforgiveness, there will be a blockage in God's provision.

In Mark 11:25,26, Jesus said:

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Jesus put the entire faith principle in context: Believe that you receive when you pray. Speak out of a heart that is filled with the love of God and keep yourself free of unforgiveness.

Why Does Faith Work?

Your attitude about faith will affect your position in prayer. From the creation of man in the very beginning, God planned for authority and dominion to be released with words. Everything He spoke was with authority. God made man in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26,27).

Hebrews 11:3 says, **"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God...."** God spoke, "Light, be," and light was. It was the original Word Explosion! Hallelujah! It wasn't a chance bang in the atmosphere. A well-ordered, well-planned bang was released when God's Word was spoken.

We aren't going to create another universe, but from our lips we can speak the very promises and blessings that God has put in His Word. When you begin to pray, "Lord, your will be done in my life on earth as it is in heaven," the will of God will be done in your life.

When you pray, "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which grows brighter and brighter," every bit of darkness has to move out of your pathway.

As you begin to say, "I am healed by the stripes of Jesus. Sickness and disease depart from me," the power of God's Word is released. Sickness is shattered, darkness goes, and you will walk in health, in Jesus' name. As you command weariness and oppression to leave your life, you will be flooded with God's strength.

Begin to pray the Word over your children: "*You are anointed. You are blessed. You will serve the Lord all the days of your life.*" Don't let a negative word come out of your mouth toward your children. If you have spoken negative words, repent and speak God's Word over them.

Continue to pray the Word: "*All of my children are taught of the Lord. They are far from oppression. Fear will not come near them. The seed of the righteous is delivered. No iniquity, uncleanness, rebellion, defilement, or perversion can come into my children, in Jesus' name.*"

The power of the laws of faith that God gave in His Word was meant to be applied to everything that our hands touch. We were meant to walk in dominion like Adam and Eve did in the beginning, not to rule with arrogance and oppression, but to rule with the love of God.

What comes out of your mouth in prayer and confession will set the course of your destiny.

In John 14:12-14, Jesus said:

"He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

This is the day and the hour for God's people to do great exploits because we are in covenant relationship with Him—speaking His Word, praying His Word and obeying His Word.

FINISHING YOUR RACE - WITH PRAYER

Hebrews 12:1 tells us, ***"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"***. God has given you a race to run. That race is your divine purpose. One of the keys to finishing your race is to make prayer a daily part of your life.

Jesus prayed a powerful prayer before His betrayal and crucifixion. It is a great example for us to follow. Jesus revealed to His disciples that He was going to leave and send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus briefly explained the function of the Holy Spirit to the disciples:

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."
John 14:26

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..."

"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you..."

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation;"

but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:7,8,13,14,33

Thank God we can have peace even in the midst of the trials and trouble we have today. We think we're in a troubled time now. Imagine how the disciples must have felt when their Savior was rejected, criticized, ridiculed, crucified and buried.

Jesus said there would be peace for His children in the midst of the tribulation and trials that are in the world. We do not deny that there are tribulations and trials, but we do deny the right of the tribulations and trials of the world to be in us!

Jesus was saying, "As you go into the world, people will reject you and fight against you like they fought against Me. There will be obstacles you will face as you preach the gospel to the world. If they rejected Me, they will reject you, but I have given you My Word and My Spirit."

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You." John 17:1

Jesus asked that the Father be glorified through His life. I believe that's still a valid prayer. By faith, as we identify with Jesus' suffering and consider ourselves dead to sin and receive His resurrection power in us, we can pray, "Father, glorify Yourself in us, and our lives will glorify You."

"As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:2,3

Eternal life is a very tangible thing. It is the personal, intimate knowing of the Father and of His Son, Jesus Christ. That's why we ask people, "Do you really know Jesus?" The word know in the Greek is not like you would know someone whose name is in the paper or

like a political candidate, but it's like the knowing that exists between a husband and wife.

Jesus said:

"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." John 17:4

Paul prayed a similar prayer:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7,8

God has something for each of us to do on the earth. Jesus received His instructions in prayer, and we are to follow His example. The Father imparted into His Son's heart the full vision of all that He was to do on the earth in a time of communion and fellowship. As we run on a track of daily prayer God will show us the things we are to do, too.

