

PRAYER

All Prayer Makes All Things Possible

CHARLES MWEWA

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DEDICATION

To

Rev. Dennis Williams

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FOREWORD

Prayer is a weapon that has great power and effectiveness. It is a weapon that can change people, situations, circumstances, the course of history and climatic conditions. Joshua prayed and the sun stood still. Elijah prayed and it did not rain for three and a half years. Prayer can do anything that God can do. Every problem in your life is an opportunity for you to engage in prayer.

This book is aimed at opening your eyes and enriching you in the art of prayer. In this book Charles is sharing personal experiences as well as a wealth of study in the rudiments of prayer. Having established an effective team of intercessors and a School of Intercession at Bread of Life Church International, over a prolonged period Charles shares the burden of his heart to see prayer take the center stage in the Church of Jesus Christ. Jesus in rebuking the money changers said of the temple that it was a house of prayer not a den of robbers.

The Church needs to rediscover once again the power of prayer in order to change this morally bankrupt and decaying world. Revival has often come as a result of prevailing prayer. This book is not an ordinary textbook on prayer, it is a how-to-do-it manual. It is birthed in a spirit of prayer. As you read it, you will certainly be motivated and inspired to pray. If you already pray, your prayer life will take on a new dimension.

I attribute our amazing growth at Bread of Life Church International from a congregation of 150 to 11,000 in the first twelve years to prayer. Prayer has been the driving engine of Bread of Life Church International. In addition, we experienced numerous victories such as financial breakthroughs, acquiring of land, expansion of branches, etc., largely due to prayer.

My prayer is that, *PRAYER: All Prayer Makes All Things Possible* will be used as a great instrument of God in the lives and hearts of multitudes in our time. May you catch the spirit of prayer as you read this book and be a winner in the journey of life.

Joe Imakando
Bishop
Bread of Life Church International, Zambia

1 | GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered.”
(George Meredith, 1828-1909)

Importance of Prayer

Prayer is very important. Prayer cannot be replaced by anything. Prayer is a rite of all major religions. It is appreciated even by those who do not practice it on a regular basis. In an individual Christian’s life, prayer is the breath that connects the mortals to the Immortal God. In the Church, prayer is the engine that drives the Kingdom machine.

Prayer is not an option, and neither is it second in importance, but prayer is the means and the end. It is a must because it is a winning proposition. The Church has been called to pray. Believers have been called to pray without stopping. Jesus Christ, the Lord of Prayer Himself, prayed. Old Testament heroes of faith, prayed. The persecuted Church prayed. Christian martyrs died while praying. Contemporary believers in Christ Jesus do pray.

Prayer must be the basic lesson in every church. Before people know even how to read the Bible they must first know how to pray. We all breathe and talk first before we learn other life skills. When we pray, we begin to know our God; we start to become like Him. Powerful individuals and churches are defined by their prayer lives. The deeper we go in prayer, the more powerful we become and, eventually, the more god-like.

The Church was erected upon the foundation of prayer. Immediately Christ ascended to heaven and just before the Holy Spirit descended on earth, the disciples regrouped and constantly prayed: “They all joined together constantly in *prayer*, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”¹

Jesus Prayed

Since the Church was founded upon prayer, it becomes imperative that the Church should pray. Jesus is the foremost prayer Master and He is also God! At His great moments of life Jesus prayed. He prayed at His baptism,² at the election of the Apostles,³ and when performing miracles.⁴ Jesus also prayed

¹ Acts 1:14, NIV (emphasis added).

² Luke 3:21

³ Luke 6:12, 13

⁴ Luke 9:16, John 6:23 and Mark 7:34

at the transfiguration,⁵ in the Garden of Gethsemane,⁶ against the devil's wishes⁷ and at His crucifixion.⁸

Moreover, we do not only see Jesus praying for Himself, but we see Him interceding for others as well. For example, we see Him interceding for His disciples,⁹ for Simon Peter¹⁰ and for the soldier at the cross.¹¹

Jesus does not only pray for Himself and others, but we find Him teaching the fundamental truths of prayer. Jesus teaches that prayer must be made in earnestness.¹² He also teaches that it must be done with humility,¹³ with a forgiving spirit,¹⁴ in privacy,¹⁵ without *battalogy* or repetitions,¹⁶ with faith¹⁷ and in agreement when two or more people are praying.¹⁸ Jesus' disciples who also became the first Christians,¹⁹ perpetuated the lifestyle of prayer even after the ascension of their Master. They prayed in connection with the laying on of hands for healings,²⁰ after baptism²¹ and on appointment to office,²² with which also prayerful-lot-casting was associated.²³

Transcendental Nature of Prayer

Gender in the Church is balanced as it regards to prayer. Both sexes are encouraged to pray²⁴ and this is usually accompanied by the gift of tongues.²⁵ And we find a stable state of prayer in the Apostolic Church. Paul appeals to the church, which Timothy pastored, to pray not only for all men but for those in authority as well. According to Paul, prayerlessness is responsible for violence and turmoil and it disrupts peace and order.²⁶

⁵ Luke 9:29

⁶ Luke 22:29-46

⁷ Luke 22:32

⁸ Mathew 27:46, Luke 23:46

⁹ John 17

¹⁰ Luke 22:32, *supra*.

¹¹ Luke 23:32

¹² Luke 11:5-13 and 18:1-8

¹³ Luke 18:9-14

¹⁴ Mark 11:25

¹⁵ Luke 6:12, Mathew 6:6

¹⁶ Mathew 6:7

¹⁷ Mark 11:23

¹⁸ Mathew 18:19-20

¹⁹ Acts 11:26

²⁰ Acts 28:8

²¹ Acts 8:14-17, 19:6

²² Acts 6:6, 13:3

²³ Acts 1:24-26

²⁴ 1 Timothy 5:5 and 1 Corinthians. 11:4, 5

²⁵ 1 Corinthians. 14:14

²⁶ 1 Timothy 2:1-3

Sickness was particularly tackled with prayer. James urges the Church to pray for the sick.²⁷ He emphasizes that prayer must accompany the anointing oil in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He continues and offers that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerful. Fervency here means to pray with purpose and serious intention; it literally means to burn with the desire to pray. Alluding to an Old Testament prophet, James illustrates that Elijah was just like us, also subjected to like passions as we are, but he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it did not rain, and after three years and six months, he prayed again, and it rained.

In the Bible, we are also told that prayer transcends the natural. Reason and human ingenuity are far below the reach of the Almighty God. Paul reveals that the Holy Spirit aids us in prayer.²⁸ Although many times, we pray, we do not measure up to God's standard, so the Holy Spirit takes it upon Himself and intercedes for us to the Father with groans too hard for words.²⁹

From the foregone, it is evident that prayer played a central stage in both the time of Jesus and during the Early Church. Not much stress has been placed on the Old Testament in the introduction because it will be discussed in Chapter 1 on "Prayer Surveys."

Prayer Metaphors

Prayer, where can it be likened? This author, usually, develops stinging headaches whenever he works for prolonged periods of time non-stop. He is always impressed by the power of painkillers. Each time he takes one – whether a Panadol, a Tylenol or an Advil – the result is instant – total relief and restoration. For him, painkillers work, and he does not need divine examination or medical or scientific experimentation to prove it.

Prayer is like a painkiller. It relieves us from distress the same way a painkiller such as Advil, Tylenol or Panadol does to our headaches or various bodily and muscular aches. Prayer is our souls' painkiller. The Psalmist declares, "Hear me when I call, O God my righteousness. You have relieved me in my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer."³⁰

Prayer is another thing that works in a similar way as a pill does. We can compare prayer to a tiny pill, but for divine reasons. Prayer is a loaded pill with perfect solutions to every spiritual or emotional problem or challenge. Prayer is a necessary part of Church business. And, indeed, it is.

²⁷ James 5:13-16

²⁸ Rom. 8:14:16

²⁹ Rom. 8:26-27

³⁰ Psalm 4:1

Limitations on Prayer

In the depth of our hearts, we all know that prayer works. However, two things seem to limit us: Doubt and duty. When we doubt that God will not answer our prayer, we become discouraged and demoralized. We lose the passion to pray and instead, we concentrate all our efforts on achieving our earthly goals in a temporal way. This is not, necessarily, wrong; but it hinders divine intervention.

For majority of church workers, doubt is not an issue in prayer, and in life. The hindrance seems to be duty. It is not right to make prayer a duty that we must do. When we make prayer a duty or a job that we must do, we lose the very essence of prayer and begin to drag and labor in the flesh.

As a duty, prayer becomes a mechanical exercise – a business proposition of some sort. It even becomes more disturbing when, for some reason, answers to prayer seem to be impossible dreams or an excuse that, “Miracles have ceased to happen.” Miracles do happen, including the miracle of answered prayer.

Definite Applauses

In every church setting, there are two types of applauses. The first is an applause of faith. This happens as a matter of fact, when God does something incredible in our midst and we lift our voices in adoration to Him, and reaffirm it with an amen (*amen* in Hebrew, meaning “so be it”).

The second, is an applause of doubt; when, against our wildest expectations, God does something we knew He could do, but we did not believe He would do. And the reason for this is simply because we look in all wrong places for the hand of God.

The story of Elijah comes to mind.³¹ It is neither through thunder nor strong wind that Jehovah God accomplishes great things in our midst. Anyone in the world can access God through a simple act of prayer. It is not by lightning or whirlwind. *God is found in a simple whisper of prayer.*³² God has pegged a very low threshold for faith in prayer. He does not demand that we possess an earth-shaking, mountain-moving faith.³³ All God wants is for us to believe simply. He wants us to believe that when we pray, He will answer, and surely, He will.

When the prophets of Baal and Asherah were put to a challenge as regard to God’s answer to prayers, Elijah demonstrated that the mighty hand of

³¹ “And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind” (I Kings 19:9-11; see also I Kings 18).

³² See Nehemiah 2:4 and 5

³³ See Chapter 30

God's power does not come through many sacrifices and human effort. For so they called upon their gods the entire day and nothing happened to their sacrifice. But when the servant of the Holy God called upon the name of his God, in seconds, God's power came down to consume the sacrifice.³⁴ What was the difference in this instance? It was Elijah's simple faith in his God. The God of Elijah answered simple prayer. So did the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. So does our God.

God answers through heeding to the voice of the prayers of His people. It could be a faint voice, but one of sincere faith. It could be a mere whisper but packed with belief in the God who does the impossible.

The world's number one enemy of answers to prayer is doubt. And prayerlessness emanates from doubt. When one doubts, no matter how much noise they make or how high they may vocalize or physically throw up histrionics, God will not answer their prayers. *God honors faith; faith brings forth the results of prayer made without doubt.*³⁵

When we come to the throne of grace in prayer, we already have a 100 percent chance to have everything we have desired of God in prayer. However, what will determine how much we get is our faith in the God who answers prayer. A sense of awe and neediness draws us to God in prayer. By definition, prayer itself is addressed from weakness to strength, from need to plentiful. Prayer, it is a solemn request for help as it is God desiring to have a relationship with us. The fundamental attitude when we pray is that God is Almighty, and He will perform that which we entreat and ask of Him.

Thinking Thanksgiving

Prayer is an expression of thanks addressed to God whom we worship with a clear conscience.³⁶ It is important to distinguish between prayer as a religious celebration of God's presence and prayer as an attitude of our hearts and minds towards God. In the former, we perform a religious service, a duty, usually, regularly and communally. When this happens, we are performing a general and congregational liturgy for general requests and blessings. This may or may not be intercessory in nature.³⁷ However, in the later, prayer is an earnest hope or wish that God would do a specific thing for individuals. In other words, *it makes prayer a personal relationship with God.*

³⁴ See 1 Kings 18:38

³⁵ See Hebrews 11:1 and 6

³⁶ See 2 Timothy 1:3

³⁷ Intercession is a kind of prayer where requests are made for someone or something else other than oneself.

Divine Dialogue

In prayer, whether general or specific, for others or for ourselves, we do many things. First, we *communicate*. Prayer is the act of communicating with God. A two-way communication platform must ensue between God and us. This communication may be in form of a *petition, adoration, contrition* or *thanksgiving*. Our petitions must be reverent; our entreaties, earnest and urgent; and our requests, fervent and purposeful. Because prayer is communication, the challenge to activate a volitional connection to God is on us. We must believe that He is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.³⁸

When we believe, we can practice our communicating with God and become comfortable with Him. Thus, prayer is an active and effective communication with God in order to offer praise, make a request, seek guidance, confess sins, or simply to express our thoughts and emotions to Him. It is neither a mysterious practice reserved for the clergy nor a mystical wand designed for the religiously devout. It is simply communication, with God. And this involves an exchange of views, ideas and feelings — listening and talking to God. It is not a *soliloquy* or an organized religious self-talk.

Second, we must *practice* prayer. In this regard, prayer is designed to be learned as an art and to be internalized as a habit at the same time. The end results of prayer, such as to solicit help from God, to talk to God for any reason, and to express our inner feelings before Him, are well established. However, the means to those ends must be deliberately cultivated through practice and habit. The injunction, “Pray without ceasing,”³⁹ captures this motif. *Prayer is powerful; it affects reality.*

Third, prayer is establishing and maintaining a *relationship of love and care with God*. It involves talking to, and with, God sincerely from one’s heart like one would talk to someone they love and trust. In prayer, we call upon God, and He is expected to answer. God challenges us to, “Call upon me, and I will answer you.”⁴⁰ In so doing, we are guided by the belief that God graces us with His presence. Because we know He is there,⁴¹ we are inclined to *learning and practicing His presence in prayer*. Prayer is, thus, the *practice of the presence of God*.

Prayer and presence constitute a place where pride is abandoned, hope is lifted, and supplication is made. Prayer is the place of admitting to our need, of adopting humility, and of claiming dependence upon God. Prayer is the needful practice of the Christian. Prayer is the exercise of faith and hope. Prayer is the privilege of touching the heart of the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is God talking to Himself — through us. Prayer,

³⁸ Hebrews 11:6, *supra*.

³⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:17

⁴⁰ Jeremiah 33:3

⁴¹ Or Jehovah Shammah

true prayer, is *spending time* with the source of time and power, Jesus Christ. It is being in *a loving relationship with God*.

The most remarkable aspect of prayer is that, like a medicinal pill, prayer has power to make whole. From our descriptions of prayer above, it might look like a contradiction that prayer is *reactive*, rather than *proactive*. Although we take pills in reaction to our medical state of affairs, with prayer, however, we may pray both as a reaction, and also as a commitment to God. Either way, prayer works, and has tremendous power.

Attention to prayer ought to be sought if we are to encounter the presence of God. Herein lies the world's greatest misconception about God and prayer. God is *omni-everything* – His presence is everywhere; His power is awesome, and he can live in everything and for eternity and to infinity. However, God relates to us within our humanity – He can listen to us and hear our prayers. He can choose to answer or delay to provide the answer. But whatever He does, He is aware that we prayed.

This does not mean that God is deficient in His power. God is a Father; He cares for His children. We ought to show a commitment to a relationship in our encounters with God and with prayer. We ought to beseech Him, to listen, to hear and act. Thus, Nehemiah prayed, “Please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before you now...”⁴² However, unlike Nehemiah, we are not simply God's servants; we are His children: “Yet, to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”⁴³ And still, “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? So, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.”⁴⁴

This manner of love is mind-boggling. If God can give us Himself (or the Holy Spirit), is there anything He cannot give us? Apostle John responds, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”⁴⁵

Not only did the Father give us the Holy Spirit, but He also gave us His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”⁴⁶ God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father gave us all He had – both the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ The

⁴² Nehemiah 1:6

⁴³ John 1:12

⁴⁴ Luke 11:11-13

⁴⁵ 1 John 3:1

⁴⁶ Romans 8:32

⁴⁷ Also known as the Holy Trinity.

Father has nothing remaining but us. This is fundamental to prayer: There is nothing God cannot give to us.

While it is noted that God can give us anything, He, however, has established precepts that govern that reception. Prayer reception is with God, just as giving is with Him. It is our job to pray. It is God's job to answer. In other words, we have a divine right to pray, and God has a divine obligation to answer our prayers.

God is always ready to receive our prayers. Indeed, "The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer."⁴⁸ Throughout the Scripture, old and new, it is an established principle that *unless we pray, God will not answer*. In principle, God has given us everything, in reality, though, we need to pray to access or receive everything.

Centrality of the Heart

The road to successful prayer is through our hearts. We do not pray because we need to, or we want to, or we have to, but the prayer of the heart happens when we pray with conviction, and genuine intimacy. It is not about the quantity, but the quality of our hearts. When prayer becomes of the heart, we can pray effortlessly, and even for those who offend and demonize us. The heart must be fond of the presence of God; it must desire daily to be God's resting place.

David prayed, "But as for me, when [my enemies] were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; and my prayer would return to my own heart."⁴⁹ And God also testifies about David, namely, "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do."⁵⁰ This genuine, simple, childlike affection for God, is what made David win God's heart. His relationship was one of heart to heart. Despite his flaws and shortcomings, David's heart was sold to the Lord. He loved the Lord. "I love you, LORD, my strength,"⁵¹ David sang.

When we are weak, then we are strong,⁵² because that is when we need God and prayer the most. We are not *afraid of God*; we have the *fear of God*. The former is dictatorial and is based on false loyalty, but the latter is true loyalty and is based on love. God is not a fearful presence; He is a delightful essence. If we hate evil as God does, then we have the fear of God. The fear of God is an overpass to God's heart and God's presence. Eliphaz confirms, "You cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God."⁵³

⁴⁸ Psalm 6:9

⁴⁹ Psalm 35:13

⁵⁰ Acts 13:22

⁵¹ Psalm 18:1

⁵² See 2 Corinthians 12:10

⁵³ Job 15:4

The Joy of Joys

Prayer to God is our joy. Prayer is what we do in our every-day life. We may call it judicial petition, legal brief, artist's portfolio, investor's prospectus, political manifesto or referendum, or an invitation to treat, but all we are doing is praying. In all these other cases, we are praying to human beings, our bosses and betters. We are asking them for requests, favors or instructions. We are petitioning or supplicating for useful needs and wants. However, the highest joy in life comes when we come before our Living God, and there stand before the Creator of Life, and there we ask Him for what we truly need.

Indeed, when our earthly masters and leaders answer us, we get answers to requests, fulfill our goals, and achieve our objectives. When God answers us, should we not be even more pleased? Thus, we are commended, and that for our own good, "You will make your prayer to [God], he will hear you..."⁵⁴

Every tribe, caste, race, profession, trade or persuasion, has a language. Prayer, is the language of heaven. As it is said, prayer allows us to acclimatize to the rhythm of heaven, to the sounds of glory. Prayer is what angels do, what the 24 elders in heaven crave, and we will be doing in eternity. Thus, David again reminds, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with you, a sojourner, as all my fathers were."⁵⁵ When we pray, we are simply exercising in our heavenly language.

This Book and the Power of Grace

This book is both on the theory and practice of prayer. It has been birthed from a track record of lectures and practices the author has personally engaged in in the space of close to 30 years. The author's personal encounter with the God of prayer began in 1993, about two years after his conversion. It was at Hillcrest Technical Secondary School where he attended his high school in Livingstone City, Zambia.

Bowing down on the altar expecting a visiting U.S preacher to lay hands on him, even before the preacher approached, he suddenly felt and sensed the presence of God Himself. In a gentle small voice, the Divine whispered: "Each time you bow on the altar to pray, I will hear you." Game changer. At that altar, one might say, he received a unique anointing for prayer.

Then came 1994, he had just completed his Grade 12 and about to trot out of Livingstone in pursuit of the future, there came one who would be his

⁵⁴ Job 22:27

⁵⁵ Psalm 39:12

first true spiritual mentor, Pastor Dennis Williams of Gospel Promotion Ministries (GPM). “Charles, I sense that the Lord wants you here, with me.” The rest, as they say, is history. The two years he spend with Rev. Williams in Livingstone would define his ministry, both as a teacher and prayer warrior. Seconded to Sianga, one of the first Zambians to specialize in disabilities and to teach them skills in college, the author would find at Sianga’s a sanctuary for uninterrupted prayer. There, at Sianga’s, the author met the God of spiritual warfare. There, he was schooled by God Himself in the School of Prayer. It was there, too, that he fought the Prince of Southern Zambia called *Nyami-nyami*.⁵⁶

In 1997, with encouragement from Bishop Joe Imakando of Bread of Life Church International (BLCI),⁵⁷ they founded, “The School of Intercession” at Bread of Life Church International, Lusaka, Zambia, where this author once served as the head of the Ministry of Intercession from 1997 until the late 2003.⁵⁸ Through this school, intercessors with hands-on prayer skills were trained. Most of them have either been integrated into BLCI’s pastorate or have been called by the Lord to begin their own ministries elsewhere.

The principles found in this book are universal. In 1998, again in the company of Bishop Imakando, the author attended a conference on prayer, intercession, spiritual warfare and evangelism in the Guatemalan village of Almolonga. One hundred and twelve countries gathered on this Central American nation to strategize and pray for the world. While at this conference, the author realized that the spiritual expectations of different nations of the world were the same. Prayer was that divine tool that worked everywhere. It was even more; it was as powerful in heaven as it was on earth. At Guatemala, the author met such giants of prayer as John Osteen, Peter Wagner, Morris Cerullo, and others.

All the mentioned and unmentioned generals of prayer believed in the power of prayer to change nations. Our Lord Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven interceding for us. It is from this perspective that the author believes that wherever the principles of this book will be used, they will achieve the same divine results as it is in heaven.

The power of prayer cannot be over-emphasized. Prayer connects us to the dynamic force of God’s creativity. We are just humans when we walk but get connected to the divine God when we pray. We are just natural when we talk but become supernatural when we pray. Prayer creates a spiritual link to the throne-room of heaven. Through this grace, we become transformed and reach to Him who is the Supreme Being. And at His feet, anything is absolutely possible. When we come into His presence like this, we are

⁵⁶ See Chapter 45 under “Territorial Angels.”

⁵⁷ Read Bishop Imakando’s comments in the Foreword

⁵⁸ This author had been Bishop Imakando’s personal prayer partner since 1997, and he has never stopped praying for him since.

invincible. No longer do we tremble at the dictates of the world system or the machinations of the evil power, but we become absolutely convinced that He that is the greatest is with, and hears, us.

In his long experiences with prayer, the author has come to one conclusion: That God answers prayer. If he were asked to choose between prayer and human effort, he would easily choose the former. He can safely say that all the prayers he has ever prayed, God has heard and answered them. He knows how difficult it is for some people to accept this fact and yet it is as true. He did not, however, discover this truth from sheer adventure or presumption, but from a consistent life of prayer that has characterized his private life.

When the author moved to Canada in 2004, he did not cease from a life of prayer. Prayer has defined his lifestyle in the West, just as it did in Africa. God has continued to answer his prayers in the developed country, just as He did in the developing country. What has become norm, is the fact that when he prays, he immediately witnesses God's hand and experiences His power.

The biggest change that has happened in life as far as prayer is concerned in the West, is that the author has discovered that prayer is more effective when it is done in the atmosphere of grace than from a sacrificial, Old Testament-style praying. No longer does he pray or teach on prayer or write about prayer from a legalistic point of view; he does so from a grace standpoint.

The next biggest change that has necessitated a richer prayer life for the author is the teaching of law in secular colleges. In Canada, he has taught law in colleges. And the more he taught secular civil and criminal law, the better he understood divine law and grace. He has desired since to wean himself of the vagaries of Mosaic Law, and has devoted himself to the magnificent, liberating embers of grace. He has learned, as a professor of law, that legalism limits, but grace liberates, especially when it comes to prayer.

The trajectory of this book is heavily tilted towards the finished work of Christ Jesus as revealed in the New Testament. The author has neglected to discuss the historic context that brought us this far. That is why in Part VII, he has attempted to reconstruct the tabernacle of Moses, and to illustrate how it set the stage for the gracious redemption brought about by the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Anyone who wishes to be effective in prayer needs not to go through what this author went through or, indeed, to do what the so-called "generals of prayer" have done. This author has variously been called, "prayer machine," "High Priest," and "prayer general," but all these accolades do not suffice. He is a very simple person whose only greatest quality is that he has discovered the need to pray, to approach God in whatever state he may be

and to seek the grace of God. Grace makes him and holds him. Without it, he is nothing.

The Word of God is very clear on prayer: It simply states, “Ask [pray], and it shall be given to you; seek [pray], and ye shall find; knock [pray], and it shall be opened to you.”⁵⁹ This is a recurring motif throughout the Bible. The only problem seems to be the confusion between listening to prayer and talking about it but not practicing it, on one hand, and understanding prayer and doing it, on the other.

This book will teach you how to understand both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors involved in prayer. The result will be a return to confidence in prayer and subsequent answers to prayer. But this author’s biggest desire is that the book will be a manual for prayer ministries in the churches and will help strengthen growth.⁶⁰ Growth in spirit and numbers is partly possible when the church prays earnestly to God. Prayer enables preaching and administration to bear fruit and is fundamental to the maintenance, the stability and freedom of the universal Church.⁶¹ Prayer can do all that God can do. *That is why praying all prayer makes all things possible.*

This author’s insistence that prayer can do all that God can do is the reason why he constantly advocates for making prayer part of a life-style and a strongly established prayer ministry in the church.⁶² Individuals and churches which do not value prayer are misplaced. Usually, ministers will not admit the lack of prayer in their local congregations but the results will tell. And, sometimes, prayer is given such an insignificant place in the local congregation that it is done haphazardly, unplanned and it becomes a privilege only of a few.⁶³ That should not be. Prayer must be integrated into the entire aspect of church-life. It must be taught and practiced. It must be planned and effectively managed.⁶⁴

When prayer is well-planned and managed, only then can it *make all things possible*. Bishop Joe Imakando is, undoubtedly, one of the greatest generals God has raised in our time in Africa. Peter Wagner⁶⁵ was another general this author greatly admired. And Rev. Dr. Peter Youngren is another in Canada who has integrated a prayer course in his Bible college.

During this author’s labor at BLCI, Bishop Imakando allowed a free flow of God’s graces by integrating prayer in all aspects of church life. This resulted in great church growth and the flurries of God’s glorious

⁵⁹ Matthew 7:7, Young’s Literal Translation

⁶⁰ See Chapter 49

⁶¹ See Chapter 16

⁶² See Chapter 51

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Charles Peter Wagner died on October 21st, 2016. He was a theologian and very huge on spiritual warfare. May his soul rest in peace.

manifestations, prominently experienced by attendees and the nation at large. The author is glad that he shared in that freedom and growth and today this book, partly, testifies to that and more. And in Canada when God gave him a vision of “taking God’s influence in the affairs of men,” it was prayer which was his companion.

Divisions of the Book

This book is divided into seven parts: Part I is on the theories of prayer. Part I chapters illustrate both the definitive and principle-aspects of prayer. It comprises eight chapters.

Part II chapters bridge the gap between theory and practice and introduce fundamentals in the philosophies, legality and redemptional themes that make praying and Christian living and success possible. It comprises 8 chapters as well.

Part III introduces different modes of prayer, such as intercession, watching, groaning, weeping, praise, agreement, power, forgiveness, repentance, peace, and mountain moving. Part III has thirteen (13) chapters.

Part IV deals with fasting and has two chapters.

Part V details with spiritual warfare in all its salencies and aspects. It defines spiritual warfare, its levels, and the concept and application of demonology. Diabolical spirits, including water spirits, are discussed in this part. Covenants and curses are also discussed, including exorcism, deliverance and spiritual counselling. Weapons available to believers and the atmospheric zone called the heavenlies are judicially canvassed in order to provide the reader with a wealth of revealed knowledge for spiritual warfare engagement. And a novice area of how tongues may be used as weapons of spiritual warfare is deliberated, and the ministry of angels is discussed in this part. Part V has fourteen (14) chapters.

Part VI moves from the micro to the macro aspect of prayer, and discusses revival, the anointing, church growth, public prayer, the establishment of a prayer department in the church, technology, politics and the universality of prayer. Part VI has eight chapters.

And the last part, Part VII, delves into everything the presence of God. It discusses the construction, composition, symbolism, and the significance of the tabernacle, including the benefits that the presence of God brings. The gist of this part is the unadulterated honor and worship of God. Part VII has six chapters.

Altogether, including the general introduction, this book has 60 chapters and a doxology. At the end of each chapter, except Chapter 1 (the general introduction), is a self-assessment review provided in order to enable you, the reader, to remember and internalize all that you have read. The suggested answers to the multiple-choice and true/false questions, the book’s

bibliography, the verses of Scripture cited and the abbreviations used in this book, are provided in a separate book called *Prayer: All Prayer Makes All Things Possible - Assessment-Answer Book* (ISBN: 978-1-998788-18-7).

Throughout this book, reference to “church” means a local congregation, and “Church,” means the universal Body of Christ. Moreover, reference to “he” will also mean “she” and “men” will also include “women” unless the context provides otherwise. The use of the word “Grace” means the dispensation of grace, and “grace” means the blessing of unmerited favor. Similar, the allusion to “Law” means the dispensation of law, while “law” means general law. Unless otherwise specified, scriptural references will be selected based on the version that provides the most relevancy and suitability. Books of the Bible may be abbreviated or used in their entirety. Generally, US English is used and where necessary, both British and Canadian English may be used.

Benedictions

I have presented to You,
O God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, Abba, my Father,
a document that is truly Yours,
scripture upon scripture,
God’s Word unadulterated,
left alone to speak and counsel.
I am Your mouthpiece,
an instrument,
You can choose to otherwise use or discard,
so that my only wish and prayer is that,
this treatise,
gratefully documented,
gracefully commented,
written with all my might, strength, loves and honors,
be an instrument unto Your glory,
to the honor of that saintly refuge,
our dearest Master, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,
through the gracious joy accorded by the Holy Spirit,
the love offered freely without retribution,
and to You,
the Father, immortal, eternal, invisible, God of gods,
now and forever,
receive this as my humble submission
to Your will and to Your name,

PRAYER

To Jesus and in Jesus' name,
let these depths of research and revelations belong,
Amen.

cm.

PART I

2 | PRAYER SURVEYS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to trace prayer from the Old Testament
- You will learn about how different periods defined and viewed prayer
- You will be introduced to the term “colloquy”
- You will appreciate the first five books of the Bible or the Torah
- You learn about personal supplication
- You will know more about the nature of prophetic blessing and thanksgiving, and
- You will learn about the basic idea of intercession, confessions, adoration and an appeal

Introduction

In this chapter, dubbed Prayer Surveys, we will trace prayer from the Old Testament and ascertain how it was interpreted from period to period. The significance of this chapter is that it will enable us to see the importance of prayer and how that those God dealt with were men and women of prayer. Besides that, this chapter will clarify various prayer modes that were used then, most of which were not explicitly referred to as prayer and yet accomplished the mission of prayer. The men and women in the Old Testament were people of prayer who prayed according to God’s Word, and in line with God’s character, and saw great answers to their prayers. Even though most of them were not filled in the Holy Spirit the way we know today, nor prayed in tongues as we do today, they knew their covenant God and in turn He honored them for believing His Word. As Kempis sagged, they were not idle: “Never be completely idle, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or at some useful work for the common good.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Thomas Kempis, 1380-1471

The Patriarchal Period

The Patriarchal period is the duration of the three patriarchs or fathers. These are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. During this time prayer was colloquy or face-to-face talk with God. In Genesis 15, Abram is visited by God in the vision. The LORD speaks and Abram answers. In verse seven, the LORD speaks again and the conversation continues. In this period prayer is also basically intercessory in nature, Abraham draws near to God and says, “Will you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”⁶⁷ And the intercessions go on and on until the LORD is able to spare the life of Lot. But in this period, prayer is also personal supplication,⁶⁸ stating a matter solemnly⁶⁹ or a vow.⁷⁰

The Law Period

This is the period of the Torah or the five books of Law. They include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Here we refer to the Law as it was codified and expanded. Prayer here was less a general duty than a prophetic privilege especially in reference to intercession such as: “Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don’t return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die.”⁷¹ But prayer was also thanksgiving in nature:

Then you shall declare in the presence of the LORD your God,
“I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all the commandments You have given me. I have not transgressed or forgotten Your commandments. I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while in mourning, or removed any of it while unclean, or offered any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done everything You commanded me.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Genesis 18:23

⁶⁸ See Genesis 43:14

⁶⁹ Gen 14:22

⁷⁰ Gen 28:20

⁷¹ Genesis 20:7

⁷² Deuteronomy 26: 13 and 14

And supplication: “Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey.”⁷³

Moses to Judges

Moses was pre-eminently a man of prayer and an intercessor, “After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh.”⁷⁴ In this period prayer was also a **colloquy** with God, “When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’”⁷⁵ It was an appeal in crises, too, “He asked the Lord, ‘Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me?’”⁷⁶ and a prophetic blessing:

Let Reuben live and not die, nor his men be few. And concerning Judah he said: “O LORD, hear the cry of Judah and bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause, but may You be a help against his foes.” Concerning Levi, he said: “Give Your Thummim to Levi and Your Urim to Your godly one, whom You tested at Massah and contested at the waters of Meribah. He said of his father and mother, ‘I do not consider them.’ He disregarded his brothers and did not know his own sons, for he kept Your word and maintained Your covenant. They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your law to Israel; they will set incense before You and whole burnt offerings on Your altar. Bless his substance, O LORD, and accept the work of his hands. Smash the loins of those who rise against him, and of his foes so they can rise no more.”⁷⁷

Joshua features prominently in this period as he prays after defeat and in battle.⁷⁸ In this period, we also find Gideon’s *colloquy*⁷⁹ and Israel’s frequent cries for help.⁸⁰

⁷³ Deuteronomy 26:15

⁷⁴ Exodus 8:12; also see 30, 32:11, 13

⁷⁵ Exodus 3:4

⁷⁶ Numbers 11:11

⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 33:6-11

⁷⁸ See Jos. 7:7-9, 10:14

⁷⁹ Judges 6:11-24

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:9, 6:6

The Kingdom Period

This was the era of great kings like David, Solomon and Hezekiah and prominent prophets like Samuel and Elijah. Samuel was an intercessor⁸¹ and prayer here was also colloquy.⁸² Most of David's **psalms** are prayers. He consults the ephod,⁸³ he prays on behalf of his child,⁸⁴ he prays a prayer of asseveration,⁸⁵ he prays when he is threatened,⁸⁶ he makes a confession⁸⁷ and he explodes in adoration:

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord God, know Your servant. For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. Therefore, You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God. "Now, O Lord God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said. So, let Your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore, Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You. "And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. Now therefore, let it please You

⁸¹ 1 Sam 7:5-9, 12:23 and 15:11

⁸² 1 Sam 16:1-3

⁸³ 1 Sam 23:3, 4

⁸⁴ 2 Sam 12:16

⁸⁵ 1 Sam 24:12-15

⁸⁶ 1 Sam 25:22

⁸⁷ 2 Sam 24:17

to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”⁸⁸

Solomon’s prayers were first for wisdom,⁸⁹ then an elaborated intercession attributed to him during the dedication of the temple.⁹⁰ Unlike the tabernacle,⁹¹ the temple is the House of Prayer⁹² and not for sacrifices although sacrifice is mentioned.⁹³ Elijah’s prayers include his intercession,⁹⁴ a colloquy,⁹⁵ and a prayer before a miracle⁹⁶ and so does Elisha.⁹⁷ Hezekiah prays in national crises⁹⁸ and for healing during his illness⁹⁹ with the assertion of his righteousness.

The Prophets

Prayer here was intercession in attitude, action and word. The prophet was divinely called and had a vision of divine will and foretold divine messages. Jeremiah prays for the people, “I have heard you,” replied Jeremiah the prophet. ‘I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you.’”¹⁰⁰ Amos prays to avert a disaster:

When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!” So, the LORD relented. “This will not happen,” the LORD said. Then I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!” So, the LORD relented. “This will not happen either,” the Sovereign LORD said.¹⁰¹

⁸⁸ 2 Sam7:18-29

⁸⁹ 1 Kings 3:5ff

⁹⁰ 1 Kings 8:22-53

⁹¹ See the discussion on Tabernacle in Part III

⁹² “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers” (Matthew 21:13)

⁹³ 1 Kings 8:63

⁹⁴ 1 Kings 18:36

⁹⁵ 1 Kings 19:9-11

⁹⁶ 1 Kings 17:20-21

⁹⁷ 2 Kings 4:33 and 6:17

⁹⁸ 2 Kings 19:15

⁹⁹ 2 Kings 20:3

¹⁰⁰ Jeremiah 42:4

¹⁰¹ Amos 7:2, 3, 5-6

Exiles and Returns

In this period prayer looms large owing to the fact that sacrificial worship ceased and there was now a realization of chastisement. Accordingly, confessions and a humble sense of dependence are prominent. We note the personal prayer habits of Jewish leaders like Ezra and Daniel:

And there by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. For I was ashamed to ask the king for an escort of soldiers and horsemen to protect us from our enemies on the road, since we had told him, "The hand of our God is gracious to all who seek Him, but His great anger is against all who forsake Him." So, we *fasted* and *petitioned* our God about this, and He granted our request.¹⁰²

Psalms, Proverbs and Job

Psalms or book of praises may appropriately be called a Book of Prayer. In these Psalms the poet either as an individual or he is representing a nation, pours out varied experiences, needs, desires and impulses. Psalms 51, for example is pardon sought and Psalms 119 is notable for repeated requests for inward enlightenment and quickening. The trend of the whole collection is indicated by its ready and natural adaptation to New Testament ideas of prayer. In Proverbs we can note the suggestive allusion to the character of the supplicant¹⁰³ and Agur's prayer.¹⁰⁴ In Job, Job's objections to his friends' criticisms often take the form of daring expostulations directly addressed to God.¹⁰⁵ Generally, in this period, prayer takes on a more gracious tone, and supplicants, petitioners and intercessors seem to have a freer approach to God than in any other Old testament period.

¹⁰² Ezra 8:21-23; also see Dan. 6 (emphasis added).

¹⁰³ See Proverbs 15:8, 29, 28:9

¹⁰⁴ Proverbs 30:7-9

¹⁰⁵ See Job 10

Précis

In the periods we have just discussed, prayer is viewed from different perspectives and attitudes. We immediately notice that prayer is used as a prophetic tool to accomplish divine assignments. Our fathers stated their matters directly to God and talked to Him face to face. Talking to God face to face is known as *colloquy*. Prayer was also a personal tool for supplication for various needs. They used prayer as a vehicle to thank the LORD for what He did for them. But above all, prayer was intercession in nearly all the periods. It is for this reason that prayer and Intercession are sometimes used interchangeably.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Adoration
- Appeal
- Assertion of his righteousness
- Book of Prayer
- Colloquy
- House of Prayer
- National crisis
- Personal supplication
- Prophetic blessing
- Quickening
- Thanksgiving
- Torah

Multiple-choice Questions

1. What is Colloquy?
 - A. Tete-a-tete
 - B. Face to face talk with God
 - C. Asservation
 - D. Appeal to the divine

2. The prayers contained in the Book of Psalms are both ____
 - A. National and international prayers
 - B. National and personal prayers
 - C. Intimate and social prayers
 - D. Davidic and Asaffic prayers

PRAYER

3. ___ is also known as the Book of Prayers.
 - A. Proverbs
 - B. Psalms
 - C. Ecclesiastes
 - D. Nehemiah

4. The ___ is the House of Prayer.
 - A. Tabernacle
 - B. Temple
 - C. Human body
 - D. Synagogue

5. During the “Moses to Judges” period, prayer was ___
 - A. Appeal and intercession
 - B. Appeal and prophetic blessing
 - C. Colloquy and prophetic blessing
 - D. Colloquy and intercession

True/False Questions

1. The temple is the house of prayer but the tabernacle is a place of sacrifices during the “Kingdom” period T/F

2. During the “Psalms, Proverbs and Job” period, prayer is variously experienced by the supplicants. T/F

3. Solomon’s prayers were first for wisdom during the “Prophets” period. T/F

4. Hezekiah prays in national crises and for healing during his illness. T/F

5. The Torah or the five books of law includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Judges and Deuteronomy. T/F

6. Daniel proclaimed a fast at Ahava Canal. T/F
7. In the Bible, enlightenment and quickening prayers are wildly repeated. T/F
8. Most of David's psalms are praises. T/F
9. Prophets are quintessentially intercessors. T/F
10. The "Patriarchal" period is the duration of the three matriarchs or fathers. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Define colloquy, and provide examples of biblical characters who engaged in such prayers
[500 words or less].
2. Differentiate between "Book of Prayer" and "House of Prayer." How does one impact on the other?
[250 words or less].
3. With scriptural proof, in which period, in your opinion, do we see a freer or a more grace-like approach to prayer?
[250 words or less].

3 | CONCEPTS OF PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to conceptualize prayer; and
- You will learn about the three basic concepts of prayer

Introduction

By concepts of prayer, we mean the key notion or idea about prayer. It is the impression that comes to our mind the moment we hear the word, “Prayer.” Generally, to most people, prayer has a connotation of asking. However, intrinsic in this notion are three basic concepts of prayer, namely, communication, commandment and relationship.

Communication

Man (in the sense of a human being) is a social being. A process of social dynamics, which gives effect to communication, holds society together. Communication is the irrevocable essence of human survival. To communicate, means to impart or transmit such abstract entities as news, heat, emotions, feelings or disease. It is to impart and succeed in conveying information. Communication always involves two or more parties. The sender transmits the message to the recipient. In the process the right medium must be chosen. The medium of communication is as important as the communication itself. There are many types of media of communication, including verbal, non-verbal and implied forms of communication. Within these forms are various types, such as private conversation, letters, public speaking, digital (including emails, texting, videos and so on), music, images, broadcasting, interactive media, social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and so on), virtual and mixed realities. The medium and the message being transmitted are interlinked.

Feedback is indispensable to communication. It may come in form of responses, reactions, comments, reports, estimations or assessments. Any form of communication without feedback is

incomplete. When people communicate, they do just more than corresponded or transmit information, they share the state of their minds as well. That is why feedback to communication is essential.

The concept of communication in prayer is well exemplified in the following Scriptural verse: “*Ask* and it will be given to you; *seek* and you will find; *knock* and the door will be opened to you”¹⁰⁶ These three words – ask, seek, and knock – conceptualize prayer as a communication. While in the following verse, “*Call* to me and I will *answer* you and *tell* you great and unsearchable things you do not know”¹⁰⁷ we find three words – call, answer, and tell – which illustrate the dynamic feedback that ensues between God and human beings.

Commandment

By definition a *commandment* is an order. It is an order given by God. God’s commandments are given out of pure love. They restrict us in order to protect us. In the Bible, especially in Psalms 119, we find several words and phrases related to *law* and *commandment*. A *testimony* is an ordinance, a minimum standard. *Ways* are a pattern of life due to obedience of God’s law. A *precept* is an injunction or a requirement. A precept defines the course of life. *Judgments* are binding laws, which are basically judicial (divine) decisions. The Word of God is the written scriptures from the truth of the Eternal God. Thus, God’s word is a living word and not dead legal system. Statutes in the Bible have a sense of defining a boundary. They are a portion or segment or a ration. They define the knowledge of one’s limits and staying within those limits. Like judicial statutes which have binding force, statutes have God’s endorsing power and they ensure order and divine governance upon the humans.

When we love God, we keep His commandments. By keeping them, we are keeping our own lives as well. God’s commandments are not burdensome or grievous.¹⁰⁸ Prayer is an easy load. By prayer being a commandment, we also mean that it must be done always just as obeying God’s *Decalogue* (Ten Commandments) was to be consistent.

Prayer is even more meaningful now under grace than it was under the Law. We are in the dispensation of grace, because we now have a

¹⁰⁶ Matthew 7:7 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁷ Jeremiah 33:3 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁸ 1 John 5:3

better and sure way in the presence of God: “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain...”¹⁰⁹ Prayer is not a burden but a joy. It is to be enjoyed, “O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.”¹¹⁰ It should be a daily activity, “Pray in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition.”¹¹¹

It must be obeyed. And by doing it we are obeying our God because His gracious commandments are light. “In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.”¹¹² In other words, God’s commandments to us are not too difficult or beyond our reach, “Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.”¹¹³

Prayer is embroiled in our duty to loving God with everything we are and have: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”¹¹⁴ We cannot claim to love God if and when we do not pray. God showed this principle long ago through Amos: “Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”¹¹⁵ God’s intentions are revealed when we seek Him in prayer: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”¹¹⁶

Relationship

A relationship is a loving association between two people. Relationships have underlying ethics. Many of them are based on true love, trust and responsibility. They involve two people who have consciously committed themselves to each other. Relationships are

¹⁰⁹ Hebrews 6:19, English Standard Version (ESV)

¹¹⁰ Psalm 95: 1-2

¹¹¹ Ephesians 6:18

¹¹² 1 John 5:3

¹¹³ Deuteronomy 30:11

¹¹⁴ Matthew 22:37-40

¹¹⁵ Amos 3:7

¹¹⁶ Jeremiah 29:13

backed by invisible rules which need to be observed. Faithfulness at all times is one such rule. Relationships are anchored in intimacy. Consider the following passage of Scriptures:

She [the Church; us] Speaks:

I am merely a rose
from the land of Sharon,
a lily from the valley.

He [God] Speaks:

My darling, when compared
with other young women,
you are a lily among thorns.

She [the Church; us] Speaks:

And you, my love,
are an apple tree
among trees of the forest.
Your shade brought me pleasure;
your fruit was sweet.
You led me to your banquet room
and showered me with love.
Refresh and strengthen me
with raisins and apples.
I am hungry for love!
Put your left hand under my head
and embrace me
with your right arm.¹¹⁷

Notice the choice of words and phrases: “my darling,” “my love,” “a rose,” “hungry for love,” “embrace me,” and the analogies to comfort, sweetness, refreshing and pleasure. This is what propels the relationship to azure heights. Intimacy connects two people to each other, emotionally.

Prayer is also based on a love relationship. Prayer is not pale, dull or empty. Prayer is alive, full of expression and intimate. It must be a love relationship between the participants, and that it should remain.

Notice that it has long been God’s desire to draw humanity closer to Himself in intimate prayer: “The LORD appeared to us in the past,

¹¹⁷ Song of Solomon 2:2-6

saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with loving devotion’”¹¹⁸

And the *Sweet Palmist of Israel*,¹¹⁹ King David, illustrates the love relationship that exists in prayer: “For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: *I love you, LORD, my strength*”¹²⁰

Prayer Answers Perspectives

In the Bible it is written: “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”¹²¹

The difficulty with receiving answers to prayers prayed is that it is as misunderstood as prayer itself is. And there are five issues to consider.

First, it is the differences of locale. God is in Heaven and the humans are on earth. Heaven behaves like heaven and earth like earth. To understand the dual dynamics humans face of being citizens both of heaven, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself,”¹²² and of earth, demands that, in prayer, they also learn the specific expectations of those regimes.

Second. It is the differences in the interpreting of time. For those who believe in God, in heaven, their time is not in their hands, but in God’s: “My times are in Your hands ...”¹²³ On earth, time is linear, and is in the hands of the humans to manage.

Third, there is a difference of order and priority. With God, “one day is like a thousand years,”¹²⁴ while to humans, a day is just twenty-four hours and a year is only 365 days.

¹¹⁸ Jeremiah 31:3, Berean Study Bible (emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ See 2 Samuel 23:1

¹²⁰ Psalm 18:1, NIV (emphasis added).

¹²¹ Isaiah 55:8-9

¹²² Philippians 3:20-21 NKJV

¹²³ Psalm 31:15

¹²⁴ 2 Peter 3:8

Fourth, God sees the future, and the humans do not. And last, faith.

Therefore, these four dynamics – locale, time, order and priority, and vision – impact upon how the humans must understand how God manages prayer. For example, when God instructs us to pray and it shall be given to us,¹²⁵ the implications of time factor in. to the human senses, logic and reason will dictate that the interpretation indicates currency and immediacy. However, to God, that might only indicate complete confidence that what He has promised will come to pass, sometimes without the implications of time considered. When Jesus told a man to “Jesus replied, “Go...your son will live”¹²⁶ it signified a transcendental consideration of the nature of sickness, the inviolability of death and the needs of the interested parties.

When we pray, we must trust, not only that God hears and answers prayer, but that He has our best interest at heart, and by faith, we should know that the way He chooses to answer the prayer is within His Providence, power and wisdom. If we feel like He has delayed or refused or is uncertain in what He does, we should immediately reconsider that we are viewing things only from our limited human perspectives. Even a no answer from God’s perspective, may be just what is in our best interest. Our response in all these is to give God thanks and wait: “In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”¹²⁷ The unimpeachable truth is that God does not neglect any prayer and He hears every prayer and He answers every prayer. Our responsibility is to do two things. First, pray. And second trust Him to exercise His sovereignty in managing our requests. Peace will be the gracious outcome.

Précis

When we talk of prayer, therefore, we have an idea of communication, commandment and relationship. A good definition must embrace all the three. And this we shall see in the next chapter.

¹²⁵ Luke 6:38

¹²⁶ John 4:50

¹²⁷ Philippians 4:6 [American Standard Version]

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Binding laws
- Commandment
- Decalogue
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Judgments
- Judicial (divine) decisions
- Law
- Legal system
- Medium
- Ordinance
- Precept
- Recipient
- Sender
- Statutes
- Testimony
- TikTok
- Twitter
- Word of God

Multiple-choice Questions

1. To most people, prayer is all about ____
 - A. Asking
 - B. Receiving
 - C. Intercession
 - D. Praise

2. All these constitute an intrinsic part of the concept of prayer, except ____
 - A. Communication
 - B. Commandment
 - C. Order
 - D. Relationship

3. All these may constitute communication media forms, except ____
 - A. Verbal
 - B. Applied
 - C. Non-verbal
 - D. Implied

4. Any of these may constitute types of forms of communication, except ____
 - A. Digital
 - B. Letters
 - C. Public speaking
 - D. Shouting

5. Any of these may constitute forms of new media, except ____
 - A. Interactive media
 - B. Zoom
 - C. Social media
 - D. TikTok

PRAYER

6. What is indispensable to communication?
- A. Feedback
 - B. Medium
 - C. Receiving
 - D. Sending

Questions 7 is based on this verse of Scripture: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7).

7. What does the words – ask, seek, and knock – conceptualize in prayer?
- A. Communication
 - B. Commission
 - C. Commandment
 - D. Relationship
8. What does the words “call,” “answer,” and “tell,” illustrate in this verse of Scripture: “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).
- A. Relationship
 - B. Feedback
 - C. Commandment
 - D. Communication
9. The Mosaic Ten Commandments may also be called ____
- A. The Decameter
 - B. The Decalogue
 - C. Colloquy
 - D. Collogue

10. Our personal prayer relationship with God is ____
- A. Intimate
 - B. Casual
 - C. Contractual
 - D. Judicial

True/False Questions

1. A relationship is a loving association between two people.
T/F
2. Relationships are backed by invisible rules which need to be observed. T/F
3. Relationships are anchored in intimacy. T/F
4. Prayer must be pale, dull and empty. T/F
5. Devotion is an aspect of intimacy. T/F
6. Both God and humans see the future. T/F
7. We must not trust that God hears and answers prayer.
T/F
8. God does not have our best interest at heart. T/F
9. God is biased towards those who give money and they are the only ones He hears and answers when they pray.
T/F
10. God may choose to answer prayer or not. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). In relation to this passage, discuss the conception that the medium is the message.

[250 words or less].

2. List and discuss the three basic concepts of prayer.

[500 words or less].

4 | DEFINING PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn how to define prayer, and
- You will be able to apply the knowledge to your own prayer routines

Introduction

Prayer is variedly defined according to the experiences of the one who is defining it. The way one defines prayer has a tremendous effect on the prayer life of that individual or organization. For example, the commonest definition of prayer is that *it is talking to God*. We call such a definition anthropocentric or man-centered.

However, to define prayer as *God talking to humans* is to make it theocentric or God-centered. Both definitions are inadequate. Both definitions lay stress on one character at the expense of the other. Many scholars also define prayer as *the uplifting of the heart to God with whatever motive*. This definition is one-sided and as a result lacks a communicative¹²⁸ component. Prayer is more than just the uplifting of our hearts to God.

Definitions of Prayer

Prayer also can be defined as an *attitude of our hearts, and attitude of our minds towards God that arises out of our helplessness, which causes us to put faith in God*. This definition is rather problematic and critics would term it anthropocentric, too. It lacks a relational¹²⁹ touch and sees our deficiency as the only reason why we should approach God.

Others may define prayer as arising out of humanity's needs, which causes them to seek God. This is a needs-based definition. It lacks a commandment¹³⁰ perspective to prayer. This also creates a one-sided,

¹²⁸ See Chapter 2

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

laissez faire attitude to prayer. Supplicants see prayer as a tool necessary to be utilized only when need arises. People who define prayer this way may be religiously zealous to offer grace before a meal, fervent in conducting bed-time prayers, and would not lay a loved one in the coffin without prayer. At the root of this aspect of definition is fear; it is fear that something bad may happen. It is may not motivated by love.

The Best Definition of Prayer

Some view prayer as a dialogue between two or more persons who love each other. First, this view is neither theocentric nor anthropocentric. Second, it involves dialogue, which is communication, and third, it involves two or more people who love each other, and that is a relationship.

This definition is, therefore, acceptable. However, the place of dialogue is ambiguous. For dialogue can either be effective or poor.

To define prayer more effectively, we have to move beyond those definitions which place ourselves at the center of our own selfish immensity and acknowledge that it is an activity which mentally, emotionally and spiritually engages at least two living beings, otherwise it is only soliloquize self-talk. Putting it simply, prayer must involve two or more living beings who are involved with each other in a verbal or non-verbal exchange. This alludes to the idea of an effective communication.

Moreover, the two beings must also be involved with each other emotionally as well as mentally, which implies a love relationship.

The best definition of prayer recommended in this book is the one which sees *prayer as a regular dialogue between God the Father and His children for different reasons through the name of Jesus Christ.*

This is by far adequate. First, it is neither anthropocentric nor theocentric. Second, it involves a dialogue, which is an aspect of effective communication. Third, it is based on a relationship between Father God and His children. But most importantly, it is done regularly or often, which is connotes a commandment. In this definition is all-encompassing, and implies that the dialogue concerned, is not faulty or ill-conceived.

Christian prayers are not simply stringing of glorious words which are ejected into the atmosphere. Christian believers know that Jesus

Christ is, "...the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me [Jesus Christ]."¹³¹

Précis

Our best and adequate definition of prayer as a regular dialogue between God the Father and His children for different reasons through the name of Jesus Christ, ensures that we are constantly and regularly found in a relational interchange with God. The definition is adequate because it brings all the three concepts of prayer discussed in Chapter 2 together. It is an effective communication between God and humanity; it is an obligation man should do constantly; and for various reasons which could be requests for needs or petition for wants or intercessions for others. It can also be the giving of thanks, the expressions of our hearts in praise and worship, or as declarations of God's promises. A bible-based, Christian prayer must be done in the name of Jesus Christ and should address God as our Father.¹³² We have a relationship with God; He is our Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the way to the Father.

¹³¹ John 14:6 (emphasis added).

¹³² See Matthew 6:9, "The Lord's Prayer."

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Anthropocentric
- Theocentric
- Dialogue
- Definition of prayer
- The Father
- God's children

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The definition of prayer as talking to God is ____
 - A. Anthropocentric
 - B. Theocentric
 - C. One-sided
 - D. Homocentric

2. The definition of prayer as hearing from God is ____
 - A. Anthropocentric
 - B. Theocentric
 - C. One-sided
 - D. Homocentric

Answer questions 3 to 5 using the following prayer below:

Prayer: "Dear heavenly Father, we thank you for this food which you have provided. Together with other benefits that you have bestowed upon us, we ask you to make this food worthy of our health and our praise of you. We believe that you have granted. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

PRAYER

3. A relationship is established by ____
 - A. Reference to heavenly Father
 - B. Reference to food
 - C. reference to health
 - D. Reference to praise

4. A communicative angle is established by ____
 - A. Reference to heavenly Father
 - B. Reference to food
 - C. Reference to health
 - D. None of the above

5. The phrase, “We believe that you have granted,” establishes ____
 - A. A relational trajectory
 - B. Feedback
 - C. A commandment trajectory
 - D. Faith

True/False Questions

1. A soliloquize self-talk is the best definition of prayer.
T/F

2. Prayer is a regular dialogue between God the Father and His children for different reasons through the name of Jesus Christ. T/F

3. Prayer must be based on a relationship between Father God and His children. T/F

4. The way one defines prayer may also be the way one prays.
T/F

5. Defining prayer well does not affect one's prayer life.
T/F

Essay-type Question/s

1. Prayer is a regular dialogue between God the Father and His children for different reasons through the name of Jesus Christ.
- a) In this definition, locate the communication component.
 - b) In this definition, locate the relationship component.
 - c) In this definition, locate the commandment component.

[500 words or less].

5 | ASPECTS OF PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will define aspect of prayer,
- You will be able to recognize each aspect in relation to needs and wants, and
- You will appreciate how praying the right aspects necessitates swift responses from God

Introduction

By aspects of prayer, we mean particular parts or features of prayer. Hence, when we discuss *Aspects of Prayer*, we are looking at prayer from different perspectives. It is important to note that each particular aspect of prayer may be suitable in a particular situation and not the other. The New International Version (NIV) rendering of Ephesian 6:18 in part is: “With all kinds of prayers.” This, essentially, shows that prayer has several aspects to it. Praying a wrong aspect of prayer in a right situation or praying the right aspect of prayer in a wrong situation may yield fruitless results.

The Right Aspect

All caution should be taken that the right aspect of prayer is employed in the right situation, that is in as far as praying with some aspect of order is concerned. However, the New Testament approach to prayer is grace. And that may mean that the state of one’s heart is more important to prayer than are religious observances.

By parity of argument, we shall categorize prayer into four aspects, namely requests, thanksgiving, prayers and intercession based on Ephesians 6:18, which reads in full as: “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”¹³³ The New International Version, renders “supplication” as requests, while the

¹³³ English Standard Version Bible

Berean Study Bible renders it as petition. Supplication and petition both have the notion of asking and so they will naturally fall into the category for requests. And with the exception of a few versions, most begin the verse with “praying...in Spirit.” And this is appropriate because even if the natural person may have challenges attempting to reason whether one word (petition, supplication or request) applies, the Holy Spirit does not have that dilemma, as the Bible says that the Holy Spirit prays for and through us with wordless groans according to the will of God.¹³⁴

Requests

The term request has two meanings. First, it means to ask and, second, it could be the object asked for. Thus, we could have a list of items to be prayed for and call them requests.¹³⁵ There are two categories of requests, namely *supplications* and *petitions*.

The foremost type of requests, and by far the most prayed, is Supplication. Supplications by definition are humble requests made to God. To supplicate, therefore, is to make an entreaty or an earnest request to God. A *suppliant* (or supplicant) is one that supplicates. However, in the “School of Intercession,” we equate supplication to requesting for those things which are *basic to us or needs*. We supplicate for those things which are the direct responsibility of God to supply. For example, one could ask for water, food, shelter, or sleep, a wife or husband, good health, money or a job, by the use of Supplication. These things are basic to us and are *needs*. In Mathew 7:7, Jesus says: “Ask and it shall be given to you.” This is supplication. It is just as simple as that; just ask. And just receive. There is neither knocking nor searching involved here. There is only a simple trust in Father God who has the responsibility of providing.

A petition, on the other hand, though being the same with a supplication in kind, actually differs slightly with it in degree. While both have the idea of asking, in a petition, you are behaving like a lawyer who should provide argument or evidence of the desired *want*. In short, petitions request for *wants*.

The “School of Intercession” makes a distinction between *Wants* and *Needs*. Needs are those things which are very essential and very

¹³⁴ See Romans 8:26-27

¹³⁵ Also known as Items of Prayer.

important to life. In other words, they are things you cannot do without. But Wants are those things we earnestly desire to possess and are urgent rather than important. In many a case, Wants can be done without. So, we petition for things which are not needs.

Most basic needs include shelter, food and clothing. By definition, a petition is a formal request to an authority asking for a favor. This, in essence, means that we need to come with evidence before the supreme authority. The Bible is our evidence. When God does not seem to answer, or He seems to have delayed, we can come with evidence from the examples of similar situations from the Bible and beseech Him to answer.

Prayers

Prayers have an aspect of *begging*. They can mean to beg earnestly and reverently by reaching one's desires to God. They are a solemn request and giving of thanks to God at a certain level. The divine aspect of prayers involves service and worship to God.

David begged God earnestly so that God would not take the life of his child.¹³⁶ We in the New Covenant are much better than David because we do not need to beg God for what He has already provided for in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Jairus begged Jesus for healing.¹³⁷ Several people bowed before Jesus to ask for healing or special favors. Prayers also involve crying to God for help. All manners of *fasting* are in the category of prayers. Fasting is in the category of prayers because it is a sacrifice which requires us to humble ourselves before the LORD in order to seek Him for that which we earnestly desire. Fasting is the cry of our souls for something deep from the hand of God. It involves not only one category of prayer, but several in order to achieve the intended goal.

Intercession

Most people define intercession as *standing in the gap*. This is mostly drawn from Ezekiel:

¹³⁶ See 2 Sam 12:15-23

¹³⁷ Mark 5:22-24

The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy and have exploited the foreign resident without justice. I searched for a man among them to repair the wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, so that I should not destroy it. But I found no one. So, I have poured out My indignation upon them and consumed them with the fire of My fury. I have brought their ways down upon their own heads, declares the Lord GOD.¹³⁸

This is correct based on the English concept of intercession which means to *go between*, from ‘inter’ – (between) and ‘cede’ - (to go). The direct meaning is that of a peace-marker or of one pleading for someone to a higher office or an advocate. Biblically, an intercessor is a watchman who alerts others about impending trouble or danger. The Greek and Hebrew words for intercession have a sense of urgency and immediacy and their active application depend on promptings. Promptings are impressions or convictions that alight upon one’s conscience.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving works to express gratitude or to bless. Thanksgiving can be the end in itself such as when the Church declares a service purely to thank the LORD God. There is an interesting account in Nehemiah¹³⁹ in which one called Mattaniah was the Head Teacher or Principal of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving in the olden days played such an important role that an expert was appointed to lead the giving of thanks. We are urged to enter into God’s gates with thanksgiving.¹⁴⁰ Thanksgiving is such an issue in the Bible that it is called a sacrifice.¹⁴¹ In the Bible, we are admonished to abound in thanksgiving.¹⁴² David gave thanksgiving one of the highest priorities during his reign. Among the officials he appointed to minister, record and praise, some of them were to give thanks.¹⁴³ Jesus prayed a prayer of thanksgiving.¹⁴⁴ Paul’s

¹³⁸ Ezekiel 22:29-31

¹³⁹ 11:17

¹⁴⁰ Ps 100:4

¹⁴¹ See Amos 4:5

¹⁴² Col 2:7

¹⁴³ 1 Chr. 16:4

¹⁴⁴ Mt 11:25

favorite prayer was of thanksgiving, in which he is understood to have abounded.¹⁴⁵

Christian believers are urged to give thanks in everything: "...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."¹⁴⁶ It is important to note that the Bible does not implore us to give thanks *for* everything – we would not give thanks for Covid-19 pandemic or for works of the devil, for instance, for that would be blasphemous. However, regardless of the circumstances, we ought to give thanks. In so doing, we are acknowledging that God has power and control over everything.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.¹⁴⁷ We urged not to be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with *thanksgiving*, to present our requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.¹⁴⁸ Our Lord has warned us not to be worried about our lives, what we will eat; or about our bodies, what we will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. We are further called to consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable we are than birds. By worrying, we cannot add a single hour to our lives. Since we cannot do this very little thing, why should we worry about the rest?¹⁴⁹

In Christ, we cannot fear anyone.¹⁵⁰ Because Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the first and the last.¹⁵¹ God is able to console us and to bring tremendous joy to our hearts.¹⁵² God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.¹⁵³ When we are dismayed or are afraid or weak, God will uphold us with His righteous right hand.¹⁵⁴

Note that God has performed and accomplished it all, calling forth the generations from the beginning, reiterating that He is the first, and

¹⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Thess. 1:3 and 1 Timothy 1:12

¹⁴⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:18, NKJV, NASV, New Heart English Bible, and KJV

¹⁴⁷ Psalm 46:1

¹⁴⁸ Philippians 4:6-7

¹⁴⁹ Luke 12:22-26

¹⁵⁰ Psalm 27:1

¹⁵¹ Revelation 1:17

¹⁵² Psalm 94:19

¹⁵³ Psalm 46:1

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah 41:10

the last, and that He is He.¹⁵⁵ And sincerely, let us allow the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, to which indeed we were called in one body; and we should be *thankful*.¹⁵⁶

Principles of Successful Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving should be part of our lives because we are creatures and God is our Creator. To appreciate Him for making us we ought to give Him thanks always. God treasures thanksgiving. After He had created everything God looked at them and said they were very good.¹⁵⁷ We can honestly deduce that one of God's purposes in creating man was so that man could offer Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The Psalmist proclaims: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him."¹⁵⁸ And further, "Offer to God a *sacrifice of thanksgiving*, and perform your vows to the Most-High."¹⁵⁹ And, of course, "I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD."¹⁶⁰

Thanksgiving ensures permanence and continuity. When one says "thank you" from the bottom of one's heart, it becomes a signature that says that what was requested for has been permanently granted.

In the Bible our blessings are protected by thanksgiving. The story of the ten lepers illustrates this point.¹⁶¹ Thanksgiving must be done faithfully, consistently and with understanding. Thanksgiving opens doors for further blessings. When we thank God, or even our fellow men, we are indicating that we are ready for more blessings. In other words, thanksgiving creates room for more to come.

Thanksgiving is the will of God.¹⁶² What do we mean when we say that something is God's will? It simply means that such a thing aligns well with God. It is saying 'yes' to what God is also saying 'yes' to. Thanksgiving is, therefore, in agreement with what God wants.

Lack of thanksgiving is a characteristic of the people of the end days.¹⁶³ Where lack of thanksgiving is placed at the same level as

¹⁵⁵ Isaiah 41:4

¹⁵⁶ Colossians 3:15

¹⁵⁷ Gen 1:31

¹⁵⁸ Psalm 28:7

¹⁵⁹ Psalm 50:14 (emphasis added).

¹⁶⁰ Psalm 116:17

¹⁶¹ See Luke 17:15

¹⁶² 1 Thess. 5:18, *supra*.

¹⁶³ 2 Timothy 3:2

ungodliness, disobedient to parents, blasphemy, pride, and so on. Thanksgiving is, therefore, one of the four *Aspects of Prayer* which is as vital as the other three. And prayer is incomplete without it.

The Philippians 4:6-7 Principle

“Don’t *worry* about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and *thank him* for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will *guard* your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”¹⁶⁴

“Be *careful* about nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall *keep* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”¹⁶⁵

“In nothing be *anxious*, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will *guard* your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus”¹⁶⁶

The principle set in the Philippians 4:6-7 is conceptualized as:

First, that a Christian believer must turn worry (anxiety; depression; stress; distress) into a prayer request to God.

Second, that a declaration of thanksgiving must be invoked even before the apparent answer to the prayer (petition; request) has been confirmed.

Third, that the combination of a request made to God accompanied by thanksgiving, produces divine peace (defined as peace that surpasses all understanding); and

Fourth, that such peace becomes a guard (keeper), which protects two vital life mechanisms: The heart and the mind. Both the heart and the mind are vital to life. The heart is protected heavily by the lungs; the brain (mind) by the cranium. Both are housed under very strong and powerful bones for safety and security. In essence, a wondering mind, and a broken heart become agents for all sorts of ailments, problems and disturbances. God intends that these two be protected

¹⁶⁴ New Living Translation (emphasis added)

¹⁶⁵ King James Bible (emphasis added)

¹⁶⁶ World English Bible (emphasis added)

for a normal life to occur. Worry injures the mind and breaks the heart. Peace, on the other mind, is the remedy for worry, anxiety and depression. When we pray and thank God, we create a protective layer unable to be penetrated by the wiles of the devil.

Thus, “For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We tear down arguments and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”¹⁶⁷We are only able to do as suggested in this Bible verse when our minds and hearts are protected by divine peace.

In summary, every worry must be turned into a prayer request, with thanksgiving to God in order to achieve the necessary peace that guards our minds and hearts into Christ.

Précis

So, there are four aspects of prayer but one. Using one and not the other or using them all as the situation demands will result in successful praying and frequent answers to your prayers. In the next chapter dealing with *Types of Prayer*, it will be shown how the types of prayer are related to the four aspects of prayer.

¹⁶⁷ 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Aspects of prayer
- Begging
- Intercession
- Needs
- Petitions
- Prayers
- Promptings
- Requests
- Sacrifice of thanksgiving
- Suppliant
- Supplicant
- Supplications
- Thanksgiving
- Thanksgiving
- Wants

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Looking at prayer from different perspectives constitutes ____
 - A. Aspects of prayer
 - B. Concept of prayer
 - C. Types of prayer
 - D. None of the above

2. All these have an aspect of request to them, except ____
 - A. Supplication
 - B. Petition
 - C. Asking
 - D. Praise

3. A suppliant seeks for ____
 - A. Mercedes benz
 - B. Ticket to a soccer match
 - C. Food to eat
 - D. A new attire to impress friends

4. A petitioner may seek for all these, except ____
 - A. Mercedes benz
 - B. Ticket to a soccer match
 - C. Food to eat
 - D. A new attire to impress friends

5. “Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. And she made this vow: ‘O Lord of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut’” (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

What aspect of prayer does Hannah pray in this passage?

- A. Petition
- B. Prayers
- C. Intercession
- D. Thanksgiving

True/False Questions

1. Intercession is standing in the gap. T/F
2. An intercessor is a watchman who alerts others about impending trouble or danger. T/F
3. Promptings are impressions or convictions that alight upon one's conscience. T/F
4. Thanksgiving can be the end in itself. T/F
5. Jesus prayed a prayer of thanksgiving. T/F
6. Thanksgiving cannot be a sacrifice. T/F
7. We should only thank God when something good happens to us, not when something bad happens. T/F
8. Thanksgiving ensures permanence and continuity. T/F
9. When we thank God, or even our fellow men, we are indicating that we are ready for more blessings. T/F
10. Lack of thanksgiving is godly. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Conceptualize the Philippians 4:6-7 Principle. Why is turning worry into a request important?

[500 words or less].

6 | TYPES OF PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about types of prayers
- Specifically, you will learn about voiced and meditative prayer
- You will discover the five stages of meditation

Introduction

Bernanos once remarked, “The wish for prayer is a prayer in itself.”¹⁶⁸ As far as Types of Prayer is concerned, we can distinguish two, namely, voiced prayer and meditative prayer. It may surprise you that, in our lifetime, we do the former more than we engage in the later. God listens and answers both. In this chapter, we show how.

Voiced Prayer

This is the type of prayer in which the thoughts of our hearts are spoken out aloud. As we speak and hear our own voice, our concentration is centered and distracting thoughts are minimized. If our faith is still weak and not well-trained, it is best to verbalize our prayers, as then our prayers can reach the Throne of Heaven and prompt God’s answer. Adoration, praise and worship, apart from the four *Aspects of Prayer* we discussed in Chapter Four, are all examples of voiced prayer. But there is a caveat:

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward. But when you pray, go into your inner room, shut your door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you

¹⁶⁸ George Bernanos, 1888-1948

pray, do not babble on like pagans, for they think that by their many words they will be heard.¹⁶⁹

It is important to note that our Lord Jesus Christ took it for granted that God answers prayer, i.e., a reward. However, ambition and proud can muffle the outcome of prayer. In praying in secret and praying in public there are rewards. In the former, the audience is God and He will intervene; in the later, the audience men or humans. If the motive for praying is to be seen and praised by men, that is all the supplicant receives for praying, the praise of men.

In the “School of Intercession,” we proscribe praying in public just for show.¹⁷⁰ Successful and effective praying is the one conducted for the audience of one, God. Vocalized praying is often done for the weakness of people; people’s faith may be weak unless they hear the content of the prayer. However, God does not need our vocalized prayers; He hears us even in the faint whispers of our minds.

God knows our thoughts: “You search out my path and my lying down; You are aware of all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, You know all about it, O LORD.”¹⁷¹ And God wants us to direct those thoughts to Him. The reason why we still need to speak or say our prayers to God, either through vocalized prayer or meditative prayer (see the next section), it because God respects our will. God may know what we want to say, but we control what we say.

Any prayer, voiced or meditative, must meet the test of faith: “...that if you *confess* with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and *believe* in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with your *heart*, you believe and are justified, and with your *mouth* you confess and are saved. It is just as the Scripture says: ‘Anyone who *believes* in Him will never be put to shame.’”¹⁷²

There are two misconceptions that arise from the above passage. First, it is the confusion in the definition of the word confess. Confess or profess is not synonymous to speaking out loud. To confess is to admit or affirm your belief in something. Confession can be through speech, in writing, or through non-verbal gestures. Anyone can confess, and this includes the mute and the deaf. Salvation is not discriminatory.

¹⁶⁹ Matthew 6:5-7

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 50

¹⁷¹ Psalm 139:3-4

¹⁷² Romans 10: 9-11

And second and last, confessing with the mouth does not preclude the use of non-vocal features. The misconception here is that people equate the mouth with sound. Therefore, they may erroneously think that for salvation to occur, one must utilize sound, i.e., the mouth. That would be discriminatory to those people who may not elicit sound through their mouths.

The commonest definition of a mouth is, “the opening in the lower part of the human face, surrounded by the lips, through which food is taken in and from which *speech and other sounds are emitted*.”¹⁷³ “Other sounds,” though not articulable to others, to God, they are as clear as speech. Therefore, every human being can use their mouth to communicate what they have believed in their hearts. In short, confession does not need to be through vocalized words.

Because we can control what we say or vocalize, we can pray in secret. For Christian believers, the default position for prayer must be in secret. When called upon to pray in public, it must be for the purposes of general worship or general intercession. In prayers involving two or more people, *agreement* is vital: “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”¹⁷⁴ The guiding principle for prayers involving more than one person is that the people involved are in agreement, otherwise they should pray individually in private.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”¹⁷⁶

Meditative Prayer

Meditative prayer is offered through our *thoughts*. It can be with open eyes, closed eyes; it can be when sitting, standing, at work or simply relaxing. This type requires much training and discipline or else it can prove to be difficult. This prayer further requires concentrating our thoughts on God and care should be taken that we do not distract them.

¹⁷³ Quizlet, “Digestive System Vocabulary,” <https://quizlet.com/49167640/digestive-system-vocabulary-flash-cards/> (Retrieved: May 22nd, 2020) (emphasis added).

¹⁷⁴ Matthew 18:19

¹⁷⁵ See a comprehensive discussion on the Prayer of Agreement in Chapter 25.

¹⁷⁶ Matthew 6:6, *supra*.

Sumballo is a word in Greek which means to throw together, to confer, to ponder or to put one thing with another on consideration bases. For example, what Mary does, namely, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart,”¹⁷⁷ is appropriate to *Sumballo*.

Five Stages of Meditation

A successful meditation should take at least five distinctive stages, as discussed below:

Preparatory Prayer

This puts us in an atmosphere of approaching God through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the time of confession of sins and preparing of the heart to meet God.

Compositio Loci

This comes from two Latin words *componere*, which means to put together, and *locus* which means at a particular position, point or place. So, the *compositio loci* stage is that time in Meditative Prayer when we concentrate our minds on God. It is fixing our imaginations on God. Our whole person is put on God by faith. Meditative prayer is not a quintessence of the spiritist movements or the new agers, including yoga; meditative prayer happens anywhere where people are disciplined enough to bring their thoughts under control. That can be under the control of one’s will power, of evil spirits or of the Holy Spirit. The principles of concentration work across the board, and they do not discriminate.

Petition

At this stage, as the word suggests, we begin to make our case known before God with our imaginations. At the same time at this stage, we are trying to arrive at an appropriate emotion. That emotion could be joy, love, adoration or anger, repentance, and so forth.

¹⁷⁷ Luke 2:19

Meditation

The *Petition* stage directly leads into the actual meditation. As it is said, one here is “reasoning to understanding.” Much time, much concentration and the use of the power of the mind must all be employed here to accomplish meditation. And God is “...able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or *imagine*, according to his power that is at work within us...”¹⁷⁸ Meditation is the peak of our imagination.

Many of our thoughts and actions begin in the depth of our imaginations. For example, we are admonished to “Watch over your *heart* with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”¹⁷⁹ We are constantly “...destroying *speculations* and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every *thought* captive to the obedience of Christ.”¹⁸⁰ If we can control evil in our imaginations, we can control it in reality: “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the *heart*. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.”¹⁸¹

King David affirms his son Solomon’s imaginations: “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all *hearts*, and *understands every intent of the thoughts*.”¹⁸² God vets one’s thoughts and imaginations: “But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but *the Lord looks at the heart*.”¹⁸³

God tests the minds: “O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; for the righteous God tries the *hearts and minds*.”¹⁸⁴ And God will accept our meditations: “Let the words of my

¹⁷⁸ Ephesians 3:20 (emphasis added).

¹⁷⁹ Proverbs 4:23

¹⁸⁰ 2 Corinthians 10:5

¹⁸¹ Matthew 12:34-35; see Luke 6:45 for the good that can come from imaginations.

¹⁸² 1 Chronicles 28:9

¹⁸³ 1 Samuel 16:7, see also Psalm 26:2, Psalm 44:21, Psalm 139:2 and Proverbs 21:2

¹⁸⁴ Psalm 7:9

mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”¹⁸⁵

The Colloque

The *colloque* here is different from the *colloquy*, the latter is the face-to-face chat with God. *Colloque* is the final stage in meditation. At *colloquy*, you have arrived at the *resolve*. The resolve is the pouring out of devotion to God. At this stage, a person’s will is established and a sense of fulfilment emanates. Meditation ends here. The goal of meditation is the glory of God and to enlighten the human soul.

Précis

The stages of meditation are meant to reach the heart of God, culminating in the *glory of God and the enlightenment of the human soul*. There must be absolute concentration. Fear must be expelled. Much meditation is associated with voodoo or incantatory prayers of most eastern religions and the underworlds. This is because they have discovered the power of meditation, although it is used amiss. However, if one is saved, living in the will of God and is coming to God through the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ, there is no fear of deception. Our God desires that we make the best use of our imaginations in order to glorify His name. Both the voiced and meditative types of prayers will enable us commune with our God any time. In the next chapter we shall learn about the best time, place or posture to use in prayer in the Deictic of Prayer.

¹⁸⁵ Psalm 19:14

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Agreement
- Colloque
- *Componere*
- *Compositio loci*
- Imagination
- Meditation
- Petition
- Preparatory prayer
- Resolve
- Speculations
- *Sumballo*
- Thoughts
- Types of prayer
- Voiced prayer

Multiple-choice Questions

1. There are two types of prayer, and these are ____ and ____
 - A. Voiced; meditative
 - B. Meditative; supplication
 - C. Petition; voiced
 - D. Meditative; requests

2. Any of these could constitute voiced prayer, except ____
 - A. Adoration
 - B. Praise and worship
 - C. Requests
 - D. *Compositio loci*

3. One of the disadvantage of voiced prayer is that ____
 - A. It doesn't get answered
 - B. God overlooks it
 - C. Pride and ambition can muffle it's outcome
 - D. One can't distinguish between genuine thoughts and the utterance

4. What test must both voiced and meditative prayers meet?
 - A. Faith
 - B. Confidence
 - C. Love
 - D. Intimacy

5. The Greek word Sumballo may mean all these, except ____
 - A. To throw together
 - B. To scatter
 - C. To confer
 - D. To ponder

PRAYER

True/False Questions

1. Colloque and colloquy both mean the same thing in prayer.
T/F
2. The resolve, which is the pouring out of devotion to God, happens only during colloquy. T/F
3. The goal of meditation is the glory of God and to enlighten the human soul. T/F
4. At the petition stage, we begin to make our case known to God through our imagination. T/F
5. The meditation stage is that time in Meditative Prayer when we concentrate our minds on God. T/F
6. The confession of sins and preparing of the heart to meet God happens at colloque. T/F
7. Men look at the heart but God looks at the outward appearance. T/F
8. Meditative prayer engages thoughts. T/F
9. Most of the prayers one can make in their lifetime happens in the thoughts. T/F
10. All forms of yoga is evil. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe the five stages of meditation.

[500 words or less].

2. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

- a) How many types of prayer do you recognize in this assertion?

- b) Why is it important to train our minds and hearts into meditative prayer?

[250 words or less].

3. Distinguish the two meanings of confession by reference to Scripture.

[250 words or less].

7 | DEICTICS OF PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define Deictics of Prayer
- You will learn that posture may matter in prayer, and
- You will understand the importance of time and place in prayer

Introduction

By the *Deictics of Prayer*, we mean our disposition to prayer as it relates to place, time and manner or posture. It is the right time, place or position to pray. Critical research of the Bible will reveal that certain times, places or postures were associated with prayer in both the Old and New Testament periods. This chapter will discuss dispositions in regard to the two periods.

Place

The first glance at spatial (place or space) disposition of prayer in the Old and New Testaments reveals that a diversity of places was used. Abraham's servant prayed by the well of water¹⁸⁶ while Jonah prayed in the belly of the fish.¹⁸⁷ The sons of Korah cried out to God from the Hill Mizar¹⁸⁸ while the Psalmist prayed under waters.¹⁸⁹ Daniel prayed inside his house¹⁹⁰ and Jesus prayed in the mountains.¹⁹¹ Paul and Silas prayed in the prison¹⁹² and Paul and his entourage prayed along the shore.¹⁹³

Moreover, Christ Himself disclaims the efficacy of place in view of true worship.¹⁹⁴ Yet, naturally, specific worship-centers were regarded

¹⁸⁶ Gen. 24:12-3

¹⁸⁷ Jonah 2:1

¹⁸⁸ Ps 42:6

¹⁸⁹ Ps. 61:2

¹⁹⁰ Dan. 6:10

¹⁹¹ Luke 6:12

¹⁹² Acts 16:24-25

¹⁹³ Acts 21:5

¹⁹⁴ John 4:21-23

as appropriate. Thus, in the early times Shiloh, where the Ark rested, Mizpah and Gibeon were regarded as appropriate places for worship or prayer.¹⁹⁵ But later the temple was the place where or towards which prayer was offered.¹⁹⁶

Synagogues afforded, in later times, local prayer-centers. Where there was no synagogue, a spot outside the town was chosen, near some stream for hand washing before prayer.¹⁹⁷ In the New Testament, we find the Apostles going to the temple¹⁹⁸ and Apostle Paul, in particular, attended the synagogue on his mission journeys.¹⁹⁹ Distinctively, Christian worship was held in ordinary buildings.²⁰⁰ But Christ discourages ostentatious praying at street corners.²⁰¹

Time

Temporal (or time) dispositions as far as prayer was concerned were well instituted by the Early Church. It became a custom to pray thrice daily at the third, sixth, and ninth hours (or 9 am, 12 pm and 3 pm, respectively). The Psalmist affirms praying in the morning, at noon and in the evening daily.²⁰² Daniel prayed three times each day in his house²⁰³ and apostle Peter and John went to pray at what was known as “The Hour of Prayer” or at 3 pm.

Moreover, we see Peter going up on the housetop to pray, “about the sixth hour [or 12 pm]”²⁰⁴ and Cornelius, a non-Jew, was fasting and, “at the ninth hour [or 3 pm]” he prayed in his house.²⁰⁵ Also, prayer was offered for instances of grace before food and at Pascal Meal.²⁰⁶

Apart from the foregone, this author also offers his own view about the time for prayer. First, with the increase in modernization also comes the constraint on time. It is important that a serious Christian

¹⁹⁵ 1 Sam 1:9-10, 1 Sam 7:5 and 1 Kings 3:4, respectively

¹⁹⁶ 1Kings 8:29-30, Ps. 28:2 and Dan. 6; 10

¹⁹⁷ Acts 16:13-16

¹⁹⁸ Acts 3:1

¹⁹⁹ Acts 17:1

²⁰⁰ Acts 1:13-14, Acts 4:23:4, Acts 12:12 and Col. 4:19

²⁰¹ Matt. 6:5

²⁰² Ps. 55:17

²⁰³ Dan. 6:10

²⁰⁴ Acts 10:9

²⁰⁵ Acts 10: 30

²⁰⁶ 1 Sam. 9:13, Matt. 15:36, Acts 27:35

becomes aware of the need for prayer irrespective of constraints on his or her time.

Second, each one should find the time that suits prayer for him or herself. Early in the morning could be one of the best times to pray. Late in the evening after work also offers another appropriate time. There are some people who usually pray some time at noon or lunch-hour; this could prove to be a very useful time to pray as well.

Generally speaking, let everyone judge for him or herself as to what is the most appropriate time to pray. This will call for some degree of discipline for better results. What could be a free time for one may not be so for the other and vice versa. Time management concerning prayer should, therefore, be a priority in this busy world.

The voice of prayer in the morning is beautiful. The psalmist says, “My voice you will hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to you and I will look up.”²⁰⁷

Here is the secret of praying in the morning. It is revealed for two reasons. In the first place, morning speaks of freshness, of newness of things. In the morning, we have the day’s blank slate. There is potential for a blameless day and here and now we can ask God for everything we want the day to become. In the morning we also have the opportunity to introduce our day resting on the shoulders of God, who knows the end of all things.

And in the second place, morning speaks of hope, hope for all the best results we envisage. Here we can seek God’s help even before we have a chance to face adversity. We can table before God all we need and wait patiently to see God carry out or help us to fulfil our objectives. How beautiful to hear the voice of our own children when they wake up in the morning? How it comforts us that they are very much awake and alive? Oh, how it should fill God with joy knowing that there we are, all his, available and ready to ask him to carry us throughout the day with his blessings?

Posture

It is vital to note from the outset that posture may not be very important to prayer. But certain postures were employed in the Bible. These include standing, kneeling and falling prostrate to the ground.

²⁰⁷ Psalm 5:3

Standing

This was the usual Jewish mode of prayer although it was not followed by the early Christians except on Sundays and the days between Easter and the Whitsun.²⁰⁸

Kneeling

Kneeling is very common throughout the Bible. Both in the Old and New Testaments kneeling before praying is taken as standard.²⁰⁹

Prostrate (Face to the ground)

We find prime instances in both Old and New Testaments.²¹⁰ Placing the face between the knees is also part of lying prostrate.²¹¹ Others include sitting,²¹² hands lifted up²¹³ or with hands extended as a symbol of reception from God.²¹⁴

Précis

It is important to clarify that when I said that posture was not very important to prayer, I did not mean that prayer is done chaotically. To the contrary, postures are taken according to the revealed essence of the divinity. Some people may find worshipping God while standing upright (holding a chest high) or sited causally inappropriate. Other people may find it doing warfare-like²¹⁵ prayers while kneeling or sited awkward or purpose defeatism. Posture, to the largest extent, will be determined by divine encounters and by which *Aspect or Type of Prayer* is involved. Here we are, we have our time, place and we know how to present ourselves in prayer, but how can we make a prayer that can effectively bring results? The chapter that follows will answer that question.

²⁰⁸ Consider: Gen. 18:22, 1 Sam. 1:26, Neh. 9:5, Mark 11:25 and Luke 18:18-13

²⁰⁹ Consider: Ps. 95:6, Is. 45:23, 1 Kg. 8:54, Ezra 9:5, Dan. 6:10, Luke 22:41, Acts 7:60 and 9:40 and Eph. 3:14

²¹⁰ Ex. 34:8, Neh. 8:6 and Matt. 26:39

²¹¹ See an example in 1 Kings 18:42

²¹² 2 Sam. 7:18

²¹³ Ps. 28:2, Ps. 63:4 and Ps. 134:2 also Lam. 2:19, Lam. 3:41 and 1 Tim. 2:8

²¹⁴ See examples in Ex. 9:29, 1 Kgs. 8:22, Is. 1:15, Ezra 9:5 and Ps. 77:2

²¹⁵ Which involve declarations

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Deictics
- Kneeling
- Place
- Posture
- Prostrate
- Sitting
- Standing
- Time

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The deictic of prayer relate to all these, except ____
 - A. Place
 - B. Subject
 - C. Time
 - D. Posture

2. The other name for posture is ____
 - A. Manner
 - B. Type
 - C. Prostrate
 - D. Pause

3. In which of these places have people prayed?
 - A. Under water and at shores
 - B. In the house and on mountains
 - C. In prison
 - D. All of the above

4. Hannah played ____
 - A. Near the temple
 - B. Near the tabernacle
 - C. On top of Mount Sinai
 - D. Inside a fish belly

5. Where does Jesus Christ discourages people to pray from or at?
 - A. Synagogues
 - B. Temples
 - C. Street corners
 - D. In the bedroom

6. In the Early Church, they regularly prayed at this time, except ____
 - A. 9 am
 - B. 12 pm
 - C. 3 pm
 - D. 7 pm

7. How many times per day did Daniel pray in his house?
 - A. 3
 - B. 23
 - C. 13
 - D. 2

8. At what time was Cornelius fasting?
 - A. 4 pm
 - B. 3 pm
 - C. 1 pm
 - D. 12 am

PRAYER

9. When does the Bible say that the voice of prayer is beautiful?
- A. In the morning
 - B. In the afternoon
 - C. In the evening
 - D. At night
10. The most admired quality of anyone waiting upon God in prayer is ____
- A. Love
 - B. Patience
 - C. Courage
 - D. Faith

True/False Questions

1. Posture is always vital to prayer. T/F
2. Posture may not include standing. T/F
3. The early Christians always stood up when they prayed.
T/F
4. The standard posture for prayer is kneeling. T/F
5. Placing the face between the knees is also part of lying prostrate. T/F
6. Lifting up extended hands in prayer symbolizes the faith to receive from God. T/F
7. The Early Church usually stood up in prayer on Sundays.
T/F
8. Falling prostrate to the ground is a sign of weakness among Jewish believers. T/F
9. Like a true Father He is, God must rejoice to hear our voices early in the morning. T/F
10. God hears meditative prayers loud and clear. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’ ‘Woman,’ Jesus replied, ‘believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth’” (John 4:20-24).
 - a) What is assumed in this passage in relation to deictics of prayer?
 - b) What is ironic in this passage about the place of prayer?
 - c) What does this passage imply about time and posture of prayer, if any?

[500 words or less].

2. “The 24 elders bow down and worship in front of the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever. They throw their victor’s crowns in front of the throne and say, ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory, honor, and power, because you created all things; they came into existence and were created because of your will,’” (Revelation 4:10-11).
 - a) Discuss posture in prayer in relation to the above passage.

[500 words or less].

8 | EFFECTIVE PRAYER

At the end of this chapter

- You will understand what it means to make an effective prayer
- You will learn about the place of righteousness in prayer
- You will find out that faith is integral to prayer
- You will know bad motives may hinder prayer, and
- You will understand that authority in prayer comes from Christ's name

Introduction

Prayer is effective or powerful when it achieves the intended results. To make an effective prayer is a work of grace, not human engineering or ingenuity. People who make powerful prayers are just ordinary men and women, boys and girls. All they have is the desire to pray according to God's revealed Word. In this chapter, we adjudge that an effective prayer, all things being equal, must involve at least five qualities: A state of righteousness; faith that never doubts; motives that are right with God; and the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. This chapter, therefore, deals with those qualities.

Two-prong Test

Prayer is never effective or powerful until two things happen. First, it must be heard by God and second, it must be answered by God. However, the more important of the two is that God should be able to hear. When we pray, does God hear? One of the most powerful challenges God has given to humankind is in the Book of Jeremiah: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things."²¹⁶

There was a time when God did not even listen to the prayers of the heathen, but in this Dispensation of Grace, God has been generous

²¹⁶ Jer. 33:3

enough to listen to our calls. There are a few characteristic features which make it easy for God to not only listen to our prayers, but to answer us as well. Here they are a prayer that is done by a righteous person; a prayer that is made according to the will of God; a prayer done with right motives; a prayer pleaded in faith; and in submission to the name of Jesus Christ.

Five Qualities of an Effective Prayer

In order to make an effective prayer, a prayer that delivers the intended results,²¹⁷ the following five (5) qualities must accompany the prayer: Righteousness, faith, the will of God, right motives, and the authority of the name of Jesus Christ.

Righteousness

The Bible tells us that God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we might be the righteousness of God through Him.²¹⁸ Every true believer in Christ Jesus is a righteous one of God. Because, according to the Bible, as many received Jesus and believe in His name, God gave them the power or right to be called sons (children) of God.²¹⁹ We are children of God because we have been made righteous through the death and resurrection of Jesus our Lord. We have been justified.

Justification is the process of declaring righteous. To justify is to legally acquit one or to declare that someone is now right. And God the Judge of the earth²²⁰ requires people to be righteous, that is, to live according to His law. God shows His righteousness by condemning those who fall short of it.²²¹ But when God does acquit someone, He actively implements that justification by showing favor to the person and publicly reinstating him or her. In Paul's writings terms such as "Adoption"²²² describe this subsequent favor and reinstatement. The verb 'justify' occurs 39 times in the New Testament, 29 are in Paul's letters or recorded words.

²¹⁷ See Chapter 26 under "Prayer Generates Power."

²¹⁸ 2 Corinthians. 5:21

²¹⁹ John 1:12

²²⁰ Gen. 18:25

²²¹ Rom. 2:5

²²² Rom. 8:15

Justification, therefore, is God's act of remitting the sins of the guilty people and accounting them righteous freely by grace through their faith in Christ Jesus.²²³ It is not because of their own works but because of Jesus, or what is known as *the representative law keeping and redemption of Jesus Christ on their behalf*.²²⁴ Justification brings an end to hostility between the believer and their God. The believer inherits all God's blessings promised to the justified. Moreover, the believer is assured that nothing can ever separate them from God's love or rob them of their justified status, that is, their righteousness, in this life or the one to come.

From the view of justification flows the thought about the equal footing of the Jew and the gentile. They both enjoy equal redemption,²²⁵ faith²²⁶ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.²²⁷ Through the fall of the Adam (the first representative of man), condemnation was brought on the human race. God justified Abraham through faith, made a covenant with him and Abraham was promised that through one of his descendants all nations would be blessed.

Moses' Law (the Mosaic Law) *gave Abraham's descendants knowledge of sin* and thus taught them their need of justification. Through Jesus Christ, (the second representative man), justification towards righteousness became available to all nations.²²⁸ *God justifies sinners on the just ground that Jesus Christ, acting on their behalf, has satisfied the claims of God's Law upon them.* Believers are made righteous before God because God admits them to share into Christ's status.

In other words, God treats them according to Christ's obedience. This is not through a false judgment that pretends that they have kept the Law personally, but by the true judgment, which accounts them as being 'in' the one who has kept the law representatively. So, on accepting sinners on the grounds of Christ's obedience and death, God acts justly. All justified believers are, therefore, righteous before God. This elaborate process of saving people and justifying them on account of Christ Jesus is called redemption.

In a nutshell, redemption is the action of regaining or gaining possession of the believer's soul in exchange for payment, and thus,

²²³ See Eph. 2:1-8

²²⁴ See Rom. 3:23-26, 4:5f and 5:18f

²²⁵ Gal. 3:13; see the definition of redemption in the ensuing paragraphs.

²²⁶ Rom. 4:23ff

²²⁷ Gal 4:6ff

²²⁸ Gal. 3:6ff

clearing a debt. People's souls could only be redeemed through the priceless blood of Jesus Christ. That is the reason why the Lord, Jesus Christ, had to die. God's account was *credited* in order to *debit* humanity's account. God lost a Son, so that He might gain sons through the redemptive work of His Beloved Son.

Believers in Christ are redeemed, and then justified through the death and resurrection of Christ. Righteousness has been imputed or credited to them. And the prayers of such people are effective and powerful: "And the *prayer offered in faith* will restore the one who is sick. The Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The *prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail.*"²²⁹ Righteousness is, therefore, a very important quality of a prayer that God hears and answers.

Faith

As indicated in James 5: 15,²³⁰ prayer and faith are like twins, or are like the two sides of the same coin. The reason is simple. God is Spirit and man is human. How can a mortal, physical and earthly man contact the Immortal, Spiritual and Heavenly God, if not by faith? Faith brings God closer to us. It is faith that makes us believe God answers prayer. The faith we use in prayer is a kind known as *Zoë* or the God-kind of faith.²³¹ This is what Jesus meant when he told His disciples to, "Have faith in God."²³² This kind of faith raises the dead and calls those things which are not as though they were.²³³ It is the faith that dispels fear and doubt: "But when you ask, you must believe and *not doubt*, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."²³⁴ It believes that all things are possible with God and takes God at His Word.

Of this faith Jesus says: "For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he said shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he

²²⁹ James 5: 15 and 16 (emphasis added).

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Zoë* may also mean the God-kind-of-life.

²³² Mark 11:22

²³³ Rom. 4:17

²³⁴ James 1:6 (emphasis added).

says. Therefore, I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”²³⁵

It is like Jesus is laying a blueprint of the secret of receiving from God. Note the phrase, “When ye pray, believe that ye receive them.” It is still like the answer to all your prayers depends on two conditions: *Your* praying and *your* believing that you have received.

Faith is indispensable to prayer, just like breath is to life. Prayer is both the medium and the message of faith. We express our faith in and to God through our Lord Jesus Christ through prayer. When we pray, we are simply demonstrating out loud with our voices or silence what we believe in our hearts.

When these two conditions of praying (*prayer*) and believing (*faith*) are fulfilled, then Jesus says: “Ye shall have them.” The writer to the Hebrews simply states: “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”²³⁶ When we come to God, we must believe that He exists and that His reward is with those who seek Him earnestly. Faith in God can change situations. Faith in God can move mountains. Faith in God is all that is needed to record answers to prayer. Faith in God is also related to boldness. When faith in God is present, there is confidence. To be *bold* is to be confident and daring. It is to be fearless and courageous.

We are told to be righteous in order to be bold because, “The righteous are bold as a lion.”²³⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ and faith in His name gives us much boldness to enter into God’s presence: “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.”²³⁸ Boldness must be our quality always unless we are living in deliberate sin, “... with all boldness, as always ...”²³⁹ Here Paul says he has been bold always. Men and women who are bold do miracles and great spiritual activities. Listen to the prayer of the Early Church:

...and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of your holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where

²³⁵ Mark 11:23-24

²³⁶ Heb. 11:6

²³⁷ Proverbs 28:1b

²³⁸ Heb. 10:19

²³⁹ Phil. 1:20

they had assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness.²⁴⁰

Observe, their prayer for boldness was adequately granted because God Himself deems it essential. Without boldness, faith and confidence in God, in prayer, even simple supplications will take long to be answered. Dare to decree, to declare and demand answers in prayer. Mercy which we all need very much and grace to help us live a successful Christian life are only possible to them who approach God boldly: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."²⁴¹ In this way, therefore, we see the interrelationship among prayer, faith and boldness. Surely, faith and boldness are very vital to the making of a prayer that God answers.

The Will of God

An effective prayer must always seek God's will rather than one's own will. All of us have our wills and naturally want to assert them. But in prayer, God's will come first. Nothing succeeds without the will of God because God has not sanctioned it. Discovering the will of God is tantamount to winning part of the contest before we engage in it. When our Lord, Jesus Christ, was teaching about the Lord's Prayer, He told them to ask God's will to be done on earth exactly as it is in Heaven.²⁴² We are ambassadors establishing God's will here on earth: "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."²⁴³

God's will is what God wants, intends or desires. It is being in perfect harmony with God. It is falling-in with the all-knowing God. God will hear and answer a prayer that is done in His will. And "This is the confidence we have in Him that, *if we ask anything according to His will*, he hearth us; and if we know that he hearth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him."²⁴⁴ As simple as that, knowing God's will demands a quick response from Him.

²⁴⁰ Acts 4:30-31

²⁴¹ Heb. 4:16

²⁴² See Matthew 6:10

²⁴³ 2 Corinthians 5:20

²⁴⁴ 1 John 5:14-15 (emphasis added).

How can we know what God wants or desires? There are two ways of doing this. First, there is the revealed will of God; the Bible. Perhaps there will never be any more revelation of God's will than He has already done through the written Word. Knowing the scripture is important, but knowing the will of God behind those words is even more important. So, we read the Bible in order to discover the Word, which is God's will. And second, we can know what God wants through other means like the inner peace from the Holy Spirit, circumstances, what God has already done with others, through mature believers or through a supernatural encounter such as a dream, a vision, a word of knowledge or wisdom, or even through a prophetic utterance.

Other than the stated above, God has revealed Himself to us through our conscience. We read about this interrelationship among prayer, the will of God and our consciences (hearts) in this manner:

This, then, is how we will know that we belong to the truth; this is how we will be confident in God's presence. If our conscience condemns us, *we know that God is greater than our conscience* and that he knows everything. And so, my dear friends, *if our conscience does not condemn us, we have courage in God's presence. We receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.* What he commands is that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as Christ commanded us. *Those who obey God's commands live in union with God and God lives in union with them.* And because of the Spirit that God has given us we know that God lives in union with us.²⁴⁵

Thus, as we noted in Chapter 2, prayer is a form of relationship, command and communication. Our consciences link us to God in a relational way. We are able, even in the absence of God's law or morality, to discern God's will from within ourselves and in nature. We also note here that, "We receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him." In other words, obedience to God's commands, necessitates answered prayer. Obeying God's command is a two-edged sword: It benefits both God and man. When we obey God, we recreate the union between God and us, and, therefore, our prayers have a clear path to God. Prayer is our pathway to power and glory.

²⁴⁵ 1 John 3: 19-24 (emphasis added).

Right Motives

In James we read that when people ask, they do not receive because they do so with wrong motives, so that they may spend what they receive on their pleasures.²⁴⁶ We are further told in Matthews that if you are offering a gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, you must leave the gift there in front of the altar; first go and reconcile to your brother or sister and then come back and offer the gift.²⁴⁷ God is all-knowing and this attribute makes it very difficult for God to be deceived. No one can deceive the Almighty God.

Motives must be right in order to get the best results in prayer. Even if we make an excellent oratory, with powerful words and a magnificent vocabulary with an eclectic amen, but with wrong motives our rhetoric is in total vain. Lack of forgiveness is one of the worst culprits of wrong motives. Our Lord Jesus makes it plain that you have no right to ask unless you forgive those who have wronged you.²⁴⁸ Pride is another vice as far as wrong motive is concerned: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”²⁴⁹ People with pride may ask God for favors in order to compete or silence others, sometimes even to show-off. Such motivation will hinder prayer.

To God, we must come with *clean hands* in prayer. This means that we come to God with right motives. Prayer should not be vindictive. We cannot come before God to justify ourselves and heap blame on others. For one, God knows all the intents of our hearts. For another, God knows all the contents of our hearts. When we come before God, we should come with clean hands. A pure heart in prayer means that we recognize that God is holy and faithful and we do well to set the house of our hearts in order. There should be, “No violence in [our] hands, and [our] prayer [must be] pure.”²⁵⁰

The Authority of the Name of Jesus

It should be hastened, from the outset to state that the use of the name of Jesus in prayer is not a slogan or a formula directive for performing

²⁴⁶ See James 4:3

²⁴⁷ Matthews 5:23 and 24

²⁴⁸ See Matthews 6:12; Mark 11:25

²⁴⁹ Proverbs 16:18

²⁵⁰ Job 16:17

a religious duty. Prayer is a supernatural activity and that being so, connotes that mere words are not capable of affecting God, who is a divine Being. But more so important is the fact that man in his fallen state falls far short of the divine standards for reaching to the Holy God.

Man is conceived in sin²⁵¹ and we know that God did not hear sinners²⁵² and of necessity it follows that a substitute is needed to pacify God's anger and meet His righteous requirements for answering prayer. Jesus, who was born in the likeness of man, lived a sinless life, also died as a substitute for man's offence, rose in power and is, therefore, the only real Man to have met the holy requirements of God for answering prayer.

It is important to reiterate what has been pointed out earlier in the Introduction, namely, that God now hears sinners. The reclusive comment made to the opposite effect is found here:

We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this man is from." "That is remarkable indeed!" the man said. "You do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to the one who worships Him and does His will. Never before has anyone heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do no such thing." They replied, "You were born in utter sin, and you are instructing us?" And they threw him out. When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, He found the man and said, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" "Who is He, Sir?" he replied. "Tell me so that I may believe in Him." 37 "You have already seen Him," Jesus answered. "He is the One speaking with you."²⁵³

In this passage a theological debate emerged on whether God could hear a man born in sin. The theological underpinning this disagreement is based in the Mosaic Law.²⁵⁴ Surely, it is the principle understanding in the Mosaic Law that God did not hear or answer sinners. The Law made a distinction between what was clean (acceptable) and what was unclean (unacceptable). Sinners were by nature unclean.

However, the two primary functions of the Law were to teach the people obedience, and to point their hearts towards the ultimate source

²⁵¹ Ps. 51:5b

²⁵² John 9:31

²⁵³ John 9:29 – 37 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁴ See Leviticus 11 to 18.

of salvation, who was Jesus Christ, and who was to be revealed at a later time. The person who was healed in the passage above, had met the ultimate end and fulfilment of the Law, the Master, Jesus Christ. The Jews who had confronted him, hadn't conceived that revelation yet. Jesus Christ had just heard and answered a prayer of a sinner, and healed him, too.

Our Lord asks the man born into sin, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Faith is the only prerequisite for receiving God's finished work of redemption on the cross. If a sinner believes, just as a Jew or a believer, they would all receive God's forgiveness and grace. In fact, man's own righteousness apart from Christ's, is like filth: "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all *our righteous acts are like filthy rags*; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."²⁵⁵

All aspects of prayer except Intercession in special declaration cases must be addressed to the Father in the name of Jesus and not the other way around. Our Lord Jesus just before He went to the cross revealed this secret to His disciples: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you."²⁵⁶ Jesus said they would ask Him nothing in those days. Those days are these we are in. In these days we are not to ask Jesus anything. But in these days, we are to ask the Father for anything and in the name of Jesus Christ it shall be granted to us.

Jesus Himself knows that the Father never denies Him anything. Praying at Lazarus' tomb Jesus revealed again another truth: "And I know that you hear me always."²⁵⁷ If God hears Jesus always and we are "in" Christ and we pray "in" Jesus name, then God will also hear us always.

Little wonder Jesus with a sense of urgency, challenges us to ask His Father through His name. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."²⁵⁸ When it comes to asking His Father for anything for us, Jesus says that He will not, on the contrary He says, "Ask in my name"²⁵⁹ and, "because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," Jesus says His Father Himself who loves us shall give us anything we ask.

²⁵⁵ Isaiah 64:6 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁶ John 16:23

²⁵⁷ John 11:42a

²⁵⁸ John 16:24

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, verse 26

Oh, what grace the Father has bestowed upon us, what a privilege! Prayers given outside the name of Jesus are nothing but organized vocals, which reverberate in the cosmic vacuum and go nowhere, unless, by faith, they are directed towards the true God, the maker of heaven and earth. The name of Jesus Christ gives our prayers authority to pass into the spiritual realm, to the third heaven where God is ready to hear and answer us. The name of Jesus Christ is authority in itself; with it, the heaven ways are open and the gates of hell can do us no harm.

Précis

So then, to maintain a right standing with God; to desire to do His will; to align our motives aright; to maintain our faith in God; and to channel our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, will give us undeniable access to the ears of God and our prayer will be guaranteed to get an answer and retain its effectiveness. Surely, God can hear us when we call, but do we really hear Him when He speaks? This is what will be addressed in the next chapter in *ways through which God speaks*.

Chapter Review

Words and Phrases

- Authority
- Faith
- Motives
- Name of Jesus Christ
- Right
- Righteousness
- Two-prong test
- Will of God

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Stated factly, the two-prong test for the effectiveness of prayer is ____
 - A. Prayer must be heard and answered
 - B. Prayer must be heard and deferred
 - C. Prayer must be answered and venerated
 - D. Prayer must be heard and announced

2. Any of these may be the qualities of prayer, except ____
 - A. Righteousness
 - B. Faith
 - C. The will of God
 - D. The joy of prayer

3. Christians are already ____
 - A. Righteous
 - B. Holy
 - C. Blessed
 - D. All of the above

PRAYER

4. The process of being declared righteous is termed ____
 - A. Justification
 - B. Sanctification
 - C. Glorification
 - D. Hubris

5. What gave Abraham's descendants the knowledge of sin?
 - A. Grace
 - B. Mercy
 - C. The Mosaic law
 - D. The New Testament Covenant

True/False Questions

1. Justification towards righteousness is available to all nations.
T/F
2. God treats us according to His Son's obedience, and not our own obedience. T/F
3. God accepts sinners on the grounds of Christ's obedience and death. T/F
4. Redemption is the action of regaining or gaining possession of the believer's soul in exchange for payment.
T/F
5. Righteousness has been imputed or credited to believers in Christ. T/F
6. When believers confess their sins to each other and pray for each other, they get healed. T/F
7. Righteousness is fulfilled in Christ, giving every believer the power to have their prayers heard by God. T/F
8. Prayer and faith are like twins. T/F
9. Faith makes Christians believe that God answers prayer.
T/F
10. Prayer is both the medium and the message of faith.
T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain the five qualities of an effective prayer.

[1,500 words or less].

9 | WAYS THROUGH WHICH GOD SPEAKS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be introduced to the Hebraic gift
- You will learn that God can speak directly, and
- You will learn that God can speak indirectly

Introduction

God speaks. Let it be written again, “God speaks.” To dispute this fact is to deny the very existence of God. And those who come to Him must believe that He is and that He rewards them that diligently seek Him.²⁶⁰ This is the very essential definition of faith. The first essence of Christian faith is that “God is there,” or *Jehovah-Shammah*²⁶¹ and, therefore, He speaks. Faith goes beyond just believing that He answers prayer, but also to believing that God can speak, has spoken, is speaking and will always speak. In this chapter, we discuss ways through which God speaks.

Hebraic Gist

The gist of the Book of Hebrews is on this subject, namely, that God spoke in the past, that He is speaking in the present, and that He will continue to speak in future: “On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son...”²⁶²

It is God’s prerogative to choose whichever medium He wishes to speak in to anybody. But whatever the situation, God will speak very clearly and no-one can doubt when He has spoken. Below are several ways God has spoken through from ancient times and He still uses them today to speak. However, the central emphasis in the New Testament is that God now speaks through His Son, our Lord Jesus

²⁶⁰ See Hebrews 11:6

²⁶¹ Consider Ezekiel 48:35 (emphasis added).

²⁶² Hebrews 1:1 and 2

Christ, and this He has done so convincingly through the written Word of God compiled in the Bible.

God Can Speak Directly

The Old Testament claims that God spoke to Moses face to face: “I speak with him face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you unafraid to speak against My servant Moses?”²⁶³ And this is attested to in the New Testament: “We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this man is from.”²⁶⁴ Elsewhere it is stated matter of factly that God speaks: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.”²⁶⁵ There is a warning to those who do not take the fact that God speaks seriously: “*See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks.* For if the people did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject Him who warns us from heaven?”²⁶⁶ The Jews also believed that God spoke to Abraham directly: “As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever...”²⁶⁷

There are many instances in the Bible when God has spoken directly to people. We are told that: “Then came there a voice from heaven saying ...”²⁶⁸ and we also read that, “... the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said,”²⁶⁹ Just from Genesis we read of God commanding the existence of the worlds, we read about Him talking to Adam, to Abraham, to Moses, and to several others including His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

You might pause and ask; how could one begin to hear God’s voice? It should be admitted that it is not as clear-cut as merely inviting one to watch a dance or acrobats at a circus. What is being given here are pieces of evidence from those who have experienced it or have known others whom God has spoken to. The following are this

²⁶³ Numbers 12:8

²⁶⁴ John 9:29

²⁶⁵ Hebrews 4:8

²⁶⁶ Hebrews 12:25 (emphasis added)

²⁶⁷ Luke 1:55,72

²⁶⁸ John 12:28

²⁶⁹ Luke 3:22

author's personal suggestions to anybody who would love to know how to hear God's voice:

Cultivate a rich prayer habit

Begin by cultivating a rich and intimate prayer lifestyle in which you can develop an attitude of loving, adoring and enquiring of God with all your heart, might, mind and soul. Devote certain moments just to meet God and talk.

Be open, yielded and with clear motive

Close your closet, which might mean also an abstract mental closet, and talk to your Dad in Heaven. When you have done this, then open your heart to the atmosphere of the human spirit who shall then have access to the Holy Spirit. In such an atmosphere of calmness, concentrate on God alone and His voice could be heard from the bottom of your heart.

Know God's nature

Apparently when God speaks, He is the same God who spoke what has been written in the Bible. So, you do not expect Him to change His language though He might just relate it to suitable circumstances. God is always love and His speech is lovely. He may speak to you on some course of actions, which are not to your liking, but He will still do it in love. God, moreover, is holy. That is to say, He will not defile His word. He stands by His words. So, you cannot expect God to tell you to commit sin. But God's holiness demands that He remains constant in matters of morality and character.

This will help you to distinguish between your voice and the devil's or God's. Because man, like the devil, is unreliable, his voice will, in most cases, be circumstantial and wavering. But God remains constant and absolutely steadfast in every situation. God's nature is naturally peaceful but the devil's is chaotic and leaves one in a quandary. This test itself is enough to judging the voices. God's voice is gentle and usually very appealing whilst the devil's voice is very militative and forceful.

Be open and clear-minded

This is a vital component of hearing from God. Do not expect to hear what you want to hear, or you may hear it from your own human spirit. God may speak something totally different from your expectations or He may reinforce your expectations. Avoid being or displaying close-mindedness syndrome (CMS). A CMS may be explained this way: A young man who has spotted a beautiful young woman. He goes to God with this young lady in mind then starts to ask God for a life partner expecting God to give him the same girl he spotted. Yes, God may allow you to go ahead, but it will be like Israel asking God for a Saul when a David could have done better.

However, this author does not suggest that this is a standard rule. There are many cases in which God allows us to make choices because we are rational beings. In such situations it is, therefore, important to choose between these two possibilities: Either make a tentative judgment then take it to God for approval in which case you are also aware that God could decide to your contrary or better still release and leave it with God to rule, knowing that He is a quintessential counsellor. Both cases involve man's will which God cannot violate.

Close-mindedness and lack of clear-mindedness can hinder you from hearing God's voice. Feelings and emotions can be your enemy when it comes to obeying the voice of God. If you insist on hearing what you want, you may hear exactly what you want. However, if you allow God to speak to you unperturbed, you will position yourself to hearing clearly from God.

Know God's attributes

It is important to note that God knows everything. Thus, the *omniscience* of God. Because God knows everything, you can be rest assured that He will not fake his speaking. God is also omnipresent, that is to say that God is everywhere. He can speak to you at any place. This, in fact, alludes to the concept of *entugchano* as discussed in Chapter 18.²⁷⁰ God is also *omnipotent*, meaning that God has absolute power. If He wants to speak to you, no-one can forbid Him. Moreover, God is *omnific*. In other words, God is infinite and eternal. God will always exist. He has no end. He has and will always be. So that if He spoke to Moses in a

²⁷⁰ See under the section called "Greek Concept of Intercession."

colloquy, that is face to face, He can still do today. It is vital for you to know also that God is both *immanent* and *transcendent*. The former means that God can exist in minute of existence while the latter is the opposite; even the universe cannot accommodate Jehovah God. The knowledge of these two attributes forced the Psalmist to wonder:

Wither shall I go from your spirit? Or wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.²⁷¹

Whether in the smallest or in the biggest, phenomenal element, God will still be there. This fact, basically, allows us to understand the fact that God can speak in the intricacy of our human spirit. And when He does, we should not doubt Him.

Be a worshipper

Worship is done in the third dimension, or the third realm. At personal level, worship commences when we break through from the conscious human soul to the sub-conscious human spirit. In this realm of the human spirit hearing from God becomes possible. Similarly, at cosmic level, worship commences in the third heaven after penetrating through the hazardous second realm or the heavenlies.

Worship is one of the methods of drawing closer to God. *It is a form of prayer*. In worship, we focus on attributing to God all the power, the praise, the honor, the majesty, the essence, the forte, the magnificence and all the glory. God is for such and deserves such. Anyone born as a human being, should exist to worship their Creator. They should do this till they die. Worship is one of the primary reasons God created human beings. With the endowed given to people, they can worship Him intelligently, consciously, knowingly and lovingly. God derives tremendous pleasure from the worship of Him. In worship, we can and should hear God speak clearly.

²⁷¹ Ps. 139:7-10

Through Prophets, Apostles and Disciples

God spoke long ago through prophets: “Heaven must take Him in until the time comes for the restoration of all things, which God announced long ago through His holy prophets.”²⁷² Moses would testify to what God would speak at a later date: “Now Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be spoken later.”²⁷³ Those who heard God speak, did transmit God’s message to the world, including the Disciples of our Lord: “...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? This salvation was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him...”²⁷⁴ John, Matthews, Mark, and Luke – collectively, the “Good News (*Gospel*)” Authors – all heard what Jesus said and they recorded it in books. Apostle Paul heard from the Lord Jesus in visions, dreams and words of revelation, and he recorded it in books (letters) to the churches.

Both in ancient and contemporary times, God has used prophecy to speak to us. Prophets are men while prophetesses are women called by God to speak on His behalf. Prophets vary; they include counselling,²⁷⁵ weeping,²⁷⁶ dreaming,²⁷⁷ singing or psalmist²⁷⁸ and administrative (such as Joseph in Egypt). Others are the national,²⁷⁹ oratorical (who normally give lengthy prophetic messages, like Isaiah), and local Church prophets.

More than anyone or anything else, the combination of prophets, apostles and disciples have facilitated communication between God and humanity.

God Can Speak through Inspired Dreams

God *reveals* Himself through *visions*, but *speaks* through *dreams*: “He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, will reveal Myself to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a

²⁷² Acts 3:21

²⁷³ Hebrews 3:5

²⁷⁴ Hebrews 2:3

²⁷⁵ 2 Kings 22:14-20

²⁷⁶ Jer. 9:10, Lam. 1:16, 2:18, 3:48

²⁷⁷ Num. 12:6

²⁷⁸ Judges 5

²⁷⁹ Ps. 2:8

dream...”²⁸⁰ Moreover, young men see visions, old people dream dreams: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your *young men* will see *visions*, your *old men* will dream *dreams*.”²⁸¹

The Bible does not place certain transitions by mistakes, they exist by deliberation. Visions bring revelations. In other words, visions reveal something that is concealed from the naked eyes. God uses visions to open people’s physical eyes to spiritual realities. Dreams on the other hand, are speech vehicles. When God gives a dream, He is saying something, usually in plain language even though sometimes it might take wisdom to decipher the meaning of a dream.²⁸²

Similarly, visions are likely to come to young people – owing to their age and the need to understanding what lies ahead of them. Thus, young people would see visions. Dreams, on the other hand, may come to old people – who are, by reason of age and wisdom, custodians of life and the interests of God. They are more likely than the young men, to appreciate the speech of God and channel it to the right purpose. Generally, God speaks more frequently in dreams to the older and mature than He does to the younger and immature.

In the Dispensation of Grace and of the Holy Spirit, dreams are the tools of divine communications: “And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.”²⁸³

There are many instances in the Bible when God chose to speak through dreams. Some of these instances are found in the Old Testament²⁸⁴ whilst others are in the New Testament.²⁸⁵ God spoke to Pharaoh, a heaven king, through a dream: “And the thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven plump, ripe ones. Then Pharaoh awoke and realized it was a dream. In the morning his spirit was troubled, so he summoned all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁰ Numbers 12:6

²⁸¹ Acts 2:17 (emphasis added).

²⁸² See 41:1-36

²⁸³ Joel 2:28

²⁸⁴ See Gen. 42:8 and 9

²⁸⁵ See Matt. 2:13

²⁸⁶ Genesis 41:7 and 8

Similarly, God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar, another heaven king, through a dream.²⁸⁷

A dream from God lingers on in our mind and brings enormous amounts of peace. A dream from God will be repeated, twice or many times. Sometimes, like in the examples of the heaven kings above, a dream from God can be very unsettling. It will grab one's attention until a correct interpretation is found.

There are also dreams due to our nature. A man's brain is like a computer able to compute events and bring them back in the form of enacted scenes in their sub-conscious. Such dreams are normal and mental.

Many times, too, Satan and his fallen angels (or demons) may appear to people in evil dreams. For a Christian who forgets to pray before going to bed such dreams may appear as nightmares. However, it must be mentioned that God protects His people when they sleep, even if they may forget to pray at night: "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the LORD sustains me."²⁸⁸ Note that, there is no mention of praying before going to sleep. God provides His people with peaceful sleep as a matter of grace: "In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety."²⁸⁹ It is important, however, to pray when we go to sleep, because we are thankful for His providence and watch over us.

Godly dreams can bring a prophetic message from God. They can also be a warning from God. Sometimes God might choose to deliver His word through a dream. For intercessors, dreams can be intercessory tools, in which sense dreams should not be taken for granted. If you have a dream and you perceive that it is an evil dream, pray against it until it is dissolved.

Dissolution of a bad dream is so important that failure to do so could somehow make it come to pass unless *you have faith that it would not come to pass*. Pray until you start to imagine the opposite outcome. Pray against it until you start to have joy emanating from deep down your soul. But if you so discern that a dream you have had come from God, receive it with thanksgiving, pray for its fulfilment and again thank God that it shall be fulfilled.

²⁸⁷ See Daniel 2:1 - 13

²⁸⁸ Psalm 3:5

²⁸⁹ Psalm 4:8

Dreams are anchored in symbolism. All societies have symbols. All dreams require interpretation. Biblical dreams will likely be imbued in biblical symbols of good and bad, righteousness and evil, angels and demons, heaven and hell, life and death, and God and Satan. Just like in any sphere of life, dreams can be misinterpreted, due to ignorance, lack of knowledge in symbolism or through sheer inadvertency. Interpreting spiritual dreams, takes prayer and spiritual understanding of God's Word, biblical symbolism and history. There is a caveat, believers should be careful not to be deceived by make-shift and self-help websites or books that claim to interpret dreams using bigoted or stereotypical symbolism.

God Can Speak through Visions

Visions are God's picture language to us. Visions come in two packages: *Open* and *close* visions. An open vision is one where the vision seems as real as anything else going on around us. Examples of open visions include Peter's trance:

The next day at about the sixth hour, as the men were approaching the city on their journey, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while the meal was being prepared, *he fell into a trance*. He saw heaven open and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, as well as birds of the air. Then a voice said to him: "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"²⁹⁰

Cornelius had a vision of an angel²⁹¹ and Ananias also had a vision.²⁹² In the Old Testament, examples of open visions can be found in Gen. 15:17, 15: 6-1, Ezra 1:1-3, Rev. 1:1ff and Zech. 1:1-8. A close vision, sometimes known as an *inner vision*, is just like an imagination translated into reality. Sometimes, they come like spontaneous deep imaginations but within the shortest possible space of time. Inner visions may happen in our dreams at night, sort of a *dream within a dream*, or in broad daylight.

²⁹⁰ Acts 10:9 – 13 (emphasis added).

²⁹¹ Acts 10:3

²⁹² Acts 9:10

Through Angels

God has spoken through angels. In fact, this was God's signature method of speaking in the Old Testament and part of the Early Church. An angel spoke to Gedeon: "The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.""²⁹³

An angel spoke to Daniel: "I heard the sound of his words, and as I listened, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, 'Daniel, you are a man who is highly precious. Carefully consider the words that I am about to say to you. Stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he had said this to me, I stood up trembling..."²⁹⁴

An angel spoke to Joseph: "But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'"²⁹⁵

An angle spoke to Mary: "The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.'"²⁹⁶

And the writer to the Hebrews conclude this way: "For if the message spoken by *angels was binding*, and every transgression and disobedience received its just punishment..."²⁹⁷

In legal parlance, a *binding* law or statement is meant to be followed and obeyed. A *persuasive* law or statement may only be selectively followed. A *distinguishable* law or statement is not followed. God's missives through angels were meant to be *binding*, as if God Himself was speaking.

God Speaks through His Word

This by far is the foremost way in which God has, still speaks and will speak to his children. God's word must be read thoughtfully,

²⁹³ Judges 6:11 and 12

²⁹⁴ Daniel 10:9-11

²⁹⁵ Matthew 1:20

²⁹⁶ Luke 1:28

²⁹⁷ Hebrews 2:2 (emphasis added).

consciously, obediently and prayerfully. The Word (The Bible) must be read every day. It must be read at important timings, such as early in the morning, at midday or late in the evening in a relaxed mood. Care should be taken not to rush through the Bible.

To be avoided should be the tendency towards ‘killing’ the mere guilty that one has actually read the Bible. Many times, as you read the Bible the Holy Spirit will highlight certain words and thoughts. That is why it is absolutely important to pray before reading the Bible. God uses the word to speak to both believers and non-believers. Hear God speak in His word. “However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come.”²⁹⁸

Précis

God has numerous other ways through which He speaks to people. He can do so through inspired songs during a worship service. God can use circumstances and situations. Because God treats us all differently, He may choose a situation peculiar to each one of us. Sometimes one can pass a comment or perform an act, which just uplifts you or points you to a fault. Other times even a conversation or a remark not initially intended for you could jump out to be a word for you from God. Just be sensitive. We now know that God speaks.

²⁹⁸ John 16:13

Chapter Review

Words and Phrases

- Attributes
- Binding
- Binding law
- Close vision
- Close-mindedness syndrome (CMS)
- Creator
- Dream
- Dream within a vision
- Gospel
- Hebraic gist
- Immanence
- Inner vision
- Jehovah-Shammah
- Omnific
- Omnipotence
- Omnipresence
- Omniscience
- Open vision
- Persuasive law
- Prayer habit
- Speak
- Trance
- Transcendence
- Vision

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Jehovah-Shammah means ____
 - E. God is there
 - F. God shall provide
 - G. God is our righteousness
 - H. God is all-knowing

2. The conception that God spoke in the past, that He is speaking in the present, and that He will continue to speak in future is termed ____
 - A. The Hebraic Gist
 - B. The Speaking God
 - C. The Gist
 - D. The Hebraic

3. Who chooses the media to speak through?
 - A. God
 - B. People
 - C. Pastors
 - D. Parents

4. The two methods of speech God may use to speak are ____
 - A. Directly or indirectly
 - B. Directly or by word of mouth
 - C. Indirectly or by using angels
 - D. Implied and explicitly

5. To be able to learn how God speaks, one must do all these, except ____
 - A. Cultivate a rich prayer habit
 - B. Be open
 - C. Know God's nature
 - D. Attend many churches

True/False Questions

1. The God who spoke in the Bible and the one who speaks to us directly are different. T/F
2. God sometimes defiles His own Word. T/F
3. Satan is pretty much reliable. T/F
4. God's voice is gentle. T/F
5. CMS stands for close-mindedness syndrome. T/F
6. Close-mindedness and clear-mindedness may mean the same thing. T/F
6. In obeying God's voice, feelings and emotions can be a blessing. T/F
7. The attribute of omnipotence, means that God has absolute power. T/F
8. The existence of God within tiny and minute formations is referred to as transcendence. T/F
9. Worship is not a form of prayer. T/F
10. God can speak through inspired dreams, but only if He wants to punish someone. T/F

Essay-type Questions

“Benjie is a young Christian who has been having challenges hearing from God. You have been a student of prayer where you learned about ways through which God speaks. Benjie strongly believes that the voices he is hearing in his head are confusing. He is not sure whether he is listening to God, the devil or from his own mind. Besides, when he was praying this morning, he saw something very clearly. It was a storm of rain which ended abruptly. He is not sure whether he was dreaming or he was in a trance when he saw it. It had happened very fast. Just before he left his home this morning, he was holding his Bible when it fell off his hand and automatically opened at Psalm 107:29, which read, ‘He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.’ He thinks that the storm he saw has something to do with this verse. Now he is completely confused and he comes to you for answers.”

1. Explain to Benjie about the Hebraic Gist.
2. Explain to Benjie the direct and indirect methods God uses to speak to people.
3. How can Benjie be sure that the voices he is hearing are from God?
4. Explain to Benjie how he can distinguish a dream from a vision (trance).
5. You believe strongly that Benjie needs to know how to hear when God speaks directly. What advice can you give him?

[1,500 words or less].

PART II

10 | LEGALITY OF PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be introduced to the grace formula
- You will be able to distinguish a promise from a right
- You will understand better the meaning of covenant
- You will meet the quintessential mediator
- You will learn about the skill of advocacy
- You will be introduced to the advocacy of Christ, and
- You will learn about the believers' rights

Introduction

This chapter introduces prayer as a believer's exercise of the divine right bequeathed to them by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Prayer is of right (a command), not only a privilege or power or an interest. It is this quality that makes prayer all-encompassing. The Lord Himself bequeathed such authority: "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you...Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you...And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."²⁹⁹

Grace Formula = Right + Power + Command

The words "authority," "power" or "right" are used interchangeably in both law and circular dialogues. Thus, the dictionary also defines authority as power or right: "The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience."³⁰⁰The Divine Deity (God) has declared that those for whom Jesus Christ died, have a right to receive everything they should desire. They can receive by means of a claim.

²⁹⁹ Luke 10:19; Matthew 7:7; John 14:13.

³⁰⁰ See "Right" from <<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>? (Accessed on January 23rd, 2022).

That makes prayer a legal exercise. It is a legal claim but not legalistic. The means by which the claim was effected was through the fulfilment of a redemptive promise, but the end was to institute a completely new regime based on grace. Thus, to advance the right to lay claim on God's promises, Christ had to die and fulfil a legal requirement, but to enjoy the benefits of redemption requires no legalism but pure grace.

Prayer has become an act of grace, "He will surely be gracious when you cry for help; when He hears, He will answer you."³⁰¹ However, to enable us to receive and enjoy prayer graciously, Christ had to fulfil the law, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them."³⁰² In other words, Christ instituted the Grace Dispensation by means of redemption, and we receive and appropriate its benefits legally. The right to prayer is ours by law and we enjoy its benefits by grace.

Believers in Christ have a right to all that Jesus Christ lived and died for. They have the authority to exercise their graciously given right. However, God in His great generosity (grace) also commands men everywhere to pray³⁰³ without ceasing.³⁰⁴ This grace can be compared to a parent who both prepares a delicious meal for her child and commands her to eat it. Or a doctor who combines a healing concoction for a very sick patient and commands him to take it. That is why it is of grace: God both takes the blame, offers salvation and also commands that those for whom He has done so participate in the blessings thus created.

A Promise v. a Right

Rights are akin to promises, except that the former is enforceable at law. Some scholars believe that there are 7,147 promises in the Bible.³⁰⁵ Bibleinfo puts that number at 3573.³⁰⁶ Others put the number at 8,810

³⁰¹ Isaiah 30:19

³⁰² Matthew 5:17

³⁰³ 1 Timothy 2:8

³⁰⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

³⁰⁵ See Chasing Vibrance, "Promises of God in the Bible to Claim Everyday," October 27th, 2020 < <https://chasingvibrance.com/promises-of-god-in-the-bible-to-claim-everyday/>>

³⁰⁶ Bibleinfo, "How many Bible promises are there?" <

<https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/how-many-bible-promises-are-there>> (Assessed on November 25th, 2021)

promises³⁰⁷ and still others at 5467 promises.³⁰⁸ And these promises range from the birth of Jesus Christ to His resurrection and to the end of the world and to the goodness of humanity.

The dictionary defines a promise as, “A declaration or assurance that one will do a particular thing or that a particular thing will happen,” or “A statement telling someone that you will definitely do something or that something will definitely happen in the future.”³⁰⁹ However, a right is defined as “an entitlement to something, whether to concepts like justice and due process or to ownership of property or some interest in property, real or personal.”³¹⁰

In law, a promise is not enforceable in the courts of law because it is not a legal contract, unless it falls under one of the two exceptions: If it is made under seal; or if it falls under promissory estoppel. A promise made under seal binds the official party who sealed it to do according as promised. A promissory estoppel, on the other hand, is a doctrine of common-law that states that, “A promise made without the exchange of consideration is binding and enforceable if: The defendant made a clear and unambiguous promise. The plaintiff acted in reliance on the defendant’s promise. The plaintiff’s reliance was reasonable and foreseeable. And the plaintiff suffered an injury due to reliance on the defendant’s promise.”³¹¹

It is clear that for a promise to be legally enforceable, the degree of derogation must have been of the highest threshold. In normal human and even divine interactions, such a threshold would be unattainable. Therefore, when God makes a promise, He is only bound by His divine prerogatives, namely, that He keeps His promises.³¹² And if God so desires or decides not to fulfil it, there is nothing humans can do. The reason is that a promise is only good if the promisor keeps the promise.

A right is different. The one who holds the right has the power under the law to make a claim. Prayer’s benefits have been bestowed upon us legally – because the requirements of prayer have been met

³⁰⁷ See Word International Ministries, Ontario

³⁰⁸ Bible Gateway, “Dictionary of bible themes – 5467 promises, divine,” < <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/5467-promises-divine>> (Assessed on November 25th, 2021)

³⁰⁹ Merriam-Webster, “Essential Meaning of promise,” < <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/promise>> (Assessed on November 25th, 2021)

³¹⁰ Dictionary.law.com, “Right.”

³¹¹ See the case of *Graham-Suit v. Clainos*, 756 F.3d 724, 749-50 (9th Cir. 2013)

³¹² See Joshua 21:45, Philipians 1:6, 2 Corinthians 1:20 and Romans 4:21.

through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Below, we will consider the process that brought us massive eternal benefits legally, at the promise of enjoying them graciously.

The Right-Based Prayer

Paul commands those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to, “pray without ceasing.”³¹³ Other translations render this verse as praying without stopping,³¹⁴ praying continually,³¹⁵ praying constantly,³¹⁶ praying and never stopping,³¹⁷ praying at all times,³¹⁸ and praying increasingly.³¹⁹ The strongest rendering is the requirement to pray at all times: “Pray in the Spirit *at all times*, with every kind of prayer and petition. To this end, stay alert with all perseverance in your prayers for all the saints.”³²⁰ The Lord Himself confirmed the need to pray always: “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”³²¹

These renditions commend believers to making prayer a lifestyle. Daniel serves as a good example of biblical characters who exemplified this concept of continuous praying; he prayed three times a day, and the assumption is that he might have prayed three times a day every day: “Now when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house, where the windows of his upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”³²²

God and the Covenants

Before He governs a people, God first enters into an agreement with them. This agreement is known as a covenant. A covenant is an

³¹³ 1 Thessalonians 5:17, English Standard Version

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Contemporary English Version; GOD’S WORD® Translation

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, New International Version; International Standard Version; Literal Standard Version; Literal Standard Version

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, NET Bible; Holman Christian Standard Bible; Christian Standard Bible

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, New Living Translation; Contemporary English Version; GOD’S WORD® Translation

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Good News Translation

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Berean Literal Bible

³²⁰ Ephesians 6:18 (Emphasis added)

³²¹ Luke 18:1

³²² Daniel 6:10

agreement, a contract. God's relationship between people at any point in time, is based on a contract but His treatment of them on a daily basis is based on grace. This entails permanency – because God cannot break His relationship with us. There are two broad covenants that God has made with His people: The Old Covenant (Testament) and the New Covenant (Testament). Both of these covenants are describes briefly below.

Old Covenant

First, there was the Noahic Covenant, which was with His general creation.³²³ Then, there was the Abrahamic Covenant, which was constituted into parts – for land promised to Israel and through circumcision, to multiply the Israelites in numbers.³²⁴ There was also the Mosaic Covenant, which consisted in Ten Commandments (or the *Decalogue*) and over 600 rules under the Laws of Moses – the over 600 commandments consisting about 365 negative commandments and about 248 positive commandments. Collectively, the Laws of Moses concerned the altar, slaves, violence, property, restitution, society and religion, justice, the Sabbath, animal festivals, Canaan, and blood covenants. Then, again, there was the Priestly Covenant, also known as Aaronic Priesthood.³²⁵ This covenant of “salt” was reserved for Aaron and his descendants forever. And last, there was the Davidic Covenant or the Royal Covenant.³²⁶ It was to establish David's dynasty perpetually based on the letter and spirit of the Abrahamic Covenant.

New Covenant

The New Covenant is encapsulated in the idea of the Kingdom of God. It is interpreted in eschatological terms, and in that regard, it transcends the present and finds its efficacy into the future or the world to come.³²⁷ It was announced at the Last Supper and was not to come into effect until the binding force, the blood of the Lamb was shed at Calvary: “And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my

³²³ See Genesis 9:1–17

³²⁴ See Genesis 12–17

³²⁵ See Numbers 18:19

³²⁶ See 2 Samuel 7

³²⁷ See Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Hebrews 2:5; and Hebrews 6:5.

blood.”³²⁸ It was, thus, inaugurated at Christ’s resurrection and became a bond in blood sovereignly administered by God.³²⁹

Covenants as Testaments

Both the old and new covenants are also referred to as testaments. However, it is the New Testament that exemplifies the legal view of a testament, which is a will left after the death of a testator. A testament is a will left by a person with instructions of their wishes of how their estate is to be distributed to beneficiaries after their death.

The first covenant God had with the Hebrew nation was defective; it had been tainted by sin. The blood of animals was used as proof before God that death had been confirmed. God wanted to find a man (holy, blameless and sinless) to enter with him into a new covenant. But “for all [had] sinned and [fallen] short of the glory of God.”³³⁰ But the blood of animals did not have the requisite power to cleanse sin: “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”³³¹ Therefore, the Old Testament was temporary, or acted as a schoolmaster preparing would-be recipients of redemption for the real sacrifice to permanently take away the sins of the world.³³² Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.³³³

The difficulty was in finding such an animal or a person who would be blameless and would be able to take away the sins of the world and also to be a qualified representative to mediate the New Covenant. Through an act of love and grace, God had no other option, but to become such a Man. So, He “became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”³³⁴

And not only that, “He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”³³⁵ In this state, as Man (on behalf of men), God had finally found a Man with whom He could enter into a permanent covenant.

³²⁸ Luke 22:20

³²⁹ See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1980)

³³⁰ Romans 3:23

³³¹ Hebrews 10:4

³³² Galatians 3:24

³³³ John 1:29

³³⁴ John 1:14

³³⁵ Philippians 2:7

As mentioned, the permanent agreement was to be covenanted through blood: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”³³⁶ In this New Covenant, God on one side and us (through Christ) on the other, sin had permanently been dealt with. It restored the once *paradise lost* into a new *heaven gained*. And as a human High Priest (who came in the order of Melchizedek),³³⁷ Christ “did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”³³⁸ Our freedom (redemption) was, thus, completed; it is now permanent.

Christ has achieved the impossible. First, there was no human who was sinless; Christ became one. Second, in one stroke, Christ became both the representative Man, and also the mediator to link God with men.

Remember that even in our own legal traditions, there is no need for a mediator unless there is more than one party involved in a dispute. The Bible is clear on this, too: “A mediator is unnecessary, however, for only one party; but God is one.”³³⁹ Christ stands as a mediator for two parties – God and us. For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.³⁴⁰

The above reference is detailing. In the first place, it emphasizes the legal nature of the covenants, i.e. “promised eternal inheritance.” In degree, this inheritance is superior to human inheritances in the sense that it is eternal. In the second place, the inheritance is guaranteed, i.e. “now that he has died...” In law, a will is unenforceable unless the testator dies. And in the third place, the former covenant was ineffective, i.e. “as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” If the first covenant was effective, there would be no need for the second covenant. Christ now mediates the New Covenant.

³³⁶ Matthew 26:28

³³⁷ See Hebrews 5:6

³³⁸ Hebrews 9:12

³³⁹ Galatians 3:20

³⁴⁰ Hebrews 9:15

Mediation Impossible without Christ

Christ plays a role not found in human mediation mechanisms. He is the only one who qualifies to mediate in this redemption story. In the English legal system, it is, generally, understood that one cannot be both a mediator and a witness in the same matter.

The reason is because of potential conflict of interest and a reasonable apprehension of bias. A mediator by definition is a go-between, that is, an internunciator, or a reconciler. Total independence and impartiality are required for the mediation to have any pursuance.

However, Christ's mediatorship has a special place. In legal mediation, the parties can choose a mediator together, or one party may choose a mediator. In case of where both parties mutually choose a mediator, both parties will bear the cost of mediation.

In situations where only one party chooses a mediator, the party which chose the mediator bears the cost of mediation. Some mediations are statutory, and in those situations, the law would have apportioned the cost burden bearer.

In some contractual mediation (akin to covenantal mediation), the terms of mediation would have been set in a contract.

A covenantal mediation is based on an exception to the rule. Because for a covenant to be binding, the stronger party must sign it under seal. Similarly, under a covenant, "it is the superior party who places himself under oath. The oaths...involve a situation wherein the inferior party delivers the animals while the superior party swears the oath."³⁴¹ Unlike under the Old Testament, in the New Testament, the superior both provided the sacrifice and placed Himself under oath – making this one of the rarest covenants in the entire creation. In the divine mediation, God sponsored the mediation and accepted a payment through blood. Christ, is, therefore, able to both stand as mediator and witness but for different purposes.

He is a mediator to the covenant. In other words, He mediates the covenant: "Now, however, Jesus has received a much more excellent ministry, just as the covenant He mediates is better and is founded on better promises,"³⁴² and "...to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant,

³⁴¹ "Covenant," < [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_\(biblical\)#cite_note-23](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_(biblical)#cite_note-23)> (Accessed on January 23rd, 2022).

³⁴² Hebrews 8:6

and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”³⁴³

And Christ is the appointed arbiter of the New Covenant because of one quality earthly mediators do not possess; He died – thus, completed the process – and He rose again (resurrected) – thus, acquiring a new role altogether, that of a witness as well. And the extent of mediation is in this wise: “Therefore, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that He has died to redeem them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”³⁴⁴

Mediation Possible with a Sinless Human Conciliator

In Christ, God achieved another fit, He reconciled us back to Him: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”³⁴⁵

Reconciliation is the process of re-uniting once enemies into friends. And this is also akin to State-sponsored conciliation: It was God who sponsored the reconciliation process using the only one who could represent man, Christ.

In that conciliation process, Christ has an added role, that of humanity’s advocate or lawyer: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate before the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”³⁴⁶

Remember that what initially separated us from God and made us His enemy, was sin. Christ dealt with sin in redemption and as a conciliator, “He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.”³⁴⁷ In ancient times, God had lamented, “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”³⁴⁸

³⁴³ Hebrews 12:24

³⁴⁴ Hebrews 9:15

³⁴⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

³⁴⁶ 1 John 2:1

³⁴⁷ Hebrews 7:25

³⁴⁸ Ezekiel 22:30

But, thankfully, in the fullness of time, God found Christ, and we are the beneficiaries. Having redeemed us, God reconciled us back to Himself as friends: “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”³⁴⁹ Reconciliation moved us from just being forgiven into being God’s friends.

Then God did another fit unimaginable; He adopted us (reconciled as friends, then adopting us as His children) as sons: “For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence. *In love* He predestined us for adoption as His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the Beloved One.”³⁵⁰ Adoption is more than just an act of grace; it is, primarily, an act of love.

Redemption is key to our salvation. But it came with added benefits. First, reconciliation and then adoption. “But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”³⁵¹ And with adoption, God has become our Father.

And even more beneficial, now we have an inheritance through Christ, because only children receive an inheritance from their fathers: “We have also received an inheritance in Christ.”³⁵²

You see child of God; redemption was a legal act. Reconciliation is a political or social act. But adoption is a matter of the heart; it is love: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are.”³⁵³ Henceforth, our relationship with God has become one of love, not of duty or convenience.

When you hear someone say, “It is all because of Jesus Christ,” it actually means just that. From redemption, to reconciliation, to adoption, it is all possible because of Christ. In redemption, sin is dealt

³⁴⁹ Romans 5:10

³⁵⁰ Ephesians 1:5 (emphasis added)

³⁵¹ Galatians 4:5

³⁵² Ephesians 1:11

³⁵³ 1 John 3:1

with. In reconciliation, enmity is dealt with. And in adoption, we now have a Father.

Of course, none of this happened perchance, God had predestined it to be so: “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”³⁵⁴

In other words, we have inherited glory as God’s children: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”³⁵⁵

In Christ, our inheritance is sure – because Christ protects the proceeds of redemption by standing in three concurrent offices: As a mediator, witness and advocate. This fit cannot be achieved by anybody, except Him who firstly, lived, secondly, died, and thirdly, He lives again.

Prayer as an Exercise in Christ’s Advocacy

In the Bible we read, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”³⁵⁶ Apostle John, in his old age, had come to understanding the real meaning of love. He had also come to a critical realization that sinning is inevitable, but with good news. Those who sin have an advocate in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is humanity’s quintessential lawyer – who stands before God pleading for their weaknesses and sins. He is able to make and resolve every case that is brought before the Father on behalf of the humans. Unlike human attorneys (also known as lawyers or advocates), Jesus is also a witness in their defence. He lived, died, and lives again.

This, in essence, means that He can vouch for them as the one who took away their sins and presented the evidence of His own blood before His Father, whom the Scripture calls, “The Great Judge.” In this sermon, we consider the following three points: The nature of Jesus’ advocacy; the frequency of Jesus’ advocacy; and the result of Jesus’ advocacy.

³⁵⁴ Romans 8:30

³⁵⁵ Romans 8:17

³⁵⁶ 1 John 2:1

The Nature of Jesus' Advocacy

God is the Judge: "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us."³⁵⁷ There are four characteristics that every judge must possess: Objective-open-mindedness (not being biased); fairness; independence (an impartial judge);³⁵⁸ and decisiveness. However, any judge who also adds righteousness to these qualities, is a rare gift in any justice system. God is said to be a righteous judge: "God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath every day."³⁵⁹ This means that God cannot be bribed, and neither does He fall for human intrigues and innuendos.

The quality of righteousness in judgeship, also means that wrong will be punished and good will be rewarded. We know that God does not side with evil, and anyone who considers what is evil to be good is said to be cursed: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."³⁶⁰ And God does not change in regard to this: "'I the LORD do not change."³⁶¹ This, essentially, means that when we sin, we must be punished. For there are only two possibilities – it is either we change and behave good to avert God's wrath and punishment, or God changes and overlooks our evil.

Since, as established, God does not change, it remained that we changed and did good to be saved. However, we were incapable of doing good. God, to save humanity, did not change but He transformed Himself into a man.³⁶² As a substitute man, He incurred God's wrath on the Cross to save humanity: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."³⁶³ The salvation, thus, secured, is total: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."³⁶⁴ But it requires positive acceptance for this gift to be effective. Those who reject God's

³⁵⁷ Isaiah 33:22

³⁵⁸ See 1 Peter 1:17

³⁵⁹ Psalm 7:11

³⁶⁰ Isaiah 5:20

³⁶¹ Malachi 3:6

³⁶² See John 1:14 and Philipians 2:8 ff

³⁶³ 1 Peter 2:24; also see Hebrews 12:2 or Romans 5:8

³⁶⁴ 1 Peter 3:18

offer of salvation will still incur God's wrath.³⁶⁵ Those who accept God's free gift of salvation – or Jesus Christ – remain righteous before God because of the advocacy work of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit actioned process of sanctification.

With regard to sin, God's wrath still burns. This quality makes God fearful: "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"³⁶⁶ And again, "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!"³⁶⁷ However, the fear of God is also the basis of His mercy: "And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation."³⁶⁸ In other words, those who fear, a *fearful* God, can also access His mercy. This balance is what has preserved God's just rule for millennia. Like God, a good judge should have both wrath and love. Mercy has no value without wrath. Possessing only one without the other, makes justice a mockery.

The balance between wrath and love is called righteousness. God's throne is founded on righteousness: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne."³⁶⁹ This wrath/love combination of God's throne, makes advocacy there a challenge for weak, immoral, and frail humanity. Only Jesus Christ possesses the requisite character and quality to advocate before the throne of God.