"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word." John 17:5,6

Our primary goal in life should be to manifest the name of Jesus and the Word of God to the people in this earth. To manifest means "to bring forth, to demonstrate, to give out." We should pray, "Lord, help us to manifest Your name in the earth."

"Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You." John 17:7

Jesus goes back to something that happened throughout His ministry: He gave the Father credit for what He was saying and for

what He was doing. Similarly, we should give God the glory for the things we say and do for His Kingdom.

"For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours." John 17:8,9

We are to pray for the people that God gives us to win to Christ. It is our calling to pray for them. We should pray for their eyes to be opened, their ears to be receptive, their minds to be understanding and their hearts to receive the truth. We should pray that the power of the devil be removed from them and the power of God be loosed upon them, so the Lord can work on their will to choose Him and refuse evil.

"And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are." John 17:10,11

To keep means "to guard and protect." Jesus said to keep them "that they may be one as We are. " This should be one of our prayers: "Lord, let there be unity in the Body of Christ. Let there be a joining, a linking, a brotherhood. Let there be a flowing together as one in the Body of Christ, just as You and the Father are one."

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." John 17:12

Jesus was saying, "Father, You gave Me all of them except one, Judas. He is the son of perdition, and he is lost, but all of the others I have kept that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

"But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in

themselves. "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." John 17:13-15

One of the prayers we should pray is, "Lord, deliver and keep me, my family and all of your people from evil. Help us to remain fruitful while we are in this world but keep the evil that's in the world out of each of us."

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:16,17

How are people going to be cleansed and sanctified? Are we going to beat, malign, and condemn people to get the sin out of them? Blast it out of them? Squeeze them? Jerk them through a knothole? I've heard all of those things, but there is only one way to be sanctified. and it is through the washing of the water of God's Word.

If hard times could sanctify us, people in certain parts of the world would be sanctified. If pressure, obstacles, disasters and calamities could sanctify people, then the people who have the hardest life would be the sweetest and holiest people of all. But that logic just doesn't fit! Hard times won't necessarily produce sanctification. If a person doesn't pray or get into God's Word, they will become harder with the hard times. It is the Spirit of God Who has to work in our hearts. Our wills have to open up to receive God's truth.

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world," John 17:18

As Jesus was sent, we are-sent. Jesus was sent to destroy the works of the devil. He was sent to seek and to save that which was lost. You and I have been sent into the world for these same reasons.

We have been sent to preach the Good News of the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives (those bound by Satan and his works), recovery of sight to the blind (both naturally and spiritually) and to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18). We are Jesus' hands extended, His voice speaking and His life flowing in the earth.

The foundation of our mission is **PRAYER**! Let's begin today to PRAY BY THE RULES. Use the principles taught in this book so your prayers will be effective and fruitful. When you have consistent life of prayer you will be thrust into the center of the divine assignment God has for your life—and you will finish the race God has for your life!

CLOSING EXORTATION

Let me close with the following exhortation from one of history's greatest students of revival, Leonard Ravenhill. It has been an inspiration and influence in my prayer life for years, and I hope this quote of his will stimulate your commitment to prayer.

"The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding.

People who are not praying are playing. Two prerequisites of dynamic Christian living are vision and passion. Both of these are generated by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to a few. The ministry of praying is open to every child of God. ...

Tithes may build the church, but tears will give it life. That is the difference between the modern church and the early church. Our emphasis is on paying, theirs was on praying.

When we have paid, the place is taken. When they had prayed, the place was shaken (Acts4:31)."

I challenge you to make a new commitment to prayer and to keep it fresh. Christianity is not about religion is about relationship and at the heart of our relationship with God is prayer.

So, lets pray together in faith as a united church and watch what God will do!

Be blessed,

Pastor Bruce

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learning how to pray

"Praying with all kinds of prayer" (Ephesians 6:18)

There are different kinds of prayer in the Bible and each kind of prayer has certain rules.

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- > How to get your prayers answered
- > and much more

"At that time, you will call out for Me, and I will hear. You will pray, and I will listen."
Jeremiah 29:12

Bruce R. Edwards