The thing that separated humanity from God was sin. Christ lived His entire earthly life without sin, yet God made Him sin: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."³⁷⁰ That simply means that Christ bore all our sins and that sin was dealt with once and for all. And yet, there was no sin found in Jesus: "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."³⁷¹ There is just no sin in Him, but He never sinned as well: "Who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."³⁷² He did not just sin, not because He had no opportunity to sin, He was tempted like us but He overcame all temptations: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched

³⁶⁵ See John 3:16

³⁶⁶ Exodus 15:11

³⁶⁷ Psalm 33:8

³⁶⁸ Luke 1:50

³⁶⁹ Psalms 89:14

³⁷⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:21

³⁷¹ 1 John 3:5

³⁷² 1 Peter 2:22

with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”³⁷³

Thus, only Jesus is qualified to appear before a righteous God on our behalf. There is no accusation brought by Satan (accuser of the brethren)³⁷⁴ that can tilt the scale against man. And the reason is simple, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”³⁷⁵ The authority to represent those who are in Him, came from Jesus’ redemption work on the Cross: “Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is there to condemn us? For Christ Jesus, who died, and more than that was raised to life, is at the right hand of God— and He is interceding for us.”³⁷⁶ Our lawyer in heaven is Jesus Christ, and the authority to represent us was duly earned through His suffering, death and resurrection. No insinuations, no innuendos, no frivolity, and no accusatory oratory of Satan can win against Christ’s advocacy on our behalf.

The Frequency of Jesus’ Advocacy

The power and joy of Jesus’ advocacy rests on this verse: “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”³⁷⁷ The phrase, “lives to intercede for them,” indicates ministry. Jesus Christ’s ministry or vocation is that of a lawyer. That is the job He currently occupies in Heaven. The denotation in the present tense means that He does this frequently, basically, always. The Bible also says that He is at God’s right hand, “interceding for us.”³⁷⁸ This is denoted in the present-continuous tense – meaning that Jesus Christ undertakes this ministry continuously. He never takes a break; He never goes on vacation. He is always representing us.

The Result of Jesus’ Advocacy

There are numerous benefits or results of Jesus Christ advocating on our behalf. Only five will be offered in this discourse. First, Satan’s

³⁷³ Hebrews 4:15

³⁷⁴ Revelation 12:10

³⁷⁵ Romans 8:1

³⁷⁶ Romans 8: 33-34

³⁷⁷ Hebrews 7:25

³⁷⁸ Romans 8:34

weapon against us fail: “No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD.”³⁷⁹

Second, after Christ took over this duty in heaven, no longer is Satan a convincing force against believers: “Then the angel showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan: ‘The LORD rebukes you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you! Is not this man a firebrand snatched from the fire?’ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy garments as he stood before the angel.”³⁸⁰ Joshua did not have victory because he stood before God in his own filth. Not now, not anymore. Now, we stand before God through Christ. God sees Christ when we go before Him. Paul prayed, “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name.”³⁸¹ Paul calls the people of God, a “family.” We are adopted into the family of God. We have now intrinsic authority.

Third, we now appear before God within the authority of Jesus Christ and of our membership in God’s family: “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”³⁸² We are no longer outsiders; we belong to the family of God, as such, we have privileges, rights, and authority.

Fourth, Jesus Christ accepts to represent us free of charge and at all times: “All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”³⁸³ In our earthly affairs, sometimes lawyers are too expensive to represent our interests. Not with Christ, His services are free, and He is available to everyone who needs such legal or advocacy work. He invites, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”³⁸⁴ And He assures, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”³⁸⁵

³⁷⁹ Isaiah 54:17

³⁸⁰ Zechariah 3:2

³⁸¹ Ephesians 3:14-15

³⁸² Luke 10:19

³⁸³ John 6:37

³⁸⁴ Matthew 11:28

³⁸⁵ John 14:13

And fifth, Jesus Christ’s lawyering sets those He represents free: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”³⁸⁶ In other words, Jesus Christ wins all the time. Those He sets free must know they are free, then they will be free, indeed: “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”³⁸⁷ This freedom, defeats Satan and death: “For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set you free from the law of sin and death.”³⁸⁸ We are no longer slaves of any man or Satan; we have become slaves of Christ and of righteousness: “For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman. Conversely, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave.”³⁸⁹ Know this freedom, and stand firm, established in it: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be encumbered once more by a yoke of slavery.”³⁹⁰ How amazing this victory, freedom and advocacy. To Jesus be all the glory.

The new ministry Jesus Christ undertakes on our behalf includes lawyering for us. He represents our spiritual interests before the judgment seat of God. In Christ, we have had mercy, and, therefore, we are triumphant in both death and judgment. And this is literally, we will not be harmed by the Judgment Day – we have passed from death to life. All this is through Christ, our great advocate.

This intercessory³⁹¹ ministry of Jesus Christ also preserves the accrue-ment of His works of redemption. Christ is a good investor – He does not abandon His investments to chance. He protects His investments and secures their good fortune and profit. He lives for us, and if we sin, we have a ready and available advocate. This way, sin is purged continually. Our role is an easy one – to report to Him so He can open a ticket with the Father. All we have to do is confess and ask for forgiveness each time we sin. Child of God, do not become tired of asking for forgiveness, because He does not become tired of advocating for you. This, too, is a manifestation of His grace – even where sin abounds, His grace just goes further. Jesus, has single-handedly transformed God’s judgment seat into a throne of mercy. Yes, in Christ alone and to Him be all the glory, amen.

³⁸⁶ John 8:36

³⁸⁷ John 8:32

³⁸⁸ Romans 8:2

³⁸⁹ 1 Corinthians 7:22

³⁹⁰ Galatians 5:1

³⁹¹ See Part III for a sustained discussion on Intercessory Prayer

The Believers' Rights

Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it.³⁹²

Christ made a statement of fact. It is a finished assignment and those who believe in Him are one hundred percent entitled to its efficacy. Christ stands to both back His promises and enforce the right bequeathed to believers through His death and resurrection. God must answer prayer or respond to His redeemed people's authoritative commands made in the name of Jesus Christ for the Father to be glorified. God must, legally, receive a request through prayer to, graciously, provide for its demands as answer to prayer. When believers pray, they operationize God to work on their behalf.

Précis

Prayer is the appropriation of redemptive benefits into a rich and reciprocal relation between the Father and His children. It is rooted in a legally bequeathed gift of grace – so that those who pray, must bear in mind that through Christ's redemption, they have authority to lay claim to God's promises, but through grace, they have access to all benefits bestowed upon them. Such benefits include salvation from sin, peace, protection, power, various needs and spiritual inheritance, among many.

³⁹² John 14:12-14

Chapter Review

Words and Phrases

- Adoption
- Advocacy
- Believers' rights
- Conciliation
- Covenants
- Defendant
- Grace formula
- Great Judge
- Internunciator
- Judgment Day
- Lawyer
- Mediation
- Mediator
- Millenia
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Plaintiff
- Promise
- Promissory estoppel
- Reconciler
- Reconciliation
- Redemption
- Rights

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Even though prayer is a grace, it is also a ____
 - A. Right
 - B. Privilege
 - C. Promise
 - D. All of the above

2. Believers in Christ can lay claim to the promises of God on account of ____
 - A. Death of Christ
 - B. Resurrection of Christ
 - C. Death and resurrection of Christ
 - D. All of the above

3. The Grace Formula may be explicated as ____
 - A. Right + Power + Command
 - B. Right + Power
 - C. Right + Command
 - D. Command + Power

4. As a grace, prayer can be compared to all these, except ____
 - A. A parent who both prepares a delicious meal for her child and commands her to eat it.
 - B. A doctor who combines a healing concoction for a very sick patient and commands him to take it.
 - C. A police officer who orders a motorist to disembark from his car
 - D. A pastor who spend an hour preparing a sermons and delivers it to his congregation in thirty minutes.

5. How many promises are in the Bible?
 - A. 5000
 - B. 7,147
 - C. 8,899
 - D. 5487

6. Praying without ceasing may mean all these, except ____
 - A. Without stopping
 - B. Continually
 - C. At all times
 - D. Sometimes

7. The fact that God deals with us both legally and graciously entail ____
 - A. That His relationship with people cannot be broken by Him
 - B. Permanency
 - C. Consistency
 - D. All of the above

8. All these were implied in the Old Covenant, except ____
 - A. Noahic Covenant
 - B. Abrahamic Covenant
 - C. Mosaic Covenant
 - D. New Covenant

9. The Davidic Covenant was also known as ____
 - A. Royal Covenant
 - B. Covenant of Redemption
 - C. Covenant of Grace
 - D. Covenant of Works

PRAYER

10. All these may mean the same thing, except ____
- A. Mediator
 - B. Internunciator
 - C. Reconciler
 - D. Adjudicator

True/False Questions

1. A testament is a will left by a person with instructions of their wishes of how their estate is to be distributed to beneficiaries after their death. T/F
2. A permanent agreement must be covenanted through blood. T/F
3. There is no need for a mediator unless there is more than one party involved in a dispute. T/F
4. Believers' inheritance is guaranteed. T/F
5. A will is unenforceable unless the testator dies. T/F
6. In English law, one cannot be both a mediator and a witness in the same matter. T/F
7. Adoption is both an act of grace and of love. T/F
8. Redemption necessitates reconciliation and adoption. T/F
9. Redemption is a legal act while reconciliation is a political or social act. T/F
10. A judge must be objectively open-minded, fair, independent, and decisive. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss the advocacy of Christ in relation to prayer. Use Scripture reference.

[500 words or less]

2. List and discuss the four characteristics that every judge must possess. Relate these to God as a Judge.

[250 words or less].

3. “Mercy has no value without wrath.” Discuss.

[250 words or less].

4. Discuss the concept of family by reference to adoption and inheritance bequeathed to believers in Christ Jesus.

[500 words or less].

5. “Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it,” (John 14:12-14).

Discuss a believer’s right in view of this passage of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

11 | RECEIVING UNDER LAW AND GRACE

At the end of this chapter

- You will understand the distinction between receiving under the Law and the New Testament
- You will realize that the plan of God was to usher in Grace
- You will learn about the meaning of a gift, and
- You will be able to identify the four factors of prayer and receiving

Introduction

God treated people's requests in prayer in different ways in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In this chapter, the Law Dispensation (Dispensation of Law or "Law") will be treated together with the Old Testament (OT). And the Grace Dispensation (Dispensation of Grace or "Grace") is synonymous with the New Testament (NT). However, strictly speaking, prayer and receiving under Law and Grace, respectively, transcend both the OT and the NT. God's treatment of prayer and receiving, even in the OT, was pointing to the time when God would accept people unconditionally and offer answers to prayer spontaneously.

Grace in Prayer Prophesied

Isaiah, an OT prophet prophesied about grace in prayer, thus, "How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you."³⁹³ The allusion to grace meant that even if Isaiah was an OT prophet, he had foretold the NT times. God would be gracious and He would answer those who prayed without them having to make sacrifices. Isaiah, similarly, prophesied, "O LORD, be *gracious* to us! We wait for You. Be our strength every morning and our salvation in time of trouble."³⁹⁴ In this verse, the House of Israel desires grace and

³⁹³ Isaiah 30:19

³⁹⁴ Isaiah 33:2 (emphasis added)

fortitude and protection but also is patiently willing to wait for it. However, in the ensuing passage, God both invites the Houses of Israel and Judah to pray and to receive “the gracious promise.” And in this we find the distinction between prayer under Law and prayer under Grace. In the former, the answer to prayer was conditional, while in the later, it is an invitation. The passage illustrates:

While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it, the LORD is His name: Call to Me, and I will answer and show you great and unsearchable things you do not know. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the houses of this city and the palaces of the kings of Judah that have been torn down for defense against the siege ramps and the sword: The Chaldeans are coming to fight and to fill those places with the corpses of the men I will strike down in My anger and in My wrath. I have hidden My face from this city because of all its wickedness. Nevertheless, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal its people and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. I will restore Judah and Israel from captivity and will rebuild them as in former times. And I will cleanse them from all the iniquity they have committed against Me, and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against Me. So, this city will bring Me renown, joy, praise, and glory before all the nations of the earth, who will hear of all the good I do for it. They will tremble in awe because of all the goodness and prosperity that I will provide for it. This is what the LORD says: In this place you say is a wasteland without man or beast, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted—inhabited by neither man nor beast—there will be heard again the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of the bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those bringing thank offerings into the house of the LORD, saying: ‘Give thanks to the LORD of Hosts, for the LORD is good; His loving devotion endures forever.’ For I will restore the land from captivity as in former times, says the LORD. This is what the LORD of Hosts says: In this desolate place, without man or beast, and in all its cities, there will once more be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. In the cities of the hill country, the foothills, and the Negev, in the land of Benjamin and the cities surrounding Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD. Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD,

when I will fulfill *the gracious promise* that I have spoken to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.³⁹⁵

Jeremiah uses the language of grace in Chapter 33 (“Chapter 33 Promises”). There is no condition and God will “answer” when the people heed the invitation to call upon God. But Jeremiah uses the language of law in Chapter 29 (“Chapter 29 Promises”), thus, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope. *Then* you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will *listen* to you. You will seek Me and find Me *when* you search for Me with all your heart.”³⁹⁶ Here, prayer is not an invitation; it is a condition. God sets a pre-condition – which includes a prosperity and peace plan. He also promises to “listen” and to be found. However, a prosperity and peace plan is only available if they seek Him with their heart. And, of course, in Chapter 33 God would “answer” them when they call but He would only “listen” to them if they call in Chapter 29.

The good news is that Chapter 33 Promises were fulfilled through Jesus Christ: “For the law was given through Moses; *grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*”³⁹⁷ Believers in Christ are invited to pray and to graciously receive all the blessings available to them in the spiritual places.³⁹⁸ And this is not as a result of a pre-condition attached, but it is purely a gift.³⁹⁹

Four Factors of Prayer and Receiving

The dynamic of prayer and receiving in the OT (Law) were premised on four factors, which the coming of Jesus Christ flipped. The key portion of Scripture which illustrates this dynamic is as follows:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no

³⁹⁵ Jeremiah 33:1-14 (emphasis added)

³⁹⁶ Jeremiah 29:11-13 (emphasis added)

³⁹⁷ John 1:17 (emphasis added)

³⁹⁸ Ephesians 1:13

³⁹⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9

longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.⁴⁰⁰

Partial fulfilment

First, there was a partial fulfilment before the fulness of time came. The OT (Law) was the partial fulfillment of God's will and desire. It was allowed, with its flaws and imperfections, to regulate that period of time. It was not God's permanent plan as much as it was His improvised plan leading to a more permanent regime. It functioned, but God wanted an idea gracious regiment to supersede the legalistic arrangement that the Bible says acted as a school principal: "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."⁴⁰¹ Therefore, the OT (Law) was a dispensation of deeds, of works and of deserving. It was a temporary arrangement which was replaced when Jesus Christ came to earth, God in human form. Giving and receiving was a matter of conditions. If something was done or accomplished, then a request was administered. God prescribed some conditionality and humans met those conditions to be either accepted or blessed or receive.

God-man legal relationship

Second, the relationship between the supplicants and the Deity was based "God-man" relationship. God related to people through His title, His position, not relationally but legally. Within this system God also related to people by His name – Yahweh or Jehovah or the LORD – but never as their Father: "I am *Yahweh*, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols."⁴⁰² The connection between God and people was contractual, legal.

Human or inanimate agency

Third, confirmation was based on human agency, not on direct divine intervention. In other words, people prayed to God through a priest or indirectly, via a physical connection. God responded through

⁴⁰⁰ Galatians 4:4-7 (English Standard Version)

⁴⁰¹ Galatians 3:24 (New King James Version)

⁴⁰² Isaiah 42:8; Exodus 3:14

human actors such as priests or prophets or earthly phenomenon. So, God would use anything and anybody to communicate to people. This has now changed. God has stationed the Holy Spirit right in the inside of human hearts. God speaks directly to the human conscience through the Holy Spirit. The concept of promptings or *entugchano* is the right-gear approach to the giving and receiving affairs between the Father and the adopted children.

The family connection

And fourth, God now is the Father to His people, and does not relate to them via position or titles. They belong to and are part of His family. Paul prayed "...for this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name..."⁴⁰³ In other words, "prayer and receiving" is no longer based on master-slave or employer-employee or boss-servant or suppliant-recipient relationships; it is based on family love and God entitles His people to calling Him as Abba.

Précis

God's Word, whether in the Law Period or the Grace Period, it is still sharper, hence, the meaning of two-edged sword. During the Law Period, God's Word (and by extension, prayer) was sharp with pre-conditions attached. However, during the Grace Period or Dispensation, God's Word and prayer are powerful and can be received unconditionally. All believers are invited to pray, and God will answer, because "The prayer of a righteous [saved by grace through faith] person is powerful and effective."

⁴⁰³ Ephesians 3:14-15

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Abba
- Chapter 29 Promises
- Chapter 33 Promises
- Connection
- Family
- Gift
- Grace dispensation
- Grace period
- Jehovah
- LORD
- Prayer and receiving
- Yahweh

Multiple-choice Questions

11. The word “conditional” is synonymous with ____

- I. Grace
- J. Law
- K. Moses
- L. Chapter 33 Promises

12. The word “unconditional” is synonymous with ____

- M. Grace
- N. Law
- O. Moses
- P. Chapter 33 Promises

PRAYER

Questions 3 to 5 are based on the following prayer:

Isaiah prayed: "O LORD, be gracious to us! We wait for You. Be our strength every morning and our salvation in time of trouble," (Isaiah 33:2)

13. This prayer was one of seeking after ____
- A. Grace
 - B. Fortitude
 - C. Protection
 - D. All of the above
14. What is implied in this prayer?
- A. Fortitude
 - B. Patience
 - C. Grace
 - D. Protection
15. All these are requisitioned in this prayer, except ____
- A. Fortitude
 - B. Patience
 - C. Grace
 - D. Protection

True/False Questions

- 1. Isaiah foretold the grace dispensation. T/F
- 2. Under Grace, prayer was conditional. T/F
- 3. Under Law, prayer was invitational. T/F
- 4. Chapter 33 Promises are of grace. T/F

5. Chapter 29 Promises are of law. T/F
6. Chapter 33 Promises have been fulfilled through Jesus Christ.
T/F
7. Believers in Christ are invited to pray and to legally receive all the blessings available to them in the spiritual places.
T/F
8. Jesus Christ was born under law. T/F
9. Jesus Christ was born of a woman. T/F
10. There was a partial fulfilment of grace before the fulness of time came. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and discuss the five factors of prayer and receiving.
[500 words or less].
2. Define Chapter 33 promises.
[250 words or less].
3. Define Chapter 29 promises.
[250 words or less].

12 | PRINCIPLES OF RECEIVING

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the PAR principle
- You will learn about the Law of Importunity
- You will understand the reason why a right inward attitude is essential to receiving, and
- You will appreciate the need for a correct outward posture

Introduction

Receiving from God is an art. By art we mean skill or the ability (to receive well). The skill of receiving from God is vital specially to mature believers in the Lord. Young believers have no problem receiving from God because they do not doubt; they simply grab God by His word. Yet, receiving at whatever level of maturity is critical to the enjoyment of prayer. In our definition of prayer, we have already established that it involves at least an exchange of information or ideas. In requests and petitions, we deal with all aspects of asking from God. But our asking is futile if we have not mastered the art of receiving. Many people find it too hard to receive from God. In this chapter, principles that may make it possible and easier to know how to receive from God are discussed.

Prayer and Receiving

Prayer is more than just asking. Answers to prayer must be appropriated. God does answer prayer. The same time spent teaching people about how to ask must also be spent teaching them on how to receive. Receiving from God is as much an integral part of prayer as asking.

When this author learned how to receive from God, his prayer life improved tremendously and his faith in Him was strengthened. There are elements and guiding principles that ought to be internalized to be able to receive from God. After grasping these fundamental truths, one's prayer time and life should be energized.

The Principle of Active Receptivity (PAR)

Receiving from God could be both passive and active. Passive reception is when we believe it is not our concern to know how God does the giving. So, we rest knowing that He who has promised is faithful. Our role here is simply to ask and forget. This is known as passive receptivity.

Spiritually speaking, all that we do when we want to receive, say salvation, is to put our faith in God. We do this, too, when we want to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Fine. But then there comes times when we need to go beyond this and demand more than just salvation and spiritual gifts.

As mature believers, we should not be content to thinking just about needs. God is able to supply whatever we need automatically, but He can also supply every want we petition Him for. Positionally speaking, we have all things in Christ.⁴⁰⁴ We can never add anything to what Jesus has done for us on the cross through His redemptive work. In fact, the Bible teaches that we have all spiritual blessings embedded in Christ Jesus in the heavenly places.⁴⁰⁵

Passive receptivity has its own limitations. However, God Himself would love us to add some persistence to our receiving; receiving from God at all costs. This is what we call the *Principle of Active Receptivity (PAR)*. The question is not: Does God answer prayer, but rather, do we know how to appropriate our answered prayers? The good news is that God has already given us all that we asked for; and the bad news is that we have not picked up our parcel. So, how does PAR work? Below are the three laws of PAR.

Three Laws of PAR

The Law of Importunity

Importunity is persistence. Jesus teaches that prayer goes beyond simply asking. Jesus says that when we ask, we receive, no strings attached: “Ask and it will be given to you; Seek, and you will find;

⁴⁰⁴ Check Ephesians 1:3

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Knock and the door will be opened.”⁴⁰⁶ This verse is not just a nice poetical arrangement of words; it has the entire essence of joy in prayer. The verse says that when you ask, it will be given to you. This implies that there is someone who is doing the giving. We all think that that someone is God, but that is partly true. The whole truth is that men shall give to us, too. People will be prompted by the giving God to provide to us, because they cannot do otherwise. Thus, while asking may be done in secret, receiving may involve a third party. And the rationale is that God is Spirit; to answer our prayer, He needs a medium.

So, we have a blank check before us: Ask, and it will be given to you. Isn't that beautiful? What if we don't receive the first time we pray? Should we give up? The answer is NO. Jesus says, “Go ahead and seek, son or daughter.”

What Jesus is letting us know is the idea that there are some actions needed on our part. What Jesus is teaching is that we are as much involved in the receiving as we were in the asking. So, He says, “Seek, and you shall find.”

Those who fail are those who do not seek. They sit waiting for some miracle to outwork themselves. When you ask for a job, one shall be given to you. When you seek for a job, you will find it. When you go looking for a job God says you are in the right track. Because those who seek, they shall find. Similarly, if you need a wife, you must go seeking for her. You do not just ask; you also do the seeking. For sure, she will be hidden somewhere. It is only when you seek for her that she shall be found. When you ask God for a woman (or a man), they is already provided and it is your duty to find them. This entails the application of wisdom, knowledge and skill on your part.

If seeking was active, then knocking is much more. Knocking is our duty but opening of the door is somebody else's. The blessing is not in knocking, but knocking at the right door. That is when asking first from God becomes absolutely necessary. After asking, be then sensitive to receiving. If you have asked God and then you go to be bed expecting to receive, you may have some chance. However, when we ask, we must also be actively involved in the appropriation of the answers. God will use anyone and anything to fulfill the request, but we must be sensitive to know when that happens.

⁴⁰⁶ Matthew 7:7

Knocking is action, and this entails persisting with the request until it is answered. This point is excellently illustrated below:

And he said to them, which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he shall answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now closed, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is a friend, yet because of his *persistence* he will rise and give him as many as he needs.⁴⁰⁷

In the Book of Luke, this lesson precedes the one we have just quoted in Matthew above. This means that the Matthew 7:7 is a principle arriving from the Luke 11:5-8. Notice that persistence is a norm rather than an exception in the art of receiving from God. Persistence is not lack of faith; it is the re-energization of faith.

Persistence is necessary in order to receive from God or men. Receiving is not for quitters. Receiving is for those who persist. In the story above, we learned that the petitioner had his request granted not because he was in good books with his friend but simply because he had persisted. Had he knocked only once and stopped, he wouldn't have gone with all that he wanted. We need to persist.

Some people teach that it is not necessary to persist because Jesus has done it all. The verse used to support this is Eph.1:3, which reads: "*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 Jesus."⁴⁰⁸ The word "bless" or "blessing" is used three times in this verse, and each time it means something else.

For example, the first *blessed* means "adorable," the next one means, "spoken well of, or invoked benedictions upon," and the last one, *blessing*, actually means prosperity which in Greek and Hebrew is actually translated "favor," "wellbeing," "welfare," or "good health." So, to paraphrase, the verse should read something like: "Adorable be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has invoked His benedictions upon us with every spiritual prosperity in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Luke 11:5-8 (emphasis added)

⁴⁰⁸ Emphasis added.

⁴⁰⁹ Ephesians 1:3, *supra*.

In other words, God has already set in motion or propelled all prosperity for us in Christ Jesus. He has intended well for us. We have the right to our blessings, but we need to pray to receive them. Why do most believers think that God does not answer prayer? It's because they ask once and stop. They fear that asking persistently to God is not faith. That is not true. Faith needs action to be complete. Faith without action is dead. To simply believe and not act is to negate the power of faith. The act of persistence is the translation of faith into actions.

God has already spoken well of our inheritance. He has even done more; He has bequeathed all heavenly blessings (prosperity) to us through the death of Christ. We do not just have the right to them, but we also have the power to receive them when we pray. God has challenged us to ask: "Call to me, and I will answer you, and *show* you great and mighty things, which you do not know."⁴¹⁰ Some people call this God's phone number. It is God's commitment to us. It is His promise to us. He will show us great and mighty things when we call to Him.

However, while most people pay attention to "great and mighty things" that God promises, fewer consider the word "show." God will *show* us great and mighty things when we pray. Showing is a process and may involve third parties or extenuations. The *showing* may happen through people or anything God desires to manifest His generosity through to us. This calls for both patience and sensitivity after we call upon Him, lest we miss the blessings already poured out.

This is the same pattern as in, "Ask and you will receive." Perhaps, the ultimate verse on receiving is in the following passage below:

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 come to pass, 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.⁴¹¹

This verse is letting us know that we hold the key to our receiving from God. It is a blueprint on answered prayer. We have the power to get whatever we need or want. The secret is our faith. It is no longer God's

⁴¹⁰ Jere. 33:3 (emphasis added).

⁴¹¹ Mark 11:23-24

problem if we do not receive; the trouble is with our believing that we have already received what we requested from God.

Doubt is a menace to prayer. For one, God is not pleased with faithlessness and, for another, we have faith already in our hearts because of Christ Jesus in our hearts who is our faith. So, every believer has faith and needs to exercise it in prayer. Faith persists. Persistence in prayer is a virtue rather than a vice. When we persist, we are proving that we have faith enough to trust God to the very end and not the other way around. But faith also means that we should have an earnest expectation that God will use anyone or anything as medium of our receiving from Him. One job is to seek them out.

Jacob is a good example of a persistent character who received what he wanted from God. If you know the man Jacob then you are acquainted with a person that needed a change very badly. Jacob's persistent story is captured in Genesis.⁴¹²

First, Jacob, even by his own name was a conman, a trickster. At birth, he deceived his brother and struggled in the womb with him;⁴¹³ as a teenager, he stole his brother's birth right;⁴¹⁴ and then as a grownup he crooked his uncle Laban into sucking him of all of his riches.⁴¹⁵ So, when God gave him an opportunity to redeem his character, he did not hesitate.

When his chance came, (and the Bible is clear that, "time and chance happen to them all"⁴¹⁶), he wrestled with it until he had received a name change. It is the principle of prayer to persist until you receive. God was testing Jacob, who later became Israel, because he had fought with God and with men and had prevailed. The Kingdom of God belongs to such as take it by force.⁴¹⁷ People pray once or twice and if they don't receive from God they give up. Some even get discouraged. But you have to keep on persisting. Keep knocking until the door opens. Keep asking until you receive. And keep searching until you find. Just never give up till you receive. And open your eyes and heart and be alert, for God would have already manifested the answer without you knowing. Do not miss it when it happens. This is how the *Law of Persistent or importunity* works.

⁴¹² See 32:22-29

⁴¹³ See Gen.25:22-23

⁴¹⁴ See Gen.25:29-33

⁴¹⁵ See Gen. 31:1 ff

⁴¹⁶ See Ecclesiastes 9:11

⁴¹⁷ See Matt.11:12

Prayer attendance is on God. It is asking God to act on the content of your prayer. When you come before God, do not hesitate to ask him to act proactively on your prayer. You must give God no rest because His is an eternal reign but ours is a temporary walk: “Give the LORD no rest until he completes his work, until he makes [you] the pride of the earth.”⁴¹⁸

As we remain on earth, with a fragile existence, we will do well to let God know we need the answers to our prayer, here and now. He may delay the actions of our prayer; He may also postpone, but entreat Him to answer you. Show a sense of urgency in your praying, as the Psalmist cries out: “Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.”⁴¹⁹

The Law of Right Inward Attitude

Apart from persistent, a right inward attitude is essential to receiving from God. The *Law of Right Inward Attitude* is the willingness to receive from God whatever the cost. It is the exercise of trusting faith in God. Too many people pray but too few people receive because people think that receiving is only passive. In their hearts, they doubt God and only see chance as the only option to their answered prayer.

God cannot be mocked. If you do not believe that He answers prayer, you will pray amiss. You have got to train your heart to trust in God and to expect an answer to every prayer made. God has done everything to give us everything: “He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”⁴²⁰

Notice the phrase: “Freely give us all things.” We need not faint or perspire to receive from God: “...men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”⁴²¹ We need not do certain ‘unsuals.’ All that we need has already been accomplished in Christ Jesus. In Him, we have all things and through Him, we can receive all things.

We have to expect in order to receive. Promises are there in God’s Word for us to use. They will never be profitable to us in heaven. Here and now is the right and best place to claim them, believe them and position ourselves to receive them. In the Bible,⁴²² Jesus urges us to

⁴¹⁸ Isaiah 62:7 (emphasis added).

⁴¹⁹ Psalm 61:1

⁴²⁰ Romans 8:32

⁴²¹ Luke 18:1

⁴²² See Mark 11:23-24

have faith and not doubt, to believe God and not to waver from His promises. The key to receiving is in this verse as well. We have the power to receive and it is our faith in God, faith that is strong enough to believe that we can have what we pray for, instantly.

Faith large enough to believe that it all depends on us and not on God to have all that we need or want from God. Doubt is an agitation to answered prayer; it is a menace to receiving. What if the answer is not instant? Well, our attitude should still be that of faith that no matter what, God has answered, and it shall come to pass. And through patience, we can, eventually, see the translation of spiritual answers into material exhibition.

Law of Right Outward Posture

The *Law of Right Outward Posture* entails the way we posture ourselves to receive what God has already provided. It is physically grabbing the promise and see it fulfilled. The word receiving comes from the Greek word *lambano*, which literally means to position yourself so as to receive, exactly like a basketball or football or soccer player would do if he wanted to receive the ball.

If he stands in one place, his opponent will not allow him to grab the ball. So, he has to make moves; he has to strategically maneuver and catch the ball. When we pray, God will use men to answer our prayers.⁴²³ So, it is not wrong after we pray to ask a human being to be a channel of that blessing or prayer request, only that we have to be sensitive. God uses people to bless people. He never uses trees or buildings. He will use those close to you or those afar from you. Be sensitive, God could have provided a long time ago and you just never knew.

When churches need moneys to do ministry work, it is alright to come to the congregation and challenge them. Why, because God requires of them. He cannot use animals when His people are there. That is why God gives us jobs, businesses and financial blessings so that we can bless His work and other people. To construct the tabernacle, God used the materials that the people donated.⁴²⁴

When you know this secret, you will be liberated. So, position yourself to receiving from God; and do not despise men and women

⁴²³ Luke 6:38

⁴²⁴ See Chapter 56, especially under "The Cost of the Tabernacle."

because they are God's agents for your blessings. There is always someone somewhere with your answer to your prayer as you pray. Whether it is your employer, your company or simply another person, it is God who has ordered them to bless you in answer to your prayer.

Précis

Well. Here we are, with everything for our enjoyment. Persistence in prayer is a great spiritual virtue, a grand key to receiving from God. We can, surely, have all that we need, and even want, when we persist in prayer. Persistence is also necessary in practical life. What happens if we have tried once and have failed? We have to try again, and again, and again until we score. We ought, too, to have a right spiritual attitude as well as position ourselves for receiving. We should not forget that God uses people to bless people. People exist for people. Whatever we do, whether in God or in life, we should not give up until we receive.

Chapter review

Key Words and Phrases

- Ask
- Blessing
- Favor
- God's phone number
- Good health
- Inward attitude
- Knock
- Lambano
- Law of importunity
- Law of right inward attitude
- Law of right outward posture
- Outward posture
- PAR
- Persistence
- Principle of Active Receptivity
- Prosperity
- Receiving
- Seek
- Show
- Welfare
- Wellbeing

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Each of these is true, except ____
 - Q. God does answer prayer
 - R. God does hear prayer
 - S. Receiving from God is a science
 - T. Receiving from God is art

PRAYER

2. PAR stands for ____
 - A. Principle of Active Receptivity
 - B. Please Act Receptively
 - C. Principle of Actions and Receiving
 - D. Power of Active Receptivity

3. Believing that God will provide and ending there is called ____
 - A. Active receptivity
 - B. Passive receptivity
 - C. Active engagement
 - D. Passive engagement

4. Under PAR, the question become ____
 - A. Does God answer prayer?
 - B. Does God listen to prayer?
 - C. Do we know how to appropriate our answered prayers?
 - D. Do we know how to record our uttered prayers?

5. All these constitute the three laws of PAR, except ____
 - A. Law of Importunity
 - B. Law of Right Inward Attitude
 - C. Law of Right Outward Posture
 - D. Lambano Law

True/False Questions

1. Importunity is persistence. T/F
2. God is Spirit; to answer our prayer, He needs a medium.
T/F
3. Receiving entails the application of wisdom, knowledge and skill on your part. T/F
4. The blessing is not in knocking, but knocking at the right door. T/F
5. Knocking is action. T/F
6. Matthew 7:7 is a principle arriving from the Luke 11:5-8.
T/F
7. Persistence is a norm rather than an exception in the art of receiving from God. T/F
8. Persistence is not lack of faith; it is the re-energization of faith. T/F
9. “Blessing” may mean prosperity, favor, wellbeing, welfare, or good health. T/F
10. Faith needs action to be complete. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Then Elisha said, ‘Take the arrows!’ So he took them, and Elisha said to the king of Israel, ‘Strike the ground!’ So he struck the ground three times and stopped. But the man of God was angry with him and said, ‘You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to it. But now you will strike down Aram only three times.’ And Elisha died and was buried,” (2 Kings 13:18-20).

Exemplify the Law of Importunity using the above passage of Scripture.

[500 words or less].

2. Why is Jeremiah 33:3 sometimes known as “God’s phone number”?

[250 words or less].

3. Exemplify the Law of Importunity using Jacob’s encounter with God in genesis 32:22-29.

[500 words or less].

4. Define prayer attendance.

[250 words or less].

5. Define the PAR principle. How does using the PAR principle help believers to be actively involved in receiving from God?

[500 words or less].

13 | SALVATION PLAN

At the end of this chapter:

- You will know more about the Divine Law of Justice
- You will configure the two trees dilemma
- You will know more about the seed of a woman
- You will be able to explicate the Law of Righteousness, and
- You will be able to understand divine victory

Introduction

“ A family that prays together stays together.”⁴²⁵
“ Through the Cross of Jesus Christ, all the families of the earth were brought together.”⁴²⁶ God was all-powerful He did not impose His divine energy against the will of Satan in order to save mankind from the power of evil. Instead, God deliberated His divine wisdom in the process of saving man from sin, self and the devil. Because God was holy and therefore true, He would not forgo His nature in order to save mankind. One of the questions we always ask is: Why didn't God just arrest the devil and finish him off after he had tempted man into eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Or why has God allowed the devil to exist, and, therefore, cause more havoc to humanity, instead of judging him instantly? The answer lies in the fact that God values His own principles and cannot corrupt His own nature. So, in order to liberate mankind, Jehovah God had used His divine wit and genius so excellently that the result was a splendid defeat of the devil and the subsequent restoration of man to his redeemed nature. This chapter highlights the principles God employed in the Salvation Process. This is then related to the grace of prayer.

⁴²⁵ Moto devised for the Roman Catholic Family Rosary Crusade, 1947

⁴²⁶ Ephesians 1:10

Principle of Divine Victory

The *Principle of Divine Victory* spells that good will always win over bad. This is directly opposite to the principle of this world where revenge is a must for every bad done. Because the devil is the very opposite of God, it follows that good will always defeat the devil. The Kingdom of Darkness to win, it must capitalize on bad and thereby get a perpetual hook-on humanity.

In the battle to liberate humanity from sin, from the devil and from humanism, God used only good to defeat evil. This principle is exemplified in this verse of scriptures: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”⁴²⁷ This principle was highly at play in the eternal battle to save mankind from the shackles of diabolism. Our fight is not a dirty fight, but a good fight of faith.

We do not insult, cheat, trick, manipulate or lie in order to win. But we employ God’s strategy in overcoming evil, and He says through Paul: “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men ... if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty give him a drink for in so doing you will pile coals on his head.”⁴²⁸

Our response to this is to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us and to do well to those who hate us as well as praying for our persecutors. The devil defeats us because when he strikes, we retaliate with complaints, murmurs and insults. Jesus never used guile against his accusers, instead he responded with words of grace. How many times have we been annoyed and we were tempted to curse back? We know that the devil is bad but even “Michael the archangel in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”⁴²⁹ Beloveds let us always defeat bad with good, no matter what.

⁴²⁷ Romans 12:21

⁴²⁸ Romans 12:17-20

⁴²⁹ Jude 9

Divine Law of Justice

The *Divine Law of Justice* demands that no sin goes without receiving a corresponding punishment: Sin whether big or small receives its worthy wage, death. Every man or woman who sins automatically invites punishment upon his or her life. Some punishments are quick and painful but others are slow and very painful. No one born of a woman is exempted from this law.

In secular affairs and legal systems, if a suspect is proved guilty before the courts of law, he or she is punished and the punishment will correspond to the size, degree and nature of the crime committed. However, there is a presumption of innocence until one is proven guilty.

When man (Adam and Eve) sinned in the Garden of Eden, the divine law of justice applied. David,⁴³⁰ though forgiven by God after sinning with Bathsheba, received a just reward for his sins by the shameful activities of his own sons and household. But all have sinned, which means that all must be punished.

But Christ was punished in our place to justify the just demands of the Law of Justice. The Bible says: “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.”⁴³¹ This helps us understand the nature of our judgment. It is one with justice. But there is only one thing that triumphs over judgment – it is the product made when love combines with kindness, what the Bible calls loving-kindness or mercy. Without the exercise of His mercies, we are doomed. Each one of us by nature is sinful and so deserves punishment but due to His grace God has had mercy on each one of us. However, those who do not repent will not go unpunished.

⁴³⁰2 Sam 11-12

⁴³¹ Matt. 12:36-37

Dilemma of the Two Trees

Man, initially, was given full control of the entire world. On the earth, man had complete dominion over all that God had made; this included both terrestrial and celestial beings. As long as man was under the light of the Almighty God with full legal rights over the creation, Satan could not temper with what was his. By being obedient to the commandments of his God, man had nothing to fear on earth. Not even the devil could come near man's power and authority in such a moment as man was obedient to God.

If Satan was going to have any authority over man and nature, he was just going to be given it voluntarily by man. The devil knew it from the beginning that man would not dare surrender his authority because he loved God and enjoyed his work in the garden. But with one hope in mind, the devil knew also that except by skillful temptation would the power and dominion be transferred from man to the deceiver. If the usurper was going to achieve this it meant that two things had to happen.

First, man's relationship with God had to be broken, and secondly, Satan had to have ultimate authority over man and this world. This is not overlooking the fact that by sinning and disobeying God, man was going to incur death, suffering, misery and perpetual subordination to the devil. Immediately the subtlety of the deceiver went towards two options in the garden, between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.

The deceiver realized that by eating from the Tree of Life man would disobey God quite alright, but yet man would lack the seed of the knowledge of evil. So, the tempter went ahead and tempted man to eat from the other tree so that the said motive could be established. This would make man a perpetual slave of evil, having the seed of evil in him. The tempter indeed was witty.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil made man to taste evil and as usual, evil is sweeter at first though it becomes bitter at the end. So, by seeking to have the initial pleasure of sin, man would be serving the will and purpose of the evil one. But if man were to taste both trees, it would have meant that his wellbeing could have been eternally shattered.

In other words, there was never going to be any redemption for man. In essence, what it could have meant was that, by eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, man would know evil and hence would have a seed of evil implanted in him, but by eating from the Tree of Life, that could have meant eternal death. The Tree of Life spells a perpetuation of possibilities. That is to say, if you are good and you consume some fruit from it, you will remain good; and if you are bad, you will remain bad forever.

That is why God immediately chased the man from the garden so that he could not be tempted again to eat from the Tree of Life. The precautions the LORD took were severe but worth of our gratitude. “So, he drove out the man, and he placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword with turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”⁴³² This one action alone, apart from the covering of man’s nakedness, was a clear manifestation of the love and the grace of God towards mankind. But even with this excellent precaution, there seemed to be no way out for man.

Man, himself, could do nothing to initiate salvation. Or he needed to do three impossible things: Live a sinless life; die as punishment; or rise again as a means of justification. The first possibility was an impossible case because man had already eaten the root of evil. The second one was a challenge because if man had to die (physically) it could have meant the end of humanity, which God could never have allowed. Once dead, the Gates of Hades would have held man in eternal chains.

The Seed of a Woman

But again, the devil had heard from the scriptures that one born of a woman, a Seed was to come. “And I will put enmity between you [the devil] and her Seed [the Lord Jesus Christ]. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”⁴³³ So, the devil’s long-term goal was to look out for such a Seed. He had only one option, to kill the

⁴³² Gen 3:24 (emphasis added).

⁴³³ Gen.3:15

Seed and make sure that He did not rise again. Because according to the principles of inheritance, the heir must prove possession of the will to claim ownership of the estate.

If Jesus (the Seed without sin) should die, He would have paid the price of guilt and sin, which is death. And if He should resurrect, He would have vindicated the freedom of those whom He would have died for, the devil knew that too. Satan had to face an intricate dilemma, he would not allow the Seed to live as doing so would be tantamount to perpetual defeat (the Seed was sinless and good always triumphs over bad). He could not kill Him without a wrong cause, as doing so would give His blood power to forgive sinful man all his sins through a substitution process. “And according to the Law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shading of blood there is no remission.”⁴³⁴

After killing Him, he (the devil) should keep the Seed under strict guard in Hell since if the Seed should resurrect, He would have both legal (according to law) and moral (according to a sinless lifestyle) authority over the devil.

That is why Peter says: “Men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know - Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and fore-knowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it.”⁴³⁵ God graciously intervened throughout the process of salvation to give mankind eternal redemption. The devil lost.

The Law of Righteousness

At the right time, God had to initiate the plan for our salvation and it starts here:

⁴³⁴ Heb. 9:22

⁴³⁵ Acts 2:22-24 (emphasis added).

PRAYER

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they come to Philip, who was from Bethesda of Galilee, and asked him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus, Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified....' Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.⁴³⁶

The death and subsequent resurrection of Jesus was sanctioned by God Himself.⁴³⁷ Otherwise, nothing and no one could have lain a hand on Jesus especially that He was sinless and all-powerful.⁴³⁸ According to the Law of Righteousness, no one deserves death except if they are found guilty.

So, by falsely accusing Jesus, the law was abrogated and by hanging him on the tree, they made a curse and a sin of Him.⁴³⁹ This essentially transferred the sins of the world on Jesus. By accepting the world's sins, Jesus became subjected to condemnation by death. It was divinely calculated that one good Man should die for all bad men! So, now Jesus had become a cursed thing on the tree, and we a blessed people, and Jesus had tasted death in exchange for our life. He was wrongly accused and died, thereby vindicating our freedom from sin, sickness and Satan.

His resurrection, moreover, raises us to our pre-Adamic nature. We are henceforth the blessed sons of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God planned our salvation just from the moment Adam and Eve sinned against Him. He did not wait for us to be good but saved us in spite of ourselves. Satan thought he had permanently defeated mankind and usurped his authority on earth.

Through the grace of God, we were wonderfully saved and brought back into our dominion in Christ Jesus our Lord. The *Principle of Divine Victory* wrought us all our blessings and through the *Divine Law of Justice* God kept His purity from the start to end.

⁴³⁶ John 12:20-23, 31-32

⁴³⁷ Job 1:9-10

⁴³⁸ John 18:4-9

⁴³⁹ Gal. 3:13; 2 Corinthians. 5:21

It was the *Law of Righteousness* that acquitted us substitutionally by making Jesus the Lamb that was slain to save us. The slaying of Jesus was done on a cross, the most excruciating death of the time. And the death and resurrection of Christ paved a way to acceptable prayer.

Précis

In conclusion, we look at a related subject, namely, the Cross of Christ. Was the cross just a stake for criminal incrimination and punishment? Or did it have a special significance in the Christian life and in prayer? Well, that is what the following chapter will find out for you.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Adam and Eve
- Dilemma
- Divine law of justice
- Garden of Eden
- Kingdom of Darkness
- Law of righteousness
- Principle of divine victory
- Salvation plan (process)
- Seed of a woman
- Sin
- Tree of Life
- Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
- Two trees

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The cross is a symbol of all these, except ____
 - A. Unity
 - B. Suffering
 - C. Redemption
 - D. Pleasure

2. Which statement illustrates the Principle of Divine Victory?
 - A. A husband who takes an adulterous wife on an expensive vacation.
 - B. A student who receives an A+ even when he missed three quarters of the semester.
 - C. A pastor who is blessed with a bonus for having preached seventy sermons in a year.
 - D. A child who is rewarded for bullying another child at camp.

3. The Kingdom of Darkness wins sometimes because ____
 - A. It dominates everybody
 - B. Satan is very powerful
 - C. It finds it easier to be rewarded with bad for bad
 - D. It finds it easier to be rewarded with good for good

4. The Divine Law of Justice was fulfilled ____
 - A. In Christ's death
 - B. In Christ's resurrection
 - C. In Christ's ascension
 - D. When Satan imprisoned Christ in hell

5. Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law of Righteousness ____
 - A. When He hang on a tree
 - B. When H dined with His disciples
 - C. When He rose again from the dead
 - D. When He fed 5000 people

PRAYER

True/False Questions

1. The devil is the very opposite of God. T/F
2. Our fight is not a dirty fight, but a good fight of faith.
T/F
3. When man (Adam and Eve) sinned in the Garden of Eden, the divine law of justice applied. T/F
4. By being obedient to the commandments of his God, man had everything to fear on earth. T/F
5. Satan still has victory over the human race. T/F
6. And according to the Law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shading of blood there is no remission. T/F
7. Satan emerged the winner at Calvary. T/F
8. Jesus was the Seed of a woman. T/F
9. The death of Jesus Christ was only possible because God permitted it. T/F
10. The death and resurrection of Christ paved a way to acceptable prayer. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Explain the Principle of Divine Victory using at least two verses of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

2. Explain the Divine Law of Justice using at least two verses of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

3. Explain the dilemma of the two trees using at least two verses of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

4. Explain the concept of the Seed of a woman using at least two verses of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

5. Explain the Law of Righteousness using at least two verses of Scripture.

[250 words or less].

14 | THE CROSS OF CHRIST

At the end of this chapter:

- You will understand why the Romans used the crucifixion as a mode of punishment
- You will be introduced to the crucifixion process
- You will learn about the three types of crosses
- You will be able to distinguish between Old Testament and New Testament interpretation of the cross
- You will understand the reason why Jesus died on the cross, and
- You will know the significance of Jesus' prayer on the cross

Introduction

The cross was a stake, which was used for punishment and execution. This process was called crucifixion. In the Roman Empire, the cross was devised to be a pain-inducing ultimate punishment for the lowest criminals and the most dangerous offenders. Condemnation to the cross was a sign of rejection, and the symbol of being below human decency. Jesus Christ was judged to be below human decency and repute. He was crucified. This chapter explores the process of crucifixion, the Cross of Christ, and its significance to a life of prayer.

Old Testament and the Cross

Crucifixion was not practiced in the Old Testament days and execution was effected by stoning, but dead bodies were hung on a tree as a warning occasionally.⁴⁴⁰ In this context, condemnation becomes a shameful term, signifying the basest of humanity,

⁴⁴⁰ Deut. 21:22, Gal. 3:13

unworthy of life and deserving of death. A condemned person is a misfit to society and since society has no place for their lives, they are subjected to a painful death.

Gentiles and Crucifixion

Phoenicians and Carthagians practiced crucifixion, but rarely for Roman citizens, only for slaves and lowest types of criminals. A tradition goes that “Peter was crucified but Paul was beheaded.” This agrees with this ancient practice since Peter was a Jew but Paul was a Roman by birth.

Three Types of Crosses

There were three types of crosses:

T-shaped – commonly called St. Anthony’s cross

X-shaped – referred to as St. Andrew’s cross

+ -dagger-shaped

The *dagger-shaped* one is likely to be the one Jesus was crucified on. This is because of the inscription walled above His head: “*Above his head* they placed the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.”⁴⁴¹

The Crucifixion Process

Below are the ten stages through which a crucificant was subjected:

1. The criminal was condemned.
2. The criminal was scourged with a whip, which had leather throngs.

⁴⁴¹ Matt.27:37, Luke23:38, John19:17-22 (emphasis added).

PRAYER

3. The criminal was made to carry the cross beam like a slave to the scene of his crucifixion outside the city.⁴⁴²
4. The criminal was stripped totally naked.
5. The criminal was laid on the ground with the cross beams under their shoulders.
6. The criminal's hands/arms were tied or nailed (whatever the case might be) to the crossbeam.
7. The crossbeam was lifted and secured to the upright position so that the victims' feet (which were tied or nailed) were just clear off the ground.
8. The main weight of the body was supported by a projecting peg astride which the victim sat.
9. The criminal was left to die from exhaustion.⁴⁴³
10. With death sometimes being hastened by breaking the legs, which was not done in the case of Jesus: "The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs."⁴⁴⁴

Notice that the victim's legs were twisted so that the calves were parallel to the crossbeam. This would induce severe pain and sporadic contractions and rigid cramps. All these contributed to a quicker death. This cruel and degrading form of death is very, very painful.⁴⁴⁵ So that sin demands pain and affliction in order to be forgiven.⁴⁴⁶

New Testament and Crucifixion

Through the cross, God demonstrated His manifold wisdom in the salvation and liberation of mankind:

⁴⁴² Cf. Heb 13:11-14

⁴⁴³ See Psalm 22

⁴⁴⁴ John 19:32-33

⁴⁴⁵ Psalm 22, *supra*.

⁴⁴⁶ See Psalm 25:18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent'... for the Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom [Philosophy]; but we preach Christ crucified to Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.⁴⁴⁷

How the pieces of stakes could be used as a means of saving man was tantamount to foolishness to the Greeks whose lifestyle was preoccupied with mooting into new ideologies and philosophies. The Greeks demanded a hypothetical explanation of everything and anything less was considered not to be scholastic enough, unethical and substanceless.

The Jews, who expected a Messiah to be a political deliverer from the Romans, were let down to discover that the very Man they expected to deliver them was considered a cursed thing.⁴⁴⁸ So, if ever one mentioned to them that the very Man they hanged on a cursed thing was their Messiah (i.e., the Christ) they would be offended. They would not figure that out and, let alone, be found implicated in the crucifixion of the very one they anticipated to come.

God is very wise. The very thing that the people, the wise of this world, would despise is the very thing that God uses. Unlike the Greeks and the Jews (not all the Greeks and not all the Jews), let us be humble and accept whatever God is doing and how He chooses to do it. It can be that God might decide to make a good use of the very thing or person we hate or despise much.

Through the cross, God reconciled Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) to each other and both to Himself.⁴⁴⁹ As the lowest form of execution, the cross illustrates Jesus' humility, a fact which the Jews

⁴⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians. 1:18-25

⁴⁴⁸ Gal. 3:13

⁴⁴⁹ Eph. 2:14-16

found very hard to understand in the Messiah.⁴⁵⁰ Then the familiar shameful sight of the victim's carrying of the cross pieces are used to illustrate the path of discipleship.⁴⁵¹ The cross is a symbol of a changed lifestyle:

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jews neither circumcision no un-circumcision avails anything, but a new creating. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.⁴⁵²

The cross is our boast because in it God demonstrated His unfailing love towards mankind, "But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."⁴⁵³ So, God proved to us that He loved us by sending His only Son to die a painful and afflictive death. This is what is meant by the grace of God.

The world, its hurts and pleasures, have been crucified to the cross together with us. This means that we are dead to the world and the world is dead to us. We no longer walk and act like the world. Our principles and way of life are totally different from those of the world and its system. Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."⁴⁵⁴

What Paul was saying is that Saul who came through the will of man (through normal birth) had died, but the born-again-Paul was a new creation for, "If any man be in Christ He is a new creation, old things have passed away [i.e., died] and behold everything become new."⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians. 1:23 and Phil. 2:8

⁴⁵¹ Mark 8:34-38

⁴⁵² Gal. 6:14-16

⁴⁵³ Rom. 5:8

⁴⁵⁴ Gal. 2:20

⁴⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians. 5:17

The new birth is no longer the action of a husband and a wife but of God Himself – “Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”⁴⁵⁶ Therefore, Christians must live as if they are dead to the sinful nature of this world but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The Bible also says that those who have been crucified with Christ to this world and live here on earth by faith (and not by sight)⁴⁵⁷ have mercy and peace upon them and they have been qualified to be “The Israel of God.” What a consolation, a great victory on our part. So, do not be ashamed with the *Gospel* of the cross of Christ because it is God’s power to save the world around you.⁴⁵⁸

Thus, the Cross of Christ is the symbol of Christian victory. The cross bridges the way between the Father and humankind. It is by the means of the cross that our sins were forgiven and our destiny was preserved. God has demonstrated unfailing love to us beyond all reasonable doubt by allowing His only begotten Son to die through the least kind of death: “Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.”⁴⁵⁹ We shall be forever grateful to the LORD for the Cross of Calvary, and eternally so.

Jesus’ Prayer on the Cross

Some of the greatest redemptive prayers the Lord prayed happened on the cross. First, He prayed for the forgiveness of people’s sins: “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.”⁴⁶⁰

Second, He prayed for the preservation of the redemptive interests: “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ John 1:13

⁴⁵⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:7

⁴⁵⁸ Romans 1:16

⁴⁵⁹ John 15:13

⁴⁶⁰ Luke 23:34

⁴⁶¹ Matt 27:46, Mark 15:34

Third, He prayed for the salvation and assurance of salvation of a repentant sinner: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”⁴⁶²

Fourth, He prayed for someone or others to be brought closer to God: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”⁴⁶³

Fifth, He reunited families, “Woman, here is your son.”⁴⁶⁴

Sixth, He prayed for those who are thirsty and are in pain, “I thirst.”⁴⁶⁵

Seventh, He prayed to the effect that what He had embarked on, the work of redemption, had been completed, “It is finished.”⁴⁶⁶

And eighth, He committed His soul to His Father, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”⁴⁶⁷

All the major themes of the redemption story were completed at the cross, the place of pain, anguish and sacrifice. Jesus, our Lord, did that so that we may never had to do the same. This is what is called grace – where the innocent Jesus takes on the punishment and inconvenience of the cross for the salvation and redemption of the entire humanity.

Précis

The greatest manifestation of God’s love happened on a cursed thing. Not only had God humbled Himself and became Man, but He also went even lower by dying on the cross. This manner of love has no-one but God. Indeed, if God allowed His dearest Son to die such a painful and humiliating death, as the Bible says in Romans 8:32, “Since he did not spare even his own Son [on the cross] but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?” That is our confidence in prayer. Finally, prayer, as good as it is, cannot benefit us much unless we learn to make it in love, and that is what the next chapter will illustrate.

⁴⁶² Luke 23:43

⁴⁶³ Luke 23:43

⁴⁶⁴ John 19:26

⁴⁶⁵ John 19:28

⁴⁶⁶ John 19:30

⁴⁶⁷ Luke 23:46

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Above His head
- Criminal
- Cross
- Crucifixion
- Dagger-shaped
- Gentiles
- Greeks
- Jews
- Messiah
- Philosophies
- Romans
- St. Andrew's cross
- St. Anthony's cross
- T – shaped
- X – shaped

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The t-shaped cross is also known as ____
 - A. Dagger
 - B. St. Andrews
 - C. St. Anthony
 - D. Romania

PRAYER

2. The x-shaped cross is also known as ____
 - A. Dagger
 - B. St. Andrews
 - C. St. Anthony
 - D. Romania

3. Jesus must have been crucified on a ____ cross.
 - A. Dagger-shaped
 - B. St. Andrews
 - C. St. Anthony
 - D. Romania

4. The cross was foolishness to the ____
 - A. Romans
 - B. Greeks
 - C. Jews
 - D. Gentiles

5. To those who believe and are being saved, the cross is ____
 - A. The power of God
 - B. The representation of Christ's humility
 - C. The wisdom of God
 - D. All of the above

True/False Questions

1. Crucifixion was practiced in the Old Testament. T/F
2. Stoning was never practiced in the Old Testament.
T/F
3. In Roman Empire, crucifixion was the highest form of punishment. T/F
4. Phoenicians and Carthagians did not practiced crucifixion.
T/F
5. No-one knows what type of cross Christ Jesus was crucified on. T/F
6. Jesus Christ died quickly on the cross because they broke his lefts. T/F
7. The Romans treated a crucified criminal the same way they would treat a slave. T/F
8. Jesus brought the Jew as well as the Gentile together by means of the cross. T/F
9. The victim's legs were twisted so that the calves were parallel to the crossbeam to induce pain. T/F
10. Christian disciples must carry their crosses daily and follow Christ. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain the 10 stages of crucifixion, using Scripture, where possible.

[500 words or less].

2. Compare the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews and Gentiles in regard to each's view of crucifixion.

[500 words or less].

3. Justify the statement, "The cross is the power of God," using Scripture.

[500 words or less].

15 | GRACE CONCEPTS OF AGAPE LOVE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will link the cross to love
- You will be introduced the most superlative kind of love called the agape Love
- You will learn about the qualities of Agape Love, and
- You will learn that prayer is an act of love

Introduction

It is said that “He prays well, who loves well.”⁴⁶⁸ The concept of agape emanates from the simple meal of brotherly love which used to be celebrated daily in the apostolic times in connection with the Lord’s Supper. It never only provided brotherly fellowship, but it was also a simple feast of unity. However, this simple feast was abused and Paul did not have a mild temperament to reverse the trend.⁴⁶⁹ This chapter discusses Agape Love.

Tenets of Agape Love

Agape love is founded on certain fundamentals also known as tenets, and according to,⁴⁷⁰ they include the following:

Agape Love Sacrifices

Sacrifices are voluntary and almost always they have to relinquish something very valuable. You have never loved until you are able to give up something valuable for your beloved. Life is, perhaps,

⁴⁶⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834

⁴⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians. 11:21, 22

⁴⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:13

the highest sacrifice one can ever give up for another. Is it little wonder the Lord says: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”⁴⁷¹ For the sake of this excellence, we are admonished to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.⁴⁷² In agape love, actions and motives speak louder than words. You have to love until you feel pain, or like dying. That is why few people practice this love because it is very costly.

Agape Love Gives

Rather than taking from, agape love gives. It seeks to bless and does not demand to be blessed in turn. God Himself is said to have loved the world because He gave.⁴⁷³ If we truly love our brothers and sisters, friends and enemies, or our spouses, we ought to be people that give. Giving of ourselves, our resources, and our time and energy is what agape love is all about.

Agape Love Protects

Have you ever heard that love covers a multitude of sins? Only love can do that. Man is a vengeful animal. He seeks to expose and destroy. But agape love will always seek to protect and build. Paul says, “Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth.”⁴⁷⁴

But where there is devouring of one another, bickering and crushing of each other’s spirits agape love is absent. “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the course of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and the needy.”⁴⁷⁵ This is agape love in action. It seeks to protect even ardent offenders.

⁴⁷¹ John 15:13

⁴⁷² Rom. 12:1

⁴⁷³ John 3:16

⁴⁷⁴ 1 Corinthians. 13:6

⁴⁷⁵ Proverbs 31:8-9

Agape Love Is the Highest Level of Character

Agape love displays kindness, patience, humility, sound mindedness, truth and liberty. This is the quality of all those that will enter into the Kingdom of God. Without this love we are nothing. Service or worship or prayer is nothing unless conducted in love, and this is what is commanded of us to do: “This is my new commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”⁴⁷⁶ When we love, we have obeyed God’s commandments.

Agape love signals God’s nature⁴⁷⁷ and whatever God does show His love for man. We can safely say that love is the reason for God’s work in man’s behalf. According to,⁴⁷⁸ love must be the pre-eminent virtue in the Christian life, and without it, we are as miserable, deceived and lost as dead religions. Moreover, when we love, our test of discipleship is proven.

No disciple of Jesus Christ will ever qualify without this virtue. Whilst love is a test of discipleship, obedience is a test of love.⁴⁷⁹ And the Lord God gives agape love as the greatest command in the law.⁴⁸⁰ Agape love then, is the hallmark of the Christian faith and the cornerstone of our belief and practice. Doing without it is lacking the essence of the very values we seek. Let love be the actions we do; and our deeds be the love we possess.

Précis

Grace is the underlying theme of the Pauline Theology. Having been himself saved by grace, Paul realized that it was only through grace that he could approach and please God through faith in Jesus Christ. In prayer, we build upon the theme of grace and approach the Throne of God, also known as the Throne of Grace. At that

⁴⁷⁶ John 15:12

⁴⁷⁷ 1 John 4:8

⁴⁷⁸ 1 Corinthians. 13:13

⁴⁷⁹ John 13:35 and 14:15

⁴⁸⁰ Matt. 22:37-39

throne, which is no longer a throne of judgment, we receive mercy and find abundant grace to help us in our time of need. We pray because the way to the Father has already been paved through the sacrificial work of redemption. We actualize the benefits of grace through faith and we appropriate all the blessings freely given to us, and claimed through the grace of prayer. Grace was only possible because God first loved us.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Agape love
- Character
- Giving/gifts
- Love
- Protection
- Sacrifice

Multiple-choice Questions

1. What is the highest level of character in Christianity?
 - A. Love
 - B. Agape love
 - C. Filial love
 - D. Erotic love
2. Agape love is all these, except ____
 - A. Highest love
 - B. Hallmark of the Christian faith
 - C. Cornerstone of Christian belief and practice
 - D. All of the above are correct
3. All these may constitute the three tenets of agape love, except ____
 - A. It sacrifices
 - B. It betrays
 - C. It gives
 - D. It protects

4. Agape love may display all these, except ____
 - A. Kindness
 - B. Selfishness
 - C. Patience
 - D. Humility

5. All these will be nothing without agape love, except ____
 - A. Service
 - B. Worship
 - C. Prayer
 - D. All of the above will be nothing without agape love

True/False Questions

1. Christianity is a dead religion without love. T/F

2. Love must be the pre-eminent virtue in the Christian life . T/F

3. If love is not in the actions we do, our actions are just like noisy gongs or a clanging cymbals. T/F

4. Man is a vengeful animal. T/F

5. Gossip and bickering are not signs that there is no agape love. T/F

6. Love and giving go hand in hand. T/F

7. You have never loved until you are able to give up something valuable for your beloved. T/F

PRAYER

8. Life is, perhaps, the highest sacrifice one can ever give up for another. T/F
9. Agape love is not an excellence. T/F
10. Love values truth. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe the four tenets of agape love.
[1000 words or less].

16 | CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

At the end of this chapter:

- You will understand the reason why the completed works of Jesus matter
- You will be introduced to the tenet of freedom
- You will learn about the true conception of prosperity, and
- You will appreciate that prayer is more authentic if grace is its foundation

Introduction

The Church of the 21st Century is evolving. Indeed, it is becoming more relevant to the needs and expectations of this era. It is praying more, and seeing more answers to its prayers. It is also becoming fatter and more rounded, especially in regards to finances. However, we are also seeing a misguided church, churches hijacked by marauding and greedy people who masquerade as prophets and servants of God. These are church corporatists who have syphoned their flocks of huge amounts of money in the name of tithes and offering, gifts, and, of course, seeds before prayer for any request is offered.

It's All in the Finished Work of Jesus Christ

We are told that we should not complain against men of God especially Prophets because we can be cursed. We should not talk about the money we give because it will be like we are not grateful. We should not complain because if they chase us from their ministry, we will never see any blessing and we could even die.

The Bible says that we freely received and, therefore, we should freely give. This principle is infused in our grace-based prayer. We pray because we received the gift of prayer freely. In fact, it is of

and by grace that we pray. We pray to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, and drive out demons, because “freely [we] have received; freely [we do] give.”⁴⁸¹

Freedom Basis of Prayer

The principle of freedom in giving and receiving establishes the basis upon which we pray. The innate basis of our redemption is freedom: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”⁴⁸² The assumption here is that it is very possible having been saved by grace in freedom, we could again be burdened by yokes of slavery. These yokes may come in various forms.

Balanced Prosperity

Many Christians hold the belief that God wants them to prosper. The Bible does mention prosperity, and even promises it. In the Old Testament, Abraham and Joseph were promised prosperity. In the Book of Joshua, the promise of prosperity was granted to those who meditated on the Book of the Law day and night.

Proverbs says that those who trust the Lord will prosper: “The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the LORD will prosper.”⁴⁸³ Luke 6 promises those who give to receive more in return: “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”⁴⁸⁴

This is a basic principle established in nature; everything that receives, gave first. We use this principle in employment, business, contracts, agriculture, seedtime and harvesttime, procreation, and in prayer. When we pray, we will receive. Without question, God wants us to have everything that we need and more, so that we can bless others.

⁴⁸¹ Matthew 10:8 (emphasis added)

⁴⁸² Galatians 5:1

⁴⁸³ Proverbs 28:25

⁴⁸⁴ Luke 6:38

To prosper, by definition, means to achieve economic success or well-being, and enjoying vigorous and healthy growth. There is nothing wrong with that, and, indeed, we should believe that God wants us to prosper. There is evidence, however, that many megachurch leaders have moved beyond godly prosperity into fleshly extravagance. Extravagance, by definition, means exceeding the limits of reason or necessity or lack of moderation, balance and restraint. The Bible does not say that we should be extravagant, but that we should prosper, as our soul prospers: “Beloved, I pray that in every way you may prosper and enjoy good health, as your soul also prospers.”⁴⁸⁵ NIV renders the last part of this verse as “even as your soul is getting along well.”

This verse has an intricate balance to it, which is omitted in many explications. In it, we see that prosperity in material things must not thump the prosperity of the soul. The soul is that part of us that is the center of godliness and divinity. Therefore, as rendered in NIV, our prosperity must move in tandem with the wellbeing of our souls. Jesus brings the salience of the same topic through a rhetorical question: “What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world (material prosperity), yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”⁴⁸⁶ When someone gets wealthy, from the context of the preceding verses, they should also watch and pray so that with it they do not forfeit their own souls.

Churches need finances to operate ministries, meet bills and payrolls. They also need money to evangelize and reach out to the lost. It is also in order to purchase homes and private jets, and even to spend tens of thousands of dollars lavishing automobiles. It is only wrong if these purchases are ends in themselves and they do not serve any divine purpose. If the purpose, indeed, is to glorify God, it is alright to spend big. It is not anti-Christian and unholy to accumulate wealth. Otherwise, this would be contrary to Scripture: “A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.”⁴⁸⁷ God’s will is that

⁴⁸⁵ 3 John 1:2

⁴⁸⁶ Matthew 16:26 (emphasis added)

⁴⁸⁷ Proverbs 13:22

wealth will eventually land into the coffers of the righteous. And when it does, they will have to accumulate it. So, there is truth to the teachings of prosperity preachers that God wants believers to be materially wealthy. Indeed, He does.

However, what God doesn't want is for those riches to blind Christians and lead them to perdition. For Christians, money should always be subservient to God: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."⁴⁸⁸ The rule of thumb for believers is to use money in the service and worship of God, and nothing else. This attitude, therefore, should define anyone who desires to cultivate a rich prayer life with God.

Theology is Philosophy

Theology, like anybody of study, is the wisdom of those who have taken time to investigate God and His manifestations. There is always a human element in theology, and therefore, it cannot always be trusted. Truth trumps theology. And the truth is that the prosperity Gospel is constructed upon men's theology.

Christians are Abraham's spiritual children and heirs to the blessings of faith and material blessings. In Abraham, the Jewish people inherited both faith and prosperity. The basis of the Abrahamic Covenant is Genesis 12-15, and, in part, is quoted below:

"I will make you into a *great nation*,
and I will bless you;
I will make *your name great*,
and you will be a *blessing*.^[a]
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you..."

⁴⁸⁸ Matthew 6:24

PRAYER

Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and *everything* he had....

The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the *land* that you see I will give to you and your offspring[a] forever. I will make *your offspring like the dust of the earth*, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you....”

He recovered all the *goods* and brought back his relative Lot and his *possessions*, together with the women and the other people....

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi[e] of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”⁴⁸⁹

The extent of the Abrahamic Covenant was total prosperity, including an heir, a great nation, great name (fame) blessings (good health as well), favor, everything, land, population growth, goods, and possessions (cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, etc.). Abraham lived in an agrarian society, mostly shepherding and farming. In our current economy, this would mean all these things including luxuries and lots of dollars. So, the prosperity *Gospel* is not wrong when it equates prosperity to material possessions, finances, among other things.

However, the Abrahamic Covenant was inferior and God had to replace it. If the Abrahamic Covenant was adequate, there would be no need for the ultimate covenant, the Covenant of Grace (the New Testament). Indeed, the Abrahamic Covenant hinged on material prosperity, but the New Covenant includes all the material prosperity plus spiritual blessings. Two New Testament verses of Scriptures highlight this dichotomy.

⁴⁸⁹ Genesis 12: 2-3, 20; 13:14-17; 14:16; 15:18-20 (emphases added)

First, “He redeemed us in order that the *blessing given to Abraham* might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the *Spirit*.”⁴⁹⁰ The New Covenant of Grace includes the Adamic Covenant plus the Holy Spirit. Those who claim for material Abrahamic prosperity are not wrong, except that they should not end there; they should also seek for the real prosperity, which is the Holy Spirit (or spiritual prosperity).

And second, and to augment the first point, the next scriptural verse is germane: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the *heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ*.”⁴⁹¹ These two scriptural verses must be read together. On one hand, there is the bequeathed promise of material prosperity, and on the other, it is the spiritual blessings (prosperity) of salvation by the Holy Spirit.

The Abrahamic blessing (prosperity) was anchored in the faith of Abraham, so that those who claim the Abrahamic blessings must also at the same time approach it with faith. Similarly, the New Testament blessings are anchored on grace through faith in Jesus Christ.⁴⁹² The Abrahamic blessings preceded the law, and, therefore, are also based on grace through faith. Anyone who claims to be a messenger of the prosperity message must believe that the purpose of prosperity (material wealth) is the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who receive the gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ also obtain spiritual wealth through Christ.

Thus, one can be spiritually wealth without being materially wealth or can be both spiritually and materially wealth. However, to be materially wealth without being spiritually wealth is spiritual poverty. Jesus advises: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”⁴⁹³ These

⁴⁹⁰ Galatians 3:14 (emphasis added)

⁴⁹¹ Ephesians 1:3 (emphasis added)

⁴⁹² Ephesians 2:8-9

⁴⁹³ Matthew 6:19-21

scriptural verses assume the following: That people only store up treasures on earth, and that balance is required to be truly blessed.

Faith is always a condition of a Christian lifestyle. It is a condition of our faith. That is why Christianity is also called *the Faith*. No divine covenant can be effective without faith. Indeed, both the Abrahamic and the grace covenants are not based on obedience to a set of rules or directives, but they have faith imbedded as a premise. Because without faith it is impossible to please God.⁴⁹⁴

Thus, New Testament believers have already received the blessings of Abraham, vicariously, through Jesus Christ. They do not need another condition to meet the requirement of prosperity. They have all been materially and spiritually blessed through Jesus Christ. Even those who may not have accumulated wealth, they can, through prayer, access the material needs of each day. When He taught about prayer, our Lord urged His disciples to ask the Father to give us this day our daily bread.⁴⁹⁵ “And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”⁴⁹⁶ And the premise of this blessing is not a condition of giving. The error, thus, committed is to think that 2 Corinthians 9:8 is conditioned upon 2 Corinthians 9:7. That later verse says, “Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver.”⁴⁹⁷

The assumption in Pauline dictum is that the people already have the means; they already have material incomes. They are giving out of abundance, not poverty. Their only condition for giving is freedom, willingness. In other words, God is not interested in their coursed giving. Thus, “You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.”⁴⁹⁸ The transfer of riches from Christ to believers is a completed work. Believers

⁴⁹⁴ Hebrews 11:6

⁴⁹⁵ Matthew 6:11

⁴⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 9:8

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, verse 7

⁴⁹⁸ 2 Corinthians 8:9

will not be rich in some distant future; they were made prosperous through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have their spiritual blessings stored up in the “heavenly places,”⁴⁹⁹ and have access, through Christ, to Abrahamic blessings through prayer. Christ’s death on the cross was not meant to increase our net worth materially; it was to lead to more permanent, real and meaningful prosperity called spiritual blessings.

Again, extravagance and prosperity are confused. Jesus said, “The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.”⁵⁰⁰ The context of this verse should not be sacrificed. Jesus introduced an equalization principle, namely, that those among believers who may not be well in material sense, have those who have prospered materially to help them. The norm is called love. Whether by choice or circumstances, the poor will always be there, but so will be love. The principle follows a grace-sin relationship, where one increases, the other does to the same extent: “The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.”⁵⁰¹ Where poverty increases, love must increase even more to obviate poverty.

The fact that the poor will always be there, indirectly, vanquishes the faulty prosperity *Gospel* premises, namely that Christians should expect material wealth to come their way as a seal of God’s approval; if material wealth does not manifest in one’s bank account, it’s probably due to lack of faith; if one is going through any suffering or sickness, they may be out of the will of God, and are most likely to be in unbelief (sin); Christians should speak positive confessions (naming and claiming things) until the desired amount of money is acquired; all the wealth in the world will be transferred to the Christians before Christ returns, then we will deliver the kingdom to Him; and Jesus lived his earthly life as a materially rich man.

These promises are very difficult to sustain, even by avid prosperity Gospel preachers. They are more enslaving than freeing,

⁴⁹⁹ Ephesian 1:3, *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰ Matthew 26:11

⁵⁰¹ Romans 5:20

going exactly contrary to the ambit and pith of redemption. In the long run, they frustrate both the preacher and the hearer – because they just don't work. The poor will always be there, and not all the poor people are going to Hell, just like not every materially rich person is going to Heaven. The modern view of prosperity does not go in tandem with the spirit of Scripture.

The difficulty with modern views of prosperity and indigence is based on misconception of what true prosperity looks like to God and to the modern person. To a modern person, prosperity (extravagance) means flaunting excesses (cars, houses, flashy clothes and shoes, expensive drinks, and vacations and fat bank accounts, and etc.) To God, prosperity means having “all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” That's the standard of God's prosperity. And, in fact, that is also the intrinsic understanding of prosperity of those who have had so much money that it felt like it was useless.

One can only come to this conclusion either by divine revelation or by experience. Indeed, grace-laced prosperity means having everything one needs, or even wants, without money: “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”⁵⁰² When we pray, this is the kind of prosperity we must invoke on God's people and on ourselves, and not the extravagance and the self-indulgence we erroneously call prosperity. Thus, selflessness and spiritual virtue are to be hankered for as of more sustainable value than material prosperity.

Prosperity-Freedom Praying

Prayer should be viewed as an attitude of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The prayer that is grace-based and freedom-inclined should include the following:

⁵⁰² Isaiah 55:1

Prayer and Acceptability in Christ

The decision has been made. God has determined that we are all loved, all accepted in Christ. Our attitude to prayer must effuse this perspective. We cannot pray as if we are still expecting redemption but as it is that redemption has already happened. All things are possible when we pray in faith.

Prayer as an Activated Account⁵⁰³

Our accounts in Christ are already activated, and, therefore, we should pray as if the buffet is already set, rather than that it is being set. God has given us everything we need for life through Jesus Christ.

Pray Prosperity God's Way

The grace-laced prayer believes in the idea that God gives us anything we ask for in prayer, including our daily bread, good health, and protection from evil. Jesus recommended that we ask for those things in our prayer, addressing them to God the Father through Jesus Christ. The assumption here is that we need to put into requests everything we desire from God rather than simply believing in our hearts.

Faith Augmented by Actions

Here on earth, we will need to show our faith by deeds. If we need money, we may find work and diligently execute our duties. If we are running a business, we need to be competent and reliable. Prayer serves as a conduit through which we access God's grace and strength to do what we are supposed to do. As we pray and then do, God's power and favor work in and through us to achieving those goals and make available the resources we may desire.

⁵⁰³ See Chapter 17

Watching and Praying

We watch when we apply knowledge to our mandates and missions. We study principles and learn to apply them to practical situations. We pray so that God can action His power through us to the accomplishment of all our tasks. To watch and to pray means that we become aware of what God is doing or what the devil is planning, and we pray according. It means to be alert. At His most difficult moment in life, Jesus Christ cautioned His disciples to watch and pray: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁵⁰⁴

Thanksgiving is the Catch

We should pray as if God has already answered, because, by faith, He has already answered. We ought to constantly thank God for every prayer we offer, as our attitude of laying claim to the already done work of God in our lives. Thanksgiving brings permanency and finality to that which we have prayed for.

Précis

We have freedom in Christ, both to believe and do that which He has determined for us to do. God has already provided all our needs, vicariously, through the Abrahamic Covenant, and by faith through spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. Faith accesses both. Prosperity is not conditional upon our being good or giving to God. Prosperity, like redemption, is a finished work through Jesus Christ. The important thing is to realize that God’s definition of prosperity may not be our orientation to the worldly notion of prosperity. Most of those who may think that they are materially poor, may be rich spiritually, and vice versa. But for whatever we need, God has promised to provide our daily bread, to give us good

⁵⁰⁴ Matthew 26:41

health and to protect us from the evil one. With an attitude of thanksgiving, we bring our praises to God even for those missing things or occasions in which we feel like we are in trouble, suffering or experiencing hardships. Prayer is the divine mechanism by which God's willingness and desire to provide, and our needs combine to bring about the desired outcome to the benefit of the human race. Prayer is free, and we must freely pray.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Acceptability
- Activated account
- True prosperity
- Watching and praying

Multiple-choice Questions

1. True prosperity is ____
 - A. Material wealth
 - B. Having status symbols
 - C. Possession of valuables and luxuries
 - D. None of the above
2. The prayer that is grace-based and freedom-inclined should include all of the following, except ____
 - A. Acceptability in Christ
 - B. Activated account
 - C. Prosperity God's way
 - D. Less and less of thanksgiving
3. What did the Jewish people inherit in Abraham?
 - A. Faith and prosperity
 - B. Lands and cars
 - C. Dreams and visions
 - D. Faith and boats

4. The most basic God gives us in prayer are all these, except _____
- A. Daily bread
 - B. Good health
 - C. Protection from evil
 - D. Vacations
5. To watch and pray includes all these, except _____
- A. Being aware of what God is doing
 - B. Being aware of what the devil is planning
 - C. Being worried and anxious
 - D. Being alert

True/False Questions

1. Truth trumps theology. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss balanced prosperity. Why do we need this knowledge in view of the modern movements that tend to equate prosperity to excessive materialism?

[500 words or less].

17 | PRAYER AS ACTIVATED ACCOUNT

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to relate prayer to an opened account, and
- You will be able to ascertain that only activated accounts bring results

Introduction

Have you ever been there when you opened an account and you could not use it because you had not activated it yet? Well, prayer is more or less like that. For many, their prayer can be heard and answered by God the moment they pray, but the benefits of such prayer may still be not manifested because “the account has not been activated.” That was before grace. Under grace, prayers are heard the moment they are uttered. However, in order to link the old to the new, we will explore Daniel’s encounter vis-à-vis Archangel Gabriel and the Prince of Persia.

The Account

To better illustrate this concept, read the exchange between Daniel and one of the chief angels of heaven:

Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone with the kings of Persia. Now I have come...⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁵ Daniel 10: 12-13

Three Lessons

There are three lessons from this encounter. First, your account is accepted, usually, the first time you open it. In other words, when you pray, God will hear your prayer immediately. But it will take more than an answer to prayer for you to appropriate the benefit of your answered prayer. Like the demons over Persia prevented Gabriel from bringing the results of Daniel's prayer, indeed, the powers of the enemy could hinder you from receiving your prayer benefits.

From this account, we understand that angels were involved in the ministration of prayers. As messengers, one of their tasks was to bring from God answers to prayer. However, Daniel existed during the time when prayer was handled through a third-party channel. There was no direct link between God and the humans. All that, however, changed. Now, we pray directly to the Father through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "This is how you should pray: '*Father*, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon.'"⁵⁰⁶

The terms of our engagement have changed. We pray in-house; not through media or angels. It is not likely now that any demon can hinder our prayers, because it seems that angels no longer deliver prayer answers. God is our Father, and as such, we now have a direct line into His throne room. All this is a work of grace which has built our confidence: "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."⁵⁰⁷ God's presence is no longer of law (duty) but of grace (relationship). As His children, we have the right to enter in and supplicate without any intermediaries.

However, as Satan and his demons are still active in the earth, spiritual warfare will still be vital in order to dislodge satanic forces that attempt to steal our blessings. The greatest hindrance Satan can impose upon the humans is prayerlessness. Because if they do not pray, they would have opened but inactive accounts. In short, God is guaranteed to hear a prayer that is, in fact, uttered. Satan's strategy

⁵⁰⁶ Luke 11:2 (emphasis added)

⁵⁰⁷ Hebrews 4:16

is to hinder people from praying. In spiritual warfare, we dislodge satanic and discouraging forces that hind people from exercising their divine right to pray.⁵⁰⁸

Second, Daniel and Gabriel exercised patience. It took Daniel 21 days to receive the messenger Gabriel. Patience was required otherwise Daniel could have lost the benefits of his prayer. He remained there, faithful, believing and alert. Although he did not understand what was going on, he stood steadfast and eventually got the message he wanted.

The new terms of our engagement may still require patience in the transactions of prayer and responses. However, that patience is no longer dependent upon a demon hindering an angel; patience is required on account of time. We live in time and God exists out of time. But the principle still is: When we pray, God will know and hear us. This was presaged years even before Christ was born: “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”⁵⁰⁹ God is swift to deliver: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me.”⁵¹⁰ Revelations start to come in the moment we pray: “You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not acknowledge them? From now on I will tell you of new things, hidden things unknown to you.”⁵¹¹ And the implication is that God is now found, and He is near: “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.”⁵¹² Sinners can access God at will: “Let the wicked man forsake his own way and the unrighteous man his own thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.”⁵¹³ Answering prayer is a new God-man vocabulary: “This is what each man is to say to his friend and to his brother: ‘What has the LORD answered?’ or ‘What has the LORD spoken?’”⁵¹⁴ And God is ready to listen to prayer: “Then you

⁵⁰⁸ For more on spiritual ware and prayer, see chapters 33 to 46.

⁵⁰⁹ Jeremiah 33:3

⁵¹⁰ Psalm 50:15; see also Psalm 91:15

⁵¹¹ Isaiah 48:6

⁵¹² Isaiah 55:6

⁵¹³ Isaiah 55:7

⁵¹⁴ Jeremiah 23:35

will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”⁵¹⁵

And Jesus exhorts us to the father-heart of God:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*⁵¹⁶

The verdict is in. God is our Father, and He will not only answer us if we pray, but He will also provide that for which we have prayed. As the Bible ascertains: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”⁵¹⁷ Indeed, during the dispensation of grace, prayer is an instrument of grace – that God will not fail us unless we do not pray. If we can pray, we can receive anything from God.

Third, there was a battle going on in the heavenly places. Prayer unleashed God’s powerful princes to fight their battles. Although we know it is neither by mighty nor by power but by God’s Holy Spirit, that promise only becomes real when we trigger the promise through prayer. When we pray, we are surrendering our battles to God. We are telling God to fight for us and to win for us.

When Daniel prayed, God sent a prince to bring him answers, and another prince to fight for a way to his breakthrough. Now when you pray in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, no prince or power of darkness can stand up against God’s authoritative command. Prayer unleashes God’s power on your behalf. God can command men, angels, and even the devils to do your bidding on His behalf. There is nothing that is impossible with God – and the same thing can be said about prayer.

⁵¹⁵ Jeremiah 29:12

⁵¹⁶ Matthew 7:7-11 (emphasis added)

⁵¹⁷ Luke 12:32

Précis

So, child of God, like Daniel, your account was accepted by God when you first opened it through prayer. But you must activate it through patience, faith, praying in the will of God, persistence and, if possible, battle. That battle, though, is for God and your part is to continue to give God thanks. Did you pray? You have been heard. Haven't your answers manifested? Give it a bit of time; God is working it out for you in the spirit.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Account
- Activated
- Daniel
- Archangel Gabriel
- Archangel Michael

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The concept of activated account assumes that ____
 - A. Prayer is heard the moment it is uttered
 - B. Answers may depend on different levels of expectations
 - C. Faith and the will of God has everything to do with answers to prayer
 - D. All of the above are correct

2. Spiritual ____ is inevitable to activated prayer accounts.
 - A. Goodness
 - B. Battle
 - C. Harangue
 - D. Fruit

PRAYER

3. The exchange between Archangel Gabriel and Daniel illustrate ____
 - A. That words matter
 - B. That words uttered in prayer matter
 - C. That words uttered in prayer to God matter
 - D. All of the above are correct

4. What's Satan's greatest hindrance to prayer?
 - A. Prayerlessness
 - B. Pride
 - C. Envy
 - D. Slumber

5. What does the new terms of our engagement require patience in the transactions of prayer and responses?
 - A. Love
 - B. Patience
 - C. Favor
 - D. Peace

True/False Questions

1. Patience is required otherwise the benefits of his prayer may be lost. T/F
2. When we pray, God will know and hear us. T/F
3. Answering prayer is a new God-man vocabulary. T/F
4. God only hears our prayers but He does not answer them. T/F
5. God hears prayers, answers prayer and provides that for which we have requested. T/F
6. Prayer unleashes God's powerful princes to fight our battles. T/F
7. When we pray, we are surrendering our battles to God. T/F
8. God can command Satan and devils to do His bidding on our behalf. T/F
9. When we pray in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, no prince or power of darkness can stand up against God's authoritative command. T/F
10. It is our duty to pray, how God decides to answer us is His prerogative. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss prayer as an opened account with scriptural references to back up your answers.[

500 words or less].

2. Explain the apparent discrepancy: Why should believers in Christ engage in spiritual warfare if God does not need a third-party media to intervene in delivering prayer answers?

[750 words or less].

PART III

18 | INTRODUCTION TO INTERCESSION

At the end of this chapter

- You should be able to define intercession from both the Greek and Hebrew points of view
- You will understand the divinity of intercession
- You will link intercession from its Old Testament conception, and
- You must recognize qualities that define effective intercessors

Introduction

Indeed, “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”⁵¹⁸ And one of the types of prayer that transforms many things in this world is intercession. Intercession is the art of praying less for oneself and more for others. The Oxford Dictionary of Current English defines art as “Human creative skill or its application.” Intercession is an art. It is an advocacy skill that must be learned and harnessed, just as a lawyer has to learn the arts of negotiation, mediation and arbitration. Intercessors are those who by reason of practice of intercession have developed mastery of certain skills, what are known as Intercessory Tools, which they make use of to achieve acceptable results. Because intercession is done, this qualifies it to be an act as well. Intercessions are actions, which are done in a particular place and at a particular time for a particular person or persons for a particular purpose or results. It is also correct to say that the Aspects of Prayer which we discussed in Chapter Four are essentially a cache of an Intercessory Tool. So that intercession is not a single string of prayer made for somebody, but a combination of several aspects to achieve a divine cause. It’s like a carpenter who has mastery of all his tools in order to produce a perfect finished product. No single tool does the job except as used together with other tools.

⁵¹⁸ Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1809-92

Divinity of Intercession

Two of the members of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, are involved in intercession. Of the Lord Jesus Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says: “Wherefore he is able also to *save* them to the uttermost that comes unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make *intercession* for them.”⁵¹⁹ Two fundamental truths are revealed here regarding the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, that He saves those who come to God through Him. This is also reinforced here: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”⁵²⁰

And yet John puts it even more explicit when he records Jesus as having said that: “All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.”⁵²¹ Saving mankind was the foremost work Jesus came to do. But what then has to happen to those who are saved? Jesus says that He will pray for them to the Father. It seems that after the resurrection, Jesus now lives to making intercession for the saints. Can you believe it if I tell you that Jesus mentions your name to His Father and ours in heaven? Yes, He does.

Moreover, John says: “And if any man sins, we have an *advocate with the Father*, Jesus Christ the righteous.”⁵²² The word “advocate” or the one who pleads for another in a court of law, a lawyer, is the same word translated intercessor. And interesting, the quoted verse puts it succinctly, “advocate with the Father.” God, the Father, is the judge.⁵²³ But note that right “with” Him, is our advocate. That means everything in advocacy parlance. For one, it means that when an accusation against us reaches God, Jesus, our lawyer, is right there. Jesus, constantly and without fail, will always be there to defend us. And for another, it means that Jesus, the righteous, will invoke His righteousness on our behalf before God. That is why our confessed sins are constantly being forgiven and our righteousness status restored.

The other member of the Godhead who is master at intercession is the Holy Spirit. Consider:

⁵¹⁹ Hebrews 7:25 (emphasis added).

⁵²⁰ Acts 4:12

⁵²¹ John 6:37

⁵²² John 2:1 (emphasis added).

⁵²³ Isaiah 33:22

PRAYER

Likewise, the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.⁵²⁴

These two verses can be the most misunderstood and misinterpreted ones. They both require discourse analysis and semantic techniques to do justice to the text. First of all, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit only helps us. To help simply means to provide with the means towards what is needed or sought. To help is to aid. It is not to do everything for us. We are only helped if we have a deficit. It is to make a contribution to the alleviation of a difficulty. So, the Holy Spirit only comes in when we lack. The Holy Spirit helps us because we have infirmities. The word ‘infirmity’ here does not point to a disease or a particular physical handicap, but to a weakness. And the weakness we have is spelled out: *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought*. That is the weakness we have; we do not simply know the prayer request exactly as it should be.

Remember, it is not saying that we don’t pray, and neither is it saying that the Holy Spirit is supposed to pray for us always. This verse is saying that the privilege to pray is ours, but when we jumble up our prayer items, the Holy Spirit is available to correct and help us. The truth has been revealed to us, in the mind of the Spirit, there is only an affinity to doing God’s will. And this is the task of the Holy Spirit, to check our prayer requests and to align them with God’s will. If men and women were not evil, self-conceited, selfish and desiring only of their own interests, there was no need for the Holy Spirit helping us to pray for anything. The Holy Spirit makes sure that all the ‘anything’ is done according to the will of God. If this was not so, then man would have been passive in prayer. This could have made many affirmative statements in the Bible on prayer to be of no effect at all.

For example, many active statements are recorded in the Bible: Samuel said that he would sin if he ceased “to pray” for the Israelites;⁵²⁵ King Cyrus made a decree concerning the rebuilding of God’s house and that they (the Israelites) “should pray for the life of the King and

⁵²⁴ Rom. 8:26 and 27

⁵²⁵ 1 Sam. 12:23

of his sons”;⁵²⁶ the Psalmist challenges everyone to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”;⁵²⁷ Jesus instructs us to “Pray to [our] Father which is in secret.”;⁵²⁸ the disciples entreated the Lord to “Teach us to pray”;⁵²⁹ Jesus Himself said He would “Pray the Father...”;⁵³⁰ Philip persuaded the Samaritans to, “Repent...and pray God...”;⁵³¹ Paul urges all Christians to, “Pray without ceasing”;⁵³² and James is not tired of encouraging believers to “pray one for another.”⁵³³

From the foregone, it is evident that we do the praying and the Holy Spirit does the helping. Similarly, the Holy Spirit does not speak in tongues for us. The Bible clearly says: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit *gave them utterance.*”⁵³⁴ People were filled with the Holy Ghost, and antecedent to this, they began to speak in tongues. Notice that these people spoke but the Holy Ghost gave them utterance. In psycholinguistics, speaking and uttering are not the same. Speech is ideally codified in our mind and then given force with the help of the larynx by the brain and emitted through the mouth as utterance. If the Holy Spirit should give utterance it would mean that the people spoke and the Holy Spirit ordered their words. Thus, both the men and the Holy Spirit are actively involved in the process of speaking in tongues. We decide to speak, and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to utter it. If men would decide not to speak, the Holy Spirit would have nothing to give power of utterance to.

So, whereas Jesus intercedes for us in accordance with the already finished work of redemption, the Holy Spirit helps us to pray rightly for God to answer us. The former does it right at the Mercy Seat in heaven, thus achieving the work of a High Priest; the latter does it inside the court as the priest would do, and, thus, helping us in the elaborate process of redemption whose end is to help us reach the seat of mercy. In all these, man is the end, for it is man who should be helped to pray and it is man who should be pleaded for in order to be

⁵²⁶ Ezra 6:10b

⁵²⁷ Ps. 122:6

⁵²⁸ Matt.6:6

⁵²⁹ Luke 11:1

⁵³⁰ John 14:16

⁵³¹ Acts 8:22

⁵³² 1 Thess. 5:17

⁵³³ James 5:16

⁵³⁴ Acts 2:4 (emphasis added)

accepted in the beloved. And it is man who should be helped daily to live a Christian life.

Old Testament Concept of an Intercessor

God says: “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”⁵³⁵ The implication here is that Noah, Daniel, Job, and indeed many Old Testament heroes, were men and women of prayer. They were intercessors. In order to understand the power and effectiveness of intercession, we need to go back to the Old Testament and see how it was done.

We may start by considering this Old Testament text: “Therefore do not pray for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear you.”⁵³⁶ To understand this verse, it is important to note the context in which it was said. The people had defiled the temple making it a “den of robbers,” (11). They had stolen, murdered, committed adultery, sworn falsely, burned incense to Baal and had walked after other gods (9). God had warned them several times but they had failed to heed (3, 13). And God had passed a passive judgment upon them (15).

These people had done too much and God feared to forgive them, knowing the power that intercession had. At this stage the only one that could reverse the situation was an intercessor, a man like them who would dare to stand right before God. Interestingly, God wanted to convince Jeremiah that the people did not need to be interceded for and provided evidence that: “Sees thou not that what they do in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem” (7:17). God knew that it was only an intercessor that could save the situation. And these were human intercessors, who themselves had weaknesses.

It was only an intercessor that could change God’s mind. Again, we read: “But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts....”⁵³⁷ The context in which this verse falls is very much different from the first one. Here, God has actually sanctioned the Israelites’ captivity. God Himself calls Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon his servant, (5). He

⁵³⁵ Eze. 14:14

⁵³⁶ Jeremiah 7:16

⁵³⁷ Jeremiah 27:18

continued to caution that if there was a prophet who should prophesy for their redemption, such a prophet would be lying, (15). And God sealed it so that nobody should bother Him on that issue any more, (22). But again, in (27:18) God gives an implicit truth that the intercessor can change God's mind on an issue, even if it was sealed.

God regarded certain courageous men in the Bible that would dare to speak or warn on His behalf as intercessors: "And he saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor..."⁵³⁸ God was bewildered that not even a single man was found to stand up for Him. Such a man who would bravely stand up for God, whether at local or in national crisis, God would refer to him as an intercessor. God was looking just for one link to help Him pacify His anger, which had been aroused because of one sin after another.⁵³⁹ In any given place, God's solution for crises was a man, usually a single man only. So, it was in this case, should one man be found whose heart would be loyal to God and who should cry out for forgiveness, God would answer. But everyone had turned against God, and God destroyed them, (31).

In the Old Testament, a watchman at the wall performed the job of an intercessor. God tells Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore, hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."⁵⁴⁰ The notion of a watchman here is different from the modern notion in which we equate a watchman to a night or security guard. In those days when cities were fortified and people lived in the safety of the walls, a watchman was an outstanding figure. He was the Chief Protector of his people because he provided warning to the whole city. In God's view, a watchman was a prophet, when he received word from God and transmitted it to the people, and a herald, when he provided warning to the people.

Notice the nature of warning; it was from the LORD'S mouth. In other words, the herald sounded back God's word as he received it. Critical analysis of the above discussions reveals the following. An intercessor needed to combine both the priestly as well as the prophetic qualities in him. A priest spoke from the people to God; thus, he stood in the gap on behalf of the people. But he was also a prophet because he was called upon to hear from God and speak on

⁵³⁸ Isaiah 59:16

⁵³⁹ See Ezek. 22:30

⁵⁴⁰ Ezek. 3:17

God's behalf to the people. Now in the dispensation in which the priestly office was acutely separated from the prophetic, it was very difficult to find many intercessors. Thus, perhaps, it explains why God always regretted having found no intercessor.⁵⁴¹

Greek Concept of Intercession

In Greek, two words are used, *entugchano* and *enteuxis*, for intercession and an intercessor, respectively. The basic idea of *entugchano* is to make an appeal and the modern translation adopts this meaning. But the root idea of the word *entugchano* is to, "light upon, by chance; to meet accidentally."

Hebrew Concept of Intercession

The Hebrew word for intercession is *paga* (and its verb means "to intercede"). *Paga* literally means to "light upon." *Paga* connotes the same meaning as *entugchano*. Both have the notion of chance and a sense of urgency. The "lighting upon by chance" and the "meeting accidentally" of *entugchano* and the "chancing upon" of *paga* both point to the same result, action when it is prompted.

By that we mean that intercessions are triggered by promptings or sharp intentions, which the Holy Spirit may bring by 'chance' or 'accidentally' to an individual's consciousness. In these promptings, time, place and action are intertwined. That is to say, the Holy Spirit-triggered imaginations or promptings may come to anybody at any time and action is expected immediately. Deductively, this means that intercession needs quick response. Delay is denial in intercession. When the promptings come, one should pray.

Never postpone the promptings. The place of the "chance upon" is as important as the person "chanced upon." Imagine an individual about to be involved in an accident. The Holy Spirit prompts you to pray. You say you will pray later. The accident occurs and the person dies or is injured. Who is to blame? It is, therefore, vital to pray when the promptings occur, where they occur, and for whom they occur. It is the reason why at the beginning of this chapter that we reiterated that intercession is an art and an act. Those who will be effective intercessors must train themselves to be obedient to promptings.

⁵⁴¹ Ezek 22:30, *supra.*, and see also Isaiah 59:16

Intercessory Promptings

The success of intercession and prayer for results depend on the understanding of what is known as the prompting. Promptings come to all so that they can pray for the issues that concern them, others and God. These strong Holy Spirit-breathed pangs arrive with deliberation and are so strong that they only dissipate when the request has been obviated or rested. Prayer is the gracious method divinely designed to settle the promptings.

Promptings are not the following:

- They are not human fears – the fear that something bad might happen.
- They are not wishes – the wishes that something good should happen.
- They are not planned – planned so that at some time scheduled someone is going to pray.
- They are not human ideas – ideas that one needs to pray for someone or something at some point.

Promptings light upon a person's consciousness from the Holy Spirit. They connect with a person's soul (and human spirit) so that a person senses exactly what God is sensing in time. When that person feels like they need to pray, they should – because in that moment, God is there. Indeed, this principle is based upon an Old Testament revelation given to Amos: “Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”⁵⁴² In those days, God had special people He chose to reveal Himself to, among them, prophets.

Those days are, however, gone, and now God will reveal Himself to everyone who has the Holy Spirit. And this has eloquently been demonstrated through the Book of Hebrews: “On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the *prophets*. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.”⁵⁴³ His Son (Jesus Christ) is the one who delegated this role to the Holy Spirit: “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good

⁵⁴² Amos 3:7

⁵⁴³ Hebrews 1:1-2 (emphasis added)

that I am going away. Unless I go away, the *advocate* will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”⁵⁴⁴

Indeed, promptings may also be called “advocacies” from the Holy Spirit. Through them, we know exactly what God’s will for us in that time is, and in that moment, we must pray. Paul put it this way: “I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus *took hold of me*.”⁵⁴⁵ God first takes hold of us, so that we may do and pray for that which He has taken hold of us. Our promptings are divinely inspired to achieve in the earth what God would love to achieve through us. In cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we pray God’s will and desire into the earth. God, partly, rules nature and the universe through our Holy Spirit-prompted prayers.

Thus, whether night or day, morning or afternoon, dark or light, tired or inspired, our role is to obey the springs of promptings and pray in that moment. The nature of our prayer is such that we stick with the prompting until the burden is lifted. When that happens, we win with God.

Promptings may come for any number of interests including:

- For ourselves
- For our families
- For our churches
- For our nations
- For the world

In each case, we hold the key to victory. When we obey and pray, we can control heavenly rooms, courtrooms, classrooms, hell rooms, and, indeed, anything and anywhere we are a topic of discussion, for good or for bad. We can influence decisions, change courses of contemporary and future events, and even prevent certain things from not happening completely. When the prompting comes, one should pray.

⁵⁴⁴ John 16:7 (emphasis added)

⁵⁴⁵ Philippians 3:12b (emphasis added)

General Definition of Intercession

From the foregone, it is quite clearly observed that an intercession is not just a prayer. Intercession is not just standing in the gap. Intercession is not just pleading for someone. Intercession is not just sitting awake like a watchman. Intercession is not just praying for others. Intercession is not just combating the powers of evil for the Kingdom of God. But intercession is all of the above. All of the above can sometimes happen individually while other times occurring collectively. But whenever they occur, they need to be obeyed. For whom they occur, they need to be obeyed. And at whatever time they occur, they need to be obeyed. All types and aspects of prayer need to be employed in order to achieve an intercessory assignment.

Intercessions are, thus: *The Holy Spirit directed promptings that may come at any time for anyone at any place and an appropriate prayer be employed to achieve divine results.*

Exemplification of the Intercessory Concept

Jacob in the Bible gives us the example of how intercession works. Two passages from the Old Testament express this concept:

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And *he lighted upon* a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.⁵⁴⁶

Clearly, Jacob intentionally left Beersheba for Haran. But he unintentionally selected his place of rest at night. Suddenly, that place happened to be the very gateway to heaven.⁵⁴⁷ This confirms that intercessions are accidental but God planned. For Jacob could never have known whether that place was the door to heaven except by divine promptings. And what happens in this place?

⁵⁴⁶ Gen. 28:10:12 (emphasis added).

⁵⁴⁷ Gen. 28:17

First, Jacob has an encounter with the divine.⁵⁴⁸ Second, the LORD renews the covenant He made with his fathers, Abraham and Isaac there.⁵⁴⁹ And last, the LORD gives Jacob direction for his continued journey.⁵⁵⁰

But note how he brings out very clearly the concept of accidental meeting: “And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said, *surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.*”⁵⁵¹ So are intercessions, God can be there and you do not know, except and unless you obey the divine promptings.

The second passage is also like the first:

And he arose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two-woman servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And he said, I will not let you go, except you bless me. And he said unto him, what is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he said your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and you have prevailed.⁵⁵²

This passage denotes the spiritual warfare aspect of intercession but connotes the underlying principles of the meaning of intercession. To start with the last, again Jacob accidentally chooses a place to remain alone. A man that shall change his destiny appears. Jacob, a trickster and conman, has met his name-changing destiny. He will be disabled for the rest of his life but he becomes a prince of God. One act of obeying the divine promptings can usher one into divine destiny, no matter what their background has been. He has accidentally or by chance selected a place and in that place his destiny has unfolded.

The first one is an aspect we call spiritual warfare. Many times, in intercession, we need to wrestle. To meet our destined place is one thing but to wrestle in order to gain our territory is another. In Gen. 28, we saw how God easily gave the place Beersheba to Jacob. But several years ahead we saw how God instructed Joshua to be strong and courageous (determined; ambitious) in order to take over the “Promised Land.” This time Joshua with Israel had to fight for what

⁵⁴⁸ Gen. 28:12b, *supra*.

⁵⁴⁹ Gen. 28:13-14

⁵⁵⁰ Gen. 28:15

⁵⁵¹ Gen. 28:16, (emphasis added).

⁵⁵² Gen 32:22-28

was promised.⁵⁵³ We have to wrestle to get our inheritance, and that is what true intercessory spiritual warfare is all about. But the nature of our fight is one of authority, victory, positional faith and occupation.

Irrevocable Need for Intercessors

Intercessors behave like pregnant mothers. They groan and travail to bring about a divine change. Just as groans of travail precede birth, so the Holy Spirit-begotten intercessions forecast new life, new hope and new possibilities for individuals trapped in the impossible. A baby truly is a good thing. All expectant mothers know that very well. But they also know of the pain during labor as well. Yet, when the child has been born, who remembers the pain? This author remembers when Clarice, his wife, was in the maternity ward for the birth of all their three girls, the excruciating pain she underwent. Yet, when their children were born, she was so happy that she almost forgot about the pain of labor. So, it is with intercession.

We go through pain, hunger and prolonged periods of prayer and warfare. And things do not seem to be pleasant. Yet, when we see people getting saved, relationships restored, miracles, signs and wonders, financial breakthroughs, nations at peace, God's will being done, and the list is endless, we get excited and forget about the supposedly discomfitures of travailing.

Intercessors are one mission-one assignment oriented. That means that they may not remain in the same place unless it is on another assignment. For example, when this author served as Prayer Leader for Bread of Life Church International (BLCI) in Zambia, he left once his burden for bringing thousands into the Kingdom of God with the acquisition of the plot of land on which to construct a modern cathedral eased. It was time to move on to other assignments God had in store for him. Those who knew how effective he was at BLCI and the close relationship he shared with Bishop Joe Imakando were very surprised, and even disappointed, that he left. But that is how intercessors operate. When assignments call, they may return.

Intercessors and intercessions are not works of fleshly effort or men's ingenuity. They are acts of grace. God provides both the willingness and the desire to pray for others without a demand for endorsement or public reward. Intercessors should subscribe in

⁵⁵³ Joshua 1:2, 6,9 and Joshua 6-13

totality to: “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men . . . but when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father who is unseen.”⁵⁵⁴

The other need for intercessors is missionary in scope. We need them to pray so that the Lord can send laborers into the fields to harvest the souls. They are also needed to engage in spiritual warfare, to liberate the masses from the enemy’s attacks through disease, sicknesses, poverty, and countless other vices. This follows from the fact that they are partners with the Lord Jesus Christ in intercession. Failure in our intercessions, may affect the fruit of Jesus’ intercession as well. The benefits of the Lord’s intercessions flow to them through their intercessions. Intercessors are, thus, needed to birth God’s will on earth; for the needy harvest fields; for restricting Satan’s work on earth through warfare and for the making of Christ’s intercessions to benefit the saints.

Qualities of an Intercessor

Intercession is a ministry that is centered on people. The following are the characteristics of an intercessor. He or she:

Must love God

Jesus assigns this to be the most important commandment. Answering to the question: Which is the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind.”⁵⁵⁵ It is first of all important to note the inquirer and the nature of his inquisition. The one asking this question is a lawyer, a professional in legal matters. He should have known the law, but he failed short as his nature of inquisition reveals.

First, he asks from a wrong motive, to tempt Jesus.

Second, a supposedly lawyer seems to be ignorant of the law. It is apparent from the tone of his voice that he was looking at the Decalogue for his answer. Little did he understand that God honors every word that proceeds from His mouth. Jesus’ answer does not

⁵⁵⁴ Matthew 6:5-8

⁵⁵⁵ Matt. 22:37

come from the Decalogue but from what may appropriately be termed “Principles for Living.”⁵⁵⁶

However, there were other laws, such as concerning relationships,⁵⁵⁷ wrestling and fighting,⁵⁵⁸ property,⁵⁵⁹ social and legal issues,⁵⁶⁰ fair play⁵⁶¹ and feasts.⁵⁶² These are few among the many moral, legal and liturgical laws that were to be followed. In fact, in tempting Jesus with this question, the inquirer has abrogated another law from whence Jesus extracts an answer: “Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God.”⁵⁶³ However, Jesus overlooks the lawyer’s ignorance and uses this occasion to give the greatest commandment. The command to love the LORD our God with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength is the first and the greatest. The nature of this love is that:

It should be with all our heart and soul (mind)

The heart is the seat of our emotions such as love, hate, happiness, sorrow, joy, fear, and so on. All emotions are expressive. In other words, we always do something with our emotions, from the root, “motion.” If we are sorrowful, for instance, we may cry. If we are fearful, we may panic and if we have joy we may laugh or smile. To love God with all our heart is to show it through our emotions. We may demonstrate it in laughter, dancing, shouting or singing. But loving God is also a decision, an expression of our self-will. Thus, we may decide to love God or not to love God. In this commandment, we are ordered to express our love emotions and decide to love God.

The soul is the seat of man’s (woman’s) affections and will. To love God with all our soul is to love God with a deep regard and appreciation. It is to love God consciously. It is to make up our minds to doing so. It is to choose to love Him and not to hate Him. It is not to “love God with all our spirit.” To love God with all our human spirit is to make man a passive lover and God an active lover. Rather, to love

⁵⁵⁶ Deut. 6:4-25

⁵⁵⁷ Exodus 21:1-17

⁵⁵⁸ Exodus 21:18-32

⁵⁵⁹ Exodus 22:33, 22:15

⁵⁶⁰ Exodus 22:16-31

⁵⁶¹ Exodus 23:10-13

⁵⁶² Ex. 23:14-16

⁵⁶³ Deut. 6:16

God with our soul is to love God apart from God. It is to pour out our affections to God independently in deep appreciation and regard.

It should be with our entire mind. It means to love God intelligently, imaginatively and thoughtfully. We have to ponder on who God is and how to love Him best. It is loving God lively. Don't we do the same as humans? When we first see someone whom we tend to love, we ponder on such feelings and evaluate the prize. Then we choose deliberately to love or to not love. That is how we should love God, intelligently and thoughtfully.

It should be with all our strength

This means loving God with might, power and security. Here the body is involved. In this view, the total man is involved, body, soul and spirit. Loving God with all our strength is applying ourselves to Him. It is doing things for Him. It is serving others for Him. It is this part, which compels us to do something, an act, or a deed, which itself demonstrates our love for God.

In summary to love God involves our all being. It is to verbalize it by saying it. It is in our attitude. It is our actions, sacrifice, obedience and also unconditionally following Him. It is communicating with Him on a frequent basis. This is what we should be remembered for, that we loved our God.

Must love people

People are the reason why the Ministry of Intercession exists. The second most important commandment in the Law is all about people: "And the second is like unto [the first], you shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁵⁶⁴ To the degree to which we love ourselves to that degree Jesus says we need to love our neighbors. A neighbor is simply every acquaintance or stranger we come across on a daily basis. We need to love people whether they are rich or poor, White or Black, loving or irritating. This is a grace we receive from our Lord. We do not need to discriminate but all the people are to be loved equally.

⁵⁶⁴ Matt. 22:39

Must identify with people

A biblical intercessor always identifies with people. “We” instead of “I” must be fondly used in prayers. Other people’s defects, sins and shortcomings also become the intercessor’s. One of the best prayers of identification is found here: “Let your ear now be attentive, and your eyes open, that you may hear the prayer of your servant, which I pray before you now, day and night, for the children of Israel your servants, and confess the sins of Israel, which we have sinned against you: both I and my father’s house have sinned.”⁵⁶⁵

Nehemiah identified himself with the people. He included himself in their sins and God answered his prayer of repentance on behalf of Israel. Similarly, when we pray, we ought to be included in the faults of other people. In fact, we need to ask the LORD to deal with us on behalf of others. That is not to say that we have physically done what other people have done, but like the priests who served barefooted in the tabernacle, we also are pilgrims who are still on the same path as our offending brothers and sisters. We should identify ourselves with other people’s strengths as well as their weaknesses. When someone falls, we should plead with God for him or her as if it were ourselves.

Must know God

The original root of the word ‘know’ in the Bible has the concept of “meeting” like a male and female would meet sexually. Knowing in the Bible speaks of intimacy. No sooner we realize how important it is to know God personally than we begin to understand how good God is. It is from this knowledge of God that we begin to appreciate God’s will and what He does not like. Our intimacy with God grows as we spend quality time in the Word of God and in prayer.

Must be holy

The priests who served in the Tabernacle of Moses were expected to be physically fit, mentally sound and socially upright. Physical disabilities of any sort disqualified them to the priestly office. We are the New Testament royal priesthood.⁵⁶⁶ Similarly, God expects us to

⁵⁶⁵ Nehemiah 1:6 (emphasis added).

⁵⁶⁶ 1 Peter 2:9

have neither spiritual disabilities nor deformities.⁵⁶⁷ God Himself commands us to be holy because He is holy.⁵⁶⁸ To be holy is to be sacred, hallowed and set apart to the worship or worthy of God.⁵⁶⁹ Holiness is being like Jesus, doing what He does, saying what He says and behaving the Jesus' way. The state of holiness is what enables us to maintain our sinlessness life style, which has been imputed on us through righteousness. Thus, righteousness and holiness are related but not the same thing. We are righteous already through Jesus Christ, but we aspire for holiness as matter of deliberation on our part. We choose to be set apart for God's own use.

Must be full of the Holy Spirit

An intercessor must be full of the Holy Spirit. He or she must be filled in the Holy Spirit every day and not just the initial experience. Intercessors must allow the Holy Spirit to lead them. This is so because whomsoever the Father accepts as is or her child is expected to be led by the Lord's Spirit.⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, an intercessor must be controlled and must walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, which results from a dedicated prayer life.⁵⁷¹ The intercessor's foremost tools are the Holy Spirit promptings. Care should, therefore, be taken that the Spirit of Dad God is not quenched nor irritated or grieved. We grieve or annoy Him by what we carelessly say. We grieve Him through malice, slander, gossip, and backbiting, lying, cheating and through deliberate disobedience. According to the Greek concept of *entugchano*, missing the Spirit's prompting is failing in our intercessory duties. It is incumbent upon an intercessor that he or she be very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It is very vital to note, though, that our acquiescence to be led by the Holy Spirit is an act of grace on the part of God and not of our own wilful volition. The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift God has promised those who would believe in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. To be led by the Holy Spirit is grace, not works so that we should boast.

⁵⁶⁷ However, we are all accepted in any state of physical disability. God does not discriminate.

⁵⁶⁸ Lev. 11:44

⁵⁶⁹ Heb. 12:14 and Matt. 5:8

⁵⁷⁰ Rom. 8:14

⁵⁷¹ Luke 4:14

Must be people of good character

Character, which is defined as moral virtue, or moral excellence, is an act of grace as well. God has given us His grace to both will and do of His own pleasure: “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”⁵⁷² However, character transcends the outward expression and becomes the inner quality of purity, resolute, power and virtuous expression. It is being what others should imitate. It is being a public testimony, a salt and light to those around us. It is to love, to give, to be open and transparent. It is to have the mind of Christ.

Must be faithful

To be faithful as it applies to humans is to be trustworthy. It is to be trusted that you can keep promises with respect to both rewards and punishments. To Nehemiah responsibility was tied to faithfulness: “That I gave my brother Hanani... charge over Jerusalem: for he was a *faithful* man, and feared God above many.”⁵⁷³ Leaders should be men and women who are faithful and who fear God above their subjects. God rewards us according to our faithfulness⁵⁷⁴ and Paul describes Onesimus as a faithful brother.⁵⁷⁵

Faithfulness is a quality of those that will be trusted with the responsibility to pray for others. Jesus is said to be a faithful High Priest⁵⁷⁶ and Paul exhorts, “Ephraim...who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salute you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”⁵⁷⁷ A faithful intercessor like Ephraim can be depended on. You can leave him with a request and you can be rest assured that the job will be done. Ephraim is not like many of us who are quick to volunteer but too slack to act. How many times do we promise that we would pray for someone and we never did? Faithfulness, therefore, is an important quality of all intercessors.

⁵⁷² Philippians 2:13 (New Living Translation)

⁵⁷³ Neh. 7:2 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁷⁴ 1 Sam. 26:23

⁵⁷⁵ Col. 4:9

⁵⁷⁶ Heb. 2:17

⁵⁷⁷ Col. 4:12

Must be merciful

Mercy is defined as kindness. The biblical mercy is the highest kind known as loving-kindness. Mercy has the power to avert judgment. It defiles the rules of justice. Without mercy, no single person could perhaps be saved. Mercy is the expression of true love⁵⁷⁸ and merciful people will obtain mercy.⁵⁷⁹ Jesus Himself is said to be a merciful High Priest, that is why He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.⁵⁸⁰ A merciful intercessor will treat people kindly and is surely poised to be a successful mediator.

Must be prayerful

Prayer finally should define all intercessors. It is not enough to talk about prayer, to brag about the many technical terms we know about it or even to show off our genius on prayer. It is only enough if we can actually pray.

It is through prayer that people, communities and nations are brought before God. It is only through prayer that their destinies are shaped. Pray when you feel like and pray even when you do not feel like. Pray all the time; pray every day. Pray for someone or something that comes to your mind by accident; it is God appointing and ordaining that meeting of minds – His mind and yours – because for whomever or whatever you pray, their destiny is shaped for sure. This then is how God's purposes are realized on men and situations; through prayer.

Précis

The chapter has introduced one of the most important aspects of prayers called intercession. As an art and act, intercession helps us to pray for people and situations which God want to be brought to His attention. The concepts of spiritual warfare as it relates to intercession has been linked, and importantly, the lightening upon of intercession

⁵⁷⁸ 1 Corinthians. 13:4a

⁵⁷⁹ Matt. 5:7

⁵⁸⁰ Heb. 2:17

in unexpected circumstances have all been defined. Qualities that will define intercessors of grace have been highlighted. In the next chapter, the intercessory system as a whole is discussed.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- *Entugchano*
- Intercession
- Intercessor
- *Paga*

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Both entugchano and paga have one thing in common:
 - A. Light upon
 - B. Meet accidentally
 - C. Meet by chance
 - D. At any place
2. Which quality must define all intercessors?
 - A. Prayerfulness
 - B. Faithfulness
 - C. Good character
 - D. Holiness
3. Intercession is a ____ centered ministry.
 - A. People
 - B. God
 - C. Holy Spirt
 - D. Jesus

4. Who in the Old Testament exemplifies the intercessory concept?
 - A. Jacob
 - B. Moses
 - C. Abraham
 - D. Nehemiah

5. Intercession is an act of ____
 - A. Grace
 - B. Power
 - C. Human will
 - D. Personal effort

6. Intercessions are ____, which are done in a particular place and at a particular time for a particular person or persons for a particular purpose or results.
 - A. Actions
 - B. Dreams
 - C. Promptings
 - D. Words

True or False Questions

1. An Old Testament watchman was a kind of an intercessor.
T/F
2. Intercessors must make themselves righteous. T/F
3. It is through prayer that people, communities and nations are brought before God. T/F
4. It isn't very vital to note, though, that our acquiescence to be led by the Holy Spirit is an act of grace on the part of God and not of our own wilful volition. T/F
5. No sooner we realize how important it is to know God personally than we begin to understand how good God is.
T/F
6. A biblical intercessor always identifies with people using the "I" word vocabulary in prayer. T/F
7. The Decalogue is the only set of regulations God expected the Israelites to follow. T/F

Short Essay-type Questions

1. Review the concepts of Entugchano and Paga and ascertain how they illustrate the intercessory concept.

[500 words limit].

2. Discuss five of the qualities of an intercessor.

[500 words limit].

3. How does Jacob' encounter with God justify the modern Holy Spirit-breathed intercession?

[500 words limit].

4. Identify at least two needs for intercessors and discuss why this is essential to the work of the Great Commission.

[500 words limit]

19 | SYSTEM OF INTERCESSION

At the end of this chapter

- You will discover if intercession is a role or a gift, and
- You will learn about the categories of intercessors.

Introduction

Intercession is a form of a prayer, but a special form of prayer. To be clear, every Christian believer is called to a life of prayer. There is no controversy, Apostle Paul wants every child of God to pray: “Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.”⁵⁸¹ By clean hands, the Apostle means that those who pray must be believers in one true God whom they should worship without pretense, instead of worshiping idols: “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear deceitfully.”⁵⁸²

By extension, the lifting up of holy hands in prayer symbolizes beauty and purity of heart, “May my prayer be set before You like incense, my uplifted hands like the evening offering.”⁵⁸³ It is also a sign and symbol of blessings.⁵⁸⁴ However, there are some people in the Body of Christ who may have a special affinity for praying for others. One good example in the New Testament is Epaphras, “Epaphras who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. *He is always wrestling in prayer for you*, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”⁵⁸⁵

“Wrestling” may be translated as “earnestly,”⁵⁸⁶ or “struggling,”⁵⁸⁷ or “laboring fervently.”⁵⁸⁸ It may also be translated as “striving

⁵⁸¹ 1 Timothy 2:8

⁵⁸² Psalm 24:4

⁵⁸³ Psalm 141:2

⁵⁸⁴ See Luke 24:50

⁵⁸⁵ Colossians 4:12 (emphasis added)

⁵⁸⁶ New Living Translation

⁵⁸⁷ English Standard Version

⁵⁸⁸ King James Bible

earnestly,”⁵⁸⁹ “laboring earnestly,”⁵⁹⁰ or even “contending.”⁵⁹¹ Indeed, it can also be translated as “prays hard,”⁵⁹² “solicitous,”⁵⁹³ and “prays fervently.”⁵⁹⁴ In other words, intercessors are a little bit more considerate, caring, attentive, concerned, and kind, than the average praying Christian.

Intercession: A Role and a Gift

Intercession is both a role and a gift. As a role it, is expected of every Christian to pray for others. Christians have been called upon to intercede for others, “Confess your trespasses to one another, and *pray for one another*, that you may be healed.”⁵⁹⁵ Every Christian here is addressed without exception. This makes the intercessory system a role.

There are also other people who do not just pray for others, but they have a special grace for prayer. These ones have a definite affinity for prayer above the common Christian. They may display the following seven characteristics:

- They pray longer, relative to others
- They pray with more intensity
- They enjoy prayer
- They have more sensitivity to the voice of God
- They may possess the gift of prophecy
- They are more alert to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and
- They may possess what may be termed as “The Gift of Intercession.”

In summary, intercession is both a role and a gift. As a role every Christian is commanded to pray for others. It is also a gift when one has a special affinity for prayer which is above the other Christians,

⁵⁸⁹ New American Standard Bible

⁵⁹⁰ NASB 1995

⁵⁹¹ Holman Christian Standard Bible

⁵⁹² Contemporary English Version

⁵⁹³ Douay-Rheims Bible

⁵⁹⁴ Good News Translation

⁵⁹⁵ James 5:16 (emphasis added)

and can pray for extended periods of time regularly and is known to see tangible and dramatic responses to prayer.

Categories of Intercessors

Based on the premise that intercession is a gift, we can identify about five categories of intercessors:

General Intercessors

General intercessors spend long hours praying over prayer lists, prayer guides and many other miscellaneous prayer requests given to them. A caveat must be stated. Praying for longer hours does not signal superiority in intercessory mastery, just as praying relative shorter prayers does not indicate intercessory inferiority. What is required is to be watchful in prayer: “*Watch and pray* so that you will not fall into temptation. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*”⁵⁹⁶

Intercession, like any type of prayer, is a discipline in the flesh. The spirit is always willing to pray, but the flesh might be a great hindrance. Intercessors, like gym goers, must constantly discipline their flesh so that it is not a hindrance to prayer. Praying longer or shorter prayers depends on many factors, and the flesh is just one of them.

Moreover, those who are called to the role or have a gift of intercession normally do well on prayer items handed over to them and can be trusted to pray for requested prayers. Ask a General Intercessor to pray for something and you can be rest assured that the job will be done.

Crisis Intercessors

A Crisis intercessor prays almost exclusively on assignment and the assignment comes from the presence of God. They usually hang on to a prayer request revealed to them by God until it is resolved or until God gives them a breakthrough. In Ezekiel, God seems to be suggesting a Crisis Intercessor: “*I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.*”⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ Mark 14:38

⁵⁹⁷ Ezekiel 22:30 (emphasis added)

Personal Intercessors

Some intercessors receive a special calling to pray on a regular basis and with intensity for a specific person or persons. These persons are usually pastors and other Christian leaders. Those people who receive such a calling may be called Personal intercessors. Personal intercessors may possess the following qualities:

They have love for the person they pray for

Every Christian must have love for God and for their neighbors.⁵⁹⁸ It is very important to love the person you pray for. Desire that such a person or persons succeed, is in good health and is walking according to the will of God. It is also important to realize that those people you pray for are humans and are likely to blunder. Do not be disappointed to see them not change as quick as you expect them. Be objective and realistic. Indeed, no Christian is expected to have love for one person above the comrades. However, personal intercessors must balance between loving Christians in general and focusing their love on one or more individuals whom they feel obligated to pray for.

Be confidential

It is very important to keep confidences of the people for whom you pray. Many times, you will be called upon to pray for very sensitive issues concerning your leader. Be sure to be prepared to keep secrets. Failure to do this, is failing in your duty as a Personal Intercessor.

Maintain a positive attitude

It is very important to protect and defend the person you pray for. Defend him or her or them in times of gossip, castigation, accusation, and so on, and then take the matter to God in prayer.

Be spiritually realistic

It is very important to be very realistic about spiritual issues especially those that could be detrimental to your leader's life. A Personal

⁵⁹⁸ See Matthew 22:37-39

intercessor is not called upon to be an adviser to the one they pray for; this calls for realism. You have no authority to rebuke him or her if they are wrong. Instead, you should, in love, stand for them in prayer and reason before God for them.

God is the only source of answers and solutions to the personal issues and problems of the person the intercessor prays for. In prayer, an intercessor can bring before God that person's needs and concerns. A prayer offered in secret, will be rewarded publicly.⁵⁹⁹

Be sensitive to the person/s' needs

It is very important to be sensitive to the people you pray for and their needs. Be ready to listen from God about their needs and pray accordingly. Do spiritual warfare for them when the LORD prompts you to. Satan's forces directly attack Personal intercessors because they play a defensive role on behalf of leaders. Do not be discouraged, it is worthy to die for a divine cause. This may be construed as spiritual martyrdom. Jesus said that we should have good cheer because He has overcome the world.⁶⁰⁰

Warfare Intercessors

Some intercessors are called specially to engage the enemy in high-level spiritual warfare. This is an advanced kind of intercession and by far the most demanding and potentially dangerous of them all. Warfare intercessors do spiritual warfare on a more regular basis than any other category.⁶⁰¹

Précis

Every Christian is commanded to pray. Some Christians may have a gift of intercession in addition. The gift of intercession is not a bragging right; it is, rather, a special grace others have that enables them to intercede with more intensity and focus for others. In that

⁵⁹⁹ See Matthew 6:6-7

⁶⁰⁰ John 16:33

⁶⁰¹ Refer to chapters 31 – 42 on spiritual warfare

regard, they join their Lord and Chief General, Jesus Christ, who lives to make intercession for the saints: “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since *he always lives to make intercession for them.*”⁶⁰² While they make intercession for others, the Holy Spirit leads them on and also makes intercession for them (as intercessor of the intercessors): “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the *Spirit himself intercedes for us* through wordless groans.”⁶⁰³

⁶⁰² Hebrews 7:25 (emphasis added)

⁶⁰³ Romans 8:26 (emphasis added)

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Affinity
- Categories of intercessors
- Crisis
- Gift of intercession
- Personal intercessors
- Role of intercession
- Spiritual martyrdom
- Warfare
- Wrestling

Multiple Choice Questions

1. According to this chapter, which one of the following statements is true?
 - A. Only intercessors must pray
 - B. Intercession is only a gift
 - C. As a gift, only pastors are intercessors
 - D. Every Christian is commanded to pray
2. Each of this is a category of intercessors recognized in this chapter, except:
 - A. General
 - B. Crisis
 - C. Warfare
 - D. Intervention

3. A mark of true intercessors is that ____
 - A. They pray longer
 - B. They fast frequently
 - C. They have a special gift
 - D. They pray

4. All these are intercessors, except:
 - A. Jesus Christ
 - B. Holy Spirit
 - C. Personal Intercessors
 - D. God

5. Intercessors ____
 - A. Must constantly advise the person they pray for
 - B. Must always be found
 - C. Must belong to an intercessory ministry
 - D. Must be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit

True or False Questions

1. Intercession can be both a role and a gift in one individual.
T/F

2. Intercessors must hide the sin of the person they pray for from people but only disclose it before God. T/F

3. Jesus Christ is the intercessor of intercessors. T/F

4. Every Christian is commanded to pray. T/F

5. Warfare intercessors do spiritual warfare on a more regular basis than any other category. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Praying for longer hours does not signal superiority in intercessory mastery, just as praying relative shorter prayers does not indicate intercessory inferiority.” Discuss this statement.

[500 words or less].

2. List and describe at least five (5) qualities of personal intercessors.

[300 words or less].

3. Explain intercession as a grace (refer to other chapters in this book).

[500 or less words].

4. Explain the concept of “wrestling” with its derivatives in relation to Epaphras.

[250 words or less]

5. Define spiritual martyrdom” and relate it to Satan’s desire to destroy Personal Intercessors.

[250 words or less].

20 | THE HEART OF INTERCESSION

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to discern the heart of intercession
- You could know that God works through prayer here on earth
- You must understand that intercession is a sacrifice
- You should learn about the significance of standing in the gap
- You should learn about further definitions of an intercessor and intercession
- You must exemplify *paga* in the real life of an intercessor

Introduction

In the Bible, Jesus declares, “The greatest way to show love for friends is to die for them.”⁶⁰⁴ There are many ways to lay down one’s life for another. One of them is through prayer. When people pray for others, they pray the prayer of intercession. Intercession is born out of the heart of the Father. What the Father desires to see on earth, He imputes it into the heart of special prayer warriors called intercessors. Intercessors translate the desires of God into prayer requests because when God wants to do anything on earth, He does so by first answering prayer.

Prayer: The Means by which God Works on Earth

God’s heart is large enough to carry all the burdens of the people. The second greatest act of grace, other than salvation through grace by faith in Jesus Christ,⁶⁰⁵ is prayer: “How gracious he will be when you cry for help! *As soon as he hears, he will answer you.*”⁶⁰⁶ Here is the gracious condition: As soon as He hears, He will answer you.

First, one must pray, directing their prayer to the Father through

⁶⁰⁴ John 15:13

⁶⁰⁵ See Ephesians 2:8-9

⁶⁰⁶ Isaiah 30:19 (emphasis added)

the name of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And second, when God hears a prayer, He immediately answers. And although God is sovereign and knows our thoughts before they form,⁶⁰⁷ and our words before they are uttered,⁶⁰⁸ divine order has established that we ought to pray, directing our thoughts (for those who may be mute or have speech handicaps) and uttering words (for those whose speech is not handicapped) to God. So it is, if one wants God to answer them, they ought to pray; and when God wants something to be done on earth, He impresses it upon an intercessor who must pray for God to answer.

For human beings to have the same capacity as God has, so that they see like God sees and have the same compassion God has, they must receive the heart of intercession. Intercessors have, thus, been empowered from on high to carry people's burdens and concerns. God depends on intercessors to pray His will in the affairs of the world.

Intercessors work with God. God wants to change and transform us until our heartbeat becomes His heartbeat, and we are moved by what moves Him. God is looking for people who will be sensitive in the area of intercession, who are willing to work with Him by praying what is on His heart into the earth. We need to pray with the fervency, love, and fire that come from our innermost beings. That is the fervency that comes from God. In its simplest form, to intercede means to take the place of another, to stand on someone else's behalf.

The Sacrifice of Intercession

Praying the heart of intercession is a sacrifice of our very being, our lifestyle, our time, and energy. It is a prayer to see God's will, plan and purposes be done on earth as it is in heaven.⁶⁰⁹ Intercession is an aspect of what the Bible terms, "sacrifice of praise," "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."⁶¹⁰ God is looking for people who will care enough to give of themselves to Him and to the needs of others in the prayer of intercession.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, has a priestly ministry of prayer. He prays

⁶⁰⁷ See Psalm 139:2

⁶⁰⁸ See Psalm 139:4

⁶⁰⁹ See Matthew 6:10

⁶¹⁰ Hebrews 13:15

for people before the Father: “But Jesus will never die, and so he will be a priest forever. He is forever able to save the people he leads to God, because he always lives to make intercession [to speak to God for them].”⁶¹¹ But we too have the same ministry like Jesus. We are partners in intercession. When Jesus conceives a need for the people, He transfers the burden to intercessors. He prompts them through the Holy Spirit to pray according to the burden of His heart. Intercessors have a very important role to play in intercession. They must be available to God. They must sacrifice time and energy to be used by God in interceding for the needs of other people.

The heart of an intercessor is to give and to pray no matter what the cost. By the grace of God, through intercessory prayer, the Holy Spirit moves on the wings of prayer to make God’s will, plan and purposes manifest in the natural realm. One of the purposes of our living is to make intercession on behalf of others. Every believer is appointed to do the work of an intercessor. That is one of the ways in which we rule and subdue the earth: “He lets us rule as kings and serve God his Father as *priests*. To him be the glory and power forever and ever! Amen.”⁶¹² Just like priests of old stood in the gap for others, so should the New Testament believers, dubbed, the royal priesthood.⁶¹³

God has elevated us to the position of priests. He has given us a privilege we could only dream about. Like kings, He allows us to rule, to command events and situations, and dominate our surroundings. However, like priests, He allows us to serve him. A priest represents people before God. He or she carries the people’s burden and represents them to God as if they were his or her own. He or she pleads before God the Father for their forgiveness, as if it was for his own. He or she cries out to God for their safety, joy, power, victory, success and so many other things, as if it were for his or her own. That is the heart of intercession. It is able to lay down its life, comfort, pleasures, joys and time for others.

Standing in the Gap

Jesus performed the greatest act of intercession, or standing in the gap, that has ever occurred, when He died on the cross for you and me. He

⁶¹¹ Hebrews 7:24-25

⁶¹² Revelation 1:6

⁶¹³ See 1 Peter 2:9

did not have to die; He chose to die. Although the price has already been paid, there is one thing we can do. We can stand for others on behalf of the sacrifice Jesus made for them. This way, the fullness of what Jesus did will come into their lives as God intended.

In intercession, we stand in the gap on their behalf. We take it upon ourselves to pray for them, to stand, speak the Word of God and to fight for them. In this way, too, the will of God will be done in their lives.

God honors the sacrifice of intercession. He looks for intercessors who will pray on behalf of others. Your prayers work powerfully in the spirit realm. Do not give up – you have to persist and persevere, until you see results come into the world through your intercessions. When God puts something on your hearts to pray for, you must refuse to give up until you see results. When the Holy Spirit releases you, you are free from the burden.

When we intercede on behalf of somebody else, we go to the Father and take hold of God with one hand, and the person we are interceding for, with the other. We bring them together as we stand in the gap: “I looked for someone to defend the city and to protect it from my anger, as well as to stop me from destroying it. But I found no one. So, in my fierce anger, I will punish the Israelites for what they have done, and they will know that I am furious. I, the LORD has spoken.”⁶¹⁴

This is an interesting account of God’s attitude towards intercession. God is looking for intercessors to help stop God’s anger from destroying the world. When God wants to punish a city or a person, another human being called an intercessor can stop that from happening by standing on behalf of that person and pleading for him or her before God.

If we had so many faithful intercessors, we would relax more and don’t worry about so many things. Intercessors would take care of business. They would help servants of God carry out their ministry without being burned out.

Intercessors are capable of reversing God’s mind. They can stop God’s judgment. When God decides to do something in anger, no one can stop Him except an intercessor who stands in the gap. Thus, intercessors can pray for the peace of nations, against global warming, for the growth of the Church, for the propagation of the Gospel, for miracles and so forth. Intercession preserves and protects, as shown in

⁶¹⁴ Ezekiel 22:30-31

the verse above.

Like a lawyer pleading a case before an adjudicator, an intercessor takes the burdens of the people and makes them theirs. In the Bible, we see Job crying out for a lawyer: “For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him and that we should go together to court. Nor is there any mediator [lawyer] between us who may lay his hands on both of us.”⁶¹⁵

To reiterate, an intercessor is someone who takes hold of God’s hand, on one hand, and that of the person being prayed for, on the other, and brings them together by standing in the gap. An intercessor is performing the role of a mediator or a lawyer when he or she does this. This is what they do before the throne of their God as intercessors.

We, therefore, come to another definition of an intercessor. *An intercessor is someone who pleads the case of another.* Like a defence lawyer, an intercessor gathers moral evidence (grace) and brings it before the throne of God so that the person he or she intercedes for may receive mercy and find grace to help him or her during the time of his or her need.⁶¹⁶

Sometimes, you see injustices and lack of kind hearts, and you may wonder why God did not do anything about such. In Isaiah, there is an answer.⁶¹⁷ In verse 16, it is mainly because there was no intercessor. God is still looking for intercessors today who will stand in the gap and intercede on behalf of other people and nations.

The Concept of Paga

In the Old Testament, we encounter an interesting Hebrew word, “Paga,” which means to intercede, to come between, to cause, to extend, to fall upon, to meet together and to pray.

Paga also means to establish to the full inheritance. The land of Israel in Joshua 19 was being divided among the various tribes. God was giving His people specific details about how far their borders were to extend. Everyone knew the boundaries of their inheritance, but they had to reach out and take possession of the inheritance that was already theirs.

⁶¹⁵ Job 9:32-33 (emphasis added)

⁶¹⁶ See Hebrews 4:16

⁶¹⁷ See Isaiah 59:12-16

Intercession is the power to reach out and take and establish what already belongs to us. This is another definition of intercession. Redemption would be meaningless if we couldn't materialize its accruments. If grace exists, its benefits must benefit those for whom Christ died. Salvation, forgiveness, peace, eternal life, and so on, must be actioned, otherwise redemption will mean nothing.

Jesus has already secured our inheritance. We are already blessed according to the Bible.⁶¹⁸ But we must reach out and possess our inheritance. We do so by prayer, by calling our inheritance into being. Simply knowing that we are blessed is not enough; we must pray our inheritance into manifestation.

You must possess all that has been given to you. Every believer and Church has an inheritance that has been apportioned to it. How much of our inheritance we possess or how much we walk in our destiny is not dependent on God, although it comes from Him. It depends on how much we possess through prayer and how much we act on the Word of God.

Another aspect of Paga is that of spiritual warfare. In the Bible, we read, "Praise God with songs on your lips and a *sword in your hand*. Take revenge and punish the nations. Put chains of iron on their kings and rulers."⁶¹⁹ The high praises of our mouth and the two-edged sword in our hands are both weapons of our warfare in the fight of faith. Paga involves attacking enemies. Part of our intercession is to attack, possess, overcome, rise above, conquer, take by force, subdue, defeat and overwhelm our enemy with victory which is ours in Christ Jesus.

Paga has an aspect of urgency. The concept of place is very important in the Paga aspect of intercession. Intercession is a mighty *place* with God. In Genesis 28, Paga means an accidental meeting *place*; to come to a *place* by chance; and to discover that God is there.

Précis

Redemption may mean less if we can't acquire the heart of the Father – the most tender, loving, compassionate and receptive heart. Salvation is first and foremost, the change of a sinner's heart into one that

⁶¹⁸ See Ephesians 1:3

⁶¹⁹ Palm 149:6-8 (emphasis added)

believes, receives and obeys God. But it does even more; it behaves just like the Father does. The Father wants to see the benefits of redemption be actualized in the earth. One of the ways He does this, is through the intercession of the saints. God first pours of Himself into us, so that in turn, we may pour out our hearts into others. Intercession takes hold of God's hand and that of people and brings them together. God will lay a thought about someone or something on our hearts. As we start to pray about it, God will be there to help us in our prayer. God works in us to helping other people through the prayer of intercession. All that we need, is being sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, which may come at any time, any place, for anyone.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Burden
- Father's heart
- Paga
- Sacrifice
- Standing in the gap

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The word paga conceptualizes all of these, except:
 - A. Urgency
 - B. Place
 - C. Power
 - D. Chance
2. Intercession may be synonymized by all these, except:
 - A. Lawyer
 - B. Advocate
 - C. Adjudicator
 - D. Mediator
3. Prayer may action all of the following, except:
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Forgiveness
 - C. Personal glory
 - D. Peace and eternal life

PRAYER

4. In the Old Testament, a ____ stood in the gap on behalf of the people.
 - A. Medium
 - B. King
 - C. Priest
 - D. Prophet

5. “As soon as God hears, He will answer you,” illustrates:
 - A. Grace
 - B. Glory
 - C. Conditional grace
 - D. Unmerited glory

True/False Questions

1. Paga means an accidental meeting place; to come to a place by chance; and to discover that God is there. T/F

2. An intercessor is someone who pleads the case of another. T/F

3. Intercession is the power to reach out and take and establish what already belongs to us. T/F

4. An intercessor is someone who takes hold of another’s hand, on one hand, and that of the person being prayed for, on the other, and brings them together by standing in the gap. T/F

5. God does not work with men. T/F

6. The heart of an intercessor is to receive and to pray no matter what the cost. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Distinguish between intercession and sacrifice.

[250 words or less].

2. Discuss, “Intercessors are capable of reversing God’s mind,” in reference to Ezekiel 22:30-31 and Malachi 3:6.

[500 words or less].

3. Relate intercession to the heart of the Father .

[250 words or less].

21 | WATCHMANSHIP

At the end of this chapter:

- You will discover that prayer is an instrument of protection
- You will learn about the concept of a watchman
- You will appreciate the interdependence of watching and praying
- You will trace the idea of watchman from the Old Testament's fortified cities, and
- You will relate Old Testament's watchman to the New Testament's intercessor

Introduction

God is the Achi-protector of His people. Throughout the Scripture, we learn of key concepts for protection, such as refuge, sanctuary, asylum, harbor, stronghold, strength, trust and, of course, watching. The key verse is: “See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!”⁶²⁰ This verse paints a picture of vulnerability, lack of safety and regret. It also makes a contrast between trusting in God as our refuge or trusting in money. Those who make their wealth or other things as their protections will always be insecure, sneering for their enemies,⁶²¹ will not be free of distress,⁶²² will have false hope,⁶²³ will encapsulate wickedness,⁶²⁴ and will be unwise.⁶²⁵ Jesus, our Lord, bemoans any other foundations other than Him as “sinking sand.”⁶²⁶ The centerpiece of our refuge is the conceptualization of the Lord as our rock: “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.

⁶²⁰ Psalm 52:7

⁶²¹ Psalm 10:5

⁶²² Psalm 10:6

⁶²³ Psalm 62:10

⁶²⁴ Psalm 73:12

⁶²⁵ Isaiah 47:10

⁶²⁶ See Matthew 7:24-27

He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.⁶²⁷

Prayer as Instrument of Protection

Rocks and fortresses are usually breached and penetrated, and, so, they may need watchmen to stand guard upon them. Prayer, generally, is construed as the instrument of protection, of watching over the spiritual affairs of the people. Prayer is also used in combination with watching as a symbol of refuge in God: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation...”⁶²⁸ “Watching and praying” must move in tandem. Watching only without praying is a fantasy; praying only without watching is a detriment. And the warning is strict: “Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands firm [immune to temptation, being overconfident and self-righteous], take care that he does not fall [into sin and condemnation].”⁶²⁹ It is, therefore, important to both watch and pray.

The Concept of a Watchman

God announces, “I have set watchmen [watchwomen] on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent [never stop praying] and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”⁶³⁰

This is one of the most emotional declarations of the Almighty God throughout the Scripture. It is a declaration of a Father who loves His offspring; a Master who prioritizes the protection of His progeny; an urgent safeguard for a leader who wants to assure His fellows; and a concerned promulgation of the God of Israel. God is a caring God. He goes to lengths to take good care of His people, including covering them in times of trouble.

⁶²⁷ Psalm 18:2-4

⁶²⁸ Matthew 26:41

⁶²⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:12 (Amplified Bible (AMP))

⁶³⁰ Isaiah 62: 6-7 (emphasis added)

A watchman performed two roles: He guarded the walls of ancient towns for the welfare of its citizens and he warned of impending trouble. He was more than just a modern security guard. He owned the welfare of the people and he defended them. In both roles, he was chiefly involved with the complete welfare of the people: Provision, security, safety and care.

The most important aspect of this Scripture is the welfare of the people inside the walls. God assures them not to worry.⁶³¹ But this is not an unreasonable assurance; God has taken action to safeguard His people. He has posted watchmen to watch over them. There could be many interpretations of this concept. At the heart of it is the God who loves and takes care of His people.

In ancient Israel, watchmen existed: “Except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman wakes up but in vain.”⁶³² As far as protecting the city was concerned, the watchman’s role was secondary. God Himself primarily protected His people. He needed the human element because He was dealing with humans in their affairs. The success of the watchman was dependent upon God’s grace and guidance. God signaled when there was an imminent attack, and through His prophets, God accelerated or decelerated the offence.

An Intercessor as a Watchman

The closest a watchman could be in the New Testament concept is a prophet or an intercessor. Jesus commanded us to “Watch!”⁶³³ He was urging us to guarding our own hearts as well as to be our brother’s keeper. A watchman sees spiritually what normal people see physically. He is spiritually anointed to perceive spiritual things. The watchman is anointed to divinely be able to see the things that God wants us to see in order to partner with Him in His work.

An intercessor has a third sight, he can see beyond the physical realm into the spiritual realm of reality; he can see in the realm where God reigns and where demonic forces resist God’s reign; and he can see God’s purposes for people and Satan’s devices against people.

To be able to see in the spirit, an intercessor must: Position himself

⁶³¹ “Therefore I tell you, stop being perpetually uneasy (anxious and worried about your life...)” (Matthew 6:25)

⁶³² Psalm 127:1B

⁶³³ Mark 13:37

or herself as watchman; must acknowledge his or her nearsightedness; must draw near to God to see spiritual truths; must focus beyond the surface of things; must receive the full picture that God is showing him or her; and must see God's purposes and the enemy's devices.

However, at the core of this watchman business is God Himself. "I [God] have set watchmen..." is God's own declaration, God's own initiative. Humans are instruments. Angels are instruments, too. God Himself is the wall that surrounds His people: "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from this time and forever."⁶³⁴

As stated, God achieves this role through human or angelic instruments. God opened the eyes of a young man during the time of Prophet Elisha to see what God had stationed around His people. And the prophet said, "Fear not; for those with us are more than those with them. Then Elisha prayed, Lord, I pray You, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the young man's eyes, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."⁶³⁵

Many people understand that God's perpetual presence is with them. However, people question why bad things seem to happen to them on the constant basis. The question is not, will bad things happen to good people, but, what has God determined for us to do either to prevent bad things from happening or to deal with the bad things when they happen? The answer is prayer. Elisha, though aware that God had protected them through chariots of fire, actioned that protection through prayer: "Elisha prayed to the Lord."⁶³⁶

In Isaiah, God reiterates this principle: "You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."⁶³⁷ This conjecture seems to be suggesting three ideas. First, that the desire to protect His people is God's. Second, that God's people can activate God's protection through prayer. Third, this process of asking God for protection must continue. In Psalm 91, God sums up this principle. "I will say [I will ask God to be] of the lord, he is my refuge...He will cover you with His pinions...You shall not be afraid...A thousand

⁶³⁴ Psalm 125:2

⁶³⁵ 2 Kings 6:14-17

⁶³⁶ *Ibid*, v. 18

⁶³⁷ Isaiah 62:6-7

may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right, but it shall not come to you....Because you have made the Lord your refuge....For He will give His angels charge over you to accompany and defend and preserve you in all your ways...”⁶³⁸

The concept of watchman is repeated in the above portion of Scripture, and more. Angels do watch over us at God’s instruction. For, “Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service of those you are to inherit salvation?”⁶³⁹ The protection of God through angels is an added bonus we freely receive from God for accepting the free gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁰ It’s the work of grace.

Thus, our trust is not, and should not be in things, angels or systems. When we retire to bed to sleep, our prayer is that God should protect us – our bodies, souls and spirits. We know that God will send His angels to take charge over us, and we should ask for that.⁶⁴¹ But the core of our defence is God Himself, not the means through which God protects us.

That is not to state that we should not find human means of protection, we should. However, at the heart of our belief system should be this realization that unless the Lord watches over our plans, we plan in vain. And this is true. We see people die every day, leaving behind wealth and enterprises they spent time acquiring. We see, too, that all we achieve in human terms is chasing after winds. We labor hard, we pin each other down in order to rise to the top. We threaten, we abuse processes, we cheat and defraud and we do all these with lethal exactitude. Yet, at the end of the day, we are empty, more miserable than before we undertook the malicious enterprise. And we die.

Oh, this miserable life, this vanity of a helpless kind. Who will deliver us from this corrupt world? And yet, the answer has always been with us.⁶⁴² We must not lift up our eyes to the hills because that is not where our help comes from. Our help comes from the Lord who made both heaven and earth, and everything in them. God will not allow our feet to slip or to be moved. God, who keeps us alive and in good health, will not fall asleep on us. The Lord is our keeper; the Lord

⁶³⁸ Psalm 91:2,4,5,7,9 and 11)

⁶³⁹ Hebrews 1:14

⁶⁴⁰ Ephesians 2:8

⁶⁴¹ See Psalm 91:11-16

⁶⁴² See Palm 121

is the shade on our right hand [on the most vulnerable side or aspect of our being or ideals]. He will keep us alive during “Acts of God” and natural disasters. He will keep us from all evil, and He will preserve our lives. The Lord will keep our going out and our coming in from this time and forever more.

Prayer Activates God’s Protection

Certainly, God watches over us. The only thing now remaining is for us to lift up our hands in prayer, to ask Him for this most fundamental aspect of living. And to all who stand in the gap as intercessors, give God no rest. To the rest of all God’s children, pray. Pray that God’s presence will be perpetually guiding you. And He does. Know that His angels exist to keep you safe from all danger. Angels are not to be worshipped because, like you, they are only creatures of God. However, they carry a special mission, and that is you – to keep you and yours from all danger. But you must pray first.

Précis

This chapter may be concluded through the following poem:

We pray not because we are strong
That is very wrong,
We pray because God has strength
And from every length, that is as true
And those few
Who know this reality
Have their minds set on eternity.
Pray, when you feel like
Pray, when life seems to spike
And your prayer will be rewarded
Because God has already awarded
All humanity with a gift of Christ Jesus
Who makes intercession for us.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Protection
- Refuge
- Standing on the wall
- Watch and pray
- Watchman

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Where does a believer's help come from?
 - A. Hills
 - B. The Lord
 - C. Angels
 - D. Police
2. An Old Testament watchman is the New Testament equivalent of ____
 - A. An evangelist
 - B. An intercessor
 - C. An usher
 - D. An apostle
3. According to the Bible, watchmen should constantly be ____
 - A. Making peace
 - B. Praying
 - C. Arguing
 - D. Guarding

4. What is the symbol of refuge?
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Watching and praying
 - C. Watching
 - D. Prayer and fasting

5. What activates God's protection?
 - A. Angels
 - B. Prayer
 - C. Watching
 - D. Watchmen

True/False Questions

1. The core of our defence is God Himself, not the means through which God protects us. T/F
2. God primarily protects us through angels. T/F
3. Intercessors should give God plenty of rest. T/F
4. Watchmen, generally, performed two roles. T/F
5. The centerpiece of our refuge is the conceptualization of the Lord as our rock. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “A watchman performed two roles: He guarded the walls of ancient towns for the welfare of its citizens and he warned of impending trouble.”

Discuss the intercessory concept in relation to this statement.

[500 words or less].

2. Discuss the following statement: “Watching only without praying is a fantasy; praying only without watching is a detriment.”

[250 words or less].

3. “The success of the watchman [is] dependent upon God’s grace and guidance.” Discuss.

[250 words or less].

22 | PRAYER AND GROANING

At the end of this chapter:

- You must define the prayer of groaning
- You must explain the significance of travailing in prayer
- You must list the four elements of the prayer of groaning
- You will learn that groanings are prompted by the Holy Spirit
- You will understand that intercession breeds groanings, and
- You will learn that groanings are not a labor of works but of grace

Introduction

Generally, groaning or travailing is an expression of three conditions: Pain, despair, or pleasure. The Merriam-Webster dictionary associates the following words to travailing: task, toil, effort, agony, torment, labor, or childbirth. In prayer, however, groaning or travailing takes on another dimension. In prayer, travailing is not for its own sake; it has a definite purpose. It is associated with the birth of something, usually, from the spiritual realm into the physical reality. Prayer may also be defined as a process by which spiritual elements are converted or turned into material substances.

Importance of Travailing in Prayer

A very illustrative analogy is given in Scripture:

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will *bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess,*” says the LORD. These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah: “This is what the LORD says: “ ‘Cries of fear are heard— terror, not peace. Ask and see: *Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale?* How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. *It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.*” “In that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will *break the yoke*

*off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them.*⁶⁴³

A grim picture is painted, a picture of extreme enslavement. In that state of bondage, men wept like women in child labor. In the end, the people were liberated and never to be enslaved again.

There are times when just prayer is not enough. These are kinds of situations which don't "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."⁶⁴⁴In addition, they call for strenuous, mental or physical exertion, tribulation, agony or anguish, and the labor of childbearing in bringing about the outcome. It is praying from the inner self of the human spirit. Prayer and fasting may be required to cast out some notorious demons, but travelling in prayer may be required to breakdown strongholds over nations or territories. Travailing works together with groanings.

All the incidents of travelling or groanings in the Bible seems to have been answered by God. For example: "During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So, God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them."⁶⁴⁵

Elements of a Prayer of Groaning

When Elijah prayed to change the condition of the day, rescheduling rain when it had not been determined so, he travailed:

And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So, Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So, Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ Jeremiah 30:3-8 (emphasis added)

⁶⁴⁴ Matthew 17:21

⁶⁴⁵ Exodus 2:23-25; see also Exodus 3:7-8

⁶⁴⁶ 1 Kings 18:41-44

From this passage, there seems to be four elements of a prayer of groaning: patience, righteous faith, the Word of God, and actions (groanings).

First, we see that Elijah was patient. Elijah told his servant seven times to “go and look.” The Bible is clear on this point: “Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.”⁶⁴⁷ Elijah patiently waited for his prayer to be actualized.

Second, Elijah had righteous faith. His servant did not see the signs of rain for at least six trips; Elijah, with faith eyes, did see when he told his servant, “Go back.” James writing about Elijah confirms: “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”⁶⁴⁸ Prayer of groaning may also be termed as the prayer of a righteous person: “The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth yielded its crops.”⁶⁴⁹

Third, Elijah’s prayer was based on the Word of God. It was Zechariah who described in words what Elijah had done years before Zechariah was born: “Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone.”⁶⁵⁰ Elijah, acting upon the revealed Word of God, trusted God and claimed this Scripture even before it had been written.

And fourth, Elijah actioned his faith. Elijah bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees. This position was one used by women when they gave birth in ancient days. It is symbolic of childbearing. Hence, we know that Elijah was traveling in the spiritual realm. He travailed for rain, and it poured down.

Travail produces fruit or brings down the rain. Rain is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of revival. Jesus, like a farmer, is waiting for the first fruit of the earth. It will not come without rain. The spirit of prayer leads us to asking God for spiritual awakening and for an outpouring

⁶⁴⁷ James 5:7

⁶⁴⁸ James 2:17

⁶⁴⁹ James 5:16-18

⁶⁵⁰ Zechariah 10:1

of the Holy Spirit. This is expressed through travailing.

Thus, Elijah was a person just like any other. He prayed earnestly (faithfully, righteously, patiently, based on God's Word and by acting upon his faith). So did Hannah in the Old Testament who travailed for her son Samuel to be born:

And she made a vow, pleading, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever come over his head." As Hannah kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard.⁶⁵¹

Both Elijah and Hannah travailed in the spirit. Travailing is a mighty weapon in prayer. When it is articulated in prayer, it gives birth to the will of God and to miracles.

Groanings are Prompted by the Holy Spirit

Groanings are not mechanical or human invasions. They are prompted by the Holy Spirit. Just like in nature, a woman gives birth to a child. It is also natural for our human spirits to give birth to God's plans. The Holy Spirit wants to turn dead situations into life. Groanings and travailing bring forth life into death situations. They bring freedom to situations and to people who are in bandage. Spiritual delivery is a brainchild of the heavenly conceived pangs. Yielding to the Holy Spirit and discerning the will of the Father are key to groanings that produce divinely ordained results.

In travailing, we may experience spiritual birth pangs. We may go through the motions until we deliver spiritual results. When the Holy Spirit leads us into travailing, we do so until there is a release in our spirits. In those situations, we must pray and travail until we give birth to the burden on our spirits' mind.

Intercession and Groanings

Travailing is the action of acute intercession, what may even be termed

⁶⁵¹ 1 Samuel 1:11-13

as desperate praying:

The Lord will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies. “For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.”⁶⁵²

Apostle Paul interceded for the Galatians as a woman in labor till Christ be formed in them: “My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.”⁶⁵³ Paul labored for the Galatians in intercession. He labored so that Christ could be formed in them. Similarly, Epaphras labored in intercession for the Colossians: “Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.”⁶⁵⁴ Epaphras and Paul travailed in intercession so that the Colossians would stand firm in the will of God and the Galatians would be reborn from above, respectively.

The heartfelt groanings of a believer give birth to the will of God and bring life. Groanings lead to deliverance from bandage. God uses His people’s Holy Spirit-begotten groanings to deliver other people and to bring them into freedom. The Holy Spirit utterances in helping believers to pray are in the form of groans: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”⁶⁵⁵

The so-called shortest verse in the Bible, *vs*, “Jesus wept,”⁶⁵⁶ is itself a form of groaning. It could conveniently be re-written as, “Jesus groaned.” Lazarus was dead. His family and friends were weeping and mourning. When Jesus came to town, He was thinking differently. He

⁶⁵² Isaiah 42:13-17

⁶⁵³ Galatians 4:19

⁶⁵⁴ Colossians 4:12

⁶⁵⁵ Romans 8:26

⁶⁵⁶ John 11:35

had come to demonstrate the glory of God. And He yielded to the Holy Spirit in the prayer of groanings.

It is stated that, “In John 11:30-34, the Greek word used here for groanings is *embrimaonai*, which comes from the word *brimaomai*. This word means to ‘snort with anger, indignation, to sigh with chagrin (which implies being distressed), to groan, and to murmur against.’ Jesus was, thus, yielding to the second level of prayer. He was releasing himself to the level of groanings. People noticed and remarked, ‘See, how he loved him.’”

Groanings and Grace

The nature of the groanings is such that they are Holy Spirit-begotten. In Romans 8:26, we read, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”⁶⁵⁷ This verse brings out three facts of grace.

First, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness.” We are not the stronger party, but the weaker in this process. The Holy Spirit assists us in our prayer details so that we can pray correctly and accurately. This is grace.

Second, “We do not know what we ought to pray for.” The Holy Spirit helps us by directing our prayers towards the right requests. We can’t even make the right requests and the Holy Spirit who knows the will of God ensures that we get it right. This, too, is grace.

And third, “The Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” Groanings are a gracious connection by which the Holy Spirit prays for us. The Holy Spirit goes further than just praying for us through groans, but also to empowering our human spirits so that they can pray aright through groans. This is ultimate grace.

This was prophesized long time ago by Prophet Isaiah: “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?”⁶⁵⁸ Of course, no-one has heard or seen such a thing except us. This passage alludes to the Church. The Church has received such grace that it needs not be in labor to produce results, nor does she need to undergo the pain of labor. In the Church, we are more than conquerors,⁶⁵⁹ because,

⁶⁵⁷ Romans 8:26, *supra*.

⁶⁵⁸ Isaiah 66:7-9

⁶⁵⁹ See Romans 8:37

by His grace, we enjoy the spoils of the war we did not fight in and purchase goods without money.⁶⁶⁰ Our groanings are not a mark of hard labor, but rather, of the labor of love and grace.

Précis

In this chapter, we have defined what the prayer of groanings is. Also known as *travailing*, groanings are engineered by the Holy Spirit to pray for those things that just simply praying cannot move. Our role in this is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in producing or birthing divine results. This is the work of grace, because, although we may groan, we do so out of love and not hard labor.

⁶⁶⁰ See Isaiah 55:1

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Elements of groanings
- Groanings
- Travailing

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Each of these is an element of the prayer of groaning, except:
 - A. Blessings
 - B. Faith
 - C. Patience
 - D. Action
2. Our groanings are a mark of ____
 - A. Hard labor
 - B. Love
 - C. Works
 - D. Deeds
3. Groanings are begotten by ____
 - A. Love
 - B. Hope
 - C. The Holy Spirit
 - D. Jesus

PRAYER

4. Travailing is the action of acute intercession and may also be termed as ____
 - A. Spiritual breakthrough
 - B. Groaned pleading
 - C. Fervent praying
 - D. Desperate praying

5. Each of these exemplifies the prayer of groaning, except:
 - A. Lot
 - B. Hannah
 - C. Elijah
 - D. Epaphras

True/False Questions

1. Our groanings are not a mark of hard labor, but rather, of the labor of love and grace. T/F

2. The Church has received such grace that it needs not be in labor to produce results, nor does she need to undergo the pain of labor. T/F

3. “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child,” is a statement of grace rather than of protest. T/F

4. Because we can’t make the right requests, the Holy Spirit who knows the will of God ensures that we get it right. T/F

5. Groanings do not, under any circumstance, lead to deliverance from bondage. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe the four elements of the prayer of groaning.

[250 words or less]

2. List and discuss the three facts of the Holy Spirit-begotten groanings.

[250 words or less]

23 | PRAYER AND PRAISE

At the end of this chapter:

- You must appreciate the importance of praise and worship
- You should understand the interrelationship between prayer and praise/worship
- You will unlock the key to God's presence
- You will understand the creatures' mandate, and
- You will deduce the rationale of the Prayer of Praise

Introduction

Praise and worship are a form of a prayer. All spiritual and divine activities that involve transmitting some form of message to God and God back to us are a form of prayer. Therefore, it is in order to categorize praise and worship as prayers. Prayer is a mode of communication. In praise and worship, the supplicants transmit their heartfelt emotions in praise and worship to their God. This chapter will discuss the prayer of praise, and worship.

God Inhabits the Praises of His People

God is found in, and takes pleasure to be, where He is being praised. It is a normal reaction. Humans also share in this same emotion. When a couple is fond of each other and speaks well of one another, they also love to be in each other's presence. Where there is strife and bickering, there is less room for unity and togetherness.

The Psalmist declares, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."⁶⁶¹ The word translated "inhabit" may also mean enthrone, sit, rule or dwell. Thus, wherever God is being praised or worshipped, He establishes His throne or rule there.

⁶⁶¹ Psalm 22:3

Glory is Defined Praise

What does it mean to glorify God? There is no complete definition of glory without praise. No-one can claim to glorify God if they can't praise or worship Him: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."⁶⁶² Isaiah reports, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: *the whole earth is full of his glory.*"⁶⁶³ The only way the "whole earth" can be full of His glory is if there is sustained praise of God. Nature (creation) declares the glory of God.⁶⁶⁴ The primary reason why humans were created is to praise God – to study Nature and to be enchanted by its creator. Then to respond with impromptu praises to the Living God. Praise is the ultimate prayer.⁶⁶⁵

The direct significance of prayer is to receive from God. The direct import of praise is total salvation. Receiving from God is implied, because everything we have or are, come from God.

When we pray, we receive; when we praise, we receive. Thus, praise and prayer are directly related. And both invoke the presence of God.

The air, the oxygen, the energy that keeps God awake is praise: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: *and they rest not day and night*, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."⁶⁶⁶ Call it duty or a non-ending tradition, in the presence of God are creatures whose duty is to give God unending praise. They do so day and night, forever.

Praise is the Key to God's Presence

When we come before God, we ignite His presence by praise. Praise is the key that ushers us into the presence of God: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."⁶⁶⁷ Praise is a double-edged sword; it cuts both ways. We enter into God's presence by means of praise, but we praise God because we are in His presence.

⁶⁶² Psalm 50:23

⁶⁶³ Isaiah 6:3 (emphasis added)

⁶⁶⁴ Psalm 19:1

⁶⁶⁵ See Luke 10:41-42

⁶⁶⁶ Revelation 4:8 (emphasis added)

⁶⁶⁷ Psalm 100:4

In the history of the Jewish nation, God introduced two concepts or approaches to His presence. The first one was the tabernacle. The Israelites were to approach God by means of sacrifices offered in the tabernacle. Then during the reign of Solomon, God modified the process, and the Israelites could offer prayer in the temple as a means of sacrifice. Now God commands men everywhere to offer Him praise in any place⁶⁶⁸ as the best means of sacrifice. Praise is the way for us to offer up spiritual sacrifices as priests before the Lord: “Through him then let us *continually* offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the *fruit of lips* that acknowledge his name.”⁶⁶⁹ Praise must be expressed through words. It must be vocalized or mimed: “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.”⁶⁷⁰ God also hears the prayer and praises of those who can’t speak.

Although God dwells in the praises of His creatures, He does not force it upon them. The kind of praise and worship that glorifies God is such as are offered volitionally and willingly. Like prayer, we are entreated to worship God but it pleases God that we do so without compulsion. David prayed: “All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.”⁶⁷¹ Like David gave the sacrifices of *things* willingly, we also ought to give our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving willingly. We have the will, and we can choose to praise or not. But if we choose, we must do so joyfully and willingly.

Order of Grace

The order has, thus, changed. Under the tabernacle, they brought animal sacrifices and offered them upon the altar. In the temple, they were supposed to bring prayer to what our Lord calls, the “House of Prayer.”⁶⁷²

Under grace, there is neither tabernacle nor temple worship; we, ourselves have become the temple, the House of Prayer: “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to

⁶⁶⁸ See John 4:21

⁶⁶⁹ Hebrews 13:15 (emphasis added)

⁶⁷⁰ Psalm 150:6

⁶⁷¹ 1 Chronicles 29:17

⁶⁷² See Isaiah 56:7 and Matthew 21:13

be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”⁶⁷³

Praise and worship are a form of sacrifice under grace. Our own bodies are now the temples of prayer: “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”⁶⁷⁴

God inhabits and speaks when believers fill His presence with praise and worship:

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting [praying]*, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.⁶⁷⁵

The Church at Antioch depended on praise/worship and prayer for its exploits. It was while it was worshipping God and praying that God set apart Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the missionary work. The inaugural Church did the same in anticipation for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit: “Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed *continually at the temple, praising God.*”⁶⁷⁶

The Definition of a Creature.

The creature adorns its creator. The primary purpose of a creature is to showcase the wisdom, creativity and resourcefulness of its creator. Thus, the reason any creature is made is to glorify its creator, to worship the maker. Inanimate creatures can only send out their beauty through the eyes of the beholder. However, humans are the only creatures capable of deliberate worship. They can subject their will to the worship of their Maker (God). If they choose otherwise, they will miss the exact purpose of their existence.

God is grateful to those who choose Him – those who choose to worship Him. He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷³ 1 Peter 2:5

⁶⁷⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:19

⁶⁷⁵ Acts 13:1-4

⁶⁷⁶ Luke 24:52-53 (emphasis added).

⁶⁷⁷ Hebrews 11:6

It is good to draw near to God.⁶⁷⁸ Praise is delightful, pleasant and beautiful.⁶⁷⁹ Intimate fellowship brings strength to our lives.

We were created to worship God. Our inner person loves to worship. We come close to the heart of God in worship and God comes closer to us. To worship God as a lifestyle is a choice we make. When we come near to God, He automatically comes near to us: “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”⁶⁸⁰ And the opposite is also true: “So he went out to meet Asa and said to him, ‘Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.’”⁶⁸¹

We grow closer to God by fellowshiping and worshipping Him. Worship is an expression of giving of oneself to the use by God. It is a declaration of surrender. It is a spiritual sacrifice: “And has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”⁶⁸²

Rationale for the Prayer of Praise

There are three reasons (three-pronged rationale) why we should be engaging in the prayer of praise continually. We consider the following passage:

You shall have no other gods before[a] me. “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments..

First, worship is defined, it is to bow our heads before God in adoration. It also means to kiss the Lord. Anything we bow our heads to; we are worshipping it. We may revere kings and other leaders, but we must not worship them. We should love other things, but we must

⁶⁷⁸ Psalm 73:28

⁶⁷⁹ Psalm 147:1

⁶⁸⁰ James 4:8

⁶⁸¹ 2 Chronicles 15:2

⁶⁸² Revelation 1:6

not worship them. We should not make any image and worship it. We should not make mental images and worship them, too. We may like some movie or celebrity stars, but they are not worthy of adoration. Only God is.

Second, because He is the only God. He is one and the only one. If we don't give Him our praise, we may, by default, be giving it to another form of a god. And that is idol-worship. God is not lenient with idolatry. It is the only sin God can punish transgenerationally.

And third, because God is a jealousy God. As stated earlier, He can punish idolatry up to the fourth generation. But He shows love and mercy to those who worship Him up to a thousand generations. Basically, those who worship Him build an everlasting legacy. They will live in perpetual bliss and beauty.

Précis

In this chapter, we have shown the relationship between prayer and praise, and worship. Both praise and worship are a form of prayer. However, they are more sublime than prayer – because, of themselves, they encapsulate all the facets of prayer and do even more. Praise and worship are the reasons why God made human beings. When the humans study and understand the creativity of God, they should give God thanks and praise. God will come and dwell in His people's praises. He will reward those who seek Him through praise and worship. Those who do not pray the prayer of praise and worship may be doomed. They will not be closer to God and may be lost eternally.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Creation
- Inhabits
- Nature
- Order of Grace
- Praise
- Prayer of Praise
- Worship

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Praise and worship are a form of ____
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Tradition
 - C. Spiritual exercise
 - D. Liturgy
2. Each of these mean the same thing in the context of God's presence, except:
 - A. Suit
 - B. Rule
 - C. Dwell
 - D. Inhabit
3. Glory cannot be defined without ____
 - A. Praise
 - B. Grace
 - C. Power
 - D. Love

4. The tabernacle is to sacrificial animals, the temple is to ____
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Praise
 - C. Crops
 - D. Altar

5. Praise and worship are a form of sacrifices under ____
 - A. Grace
 - B. Temple worship
 - C. Law
 - D. Tabernacle worship

True/False Questions

1. God inhabits the prayers of His people. T/F
2. Both praise and worship are a form of prayer. T/F
3. God can punish idolatry up to the fourth generation. T/F
4. Only the Jews were created to worship God. T/F
5. The primary purpose of a creature is to showcase the wisdom, creativity and resourcefulness of its creator. T/F
6. This chapter has identified a three-pronged rationale for the prayer of praise. T/F
7. Through Jesus, we infrequently offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. T/F
8. Under grace, the temple is at Jerusalem. T/F
9. Only part of the earth is full of the glory of God. T/F

10. We grow closer to God by worship but not by fellowship.
T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Humans are the only creatures capable of deliberate worship. They can subject their will to the worship of their Maker (God). If they choose otherwise, they will miss the exact purpose of their existence.” Discuss.

[250 words or less].
2. List and discuss the three-pronged rationale for the prayer of praise.

[250 words or less].
3. “Praise is a double-edged sword; it cuts both ways. We enter into God’s presence by means of praise, but we praise God because we are in His presence.” Discuss.

[250 words or less].
4. “Praise is the ultimate prayer.” Discuss.

[250 words or less].

24 | PRAYER AND WEeping

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about prayer and weeping
- You will link weeping to groaning
- You will learn about the significance of a Weeping Prophet, and
- You will link prayer to emotions

Introduction

This chapter is based on the materials sourced from the World Impact Bible Institute (WIBI) under the auspices Rev. Dr. Peter Youngren.⁶⁸³ In Chapter 22, we discussed groanings and travailing. Groanings, travailing and weeping are all expressions of the Holy Spirit. He (the Holy Spirit) is the most emotional member of the Godhead (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit is grieved when God's will is not manifested. The Holy Spirit is a person, and He may be saddened. As a divine personality full of heart and emotions, He sympathizes with our weaknesses. When we are in distress or are burdened by the cares of life, we can go to God the Holy Spirit and travail with Him in what may be termed as the Prayer of Weeping.

The Emotional God

God expresses His emotions through us in prayer. The so-called shortest verse in the Bible, expresses God's emotions: "Jesus wept."⁶⁸⁴ When this happens, people's situations begin to change. Weeping is an expression of the Holy Spirit which starts in the spiritual

⁶⁸³ <https://wibi.com/>

⁶⁸⁴ John 11:35; Esther 8:9 is considered the longest verse in the Bible, and that verse says: "At once the royal secretaries were summoned—on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush. These orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language."

world and is transferred to our inner man by the Holy Spirit in prayer. This is not soulish weeping. It does not start with our mind or emotions. It starts deep in our spirits through the Holy Spirit then manifests itself through our emotions. To active it, we need to listen to the Holy Spirit and yield to His leading.

The Weeping Prophet

Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet: “Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.”⁶⁸⁵ He would see the sins and the backslidings of the people. He would feel it in his heart and would then express it in weeping prayer. He would ask God through his weeping to love and set the people free, thereby restoring their relationship with God: “We are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and everyone her neighbor lamentation.”⁶⁸⁶

Principles of a Weeping Prayer

There are six principles of a Weeping Prayer. These are: Feeling God’s heart; calling people to repentance; a strong desire to see people’s conditions change; breaking-up hard ground; harvesting joy; and bringing out the Lord’s champion out of us:

Feeling God’s Heart

Jeremiah felt God’s heart. He discerned God’s jealousy and love towards his people. He felt the severity of their rebellion, which had taken them out of God’s will. He sensed the urgency for them to repent and get right with God. In Weeping Prayer, we seek God’s heart, and having found it, we weep for others and ourselves in order to get everything right with and for God.

⁶⁸⁵ Jeremiah 9:1

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., verses 17-21

Calling People to Repentance

Jeremiah called the people to repentance. People's hearts were hardened. Their rebellion against God's ways and authority produced both spiritual and physical death. A person praying with weeping feels for the people. The Holy Spirit burdens him or her to feel how God is feeling for the unrepentant. John the Baptist grieved for the people: "And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."⁶⁸⁷ And God gives the rationale for weeping: "'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your *heart*, with fasting and *weeping and mourning*.'"⁶⁸⁸ This is an augmentation of the first principle.

Desire for Changed Conditions

The Holy Spirit calls people to weep and mourn in prayer. He calls for changed conditions so that God's people could humble themselves before God. When they do that, they would ask for forgiveness and their sins would be forgiven. Healing would also come. God is still looking for people who will humble themselves before Him and pray, that He may heal their land.

Apostle Paul is the best example of a person who felt so strongly for his people. The entire Romans 9 to 11 is dedicated to his burden for the salvation of Israel. We only consider a portion of that here: "My heart is full of *sorrow*. My *sadness* never ends. I am so *concerned* about my people, who are members of my own race. I am ready to be cursed if that would help them. I am even willing to be separated from Christ."⁶⁸⁹ Paul uses words like "sorrow," "sadness" and "concern" to express his feeling for Israel. That is what a person burdened by the desire to change other people's conditions does or goes through. He assumes the burden as of it was his very own, because for Paul and his nation, it was his very own. He was sorrowful, saddened and concerned for the salvation of Israel by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

⁶⁸⁷ Mark 1:4

⁶⁸⁸ Joel 2:12 (emphasis added)

⁶⁸⁹ Romans 9:2-3

Breaking-up Hard Grounds

“Weeping” comes because the prayee (a person who is praying) delves into hard grounds that need to be broken. There is a divine struggle, a breaking going on spiritually when a person prays this way. This prayer is akin to plowing hard grounds: “This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem: ‘Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.’”⁶⁹⁰ This is reiterated in Hosea: “Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.”⁶⁹¹ The weeping is because of a cracking of the heart, of the soul, which the one praying feels, reflecting the burden on the Holy Spirit’s heart.

Weeping serves to break up hardened hearts in people’s lives. When conviction comes upon a person, that person will often weep and his or her heart will be softened towards God. It does not matter how much weeping one does before God. Joy can still be kept in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Prayer of Weeping does not create a state of sadness; it creates a condition of sadness, which is meant to be transitory – leading one to real change.

We cannot be effective in prayer if we are depressed and heavily burdened. That is why Jesus admonishes us to cast all our cares upon Him in prayer. Jesus said: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”⁶⁹² God does care about our burdens and sorrows. We can always ask God to fill us with joy even when things are not going well in our lives.

We can turn all our anxieties into prayer items to God. Our duty is to pray until we sense a release in our spirit, and joy fills our hearts again. We should not make an emotional spectacle out of our prayer life.⁶⁹³ We must stop all fleshly actions and talk and work with God in the secret place of prayer.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹⁰ Jeremiah 4:3

⁶⁹¹ Hosea 10:12

⁶⁹² Matt. 11: 28-30

⁶⁹³ See Matthew 6:6

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The End of Weeping is a Harvest of Joy

Weeping brings a harvest: “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.”⁶⁹⁵ Weeping is not the end; it is a means to an end. The end of weeping in prayer is joy: “Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”⁶⁹⁶

Weeping in the Spirit is a form of sowing. The weeping we do is a spiritual seed we sow and it can produce a harvest. The Bible is clear that we are sowing in tears when we weep. The end result will be a bountiful harvest. But we must be careful that we are not just pouring out some crocodile tears. The kind of weeping that brings a harvest is the one induced by the Holy Spirit and is done with a sense of concern and love.

Weeping Brings Out the Lord’s Champion Out of Us

The Weeping Prayer is reserved for God’s champions. They weep not like cowards escaping, but because, like a lion roar, they anticipate great victory. Thanks be to God that all those who believe in Jesus Christ have victory through Him.⁶⁹⁷

In Isaiah, we read: “The LORD will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.”⁶⁹⁸

In Revelation, we read: “But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”⁶⁹⁹

In Jeremiah, we read:

Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them:
“The Lord will roar from on high; he will thunder from his holy dwelling and roar mightily against his land. He will shout like those who tread the grapes, shout against all who live on the earth. The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth, for the

⁶⁹⁵ Psalm 126:5-6

⁶⁹⁶ Psalm 30:5

⁶⁹⁷ See 1 Corinthians 15:57

⁶⁹⁸ Isaiah 42:13

⁶⁹⁹ Revelation 5:5

Lord will bring charges against the nations; he will bring judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword.⁷⁰⁰

In Amos, we read: “The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”⁷⁰¹

In Hebrews, we read: “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”⁷⁰²

In 1 John, we read: “The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”⁷⁰³

In Revelation, again, we read: “and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.”⁷⁰⁴

In Joel, we read: “Proclaim this among the nations:

Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!” Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there... The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. Bring down your warriors, Lord!⁷⁰⁵

In Hebrews, we read:

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”[a] The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a

⁷⁰⁰ Jeremiah 25:30-31

⁷⁰¹ Amos 1:2

⁷⁰² Hebrews 1:9

⁷⁰³ 1 John 3:8

⁷⁰⁴ Revelation 10:3

⁷⁰⁵ Joel 3:9-11, 16

kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.⁷⁰⁶

In Matthew, we read: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”⁷⁰⁷

In Psalm, again, we read: “May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him.”⁷⁰⁸

To crown it all, in Hebrews, again, we read: “In the days of his flesh, *Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.*”⁷⁰⁹

We can weep until we begin to roar. In the Bible, there are many occasions when people cried out to God in a roar. This kind is an expression of strong, deep and loud cries like a lion does. In roaring, we are uttering loud and prolonged sounds as though we are in distress, rage or gasping for breath.

Roaring is a type of crying in which we make inarticulate sobbing sounds and call out aloud. The nature of God is that of a victorious warrior. A warrior never accepts the presence, tactics or works of the enemy. God expresses His zeal with shouts of war and a battle cry. Jesus himself is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.⁷¹⁰ A lion roars at its enemies.

Jesus was on earth to destroy the works of the enemy because God hates evil. If there is a roar in the heart of God, there must be a roar in yours as well. As God’s child, you have His nature. With a shout, you can proclaim God’s victory. It is a shout of joy to sound an alarm and to declare triumph.

God’s roar shakes things. When the Lord roars and speaks from His dwelling place, the heavens and the earth are shaken.⁷¹¹ Everything that is contrary to the will of God will shake in the last days so that the Kingdom of God should remain. When we cry out and roar in prayer, we shake the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places that wage war against the Church of Jesus Christ.

⁷⁰⁶ Hebrews 12:25-28

⁷⁰⁷ Matthew 6:10

⁷⁰⁸ Psalm 68:1

⁷⁰⁹ Hebrews 5:7 (emphasis added)

⁷¹⁰ See Revelation 5:5

⁷¹¹ See Haggai 2:6-9

Satan has been defeated. You have the joy of manifesting that defeat by working with God in prayer until Jesus comes again to finally establish His kingdom on earth. Jesus Himself cried out. In Greek, to cry is to scream, to call out loud, to shriek, to exclaim and to entreat. Because the Holy Spirit is within us, we cannot help it but cry out and roar against God's enemies. They become our enemies because we belong to God. You can learn in prayer to draw from deep within and let what is on the heart of the Father be expressed through you by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Précis

In this chapter, we discussed Weeping Prayer or the Prayer of Weeping. When God through the Holy Spirit burdens us to weep, it can be because we feel God's heart, we seek repentance, we desire to change conditions, to break up hard grounds, to harvest joy, or to bring out God's champions in us. Like Jesus our Lord, we may weep, not because we are overcome with sadness, but because we desire to produce God's victory and joy. The Holy Spirit reserves the Prayer of Weeping for times when the inevitable must happen.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Changed conditions
- Emotion
- God's heart
- Harvesting
- Joy
- Plowing
- Principles of Weeping
- Roar
- Weeping
- Weeping Prayer
- Weeping Prophet

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Which prophet is also known as the Weeping Prophet?
 - A. Isaiah
 - B. Hosea
 - C. Joel
 - D. Jeremiah

2. A warrior never accepts the presence, tactics or works of the —
 - A. Opponent
 - B. Victim
 - C. Enemy
 - D. Victor

3. All these are principles of Weeping Prayer, except:
 - A. Feeling God's heart
 - B. Calling people to celebration
 - C. A strong desire to see people's conditions change
 - D. Breaking-up hard grounds

4. What is the shortest verse in the Bible?
 - A. John 11:35
 - B. 1 Thessalonians 5:16
 - C. Eccl 3:4
 - D. Esther 8:9

5. What is the longest verse in the Bible?
 - A. John 11:35
 - B. 1 Thessalonians 5:16
 - C. Eccl 3:4
 - D. Esther 8:9

True/False Questions

1. Like Jesus our Lord, we may weep, not because we are overcome with sadness, but because we desire to produce God's victory and joy. T/F

2. Roaring is a type of crying in which we make articulate sobbing sounds and call out aloud. T/F

3. Jesus was on earth to destroy the works of the enemy because God hates evil. T/F

4. Weeping brings out our champion in the Lord. T/F

5. Weeping in the Spirit is a form of sowing. T/F

PRAYER

6. The Holy Spirit-inspired weeping always produces joy.
T/F
7. Satan has not been defeated but he will be defeated in future.
T/F
8. God's roar shakes things. T/F
9. Jeremiah and Apostle Paul specifically referred to weeping as plowing the ground. T/F
10. Jesus is also called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. With reference to at least five (5) scriptures, explain how weeping brings out champions for the Lord.

[500 words or less].
2. In reference to Jesus' name as the Lion of the Tribes of Judah, explain the significance of roaring. Refer to at least two (2) scriptures.

[250 words or less].
3. List and describe the six principles of a Weeping Prayer.

[500 words or less].
4. "Paul uses words like 'sorrow,' 'sadness' and 'concern.' That is what a person burdened by the desire to change other people's conditions does or goes through." Discuss.

[500 words or less].

25 | PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the generality of agreements
- You will appreciate the derivatives of agreements
- You will be able to define an agreement
- You will list and explain the ingredients of an agreement
- You will learn about the multiplying effect of a Prayer of Agreement
- You will differentiate an agreement from a Mental Assent.

Introduction

It is very clear in the Bible that where there is an agreement, there is more spiritual energy. The entire Bible is framed around the idea of a covenant. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a covenant as “a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement; a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action.”⁷¹² Thus, we have two agreements, the Old Testament and New Testament. It follows, therefore, that even God Himself places so much stress on agreements. In this chapter, we will discuss the Prayer of Agreement and the benefits that this kind of prayer has on a believer’s life and relationship with God and other believers.

Agreement Derivatives

There are many derivatives of the word “agreement.” Among them are covenant, walking together, same mind and the same judgment, same accord, to highlight but four.

⁷¹² Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “Covenant,” < <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant#:~:text=%3A%20a%20written%20agreement%20or%20promise,covenantal> > accessed on November 21st, 2022.

Covenant

As alluded to above, the Bible is a testament or an agreement. It is a covenant between God and His people. In other words, God first establishes a contract with His people before He can have the binding authority to enforce His judgments: “Because of all this we make a firm *covenant* in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.”⁷¹³ The concept of faith or belief is anchored on the same idea of covenant. One believes volitionally and, by extension, follows through either through obedience or compliance. In the Christian Faith, all adherents and followers have, intrinsically or deliberately, agreed to abide by the biblical precepts, otherwise it is only an exercise in futility. There is an understanding that all that is promulgated in Scripture is true, trustworthy and credible. Any trifle from this realization puts the entire question of faith into question. Doubt, therefore, is *anathema* to faith, and a condemnable offence anywhere in religion. This is because there is a presumption of faith, of agreement, of covenant, in religion.

Walking Together (Understanding)

We read in Genesis: “Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”⁷¹⁴ The juxtaposition of sense and reason is rife in this statement. In “let us” we see unity, agreement and the understanding of the Holy Trinity. It is expected that as a unity, in unison, in agreement, the Trinity would achieve anything it embarks on doing. Thus, immediately, we read, “So, the LORD scattered them from there over the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it is called Babel, for there the LORD confused the language of the whole world, and from that place the LORD scattered them over the face of all the earth.”⁷¹⁵ When the members of the Godhead agreed to do something, they achieved it.

And in Amos a rhetorical question is posed: “Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?”⁷¹⁶ The resounding response is yes. There is more that is accomplished daily on this earth through

⁷¹³ Nehemiah 9:38 (emphasis added)

⁷¹⁴ Genesis 11:7

⁷¹⁵ Genesis 11:8 and 9

⁷¹⁶ Amos 3:3

agreement, understanding than it is given credit for. Marriages, families, friendships, companies, associations, education, legislation, and the list is unending, all have to agree somehow to advance a proposition or an *agenda*. Agreements govern our day-to-day affairs, no matter where one is resident on the surface of the earth.

Same Mind and Judgment

Divisions are discouraged in most biblical scenes because, by nature, they portend the opposite of progress: “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”⁷¹⁷ Unity, agreement, one mind, and one judgment are further derivatives of an understanding of being in one accord. When that unity or agreement is strong, there is an expectation of reaching goals and getting answers.

Harmony

There is no mincing of words, harmony is attractive and is demanded of all mutual interests: “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in *accord* with Christ Jesus.”⁷¹⁸ Very little is achieved with disunity, disharmony, conflicts and tensions. Where there is harmony, there is power.

Prayer and Agreement

Here is the flagship and linchpin on which the biblical credibility for the Prayer of Agreement is enshrined: “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”⁷¹⁹ These two verses make heaven seem so close to earth. It also reveals that earth is very much part of what happens in heaven. And it finally shows that there are events and activities here

⁷¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:10

⁷¹⁸ Romans 15:5 (emphasis added).

⁷¹⁹ Matthew 18:18-20

on earth that can literally freeze heaven. And the Prayer of Agreement is one such events.

Definition of the Prayer of Agreement

The Prayer of Agreement may also be referred to as *Agreement in Prayer*. The Prayer of Agreement is an aspect of victorious praying our Lord introduced to the disciples. It can be called a secret exposed in plain sight. The Prayer of Agreement can be defined but by reference to its ingredients:

Ingredients of the Prayer of Agreement

- a) It must be prayed by two or more people;
- b) The two or more people must be alive and on earth;
- c) The two or more people alive on earth must ask the Father for something in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- d) The two or more people must be in agreement. They should agree in truth and in spirit. They should not agree in word only, what is called a Mental Assent. They should agree in spirit;
- e) The two or more people must ask together; it is not a casual prayer;
- f) When two or more people ask together in the name of Jesus, the Lord will be there with them;
- g) When praying a Prayer of Agreement, two or more people involved must forgive each other and their brethren; and
- h) The Prayer of Agreement involves binding (restricting) and losing (allowing).

When the above ingredients have been met, especially prayer by at least two people, God will restrict whatever has been restricted, and permit or allow whatever the two or more people have permitted.

Multiplied Effect of the Prayer of Agreement

In Deuteronomy, we learn about what may be termed as the “Multiplied Power of Prayer or MPP”: “How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock

had sold them, and the LORD had given them up.”⁷²⁰ There is a ten factor multiplication effect in the Prayer of Agreement. There are two elements of an MPP. These are unity and requisition:

Unity

The supplicants must be united. They must agree, basically fulfilling all the ingredients of the Prayer of Agreement itemized above. That would then give them the power to open the heavens wide.

Requisition

The heavens may continue to remain open but nothing will happen unless the supplicants ask: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”⁷²¹ Asking must be directed to the Father using the authority of the name of Jesus: “In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.”⁷²²

Believers in Jesus Christ must always ask and not faint (not giving up or losing heart): “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”⁷²³ Prayer made this way, does not only move the heavens, but it also moves the heart and soul of men: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your *requests* to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”⁷²⁴ The power of a request *actually made* lies in this Scripture. It is singly responsible for mending hearts and healing souls. When the soul is at peace, the material world must respond favorably.

⁷²⁰ Deuteronomy 32:30

⁷²¹ Matthew 7:7

⁷²² John 16:23

⁷²³ Luke 18:1

⁷²⁴ Philippians 4:6-7 (emphasis added).

Précis

In this chapter, we canvassed around the concept of agreement and ascertained that it is inevitable in both divine and human relations. We reached the crescendo in the discussion of the Prayer of Agreement. We caressed its rhythm and tenor in the derivatives to an agreement, in the ingredients of the Prayer of Agreement, and in the multiplied effect that ensues.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Agreement
- Agreement derivatives
- Covenant
- Harmony
- Multiplied effect
- Multiplied Power of Prayer
- Prayer of Agreement
- Request/requisition
- Same judgment
- Same mind
- Understanding
- Unity

Multiple-choice Questions

1. ____ is central to both human and divine affairs.
 - A. Unity
 - B. Agreement
 - C. Covenant
 - D. Harmony

2. Any of these may qualify to be defined as an agreement, except:
 - A. Walking together
 - B. Similar mind
 - C. Covenant
 - D. Same judgment

3. According to the Multiplied Power of Prayer or MPP, one can chase a thousand, and two ____ to flight?
 - A. Ten thousand
 - B. Two thousand
 - C. None
 - D. A thousand and two

4. If a Church of 200 intercessors agree to pray on a request. How much result in multiplying power do they stand to gain in total?
 - A. 2,000,000
 - B. 200,000
 - C. 200,000,000
 - D. 2000

5. What is the key most ingredient in the Prayer of Agreement?
 - A. It must be prayed by two or more people
 - B. The people must be alive and on earth
 - C. Asking the Father for something in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - D. There must be an agreement

PRAYER

True/False Questions

1. The Prayer of Agreement must be prayed by two or more people. T/F
2. The Prayer of Agreement must be alive and on earth. T/F
3. In the Prayer of Agreement, the two or more people alive on earth must ask the Father for something in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. T/F
4. The Prayer of Agreement must be in agreement. T/F
5. In the Prayer of Agreement, agreement must be in truth and in spirit. T/F
6. The Prayer of Agreement should be a Mental Assent. T/F
7. The two or more people in the Prayer of Agreement must ask together; it is not a casual prayer. T/F
8. When two or more people ask in the name of Jesus, the Lord will be there with them. T/F
9. When praying a Prayer of Agreement, two or more people involved must forgive each other and their brethren. T/F
10. The Prayer of Agreement involves binding and restricting. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss the multiplied effect of the Prayer of Agreement.

[500 words or less].

2. Define the Prayer of Agreement with respect to derivatives for agreement and the espoused ingredients.

[500 words or less].

3. “With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers
“ (Acts 1:14).

Explain the significance of this verse in relation to the Prayer of Agreement.

[500 words or less].

4. “Prayer made this way, does not only move the heavens, but it also moves the heart and soul.”

Cite a scriptural reference and explain the significance of this kind of prayer.

[250 words or less].

26 | PRAYER OF POWER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define power
- You will relate power to prayer
- You will appreciate the power-generating power of prayer
- You will decipher the qualities that make a prayer powerful
- You will learn about the meaning of fervency
- You will deduce the power formula
- You learn about the seven attitudes of asking, and
- You will discover the grace foundation of prayer, and

Introduction

There is a misconception as it relates to “power” and prayer. “Power” in its generic definition means the ability to do or accomplish something. It is written, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”⁷²⁵Power here is qualified. God can do something mightily. We also read, “But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.’”⁷²⁶Jesus makes an argument for the understanding of what the Scriptures and God are able to do. To have power, God or prayer or Scriptures should be able to have the strength, the greatness, the wonder, the knowledge, the majesty, the authority, the wisdom, the infinitun and the wherewithal to do or accomplish something. For prayer to have power, it should be able to accomplish the purpose for which it was made.

The Prayer of Power: Definition

The Word of God defines its own power: “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish

⁷²⁵ Ephesians 6:10

⁷²⁶ Matthew 22:29

what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”⁷²⁷ The prayer of power or a powerful prayer is that which causes the prayer to “achieve the purpose for which” it was made. Hannah prayed for a child: “In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly.”⁷²⁸ Thus, Hannah’s weeping prayer was powerful because she got Samuel.⁷²⁹ Elijah prayed for the rain, and it rained. Thus, Elijah’s prayer was powerful.⁷³⁰ James confirms that; indeed, Elijah’s prayer was powerful (effective): “The prayer of a *righteous* man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.”⁷³¹

Moreover, the writer to the Hebrews confirms that Jesus’ weeping prayers were powerful because they were heard: “Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his *reverence*.”⁷³²

A prayer is powerful when it achieves what was intended. When one prays for the sick to get healed and the sick get healed, that prayer is powerful. The same is true for any other purpose for which prayer has been made. Prayer is not powerful or effective if it fails to achieve the purpose for which it was made.

Qualities of a Powerful Prayer

In James, we read, “The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]”⁷³³ In many commentaries about the “powerful prayer,” many commentators place emphasis on “fervency” or “earnest” to the neglect of righteousness or reverence. Indeed, both are required, and both are conditions of the heart, not of emotions or feelings. Thus, many people confuse strong voicing, convulsions, shrieking or shaking as denotations of a powerful prayer. To the contrary, a prayer may be

⁷²⁷ Isaiah 55:11

⁷²⁸ 1 Samuel 1

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, verses 19-20

⁷³⁰ See 1 Kings 18:41-19:8

⁷³¹ James 5:17-18 (emphasis added).

⁷³² Hebrews 5:7 (emphasis added).

⁷³³ James 5: 16 - AMP

silent or even unassuming, as long as it achieves the purpose for which it was made, it is powerful.

To illustrate, we consider a familiar Old Testament incident concerning Elijah:

The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”⁷³⁴

Common-sense would have expected that God would be in the wind, the earthquake and the fire. Alas, God was not in those earth-shaking events. God came in a “still, small voice.”⁷³⁵ Not the wind, and neither the earthquake nor the fire brought the results Elijah wished for, but God came quietly. A powerful prayer achieves the intended purpose, no matter how that happens. A powerful prayer emanates from a broken heart, a contrite spirit, reverence for God and a walk of righteousness: “My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.”⁷³⁶

Prayer Generates Power

It is not a mystery, prayer generates power to achieve spiritual results, whether that be healing, raising of the dead, or divine manifestations. Jesus had one day spent the evening praying and in the morning the power of God accompanied Him in healing the sick: “*Yet He frequently withdrew to the wilderness to pray.* One day Jesus was teaching, and the Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. People had come from Jerusalem and from every village of Galilee and Judea, and *the power of the Lord* was present for Him to heal the sick.”⁷³⁷

⁷³⁴ 1 Kings 19:11-13

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, verse 12, Berean Standard Bible

⁷³⁶ Psalm 51:17

⁷³⁷ Luke 5:17 (emphasis added).

A “powerful prayer” and the “power of the Lord” are not the same thing. A powerful prayer, if prayed, achieves the intended purpose. The power of the Lord, generally, accompanies those who have spent time in prayer. The power of the Lord is akin to the rubbing (the anointing) of the Lord upon someone who has been in the presence of God.⁷³⁸

There is an event in the Book of Acts where they both prayed a powerful prayer and the power of the Lord (Holy Spirit) came: “And *when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*”⁷³⁹ They prayed a powerful prayer – because we see the results; the place was shaken and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. We also know that because they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit (the power of the Lord.) This was a physical manifestation of the power of God which was generated by the praying believers. However, prayer is no less powerful even if there is no physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

The Meaning of Fervency

“Fervency” is a connotation of fire. It is a derivative of a charged atmosphere. Indeed, there are times when prayer generates such kind of atmosphere. The incident referred to above is one such. The Holy Spirit is symbolized as being accompanied by fire: “John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’”⁷⁴⁰ In the Book of Acts, it is reported that, “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”⁷⁴¹ This was not actual fire; it was what “seemed to be tongues of fire.” Either way, there is an implication of fire.

A fervent atmosphere of prayer generates power to achieve divine results. It may also ensure swift results. Powerful fervent prayers attract immediate answers to prayers. And this may be because of the ensuing atmosphere that requires it. An evangelist who is conducting a crusade and is presented with the lame or blind, may need a fervent prayer to

⁷³⁸ See “The Anointing and Prayer” in Chapter 48

⁷³⁹ Acts 4:31 (emphasis added).

⁷⁴⁰ Luke 3:16

⁷⁴¹ Acts 2:3

generate immediate results of healing. Fervent prayers produce power. They produce dynamic divine power that makes healing immediate and dramatic.⁷⁴²

There is a very interesting incident in the Book of Nehemiah in which Nehemiah was confronted with a situation that required a fervent prayer. And yet, with every indication, Nehemiah's prayer was a quiet prayer and did not look like it had the semblance of fervency:

The king said to me, "What is it you want?" *Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."* Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" *It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.*⁷⁴³

Just like an evangelist confronted with a situation that requires a fervent prayer, Nehemiah was, too. There is no evidence he left the presence of the king. However, within that moment, probably in split seconds, Nehemiah both prayed and received an answer from the Lord. In the same event he prayed and generated power and received an answer: "Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king..." The prayer produced the intended results: "It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time."

This event, though brief and uneventful, met all the ingredients of a powerful prayer: It was fervent (it required immediate divine intervention); it generated power (the king must respond favorably); and it produced the intended results (Nehemiah's trip to Jerusalem was approved). While in Acts the place was shaken, in Nehemiah there was no earth-shaking manifestation, and yet in both events, they had powerful immediate results.

God's Power Formula

Taking salvation as an illustration, we consider a verse of Scripture in the Book of Romans: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,'

⁷⁴² Luke 5:17, *supra*.

⁷⁴³ Nehemiah 2:4-7 (emphasis added).

and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”⁷⁴⁴The formula may be written as:

Righteous heart of faith + Voice of prayer =
Power/Answer to prayer

This formula does not only apply to salvation, but it also applies to everything in Christendom. Righteousness is implied in everyone who has accepted the gift of Eternal Life (the gift of Jesus Christ).⁷⁴⁵The quality of the heart involves that of contriteness and reverence. And all those who pray in faith, receive: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.’”⁷⁴⁶

Seven-Prong Attitude for Asking

“For your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!”⁷⁴⁷Parents of little babies usually know what the babies need. However very few, if anything, none, will know exactly what the child needs before it asks or cries out. God knows exactly what we need before we ask Him. Asking God, therefore, is an act of grace. Because we know that God already knows what we need even before we ask, and still the Bible requires us to pray for those things.

Our attitude to asking should have the following seven attitudes:

1. We should say exactly what we need to say;
2. We should say exactly what we want to say;
3. We should keep it simple, the fewer words the better;
4. It should be easy to ask for requests, so, prayer should be an easy exercise;
5. We should give thanks for everything we ask for, even before they manifests;
6. We should stay patiently and confidently waiting for the manifestation; and
7. We should repeat the above steps.

⁷⁴⁴ Romans 10:9

⁷⁴⁵ See 2 Corinthians 5:21

⁷⁴⁶ Mark 9:23

⁷⁴⁷ Matthew 6:8

Everyone who comes to God in prayer must have this attitude in them. Being open and honest before God is just in order because there is nothing we can hide. Trying to use requests amiss, such as posturing as if we are asking for needs when what we are asking for wants will not do.

Therefore, there can be only two reasons why we may not receive from God. Either we do not ask: “You do not have because you do not ask God,”⁷⁴⁸ or when we ask, we ask amiss: “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”⁷⁴⁹ To remedy this quandary, we need to have the attitudinal seven framework above, to ensure that we (1) ask God, and (2) we ask Him with the right motives.

Grace: The Three Foundations of Prayer

The foundation of the power of prayer and of powerful prayers is not because of men, but in spite of them. It was all because of the will of God. There are generally three attributes of the foundation of prayer: Position in Christ; faith in God; and the knowledge of God’s covenant.

Believers’ Position in Christ

The price of prayer has been paid: “He who did not spare his own Son, *but gave him up for us all*—how will he not also, along with him, *graciously give us all things?*”⁷⁵⁰ The phrase, “graciously give us all things,” is a quality of grace. Prayer is about giving and receiving, and there is no place where this more pronounced than in the redemption story. There, God gives being asked and He gives even to those who do not seek Him: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”⁷⁵¹ And Apostle Paul hits the nail on the head, this gift of giving and receiving was extended even to enemies: “Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.”⁷⁵²

If God has given His most precious gift, there is nothing else He can fail to give us. Jesus Christ paid the price for sin and disobedience

⁷⁴⁸ James 4:2

⁷⁴⁹ James 4:3

⁷⁵⁰ Romans 8:32 (emphasis added).

⁷⁵¹ John 15:13

⁷⁵² Romans 5:7

on the cross for us. That is the reason why we pray, because we are guaranteed of the results. God has already paid for anything we need; all we must do is to access them by faith.

Faith in God

Grace works by faith. Lack of faith makes grace impotent. If one prays, they must believe in order to appropriate the accrual of grace: “But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”⁷⁵³ This is self-explanatory.

Knowledge in the God of Covenant

Grace and faith can be likened to a rancher who resides on a piece of land laden with gold ores. If he does not know, he would not benefit from the wealth underlying his premises. He might even die poor. The problem is not with the Creator, the problem is with the ignorant creature. A verse most often used but under applied is found in Romans: “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.”⁷⁵⁴ Faith is built on knowledge. Where there is no knowledge, there will be no faith.

If one does not read this book, accessing this knowledge about prayer, they would have no faith to believe in, or pray, with results. Because they did not know, so they did not build faith for it. It is just that simple. The Psalmist declares, “Teach me *knowledge* and good judgment, for I *trust* your commands.”⁷⁵⁵ Knowledge comes before trust (faith). And here is a culminating scriptural verse, a true gem in the divine wealth management portfolio: “*Gold there is*, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak *knowledge* are a rare jewel.”⁷⁵⁶ Gold is there, but one must know about it to benefit from it. The one who says, “I know God,” will likely also say, “Therefore, I believe in Him.” Both intelligence and wisdom are tied to knowledge,⁷⁵⁷ and so is faith.⁷⁵⁸ Those who have knowledge will live,⁷⁵⁹ because faith preserves

⁷⁵³ James 1:6

⁷⁵⁴ Romans 10:17

⁷⁵⁵ Psalms 119:66

⁷⁵⁶ Proverbs 20:15

⁷⁵⁷ Proverbs 18:15, English Standard Version (ESV)

⁷⁵⁸ Romans 10:17, *supra*.

⁷⁵⁹ Hosea 4:6-7

them.

Précis

This chapter has illustrated that the power of prayer lies in its purpose. When a prayer achieves its intended purpose, it is said to be powerful. The chapter then delved into qualities that make a prayer powerful as well as describing the power-generating power of prayer. The prayer of power or the prayer that produces enormous power for results, can be fervent or may lack the fiery drama. However, it always accomplishes its purpose. The power formula has been canvassed, as well the seven attitudes of asking. The chapter ends by linking prayer to grace, which is the foundation upon which any powerful prayer is founded.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Fervency
- Knowledge
- Power
- Power formula
- Power of the Lord
- Powerful prayer

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Each of these may be an attribute of asking, except:
 - A. We should say exactly what we need to say
 - B. We should say exactly what we want to say;
 - C. We should keep it simple, the fewer words the better
 - D. It should be difficult to ask for requests
2. One of the reasons why people may not receive from God is because ____
 - A. They have faith
 - B. They have knowledge
 - C. They don't give thanks
 - D. They don't ask
3. Each of these prayed powerful weeping prayers, except:
 - A. Jeremiah
 - B. Hannah
 - C. Jesus Christ
 - D. Jonah

PRAYER

4. Jesus' power to work miracles was generated by ____
 - A. Preaching
 - B. Teaching
 - C. Him being God
 - D. Prayer

5. Righteous heart of faith + Voice of prayer =
 - A. Glory
 - B. Grace
 - C. Freedom
 - D. Power

True/False Questions

1. For your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him. T/F

2. You do not receive because you do not have. T/F

3. Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel. T/F

4. Grace and power can be likened to a rancher who resides on a piece of land laden with gold ores. T/F

5. God has given His most precious gift and there is nothing else He can fail to give us. T/F

6. The price of prayer is yet to be paid through hard praying and fasting. T/F

7. Nehemiah's quiet prayer was fervent. T/F

8. Common-sense would expect that God would be in a still, small voice. T/F

9. Grace works by faith. T/F
10. For prayer to have power, it should be able to accomplish the purpose for which it was made. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and briefly discuss the seven-prong attitude for asking.
[150 words or less].
2. Discuss the three grace foundation of a powerful prayer.
[500 words or less].
3. Discuss the idea of fervency by citing at least three scriptural references from the Bible.
[500 words or less].
4. How does prayer generate power?
[250 words or less].

27 | PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define forgiveness and the Prayer of Forgiveness
- You will be reminded of the inevitability of forgiveness
- You will be shown how to make a Prayer of Forgiveness, and
- You will learn about the power of the Prayer of Forgiveness

Introduction

Prayer and forgiveness are two sides of the same coin. Where there is one, there is the other, and vice versa. This chapter, however, is not dedicated to prayer and forgiveness, rather, to the Prayer of Forgiveness. The chapter assumes that the supplicant understands their need to forgive others to be forgiven by God. Then it delves into how best the supplicant can pray such a prayer, and the power inherent in such praying.

Forgiveness Defined

Forgiveness may be defined as the ability and willingness to let go. It is volitional and it involves one's will. No-one can forgive another on another's behalf. A person must release another person from a grudge or a bitter heart. Forgiveness is a heart matter and it should emanate from the heart.⁷⁶⁰ A person who offends another, owes the other. To forgive, therefore, is to free the offender from a debt: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."⁷⁶¹ Jesus compares forgiveness to having pity on a debtor. Although those who offend us don't deserve it, we need to love them and forgive them. While God has exercised grace over us, generally, we also exercise grace for others through the act of forgiveness. A creditor has a right to enforce their debt against a debtor. However, in forgiveness, a creditor waives their

⁷⁶⁰ See Matthew 18:35

⁷⁶¹ Matthew 6:12, New International Version (NIV)

right and, rather, chooses to forgo the debt. That gives the former debtor tremendous freedom. And freedom is currency. They can expend it anyhow they deem fit, including forging a new relationship with their former creditors based on love and mutual dignity.

Inevitability of Forgiveness and Prayer

We begin in Mark: “Jesus told his disciples: Have faith in God! If you have faith in God and don’t doubt, you can tell this mountain to get up and jump into the sea, and it will. Everything you ask for in prayer will be yours if you only have faith. Whenever you stand up to pray, you must *forgive* what others have done to you. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins.”⁷⁶²The injunction, “you must forgive what others have done to you” is inevitable. It is not you *should*, but rather, you *must*. It is not you *may*, but rather, you *ought to*. It is not you will, but rather, to you *shall*. Everyone who prays must forgive.

Definition of the Prayer of Forgiveness

A *Prayer of Forgiveness* is that in which the supplicant realizes their own need to be forgiven by God and extend the same need to forgive others. The *Prayer of Forgiveness* is not the *prayer for forgiveness*. The latter’s only emphasis is on self. The former considers the wellbeing of self, last, in deference to the wellbeing of their neighbors.

This prayer (Prayer of Forgiveness) helps us to deal with the condition of our own heart. The Prayer of Forgiveness helps us to stay away from bitterness, unforgiveness and resentment that can result from our dealings with those around us.

A lack of forgiveness will quench our faith. In Mark,⁷⁶³ Jesus, our Lord, links the Prayer of Forgiveness to the Prayer of Faith. Faith must express itself through love.⁷⁶⁴When we walk in unforgiveness, we don’t walk in love. Prayer will not work in an unforgiving heart. We simply cannot hold a grudge against anyone and maintain a prayer life that gets results.

Forgiveness is the key to the working of faith. Forgiveness is a beautiful trait that should characterize our lives. When we pray with

⁷⁶² Mark 11:22-25 (emphasis added).

⁷⁶³ Mark 11:25, *supra*.

⁷⁶⁴ Galatians 5:6

forgiving hearts, we allow a smooth flow of the power of faith in our lives. We give authority to our prayers and demand any number of things from God.

How to Pray a Prayer of Forgiveness

Focus on the Debtor, Not the Debt

To successfully conduct a Prayer of Forgiveness, one must focus on the person (debtor), rather than the debt (the problem): “Forgive *us our* sins, as *we* have forgiven *those* who sin against *us*.”⁷⁶⁵ Notice the emphasis on the object rather than the subject. The creditor forgives the debtor. It is biblically redundant and even wrong to focus on the offence, for each of us, like those who wrong us, have also wronged God and do wrong others as well: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”⁷⁶⁶

Consider the Option

The opposite of forgiveness is unforgiveness. The consequences of unforgiveness in prayer far outweigh all the effort and time put into the prayer: “But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”⁷⁶⁷ Unforgiveness is a zero-option proposition. Unforgiveness stops prayer and kills one’s prayer life. There is no other option but to forgive.

Inclusivity of Forgiveness

Consider the following prayers: “We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.”⁷⁶⁸

“Our ancestors sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment.”⁷⁶⁹

“We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong

⁷⁶⁵ Matthew 6:12 (emphasis added).

⁷⁶⁶ Romans 3:23

⁷⁶⁷ Matthew 6:15

⁷⁶⁸ Jeremiah 14:20

⁷⁶⁹ Lamentations 5:7

and acted wickedly.”⁷⁷⁰

“Your first forefather sinned, and your spokesmen have transgressed against Me.”⁷⁷¹

“When they sin against You--for there is no one who does not sin--and You become angry with them and deliver them to an enemy who takes them as captives to his own land, whether far or near...”⁷⁷²

“Surely there is no righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.”⁷⁷³

“What then? Are we any better? Not at all. For we have already made the charge that Jews and Greeks alike are all under sin.”⁷⁷⁴

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”⁷⁷⁵

“Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.”⁷⁷⁶

“If we confess *our* sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse *us* from all unrighteousness.”⁷⁷⁷

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message...”⁷⁷⁸

The Prayer of Forgiveness must be inclusive of others. If one is praying for a nation, they must include themselves in that nation. If they are praying for a Church, they must include themselves in that Church. If they are praying for an individual, they must connect themselves to that individual. And so on.

Motivated by Love

Just as faith does not work without love,⁷⁷⁹ so doesn’t forgiveness. Love covers other people’s faults (sins or offences): “Above all, keep

⁷⁷⁰ Psalms 106:6

⁷⁷¹ Isaiah 43:27

⁷⁷² 1 Kings 8:46

⁷⁷³ Ecclesiastes 7:20

⁷⁷⁴ Romans 3:9

⁷⁷⁵ Romans 10:1

⁷⁷⁶ Nehemiah 1:5-6

⁷⁷⁷ 1 John 1:9

⁷⁷⁸ John 17:20

⁷⁷⁹ Galatians 5:6, *supra*.

loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”⁷⁸⁰

Love binds everything in perfect harmony: “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”⁷⁸¹

A direct act of forgiveness is an indirect act of self-release: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.”⁷⁸²

Forgiveness is an act of kindness: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”⁷⁸³

And the crowing passage reminds us that anything else we may be or do, if it does not proceed out of love, it is nothing: “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.”⁷⁸⁴In short, love forgives. And forgiveness itself is an act of love.

The Prayer of Forgiveness helps us make better the Prayer of Faith. Faith is useless without love or forgiveness. True faith always makes us love others. It helps us to go out of our ways to forgive even our worst enemies. When we pray with unforgiveness, we lack love in our hearts and our prayer will not bear fruit. Prayer is, thus, a sacrifice of our hearts, for in forgiving even those who do not favor us, we are sacrificing all for them. That is quintessential love.

Pro-giving

The word “forgive” simply means being pro-giving or fore-giving. In spite of the fact that we were a total mess before we were saved, and

⁷⁸⁰ 1 Peter 4:8

⁷⁸¹ Colossians 3:12-14

⁷⁸² Luke 6:37

⁷⁸³ Ephesians 4:32

⁷⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

we had done every evil thing under the sun, God forgave us and cleansed us through the blood of Jesus Christ. God does not ever remember our sins any more: “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”⁷⁸⁵ The blood of Jesus has washed away our sins as far as the east is from the west: “He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.”⁷⁸⁶

The implications of the above are fivefold. First, forgiveness is infinite. God does not remember the sins He has forgiven, so should we. The test for forgiveness is in whether we can remember the sins we claim to have forgiven or not. If we find ourselves regurgitating on the faults we claim to have forgiven, our forgiveness is fickle or uncertain.

Second, forgiveness is indefinite. The distance from east to west is indefinite. Our forgiving of others should be limitless, no bounds, and no limits. We simply forgive and forget.

Third, forgiveness is undemonstrative, unemotional. We should not wait until we “feel” like forgiving others.⁷⁸⁷ Forgiveness is detached from our emotions. We do not have to feel like forgiving. We must forgive irrespective of how we feel.

Fourth, forgiveness is timeless. There is no right or wrong time for forgiveness. We must forgive now and we must forgive always.

Last and fifth, forgiveness is unconditional. Because God has demonstrated His love by forgiving our sins, we ought to do the same as well. We ought to forgive others unconditionally. God has a moral right to command us to forgive others because He did. God does not ask us to forgive others, He implores us to forgive them. Forgiveness unlocks the heavenly gates for our blessings. We must learn how to forgive as God forgives.

The Power of Prayer of Forgiveness

There is a tripartite benefit of praying the Prayer of Forgiveness. First, the Prayer of Forgiveness deals with our hearts. One of the results of walking in the power of this prayer is a heart that is guarded and protected from unwanted enemies, and from us: “And the peace that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ

⁷⁸⁵ Hebrews 8:12

⁷⁸⁶ Psalm 103:12

⁷⁸⁷ Al Early, “Is ‘forgive and forget’ Biblical?” *The Winchester Sun*, July 28th, 2017

Jesus.”⁷⁸⁸It protects us from hatred, bitterness, resentment and strife.

Second, the prayer of forgiveness makes walking in forgiveness a lifestyle: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, *forgiving* each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”⁷⁸⁹We make those who sin against us a prayer request. We do not harbor resentments any longer. We make forgiveness a present continuous tense.

Third and last, the Prayer of Forgiveness gives us unrestrained freedom. It offloads unwanted burdens from us and releases us into perfect liberty. It benefits the one praying as well as the one who is being prayed for. It blesses the individual as well as the nation. It builds personal faith and the faith of the entire Church.

Précis

Forgiveness in general has been defined. The inevitability of forgiveness has been canvassed. The Prayer of Forgiveness is inevitable. When praying this kind of prayer, we need to focus on the debtor, not the debt; consider forgiveness as the only option; include others and ourselves; be motivated by love; be pro-giving; and in being pro-giving, we should make forgiveness infinite, indefinite, unemotional, and unconditional. The Prayer of Forgiveness has tremendous power - it guards our minds and hearts, makes forgiveness a lifestyle and gives us unrestrained freedom.

⁷⁸⁸ Philippians 4:7

⁷⁸⁹ Ephesians 4:32, *supra*. (emphasis added).

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Creditor
- Debt
- Debtor
- Forgiveness
- Options
- Prayer of forgiveness
- Pro-giving

Multiple-choice Questions

1. What does it mean by forgiveness being a zero-option proposition?
 - A. There are many options
 - B. It's the only option or there is no other option
 - C. It's an option sometimes
 - D. It's never an option
2. Whether we can remember the offences we have forgiven or not is ____
 - A. A definition of forgiveness
 - B. A test of forgiveness
 - C. An implication of forgiveness
 - D. A duty to forgive
3. We forgive because ____
 - A. God demands it
 - B. God first forgave
 - C. God will be saddened if we don't
 - D. God will forgive us even if we don't forgive

PRAYER

4. The peace that surpasses all understanding is ____
- A. The power of prayer
 - B. A benefit of the Prayer of Forgiveness
 - C. A utility principle
 - D. A requirement for making a request
5. The Prayer of Forgiveness must be a ____
- A. Duty
 - B. Lifestyle
 - C. Drudge
 - D. Directive
6. The ultimate essence of the Prayer of Forgiveness is ____
- A. Joy
 - B. Freedom
 - C. Peace
 - D. Hope

True/False Questions

1. Love forgives. T/F
2. Forgiveness is an act of love. T/F
3. The Prayer of Forgiveness and the Prayer of Faith are inversely related. T/F
4. Prayer is a sacrifice of our hearts. T/F
5. Grace is in that God forgave us even before we asked for His forgiveness. T/F
6. God sometimes remembers the sins He has forgiven. T/F
7. By forgiveness being infinite, it means that it is limitless. T/F
8. We need to feel the need to forgive. T/F
9. There is a right and a wrong time to forgive. T/F
10. The power of the Prayer of Forgiveness deals with our hearts. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. By reference to at least five (5) scriptural verses, discuss the inclusivity of forgiveness.

[500 words or less].

2. Differentiate forgiveness from the Prayer of Forgiveness.

[250 words or less].

3. List and describe the five (5) implications of pro-giving.

[250 words or less].

4. Discuss the tripartite benefits of the Prayer of Forgiveness.

[250 words or less].

5. “We make those who sin against us a prayer request.”
Discuss.

[250 words or less].

28 | PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to define repentance and the Prayer of Repentance
- You should be able to reconstruct the principles of a Prayer of Repentance, and
- You will be able to recite and review a Sinner's Prayer.

Introduction

“ God, I am a sinner. I acknowledge that Jesus Christ died for me and took away my sins. I ask for your forgiveness. Write my name in the Book of Life and give me a new life in Christ. Amen.” A Prayer of Repentance, or something like this, is the prayer (also known as a Sinner's Prayer) we prayed when we were Born Again (Born Anew or became Christians). It is an ecumenical, universal prayer. For many, it is the first prayer they prayed. As we pray the Prayer of Repentance, our lives are cleansed from sin. In this chapter, we explore the Prayer of Repentance.

Repentance Defined

Repentance means to change, to turn around and to go in the opposite direction. It is the coming to one's senses, as narrated in the story of the Prodigal Son.⁷⁹⁰ In the Book of Acts, we read: “So repent (change your mind and purpose); turn around and return [to God], that your sins may be erased...”⁷⁹¹ Repentance is the changing of one's mind and purpose. Repentance comes first; change follows thereafter.

Repentance is the entry point into the Kingdom of God: “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.”⁷⁹²

It is also foundational to Christianity. It is ranked on the same level as faith towards God, instructions about washings, laying on of hands,

⁷⁹⁰ See Luke 15:11-32, especially verse 17

⁷⁹¹ Acts 3:19 Amplified Bible

⁷⁹² Mark 1:15

the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment: “Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.”⁷⁹³

Every part of us (spirit, soul and body) need to change and come in line with the Kingdom of God. Repentance is a very strong foundation to a Christian life. When true repentance comes, change happens in the inside of us. The Prayer of Repentance is the first prayer we pray that connects us with God. It is a very important prayer we all pray or have prayed or must pray at some time.

Repentance is a Command

Every creature is commanded to repent: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all human beings everywhere to repent...”⁷⁹⁴ God now commands all humanity to repent. Repentance is a prayer that God has commanded every creature to pray. While we may not force people to pray any kind of prayer, this one, however, we ought to persuade all nations to pray. The Prayer of Repentance is a commitment that God wants all the people to fulfill. When they pray this prayer, they open a relational door with Him. The Prayer of Repentance may also be termed the *Grace of Goodness*: “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the *goodness of God leads you to repentance?*”⁷⁹⁵

The Prayer of Repentance demonstrates our response to God’s goodness. God is generally very patient with us: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”⁷⁹⁶ God forbears long, that is, He waits for us to decide to pray this prayer. But because we may not know how long we may exist, we ought to compel people to pray this prayer. It is not the prayer we pray because God is angry with us, but because He is good to us.

⁷⁹³ Hebrews 6:1-3

⁷⁹⁴ Acts 17:30

⁷⁹⁵ Romans 2:4 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹⁶ 2 Peter 3:9

Principles of Repentance

The principle of repentance is captured in the Book of Romans: “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”⁷⁹⁷

Repentance is a two-prong process, it involves the heart and the mouth or the articulation of what the heart has conceived. Believing happens first in the heart unto righteousness. Believing is followed by confession, which is made with the mouth unto salvation. Basically, righteousness gives birth to salvation.

Faith in God’s grace leads to righteousness. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”⁷⁹⁸ “When you combine Romans 10:9-10 and Ephesians 2:8, you begin to notice that there are two requirements to salvation: Faith in God and confession of that faith (1 John 1:9).”⁷⁹⁹ God has offered His Son Jesus Christ. Believing in Jesus as Lord brings salvation. Believing makes you righteous. This is grace, a free gift of unmerited favor. This is as simple as it comes. The simplicity of salvation is owed to its gracious nature. God, *simply*, wants everyone to repent and be saved.

When one believes in their heart, they are saved, according to Ephesians 2:8, but they need to confess or admit what they have believed in their heart with their mouth. In this way, they fulfill all requirements. Those who cannot confess due to various reasons, will still be saved as long as they believe in their hearts.

Précis

The chapter has discussed repentance and the Prayer of Repentance. Repentance is a prayer in itself. It stands alone. It is the most basic form of prayer. It requires no formula. It can take any shape and form. The gist of any repentance is the quality of the heart – a decision to return to God. Like the story of the Prodigal Son, all it takes is the realization that one needs to go back to the Father.

⁷⁹⁷ Romans 10:9-10

⁷⁹⁸ Ephesians 2:8

⁷⁹⁹ A quote from a WIBI Prayer Material

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Believe
- Born Again (Born Anew)
- Confess
- Ecumenical
- Goodness
- Grace of Goodness
- Prayer of Repentance
- Repentance
- Righteousness
- Salvation

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The principles of repentance encapsulate a two-prong process of ____
 - A. Believing and confessing
 - B. Believing and repenting
 - C. Confessing and righteousness
 - D. Confessing and salvation
2. Repentance is a ____
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Grace
 - C. Process
 - D. Going forward

PRAYER

3. Repentance is the ____ form of prayer.
 - A. Basic
 - B. Complex
 - C. Difficult
 - D. Rare

4. Why is the Prayer of Repentance also called the Grace of Goodness?
 - A. Because God does not want anyone to perish
 - B. Because repentance shows God's goodness
 - C. Because repentance is a grace
 - D. All of the above are correct

5. Repentance is ____
 - A. A prayer
 - B. A prayer that God has commanded
 - C. A prayer that God has commanded every creature
 - D. A prayer that God has commanded every creature to pray

True/False Questions

1. Every creature is commanded to repent. T/F

2. Repentance is a two-prong process, it involves the mind and the mouth. T/F

3. When true repentance comes, change happens in the inside of us. T/F

4. Repentance means to change, to turn around and to go in the opposite direction. T/F

5. Believing doesn't make one righteous. T/F

6. Believing in Jesus as Lord brings salvation. T/F
7. Believing is followed by confession, which is made with the mouth unto righteousness. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “Those who cannot confess due to various reasons, will still be saved as long as they believe in their hearts.” Discuss.

[500 words or less].
2. Resolve the discrepancy by using the relevant verses of Scripture: “God is patient with sinners but sinners may die in sin at any time.”

[250 words or less].
3. “God, I am a sinner. I acknowledge that Jesus Christ died for me and took away my sins. I ask for your forgiveness. Write my name in the Book of Life and give me a new life in Christ. Amen.” Review this Sinner’s Prayer in the light of Romans 10:9-10 and Ephesians 2:8.

[500 words or less].

29 | PRAYER OF PEACE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define the Prayer of Peace
- You will understand what the Transference of Cares mean
- You will learn about the Zero-Worry Infinite Praying Principle, and
- You will appreciate that prayer is the pathway to peace

Introduction

When it comes to prayer, the first sign that God is answering it or has answered it, is an inner peace that comes after prayer. This internal peace is a reflection of the posture God has taken on a supplicant's petition. Since God (the Holy Spirit) lives within believers, He knows when their prayers are effective or not. He can, accordingly, channel that confirmation to the petitioner through the inner peace that He alone can bring. This chapter discusses the Prayer of Peace.

Soul's Tranquilizer

No other religion apart from Christianity teaches how to win over troubled minds and hearts. To do so, we ought to pray, casting all our anxieties upon God, because He cares for us. Prayer brings instant quietness to a troubled soul. It generates a strong witness within that God has assumed the burden the supplicant had. The Psalmist declared, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living."⁸⁰⁰ What the Palmist is saying is that he would have given up, would have been depressed or would have been suicidal but for the trust in the God of peace. Prayer calms the mind, rests the soul and guards the spirit. It is the tranquilizer of the soul.

⁸⁰⁰ Psalm 27:13

Transference of Cares

Peter assures, “God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him.”⁸⁰¹ We turn all our worries to God through prayer. There is, thus, a transfer of places. Peter implies the following:

- People aren’t equipped or able to handle worries, cares and anxieties on their own;
- Worries, cares and anxieties are harmful to people;
- Worrying leads to detachment from God
- Worries, cares and anxieties must be cast out completely; and
- God has the capacity and is equipped to handle worries, cares and anxieties on people’s behalf.

In the Prayer of Peace, we give God our worries, cares and anxieties, and He, in turn, gives us back peace.

Dual Function of Prayer

Prayer has two major functions as far as peace is confirmed. First, *it is the source of peace in itself*. And this is contained in what is known as the *Zero-Worry Infinite Praying Principle (ZWIPP)*. ZWIPP is captured in the following verse: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”⁸⁰² ZWIPP is formulated as follows:

Zero-worry + Prayer (Requests) + Thanksgiving = Peace
(Heart & Soul/Jesus Christ)

Worry must be eliminated: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”⁸⁰³ There is no room for worry; it must be completely eliminated.

The condition of the heart and mind in Christ is inversely related to worry. The more worried we are, the less peaceful in Christ we will

⁸⁰¹ I Peter 5:7

⁸⁰² Philippians 4:6-7

⁸⁰³ Matthew 6:25

be. And thence the more worsened the condition of our hearts and minds.

There should be the application of the *Transference of Cares*. This time the thing which was the cause or source of worry is turned into a prayer request. For example, if the source of worry was that you might fail an examination, turn that worry into a prayer request and say, "Father in Heaven, I ask that I do very well in the coming Physics exam. I will pass and not fail. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

The *Transference of Cares* is then followed up with thanksgiving. In thanksgiving, you acknowledge that God has already given you the victory, the answer to the request made to Him. This is not passive or wanton declaration; such a prayer must be followed up with a strategic plan to study and get the grade desired. Prayer in the form of thanksgiving is a celebration and not a requisition. It is as if the answer has already been granted: "God who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not yet exist."⁸⁰⁴ Calling results which are not there as if they are already there is not presumption; it is rooted in God Himself who operates that way.

Rule of thumb, do not worry about anything, but pray about everything. If you worry, you make ZWIPP of no effect. Worry is dangerous; our Lord addressed this in a rhetorical question: "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"⁸⁰⁵ And, of course, no one. Worry is like a poison. On its own it is useless, but if it is consumed or added to food, it is lethal. To escape poison, just don't take it. Just don't take in worry. Choose, rather, to believe and you do that by giving thanks to God for results that you cannot yet see with naked eye but with faith.

If you don't worry about anything, it means that your heart and mind are at peace. Every time you are worried, you cannot be at peace at the same time. When something is troubling you, pray. Say, "Father, I give you this worry [name it]. In turn, I receive [name it; the opposite of the worry] in Jesus' name." Then give Him thanks and the peace of God that transcends all human understanding will envelope you and protect your heart and mind. That means, you will stop to worry, to buffet your heart and mind with perilous thoughts.

Second, *prayer is the instrument or the vehicle used to ask for peace*. Peace is a transaction of conflicted opinions, thoughts and interests. In

⁸⁰⁴ Romans 4:17

⁸⁰⁵ Matthew 6:27

Christianity, peace is the result, not the process. Thus, when there is peace, a lot of things have happened already. We consider the following passage from James:

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.⁸⁰⁶

We have already met this passage in our discussions on the Prayer of Power.⁸⁰⁷ Prayer is the pathway to both power and peace. However, in achieving peace, prayer takes on the shape of the issue it desires to tame. Thus, we see how different situations in our passage call for different applications of prayer. For example, general trouble is tackled by simply praying. Sickness is handled through the elders. Sin and sickness together, are handled variously – the anointing oil and prayer are used, and so on.

Because of the numerary of mentioning prayer in this passage, we may conclude that everything in Christian life is tied to prayer. It is the answer to the troubles we face, to the state of happiness or sadness we experience, to healing, to sin, to powerlessness, and to fruitfulness and prosperity. Peace is the end of trouble, and in this passage, we learn that prayer causes peace. When we pray, just like prayer brings peace to the soul, it also brings peace to our world.

Praying for Peace

The Prayer of Peace has a divine framework. First, that framework is deeply imbued in a person, Jesus Christ: “I have told you these things, so that *in me* you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.

⁸⁰⁶ James 5:13-18

⁸⁰⁷ See Chapter 26

But take heart. I have overcome the world.”⁸⁰⁸In Jesus, we have the peace that has already overcome the world.

Jesus has given us His peace: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”⁸⁰⁹ Our prayer, therefore, is that “The Lord of peace himself [should give us] peace at all times and in every way.”⁸¹⁰

Second, that framework is partly imbued in us: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”⁸¹¹Here, our prayer is that we, ourselves, become instruments of peace, not someone else. It was from this angle that St. Francis of Assisi wrote that famous prayer for peace:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

We must move from only being instruments of peace to being a prayer of peace, to pursuing peace: “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; *they must seek peace and*

⁸⁰⁸ John 16:33

⁸⁰⁹ John 14:27

⁸¹⁰ 2 Thessalonians 3:16

⁸¹¹ Matthew 5:9

pursue it.”⁸¹²Peace must be our calling: “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you *were called to peace*. And we should be thankful.”⁸¹³Every member of the Body of Christ (the Church) must pray for peace, seek peace and pursue it.

The prayer for peace, is peace in itself: “The Lord bless [us] and keep [us]; the Lord make his face shine on [us] and be gracious to [us]; the Lord turn his face toward [us] and give [us] peace.”⁸¹⁴

Précis

In this chapter, we have reviewed the key aspects of the Prayer of Peace. We have noted the four-tier conceptual framework: The transference of cares, the zero-worry infinite praying principle, the dual function of prayer, and the divine framework (praying for peace). In this framework, we have identified key thrusts and canvassed many applications within an individual, in relation to the peace of the soul, and to nations, in relation to world peace.

⁸¹² 1 Peter 3:10-11(emphasis added).

⁸¹³ Colossians 3:15 (emphasis added).

⁸¹⁴ Numbers 6:24-26

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Anxiety
- Peace
- Prayer of Peace
- Soul's Tranquilizer
- St. Francis of Assisi
- Thanksgiving
- Transference of Cares
- Worry
- Zero-Worry Infinite Praying Principle
- ZWIPP

Multiple-choice Questions

1. In the formula:

Zero-worry + Prayer (Requests) + Thanksgiving = Peace
(Heart & Soul/Jesus Christ)

The condition of the heart and mind in Christ is related to worry ____

- A. Indirectly
- B. Inversely
- C. Proportionately
- D. Directly

2. In the *Transference of Cares*, we may transfer each of these, except ____
 - A. Worry
 - A. Anxieties
 - C. Cares
 - D. Praise

3. The Christian life is tied to ____
 - A. Peace
 - A. Prayer
 - C. Power
 - D. People

4. What should every Christian pray for and seek?
 - A. Power
 - B. Peace
 - C. Joy
 - D. Money

5. The divine framework is deeply imbued in ____ and partly imbued in ____.
 - A. Jesus; Us
 - B. Us; Jesus
 - C. God; Jesus
 - D. Jesus; God

6. ZWIPP stands for ____
 - A. Zero-Worry Infinite Praying Principle
 - B. Zero-Work Infinite Principle
 - C. Zero-Worry Inferential Praying Principle
 - D. Zero-Worry Infinite Praising Principle

True/False Questions

1. Prayer is the pathway to both power and peace.
T/F
2. The prayer for peace, is peace in itself.
T/F
3. The condition of the heart and mind in Christ is inversely related to worry.
T/F
4. The Prayer of Peace is hugely anchored in human efforts.
T/F
5. The more we worry, the more peace we will find. T/F
6. St. Francis of Assisi's "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace" prayer is founded in the second leg of divine framework. T/F
7. The verse, "God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him," is also known as the *Transference of Cares*. T/F
8. According to James, general trouble may be tackled by simply praying. T/F
9. Christians are called to peace. T/F
10. In Christianity, peace is a process, not the result. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Define the Prayer of Peace.

[500 words or less].

2. Write down the ZWIPP formula and explain its constituent elements.

[500 words or less].

3. We pray for peace in relation to its divine framework. Explain the efficacy of this framework.

[250 words or less].

4. Explain the five (5) implications of *Transference of Cares*.

[250 words or less].

30 | MOUNTAIN MOVING PRAYERS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the theology of the Mountain Moving Prayer (MMP)
- You will be able to define an MMP
- You will discover the application of MMP
- You will learn about the characteristics of an MMP, and
- You will be able to discern the principles of an MMP

Introduction

In this chapter we analyze the concept of Mountain Moving Prayers or MMPs. Although mountains in Scripture don't always connote negatives, in this discussion emphasis shall be placed on negative connotation of mountains. Thus, mountains may symbolize problem issues, challenges, impediments, hindrances, and obstructions. They can also mean barriers, hurdles and obstacles. Mountains must be identified, ordered to move, and directed to specific locations. This prayer, MMP, differs from other prayers in that, it requires to command something to move away and not to receive something. In doing so, faith is key and doubt is liability.

Theology of Mountains and Prayer

There are many interpretations on the symbolism of mountains. There is, definitely, a purpose why the Bible mentions mountains over 500 times. To some, mountains are a symbol of “stability and permanence... durability [toughness, hardness, sturdiness, robustness, resilience], steadfastness, trustworthiness, immovability, and strength.” This interpretation is the most germane as it flows, naturally, from the nature of the substance and structure of rocks.

To others, mountains “remind us of God's glory, the trials we face, victories we obtain through Christ, or refuge from the enemy” and as places of mystery and divine power: “In the LORD I take refuge; How

can you say to my soul, ‘Flee as a bird to your mountain.’”⁸¹⁵ Moreover, there is salience to this view, as most theophanies of divinity have appeared on mountains in the Bible. Those who think that mountains are a “universal symbol of the nearness of God,” are not wrong, as most prayers in both the New Testament and the Old Testament were conducted near or on mountains.

Our Lord Himself frequented mountains to pray: “And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.”⁸¹⁶ This view is also supported by those who believe that mountains symbolize God’s seat of government, a place of ascent, liberation and power: “In the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”⁸¹⁷

Some also see mountains as symbols of many of the ups and downs of life. And the symbol of our willingness to do anything to solve the problems and troubles that may come on our way. By extension, we may add that mountains may also be looked at from a negative angle as impossible, impenetrable fortresses that hinder our progress in life. In that view, the signature scripture in this chapter will apply: “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.”⁸¹⁸

Mountain Moving Prayer (MMP): Definition

The *Mountain Moving Prayers* are defined as *prayers* that declare the removal of a challenge in strict faith that never doubts. This prayer has the following six (6) characteristics.

First, it is based on spoken words: “if anyone says...” The supplicant must say out what is in their hearts. They must vocalize if they have the vocal capacity to do so. If they lack the capacity to talk,

⁸¹⁵ Psalm 11:1

⁸¹⁶ Mark 6:46; Matthew 14:23; Luke 9:28-43; John 6:15;

⁸¹⁷ Isaiah 2:2-3

⁸¹⁸ Mark 11:23

they may say it in any form in which they express their speech or communication.

Second, it is addressed directly to the challenge [mountain]: "...if anyone says to this mountain." The declaration is directed to the challenge. By "this" mountain, the declaration assumes specificity. The "mountain" must be defined accurately so that the act of moving is not confused or misdirected.

Third, the mountain must be sent away or commanded to go to a specific place: "Go, throw yourself into the sea." To a mountain, only a sea suffices to be its destination. However, a mountain (challenge) may be directed anywhere it could be further away from the safety of the supplicant. The choice of the place where the challenge should go may not have consequences but specificity is implied. Thus, one can pray and command a specific disease or illness to go to Hell. The choice of Hell is deliberate, as it is the infinite place where evil and bad things belong. If praying as a Prayer of Agreement,⁸¹⁹ the two or more people praying should agree on where to direct the mountain (challenge).

Fourth, there must be zero doubt in the supplicant's heart: "...and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen." This is the cornerstone of the Mountain Moving Prayer. It is founded on a simple faith but strong heart: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."⁸²⁰ A strong heart does not doubt or allow doubt to sip through into it. The Bible makes a distinction between "little faith"⁸²¹ or unbelief, and faith as small as a mustard seed.⁸²²

There is no contradiction here. The allusion to a mustard seed denotes proportionality, not the absence of faith. Definitely, the seed of a mustard is smaller compared to the seed of a palm tree, the cocodemer, for example. Faith is measured in relativity. Thus, some may have enough faith to trust God for \$2, while others it could be for \$2 million. Both have enough faith relative to their level of desire and background.

⁸¹⁹ See Chapter 25

⁸²⁰ Luke 17:6

⁸²¹ See Matthew 17:20

⁸²² Luke 17:6, *supra*.

The declarant must believe that what they have declared will happen. It is not God believing for them. It does not depend on God; it depends on the faith and expectations of the supplicant. That faith must have doubt in it.

Fifth, it must be declared in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ: “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask *anything* in my name, I will do it.”⁸²³ Although an MMP is not a “receiving” prayer, the later part of this verse applies to it, because of the rendition “anything in my name.” In addition, it is assumed that the authority to make declarations come from the authority of the name of Jesus Christ.

Sixth and finally, it will be done for them. The declarant, after successfully discharging their burden, now it remains for God to find the mode of delivery or removal of the challenge. Note, that “it will be done for them,” but the Bible does not specify how it will be done. This is, partly, because it is no longer the concern of the supplicant but of God, who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.⁸²⁴

Application of the MMP

The MMP is a “moving away” prayer, and not a “receiving” prayer. There is a difference. In the prayer of requesting (“receiving”), it depends on God to “bring” to the supplicant the thing they have requested. They need faith to cause God to do for them that which they expect to receive. For example, “Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have *received* it, and it will be yours.”⁸²⁵ This is a “receiving” prayer. As noted, even in receiving prayers, faith is required: “And whatever *you ask* in prayer, you *will receive*, if you *have faith*.”⁸²⁶ Like in “moving away” prayers, even here, the condition is faith that has no doubt.

An MMP is not a receiving but a “moving away” prayer. Thus, one cannot say, “I command money to come to me in Jesus’ name.” That would be wrong because a receiving prayer is being mistaken for a moving away prayer. You can command money all you want but you

⁸²³ John 14:13–14 (emphasis added)

⁸²⁴ Ephesians 3:20

⁸²⁵ Mark 11:24 (emphasis added).

⁸²⁶ Matthew 21:22 (emphasis added).

will still be broke. The reason is simple, money is not a mountain to be removed but a need or want to be asked for. But you can pray as follows: “Father, in Jesus’ name, I ask that you give me strength and ideas and opportunities to make money.”

That is an appropriate prayer for that purpose. But you can declare, “Poverty in my life, be removed and be thrown into Hell.” That will be done for you if you have faith that never doubts. The issue is whether you will now become rich because poverty has been removed. And the answer is a resounding, “No!” The reason is because, although poverty has been removed, richness has not been asked for. The wrong presumption people have is that richness is the opposite of poverty and vice versa. Poverty and richness are not mutually exclusive. They are not direct opposites. One can be poor but happy. Another can be rich but unhappy. Still one can be rich but spiritually or mentally poor. And so on.

Combining the moving away prayer (MMP) and the receiving prayer, one may pray, as follows:

Poverty in my life, be removed and be thrown into Hell, in Jesus’ name. Thank you, heavenly Father, that poverty has been removed. Now, Father, I ask that you give me strength and ideas and opportunities to make money, in Jesus’ name, Amen!

MMPs v. Binding and Loosening (B&L)

MMPs are not about binding and loosening (B&L).⁸²⁷ Binding and loosening come from a very different context:

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, regard him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you truly that if two of you on the earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁷ See Chapter 25 for further discussions on binding and loosening

⁸²⁸ Matthew 18:17-19

The issues of B&L come from a disciplinary angle. And they are acts of grace and not of punishment. A person who has refused to be corrected after all methods of conflict resolutions such as negotiation, mediation or conciliation, have been attempted, may find themselves being surrendered to the world. However, it should be remembered that Jesus came for lost people and therefore, loosening should be more prominent than binding. Although our Lord had this authority, He never used it, even when Judah betrayed Him, he never “bound” him as it were.

Similarly, while we can easily bind demons and evil, it is not wise to rush into binding people. This is because, however evil or depraved, there is always hope that someone might find grace before they die. Demons are rebellious against the will and purpose of God. So, it is wise to exercise this authority, especially in territorial claims.⁸²⁹

Principles of the MMP

The authority to make commands and declarations is based on the clear injunctions stipulated in Scripture. These stipulations are not prayers but they may give authority or the basis of authority in MMP.

First, when God appears, problems disappear. We know that mountains (challenges, problems, etc.) can quake at God’s presence: “The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD. This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel”⁸³⁰ and “‘For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,’ Says the LORD who has compassion on you.”⁸³¹ These are good scriptural verses to stand on when making MMP declarations. Indeed, when God appears, problems disappear.

Second, when God is angry, strongholds under Him can tremble: “Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry”⁸³² and “I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, And all the hills moved to and from.”⁸³³ In MMP, we may as well be angry because certain problems around us refuse to yield. In those situations,

⁸²⁹ See the discussion on Spiritual Warfare in Part V.

⁸³⁰ Judges 5:5

⁸³¹ Isaiah 54:10

⁸³² Psalm 18:7

⁸³³ Jeremiah 4:24

we may assume God's quality of holy anger at evil and make declarations likewise. Holy anger may be the trigger but faith is the necessary condition.

Third, problems may change state or conditions at the presence of God: "The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth"⁸³⁴ and "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence."⁸³⁵ Like under the first principle, here, too, mountains don't only quake, they melt away. In other words, they change state. There are times when one needs to command that a negative situation changes into a positive state.

If the mountain stands before you and your passage to your destiny, well, direct it to "melt away" into nothingness so that you can pass. This is figurative but it can practically be illustrated by many events. If there is a person who is leading you astray, you may pray that they are removed from where you live to another place. Is it your boss who hinders your promotion? Is it a habit that puts you down? Is it the weakness that causes you to sin? Send it away. That way, the source of your impediment is removed. Indeed, MMP can change conditions.

And fourth, difficult situations can become easy: "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"⁸³⁶ You are about to take an exam and it is difficult. You want to enter into a particular course or profession, and the conditions are harsh. You want to excel in something, but there are impediments. You want to be considered but there are hindrances. You want to win, but there is fierce competition. In any of these or similarly-situated events, what you need is to make a grace-infused MMP.

Précis

This chapter has defined what an MMP is, has provided the theology behind MMPs and has discussed both the application and principles of this rare type of prayer. The emphasis is on distinguishing "receiving" prayers from "moving away" prayers. The necessary condition) in this kind of prayer, is the faith that is devoid of doubt.

⁸³⁴ Psalm 97:5; see also Micah 1:3-4; Nahum 1:5

⁸³⁵ Isaiah 64:1

⁸³⁶ Zechariah 4:7

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Binding
- Challenges
- Loosening
- MMP
- Mountain Moving Prayer
- Mountains
- Moving away
- Problems
- Receiving

Multiple-choice Questions

1. MMP stands for ____
 - A. Mountain Making Prayer
 - B. Mountain Mowing Prayer
 - C. Mountain Moving Prayer
 - D. Money Making Power

2. All these are principles of MMP, except ____
 - A. When God appears, problems disappear
 - B. When God is angry, strongholds under Him can tremble
 - C. Difficult situations can become even more difficult
 - D. Problems may change state or conditions at the presence of God

3. The MMP is a ____ prayer, and not a “receiving” prayer.
 - A. “Moving”
 - B. “Moving in”
 - C. “Moving away”
 - D. “Away”

PRAYER

4. All these constitute some of the characteristics of an MMP, except ____
 - A. It is based on spoken words
 - B. It is addressed directly to the challenge
 - C. It concerns binding and loosening
 - D. The mountain must be sent away or commanded to go to a specific place

5. Mountains are mentioned at least ____ times in the Bible.
 - A. 250
 - B. 5000
 - C. 500
 - D. 2500

True/False Questions

1. Mountains must be identified, ordered to move, and directed to specific locations. T/F

2. There is only one interpretation on the symbolism of mountains. T/F

3. Mountains remind us of God's glory, the trials we face, victories we obtain through Christ, or refuge from the enemy. T/F

4. Our Lord Himself frequented mountains to pray. T/F

5. Mountains are symbols of many of the ups and downs of life. T/F

6. Mountain moving prayers are defined as prayers that declare the removal of a challenge in strict faith. T/F

7. MMPs are always vocalized. T/F
8. MMPs must always be sent to the sea. T/F
9. B&L should be the first action under Church discipline. T/F
10. MMPs must be made under the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Explain the grace principle of MMPs.
[250 words or less].
2. Differentiate between faith as small as a mustard seed and little faith.
[500 words or less].
3. “Poverty in my life, be removed and be thrown into Hell, in Jesus’ name. Thank you, heavenly Father, that poverty has been removed. Now, Father, I ask that you give me strength and ideas and opportunities to make money, in Jesus’ name, Amen!” Review this prayer in view of MMP and “receiving” prayer.
[500 words or less].
4. List at least two scriptural verses and explain how MMP may cause conditions to change or to be changed.
[250 words or less].

PART IV

31 | PRINCIPLES OF FASTING

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define fasting
- You will understand the basis for fasting
- You will be able to classify fasting
- You will be able to identify the principles of fasting
- You will discern the assumptions of fasting
- You will be able to itemize the effects of fasting, and
- You will identify the precautions to take during fasting

Introduction

Fasting is not a prayer, but it is about prayer. Biblical fasting involves praying. There is also an implied that when in fasting, man must be feeding on God's Word: "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."⁸³⁷ This understanding is reiterated by our Lord Himself.⁸³⁸ In this chapter, we discuss biblical fasting.

The Definition of Fasting

Fasting is generally defined as not eating or abstaining from food. In this book, we define fasting as *abstaining from solid foods and water, when it is total, or from solid food with water, when it is partial, in order to concentrate on a divine cause by means of prayer and the Word of God.*

Since many, if not all, divine assignments have to do with communion with God, it follows that fasting has to be done with prayer. Whilst prayer may not be done with fasting, fasting, on the other hand, must always go with prayer: "So after they had fasted and

⁸³⁷ Deuteronomy 8:3

⁸³⁸ See Matthew 4:4

prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”⁸³⁹ Fasting is not a type or form of prayer, but biblical fasting must be accompanied by prayer. Since fasting involves abstaining from human food, biblical fasting must involve engaging in spiritual food, which is the Word of God.

The most well-ordered and coveted Christian life must involve the Word of God, praising and worshiping God, praying and fasting: “...and then was a widow [Prophetess Anna] until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple [presumption of engagement in the Word of God] but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.”⁸⁴⁰ Prophetess Anna is the archetypal of a Christian order of life.

The Food Imperative

Food is vital to human existence; it sustains life. Eating is one of the most time spent in one’s life, second only to sleeping. In fact, Satan’s initial temptation is usually with food as the cases in the Garden of Eden with the first Adam,⁸⁴¹ and in the wilderness with the second Adam, Christ Himself,⁸⁴² illustrates. Fasting is an imperative. It falls in the same category as sex, thirst and excretion. All these human basic activities are instinctive, and do involve an intake or out-take, through an orifice, of the elements of life. They are pleasure-pain imperatives. They demand an exercise in moderation, deliberation, care and self-control. As such, they may be susceptible to abuse or misuse. They are easy targets of the enemy.

Food has a religiosity feeling. Even in mythology or ancient religions, the gods demanded food. They also alleged punished people by engineering droughts and floods. The aim was to deprive people of food, among other things. Food is associated with pleasure and comfort. Any suggestion of fasting, immediately triggers resistance within. And this is the first hurdle that has to be overcome to conduct successful fasting.

If one is unable to overcome this initial resistance, they may not be able to fast successfully. The “threat” of not taking in food can lead to the paralysis of the pleasure inclination. This can enhance the craving

⁸³⁹ Acts 13:3

⁸⁴⁰ Luke 2:37 (emphasis added).

⁸⁴¹ Gen. 3:1-6

⁸⁴² Matt. 4:2-4

and may be a great impediment to fasting. Fasting takes resolve, courage and determination. It is for this, and other, reasons why God honors those who fast. They give up more than meet the senses. They give up life itself.

The beginning of fasting is as tempting as the end of fasting: “After fasting forty days and forty nights, he [Jesus] was hungry.”⁸⁴³ Gluttony can be the result if the fast is not properly conducted or ended.⁸⁴⁴ Gluttony is as the sin of idolatry.⁸⁴⁵ Eating and drinking must be to the glory of God.⁸⁴⁶ Fasting, therefore, calls for strict discipline – because Satan can attack any time – before, during and after fasting. The person who can have a handle on food, can be trusted with divine assets and eternal interest.

Fasting, the Law and Grace

In the Law of Moses, fasting was done on the Day of Atonement.⁸⁴⁷ The reference, “You shall afflict yourselves” may also be rendered as “fasting in penitence and humility.” And, occasionally, in Old Testament, public fasting was proclaimed to express national humiliation and to supplicate divine favor.⁸⁴⁸ Fasting is as much a New Testament discipline as it was in the Old Testament. Those who claim otherwise are wrong because we find the Early Church praying and fasting all the time. We read in Acts that, “Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”⁸⁴⁹ This was when they were sending Paul and Barnabas on Paul’s First Missionary Journey. Paul himself said that he fasted often.⁸⁵⁰

Fasting in the New Testament is a hidden grace. Fasting is a divine obligation because Jesus expected us to fast: “Moreover *when* ye fast...”⁸⁵¹ as opposed to if you fast. Fasting is a spiritual obligation because it benefits us. Jesus replied, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? But the time will come

⁸⁴³ Matthew 4:2

⁸⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:13

⁸⁴⁵ Philippians 3:18-19 and Colossians 3:5

⁸⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 10:31

⁸⁴⁷ Leviticus 23:26-32

⁸⁴⁸ 1 Sam. 7: 6, 2 Chronicles 20:3

⁸⁴⁹ Acts 13:3

⁸⁵⁰ 2 Corinthians.11:27

⁸⁵¹ Mathew 6:16

when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.⁸⁵² We fast not as if we are mourning for lost love, but because we are awaiting the bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself, to reappear.

Moreover, the grace of fasting is one of the means by which we bring the body under control: David used it, “I chastened my soul with fasting.”⁸⁵³ Paul used it: “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.”⁸⁵⁴ And our Lord used it.⁸⁵⁵

Under grace, fasting is conducted with beauty instead of sackcloth. Under the law, they cut and afflicted themselves and they tore their clothes: “It happened, when Ahab heard those words, that he *tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his flesh, and fasted*, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.”⁸⁵⁶ Under grace, we are commanded to look beautiful and put on oil and a presentable face: “But when you fast, *put oil on your head and wash your face.*”⁸⁵⁷

Finally, under grace, there is guaranteed acceptance of our prayer in fasting: “And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, *will reward you.*”⁸⁵⁸ God will reward a New Testament fast; that is already a guarantee.

Classification of Fasting

There are basically three classes of fasting, namely, partial, absolute and total.

Partial Fast

A partial fast is not a complete fast. Normally, this kind of fast just lasts a few hours. Sometimes, a partial fast can be done for some extended period of time, in which case only some light meals are taken. A partial fast is no less effective as an absolute or total fast. What is important is the purpose for which the fasting is being conducted.

⁸⁵² Matthew 9:15

⁸⁵³ Psalm 69:10

⁸⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 9:27

⁸⁵⁵ See Mathew 4:1-11

⁸⁵⁶ 1 Kings 21:27 (emphasis added).

⁸⁵⁷ Mathew 6:17 (emphasis added).

⁸⁵⁸ Matthew 6:18 (emphasis added).

Absolute Fast

Absolute fast is normally a one-day fast. It can also be a more-than-one-day fast. But in this aspect of fasting, one resorts to liquids without solid foods. One can take some drinks at intervals without eating any solid foods.

Total Fast

Here we are talking about a complete fast (total fast); without water and without solid food. This is, normally, the most important fast. A total fast is always divinely inspired. The Lord Jesus Christ went on a complete fast for forty days and forty nights. Moses went on a complete fasting for the same period of time. You can have a complete fast for three, twenty-one or more days. You can still have a complete fast for one-single day.

Five Principles of Biblical Fasting

Purpose

A fasting engagement without a well-defined purpose may be pointless. You must, from the outset, define the motive behind your fasting assignment. Sometimes, it is better to list what you expect to achieve at the end of your fast. At the end of it, you can be rest assured of its success in Jesus' name.

Inspiration

The next principle of fasting is inspiration. It is advisable to set a suitable program committing yourself to weekly or monthly prayers. Such prayers and fasting should be supernaturally motivated. God will honor any fasting that glorifies Him. In very long fasting, the Holy Spirit must be the deciding factor. This is so because certain people go on fasting for several reasons. Some do so for health reasons while others as a result of religious obligations.

Right Attitude

The right attitude is another principle of fasting. A fasting engagement without love is in vain.⁸⁵⁹ The fact that we are fasting does not mean that we should resent our brothers and sisters. During fasting, care must be taken to avoid unnecessary temptations to look down on those who are not fasting. Let love compel us to fast and love should sustain us throughout the fasting.

The Hospitality Factor

Next, we look at hospitality as a principle of fasting. Certain individuals will consume everything that they budgeted for that particular day of fasting either the day before the fasting or the day after. That is not a wise thing to do. It is recommended that the food which was meant for the day of fasting be given to others without food. Or, the money which could have bought food for that day be given to the needy, then that fast would be done in line with the express will of God. This is what may be referred to as the hospitality aspect of a biblical fasting.

In the New Testament, fasting is the time to show love to God's people, and not to afflict ourselves with pain and anguish. Our fasting has guaranteed results and that is why we should share with all those in need during our time of fasting.

The Law of Secrecy

The last principle of fasting is constituted in the law of secrecy. We should not pose as though we are fasting. Our posture must be to, at all costs, disguise ourselves. For a married couple, however, there should be agreement, so that the devil does not take advantage: "Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it's for the purposes of prayer and fasting - but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it."⁸⁶⁰ For a family, it is wise to notify each member of the family but not the outsiders. When it is a Church program, it is imperative that everyone in the Church is aware of the proclamation. In that case, it should not be publicly declared to

⁸⁵⁹ See 1 Corinthians. 13

⁸⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:5

the community; if possible, only to Church members. For individuals, it must be done exclusively in secret. God the Father will reward such a fasting.

Presumptions of New Testament Fasting

In Christianity, fasting is not an after-thought programming, it is presumed. There are about six (6) presumptions of a New Testament fasting:

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.⁸⁶¹

First, there is a presumption of fasting: “When you fast.”

Second, there is a presumption of praying: “What is done in secret.”

Third, fasting must be conducted in absolute secrecy: “Do not look somber as the hypocrites do.”

Fourth, fasting must be uneventful: “[Do not] disfigure [your] faces to show others [that you] are fasting.”

Fifth, Christians fast for their unseen God: “...so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen.”

And sixth, the reward of fasting comes from God and not from men: “...and your Father, who sees what is done in secret [praying], will reward you.”

Five Precautionary Measures during Fasting

No over-eating

Either the day before the fast or after. Do not do so as a cover-up measure. Just take a reasonable amount. If it is a very long fast, it is wise to have some vegetables, but not sweet foods just before entering the fast.

⁸⁶¹ Matthew 6:16-18

No miserable looking

Make sure that you look as presentable as possible. Apply ointment to your face and comb your hair properly. Avoid showing off to people that you are fasting.

Drink adequate amount of water

This is especially important if you are going on a long fast. When it is a twenty-one to forty days-fast, drink warm water, preferably, eight glasses each day. Avoid taking extreme hot or cold bath; just a lukewarm bath will do.

No starving the spirit man

You are supposed to starve your physical-man and not your spirit-man. So, do a lot praying and reading of your Bible. This is the time to meditate on the Word of God. Do not be lazy and avoid sleeping unnecessarily. Break the fast with a light meal or juice. And this also will depend on which kind of fast you did.

Effects of Fasting

We end this chapter by looking at three inevitabilities of a biblical fasting.

First, the terms of the Old Covenant were written during fasting: “Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.”⁸⁶²This is known as the *Covenant-writing Effect*.

Second, fasting arrests God’s attention: “I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions....So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.”⁸⁶³This is known as the *Attention-arresting Effect*

And third, fasting is a sign of being serious with God: “Even now,” declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and

⁸⁶² Exodus 34:28

⁸⁶³ Ezra 8:21-23

weeping and mourning.”⁸⁶⁴This is known as the *Total-commitment Effect*.

Précis

This chapter has introduced fasting and defined it in Old and New Testament comparative terms. Of importance to this chapter, is the linking of fasting to grace. Under the law, fasting was a weapon of humiliation with no guarantee for breakthrough. Under grace, however, God has guaranteed a reward to those who will fast according to Jesus’ stipulations. Here, fasting is accompanied by beauty, decency and honor.

⁸⁶⁴ Joel 2:12

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Absolute fast
- Fasting
- Food
- Inevitabilities of fasting
- Law of secrecy
- Partial fast
- Prayer and fasting
- Precautionary measures
- Presumptions of fasting
- Sex
- Total fast

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The requirement not to pose as if one is fasting during fasting is called ____
 - A. The law of secrecy
 - B. Absolute fast
 - C. Importunity
 - D. Dormancy

2. Each of these is part of the inevitability of biblical fasting, except ____
 - A. Covenant-writing effect
 - B. Attention-arresting effect
 - C. Total-commitment effect
 - D. Consumption effect

PRAYER

3. Under grace, fasting is accompanied by all these, except ____
 - A. Beauty
 - B. Decency
 - C. Honor
 - D. Sackcloth

4. All these constitute the precautionary measures in fasting, except ____
 - A. Starving the spirit man
 - B. No over-eating
 - C. No miserable-looking
 - D. Drink adequate amount of water

5. All these are principles of fasting, except ____
 - A. Purpose
 - B. Hospitality
 - C. Inspiration
 - D. Showmanship

6. What is the first hurdle one must overcome in beginning a fasting engagement?
 - A. The urge to eat
 - B. The class of fasting
 - C. The length of fasting
 - D. The degree of commitment

7. Satan first tempted man with it, and then also tempted our Lord with it. What is it?
 - E. Glory
 - F. Pride
 - G. Food
 - H. Money

True/False Questions

1. Under the law, fasting was a weapon of humiliation with guarantees for breakthrough. T/F
2. Under grace, God has guaranteed a reward to those who will fast according to Jesus' stipulations. T/F
3. When one fasts and God answers their prayers, this is called the Attention-arresting Effect. T/F
4. In biblical fasting, praying and reading the Bible don't go hand in hand. T/F
5. The reward of fasting comes from God and not from men. T/F
6. Christians fast for their seen God. T/F
7. Fasting is abstaining from solid foods and water in order to concentrate on a divine cause by means of prayer and the Word of God. T/F
8. Biblical fasting is pointless without a well-defined purpose. T/F
9. The reference to "afflict yourself" in the Day of Atonement alludes to fasting. T/F
10. Paul rarely fasted. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss the food imperative with the aid of scriptural verse/s.
[500 words or less].
2. Classify fasting and give examples when each may be required
[250 words or less].
3. “Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it’s for the purposes of prayer and fasting - but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it.” Discuss.
[500 words or less].
4. What makes the New Testament approach to fasting one of grace?
[250 words or less].
5. Explain the five presumptions of fasting. [500 words or less].
6. With the use of relevant scriptural reference, explain the pleasure-pain (food) imperative and justify why Satan uses it to tempt people.
[500 words or less].

32 | RESULTS OF FASTING

At the end of this chapter:

- You will have reviewed Isaiah 58:6-14 in relation to biblical fasting, and
- You will discover 22 reasons why fasting is beneficial

Introduction

We consider a passage in the Book of Isaiah as a way of introducing this chapter:

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness[a] will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”

The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your

father Jacob.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.⁸⁶⁵

Twenty-Two Benefits of Biblical Fasting

1. Fasting is an act of humbling the body and the soul

By now we may have known that man is spirit, soul and body. The spirit is man himself whose emotions, feelings, intellect (or soul) find their full expression in the body. The spirit must control the soul, which must in turn control the body.

The opposite of this trend is a detriment. When the body is able to control your emotions, intellect or feelings, you are in captivity. This means that you are unable to do the right things you know to do. The spirit man may feel like praying but the body might prevent it from praying.

The Lord Jesus revealed this truth to the disciples when they failed to pray with him even for an hour. His words were, “The spirit is willing but the body is weak.”⁸⁶⁶ Fasting humbles the body and the soul to receive the things of the Holy Spirit.

2. Fasting brings forth light

We all know that light is the main directing force in all the earth. Without light, there is everything but chaos. Light marks the difference between day and night.

When we are in the night times of our life, we may need fasting to release us into the bright day light of our life. Fasting will accelerate the process of divine direction. When we are at the crossroads of our life and we need something to direct us, fasting will do. Normally, we get so stereotyped that we become very biased to possibilities. With fasting, however, we are capable of selecting the right possibilities.

3. Fasting will accelerate healing

God heals, but the process of fasting and faith (Prayer of Faith)⁸⁶⁷ accelerates that healing. Fasting in itself does not heal; it is necessary

⁸⁶⁵ Isaiah 58:6-14

⁸⁶⁶ Matt. 26:41

⁸⁶⁷ See Chapter 27

to the building up of one's faith to trust God for healing. During the process of fasting, the body, which is the doubting factor, is suppressed thereby giving way to the believing factor, the spirit.

On the part of the one performing the act of healing, it gives them sufficient power (Prayer of Power)⁸⁶⁸ to break the spirit⁸⁶⁹ responsible for that sickness. It follows that fasting puts us on the arena where we are able to reinforce divine authority on the diseased, the sick and the disadvantaged. Attesting to this truth, the Bible simply says: "... and your healing will quickly appear."⁸⁷⁰

4. Fasting assures of God's Presence

This, probably, is the most precedential aspect of fasting. Most people, especially in the Old Testament, fasted chiefly because they wanted to have an audience with God. They sought God's presence through fasting. God is always with us because God is Spirit. But His manifest presence comes as a result of, among other things, fasting. The Bible speaks of Jesus going into fasting in the wilderness (*eromos*-Greek) full of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷¹

God's presence is not only synonymous to His power but is actually the power of God. For wherever God's power is, God's presence is there as well. The "righteousness" in Isaiah 58:8 is actually translated, "the righteous one." So, the complete verse should read, "...then the Righteous One will go before you."

5. The Glory of God will be our rear guard

When God delivered the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, He led them by the cloud during the day and by a pillar of fire during the night. The pillar of cloud and of fire symbolized the glory of God. The pillar's position was strategic; it was at the back of the Israelites. At one time, the enemy army moved very near to the congregation of the Israelites.

The pillar protected the congregation throughout. Imagine if the pillar was not there. The Psalmist compares God to a shepherd who

⁸⁶⁸ See Chapter 26

⁸⁶⁹ If the sickness is spiritual in nature

⁸⁷⁰ Isaiah 58:8

⁸⁷¹ Luke. 4:1

prepares a table before His people in the presence of their enemies.⁸⁷² This is what it means by the pillar going before them. They were able to make progress regardless of the enemy camp behind them.

By definition, a rear guard is a troop or troops protecting the rear of the main army. So, when you fast, the Lord shall be a troop protecting your most important side. You shall rest assured, as it were, of God's most dependable protection.

6. The Lord will answer

The sacrifices of the LORD God are a broken and contrite heart and that God shall not despise.⁸⁷³ A persistent call to God as a result of prayer and fasting will be answered. God has promised to answer anybody who calls upon Him in a humble state of fasting. He has challenged us to call upon Him and He shall show us great and marvelous things we do not know about.⁸⁷⁴

7. God will send help

No one needs help when it is in their power to act. We all need help when we fall short of the expectations. The help that comes from God is tangible and effective. God primarily helps us in our weaknesses. We may be wearied by the cares of the world. It is there when we need God's help.

However, when you fast, you will get God's unquestionable help. Do you need help from above? Are you burdened by worries, cares and anxieties? Are you crippled by offences? Are you struggling with a habit that easily defeats you? In all these situations, you may need to fast.

8. Fasting lifts up miseries

The Bible says that if we do all that is necessary for us to do in a fast that God has chosen, our night will become like noonday. Our miseries will disappear.

⁸⁷² Psalm 23:5

⁸⁷³ Psalm 51:17

⁸⁷⁴ Jeremiah 33:3

9. Fasting triggers divine guidance

A guide is always a master in the trade. He takes you where you have never been before. God is our Chief Guide; He knows the end from the beginning and He can guide in the present: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”⁸⁷⁵

This is God’s commitment towards humanity. What is your commitment to God? Can you proudly take your insecurities to God for guidance? The next time you wondered between two opinions, seek God’s instruction and counsel in fasting. Isaiah assures us of the Lord’s eternal guidance in fasting after he admits: “The LORD will guide you always.”⁸⁷⁶

10. Needs are met

Whatever lack we have can be met through prayer and fasting. The Bible tells us that God will satisfy our needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen our frame so that we may become like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose water does not fail.⁸⁷⁷

11. Health is maintained

Fasting will keep us healthy.⁸⁷⁸ God would strengthen our frame. God will put our health-mechanism in its right working condition. The Lord will readily maintain our good health. He will renew it like the eagles: “But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.”⁸⁷⁹ Apparently, it has been medically proven that there are certain diseases which can be cured by fasting. And yet that is not the reason why we should fast, but the health-improvement that can come from biblical fasting need not be underestimated.

⁸⁷⁵ Psalm 32:8

⁸⁷⁶ Isaiah 58: 11b

⁸⁷⁷ Isaiah 58:11

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁹ Isaiah 40:31

12. Fasting will make us fruitful

We have already noted how a biblical fasting can cause us to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. But it can also result in productivity. When the Lord Jesus wanted some fruit from a fig tree but found none, he cursed it.⁸⁸⁰ A fruitless tree is worth nothing. A fruitless life is not useful to God or to man. Are you not productive? Where are your fruits? Is there anything you can point at to prove the fruit of your labor? A biblical fast can for sure accelerate productivity in your life.

13. Fasting will bring restoration

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”⁸⁸¹ When we fast, we are restored and then we become an agent to bring restoration to others. To restore is to bring back to something or someone’s former state. Are you unable to witness, pray, give and serve God the way you used to? It may be time to proclaim a fast.

14 Fasting will bring joy

When you fast correctly, the Bible says: “...you will find joy in the Lord.”⁸⁸² This is perhaps the most notable result of fasting. When you fast, you will experience joy.

This is very important to a believer because it releases strength for their Christian walk. They will find joy in the presence of God: “Those who sow in tears will reap in joy. He, who goes out weeping carrying seeds to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”⁸⁸³

15. Fasting will release God’s favor

Favor makes things go well. When God favors you, everything you do go well. A person who has been graciously favored is honorable. Favor

⁸⁸⁰ See Mark 11:12-25

⁸⁸¹ Isaiah 58:13

⁸⁸² Isaiah 58:14

⁸⁸³ Psalm 126:5, 6

is more important even than great riches.⁸⁸⁴ A poor man who receives favor is better than a rich man who wallows in ignominy. Yet a rich man with God’s favor is an unbeatable champion.

Every believer has been favored by God through grace in Christ Jesus. Yet, fasting releases that favor in greater measures. Fasting is an act of humbling oneself before the Living God. And the Bible also says that God despises the proud but gives grace to the humble.⁸⁸⁵ Humility exalts but pride always goes before a fall.⁸⁸⁶

A fast that is acceptable to the Lord will lift us up and bring honor to us. The Bible has tremendous examples of people who received favor due to fasting. Esther did: “Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ‘Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day, and I and my maidens will fast as you do. After that, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish’... As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight.”⁸⁸⁷

Nehemiah also did.⁸⁸⁸

Do you need favor before your boss, your employer or before your oppressors? What is it that you want to receive favor for, dear child of God, proclaim a God-inspired fast and your favor will come: “And I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feed on the inheritance of your father Jacob; the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”⁸⁸⁹

16. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.”⁸⁹⁰

Paul refers to the spirit-man as “you” and to the flesh or the bodily

⁸⁸⁴ Proverbs 22:1

⁸⁸⁵ James 4:6

⁸⁸⁶ Proverbs 16:18

⁸⁸⁷ Esther 4:15-16; 5:1

⁸⁸⁸ Nehemiah 1, 2

⁸⁸⁹ Isaiah 58:14

⁸⁹⁰ Gal. 5:16-18

man as “a sinful nature.” The spirit-man is the part of man who is willing to obey and do what God wants. The flesh, however, is the opposite because it always wants to do what is sinful and natural. As long as the flesh is active it will compete with the spirit-man.

When we fast, we humble the flesh to give way to the spirit-man. The spirit-man will then receive revelations from the Spirit of God, with ease.

17. Fasting brings understanding

No doubt, in fasting, we get understanding. The Bible talks of getting understanding rather than choice rubies.⁸⁹¹ When Daniel wanted to understand the promise of the LORD his God, he proclaimed a twenty-one day fast: “I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.”⁸⁹² Jehoshaphat needed to understand what God’s place and response was to the attack by Moab and Ammon and through fasting, he got what he wanted.⁸⁹³

18. Fasting may confirm one’s ministry

Fasting may release someone into their ministry. This is so more especially to those who have a calling upon their lives. Those who will engage in strategic warfare are required to fast. Before the Lord Jesus Christ started to preach, to heal the sick or to do miracles, he fasted for forty days and forty nights.⁸⁹⁴ The great Apostle Paul also fasted: “Three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything,”⁸⁹⁵ and he did it more often after that.⁸⁹⁶

19. Guidance for ministerial duties

“In the Church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch) and Saul. While they were

⁸⁹¹ Proverbs 8:10-11

⁸⁹² Daniel 10: 2-3

⁸⁹³ See 2 Chronicles 20

⁸⁹⁴ Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4

⁸⁹⁵ Acts 9:9

⁸⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 11:27

worshipping the Lord and *fasting*, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So, after they had *fasted and prayed*, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”⁸⁹⁷ This passage is self-explanatory.

20. Fasting will bring divine deliverance

After prayer and fasting, singing and praising, “The LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.”⁸⁹⁸ Admittedly, most successful deliverances this author has conducted were achieved after prayer and fasting. He remembers very well one occasion in 1993 after attempting to cast out several demons in a woman to no avail, he declared a fast. After fasting, he easily identified and cast out those particular demons. And the word of His Good Lord was confirmed: “Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”⁸⁹⁹

21. Fasting is the will of God

Note what Jesus said: “When you fast”⁹⁰⁰ and not, “If you fast....” When you fast – rather than, if you fast – follows that this is an active rather than conditional case. So, fasting is not reserved for ministers of the Gospel alone, it is an activity for every Christian. Fasting is neither for nonentities as much as it is not for the VIP. When anybody goes down on their knees in humble prayer and fasting, spiritual law demands that heaven will award them with an irretrievable reward.

22. Fasting is simply rewarding

Fasting is more than just a “good work,” it is a Christian necessity. Those who fast in the biblical way will receive a reward from God the Father. Dear loved one of God, invest in fasting an eternal input; and you are assured of a hundred percent worth of return: “And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁷ Acts 13:1-4 (emphasis added).

⁸⁹⁸ 2 Chronicles 20:22

⁸⁹⁹ Matthew 17:21

⁹⁰⁰ Mathew 6:16

⁹⁰¹ Matthew 6:17

Précis

This chapter has reviewed twenty-two benefits of fasting, from internal absolution to external blessings. God has sanctioned fasting. Those who conduct their fasting in the way required by Scripture will reap its reward.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Barnabas and Saul
- Benefits
- Benefits of fasting
- Chief Guide
- Esther
- Mordecai
- Repairer of Broken Walls
- Restorer of Streets with Dwellings
- Righteous One

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Esther instructed Mordecai to “not eat or drink for three days, night or day, and I and my maidens will fast as you do.” This class of fasting is ____
 - A. Total fast
 - B. Partial fast
 - C. Semi-complete fast
 - D. The Esther-Fast
2. Complete the sentence: “Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and ____.”
 - A. Fasting
 - B. Actions
 - C. Feasting
 - D. Worship

3. Who said these words: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”?
 - A. The Holy Spirit
 - B. Jesus Christ
 - C. Church at Antioch
 - D. The Jerusalem Council

4. All these are benefits of fasting, except ____
 - A. Rewarding
 - B. The will of God
 - C. Baptism
 - D. Divine deliverance

5. The flesh or the bodily man has a/an ____
 - A. Sinful nature
 - B. Bloody nature
 - C. Weak nature
 - D. Eternal nature

True/False Questions

1. This chapter has identified twenty benefits of fasting. T/F

2. Fasting is for spiritual VIPs only. T/F

3. The Bible talks of getting understanding rather than choice rubies. T/F

4. Barnabas, Niger, Lucius and Manaen were prophets and teachers at Antioch. T/F

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5. God's presence is the same as the power of God. T/F
6. Favor, among other sources, comes from fasting. T/F
7. Jeremiah ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into his mouth, nor did he anoint himself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. T/F
8. Joy is the immediate outcome of fasting. T/F
9. The "Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings" is Jesus. T/F
10. Prophet Isaiah gave guidelines on a fasting that is acceptable by God. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe in great details at least ten benefits of fasting pursuant to Isaiah 58.

[1500 words or less].

PART V

33 | INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL WARFARE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the generality of war
- You will understand the meaning and definition of war
- You will be able to differentiate between war and battle
- You will appreciate the nature of spiritual warfare
- You will learn about the five principles of spiritual warfare, and
- You will be able to relate spiritual warfare to prayer

Introduction

We begin by asserting a discrepancy: “He prays but faintly and would be denied.”⁹⁰² We have discussed general prayer aspects and types and forms. We have identified receiving prayers and mountain moving prayers, prayers that require stating our requests and making declarations, respectively. What if these forms of prayer do not still achieve their end, what do we do? In other words, we pray but we assume denial. Indeed, there are situations in which mere asking and receiving and making declarations are not adequate and we may need to make war. In this chapter, we introduce a concept of war, but a spiritual kind of warfare. We will, therefore, consider spiritual warfare and its relationship to prayer.

Universal Nature of War

War is not a relative term because it is understood the same everywhere. War is war in Africa as it is in Asia or Europe or America or as it shall always be on any part of the world. War may be defined anywhere as a *declared, open and armed struggle*. In war, blood is shed, peace is disrupted, communities are disintegrated, families are broken apart, life literally comes to a halt and death is a requiem.

Moreover, men and women lose property and sounds of mirth and

⁹⁰² Richard II, 1595

merriment are rare. In war, plans and purposes find no fulfilment and everybody lives for today, this minute, perhaps. War may be physical, psychological, nucleic, biological, cold, covert, undefined or spiritual.

Warfare, whether legal or spiritual, is always a state. In traditional terminology, war is supposed to produce a state of war, and all the legal effects of war are then deduced from this state of war. In other words, while battles are named according to place or which generals led them, war, once declared is always in a state of potential conflict. To be in *state of war* is to be ready to fight at any time. It does not mean that when there is war there are always confrontations, but sometimes there could be flashes of peace and order, yet potentially war is looming.

In International Law, if there is a *declaration of war* (or state of war), the commencement of war can be readily determined. This is a fundamental fact. Once war has been declared, to begin it is just a matter of time. But remember, the effects of war, especially in international relations, manifest themselves at three levels: In relations between belligerent states; between belligerent states and enemy nationals; and between enemy nationals.

Belligerent states are states taking part in a war or the individuals authorized to use armed force.⁹⁰³ An *enemy national* (or enemy alien) is a citizen of one country living in another country with which it is at war, and viewed as suspect as a result.⁹⁰⁴

Thus, war affects all, peoples at war and those at peace. Hence, once war has been declared, there is potential conflict and no one will be spared in its effects. Wars are, therefore, won and lost.

Definition of Spiritual Warfare

We first look at what Spiritual Warfare is not. The term ‘spiritual warfare’ is not synonymous with strong, energetic declarations, heavy stamping of the feet or binding and loosening of the enemy. Spiritual warfare is not loud shouts, fire-breathing, tongue-jabbing, convulsion-dissipation or rhetorical overtones. Of course, spiritual warfare is not Satan-thrashing or Hell-depopulation. Such are tendencies analogous to physical warfare, not to divine or spiritual warfare.

⁹⁰³ “Belligerent,” < <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/belligerent/> > accessed on November 26th, 2022

⁹⁰⁴ “Enemy alien,” < <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/enemy-alien> > accessed on November 26th, 2022

Spiritual warfare may be defined in three ways:

- 1) Spiritual warfare is spiritual *battle* between the members of the Kingdom of God on one side and an extensive network of evil spiritual beings that are loyal to Satan, on the other side, which is fought in the realm of the spirit; or
- 2) Spiritual warfare is a *hostile contest* between spiritual forces which are in a state of declared spiritual war, which is fought spiritually but whose effects manifest in the natural realm; or
- 3) Spiritual warfare is the *total displacement* of satanic forces and the *complete eradication and evacuation* of the systems that ensure their survival.

The Church exists in a spiritually hostile environment in which it does battle with the forces of Satan. As part of God's Kingdom, the Church existence and growth are contested and inhabited by satanic forces.

Spiritual warfare affects those engaged in it directly and those who are neither part to it nor are aware of it. There is no middle ground once war has been declared. Killing and death are legal in a declared state of war. Both God and men can kill in a declared state of war. For example, we see God giving David the command to go and kill everyone: "The LORD anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and *completely destroy* those wicked people, the Amalekites; make *war* on them until you have *wiped them out*.'"⁹⁰⁵ Israel and the Amalekites existed in a declared state of war, and, therefore, David was in order to kill.

Killing in times of peace is forbidden anywhere, except if it is judicially decided after going through the due process of law. Thus, anyone who kills another in peaceful times, commits murder. And murderers shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Killing by proxy is considered murder in Christianity. There is an event in the Bible where King David sends out one of his generals to battle, in a declared state of war. However, he commits murder because David sends out Uriah for a wrong reason. David murdered Uriah by proxy because he ordered Uriah's comrades to abandon Uriah in the

⁹⁰⁵ 1 Samuel 15:18

middle of battle. The enemy camp stroke Uriah down, but it was King David who killed him.

Thus, in the Bible, it is murder to wish another person death. It is also committing murder to use other people other than oneself to kill another. And it is murder, too, to create conditions that one knows will lead another to death.

There is a distinction between the terms “war” and “battle.” War and battle are related but do not mean the same thing. War is potential or a state. It is declared hostility and involved parties are aware of its existence and know that it could break out any time.

But a battle is *the actualization of war*. It is the doing of the war. It is not potential, but experiential. Casualties are recorded in a battle. In other words, a battle has a place, time and is named likewise. Casting out of demons is a battle yet we are in a constant state of warfare. Even after the defeat of Satan and his forces at Calvary, we are still potentially in a state of war, especially for souls.

Some disregard this, claiming that we do not need spiritual warfare any more. How can we reach out to the lost, to organized religions, to satanic agencies and overcome world apathy without spiritual warfare? What these people mean is that, positionally, we are on the winning side. Paul calls this as being more than conquerors. Surely, our Savior has given us the ultimate victory, but, practically, we are still on earth and Satan and his forces are still active. We are in a spiritual warfare, but it is a good one because we fight from a position of victory, glory to God.

The Bible doesn't say that God gave us victory, but rather, who “gives” us victory: “But thanks be to God. He *gives us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁹⁰⁶ This means that battle is constant and is ongoing, but whenever we engage in one, through Christ, we have victory. Victory is achieved in an event called battle, but this war is ongoing till Christ comes. We enter into this war from a victorious standpoint, and we know this is true because Jesus achieved all requirements of redemption by fulfilling the atonement of our sins through His sacrifice at Calvary.

Despite making this distinction, the dividing line between the two terms is a very thin one. This is because every state of war leads to actual confrontations, we call battles; and all spiritual battles are due to warfare. In this vein, it is very correct to say that we are in a state of

⁹⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:57 (emphasis added).

spiritual war every day and do battles every time we gather to pray during our prayer meetings and every other time that the enemy attacks us.

Nature of Spiritual Warfare

The fundamentals of warfare and battles having been itemized above, however, spiritual warfare operates by its own rules. We begin by analyzing the classic spiritual warfare framework:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.⁹⁰⁷

This passage provides us with five (5) principles of spiritual warfare.

It's spiritual

Spiritual warfare is, in fact, spiritual. Oxford Languages Dictionary defines spiritual as “relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.” It is waged in the “spirit-ual” realm. It is discernible rather than being experienced physically. It can't be touched, felt, breathed, noticed or seen, and it cannot be smelled or heard. But it can be discerned using spiritual antennas by faith. Although there are times when the encounter with evil spiritual forces may “feel” like physical, i.e., when buffeted or asphyxiated in sleep or semi-sleep condition or when dreams turn into almost physical combats, these battles are spiritual. Thus, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.”

It's weapons are spiritual

Battles are fought with weapons, also known as arsenal or armament. In bodily combat, weapons are generally defined as “a thing designed or used for inflicting *bodily* harm or *physical* damage.”⁹⁰⁸In spiritual

⁹⁰⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

⁹⁰⁸ Oxford Languages Dictionary

warfare, the weapons are not physical or bodily, they are spiritual: “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.” Among the spiritual weapons we use against evil spiritual forces, are the Word of God, faith, authority in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, the fruit of the Spirit, the blood of Jesus Christ, our own word as a testimony of the victory of Christ, prayer, and so on. These weapons are, collectively, more potent than the machinations of the devil.

Spiritual weapons have divine power

As it concerns spiritual warfare, the divine weapons have power: “On the contrary, they have divine power...” They have power – meaning they achieve the purpose for which they are intended. If, for example, it is to liberate people from demonic bondage, they achieve that.

The powerful spiritual weapons demolish strongholds

Satan fights by way of lies, deception, carnage, and mental bondages. These are collectively known as Strongholds. Strongholds are akin to military fortresses which were erected in olden days to prevent enemy forces from penetrating the city. Satan and his forces “build” fortresses in people’s minds so that they believe lies instead of God’s Eternal Word. Strongholds may also be referred to as false arguments, fortresses, arguments, rebellious fortresses, or counsels. Thus, the lies and falsehoods built in people’s minds, can be demolished by teaching and preaching the truth of God’s Word, by declarations in prayer, and etc.

Three levels of strongholds

Satan and his evil forces have waged war using a tripartite of three holds: “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

The tripartite of three holds involves arguments. First, Satan and his forces try to win over unbelievers with a wrong, false or twisted message. The aim is to undermine the goodness or power of God. He postures as though adhering to God is a loss of freedom and self-expression. And to do so, he will question everything godly in order to

cause people to disobey God.

In addition, to do so, he must be crafty, evilly, deviously genius, subtle and agile: “Now the serpent was more *crafty* than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He *said* to the woman, ‘Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”⁹⁰⁹In so doing, Satan is planting doubts in the tempted so that they can question God’s authority, goodness or sovereignty.

Second, Satan and his forces try to rise high above God’s knowledge. It is either people don’t know and believe in God at all, or if they do know God, they should not believe God. Once one of these two is achieved, Satan and his evil forces then would claim as if God were “hiding” something from people: “*For God knows* that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ *When the woman saw* that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.”⁹¹⁰

In this verse, Satan draws the woman’s attention to an argument. By trying to question what God had instructed, Satan is both pouring doubt in the woman and persuading her to rise high above God’s knowledge. In other words, the woman would begin to believe that the way she knows or understands God is faulty. And in this case, she was won over when she “saw” the fruit on the tree in another light. Satan has done the same throughout generations.

Third, Satan aims, finally, to make these doubts and falsehoods take root in people’s thoughts: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”⁹¹¹Thoughts transcend the mind; they eventually affect the heart – a person’s entire character and reasoning faculty. That’s why Satan knows that he hasn’t defeated a human being until he conquers their heart’s mind. The Bible says, “...and with every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, because they refused the love of the truth that would have saved them. For this reason God will send them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie, in order that judgment may come upon all who have disbelieved the truth and

⁹⁰⁹ Genesis 3:1 (emphasis added)

⁹¹⁰ Genesis 3:5 (emphasis added)

⁹¹¹ Proverbs 23:7

delighted in wickedness.⁹¹²The aim is to make people love lies instead of truth.

This is, thus, repeated at personal, cultural, national or global levels. Satan engineers this tripartite mechanism of evil through influencing people's cultures (the so-called "in the culture"), education, lifestyles, music, what they read, what they listen to, whom they love to listen to, and, of course, through law and moral delusions.

Spiritual Warfare and Grace

Under grace, the way we look at spiritual warfare has changed. In non-grace demonstrations of spiritual warfare, people take it upon themselves to battle the forces of evil. They placate the forces of evil, put up rituals, demonstrate procedures and even prescribe formulas. Notice a good example of such from the incident involving Elijah:

At noon Elijah began to taunt them, saying, "Shout louder, for he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or occupied, or on a journey. Perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened!" So, they shouted louder and cut themselves with knives and lances, as was their custom, until the blood gushed over them. Midday passed, and they kept on raving until the time of the evening sacrifice. But there was no response; no one answered, no one paid attention.⁹¹³

Doing these antics is a signature of cults. All these are signs that your "church" is stuck in the Old Testament or does not understand the grace-aspect of New Testament spiritual warfare. Indeed, Satan has not changed, and he remains the father of lies, a killer and thief.⁹¹⁴

However, at the advent of grace, the Church does not engage the enemy from a neutral vein; Satan has lost the grip on eternal destiny. Jesus Christ, our Lord, emerged the champion. All that must be done spiritually to win over evil has been accomplished through Christ. We are, as it were, recipients of the trophy that has been won:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we face death all day

⁹¹² 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

⁹¹³ 1 Kings 18:27-29

⁹¹⁴ John 10:10

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long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, *in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us*. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁹¹⁵

Grace in spiritual warfare is in this passage. Imagine belonging to a particular country and you are its head of state. Your nation’s team participates in a World Cup (the “Cup”) and wins the trophy. Your national team comes back home to a hero’s welcome and hands over the Cup to you, its head of state. You have doubly won – you never personally participated in the contest, but the national team’s victory is your victory, and has, probably, your name on it. And the beauty is that you never even participated in the contest. That’s what being “more than conquerors” entails.

Daily, we claim our place “in Christ,” and the victory flows toward us. We may sin (and sin is not good) but we are not defeated. Christ vanquished the devil and the evil one once and forever more. In Christ, we have claimed victory and in Him, we continue to enjoy that victory till the end of time. That is grace.

Précis

This chapter has introduced the concepts of war, battle and spiritual warfare. We are in a spiritual warfare. However, it is a good one, because we fight from a position of victory, glory be to God.

⁹¹⁵ Romans 8:35-39 (emphasis added).

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Arguments
- Battle
- Belligerent states
- Calvary
- Enemy (alien) national
- Evil
- Fortresses
- High things
- Satan
- Spiritual warfare
- Strongholds
- Thoughts
- Victory
- War
- Warfare
- Weapons

Multiple-choice Questions

1. In international law, war must be ____ to be legal.
 - A. Declared
 - B. Discussed
 - C. Defined
 - D. Debated

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2. A specific event of combat as opposed to the general nature of declaration of conflict, is called ____.
 - A. War
 - B. Battle
 - C. Armistice
 - D. Demilitarization

3. Satan's tripartite mechanism of evil includes ____
 - A. Lies; false knowledge; and argumentative thoughts
 - B. Lies; weapons; and knowledge
 - C. False knowledge; demons; and argumentative thoughts
 - D. Argumentative thoughts; lofty ideas; and wrong thinking

4. All these are principles of spiritual warfare, except ____
 - A. It's spiritual
 - B. It's weapons are spiritual
 - C. Spiritual weapons have divine power
 - D. There are two levels of strongholds

5. The weapons of our warfare are ____
 - A. Livelily
 - B. Physical
 - C. Spiritual
 - D. Canal

True/False Questions

1. War has a universal connotation. T/F
2. Battle is always local, specific and can be named. T/F
3. Killing in peaceful times is allowed. T/F
4. Murder does not apply to declared war. T/F
5. People lose property and sounds of mirth and merriment during spiritual warfare. T/F
6. Spiritual warfare is spiritual battle between the members of the Kingdom of God, on one side, and an extensive network of evil spiritual beings that are loyal to Satan, on the other side, which is fought in the realm of the spirit. T/F
7. Spiritual warfare is the partial displacement of satanic forces and the partial eradication and evacuation of the systems that ensure their survival. T/F
8. The lies and falsehoods built in people's minds, can be demolished by teaching and preaching the truth of God's Word. T/F
9. Satan can only win if we give him the opportunity to win. T/F
10. Spiritual warfare is synonymous with strong, energetic declarations, heavy stamping of the feet or binding and loosening of the enemy. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain the five (5) natural principles of spiritual warfare.

[500 words or less].

2. Compare war to battle using biblical scriptures as a guide.

[250 words or less].

3. Consider the three different definitions of spiritual warfare advanced in this book, namely:

“Spiritual warfare is spiritual battle between the members of the Kingdom of God, on one side, and an extensive network of evil spiritual beings that are loyal to Satan, on the other side, which is fought in the realm of the spirit.”

“Spiritual warfare is a hostile contest between spiritual forces who are in a state of declared spiritual war, which is fought spiritually but whose effects manifest in the natural realm.”

“Spiritual warfare is the total displacement of satanic forces and the complete eradication and evacuation of the systems that ensure their survival.”

In your opinion, explain what is central to all these definitions and in which way or ways are they different.

[1500 words or less].

4. Explain the grace-basis of spiritual warfare in reference to Romans 8:35-39.

[500 words or less].

34 | LEVELS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the levels of spiritual warfare
- You will be able to identify the ground level spiritual warfare
- You will be able to identify the occult or magic level spiritual warfare
- You will be able to identify the strategic or cosmic level spiritual warfare

Introduction

Many experts and writers on spiritual warfare agree that there are various levels of spiritual warfare. These are three, namely: Ground level, occult level and strategic level. This chapter discusses these three levels in that order.

Ground Level Spiritual Warfare

At the Ground Level spiritual warfare, we confront demonic spiritual forces that molest individuals, usually possessing or dominating them internally. It is an aspect of personal deliverance and the casting out of demons: “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them.”⁹¹⁶ Paul here, like all of us who are saved, is a soldier.⁹¹⁷ Through him, the power of God is working to “evacuate” diseases and demonic spirits from people, according to our third definition of spiritual warfare.

Ground level spiritual warfare is the least effective looking at it from Satan’s viewpoint – because demons can only possess one individual at a time. However, looking at it from Christ’s point of view, even one soul is as important as the ninety-nine safe ones as the parable

⁹¹⁶ Acts 19:11-12

⁹¹⁷ 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Eph. 6:11, 13

of the lost sheep illustrates.⁹¹⁸

Occult or Magic Level Spiritual Warfare

At the Occult or Magic Level spiritual warfare, we confront and expose organized forces of darkness such as witchcraft, shamanism, Satanism, clandestine and secret societies, Eastern religions, New Age movements, spiritism and the like. Here, we are not only dealing with people who consciously have been conscripted into the satanic army, but with high spirits, which, in conjunction with humans, can make use of several demonic spirits to torment people: “And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. And mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”⁹¹⁹ Here, Paul is encountering an occultic situation. The magicians are giving up their magic books and burning them. This is the kind of warfare which could be encountered every now and then.

Strategic or Cosmic Level Spiritual Warfare

The Strategic or Cosmic Level spiritual warfare involves wrestling with principalities, powers and rulers of darkness, as defined by Paul: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”⁹²⁰

This is the highest level of spiritual warfare. Satan, at this level, is able to influence souls *en mass*. Through ideology, social behavior or national legislation, he can have an entire race of people doing his bidding in one act.

In Acts, there is commotion in Ephesus because Paul has confronted Diana whose effect has become less and her adherents are getting infuriated.⁹²¹ This situation vindicates the concept of stationary spiritual rulership over physical domains, what is referred to as the *Concept of Territoriality*. Like in the Book of Daniel, certain principalities

⁹¹⁸ See Matthew 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7

⁹¹⁹ Acts 19:18–20

⁹²⁰ Ephesians 6:12

⁹²¹ Acts 19:24–41

may be assigned over cities or nations.⁹²² These act as spiritual margraves over certain localities. These princes become territorial spirits, which control vast areas, and know whatever takes place in those areas.

They are stationed to fight against the will of God in those localities. *Strategic-level intercession* will dislodge such satanic forces. Winning at this level involves the deployment of *Strategic Maneuvers*. Strategic Maneuvers involve but are not limited to the following: Research in the history of the area; spiritual mapping (mapping strategic problem areas of a particular territory and recording or documenting problem demonic activities there); spiritual identification (by use of the results of spiritual mapping to identify types of *familiar spirits* in those areas); compulsory repentance (declared prayer and fasting with repentance of identified sins in the area. This should best be conducted multi- or interdenominationally to achieve greater results); breaking covenants and curses;⁹²³ destruction of altars of human sacrifices; and so on.

Strategic-level warfare is central to world evangelization, and this level alone gives a clue to how great world religions have had such a tremendous impact on their followers. Principalities at this level influence and determine the customs, traditions and the cultural behaviors of the peoples. They control marriages, births and deaths.

The weapon mostly used by these satanic forces at this level is strongholds so that certain beliefs become entrenched in people's hearts and are passed on, sometimes are even enacted in parliaments as laws. In these parts of the world, missionaries and evangelists risk their lives to bring these beliefs down. This is where the authority we have in Jesus Christ comes into play, because we are encountering warfare in a practical, realistic way.

Satan's chief strategy is to normalize evil, to make it culturally innocuous or accepted. Isaiah warned: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."⁹²⁴ Satan takes certain habits or behaviors that are known to be offensive, and even sinful, and normalize them. Sometimes, he may even influence nations to condone practices and behaviors that are religiously repugnant and reclassify them as human rights or new order. He prowls around

⁹²² Daniel 10:3-12

⁹²³ See chapters 38 and 39 for a thorough discussion on covenants and curses, respectively.

⁹²⁴ Isa. 5:20

looking for such opportunities.⁹²⁵

Précis

This chapter has looked at three levels of spiritual warfare. At the ground level, fewer people are influenced and so, too, is at the magic level by comparison to the highest level, the cosmic level spiritual warfare. Like foot soldiers, believers in Christ can cast out demons, pray for social change, and evangelize *en mass*. In all these actions, God's Word and prayer have the power to clean up souls and free them from the web of evil in which they may have been caught.

⁹²⁵ 1 Peter 5:8

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Altars
- Concept of Territoriality
- Cosmic
- Diana
- Familiar spirits
- Ground level
- Magic
- Missionaries
- Multi- or interdenominational
- Occult
- Spiritual identification
- Spiritual mapping
- Strategic level
- Strategic maneuvers
- Strategic-level intercession

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Occult level spiritual warfare may also be called ____
 - A. Strategic
 - B. Magic
 - C. Cosmic
 - D. Ground

2. Which level of spiritual warfare has far-reaching impact against the Kingdom of God?
 - A. Ground
 - B. Magic
 - C. Occult
 - D. Strategic

3. Satan's ultimate strategy against God's people is to impose his lies through ____
 - A. Belief systems
 - B. Governments
 - C. Possession
 - D. Social media

4. Principalities at the strategic level may influence and determine all of these, except ____
 - A. Customs
 - B. Traditions
 - C. Culture
 - D. Revival

5. All of these may be part of the Strategic Maneuvers, except ____
 - A. Research
 - B. Spiritual mapping
 - C. Familiar spirits
 - D. Spiritual identification

6. Organized forces of darkness may include all these, except ____
 - A. Witchcraft
 - B. Shamanism
 - C. Satanism
 - D. Dominism

True/False Questions

1. Spiritual mapping happens when problem areas of a particular territory have the demonic activities there documented and recorded. T/F
2. Spiritual identification may map the activities of familiar spirits. T/F
3. Satan's chief strategy is to normalize evil. T/F
4. The Lost Sheep Parable illustrates that, to God, one soul buffeted by demons may be His priority leaving the ninety-nine safe ones for later. T/F
5. The weapon mostly used by satanic forces at strategic level is strongholds. T/F
6. Paul encountered an occultic situation. T/F
7. Ideology, social behavior and national legislation are the only means Satan uses to occupy territories. T/F
8. Spiritual struggle is against flesh and blood. T/F
9. Paul confronted Diana at the Island of Patmos. T/F
10. A stationary spiritual ruler over a physical domain falls under the Concept of Territoriality. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Review this scripture in view of strategic level spiritual warfare.

[500 words or less].

2. Define each of the following terms or phrases:
 - a) Strategic-level intercession
 - b) Strategic maneuvers
 - c) Research in the history of the area
 - d) Spiritual identification
 - e) Familiar spirits
 - f) Compulsory repentance

[250 words or less].

35 | DEMONOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define demonology
- You will be able to define demons
- You will be able to identify the Satanic hierarchy
- You will be able to know who Satan is
- You will be able to describe Satan’s arsenal

Introduction

By definition, *demonology* is the study of demons. Demons are disembodied fallen angels whose domain is in the unseen world. Demons, together with Satan, were defeated and thrown out of heaven because of rebellion led by Lucifer (as Satan was then called): “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn. You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations. You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.”⁹²⁶

It is believed that demons make up a third of all the angelic beings created by Jehovah God. Being spirits, demons can only function in a living creature such as in animals or human beings.⁹²⁷ They follow the dictates of Satan and they will finally be thrown into the Lake of Fire with Satan.⁹²⁸

The Satanic Hierarchy

Satan has a very well-organized kingdom. It is important for us from

⁹²⁶ Isaiah 14:12-15; see also Rev. 12

⁹²⁷ See Mark 5:2-11

⁹²⁸ Revelation 20:10

the outset to clarify that Satan is not to be ranked equal with God. Satan is a created being and prior to his fall, he was an arch (chief) angel, just like Michael and Gabriel. So, Satan is a prince and is at equal footing with the other two holy archangels. Apart from Satan, God has revealed that there are other ranks in the demonic world. Accordingly, these are principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and wicked spiritual hosts: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”⁹²⁹

Principalities

These are chief demons from the Greek word *arches*. They are leaders or magistrates or margraves. In the Satanic kingdom they are ranked as generals, a position just lower than their commander-in-chief who is Satan. From the English “territory” or “jurisdiction,” principalities are princes over countries or extended territories. The demon that delayed Daniel’s answer was a prince over Persia.⁹³⁰ Many times, principalities take up the names of the regions or countries over which they have demonic jurisdiction, for example, “Prince of Persia.”

Powers

The Greek word *exosias* is the English equivalent of powers translated as authorities. Thus, there is a level of evil spirits who govern the notorious evil world and who give enormous political, social or economic powers to their adherents. Satan would have tricked Jesus into succumbing to this power had Jesus not been conversant with Satan’s schemes.⁹³¹ While principalities control some countries of the world at large, powers govern in the affairs of some of those nations.

Rulers of Darkness

The Greek word *kosmokratoras* for rulers can be translated as lords of the world or simply princes of this age. These demons dominate

⁹²⁹ Ephesians 6:12

⁹³⁰ See Dan. 10:12-13

⁹³¹ Matt. 4:8-9 and Luke 4:5-6

through bondage. They rule over affairs of men and are involved in the day-to-day activities of the mortals.

Spiritual Hosts of Wickedness

These are the majority and they carry out the decisions of the other three. It is interesting to note that they lurk in the *heavenly places* or high places. This means that they hinder the flow of our spiritual blessings.⁹³² Being hosts means that they are the military unit of the Kingdom of Darkness trying to oppose God's will.⁹³³

Satan, Chief among Demons

At the helm of the Satanic hierarchy is Satan himself. He is a demon and the chief of all demons. He is called the devil,⁹³⁴ father of lies,⁹³⁵ the god of this evil world,⁹³⁶ and an infidel or unbeliever.⁹³⁷

Satan is also known as the prince of the bottomless pit or the angel of the abyss; the destroyer;⁹³⁸ the angel of light;⁹³⁹ star of the morning or son of the dawn;⁹⁴⁰ and the enemy or an avenger.⁹⁴¹

Satan is the evil one;⁹⁴² the adversary;⁹⁴³ the destroyer;⁹⁴⁴ the accuser of the brethren, the tempter;⁹⁴⁵ and the dragon.⁹⁴⁶

Moreover, we find Satan being referred to as the serpent;⁹⁴⁷ the deceiver;⁹⁴⁸ and he is Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.⁹⁴⁹

From his names, it is plain to notice that Satan's scheme is camouflaged in blame, deceit and darkness. Many of his names not

⁹³² See Eph. 1:3

⁹³³ See Rev. 12:7-9

⁹³⁴ Matt. 4:1,5,8,11; 1 John 3:8,10; Jude 9; Rev. 12:9,12, 20:2

⁹³⁵ John 8:44

⁹³⁶ 2 Corinthians. 4:4

⁹³⁷ 2 Corinthians. 6:15

⁹³⁸ Rev. 9:11

⁹³⁹ 2 Corinthians. 11:14

⁹⁴⁰ Is. 14:12

⁹⁴¹ Ps. 8:2

⁹⁴² Matt. 6:13; John 17:15

⁹⁴³ 1 Peter 5:8

⁹⁴⁴ Job 15:21; 2 Thess. 2:3

⁹⁴⁵ Gen. 3:1; Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5

⁹⁴⁶ Rev. 12:7-13; 20:2

⁹⁴⁷ Gen 3:1-4; Rev. 12:9; 20:2

⁹⁴⁸ Gen. 3:13; 2 John 7:2; 2 Thess. 2:3

⁹⁴⁹ Matt. 12:24

only reveal his character, but also suggest his tactics in warfare against the Body of Christ. While it is not an issue to those in Christendom to disbelieve the notion of Satan's existence, many in the so called "civilized societies" still believe that Satan does not exist and claim that he is simply an evil personification.

This is a blatant lie from the "father of lies" himself. Satan's cleverest trick is to convince the world that he does not exist. If one has confronted the evil spirits at a personal level, the way this author has, one would forever shut their mouths to the deception about the non-existence of Satan.

Satan is real, and his mission is spelled: To steal, kill and destroy.⁹⁵⁰ Millions are trekking to Hell every year either because they disbelieved or they were deceived to believe that Satan never existed.

God and Satan Can't be Compared

The order is, thus, Satan, principalities, power, rulers of darkness, and wicked spiritual hosts. We have placed Satan at the same level as the other archangels, Michael and Gabriel, because they are all princes. This also will help to clear the notion which attempts to place God at the same footing as the devil.

God is the Creator and Satan is a created being. The place of human agents would include satanists, warlords, sorcerers and witches, necromancers, thaumaturgists, magicians, astrologers (clairvoyants, soothsayers, psychics, seers, seers, and etc.), masonries, spiritists and so on. Unbelievers are potential to the hierarchy. Unbelievers, however, are the chief reason for the Salvation Plan.⁹⁵¹ The satanic hierarchy targets them and we, as an army of God, are called to liberate them from the diabolical shackles. Failure in our spiritual warfare and evangelism leave them exposed to Satan's schemes.

Satan's Arsenal

Satan's arsenal comprises three general weapons: Sin, accusations and strongholds. The first two are very much known by almost every Christian and so little time will be spent on them. But our

⁹⁵⁰ John 10:10a

⁹⁵¹ See Chapter 13

concentration is on strongholds, which is the most unpopular yet deadly weapon of Satan against the Church.

Sin

Sin is Satan's active weapon. He is known as the tempter.⁹⁵² Like a guided missile, sin seeks us and when it hits us, we know it immediately because of its wages, which is death. Sin could variedly be defined, but its biblical equivalence is the "transgression of the law."⁹⁵³ It could be viewed as a single act of transgressing or it may be viewed as a state in which all men are or have been.⁹⁵⁴

The consequences of sin are physical death.⁹⁵⁵ The wages of sin, under the age of the reign of Christ, is spiritual death.⁹⁵⁶ The seat of all sin is the heart,⁹⁵⁷ because out of it comes all things one says or does.

Because man was in sin, God loved man and sent Jesus to save him from it.⁹⁵⁸ The unpardonable sin seems to be the denial of the power of God which is invested in Jesus Christ⁹⁵⁹ and the deliberate blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶⁰

Accusation

This is a passive sin but spiritually very lethal. Like a trap, it is superstitiously set up for us to fall into. Satan himself is described as the accuser of the brethren.⁹⁶¹ He did this day and night before God's throne, which left us susceptible to him here on earth. Even after we have been forgiven, he keeps on reminding us of each and every sin we have committed.

Satan uses accusations to generate anxiety strong enough so we will come out from under the mighty hand of God.⁹⁶² This is why Peter admonishes us, "casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares

⁹⁵² Matt. 4:3

⁹⁵³ 1 John 3:4

⁹⁵⁴ Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8

⁹⁵⁵ Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12

⁹⁵⁶ Rom. 6:23

⁹⁵⁷ Matt. 15:19

⁹⁵⁸ John 3:16; Acts 10:43

⁹⁵⁹ Matt. 12:31

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶¹ Job 1:6-12; Zech. 3:1, Rev. 12:10

⁹⁶² 1 Peter 5:6

for you.”⁹⁶³ Satan’s objective is to paralyze us, very much like an animal that has fallen into a trap.⁹⁶⁴

Likewise, we know when this weapon has been used against us successfully, because we lose our freedom of movement in Christ. Creeping anxieties take over. Fear replaces faith, and despair overtakes hope.⁹⁶⁵

Strongholds

A stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchallengeable, situations that we know are contrary to the will of God. Paul addresses these as speculations, knowledge and thoughts, and we know that these are found or do take place in the mind.⁹⁶⁶

The principle of a stronghold is founded upon the manner of olden military castles. These were built on strong rocks usually around a raised hill. They were guarded day and night. Due to their strategic location, enemies were spotted from a far and necessary action against them was taken. From this, five facets or characteristics of spiritual strongholds are identified:

They are located in the mind

Being located in the mind, they are triggered by speculations and assumptions, which are suppositions that cannot be proven. And the mind is forced to believe a lie. Since the mind is the center of our thoughts, our belief system is captured and bound.

They are made up of seemingly “Good Thoughts”

The mind is the thought producing center. The evil thoughts that our minds produce are more easily spotted and identified. It is the so-called “good thoughts,” but not “godly thoughts” that our minds are incapable of identifying. That is where Satan initiates carnal and

⁹⁶³ 1 Peter 5:7

⁹⁶⁴ 2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Pet. 5:8-9

⁹⁶⁵ 2 Tim. 1:7

⁹⁶⁶ See also Chapter 33 for a sustained discussion on strongholds

disastrous processes to pin us down. It is vital, therefore, to distinguish between godly thoughts and good thoughts.

They develop in the shadow of our “Strengths”

Satan targets more our natural strengths than natural weaknesses. This is because he knows that we are hesitant and constantly are aware of our weaknesses. We also keep a keen watch over our weaknesses. Little wonder the Bible says: “Wherefore let him that thinks he is standing take heed lest he falls.”⁹⁶⁷

They are activated by traumatic past experiences

Normally, it is the experience we had in the past that was shameful, painful and debasing. Satan plants these as reservoirs of defeat. Every time he reminds us of these, he cripples our progress. This makes it impossible for us to do the will of God. Part of the solution is in realizing that once God forgives, He forgets.⁹⁶⁸ And that a righteous person might fall even up to seven times, but the Lord will raise him or her up each time.⁹⁶⁹

They create a double mind that causes both spiritual and emotional instability

In the Bible we are warned: “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.”⁹⁷⁰ God will honor our sense of consistence in spiritual ministry. What the devil does is to wonder our mind about so that we are incapable of doing the will of God.

Strongholds, therefore, are to be destroyed and not remodeled nor repainted and covered. In the absence of doing this, we may find situations where someone one day expounds on God’s wisdom and the next day acts on the wisdom that is demonic. Strongholds are deadly.

⁹⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians. 10:12

⁹⁶⁸ See Chapter 27

⁹⁶⁹ Proverbs 24:16

⁹⁷⁰ James 3:1

Précis

This chapter has considered the concept of demonology. It has defined the term and adduced the hierarchy of Satan's evil empire. Satan is not to be compared with God, because Satan is only a "god" and ranks at the same level as God's archangels. The chapter ended by considering Satan's arsenals, including sin, accusations and strongholds.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Archangels
- Arsenal
- Astrologers
- Clairvoyants
- Demons
- Gabriel
- Masonries
- Michael
- Powers
- Principalities
- Psychics
- Rulers of darkness
- Seers
- Seirs
- Soothsayers
- Sorcerers
- Spiritual hosts of wickedness
- Warlords

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Who is the chief of demons?
 - A. Satan
 - B. Lucifer
 - C. An archangel
 - D. Principalities

2. Who/which of the following is at the same level as Satan?
 - A. Jesus
 - B. Powers
 - C. Michael
 - D. God

3. All these comprise the satanic hierarchy, except ____
 - A. Principalities
 - B. Satan
 - C. Orders
 - D. Rulers

4. Among Satan's arsenal is ____
 - A. Songs
 - B. Sin
 - C. Trumpets
 - D. Prayers

5. A/an ____ is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchallengeable, situations that we know are contrary to the will of God.
 - A. Accusation
 - B. Thought
 - C. Stronghold
 - D. Sin

True/False Questions

1. Satan's arsenal includes sin, accusations and strongholds.
T/F
2. Strongholds are triggered by speculations and assumptions, which are suppositions that cannot be proven. T/F
3. "Good thoughts," are "godly thoughts." T/F
4. Satan targets our weaknesses. T/F
5. According to the Bible, masters shall receive greater condemnation. T/F
6. Strongholds must be remodeled, repainted and covered.
T/F
7. Christians know very little about sin. T/F
8. Satan is a demon. T/F
9. Satan has many names, many of which describe his nature and character. T/F
10. The end of Satan is the Lake of Fire. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List at least ten (10) names of Satan.

[250 words or less].

2. List and describe the five (5) characteristics of strongholds.

[500 words or less].

3. List and describe Satan's arsenal.

[250 words or less].

4. Many, erroneously, compare Satan to God. Debunk the misunderstanding.

[250 words or less].

36 | DEMONOLOGY: THE DELICATE WEB

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define demonization
- You will learn about the sources of demonization
- You will recognize the stages of demonization
- You will be able to characterize a demonic presentation

Introduction

This chapter delves into the meat of demonology and begins by defining what demonization is. The Bible is an offensive as well as a defensive source book. In it, are revealed the operation, organization and the reach of the demonic. By analyzing it correctly, patiently and prayerfully, we can uncover a myriad of ways in which demons exert their evil influence upon the human race. Suddenly, a somewhat quiet and uneventful atmosphere around us, light with celestial activities of the invisible world. Both God's good angels and Satan's demons are at work. In this chapter, which is deliberately dubbed, "The Delicate Web," we explore the entire reach of demonization within the ambit of demonology.

Sources of Demonization

Born again believers cannot be possessed by evil spirits because Christ and the devil cannot live in the same body: "Light and darkness cannot share together."⁹⁷¹ Non-believers and backsliders may get possessed by demons through the following means.

Transference of Spirits

Positively, when God created man, He transferred His Spirit into him.⁹⁷² Moses, similarly, transferred his spirit into seventy (70)

⁹⁷¹ 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, New Century Version (NCV)

⁹⁷² Gen. 2:7

elders.⁹⁷³Elijah, too, transferred his spirit into Elisha through a mantle.⁹⁷⁴From here, it is clear that words and clothes can transfer spirits.

Paul exemplifies this when his handkerchief transfers healing power.⁹⁷⁵Leadership authority may also be transferable.⁹⁷⁶But negatively speaking, evil spirits can also be transferred through words, clothes and associations.⁹⁷⁷ Laying on of hands can, definitely, transfer evil spirits. Care, therefore, should be taken as to who lays hands on who.

Negative Anointing

This comes through the laying on of hands by people who are in witchcraft, idolatry, Satanism, and so on. Religious spirits or certain bad habits like lust, infidelity, to mention but a few, may be transferred through this means.⁹⁷⁸

Ancestral Worship

This usually takes place through libation. This is the pouring out of alcoholic beverages in the river to evoke the ancestral or familiar spirits. People who are dead cannot come into contact with the living. Any belief that the living can have interaction with the dead is usually demonic. Familiar spirits may impersonate themselves in the form of the dead, and then attempt to make contact with the living. Christians should not entertain such heresies.

Illicit Sex

This is the commonest way. Sex done outside of marriage with a demon possessed persons may transfer demons into the other person. Adultery, fornication and puberty rites are potential ways through which demons can get transferred: 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ

⁹⁷³ Num. 11:16-17

⁹⁷⁴ 2 Kings 2:1-12

⁹⁷⁵ Acts 19:12

⁹⁷⁶ Num. 27

⁹⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians. 15:33; Pro. 13:20

⁹⁷⁸ See 1 Corinthians. 15:33

and unite them with a prostitute? Never.’ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”⁹⁷⁹

Inheritance

Just as much as parents are able, genetically, to pass on features of the body and attitudes to their offspring, so often it may be easier to pass on spiritual habits to children by inheritance. Witchcraft, poverty, polygamy, prostitution, alcoholism, rates of divorce, hypertension, failure, chronic sickness, and so on, are known to be transferred to the offspring.

Demons could be transferred through the so-called “holy water,” in which case the water is first dedicated to evil spirits and then partaken.⁹⁸⁰ Magic or occult books, pictures, tattoos, foods dedicated to idols and satanic music have all been known to have the potential to transfer demons. Backtracking is the technique satanic singers use to entice the young generation into the demonic world. Immorality, sexual pervasions, and so on, are known to be the result.

Stages of Demonization

Demonization is defined as a process of demon possession. As a process, it happens in stages. It seems to occur in seven stages:

Regression

This is the state in which a person begins to backslide from the purposes of God. This stage is acutely characterized by withdrawing from reading God’s Word and from prayer. Regression is not backsliding; it may be if tolerated and encouraged.

Repression

At this second stage, a person becomes silent and unable to express oneself freely. Natural feelings and desires are held back. Worship, service to God and spiritual ministry are also held back. Regression is

⁹⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:15-16

⁹⁸⁰ See 1 Corinthians 10:19-20

not backsliding. And it is not always spiritual, it could be as a result of psychological experience such as stress or depression. Through prayer, care and understanding, it can be reversed. However, if not tended to properly, it could lead to suppression.

Suppression

This is a stage of gross instability and the victim feels as if they are being abnormally squeezed down. Unhappiness and disinterestedness become the norm. Joy is stolen and serving God becomes a form of ritual and not based on the true love for God. Suppression could easily become depression – a psychospiritual condition that may lead to suicidal ideation or worse.

Depression

The spirit of the victim is broken and crushed. Medical examination may not detect any problem and yet the person is sick. There is a conflicting state of mind and confusion becomes the norm. Suicide and lack of self-expression may hallmark the experience. The person under depression will, characteristically, be staring in the space and is absent-minded. Fluctuation in moods is almost the order of behavior. Depression is not always a spiritual condition but it can easily be hijacked by demonic forces leading to worse outcomes.

Oppression

Oppression as a fifth stage is when the victim feels heavily laden and feelings of anger and cruelty dominate. The spirit of the individual is oppressed, usually demonic influences may be the forces behind it.

Obsession

The mind of the victim becomes so completely obsessed that they are occupied with thoughts of evil and lies. Once lies and evil predominate, a person is becoming a pawn in the hands of the demonic. There is an idea that one needs a special thing in life. Obsession is detrimental to both general physical wellbeing and to spiritual wellbeing because it could cause the victim to miss the will of God or explicit opportunities

because of being obsessed with an “ideal” in mind. Insecurity and habitual sins become common placed. There is now no sense of morality; sin is done almost willfully. But obsession is not possession.

Possession

This is the final stage towards demonization. The victim is totally under the control of demons. Physically or spiritually, the person is a puppet of demons. They are heartless and vulnerable. Such people are known to be shy to look intently in the eyes of a godly spirit-filled person and they may have red eyes. Possession means that a person’s will is overshadowed by demonic influence. This stage has superseded the psychospiritual experience and has become fully spiritual. A person is under the control of demons. The only remedy is to cast out the demons from them.

Characteristics of Demonic Presentation

Demons are physically strong,⁹⁸¹ boastful and filled with pride. Demons, which indwell a person, can range from one to as many as 70,000 or more.⁹⁸² Demons are filthy (known as lords of the flies or carriers of filthy things). They are basically liars like their master the devil.⁹⁸³ They also come to steal (our peace of mind, assurance and good health), kill (both spiritually and physically) and to destroy (our good character, our relationships and so on).⁹⁸⁴

The people who are demonized could do the following:⁹⁸⁵

- Scream
- Shake violently
- Convulse
- Weep
- Laugh hysterically
- Writhe
- Faint

⁹⁸¹ Mark 5:3; Acts 19

⁹⁸² Matt. 12:43-45

⁹⁸³ John 8:44

⁹⁸⁴ John 10:10

⁹⁸⁵ Mark 1:26ff

- Sigh
- Groan
- Choke
- Wretch or
- Vomit

However, demons are not to be feared because of the authority delegated to us by our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ: “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”⁹⁸⁶

There are various ways of knowing when one is being influenced by demons. Many times, dreams can reveal this. The following manifestations are commonplace:

Eating or drinking in dreams

Normal dreams can also manifest this. But if the eating and drinking in the dreams is frequent and usually cause trouble, then there is reason to suspect.

Flying in the dreams

This may also happen in normal dreams. However, if it is frequent and inflicting sporadic fear and anguish, it could reveal demonic influence. This sign is associated with witchcraft. This is known as *blind witchcraft*. Some people do walk in sleep. Sleep-walking may be a normal psychic reaction or may be a sign of demonic influence. Such people may even open the door and walk outside which to most people is normal and tolerable. However, *blind witchcraft* is also known to do the same.

Sexual intercourse in dreams

We are social as well as psychological beings. We may be affected by what we see, hear, feel, touch and even smell. This means that we may, occasionally, dream of having sex with those we admire. However, demons more often than not, are also known to abuse their victims sexually in dreams. This incapacitates them, spiritually, and may be a

⁹⁸⁶ Luke 10:19

cause of barrenness, miscarriages and or delayed marriages or divorces. Sometimes, the demons may even kill the physical partner of the demonized person.

Variants of Demonic Activities

In our discussions on the demonic world, we have already established the fact that demons are of various scopes and are specialized in different wicked aspects. Principalities, power and rulers deal with the issues of power, dominion, wealth and influence.

What may be known as “water spirits” may deal with matters of morality and relationships. Among the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the water kingdom also are the spirits known as *incubus* or spirit husbands, and *succubus* or spirit wives.

An *incubus*, derived from Latin: to lie upon, is an evil male spirit that lies upon women in their sleep to have intercourse with them.

The *succubus*, derived from Latin: to lie under, is a female spirit that comes at night to have sexual relationship with men.

Whilst asleep, these spirits may come to the victim with fondling hands, caressing hot lips and tongue to stimulate lustful sexual feelings. The affair, at first, may seem dream-like leaving the person thinking that they are just dreaming things. The affair can be pleasant and could even be consummated. But the end result is usually guilt and deep shame. These spirits delight in generating all kinds of normal and deviant sexual experiences. Yet the pain, fear and mental anguish that are inflicted upon the soul of the victims are deadly. Once these spirits possess a person, he or she becomes their sexual slave. The person, without their will, are forced to do what they have come to hate.

In fact, to these spirits, later on, it does not matter whether these experiences produce pleasure or pain. The demon is only interested in enjoying the lust it generates. The person eventually sinks lower and lower and becomes more and more animistic, sickeningly filthy and loses a touch on restraint.

The issue of spiritual spouses is a crucial one to many millions on the globe. Apparently, this problem knows no status, race, color or gender. People of all kinds are affected. It becomes even problematic because most victims are unable to disclose the ordeal due to fear of being considered abnormal or weak. Most people grapple with bizarre dreams they will never share with others.

Spirit husbands and wives hate the institution of marriage with perfect hatred. They may be classified into the following categories:

Physical spiritual spouses

These operate physically and some of their victims can actually see them. There are people who actually suffer from demonic sexual harassment while they are wide-awake. They become sexually excited even when there is no living soul around them. Masturbation is also known to induce sexual deviancy. So, it is wise to distinguish normal masturbation from spiritually sexual nuptials.

Conscious-unconscious spirit spouses

Some demonic sexual harassments are conscious while others are unconscious. Majority of victims will claim that they are unconsciously molested. Demons prefer to keep their victims ignorant in order to buffet them.

Spiritual prostitution

These spirits do not limit themselves to only one person. They attack as many persons as possible. They cause more havoc by attacking many victims. They are never satisfied with only one spouse. They delight in changing sexual partners, as in normal prostitution.

Wandering spirits

Some wicked spirit husbands and wives are mandated to wonder from person to person. They can operate in many cities, nations and even continents.

Masquerades or camouflage spirits

This category of spirits often take-up the appearance of someone who their victim would hardly reject. When an evil spiritual spouse comes in the appearance of someone one is fond of, they are overpowered and they may not resist the advancement. Many people have been

sexually abused not knowing that evil spirits hid under the facial appearance of the said loved ones.

Many people who are desperate for marriage and do vocalize their admiration for particular individuals are susceptible to having dreams of those individuals either marrying them or having sexual intercourse with them. It is not God answering their prayers; it is the masquerades doing their job.

Family spirit husbands and wives

Some families may harbor spirit husbands or wives. Such personalities usually marry every member of that family. The evil spouses, generally, have sex, spiritually, with every member of the family. It is important not to mistake normal dreams to spiritual dreams. It is wise not to spiritualize every dream, either. However, it is better to be cautious.

Hermaphrodite spirit

This spirit is believed to come against its victims with both male and female organs. The spirit has different functions and attacks different victims. Other spirits associated with *incubus* and *succubus* are the spiritual twins which are spirit husbands and wives operating like physical twins.

Wicked and violet spirits

This category of spirits is believed to be violent when sexually abusing their victims. Victims wake up with excruciating pain in their reproductive organs, just when they wake up from a sex dream.

Resident spirit husbands or wives

May be harbored by some people. These spirits live with their victims and once the victim closes his or her eyes, they begin to abuse them sexually. Sometimes, victims can see these spirits appearing as if it is a normal experience. They may also represent themselves as familiar spirits.

Bathing in dreams

Bathing either in showers or rivers on an abnormal frequency in dreams could be a sign of water spirits. But it could also just be a normal habitual reaction.

Negative Impact of Demonic Presentation

The legacy of spiritual spouses is known to destroy virtues. It destroys the virtue of anyone they have sex with. Sex dreams may portend failure, calamity and non-achievement. These spirits are known to siphon the power of God. Whenever an evil personality succeeds in luring one into having sex in the dream, they would wake up the next day feeling empty, spiritually.

Late marriages may be the obvious results of the demonic sexual affairs. Some victims may think of marriage seriously when they have passed prime age. These characters would have been coming across potential partners in the past, but the spirit partners would have been preventing marriage.

Some people who are victimized in this way may fail to get married if they don't get help through deliverance, but even when they get marriage, evil spiritual spouses may still attempt to make them childless. Marital conflicts may be commonplace in the lives of the victims. Confusion comes between the physical partners, a situation that could lead to divorce. For those in courtship, a small quarrel could cramp a good relationship. Some people may never allow their relationships to end in a marriage. All the attempts may start well and end up worse. This is because the spirit spouse induces spirits of hatred, which might make it impossible for relationships to last.

Grace and Demonic Presentation

It is very important to apply caution here. Not all characteristics denoted above are spiritual in nature. Just like not all people desire to get married or to be with a partner. Some incidents may be just isolated moments of a person's will and decision. And not every incident of having sex in dreams is spiritual or demonic. Not every instance of being drowned in dreams or running in dreams is spiritual or demonic, either. Of course, not every misfortune, such as miscarriage or late

marriages are spiritual or demonic. It is important to apply the right review and wisdom when dealing with these issues.

No matter the issue or demonic experience, God is able to overcome it: “Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.”⁹⁸⁷ And the same grace can teach us how to overcome or come out of any demonic bondage, whatever it may be: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to everyone.”⁹⁸⁸ Grace instructs us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives in the present age. And, of course, we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us.⁹⁸⁹

Grace has given us every tool we need to dislodge all the machinations of evil. No matter how sophisticated the demoniac gets, God’s grace will abound even more. The power of grace is the weapon that keeps us safe even when we are surrounded by demonic activities.

Précis

It is important to note that what has been discussed in this chapter is not a suggestion to fear the presentation of evil forces. Most of the events discussed may be psychological in nature or even purely innocuous. For example, some dreams can come to anyone, whether believers or nonbelievers, spiritual or natural. The dispensation of grace has given us tremendous freedom in our choices and dealings. Satan and his array of demons may only succeed to extent to which they play on people’s ignorance. But God is faithful, and He will not allow any of His creatures to be tempted beyond their ability, but with the temptation, He will also provide a way of escape, so that they may be able to endure it and overcome.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁷ Ephesians 3:20

⁹⁸⁸ Titus 2:11-12

⁹⁸⁹ Romans 8:37

⁹⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 10:13

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Ancestral worship
- Demonic presentations
- Depression
- Dreams
- Hermaphrodite spirit
- Illicit sex
- Incubus
- Inheritance
- Masquerades
- Negative anointing
- Obsession
- Oppression
- Possession
- Regression
- Repression
- Resident spirits
- Sexual intercourse
- Spiritual prostitution
- Spiritual spouses
- Succubus
- Suppression
- Transference of spirits
- Wandering spirits
- Water spirits

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Spirit husbands are known in Latin as ____
 - A. Succubus
 - B. Incubus
 - C. Wandering spirits
 - D. Water spirits

2. Spirit wives are known in Latin as ____
 - A. Succubus
 - B. Incubus
 - C. Wandering spirits
 - D. Water spirits

3. Frequent sexual intercourse in dreams may be a ____
 - A. Demonic presentation
 - B. A physical spiritual spouse
 - C. Masquerade
 - D. Sign of fertility

4. Freedom over demonic presentation is a subject of ____
 - A. Power
 - B. Prayer
 - C. Grace
 - D. Glory

5. ____ is the final stage towards demonization.
 - A. Repression
 - B. Depression
 - C. Obsession
 - D. Possession

6. Suicidal thoughts/ideations may occur during ____
 - A. Repression and suppression
 - B. Depression and suppression
 - C. Obsession and regression
 - D. Possession and regression

7. Where a spiritual spouse is never satisfied with only one spouse, it may be a condition known as ____
 - A. Succubus
 - B. Spiritual prostitution
 - C. Violent spirits
 - D. Bathing in dreams

8. Spiritual spouses may impact ____
 - A. Virtue
 - B. Morals
 - C. Achievement
 - D. All of the above

9. Resident spirits may penetrate the human soul through ____
 - A. Eyes
 - B. Mouth
 - C. Ears
 - D. Genitals

10. Transference of spirits might have happened in the case of all of them, except ____
 - A. Moses
 - B. Elijah
 - C. Paul
 - D. John the Baptist

True/False Questions

1. Religious spirits or certain bad habits like lust, infidelity, to mention but a few, may be transferred through negative anointing. T/F
2. Libation is the pouring out of alcoholic beverages in the river to evoke the ancestral or familiar spirits. T/F
3. Adultery, fornication and puberty rites are potential ways through which demons can get transferred. T/F
4. Witchcraft, poverty, polygamy, prostitution, alcoholism, rates of divorce, hypertension, failure, chronic sickness may be hereditary. T/F
5. Regression happens when a person begins to withdraw from reading God's Word and from prayer. T/F
6. Sleep-walking may, in rare instances, be a sign of blind witchcraft. T/F
7. Late marriage is always a results of the demonic sexual affair. T/F
8. Marital conflicts are more often than not caused by demonic presentations. T/F
9. Sex dreams always portend failure, calamity and non-achievement. T/F
10. Grace has overcome all variants of demonic presentations. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and discuss the sources of demonization.
[500 words or less].
2. List and discuss the stages of demonization.
[500 words or less].
3. List and discuss at least five (5) variances of demonic activities.
[500 or less words].
4. “Grace trumps over demonic influences.” Discuss.
[1500 words or less].

37 | DIABOLICAL SPIRITS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the “Queen of Heaven” mystery, and
- You will learn about water spirits

Extended Introduction

In what may be termed as “African Mythology,” it is not uncommon, from time to time, to give names to familiar spirits that have come to dominate a particular territory. Egypt, for example, is lit with famous gods: Osiris, Isis, Horus, Seth, Ptah, Ra (Re), Hathor, Anubis, Amon, and Thoth, to mention but ten.

These “gods” famous as they may be, can only fall in two categories. Either they are God’s clean angels or they are fallen angels or demons. Those who live along water bodies, like lakes and rivers, may adapt certain spirits to these localities. And this is the same in mountainous, valley or savannah areas.

It was not different with Greece (Greek Mythology), for example, where local “gods” or demons acquired names and characteristics the Greeks associated with intelligence, fertility, protection at the sea or valor in war. Some of these gods (such as Athena, Zeus, Apollo, and etc.) were adopted by the Romans who christened some of them following planetary phenomena like Jupiter, Saturn, Pluto, and etc.

These “gods” or demons had come to be regarded as mementoes and had tremendous effigative powers (power of submission and mechanistic effulgence fostered by animistic sacrifices and idolatry).

Similarly, there is plenty of evidence that God was concerned with the Israelites adopting other “gods” when they landed in Canaan. God Himself calls these demons “other gods” or “foreign gods”: “When the LORD made a promise to Israel, he commanded, ‘Never worship *other gods*, bow down to them, serve them, or sacrifice to them. Instead, worship the LORD, who used his great power and a mighty arm to bring you out of Egypt. Bow down to the LORD, and sacrifice

to him.”⁹⁹¹

At the time God delivered the children of Jacob from bondage in Egypt, leading them to Canaan, Canaan was at the apex of its mythological indulgency. Canaanites prided in deities they paid homage to in the Pantheon. Chief among them were El, Athirat (Asherah), Ba'al, and Anat, to mention but four. Ba'al, believed to be the son of El, is mentioned over 90 times in the Hebrew Bible.

We read, for example, in Numbers:

While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. So, Israel yoked themselves to the Ba'al of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them. The Lord said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the Lord's fierce anger may turn away from Israel."⁹⁹²

In Shittim, some Israelites went crazy with the feasts and sacrifices to the "god" Ba'al. God, definitely, knew that Ba'al was a demon masquerading as a god. And God's anger was aroused. The only remedy was death: "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the Lord's fierce anger may turn away from Israel."

Thus, then as now, in different parts of the world where the Gospel of Jesus Christ hasn't fully reached, the people there are still being deceived to pray to, and to worship demons masquerading themselves as gods of various degrees and order. Of course, Satan's chief tripartite mission is to destroy, kill and steal. These demons pretend to offer auxiliary divine providence, such as fertility, bumper harvests, victory in war, social stability, familial clemency or to realign climatic and environmental conditions. Because such people do not know anything better, they succumb to the dictates of demons by pouring libations, sacrificing on altars or making human sacrifices in lieu.

In this chapter, we discuss one such demon who parades herself as the "Queen of Heaven," deceiving the ignorant and inflicting on them demonic wrath and chagrin.

⁹⁹¹ 2 Kings 17:35-36

⁹⁹² Numbers 25:1-5

Mystery of the “Queen of Heaven”

The “Queen of Heaven” is believed to be a female spirit (demon), which tends to release spiritual currents aimed at polluting the Church. This kind of spirit first operated in Queen Jezebel, wife of Ahab the King of Judah.⁹⁹³ We first encounter the “Queen of Heaven” in Jeremiah:

Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present—a large assembly—and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah, “We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD. We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the *Queen of Heaven* and will *pour out drink offerings* to her just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time, *we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine.*” The women added, “When we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did not our husbands know that we were making cakes impressed with her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?” Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, “Did not the LORD remember and call to mind the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land? When the LORD could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things you did, your land became a curse and a desolate waste without inhabitants, as it is today. Because you have burned incense and have sinned against the LORD and have not obeyed him or followed his law or his decrees or his stipulations, this disaster has come upon you, as you now see.” Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah in Egypt. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives have done what you said you would do when you promised, ‘We will certainly carry out the vows we made to burn incense and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.’ “Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows. But hear the word of the LORD, all you Jews living in Egypt: ‘I swear by my great name,’ says the LORD, ‘that no one from Judah living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my

⁹⁹³ See 1 Kings 19:1, 18; 16:29-33; 21:5-25; and 2 Kings 9:30-37

name or swear, “As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives.” For I am watching over them for harm, not for good; the Jews in Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed. Those who escape the sword and return to the land of Judah from Egypt will be very few. Then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs. “‘This will be the sign to you that I will punish you in this place,’ declares the LORD, ‘so that you will know that my threats of harm against you will surely stand.’”⁹⁹⁴

The name “Queen of Heaven” may mean “without co-habitation.” It cannot live with anyone unless it is allowed to dominate, control and manipulate the other party. It targets all – “ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land.” Its agents, as we have noticed in the above passage, are women. It uses the alluring endowments of the female physique, and the sophistry and cunning of harlotry to trap men.⁹⁹⁵

Characteristics of the “Queen of Heaven”

Manipulation and seduction

It uses flattery and false praise, pride, insecurity, destructive anger, and intimidation. It hates humility; true prophets; and intercessory prayers because these expose its dealings and hold on man. It brings ambiguous visions and words that contradict God’s will.

Pervasive Ambitions

It rekindles past failures and causes strife. It is covetous; perverse and looms with bad motives. Perversion comes through fantasy, imaginations and pornography. It does not give and it is enticed by riches. It has a façade that makes it unapproachable and difficult to confront when it does wrong.

⁹⁹⁴ Jeremiah 44:15-29 (emphasis added).

⁹⁹⁵ See Rev. 12:1; 18:1

Resentment and Bitterness

It carries a spirit of resentment and embitterment towards men and it is unforgiving. It may push a man in a position of leadership and exercises control over him and always attacks after a great victory. This spirit is master at the use of blackmail. And it refuses 'no' for answer. It is known to exhibit double standards and hypocrisy.

It is Vengeful and Punitive

The women said it all here: "At that time, we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the 'Queen of Heaven' and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine."

Vindictive Sorrow

When this spirit takes up its throne, she manifests herself as the "Queen of Heaven." In this place, she uses the curse of sorrow to torment humankind. She likes to manifest herself as the Egyptian goddess, Iris, which means, "She who weeps."

She is also known as "The mother of sorrows." Today, she appears mimicking as a weeping mother. When the curse of sorrow is not removed from the soul, it becomes a stronghold of sorrow that attracts evil.

This is meant to paralyze the grace of God upon a Christian and human efforts take its place. Sorrow, when it is matured in an individual, becomes associated with the fear of death, heaviness of heart, depression, brokenness of the spirit, despaired hopelessness, sadness, grief, dejection, melancholy and even despondency.⁹⁹⁶

Religiosity

The "Queen of Heaven" is master at setting up and imposing on the humans religious rules, rituals and laws which deceive people into idolatry and legalism. Covetousness, greed and false images become

⁹⁹⁶ See 2 Corinthians. 7:10; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians. 15:54-57; Heb. 2:14-15; Heb. 10:10; 2 Tim. 2:11 and Rom. 8:34

the idol of a victim's worship. The powers behind these fake images, enable Satan to achieve his desire to be "God."⁹⁹⁷

It is, therefore, not true that those who claim to have seen the apparition of Virgin Mary truly saw the real Mary, the mother of Jesus. Those people innocently but deceptively, might have seen the apparition of the "Queen of Heaven." The Bible urges us to test the spirits to see if they are from God: "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for *he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*"⁹⁹⁸

Water Spirits

The Rationale

There is nothing like water, air or body spirits. We attach the label simply because of the likelihood of the places and habitats that these evil spirits tend to occupy. Water spirits are an army of the Kingdom of darkness. Most of the demons Jesus encountered either came from water or where commanded to go into the water.⁹⁹⁹ Looking at God's creation, it is obvious and notable that the earth itself has always been covered with water.¹⁰⁰⁰ Science and geography have discovered that seventy percent (70%) of the human body and of the earth's surface, are covered with water, respectively.

In addition, the foundation of the earth and the world in its entirety lies upon the waters: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; *for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*"¹⁰⁰¹ And God is said to have established His own throne upon the waters: "The voice of the Lord is over the waters...The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever."¹⁰⁰²

It is, therefore, unarguable that the waters have a definite influence upon both divinity and humanity. God first destroyed Noah's world with water. It can be assumed that water demons were targeted.

Water spirits are powerful and they lay claim to creation, dominion, power and wealth: "Speak to him and say: This is what the Sovereign

⁹⁹⁷ See Psalm 18:4-5; Proverbs 14:12-13; 15:13 and Isaiah 14:13-14

⁹⁹⁸ 1 John 4:4 (emphasis added).

⁹⁹⁹ See Mark 5:11-13; Rev. 17:1-6

¹⁰⁰⁰ Gen. 1:2

¹⁰⁰¹ Psalm 24:1-2 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁰² Psalm 29:3,10; see also Rev. 4:6; Psalm 104:5-6

LORD says: 'I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, you *great monster lying among your streams.*' You say, '*The Nile belongs to me; I made it for myself.*'"¹⁰⁰³ Surely, everyone saw King Pharaoh, but God saw a "great monster lying among your streams [saying that]...the Nile belongs to me; I made it for myself."

Characteristics of Water Spirits

They manifest themselves in water places

Such as pools, swamps, streams, rivers and oceans and in the water spaces of the human body. Which means that they cover the largest area of human influence. Those in the human bodies are among the most difficult and do pause abnormal resistance to deliverance. The network of the water spirits includes individuals, families, communities, cities and nations.

They manifest as the Queen of Heaven

As discussed above, the "Queen of Heaven" belongs to this group. And therefore, all the characteristics tabulated above (manipulation, seduction, perversity, ambition, resentment, vengeance, sorrow and religiosity) apply to water spirits.

They invade cultures

People may, without their knowledge, serve these spirits in their traditions, cultures and religious practices. Libation (pouring out of drink offering), which is a ritual of paying homage to the familiar water spirits by pouring beer into the river, is common place in many parts of the world.

They are immoral

The hinder spiritual growth through sexual immorality. Many people are initiated in the water spirit realm through ungodly family ties, idolatry and ancestral worship. Unholy sexual activities are among the activities encouraged by water spirits.

¹⁰⁰³ Ezekiel 29:3 (emphasis added).

They break homes and marriages

People have the legal rights to divorce, but water spirits exacerbate that process. Broken homes and broken marriages and divorces may happen for no apparent reasons and separations become the norm. There is considerable loss of desire for one's legal partner which culminates in constant quarrels when a water spirit is involved. Victims may also experience sexual abuse in dreams. In most cases, there is unexplained barrenness and infertility among women.

Impact on children

Other effects of the water spirits include juvenile delinquencies, stubbornness of children and disobedience to their parents. Lies, fighting and promiscuity are rampant. Water spirits tie the victims' lives, inheritance and destiny to the water. The ultimate end is to bring them to nothing and pain: "She is empty, desolate, and waste. The heart melts, and the knees shake; Much pain is in every side, And all their faces are drained of color."¹⁰⁰⁴

Ministry failure

In Christian ministry, water spirits may cause failure in God's work. They may also pollute spiritual music and worship in the Church. And they may induce sporadic spiritual weakness, lukewarm, lack of commitment in the Lord's work, and, of course, prayerlessness.

Spiritual Checkmate

We began by asserting the locale of water spirits, and noted that they occupied watery spaces. We also asserted that both the earth and the human body are 70% water. This would mean that the influence and reach of water spirits is wide.

That noted, water spirits are no match to God's position and power. First, God seats enthroned above the circles of the earth: "He sits enthroned *above the circle of the earth*, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like

¹⁰⁰⁴ See Nehum 2:6-13, especially verse 10

a tent to live in.”¹⁰⁰⁵

Second, God is seated above the waters: “The LORD rules over the floodwaters. The LORD reigns as king forever.”¹⁰⁰⁶

Third, the earth is God’s footstool: “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?”¹⁰⁰⁷

And finally, God will crush satanic forces and Satan himself under His feet: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”¹⁰⁰⁸

It is important to note the progression here. First, God’s influence is above the waters. So, demonic spirits who inhabit watery places are not a match to the power above them. Second, the thirty percent (30%) of the non-watery places, is God’s footstool, again giving the demonic no chance whatsoever. And third, Jesus Christ has delegated His authority to believers to put the enemy further under His feet, and under their feet by extension and inheritance: “Jesus was saying, ‘Go and be My spokesperson because all power and authority has been given unto Me, both in heaven and in earth. Therefore, I give you the power and authority to put him (the enemy) under your feet.’”¹⁰⁰⁹ Also: “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet?”¹⁰¹⁰ From whatever angle one looks at it, the army of the water spirits and the satanic kingdom will never win over God and His rule.

Water Spirits and Grace

We revisit the already-quoted verse of Scripture: “The God of peace will soon *crush Satan under your feet*. The *grace* of our Lord Jesus be with you.”¹⁰¹¹ Spiritual victory is guaranteed, because it has already been won “in-Christ.” When someone can claim victory on account of another’s sacrifice and pain, that is grace. Paul confirms; thus, Satan being crushed under our feet by the Lord, is grace.

The Book of Revelation provides a graphic demonstration of the

¹⁰⁰⁵ Isaiah 40:22

¹⁰⁰⁶ Psalm 29:10

¹⁰⁰⁷ Isaiah 66:1

¹⁰⁰⁸ Romans 16:20

¹⁰⁰⁹ Mark 16:15-18

¹⁰¹⁰ Acts 2:35 ESV

¹⁰¹¹ Romans 16:20, *supra* (emphasis added)

final battle between the Church and the water spirits.

First, the earth came to the service and rescue of the Church: “But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged at the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea.”¹⁰¹²

Second God has provided a panacea through grace: “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that as sin reigned in death, grace might also reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ.”¹⁰¹³

All the characteristics of the “Queen of Heaven” and of the water spirits in general, put together, cannot quench the zeal and thrust of the Church. The Church is headed to a grand slam, a grand victory.

And, finally, they overcame or defeated him (the personification of the water spirits, i.e., the devil himself) by the work of redemption, prayer and testimony: “And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.”¹⁰¹⁴

Précis

That verse we looked at above, namely: “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,” is a checkmate against all the works of evil spirits, water spirits, i.e., the “Queen of Heaven,” included. The power of the evil is in sin. The power of sin is the law. God made a move by eliminating the law, and in that move, pre-empted sin. What was once the power of evil, became a channel of grace. Thus, the more sin increases, the more grace abounds. Demons cannot win in this battle. God has taken out the sting of death through the redemptive move. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰¹² Revelation 12:16-19

¹⁰¹³ Romans 5:20-21

¹⁰¹⁴ Revelation 12:11

¹⁰¹⁵ I Corinthians 15:57

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

1. Culture
2. Manipulation
3. Ministry failure
4. Pervasion
5. Queen of Heaven
6. Religiosity
7. Seduction
8. Sorrow
9. Water spirits

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The “Queen of Heaven” belongs to an array of demonic spirits called ____
 - A. Water spirits
 - B. Mountain spirits
 - C. Egyptian spirits
 - D. Ba’al
2. Each of these gods is part of the “African Mythology,” except ____
 - A. Ra
 - B. Isis
 - C. Seth
 - D. Athena

3. Mythological gods are seen in Christianity as ____
 - A. Planets
 - B. Stars
 - C. Demons
 - D. Good angels

4. The “Queen of Heaven” is worshipped by way of ____
 - A. Altars
 - B. Libation and altars
 - C. Libation, altars and burning incense
 - D. All of the above

5. Behind Pharaoh, king of Egypt, God saw ____
 - A. A great monster (a demon)
 - B. Iris
 - C. Maker of River Nile
 - D. Miracles

6. Through the “Queen of Heaven,” Satan desires to be ____
 - A. Immortal
 - B. Invisible
 - C. God
 - D. Glorious

7. The “Queen of Heaven” may mean all these, except ____
 - A. Without co-habitation
 - B. Mother of sorrow
 - C. One who dominates
 - D. She who laughs

PRAYER

8. All these are characteristics of sorrow, except ____
 - A. Fear of death
 - B. Heaviness of heart
 - C. Brokenness of spirit
 - D. Joyous song

9. Iris means ____
 - A. He who weeps
 - B. She who weeps
 - C. Weeping
 - D. Sorrowful

10. Satan being crushed under believers' feet by the Lord, is ____
 - A. Grace
 - B. Sophistication
 - C. True victory
 - D. Awesome

True/False Questions

1. Water spirits are immoral. T/F

2. Water spirits may cause ministry failure. T/F

3. The "Queen of Heaven" is Mary, the mother of Jesus.
 T/F

4. The "Queen of Heaven" does not belong to water spirits.
 T/F

5. The "Queen of Heaven" may break homes and marriages.
 T/F

6. The "Queen of Heaven" is master at the use of blackmail.

T/F

7. Libation is the same as drink offering. T/F
8. Under the guise of water spirits, sorrow may lead to depression. T/F
9. The Book of Revelation provides a graphic demonstration of the final battle between the Church and the water spirits.
T/F
10. All the characteristics of the “Queen of Heaven” and of the water spirits in general, put together, cannot quench the zeal and thrust of the Church. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain at least five (5) characteristics of water spirits.
[500 words or less].
2. List and explain at least five (5) characteristics of the “Queen of Heaven.”
[500 words or less].
3. Differentiate between Ba'al and Beelzebub by using relevant scriptural references.
[250 words or less].
4. In the context of grace and spiritual warfare, explain what the following verse of Scripture means: “And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.”
[500 words or less].

38 | COVENANTS

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to define a covenant
- You should be able to identify at least five (5) types of covenants
- You should be able to relate covenants to prayer
- You will appreciate the victory wrought for us by the New Covenant (Covenant of Grace), and
- You will relate biblical covenants to prayer

Introduction

By definition, a *covenant* is a formal agreement that is legally binding. Terms, conditions or reasons normally exist for the covenants to be made. It can be between a person and another or between parties. A covenant is not strictly a contract, in the sense that the offer is imposed upon the weaker party and consideration is not mutual. In the former, one party is greater than the other. Covenants are made with the idea that they will never be broken while a contract could be terminated at any time by either partner. There were many covenants that were made in the Bible such as the Adamic, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Davidic, the Messianic, the Old Testament, and even the ultimate one of all, the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord. This chapter explores the various types of covenants.

Types of Covenants

There are various types of covenants associated with demons, namely:

Latent (Hidden) Covenants

Things done or said sometimes in innocence may bring or might have brought these covenants. Most vulnerable are those who do not remember the dreams they have.

Dream Covenants

These are usually with demons trying to impersonate themselves into some already dead relatives. Since man is also a spirit, this is a clear possibility and care should be taken. It is vital, therefore, that we take caution and refuse to entertain thoughts that claim that those that have died are still with us.

Sexual Covenants

These come when one commits adultery or fornication with a man or woman who will not marry them later. This is so serious that it may bind the two forever due to a blood covenant. Life is in the blood. There is a life sharing immediately. No wonder the Bible says that one who commits adultery with a prostitute becomes one with her.¹⁰¹⁶

In the olden days, the penalty for such was death¹⁰¹⁷ or if there was repentance,¹⁰¹⁸ great suffering followed. When a sexual relation *was* done with God's will and there *was* conception, the child *was* considered God's child.¹⁰¹⁹ When, however, it *was* done outside of God's will, that child might be cursed and an evil covenant might be made between the parties.

However, if one of the parties became a Christian, and was willing to stay with his partner, the children were sanctified by the virtue of the believing partner: "For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so."¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁰¹⁷ Lev. 20:10

¹⁰¹⁸ 2 Sam. 12:13

¹⁰¹⁹ Gen. 4:1

¹⁰²⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:14

Mistakenly Made Covenants

People enter into mistakenly-made covenants through deception by the devil. Sometimes, this can be by wearing clothes of a witch or shaking hands with a witch. When these are done to one who is not a Christian and it was planned, the person might suffer a covenant. To others, it could be through washing in medicines (especially prescribed by witchdoctors), or making tattoos on the body (more serious because it could involve blood, especially, if that blood was to be sacrificed to the demons). It must be emphasized that normal day-to-day tattooing does not apply to this thinking. Indeed, people are at liberty to make tattoos as they think fit, and sometimes, it is even desirable. It only becomes an issue if the tattoo is made with satanic motivation or incantation.

Religious Covenants

Especially among those who have entered “cultic churches,” either for prayers, weddings, thanksgiving, harvest, fasting, sleeping, bathing in the river, worshipping or even becoming full time members.

Be careful, don’t join such “churches” or participate in whatever ritual you do not understand in these churches.¹⁰²¹ When people want to seek promotion, prosperity, fame, power, or protection, they might be made to swear oaths of allegiance to Satan. Satanism, sorcery, secret societies, witchcraft, doorways, horoscopes (not all horoscopes are motivated by evil and Satan; this calls for wisdom),¹⁰²² palm reading, reading occult books, occultic films (this, too, calls for wisdom; not all films or movies have satanic overtones, even if the movie itself is full of unsavory language and actions. This calls for wisdom), playing ouija boards and magic arts - usually with their blood promising neither to leave the society nor to disclose the secrets, are predominant routes through which people enter into the occult world.

Religious covenants come through some forms of initiation ceremonies, puberty rites, title rites, especially chieftaincy rituals, burial rites, demonic naming ceremonies (whether you are being given a name as a baby or adult does not matter) and some traditional circumcision rites (this excludes medical ones).

¹⁰²¹ Jere. 44:17-18

¹⁰²² See Matthew 2:1-12

Here, too, we must be wise and avoid overtly over-spiritualizing each of these practices. Sometimes, people may just do all these for fun and without any wicked or satanic influence. And that is just fine.

They can also come through food sacrificed to idols.¹⁰²³ When we pray for food, we sanctify it for our nourishment in the name of Jesus and all who eat share in the blessings. The same is true when food is offered to demons. Those who eat the food dedicated to demons share in the curse.¹⁰²⁴

It is important to clarify here that colonial theories that suggested that rituals carried out by other races other than Whites were demonic, have no biblical basis. Rituals and rites that may have no demonic intent may be accepted even in Christianity. The key is to test the spirit behind a ritual or rite.

Trespassing the Boundaries

Visiting witch-doctors' houses, spirit churches, fortune tellers, palm readers, star-gazers or grave yards for prayers, are trespasses. The devil might demand that such people pay for it. He never forgives and he never forgets.

Inherited Covenants

Those who have grown in idol worshipping families or witchcraft practicing households should take particular caution. Our fore-parents (or parents) might have made covenants which involved the unborn babies. These could have been you or me. Idolatry is such a dangerous sin that its vexatious effects might transcend even up to the fourth generation.

Idolatry is one of the sins that God's wrath do affect the unborn children, up to the fourth generation: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them [idols], nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation* of them that hate Me."¹⁰²⁵ However, even in this, God's grace prevents Him from meting out the final penalty of death.

¹⁰²³ See Acts 15:28-29

¹⁰²⁴ See 1 Corinthians. 10:14-22

¹⁰²⁵ Deuteronomy 5:9

Blood Covenants

These are sometimes made by lovers who pledge to marry each other. They might cut each other and mix blood (sometimes in beer) then drink it. This is a very stubborn covenant and might involve the following characteristics:

- a) Such people cannot make a decision without the other;
- b) When one is sick in one place, another in the other place may be feeling it; and
- c) They might die at the same time.

Blood covenants are perpetuated through sexual relations. When two people have sex with each other, they may be saying, in the strongest language, that they love each other so much that they solemnly give all of themselves to each other. When one breaks the covenant, a curse may result unless there is repentance and/or deliverance: “Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two will become one flesh.’”¹⁰²⁶

Positively, blood covenants establish permanency and authenticity. Christ is said to have subjected the New Testament (Covenant) to His own blood [His own death]: “...for this is *my blood*, which *confirms the covenant between God and his people*. It is poured out [death] as a *sacrifice to forgive the sins of many*.”¹⁰²⁷ God does not forgive sins without the shedding of blood [something or someone dying]: “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*.”¹⁰²⁸

In other words, blood cleans sins, and pure blood cleans all sins. The irony with evil blood covenants is that they use impure blood, which instead of cleaning sins, enshrine sin. The analogy is similar to the simile Jesus Christ, our Lord, offers to sault: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”¹⁰²⁹

Evil blood covenants violate the rule of purity. And like saltless

¹⁰²⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁰²⁷ Matthew 26:28, New Living Translation (emphasis added).

¹⁰²⁸ Hebrews 9:22 (emphasis added).

¹⁰²⁹ “Matthew 5:13

sault, they lead to destruction. This is because they are “good for nothing.”

Similarly, pure blood is like light; it benefits only if it is exposed to an open space: “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.”¹⁰³⁰

Taking the qualities of both salt and light into consideration, blood penetrates to the same effect: “But if we walk *in the light as He is in the light*, we have fellowship with one another, and the *blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”¹⁰³¹

Just as hidden light and saltless salt are ineffective, so is blood contaminated by demonic worship or sinful sacrifice. To be effective, blood must be pure, just as free light and seasoned salt achieve their purpose.

Covenant of Grace and Prayer

There is an implied Covenant of Grace in the New Testament. Theologians, conceptually, consider at least three types of covenants:¹⁰³² Covenant of works, of redemption and of grace. All these conceptual covenants may be manifested through either the New Testament or Old Testament. The Old Testament consisted of various sub-covenants God made with Adam, Moses, Abraham and David.¹⁰³³ In regards to prayer, this chapter will only comment on the Covenant of Grace. Suffice, though, to mention that the Covenant of Redemption informed the inter-trinitarian pact made in eternity past. In that covenant, the Father would be the chief designer. The Son would agree to undertake the implementation of the design. And the Holy Spirit would agree to apply the results of redemption. The Covenant of Redemption was fulfilled in the Covenant of Works – the implementational process in which Christ did put the redemption plan to work and He achieved it.

¹⁰³⁰ Luke 8:16

¹⁰³¹ 1 John 1:7-9

¹⁰³² These are not the same as the New and Old testaments discussed in Chapter 9.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*

In the Covenant of Grace, Christ replaced Adam as the federal head of the human race. In this covenant, the shame of the Adamic nature has been replaced by the glorious triumph of Christ. God, unilaterally, promised and delivered the reward of eternal, unmerited favor and gracious access to His presence through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And unlike in the Covenant of Works, to get to Heaven was premised on good works of the law, under that of grace, neither good works nor the law is required.

Faith is presumed under the Covenant of Grace. However, prayer is not: “*Let us, therefore, come boldly* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”¹⁰³⁴ “*Let us, therefore, come boldly...*” is an invitation to pray. We come into the presence of God by prayer. Grace has been reserved. However, we must pray to access it.

The benefits of who God is and what He has, have been made available to us by grace. They are there, they exist. But we must wait upon God for them in prayer: “*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*”¹⁰³⁵

God has justified us and made us heirs of everything. But enjoyment of the blessed bequeathal is by accessing them by way of prayer: “*That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*”¹⁰³⁶

All things belong to us who believe. The means by which we access all things, is through prayer: “*For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*”¹⁰³⁷

And finally, we have a fulfilled covenant with better promises: “*But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.*”¹⁰³⁸ Promises must be claimed, and we claim covenantal promises through prayer.

¹⁰³⁴ Hebrews 4:16 KJV

¹⁰³⁵ Isaiah 40:31 KJV

¹⁰³⁶ Titus 3:7 KJV

¹⁰³⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:15

¹⁰³⁸ Hebrews 8:6

Précis

This chapter has considered the subject of covenant. In spiritual warfare, evil covenants may be weapons Satan use to continue to keep unbelievers in bondage. People may enter into these covenants unconsciously, through questionable dreams and unquestionable sexual deviancies. They may also enter into these covenants mistakenly, by blood or through inheritance. However, God, through the covenant of grace, has bequeathed to all of humanity, through the blood and death of Jesus Christ, a superior covenant which overrides all demonic covenants. Through Christ, we have access to all of the benefits of the New Covenant by grace through faith by prayer.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Blood covenant
- Covenant
- Covenant of grace
- Covenant of redemption
- Covenant of works
- Dream covenant
- Fortune-tellers
- Inheritance
- Latent covenant
- Ouija boards
- Palm readers
- Puberty rites
- Sexual covenant
- Star-gazer
- Trespass

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Lovers who pledge to marry each other may enter into ____ covenants.
 - A. Dream
 - B. sexual
 - C. Blood
 - D. Mistakenly-made

2. Life is in the ____.
 - A. Blood
 - B. Brain
 - C. Covenants
 - D. Lies

3. Hidden covenants may also be known as ____ covenants.
 - A. Dangerous
 - B. Latent
 - C. Mistakenly-made
 - D. Flattery

4. All these are biblically and historically-made covenants, except ____
 - A. Alamic
 - B. Abrahamic
 - C. Mosaic
 - D. Davidic

5. The Old Testament was based on law; the New Covenant is based on ____
 - A. Grace
 - B. Regulations
 - C. Faith
 - D. Peace

6. You know a covenant is very serious if ____
 - A. It is made of promises
 - B. It is made by blood
 - C. It is made between lesser and greater parties
 - D. It involves close relatives

PRAYER

7. According to the Covenant of Redemption, the Father is the
——
- A. Designer
 - B. Undertaker
 - C. Applier
 - D. Implementer
8. Who is the current federal head of the human race?
- A. Adam
 - B. Eve
 - C. Jesus Christ
 - D. Both Adam and Eve
9. ____ is presumed under the Covenant of Grace.
- A. Love
 - B. Peace
 - C. Glory
 - D. Faith
10. All the covenantal promises of God are of no effect unless
——
- A. They are actioned through prayer
 - B. They are made with blood
 - C. They are hidden covenants
 - D. They are redemption in nature

True/False Questions

1. The dead are still alive and with us. T/F
2. There is a life sharing in sexual covenants. T/F
3. It is possible to enter into a covenant by mistake. T/F
4. Some people usually resort to misguided satanic practices to seek promotion, prosperity, fame, power, or protection.
T/F
5. Reading palms and occult books, watching occultic films, playing ouija boards and practicing magic arts may be means through which some may be introduced into covenants.
T/F
6. Trespassing onto witch-doctors' houses may be one of the ways in which some people may enter into covenants.
T/F
7. Some families may pass on witchcraft trades by inheritance to the members of the family.
T/F
8. Blood may be ritually combined with beer in covenant-entering rites. T/F
9. There is an implied Covenant of Grace in the New Testament. T/F
10. The benefits of who God is and what He has, have been made available to us by grace. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain the three characteristics of blood covenants.

[250 words or less].

2. Justify with the help of Scripture, the relationship among covenants, grace and prayer.

[500 words or less].

3. Discuss the impact of committing adultery with a prostitute.

[250 words or less].

39 | CURSES

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define a curse
- You will understand what curses are not
- You will be able to classify curses
- You will understand Christ's power over curses
- You will be able to relate blessings to true wealth, and
- You will know about the place of prayer in accessing divine blessings

Introduction

A curse is a word or phrase or sentence calling for the punishment, injury or destruction of something or somebody else. It is a violation of blessings and a violent expression of evil upon others. Curses hinder blessings and induce all kinds of miseries. As the rule in Christianity, blessings have already been bequeathed to those who believe in Jesus Christ. This chapter, therefore, will review how curses may manifest in the lives of nonbelievers for whom our dear Lord died. The aim is to identify such and conduct spiritual warfare to dislodge the curses.

What Cannot be Cursed

Children were forbidden from cursing their parents: “Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.”¹⁰³⁹ The same rule that forbade people from blaspheming God, also forbade people from cursing their rulers: “Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.”¹⁰⁴⁰ This has been reiterated in the New Testament: “And Paul said, I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁹ Exodus 21:17

¹⁰⁴⁰ Exodus 22:28

¹⁰⁴¹ Acts 23:5, ESV

The Bible forbids cursing the deaf or putting stumbling blocks on the blind: “Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.”¹⁰⁴² And in the New Covenant, Jesus appears to have extended the same regulation to enemies: “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who *curse* you, pray for those who mistreat you.”¹⁰⁴³ Balaam understood this precept a long time ago: “Then Balak’s anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, “I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times.”¹⁰⁴⁴

God’s children cannot be cursed: “How can I curse those whom *God has not cursed*? How can I denounce those whom the LORD has not denounced?”¹⁰⁴⁵ And when the Jewish nation is right with God, it cannot be cursed: “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”¹⁰⁴⁶

God cannot be cursed: “His wife said to him, ‘Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!’ He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’”¹⁰⁴⁷

What Can be Cursed

Land or community can be cursed: “At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: ‘Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: At the cost of his firstborn son, he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.’”¹⁰⁴⁸

All other individuals and families can be cursed: “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but forasmuch as he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph’s.”¹⁰⁴⁹

¹⁰⁴² Leviticus 19:14

¹⁰⁴³ Luke 6:27-28 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Numbers 24:10

¹⁰⁴⁵ Numbers 23:8 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁴⁶ Genesis 12:2

¹⁰⁴⁷ Job 2:9-10

¹⁰⁴⁸ Joshua 6:26; see also 1 Kgs. 2:18-20, 1 Kings 16:34

¹⁰⁴⁹ 1 Chronicles 5:1-2; see also Genesis 49:3-4

Elements of a Curse

Curses seems to be divided into four elements:

The declarant

The declarant makes the evil or injurious declaration. She makes or utters or speaks out the curse. The declaration must be meant to cause harm, injury or trouble to the victim. Anyone could be a declarant. Usually, the declarant makes the declaration of a curse assuming that the enforcer will bring to pass the harm that is being declared against the victim.

The victim

The victim is a person or entity that is being harmed. The declarant makes the declaration believing that an enforcer will bring to pass the evil that is being desired to happen against the victim. The evil desired could be death, illness, and so on, also known as the harm.

An enforcer

The enforcer is usually the devil and his demons, and in some limited situations in the Old Testament, God. The enforcer must have inherent spiritual power to harm. God can, of course, harm. However, God can only allow harm to human beings if there is a cause, usually a petitioned cause as in the case of Job¹⁰⁵⁰ or Joshua.¹⁰⁵¹

The offensive causation

The offensive cause is a cause-and-effect event or act that is meant to justify the harm. It must always be an or event. It does not seem like a mere intent or thought could lead to a curse. For example, disobedience, an act of rage, apparent blasphemy, trespass on a “cursed” land or place, and etc. All these are actionable causes.

No curse will result to anyone without a justified offensive cause. The victim might have invited an offensive cause through acts of

¹⁰⁵⁰ See Job 2:1-11

¹⁰⁵¹ See Zechariah 3:1-10

disobedience, trespass, and etc. Mere thinking of, or intending to, cause an offence does not seem to count.

The apparent harm

The apparent harm is what we technically call a curse. It is the end of the process – the declarant makes an offensive statement which the enforcer undertakes to fulfil to harm the victim, because the victim caused an actionable offense to be committed.

Harm could be spiritual, psychological or physical, or other. Curses have the power to lead to any number of outcomes (harms), some of which could have been indefinable or untraceable by scientific or medical means.

Curse elements illustrated

The elements of the curse concept may be illustrated from the following passages:

Then to Adam He [God] said, “*Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:*” “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” And Adam called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all living... Therefore the LORD God sent *him* out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, *He drove out the man*; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, *to guard the way to the tree of life.*¹⁰⁵²

The **offensive causation**: “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it.’”

The *apparent harm* (the curse): “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground,

¹⁰⁵² Genesis 3:17-24 NKJV

for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”

The *enforcer*: “...He [God]...” and the *declarant*, “Then to Adam He [God] said...” and humanity (via Adam and Eve) is the **victim**: “God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, He drove out the man...”

A non-biblical example to illustrate a curse is the so-called “Rasputin and the Romanovs”¹⁰⁵³ curse:

Rasputin, a self-proclaimed magician and cult leader, wormed his way into the palace of the Romanovs, Russia’s ruling family, around the turn of the last century. He did so by telling stories to the heir to the throne, a boy named Alexis. His stories kept Alexis calm and sedate. This was important to the royal family because Alexis had hemophilia, which could have caused him to bleed to death if he were injured. Rasputin’s power, however, soon went to his head, and a few of the Romanovs allegedly decided to have him killed. But he was exceptionally resilient.

Reportedly it took poison, a fall down a staircase, repeated gunshots and drowning before Rasputin was finally dead. It’s said that Rasputin *mumbled* a curse as he died, assuring Russia’s ruling monarchs *that they would all be dead themselves within a year*. The *Romanov family was brutally murdered in a mass execution less than a year later*.

The *offensive causation*: “Romanovs allegedly decided to have [Rasputin] killed... Rasputin was finally dead.” The *Ramonov* caused the offence. The *apparent harm* (the curse): “Rasputin *mumbled* a curse as he died, assuring Russia’s ruling monarchs *that they would all be dead themselves within a year*.” The curse, the harm, was death of the Ramonov family. The *enforcer* was either Satan or some gods (demons). The *declarant* was Rasputin. The *victim* was the Romanov family.

Sources of Curses

Curses could come through breaking covenants: “But the Israelites did not attack the towns, for the Israelite leaders had made a vow to them in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. The people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Implied in this

¹⁰⁵³ “Famous Curses,” < <https://people.howstuffworks.com/7-famous-curses.htm> > accessed on December 1st, 2022

¹⁰⁵⁴ Joshua 9:18

verse is that the leaders did not violate the treaty because they feared to attract curses. The avenging of the Gibeonites speaks to this proposition.¹⁰⁵⁵

Idolatry was in the Old Testament and still is abomination to the Lord and may attract curses: “You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.”¹⁰⁵⁶

In the Old Testament, a “God’s curse” was not unideal: “From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him. ‘Get out of here, baldy!’ they said. ‘Get out of here, baldy!’ He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.”¹⁰⁵⁷

Radical and acceptable as this once was, it has been repealed by Christ’s regulation. That regulation requires us to bless our enemies and those who speak evil or who mock us: “But I say unto you, love your enemies, *bless them that curse you*, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”¹⁰⁵⁸

Curses might have come from deliberate disobedience and murder. The case of David after he killed Urea and married his wife, Bathsheba illustrates.¹⁰⁵⁹ Even in the New Testament, deliberate sinning may be cause for punishment, but this doesn’t seem to suggest a curse: “If we deliberately go on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins remains, but only *a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume all adversaries.*”¹⁰⁶⁰ There is implied here the fact that deliberate sinning without repentance attracts the same judgment as God’s enemies receive. Thus, there is no evidence that David’s sin amounted to a curse.

In the Old Covenant, disobedience (of any kind) attracted curses: “But if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, your God, carefully

¹⁰⁵⁵ 2 Sam. 21:1-6

¹⁰⁵⁶ Exodus 20:5

¹⁰⁵⁷ 2 Kings 2:23-25; see also Proverbs 3:33 and Ps. 119:21

¹⁰⁵⁸ Matthew 5:44 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁵⁹ See 2 Sam. 12:10-16: 22

¹⁰⁶⁰ Heb. 10:26-27

observing all his commandments and statutes which I give you today, all these curses shall come upon you and overwhelm you.”¹⁰⁶¹

Disobedience in the Old Testament would easily attract a curse because the strength of the relationship between God and the people, was based on law. Law to be effective, must demand compliance (obedience). In the absence of compliance, there only remains vulnerabilities at the hands of evil.

Misappropriation of God’s glory may be punishable by Hell but there is no evidence that it attracted a curse: “... because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”¹⁰⁶²

Similarly, marital unfaithfulness is judged and punishable, but there is no evidence that it attracts a curse: “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”¹⁰⁶³

There does not appear to be curses attracted for unnatural affairs like homosexuality, but Paul hints that these kinds of behaviors do not please God.¹⁰⁶⁴ The Bible, too, proscribes incest and what it calls “unlawful sexual relations.”¹⁰⁶⁵ But these do not seem to attract a curse.

Afflicting the poor and the needy, the widows and orphans could attract God’s instant judgment of death, but even in this, it does not imply a curse: “You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; our wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.”¹⁰⁶⁶

Injustice is always a cry for God’s intervention. However, injustice as unpalatable as it may be, does not attract a curse. It could attract instant judgment. God would hear the cries of those under bondage and injustice. The biblical remedy for injustice is not revenge or vengeance, but a prayer for God to intervene: “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written,

¹⁰⁶¹ Deut. 28:15

¹⁰⁶² Romans 1:21

¹⁰⁶³ Hebrews 13:4

¹⁰⁶⁴ See Romans 1:25-28

¹⁰⁶⁵ Lev 18:1-20

¹⁰⁶⁶ Exodus 22:22-24

‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’¹⁰⁶⁷ The rationale is that man may not apply the correct scale.

However, unfaithful priests did attract curses: “And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings.’”¹⁰⁶⁸ And this included not paying tithes.¹⁰⁶⁹

Diffusing Curses

The easiest way to diffuse any curse is through repentance of sin and becoming a Christian, what may be termed as being Born Again. This is an exchange program, one receives Christ’s sinless and blameless life for their cursed life: “Christ redeemed us from the *curse* of the law by becoming a *curse* for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.’”¹⁰⁷⁰

For both saved believers and non-believers alike, attracting curses may come from outside sources, from an adversary or critic. The adversary or critic or agent provocateur might do this by way of temptation (Satan) or provocation (humans). Fortunately, Christ has given us enough regulations to diffuse any provocation and not to let down our guard.

The most effective antidote to a curse is to bless the declarant: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, *bless those who curse you*, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone takes your cloak, do not withhold your tunic as well.”¹⁰⁷¹

The language of spiritual warfare

In spiritual warfare, care must be taken that we do not sin by trying to win over evil, with evil. The principle of repaying evil for evil is a losing proposition: “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”¹⁰⁷² Even God who has tremendous

¹⁰⁶⁷ Romans 12:19

¹⁰⁶⁸ Malachi 2:1-2; see also Jere. 49:10

¹⁰⁶⁹ See Malachi 3:7-12

¹⁰⁷⁰ Galatians 3:13

¹⁰⁷¹ Luke 6:28-29, *supra* (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁷² 1 Peter 3:9

power over Satan dares not to use slanderous language to deal with Satan, but He uses the language of grace and truth: “Satan, the LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand.”¹⁰⁷³ This is the same approach taken by the Archangel Michael: “But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”¹⁰⁷⁴ Angels follow the same principle: “Yet not even angels, though greater in strength and power, dare to bring such slanderous charges against them before the Lord.”¹⁰⁷⁵

In spiritual warfare, evil should be overcome with good: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”¹⁰⁷⁶ The language of love and soundness (grace) silence all the wiles of the evil one. It is the same language and mentality that diffuse curses.

Grace, the Operation of Curses, and Prayer

Curses may operate through chronic illness, fruitless deliverance, miscarriages, barrenness, delayed and broken marriages, poverty, chronic mental breakdowns as well as untimely deaths.¹⁰⁷⁷

Believers in Jesus Christ are, however, blessed. No curse can come upon a true Christian. What God has blessed no man or demon can curse. This is the reason why believers are more than conquerors. But they have a responsibility to reach out to the lost and to the bound and through Jesus Christ, to minister salvation and deliverance to them.

Under grace, every one of the redeemed are blessed: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*”¹⁰⁷⁸ The nature of the New Testament blessings under grace are four-folds.

First, the blessings are final and unconditional. The Old Testament blessings were tied to obedience. In other words, there was a condition to be fulfilled before one could enjoy any of God’s blessings. Thus, “If

¹⁰⁷³ Zechariah 3:2

¹⁰⁷⁴ Jude 1:9

¹⁰⁷⁵ 2 Peter 2:11

¹⁰⁷⁶ Isaiah 5:20

¹⁰⁷⁷ See Ex.23:26, Gen.2:18, Is. 4:1, Deut. 8:18

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ephesians 1:3 (emphasis added).

you fully obey the Lord... All these blessings will come on you..."¹⁰⁷⁹ And conversely, "However, if you do not obey the Lord your God... You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country."¹⁰⁸⁰

Second, the safe house of blessings is in the "heavenly places." The grace-filled blessings are stored where thieves and moths cannot pollute or corrupt: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal."¹⁰⁸¹ The New Testament believers' blessings and investments are safe.

However, the declaration of intention does not imply the manifestation of the same. God has declared the right to blessings, but we must, through prayer and faith, access those blessings. Apparently, our blessings are stored in the heavenlies,¹⁰⁸² exactly where demons lurk. This means that spiritual warfare is inevitable.

Third, believers' blessings are first spiritual. This is in contrast to the blessings of obedience. The blessings of obedience were natural and human in nature, including:

- Status in the city and country;
- The fruit of the womb;
- The crops of the land;
- The young of the livestock;
- The basket and the kneading trough;
- The travels;
- The defeat of enemies;
- In barns and on everything they put hand to;
- Establishment as a holy people;
- Feared by other nations;
- Abundant prosperity;
- Open heavens;
- Rain and good harvest;
- Lenders and not borrowers;

¹⁰⁷⁹ Deuteronomy 28:1-2

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, verses 15-16

¹⁰⁸¹ Matthew 6:19-20

¹⁰⁸² See Chapter 43

- First place in everything (“head, not the tail”) and (“always be at the top, never at the bottom.”)

However, spiritual blessings overtake and supersede physical blessings. Spiritual blessings ensure perpetual relationship with God, and then all the above are only “other” blessings: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”¹⁰⁸³ In other words, if you have spiritual blessings, you have eternal currency; you can access any physical blessings. We access spiritual blessings through a conversion process called prayer. Prayer is; thus, the method God has designed to cause blessings to manifest into the physical realm: “*Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it.*”¹⁰⁸⁴

Paul summarizes the blessings of God due to us via grace, thus: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might *become rich*... And *God is able to bless you abundantly*, so that in *all things at all times*, having *all that you need*, you will abound in *every good work.*”¹⁰⁸⁵

The reason why spiritual blessings are more superior to material blessings is in these two verses. It is a complete and rounded wellness, rich...[in] all things...[in] all that you need...at all times...in every good work. This is the ultimate achievement.

The quandary most people face every day is that they fail to understand the culture of a moneyless economy. People, erroneously, measure wellness and richness in material (usually, monetary) terms. That is fickle.

Money has no value; it is simply a means of exchange, and, from time to time, it can be replaced by any abstract currency. The value that lasts, is rounded and not based on flippant experiences. Wealth in money is based on luck and chance: “I returned, and saw under the sun, that the *race is not to the swift*, not the *battle to the strong*, neither yet *bread to the wise*, nor yet *riches to men of understanding*, nor yet *favor to men of skill*; but *time and chance happeneth to them all.*”¹⁰⁸⁶ Some use very well their chances and opportunities in time, others are eluded.

¹⁰⁸³ Matthew 6:33

¹⁰⁸⁴ Mark 11:24

¹⁰⁸⁵ 2 Corinthians 8:9; 9:8

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ecclesiastes 9:11

God and God alone grants true wealth – that which adds no trouble to it: “The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, without painful [sorrow] toil for it.”¹⁰⁸⁷ And Isaiah, the only prophet to define the true riches a person on earth can have, graciously states: “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have *no money*, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk *without money* and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”¹⁰⁸⁸

Indeed, the wealthiest person is not the one who spends lavishly on worthless things that will not last and they will not take with them to the grave. It is, rather, the one who spends on everything they need without money. And that is the meaning of, “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”¹⁰⁸⁹ So, the end of good wealth, is good works.

Précis

This chapter has analyzed the topic of curses. As shown, curses played a pivotal role in the spiritual affairs of the people. Curses portended punishment. Curses are the opposites of blessings. To a blessed person, everything potentially goes well. The cursed had everything potentially going wrong for them. Grace has eliminated curses. To the redeemed, only blessings apply. The better blessings are those which are spiritual, add no sorrow and are not measured in money.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Proverbs 10:22 (emphasis added)

¹⁰⁸⁸ Isaiah 55: 1

¹⁰⁸⁹ 2 Corinthians 9:8, *supra*.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Blessings
- Curses
- Gibeonites
- Misappropriation
- Money
- Spiritual blessings
- Wealth
- Wellbeing
- Wellness
- Who can be cursed
- Who cannot be cursed

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Curses are direct opposites of ____
 - A. Blessings
 - B. Grace
 - C. Sorrow
 - D. Favor
2. All of these cannot be cursed, except ____
 - A. Parents
 - B. God
 - C. Land
 - D. The deaf

3. All these can be cursed, except ____
 - A. Land
 - B. Community
 - C. The disobedient
 - D. God's children

4. What abominable act attracted curses in the Old Testament and may still attract curses in the New Testament?
 - A. Tithing
 - B. Idolatry
 - C. Sorcery
 - D. Impertinence

5. Material blessings are defined as ____ under the dispensation of grace.
 - A. Others
 - B. Money
 - C. Real wealth
 - D. Land

6. All these are the elements of a curse, except ____
 - A. Victim
 - B. Enforcer
 - C. Harm
 - D. Blessings

7. The best counteractivity to cursing is ____
 - A. Running away
 - B. Striking back
 - C. Speaking blessings to the declarant
 - D. Speaking blessings to the victim

True/False

1. God does not forbid people from cursing their rulers.
T/F
2. The deaf must be cursed. T/F
3. Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, was never cursed. T/F
4. Joshua did curse the city of Jericho. T/F
5. Idolatry is silent in the New Testament. T/F
6. Children called Elijah, “ baldy!” T/F
7. David was cursed because he killed Urea and married his wife, Bathsheba. T/F
8. Truly born-again Christians can be cursed. T/F
9. Under grace, curses are relative to one’s state of righteousness.
T/F
10. True blessings can be purchased with money. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain all those who cannot be cursed according to Scripture.

[250 words or less]

2. List and explain all those who can be cursed according to Scripture.

[250 words or less]

3. “Grace has given us all things that pertain to life , wellbeing and godliness, among them lasting blessings that do not require money.”

- a). Define spiritual blessings.
- b). Which prophet defined true blessings?
- c). List at least five (5) things that comprise physical/material blessings.
- d). Why has God stored true riches in the heavenlies?
- e). What is the view of money in relation to true wealth?

[1500 words or less]

4. Discuss the importance of prayer in translating spiritual blessings into material blessings?

[250 words or less]

5. Define prosperity according to this chapter.

[500 words or less].

6. List and describe at least ten (10) facets of the blessings of obedience tabulated in Deuteronomy 28.

[500 words or less].

PRAYER

7. “Satan, the LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand.” Discuss the use of language in spiritual warfare.

[250 words or less].

8. Explain, with scriptural references, how to diffuse curses.

[250 words or less].

9. List and define the elements of a curse.

[250 words or less].

10. “Beze wakes up shackled to a bed by his father. Beze had taken his father’s motor vehicle without his father’s permission and caused an accident that led to the car being written off. The car had no insurance and Beze’s father was very angry. In his anger, Beze’s father said, ‘I wish you were not my son. May you never amount to anything till you die.’ Beze thinks that what he had done did not warrant being tied to the bed for a week, denied a shower and food. Beze is heard saying, “My father just hates me. If it was Isaac, my young brother, he would have not tied him to the bed.””

Review the anecdote above and answer the following questions:

- a) Was Beze cursed by his father?
- b) Justify your answer in (a).
- c) If Beze was cursed, how would he escape the effects of the curse?
- d) If, in your opinion, Beze felt that his father’ treatment of him was disproportionate and unfair, how would he deal with it if he were a Christian?

[1500 words or less].

40 | EXORCISM

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the application of ground spiritual warfare principles
- You will understand the concept of demon-possession
- The will be able to identify the characteristics of the demoniacs
- You will be able to define exorcism
- You will be introduced to deliverance, and
- You will be able to review demonic activities

Introduction

This chapter will illustrate the principles of ground level spiritual warfare first introduced in Chapter 34. The ground level spiritual warfare mostly involves the casting out of demons. From both the devil's and Christianity's angle, this is the least effective method of spiritual warfare. It involves a demon or demons taking possession of an individual. Exorcism is, therefore, a spiritual practice of evicting demons from a person (or even a place) that is believed to be possessed by a demon or demons.

Demonization Revisited

Both in contemporary life and in the Bible, we find many cases of demonization. We see Saul consulting help for battle from the medium¹⁰⁹⁰ and the result was that he lost not only the kingdom but his life as well.

We also see the case of a Legion.¹⁰⁹¹ The man was possessed by a legion – which is a largest number of demons, probably 5000 demons, give and take, patterned upon the Roman army. The Romans created a legion of 5000 or 6000 troops. And the demon clearly defined itself

¹⁰⁹⁰ 1 Sam. 18:17

¹⁰⁹¹ Mark 5: 1-20

in that was: “My name is Legion. . .for we are many.”¹⁰⁹²

Many times, it is not very simple to differentiate between mental illness and demon possession. Often times, the symptoms are almost identical. When a counselor comes to a possessed person, they may not be able to clearly define whether that person is having emotional problems or is demon possessed. One of the helpful criteria for distinguishing between emotional problems and demon possessions may be the degree of chaos in a person’s life.

Demon possessed individuals are chaotic psycho-spiritually. But when they come nearer to God, these people become less chaotic. Moreover, demonized individuals may appear without any mental disorder. Many times, they will look presentable and as normal as any other persons until they come under the influence of a demon.

Paradoxically, mental illness may occur without any demonic activity. This view alone postulates that mental disorder and demonization may occur together. It is important to understand this difference so as not to stigmatize them. Having said that, there seems to be three characteristics that suggest the presence of the demonic.

Multiple personality disorder

First of all, demonic influences, many times, mimic multiple personality disorders. Sometimes, like in a legion case,¹⁰⁹³ more than one voices may proceed forth from one individual.

Reaction to Jesus’ name

The second characteristic of the demonic is their reaction to the name of Jesus. Demons are terrified, react negatively or violently to the name of Jesus. They know Him and they fear He might send them into the Lake of Fire before their time.

Demons are testable

A final characteristic of the demonic involves the biblical injunction to “test the spirits.”¹⁰⁹⁴ Evil spirits will never admit that Jesus was

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, verse 9

¹⁰⁹³ Mark 5:1-20, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁴ 1 John 4:1

conceived of the Virgin Mary, died to take away men's sins, rose again from the dead for humanity's justification.

In short, demons will never admit that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Or if they did, they would shudder: "You believe that there is one God. Good. Even the demons believe that—and shudder."¹⁰⁹⁵

There are those in our days who doubt the ability to discern evil spirits. The Word of God, however, reassures us, "But ye have unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things."¹⁰⁹⁶ Now after the careful assessment and much evaluation, and if it appears that the person is demon possessed, then deliverance could begin. Believers in Christ should not be afraid of demons because they cannot be possessed unless they willfully allow it. He who is in them is greater than the enemy that is in the world.¹⁰⁹⁷

Exorcism Defined

What then is exorcism? In addition to the definition offered in the introduction to this chapter, exorcism may be defined simply as the expelling or the casting out of evil spirits. At this stage, personal qualities and spiritual preparations are vital. The basic preparations will include prayer and fasting.¹⁰⁹⁸

Personal qualities may include:

- a) Being a professing believer in the Lord Jesus Christ;
- b) Living a holy life is a good essence and identification and confession of personal sins; and
- c) Depending totally on the Holy Spirit to discern the evil spirit and for power.¹⁰⁹⁹

After these personal qualities and preparations by the counsellor, the counselee then should be told to renounce any known sins and satanic strongholds. This allows for the affirmation to allow God to have total control over their being. This process should be handled with love and care. People who become possessed by demons have gone through soul torture by the demons. They deserve our love.

¹⁰⁹⁵ James 2:19

¹⁰⁹⁶ 1 John 2:20

¹⁰⁹⁷ 1 John 4:4

¹⁰⁹⁸ Mark 9:29

¹⁰⁹⁹ Acts 1:8

Process of Exorcism

The process of exorcism may be summarized as follows:

- a) After a time of prayer and praise, the deliverance can begin;
- b) In the name of Jesus, clear restrictions should be placed on any demonic spirits;
- c) The demonic spirits should be prohibited from harassing any of those present in the room or their families;
- d) And they should be prohibited from any form of expression, except the temporary use of the mind and mouth of the person being delivered; and
- e) They must be directed or commanded to leave the victim.

Believers have the right and authority to address and command demons. Bible passages exist to support this position.¹¹⁰⁰ In a deliverance session, any evil spirit present must be commanded to answer a series of questions affirming Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. If the spirit present is unable to answer such questions affirmatively, it is clear that it is a demonic presence. Questions such as “Do you confess Jesus Christ came in the flesh?” and “Who is Lord?” or “Is Jesus Christ your Lord?” can be asked.

At this point, the demonic presence is commanded to give its name and rank, and the name of its leader. Demons are, usually, ranked and are linked in chains of authority under a head leader. This is done in a quiet but authoritative tone of voice. The command may have to be repeated. Demons are reluctant to identify themselves and their leaders because they do not want to leave the demonized.

The one conducting exorcism (the counselor or the exorciser) should command the demons to respond, asserting that they are under the authority and power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Because demons are deceptive, it is often necessary to ask them if their answers can stand before the judgment bar of God, at which point they will answer reluctantly but truthfully. After it has been determined if there are any grounds for each demon to remain, the demonized person is told to specifically renounce each demon by name, affirming that he or she wants nothing to do with them, and to reclaim the territory that demons controlled, putting it under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁰⁰ See Matt. 8:32; Mark 16:17; Luke 8:29; Luke 10:19; and Acts 16:18.

At this point, after prayer and praise together, the primary exorciser commands the demons by name to leave and never to return. These commands must be repeated until all the demons have left. A final re-evaluation is done by calling each lead demon to attention and asking if they or their subordinates are present. If there is no answer, the person is most likely delivered. Given the stubbornness of demons, however, the delivered person should be prayed for with the laying on of hands, and the Holy Spirit should be invited to fill the person with His presence.

Demonic Activity and Deliverance

It is important to mention here that demonic activities normally lie in the area of the personality intersected between the soul and the spirit. In other words, the demon partly affects the soul and partly the spirit of a person. Deliverance, by procedure, may leave patches that need to be filled spiritually. Leaving a delivered person unattended to, may provide the demons with a chance to return and worsen that person's spiritual condition.¹¹⁰¹

Man is a trinity of body, soul and spirit.¹¹⁰² The body of a man is where senses operate from. The soul comprises the mind, intellect, will and emotions. This aspect of man controls man's consciousness. This makes man intelligent and being aware of his physical environment.

The spirit, on the other hand, is the innermost being of man. The spirit, like the soul, is abstract, but affects the happenings in the concrete world. This is the part of man that controls man's sub-consciousness. It is known as the inner man. It relates to God and unlike the mind or soul that is only renewed after conversion¹¹⁰³ and the body that must be deliberately brought under man's control,¹¹⁰⁴ the spirit of man is capable of being Born Again. It is the aspect of man that is intimate with God and it is the candle of the Lord where the inner small, still voice of the saints emanates.

The strategy of the devil is to take control of any of the three parts. When someone goes into Satanism, the whole body, soul and spirit are in total control by the devil. If the devil controls only one part, the

¹¹⁰¹ See Matthew 12:45

¹¹⁰² 1 Thess. 5:23

¹¹⁰³ Rom. 12:3

¹¹⁰⁴ 1 Corinthians. 9:27

person is said to be under the *influence* of demons. But if all three are controlled, they are under the *possession* by demons or the devil.

A person who is demon possessed has the whole of their body, soul and spirit under the control of the demon. The devil takes total possession of the person's entire personality. And, it becomes plausible to conclude that demon possessed people, are not Christ's¹¹⁰⁵ and, therefore, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,¹¹⁰⁶ unless they are delivered from demons.

Exorcism and Grace

We capture the story from Mark 5:

When the man with the demon saw Jesus a long way off, he ran and worshiped Him. The man spoke with a loud voice and said, "What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I ask You, in the name of God, do not hurt me!" At the same time, Jesus was saying, "Come out of the man, you demon!" Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Many [Legion], for there are many of us." The demons asked Jesus not to send them out of the country. There were many pigs feeding on the mountain side. The demons asked Him saying, "Send us to the pigs that we may go into them." Then Jesus let them do what they wanted to do. So, they went into the pigs. The pigs ran fast down the side of the mountain and into the sea and died. There were about 2,000.¹¹⁰⁷

Many have wondered why Jesus Christ sent the demons into pigs, and from this any number of cults have emerged. Some completely refuse to eat pork because of the likely connection to demons. Pigs were not our Lord's choice, but of the demons themselves. However, the lesson most poignantly learned from this passage is three-fold:

First, it was the number of demons that had taken possession of one person; it was a Legion or Many or probably 5000 or 6000 demons. Such a large number of demons possessing one individual is injurious to that person's spiritual destiny. The demons had taken over the entire person, body, soul and spirit.

Second, the demons knew their rights; they understood that their

¹¹⁰⁵ See Rom. 8:9

¹¹⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians. 6:9-10

¹¹⁰⁷ Mark 5:6-13

time to be “hurt” or thrown into the Lake of Fire had not come. Our Lord, in honor of that right preserved them for the Last Day. Therefore, our Lord answered the demons’ prayer to be driven into the sea via pig possession.

Last, the grace of God manifested. Our Lord preserved a human life in exchange for the life of animals. In other words, one man’s life was spared at the expense of pigs. The pigs drowned and died while the man lived.

The lesson is that men would sacrifice precious human life for animal life. But God would not. In view of animal activism against animal cruelty, the Lord is still concerned about animals. There were about 2000 pigs, but a Legion of demons. Which means that the Lord saved 3000 or 4000 other pigs in that act: “But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: *ye are of more value than many sparrows [animals].*”¹¹⁰⁸ That is grace is operation.

As discussed in this book, idolatry could reach up to the fourth generation. This might explain why this demon possessed man had over 5000 demons in him. In addition to being possessed by an astronomical number of demons, he lived nearby pigs, considered to be unclean in the Old Testament: “And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you.”¹¹⁰⁹ In one move, Christ had done two impossibilities: He had delivered a man possessed by a Legion, and he had sent them into unclean pigs and they were dead. Christ was announcing a new dispensation of grace. He was forecasting the New Testament in which believers would have the power over demons like Christ had. But he was also announcing that the rule of unclean spirits and the consideration of pigs as unclean had ended or died.

Now, Christians have the power to cast out demons everywhere. Satan and his demons can only enjoy a brief stay here on earth – because he knows that his days are few. And now Christians can eat any animal that God has presented by way of prayer and thanksgiving: “...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁸ Luke 12:7

¹¹⁰⁹ Leviticus 11:7

¹¹¹⁰ Romans 14:17, NASB

Précis

This chapter has defined and discussed exorcism. It has delved into the details of the demonization process. This includes laying down the exorcism process from preparation to commands and to reintegration of the formerly demonized into the Kingdom of God. God shows tremendous grace in empowering the Body of Christ with authority over demons. A few animals might be sacrificed in preservation of the human soul. But God is good, and He will be moderate and reasonable, even to animals, even in the deliverance process.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Consciousness
- Control
- Counselee
- Counsellor
- Demon casting
- Exorciser
- Exorcism
- Influence
- Intelligence
- Legion
- Mental disorder
- Mental illness
- Mind
- Multiple personality disorder
- Pigs
- Possession
- Roman army
- Romans
- Soul
- Spirit
- Stubbornness

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Exorcism is ____
 - A. Commanding spirits
 - B. Chasing demons
 - C. Casting out demons
 - D. Taming spirits

2. Demon possession may be mistaken for all these, except____
 - A. Demonization
 - B. Emotional distress
 - C. Multiple personality disorder
 - D. Mental disorder

3. A Legion has at least ____ demons.
 - A. 2,000
 - B. 3,000
 - C. 50,000
 - D. 5,000

4. Legion means ____
 - A. Many
 - B. Romans
 - C. Roman army
 - D. Pigs

5. Our Lord's command of demons into pigs was an act of ____
 - A. Desperation
 - B. Animal cruelty
 - C. Grace
 - D. Wrath

PRAYER

6. All these may be characteristics of the demonic, except ____
 - A. Multiple personality disorder
 - B. Shouting loudly
 - C. Reaction to Jesus' name
 - D. Testability

7. All these may be components of the soul, except ____
 - A. Mind
 - B. Intellect
 - C. Will
 - D. Spirit

8. The part of a person that controls the sub-consciousness is the ____
 - A. Spirit
 - B. Soul
 - C. Body
 - D. Emotions

9. According to this chapter, the greatest fear of demons is ____
 - A. Jesus Christ
 - B. The Lake of Fire
 - C. Women
 - D. Commands

10. Exorcism is ____
 - A. Ground level spiritual warfare
 - B. Strategic level spiritual warfare
 - C. Occult level spiritual warfare
 - D. Counseling level spiritual warfare

True/False Questions

1. Only one demon can possess a person at a time. T/F
2. Total demon possession does not harm the spirituality of a person. T/F
3. Pigs are a symbol of evil. T/F
4. Demons can't return into an individual once they are casted out. T/F
5. Demons easily confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. T/F
6. Exorcism is the process of expelling or the casting out of the devil himself from an individual. T/F
7. A demon-possessed person is called the counsellor, while the person conducting exorcism is called the counselee. T/F
8. The authority to cast out demons comes only from Jesus Christ. T/F
9. Exorcism is an operation of grace. T/F
10. Demons can lead people or animals to death. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe three characteristics that may suggest the presence of the demonic.

[250 words or less].

2. Summarize the process of exorcism.

[500 words or less].

3. State other ways, in addition to prayer and fasting, a person must do in order to prepare for exorcism.

[500 or less words].

4. Jesus said: “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20). Explain this verse of Scripture in relation to grace and exorcism.

[500 words or less].

41 | DELIVERANCE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define deliverance
- You will be able to identify key steps in deliverance

Introduction

Deliverance may be defined as the bringing of somebody out of the captivity of the devil or demons. Deliverance and exorcism may be related. However, deliverance may happen at all levels of spiritual warfare: Ground, occult or strategic. Exorcism, however, is on ground level spiritual warfare. In this chapter, we shall discuss how deliverance could be ministered to the people who are troubled by spiritual spouses, and the relevant steps that may be taken to that end.

Steps in Deliverance

The following may be the steps that should be taken for a deliverance to be successful:

Repentance

Repentance is the first step. Repentance and deliverance are two sides of the same coin. There mustn't be one without the other. To repent is to turn away from Satan and all that he stands for, and to return to God. It involves the active confession of sins, both past and present.

In deliverance, repentance must occur either at personal or corporate levels. It may be done by an individual alone. It may be by individuals together. Or by one individual or individuals on behalf of everyone else involved or affected.

Renunciation

Renunciation is the second step. Reject and renounce every evil

marriage. But also remember that every evil marriage is legally binding to those involved in it. Symbolically, renounce the spouse and the spirit children. Break every covenant of the spiritual marriage over the victim's life and, by faith, destroy the symbolic marriage certificate. Then redeem the person through the blood of Christ and present, by faith, the symbolic bill of divorce to the devil. If anything, destroy every physical thing that could have served as points of contact with the spiritually evil world.¹¹¹¹

In order to come out of a covenant or a curse, first and foremost, desire to be free from them. Remember that curses do not just come; they are caused.¹¹¹² Once you know how a covenant or curse came upon you, it gives you power to repent, confess or even minister restitution if it so directly concerns you.

Restitution

Restitution is an aspect of paying back in compensation for what was taken. When this is done, renunciation is actualized. Address all the evil problems squarely and command them to cease operating on your life in the name of Jesus Christ. Taking your position as a child of God, based on the grace of the privileges of all God's children in-Christ,¹¹¹³ decree or declare boldly what you desire to see.

If it was a spiritual spouse, now declare a true human spouse; if it was spiritual children, now decree normal physical children. If it were fruitlessness or barrenness or infertility, now command productivity, children and fertility. If it were lack of progress or poverty, where even when you have been giving and working hard and it still persisted, decree progress and prosperity to be yours in Jesus' name.

Précis

In conclusion, it is believed that discussions on topics of this nature are always inconclusive. However, it is important to mention that in both counselling and deliverance, the aftermath is always vital. After a successful deliverance, former victims should now live in commitment to Christ, by the Word of God, by praise and prayer, and by constant

¹¹¹¹ Col. 2:14

¹¹¹² Pro. 26:2

¹¹¹³ Eph. 1:3; John 1:12; Rom. 8:37-39; and Job 22:28

forgiveness and focusing their minds on the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Barrenness
- Deliverance
- Fertility
- Fruitlessness
- Infertility
- Poverty
- Productivity
- Renunciation
- Restitution
- Spiritual spouses
- Symbolic marriage certificate
- Symbolic bill of divorce

Multiple-choice Questions

1. ____ is the bringing of somebody out of the captivity of the devil or demons.
 - A. Deliverance
 - B. Exorcism
 - C. Denunciation
 - D. Restitution

2. ___ is the rejection or leaving of the evil spirits working against you.
 - A. Deliverance
 - B. Renunciation
 - C. Denunciation
 - D. Restitution

3. ___ is the aspect of paying back in compensation for what was taken.
 - A. Deliverance
 - B. Renunciation
 - C. Denunciation
 - D. Restitution

4. People may be delivered from all these, except ___
 - A. Fruitlessness
 - B. Barrenness
 - C. Infertility
 - D. Productivity

5. What actualizes renunciation?
 - A. Renunciation
 - B. Restitution
 - C. Reproduction
 - D. Reinvention

True/False Questions

1. To repent is to turn away from something or someone and to return to God T/F

2. Repentance can happen without confessing sins. T/F

PRAYER

3. Demons may sire symbolic spiritual children with humans.
T/F
4. The destruction of anything physical that connects one to the demoniacs may be a vital part of renunciation. T/F
5. Grace gives us the power in Christ to decree all we may need in order to free us from demonic interference, influence or even possession. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explore the steps you might take to enforce deliverance.

[500 words or less].
2. Contrast deliverance from exorcism.

[250 words or less].

42 | OFFENSIVE WEAPONS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to recognize the offensive weapons of spiritual warfare, and
- You will learn about the three levels of spiritual engagement

Introduction

War, in general, is not a haphazard demonstration of military power. Wars are strategically planned and executed. To go to war with only vengeance or wrath on the mind is suicidal. Wars utilize what are known as Rules of Engagement. These are specifically drafted to direct the outcome of war. Military forces are, internally, given rules that define the degree of engagement, the prevailing circumstances, the expected conditions, and the manner in which actionable force may be used. In most cases, actionable force can only be used in provocative situations. However, as defined in Chapter 33, once war has been declared, aggression is assumed, and the breaking of armed conflicts may happen at any time in the form of battles.

Spiritual rules of engagement exist. However, the nature of Satan and his demonic forces may not allow them to follow these rules. Thus, God has warned, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”¹¹¹⁴ This calls for the knowledge and understanding of Satan’s schemes: “...in order that Satan should not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”¹¹¹⁵ God, who knows that Satan follows no rules of engagement, also understands that we will be vulnerable unless we know Satan’s’ stratagems. Thus, God has conveniently provided us with such knowledge through the Holy Writ. In this chapter, we will look at some of the believers’ weapons of defence and offence, and discuss them in relation to the three levels of spiritual engagements.

¹¹¹⁴ 1 Peter 5:8

¹¹¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 2:11

Offensive Weapons

The Bible records various weapons of our offence. We look first at the weapons of our offence, and we will later discuss our weapons of defence. The summary of our weapons of offence could not be better presented as in this verse: “And they overcame him by the *blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony*; and they *loved not their lives unto the death.*”¹¹¹⁶ One thing comes very plainly from this verse Scripture: Victory is already ours, “they overcame him.” To overcome is to prevail over or to be victorious over someone or something. We are overcomers in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We can deduce at least three levels of our engagement from the preceding verse, namely: Power, truth and allegiance.

Power engagement

Although blood is only a life fluid which flows in our bodies, it is used, figuratively, to represent the power of life. For this reason, it was used as a sacrifice in substitute for its offender: “Since the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement on the altar for yourselves, because it is the blood as life that makes atonement.”¹¹¹⁷

Blood is life, it never dies. Even after the death of Abel, his blood still cried out to God for revenge.¹¹¹⁸ The Hebrews recognized the immortality of blood when they demanded that Christ’s blood should be upon them.¹¹¹⁹

Apart from its cleansing power¹¹²⁰ and its power to give us access into God’s throne room,¹¹²¹ blood has the power to make evil and the devil (the progenitors of death) shudder. By the blood of Christ, we defeat all evil. For the believer, Jesus’ blood is the cleansing, protecting and healing fluid, but for the devil, it is a missile, an atomic fluid that destroys all that has interests with evil. When the devil comes, we will not plead our goodness, not even our innocence, if any, but we will

¹¹¹⁶ Rev. 12:11

¹¹¹⁷ Lev. 17:11

¹¹¹⁸ Gen. 4:10

¹¹¹⁹ Matt. 27:25

¹¹²⁰ 1 John 1:7

¹¹²¹ Heb. 9:12

plead the blood of Jesus. There is power in the blood of Jesus. With the blood of Christ, we are engaging the enemy with power.

Truth engagement

At this level, we are talking about the Word of God. In particular, here we are dealing with what God has said about us and certain things. We take the written scriptures and through our mouth we make them a weapon against Satan and his interests. The Word of God is the *sword of the Spirit*.¹¹²² We use it to shut off all the wiles of the devil. It is alive, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through and dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and in the process, discerning all thoughts and intentions of the heart.¹¹²³ Just as we recognized and defined in Chapter 33 strongholds as high thoughts, speculations and arguments, in strategic level spiritual warfare, we use the Word of God to silence all the lies of Satan.

With the sword of the Word of God, we conquer spirits as well as physical problems. The Word of God has the power, according to this verse, to heal the body, soul and spirit. The Word of God used in context, disintegrates all maneuvers, strategies and all plots of the enemy. The Word of God is the truth that proceeds from God to attack all lies that have their foundation in the devil, the father of all lies.¹¹²⁴ In the wilderness, Jesus used truth to defeat the lies of Satan.¹¹²⁵ What is written, or what God has said, is the only guarantee that the devil will back off. Nothing else has power to silence the enemy apart from what God has said. The Word of God has it is written in our Bibles, has immense power to destroy all evil. The Word of God is effective, because it does that for which He said or spoke it: “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it”¹¹²⁶

Allegiance engagement

The first part reads, “By the blood of the Lamb” and the second part,

¹¹²² Eph. 6:17

¹¹²³ Heb. 4:12

¹¹²⁴ John 8:44

¹¹²⁵ See Luke 4:4, 8, 12; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10

¹¹²⁶ Isaiah 55:11

“... by the word of their testimony” make up the first two engagements of power and truth, respectively. But the third, and usually the most overlooked, is as powerful as the other two, “...they loved not their lives unto the death.” This is allegiance engagement.

Allegiance means loyalty to a person or a cause. Allegiance is the duty of the subjects to their masters. Believers in Christ are allegiant to their God.

Allegiance is the highest of both our *offensive* and *defensive* weapons. It is the part which a few have done and only very few have reached. Jesus, in His submission to God, died on the cross. Peter says that we need to submit to God if we are to resist the devil.¹¹²⁷ And Paul, in his great spiritual warfare treatise, comments that evil powers are only capable of bowing to us if our submission to God, what may be termed as unconditional obedience, is fulfilled: “And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.”¹¹²⁸ Allegiance engagement is the level where we are willing to resist the devil even to the point of our own discomfort, even up to death. It is to die for the divine cause if need be.

Defensive Weapons

Power, truth and allegiance engagements are all aspects of offensiveness in spiritual warfare. Our defensive weaponry includes righteousness: “Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the *breastplate of righteousness*.”¹¹²⁹ Salvation is a defence: “And take the *helmet of salvation* and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”¹¹³⁰ And faith: “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”¹¹³¹

Atmosphere of Prayer and Authority of Jesus’ Name

Prayer is the atmosphere through which our weapons, whether offensive or defensive, operate. The name of Jesus is what gives power to our weaponry; it’s the power of attorney. Without the name of Jesus,

¹¹²⁷ 1 Peter 5:6-9

¹¹²⁸ 2 Corinthians. 10:6

¹¹²⁹ Eph. 6:14 (emphasis added).

¹¹³⁰ Eph. 6:17 (emphasis added).

¹¹³¹ Eph. 6:16 (emphasis added)

our weapons, though potentially powerful, will be blunt. Our offensive and defensive weapons put together have tremendous power to demolish Satan's arsenal (sin, accusations and strongholds).

In Paul's mimicry of the Roman soldier, salvation is the helmet; righteousness is the breastplate; truth is the belt and faith is the shield. The Word of God is the sword and we must have good cheer because Jesus has overcome the world.¹¹³² And our weapons are not worldly.¹¹³³

One of the greatest reasons why our Lord Jesus Christ appeared was to destroy the works of Satan: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."¹¹³⁴ Jesus did not come to sugar coat, or weaken the works of Satan, but to destroy them. Of course, at the end, Satan himself will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire. Everything we see or know or don't see or don't know which are the works of Satan, will, one day, be destroyed. The end of wickedness is destruction.

Précis

The grace of God is on each sentence of this chapter. God, in His divine mercy, did not leave us like orphans or in ignorance. He prepared the useful and most powerful arsenal the world has ever seen, the Word of God. In it, we find the exposure of Satan's schemes and plans. In it, we find the weapons of our defence and offence. And in it, we find God's plan of permanently ending evil on earth. Satan's days are, indeed, numbered: "[Satan] is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."¹¹³⁵

¹¹³² Eph. 6:10- 18; John 16:33

¹¹³³ 2 Corinthians. 10:3

¹¹³⁴ 1 John 3:8

¹¹³⁵ Revelation 12:12

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Allegiance engagement
- Belt of truth
- Blood of the Lamb
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Defensive weapons
- Helmet of salvation
- Offensive weapons
- Power engagement
- Sword of the Spirit
- Testimony
- Truth engagement

Multiple-choice Questions

1. What is the reason that Jesus Christ came?
 - A. To destroy the works of the devil
 - B. To redeem the damned
 - C. To save the lost
 - D. All of the above are correct
2. ____ is a helmet.
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Righteousness
 - C. Truth
 - D. Word of God

3. ___ is the breastplate.
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Righteousness
 - C. Truth
 - D. Word of God

4. ___ is the shield.
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Righteousness
 - C. Truth
 - D. Word of God

5. ___ is the sword.
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Righteousness
 - C. Truth
 - D. Word of God

6. The blood of Jesus Christ is a believer's ___ weapon.
 - A. Offensive
 - B. Defensive
 - C. Divine
 - D. Spiritual

7. Righteousness is the believer's ___ weapon.
 - A. Offensive
 - B. Defensive
 - C. Divine
 - D. Spiritual

True/False

1. The name of Jesus is what gives power to our weaponry.
T/F
2. The name of Jesus is the power of attorney. T/F
3. Without the name of Jesus, our weapons, though potentially powerful, will be blunt. T/F
4. Our offensive and defensive weapons put together have tremendous power to demolish Satan's arsenal. T/F
5. Satan's arsenal includes sin, accusations and strongholds.
T/F
6. Some of our defensive weaponry are righteousness, truth, salvation and faith. T/F
7. Some of our offensive weapons are the blood of Jesus, our testimony and our allegiance to God. T/F
8. Spiritual rules of engagements exist and they are respected by Satan. T/F
9. The Word of God has the power. T/F
10. The three levels of spiritual engagement are power, truth and allegiance. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”
 - a) Who is “they” in this scriptural verse?
 - b) Who is “him” in this scriptural verse?
 - c) Who is the “lamb” in this verse?
 - d) Define the three levels of spiritual engagement.
 - e) How does the three levels of spiritual engagement relate to the three levels of spiritual warfare, if any?

[1500 words or less]

2. “[14] Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, [15] and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. [16] In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [17] Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Review this passage of Scripture and relate it to the degree of readiness impressed upon a Roman soldier equipped for battle.

[500 words or less].

43 | THE HEAVENLIES

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the heavenlies
- You will be able to define a cosmic grave
- You will be able to distinguish among the three heavens
- You will discover where the believers' storehouse of blessings is located, and
- You will discover the strategic position of the Church in the heavenlies

Introduction

We now come to an elusive area in the Bible only known as the heavenlies or the heavenly places. This area is not heaven, and neither is it the atmosphere. The use of the term in the Bible seems to indicate that it is a place designed and designated for the believers' blessings, more or less like a storehouse. As such, it is around which demons lurk, with denotation that they desire to hinder the saints' blessings. This chapter will highlight key notations regarding this area, and ascertain that battle in this area is integral to the manifestations of blessings to believers on earth.

Where Strategic Battles are Won and Lost

When it comes to cosmic warfare or warfare in the heavenly places, the battlefield sharply shifts from the mind to the real spiritual realm. Strategic battles are not fought on earth – but in an area referred to as the *heavenlies*. The heavenlies are the second realm of our present world.

The world is structured, from the spiritual point of view, in five dimensions: The earth; Hell (or the cosmic grave); the first heaven (or the earth's atmosphere); the second heaven (also known as the heavenlies); and the third heaven (or the heaven of heavens).

The earth

The earth is the home to the mortal human beings. Any spirit that wants to exist on earth needs a body because it is entering in a tangible world. Demons and Satan will either have to find agents or possess a human or animal body in order to function on earth. This, as we shall see, limits them a great deal.

Hell

Hell is also known as the cosmic grave, and is the abode of wicked human spirits, spirits that once had physical expression in the body, but were cast here due to their unregenerate nature. In legal parlance, Hell is simply a temporary cell where human dead souls, Satan and demons await their final judgment.

Hell is said to have been made for the devil and his angels (demons) and that man is only an intruder there.¹¹³⁶ Hell is a *place* of fire and torment, and since man's soul which never dies goes there, a physically dead man will be spiritually conscious in Hell and will experience all that a soul is capable of sorrow, pain, thirsty, hunger, regret, and many more.¹¹³⁷

Hell mystery debunked

The existence of Hell is understood, but the location of Hell has eluded many a Bible scholar. And the greatest confusion is that many construe Hell to be the Lake of Fire. This is owing to the use of the words "fire" or "torment" in relation to Hell and the Lake of Fire, interchangeably.¹¹³⁸ Hell is neither on earth nor in Heaven. Hell is not the end of life, but is more like a detention center. In judicial parlance, an accused who has not been found guilty and sentenced cannot be sent to prison. In many cases, due to flight risk, an accused might be detained pending trial. This procedure is moderated by any number of presentations in order to subscribe to the nuances of due process and attendant justice.

¹¹³⁶ Matt. 25:41

¹¹³⁷ Luke 16:23-24

¹¹³⁸ See Matthew 13:42; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 19:20; Revelation 21:8; Matthew 3:12; or Revelation 14:10

Sin is the basis of eternal judgment, but even when one is in the state of sin, God reserves their soul for judgment before He could sentence them to eternal damnation. Hell is, thus, a detention center for Satan, demons and all those who did not believe: “For if God did not spare *angels when they sinned*, but *sent them to hell*, putting them in *chains of darkness to be held for judgment*.”¹¹³⁹ This verse of Scripture, both defines Hell and provides for its purpose. Hell is a place of chains or torment or restrictions. And all inhabitants of Hell are on hold till judgment.

However, just like in penitentiaries where the lead gang leader might still be calling the shots, Satan does act like a gang leader in Hell. Obviously, Satan and demons can still have influence on earth because they can possess humans or influence the abstract minds of the people. But their aboard is Hell.

The position of Hell is suggested by Scripture: “The *sea* gave up the dead that were in it, and *death and Hades* gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was *judged* according to what they had done. Then *death and Hades* were thrown into the *lake of fire*. The lake of fire is the second death.”¹¹⁴⁰ This verse of Scripture uses a literary technical of chiasmus. A chiasmus is a rhetorical device used to create a stylized writing effect, in which the second part of a sentence is a mirror image of the first.¹¹⁴¹ Thus, Hell may be placed somewhere under or near the seas. And the idea of going down to Hell is well-sustained throughout the Scripture, for example: “The path of life leads upward for the prudent to keep them from *going down to the realm of the dead*.”¹¹⁴² The “realm of the dead” is Hell. The Psalmist has repeated this imagery: “The wicked *go down to the realm of the dead*, all the nations that forget God.”¹¹⁴³ And so has Dr. Luke, quoting King David, “...because you will not abandon me to *the realm of the dead*, you will not let your holy one see decay.”¹¹⁴⁴ And Jesus, our Lord, alludes to it in His teaching: “And in *hell he lift up his eyes*, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”¹¹⁴⁵

The Bible makes it very clear that Hell will be gathered and together

¹¹³⁹ 2 Peter 2:4

¹¹⁴⁰ Revelation 20:13-14 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁴¹ MasterClass, “Writing 101: What Is Chiasmus? Learn About the Rhetorical Device with Examples,” < <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/writing-101-what-is-chiasmus-learn-about-the-rhetorical-device-with-examples>> accessed on December 6th, 2022.

¹¹⁴² Proverbs 15:24 (emphasis added)

¹¹⁴³ Psalms 9:17 (emphasis added)

¹¹⁴⁴ Acts 2:27 (emphasis added)

¹¹⁴⁵ Luke 16:23 (emphasis added)

with Satan, will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (variously known as the “blazing furnace,”¹¹⁴⁶ “eternal fire,”¹¹⁴⁷ “fire that never goes out,”¹¹⁴⁸ and “fiery lake of burning sulfur”¹¹⁴⁹). This makes sense in relation to judicial determination. Just as convicts may be sentenced to death or to serve their sentence in a permanent penitentiary, so will those in Hell who will be judged and condemned. Their lasting place is the Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire is the end of all satanic and demonic activities. Hell is not the end of satanic and demonic activities.

The Bible makes reference to torment and fire in Hell. For example, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can *destroy* both soul and body in hell.”¹¹⁵⁰ There, in Hell, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth: “They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹¹⁵¹ Then there is the fact of being cursed: “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”¹¹⁵² And in Hell, the “worm” does not die: “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two hands and go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”¹¹⁵³

All the references adduced above demonstrate a kind of active suffering or hardship. They explain the experience of Hell, a state of grief, mourning, misery, sorrow, sadness, anguish, and pain. The idea of a worm has been variously interpreted. Some see it as a perpetuation of the weakness (probably the same shame or regret)¹¹⁵⁴ that someone took with them to Hell. And that is reinforced by the idea of “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off...”¹¹⁵⁵ so as not to turn the entertained weakness into a worm in Hell.

¹¹⁴⁶ Matthew 13:42

¹¹⁴⁷ Matthew 25:41

¹¹⁴⁸ Mark 9:43

¹¹⁴⁹ Revelation 19:20

¹¹⁵⁰ Matthew 10:28

¹¹⁵¹ Matthew 13:42

¹¹⁵² Matthew 25:41

¹¹⁵³ Mark 9:43-44

¹¹⁵⁴ Charles Mwewa, *The Patch Theorem: A philosophy of death, life and time* (Ottawa: ACP, 2022), pp. 51-52

¹¹⁵⁵ Mark 9:34-44, *supra*.

The first heaven

The first heaven (or Heaven1) is our atmosphere. Man has reached here physically. The stars, the moon, planets and even the sun abide here. The atmosphere reveals the glory of God and it is commanded of them to continue to do so.¹¹⁵⁶

The second heaven

The second heaven (or Heaven2) is our area of concern. It is the *place* of great conflicts; spiritual battles are either won or lost here. It comes in between earth and heaven. Satan and his angels operate here, but Jesus and His saints are also found here, far above the abode of the diabolic. As we shall see, our blessings¹¹⁵⁷ are also decked here awaiting our commands to be released.

The third heaven

The third heaven (or Heaven3) is the throne of God and His holy angels, the twenty-four (24) elders and the spirits of the saints who die in Christ.¹¹⁵⁸ Heaven3 is what is known as the *heaven of the heavens*. It is the place of superlative glory and grandeur. Heaven3 can only be described as splendid, majestic, opulence, magnificent, and etc. It is the *place* of unspeakable beauty, the desire of all mankind. Jesus said that when we pray we should address our prayers to our Father who is in Heaven3. This is our destiny, hope and the *place* of our true rest. In Psalm 148, we read:

Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens: Praise him in the heights [Heaven1]. Praise him, all his angels: Praise him all you stars of light. Praise him, sun and moon: praise him, all stars of light. Praise him, you *heavens of heavens* [Heaven3], and you waters that be above the heavens. Praise the LORD from the earth, you dragons, and all deeps. Fire, and hail; snow; and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word. Mountains, and all hills; fruit trees, and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl; kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men, and maidens, old men and

¹¹⁵⁶ Ps. 150:1b

¹¹⁵⁷ See Ephesians 1:3

¹¹⁵⁸ Luke 16:22; Rev. 14:13; and Eccl. 3:21

children.¹¹⁵⁹

Three things come out from this passage. First, the world is demarcated into three: heavens, heights and the earth (1, 7). These are our third heaven, second heaven and first heaven (for the second and first heavens are part of the heights) and the earth.

Second, the constitution of the third and first heavens and the earth are drawn. Angels and hosts (who may include other celestial beings as well) are found in the third heaven. Note that God Himself is part of this but we omit Him because He is the reason why the angels and other hosts exist.

The composition of the heavens tabulates the contents of the first heaven: The sun, the moon and the stars. The earth comprises dragons (or great whales), deeps (or great seas), hot and cold deserts, mountains, hills, fruit trees and other trees including grasses, vicious animals, edible animals, reptiles and birds. The earth also includes very important peoples and ordinary men. It also includes males and females, young and old. All these are found in (7 and 12).

Third, you will notice that the passage is silent on the composition of the second heaven, which is listed as part of the first heaven (referred to as heights (1)).

Below, we explore the heavenlies and disclose tremendous secrets imbedded therein. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is very important in the discussion of the heavenlies. The letter to the Ephesians gives us deep truths about the nature and operation of the Kingdom of Satan. But we are also equipped with God's armor in dealing with satanic forces. It is, thus, the most appropriate book to use if we want to understand spiritual warfare.

Ephesus or modern Turkey has always been known to be the seat of Satan. Necessarily, when Paul talks to the believers in this region, he is concerned about a higher strategy than just ground level warfare. Here to win, he needed to confront the enemy from his seat of influence.

Philosophy of the Heavenlies

All our scriptural references shall come from Ephesians. The following are the biblical philosophies of the heavenlies:

¹¹⁵⁹ Psalms 148:1-14

Storage house of the believers' spiritual blessings

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.”¹¹⁶⁰ This verse reveals the storage source of our spiritual blessings. They are in the heavenlies or the heavenly places. The blessings are already there because God “has blessed” us already. Every believer in Christ is entitled to their blessings. Blessings are endowed capacity to increase in all things – finances, good health, favor, fullness of life, progress, victory, and the list is endless. God has already blessed us spiritually – because spiritual things are afterward and permanent.¹¹⁶¹ Spiritual blessings are easily transferable into the physical things. God is Spirit,¹¹⁶² immortal and permanent. All the blessings that we need are in the heavenlies.

Christ Jesus is seated far above in the heavenlies

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his *right hand in the heavenly places, far above* all principalities and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet”¹¹⁶³ In terms of position, Christ is also in the heavenlies but very far above the evil powers. In other words, His feet step over the heads of His enemies.

Believers are also seated with Christ in the heavenlies

“Even when we were dead in sins, he has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”¹¹⁶⁴ Christians are wonderful beings, physically they are on earth but spiritually they are located in the heavenlies. Notice that their sitting is strategically better than the principalities, powers, dominions or the might because they are ‘in’ Christ who is sited far above the forces of evil.

Rationally, fighting from the earth against the powers of evil

¹¹⁶⁰ Ephesians 1:3, *supra*.

¹¹⁶¹ See 1 Corinthians. 15:46b

¹¹⁶² John 4:24a

¹¹⁶³ Ephesians 1:20-22

¹¹⁶⁴ Ephesians 2:5-6

disadvantages us since they will stand over us. But, as it is, we are more advantaged than them, as our position is much higher. We fight “in Christ” and which makes us fight from a vantage point.

Enemies in the heavenlies

God’s enemies are stationed in the heavenlies but they are much lower in position than Christians or Christ.¹¹⁶⁵ The fact is that our enemies are in the heavenlies. Because our blessings are in the heavenlies,¹¹⁶⁶ and our enemies are also there,¹¹⁶⁷ the concept of war looms large. It is also the reason why although we know that we are truly blessed, our blessings do not seem to materialize as easily as we suppose. That is why Apostle Paul advises us to wrestle, fight and enforce our victory. Once we defeat the enemy in the heavenlies, blessings will have no option but to pour down to us.

Our spiritual blessings and victory are tied to our warfare. Those who innocently or ignorantly presume that since God loves us all things will come to us without struggles are deceived. In the Bible, the images for battle and warfare run from Genesis to Revelation. God has surely blessed us already,¹¹⁶⁸ yet our enemies are sited next to our parcels and our warfare will propel our blessings towards us.¹¹⁶⁹ Good news is that ours is a good fight;¹¹⁷⁰ it is the exercise of our faith in the already finished work of redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Strategic Position of the Church in the Heavenlies

The Church, which the body of Christian believers who gather together anywhere in the name of Jesus Christ, has a very special place in the heavenly places: “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.”¹¹⁷¹

The Church is more than an Ecclesia, in Greek, *Ekklesia*, “gathering

¹¹⁶⁵ Ephesians 1:20-21; 6:12

¹¹⁶⁶ Eph. 1:3

¹¹⁶⁷ Eph. 1:21

¹¹⁶⁸ Eph. 1:3, *supra*.

¹¹⁶⁹ Eph. 6:12

¹¹⁷⁰ 1 Timothy 6:12

¹¹⁷¹ Ephesians 3:10

of those summoned.” The Church is the Lord’s commission armed to repel all the forces of evil: “I will build *my* church, and the gates of hell [all the powers of hell and death] shall not prevail against it.”¹¹⁷²

The place of the Church is to startle, to amaze, to demonstrate God’s wisdom to the enemies of God. Our role as a Church in the heavenlies is one of producing the end result of the process. We need to show by the power of Christ, the outcomes of salvation – saved souls, healed bodies, and delivered persons. We have got a pyrrhic victory to demonstrate to the principalities and powers. Potentially, there is no space for demons to operate freely because Jesus has covered all things: “Wherefore he says, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also *descended first into lower parts of the earth*? He that *descended* is the same also that ascended up far above the heavens, that he might fill all things).”¹¹⁷³

Jesus is the Head and the Church is His Body

When the head ascends or descends the body follows likewise. But presently, Jesus is in heaven and His body is on earth. Yet, positionally, and since the body is part of the head, the assertion that we are sited with Christ in the heavenly places is correct. The position of the Church in the world is at the center of spiritual events. It is, potentially, in the heavens but, practically, on earth. It can change the course of things on earth because it can change them in the heavenlies.

Jesus has filled all things – the only Man to trail Hades and still sit at the right hand of God. Hence, He has descended to the lowest parts of the earth (or Hell) and He has also ascended to the highest heavens. This verse,¹¹⁷⁴ too, shows that Hell is somewhere under the earth.

Précis: The Battlefield

The battlefield for world harvest is the spirit realm in an abode referred to as the heavenlies or heavenly places. It can sometimes be termed the *high places* in which case it also incorporates the earthly atmosphere. In this place, exists all our spiritual blessings, our enemies are also there

¹¹⁷² Matthew 16:18 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁷³ Ephesians 4:8-10 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

and the Church is there, spiritually, with Jesus as the Head.

The position of Jesus in the heavenlies is far superior to that of the principalities, the powers, dominions or the rulers and the might. This, essentially, puts us on an advantaged position in terms of cosmic warfare. Since our enemies know that our blessings are there, they erect their camps near our inheritance so that we are kept struggling always.

Our duty is to attack and engage and defeat our enemies in order for our blessings to trickle down to us. For world evangelization and the release of nations, the heavenlies are our foremost battle zone. “In Him,” therefore, we have access to the heavenlies where we intimidate, dominate and defeat our enemies to let go of our blessings that should profit us on earth in a practical way. “In Him,” all have been accomplished and all that we have to do is to harvest. Ours is to gather the end results of Jesus’ victory on the cross: Blessings, favor, righteousness, salvation, prosperity, power, unmerited favor (grace), and so on. And we are not alone in this, God’s good angels are there to ensure that we are well served.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Battlefield
- Church
- Cosmic grave
- Earth
- First heaven
- Gnashing of teeth
- Heavenlies
- Heavenly places
- Hell
- Lake of Fire
- Second heaven
- Storehouse
- Third heaven
- Worm

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Spiritual warfare in heavenly places is called ____
 - A. Cosmic warfare
 - B. Heavenlies
 - C. Strategic
 - D. Heavenly places

2. The heavenlies are the ____ realm of our present world.
 - A. Second
 - B. Third
 - C. Fourth
 - D. Tertiary

3. In spiritual warfare parlance, hell is the ____
 - A. Cosmic grave
 - B. Ephemeral grace
 - C. Fourth heavens
 - D. Up above

4. Satan and demons occupy the earth by way of ____
 - A. Human embodiment
 - B. Animal embodiment
 - C. Human possession
 - D. All of the above

5. The heavenly place is the storehouse of ____
 - A. Blessings
 - B. Warfare
 - C. Demons
 - D. Arsenal

6. What do we call the body of Christian believers who gather together anywhere in the name of Jesus Christ?
 - A. Church
 - B. The Body of Christians
 - C. A Christian Mosque
 - D. Ecclesia

7. The outcomes of salvation include all these, except ____
 - A. Saved souls
 - B. Healed bodies
 - C. Delivered persons
 - D. Defeated church

PRAYER

8. All these belong to Heaven¹, except ____
- A. The sun
 - B. The moon
 - C. The 24 elders
 - D. The stars
9. All these belong to earth, except ____
- A. Dragons
 - B. Deeps
 - C. Deserts and mountains
 - D. Angels
10. Hell is usually confused with ____
- A. Hades
 - B. The Lake of Fire
 - C. Deep seas
 - D. Heaven
11. The Gates of Hell are a symbol of ____
- A. Hell
 - B. Powers of darkness
 - C. Dominions
 - D. Entry point
12. Who is the Head of the Church?
- A. The Pope
 - B. The Holy Spirit
 - C. The Lord Jesus Christ
 - D. God, the Father

True/False Questions

1. The existence of Hell is understood, but the location of Hell has eluded many a Bible scholar. T/F
2. Hell is the same as the Lake of Fire. T/F
3. Hell is more like a temporary detention than a permanent prison sentence. T/F
4. Satan and demons can still have influence on earth from Hell. T/F
5. Satan and demons can influence people on earth directly from Hell without the use of a medium. T/F
6. Hell is somewhere in heaven, and, hence, the name cosmic grave. T/F
7. Sometimes, the best way to understand the meaning of Scripture is with the aid of literary techniques. T/F
8. “The realm of the dead,” refers to Hell. T/F
9. The Lake of Fire is the end of all satanic and demonic activities. T/F
10. Hell seems to be a place of grief, mourning, misery, sorrow, sadness, anguish, and pain. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. With the help of scriptural references from the Book of Ephesians, dissect the philosophy behind the heavenlies.

[1,500 words or less].

2. Define the Church, and explain its purpose in relation to the destruction of the Kingdom of Darkness.

[500 words or less].

3. Differentiate the earth and the heavenlies as respective battlefields in relation to the levels of spiritual warfare discussed in Chapter 33.

[500 words or less].

44 | TONGUES AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will know that tongues can be weapons of spiritual warfare, and
- You will learn about the six activating triggers of the Holy Spirit

Introduction

On or around September 30th, 2022, this author had a spiritual encounter in which a demon approached him while lying semi-awake on his bed. In moments like that, the servant of darkness usually has an upper hand. In this encounter, this author began to feel his strength draining out as if he was falling into a deep sleep. It was as if Azrael (Azrael is believed to be the Archangel of Death and leader of the angels of death) was in the room because he could be. What was very interesting was not the encounter, because this author has had several of these across the years. What was, however, interesting was the revelation he received in that moment. Naturally, he would start praying, expelling the demon in the name of Jesus. This time, he had an impression to pray in tongues. As he began to pray in tongues, Azrael or a similarly-situated demon began to retreat and the power of life began to flow back into the author. Having retained his faculties, he prayed in English in the name of Jesus Christ for a quiet and peaceful sleep for himself and his family. This chapter will, therefore, highlight how praying in tongues can be a weapon in spiritual warfare.

Tongues as Weapons of Spiritual Warfare

The fundamental lesson here is imbedded into this verse: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”¹¹⁷⁵ But this must be read together with another group of verses, *viz*, “For he that

¹¹⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:14

speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”¹¹⁷⁶

Activating the Holy Spirit Power through Tongues

There are six ways in which speaking in tongues (other languages) activates the power of the Holy Spirit.

Exercise of the spirit man

First, speaking in tongues (other languages or language of angels) is an exercise of the will of the spirit of man, not the Holy Spirit. It is the member of the triune man (one of the spirit, soul and body) praying. The soul (mind) cannot comprehend it, only the spirit does.

Being in league with the Holy Spirit

Second, the spirit of a person is in league with the Holy Spirit: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”¹¹⁷⁷ When our spirit prays in another language, it is an act of grace in which God the Holy Spirit assists us to pray for the correct response. Indeed, as in the encounter of September 30th, 2022, this author did not know how to pray. But trusting the Holy Spirit, he allowed his spirit to pray in another tongue and the result was victory.

Dislodging demons

Third, tongues can be used to dislodge demons as the encounter of September 30th, 2022, illustrated. This is because the Holy Spirit is our advocate: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to be with you forever.”¹¹⁷⁸ An advocate, like a lawyer, has the

¹¹⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:2,15,16,19

¹¹⁷⁷ Romans 8:26-27

¹¹⁷⁸ John 14:16

right and authority to speak on behalf of His client. We are His clients, and whatever we can say or speak, the advocate can say or speak on our behalf. In this encounter, the Holy Spirit in league with the author's human spirit, spoke in prayer of tongues and sent the devil or demons away.

Adoption into sonship

Fourth, God has adopted us through His Spirit into sonship: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"¹¹⁷⁹ We are God's children. And when a demon attacks us, it is attacking God's children and God, our Father, will come to our defence.

The greatest gift God has ever given to humanity is not only our Lord Jesus Christ, but also Himself: "So if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"¹¹⁸⁰ The Holy Spirit is God. And God has given Himself out to us through the Holy Spirit. When we pray in tongues in spiritual warfare or otherwise, we activate life's most lethal weapon, God Himself. Like any other spirit, to live on earth, requires agents.

Extension of the authority of the name of Jesus

Fifth, speaking in tongues as an offensive weapon of spiritual warfare is an extension of the authority Jesus, our Lord, gave to us in His name: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."¹¹⁸¹ This was a promise God made a long time ago: "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks...."¹¹⁸² Our response is faith, and not fear; faith that the Holy Spirit will be with us in every battle we encounter with the messengers of darkness.

¹¹⁷⁹ Romans 8:15

¹¹⁸⁰ Luke 11:13

¹¹⁸¹ Luke 10:19

¹¹⁸² Ezekiel 2:6

Holistic

And last, praying in the spirit is holistic: “Pray in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition. To this end, stay alert with all perseverance in your prayers for all the saints.”¹¹⁸³ There is no one method of praying against the messengers of darkness; everything is on the table. By all means necessary, as it were, we ought to fight the members of the Kingdom of Darkness. Praying in tongues is just one of those methods. The Holy Spirit might show us other methods as we remain sensitive and cooperative with Him: “Do not quench [stifle; extinguish; turn away; restrain; put out] the Spirit.”¹¹⁸⁴ And the inference here is that our coldness and lukewarmness do quench the Holy Spirit. Faith in God and trust in the authority of Jesus Christ put us on fire with the Holy Spirit. When we pray in unknown tongues, we give the Holy Spirit the atmosphere necessary to glorify Jesus through us – and that includes putting the powers of darkness where they belong – under the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹¹⁸⁵

Précis

This chapter has discussed how speaking in other tongues can be used as a weapon of spiritual warfare. This is because it involves the exercise of the human spirit who is able to discern from God what the will of God is. More than that it involves being in league with the Holy Spirit. This in itself means that God is able to reveal what is happening in the Kingdom of Darkness and to provide direct promptings so that those praying may pray in context, at the right time and when it is demanded. Further, the power contained in tongues dislodges demons and because of the claim to sonship, believers can both make commands and benefit from the umbrella of protection inherent in being God’s children. And finally, praying in tongues is praying the will of God into action through the power that is contained in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

¹¹⁸³ Ephesians 6:18

¹¹⁸⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹¹⁸⁵ Romans 16:20

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Tongues
- Azrael
- Death
- Holy Spirit
- September 30th, 2022
- Lawyer
- Client
- Abba
- Father
- Scorpion
- Perseverance
- Quench
- Feet (under the)

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Praying in the spirit should be ____
 - A. Occasionally
 - B. At all time
 - C. When we feel like
 - D. When we don't feel like
2. To quench the Holy Spirit is all these, except ____
 - A. Stifle
 - B. Extinguish
 - C. Restrain or put out
 - D. Energize

3. When we pray in unknown tongues, we ____ Jesus.
 - A. Glorify
 - B. Dodge
 - C. Elude
 - D. Excite

4. “Abba” means ____
 - A. Father
 - B. Mother
 - C. Intimacy
 - D. Promise

5. Slavery leads to all these, except ____
 - A. Freedom
 - B. Fear
 - C. Bondage
 - D. A broken spirit

6. When our spirit prays in another language, it is an act of ____
 - A. Grace
 - B. Faith
 - C. Goodness
 - D. Power

7. As it regards intercession, the Holy Spirit brings us ____ to respond to God’s immediate need for prayer to be answered.
 - A. Promptings
 - B. Weeping
 - C. Groanings
 - D. Laughs

True/False Questions

1. Praying in tongues is praying the will of God into action through the power that is contained in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. T/F
2. Praying in the spirit is holistic. T/F
3. Speaking in tongues is an offensive weapon of spiritual warfare and is an extension of the authority Jesus, our Lord, gave to us in His name. T/F
4. The Holy Spirit is God. T/F
5. An advocate is the same as a lawyer. T/F
6. God has adopted us through His Spirit into slaves. T/F
7. praying in other tongues leads to defeat. T/F
8. The Holy Spirit helps us in our strengths. T/F
9. Tongues are for Pentecostals alone. T/F
10. Azrael is believed to be the archangel of life. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and explain the six ways in which speaking in tongues (other languages) activates the power of the Holy Spirit.

[1,500 words or less].

45 | ANGELS' MINISTRY

At the end of this chapter:

- You should be able to define angels
- You will learn about the categories of angels
- You will know how to release angels, and
- You will understand the angels-believers' alliance in spiritual warfare

Introduction

By angel, we mean, generally, a messenger and could be any messenger. Angels are regarded as messengers of God. An angel can also be a messenger of the devil. In this chapter, the use of the word “angel” will only be limited to those holy beings that portray super-human traits and sometimes perform miracles. Some angels are named such as Gabriel and Michael. Gabriel was sent to explain to Daniel the visions which Daniel saw.¹¹⁸⁶ In the New Testament, Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist¹¹⁸⁷ and the birth of the Messiah.¹¹⁸⁸ Michael came to Daniel's aid¹¹⁸⁹ and he is an archangel.¹¹⁹⁰ An archangel is an angel of a high rank. Satan, once known as Lucifer, is an angel and was an archangel as well.

Working Definition of an Angel

An angel is defined as a celestial, heavenly being powerful and glorious, serving God in truth. Angels were created by God and are in millions.¹¹⁹¹ They represent and guard God's interest on earth as well as in heaven. Angels could have been created sometimes before the

¹¹⁸⁶ Dan. 8:16 and 9:21

¹¹⁸⁷ Luke 1:11

¹¹⁸⁸ Luke 1:26

¹¹⁸⁹ Dan. 10:21

¹¹⁹⁰ Jude 9

¹¹⁹¹ Ps. 148:5, Rev. 5:11

creation of human beings¹¹⁹² and they can manifest themselves in human forms (known as theophanies) as the case of Lot and Sodom illustrates.¹¹⁹³

But, occasionally, an angel may be revealed in his full heavenly glory.¹¹⁹⁴ As may be observed, angels are spoken of in the masculine gender though they do not marry nor reproduce. And angels are said to be a company (counted in myriads) rather than a race of beings.¹¹⁹⁵

Categories of Angels

Although angels could be defined by their mission, they are, however, categorized into two, namely seraphim and cherubim.¹¹⁹⁶ Seraphim serve before God whilst the cherubim serve on various specialized missions. Within the two broad categories we might find more than one subcategory. Each subcategory may represent different functions and levels of authority including thrones, dominions, archangels and guardian angels.¹¹⁹⁷ Both the angels who serve before God and those on other specialized missions do worship before the throne of God and serve God obediently.¹¹⁹⁸

Angels serve different specialized missions to which they are highly committed. Guardian angels are assigned to each child at birth and do minister to that person throughout life. They may, however, withdraw in the event that that person turns against God and desires to do evil.¹¹⁹⁹

All angels irrespective of function do celebrate the spiritual birth of every sinner, "...likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."¹²⁰⁰ Angels seem to understand the importance of salvation to a sinner. This could be for two reasons. First, being spirits and having been made earlier than man, they know the amount of love and privileges that God has bestowed upon every person who comes to God. And second, they

¹¹⁹² Job 38:7

¹¹⁹³ Gen. 19; Acts 10:30

¹¹⁹⁴ Dan. 10:6, Matt. 28:3

¹¹⁹⁵ Matt. 22:30 and Luke 20:34-36

¹¹⁹⁶ For more in terms of categorization of angels, see Charles Mwewa, *Resurrection (A Spy in Hell)* (Ottawa: ACP, 2023), pp. 273-4

¹¹⁹⁷ Col. 1:16, Jude 9

¹¹⁹⁸ Ps. 148.2, Heb. 1:6

¹¹⁹⁹ Matt. 18:10

¹²⁰⁰ Luke 15:10

know the implications of Hell and its sting. They know that it is the abode of wicked spirits who rebelled against God, and a person treks there as an intruder. So, angels celebrate when they see a person chooses his original destiny.

In the similar vein, good angels escort the souls of Christians to paradise when they die in the Lord.¹²⁰¹ Some angels record the good and the bad deeds of our lives in the books, which will be opened at the occasion of the last judgment: “Then them that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a *book of remembrance was written* before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”¹²⁰²

Notice the importance of holy conversations and holy thoughts. Angels are quick to pick up holy conversations and make them known to the LORD. But more importantly, it is angels who record for God the good talks of those who fear God. Two conditions for that are specified: It is “them that feared the LORD”; and “them who thought upon His name.”

To fear the LORD is to hate evil, perversity and pride.¹²⁰³ To think upon the LORD is to be in constant fellowship with Him and to be surrendered to Him in order to allow our minds to be God’s throne for His own purposes.

But there is another aspect to the nature of recordings done by the good angels: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and *books were opened*, and *another book* was opened, which is the *book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the *books*, according to their works.”¹²⁰⁴ Angels who are in myriads, and definitely in greater number than the humans, do document the daily deeds of the human beings in these books.

All the works we do are recorded whether bad or good. There are books in which these works are recorded. The Book of Life only records the names of those who repented and asked Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior of their lives. In other words, without the books, there could not be any judgment, because the absence of one’s name in the Book of Life would be enough to condemn that one to Hell. Nevertheless, in harmony with the laws of justice, God desires that

¹²⁰¹ Luke 16:22

¹²⁰² Mal. 3:16 (emphasis added).

¹²⁰³ Proverbs 8:13

¹²⁰⁴ Revelation 20:12

everyone should understand the reason why they did not appear in the Book of Life and it is only their works that would justify that. This is akin to procedural fairness.

From this, it is apparent that one's destiny is a blank sheet until one dies. When we die, it is what we did while we were in the flesh that would speak: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their *labors*; and their *works* do follow them."¹²⁰⁵

Moreover, angels are used by God to bring messages to people.¹²⁰⁶ Similarly, the work of the Holy Spirit is distinct from that of angels in that angels administer material affairs to the humans while the Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God. Jesus was led by the Spirit, taught of the Spirit and filled with the Spirit, but He was defended and fed by angels.¹²⁰⁷ The bride of Christ is positioned next to God.¹²⁰⁸ And redeemed people will one-day judge angels.¹²⁰⁹ In fact, angels are currently sent to minister, or to serve those who will inherit salvation.¹²¹⁰

Interesting enough, while angels may collect evidence for and against us, they cannot judge us; only God can do that. Fascinating enough, in Christ, we have inherited sonship as children of God: "So He became as far superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is excellent beyond theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: 'You are My Son; today I have become Your Father'? Or again: 'I will be His Father, and He will be My Son'? And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all God's angels worship Him.'"¹²¹¹

Implicit in this verse of Scripture is the transcendental nature of our salvation through Jesus Christ. We, unlike angels, can call God "Our Father." We, unlike angels, share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ. And we, although like angels we worship God, will judge angels.

¹²⁰⁵ Rev. 14:13 (emphasis added)

¹²⁰⁶ Zechariah 1:9 13-14, 19

¹²⁰⁷ Matt. 4:11

¹²⁰⁸ Rev 21:9-14; 2 Tim 2:12

¹²⁰⁹ 1 Corinthians. 6:3

¹²¹⁰ Hebrews 1:14

¹²¹¹ Hebrews 1:4-6

Releasing Angels

Knowledge and confidence

In order to release angels to work for us, knowledge is vital. Apart from knowledge one also needs to have confidence. Angels are ministering spirits sent to minister to the saints. So, one needs only to be confident and distribute them. Angels will, therefore, be turned loose by one's confidence in the fact that such a one understands and knows their mandate.¹²¹²

State of innocence

A state of innocence or purity is vital to angelic operation.¹²¹³ Children are, generally, innocent and so they attract angelic ministration. But grown-ups also can attract angels when they are blameless and pure; or in situations where they are falsely accused.

The fear of God

The fear of the Lord is another factor to the releasing of God's angels. Accordingly, "The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them."¹²¹⁴ The fear of God is not only our weapon but it is key to angelic ministration. They that fear God will love Him and worship Him. Deliverance by angels comes to those who fear God. They may slip but they will be upheld by them.¹²¹⁵

Present companions in prayer

God has given us a blueprint concerning supernatural matters through prayer: "Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning *the works of my hands* command me."¹²¹⁶ In the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, sons or sons of God always alluded to angels: "Now there was a day when the *sons of God* came also among

¹²¹² Heb. 10:35

¹²¹³ Dan. 6:22; Matt 18:10

¹²¹⁴ Ps. 34:7

¹²¹⁵ Ps. 91:11

¹²¹⁶ Is.45:11

them.”¹²¹⁷The sons of God here are the angels. But by “the works of my hands” God, categorically, means humans.

God dares humans to “command” Him, but of angels, only to “ask” Him. This is one of the highest privileges God has ever bestowed upon human kind, in addition to adopting them into His family as His children: “But to all who believed him and accepted him, *he gave the right to become children of God.*”¹²¹⁸

There has been no work in the entire creation that has given God more joy than the creation of human beings.¹²¹⁹ If angels celebrated the creation of the world,¹²²⁰ they certainly celebrated more the creation of man and do so much more for every new birth.¹²²¹ So, we have established that of things concerning angels and human beings God says, “Command me.” It is our overt privilege to ask God for things, and even to command Him, when it comes to angels.

Perhaps, Jesus Himself gives us a much more comprehensive revelation as far as angels, prayer and God are concerned: “Thinks you that I cannot now *pray* to my Father, and he shall presently *give me more than twelve legions of angels?*”¹²²² That is about 72,000 angels. Jesus is saying that angels are always ready to fight for us. When we pray for angels to be released whether in times of trouble or just to help us in a challenging task, they will be released. And, moreover, angels are capable of making a hedge around us when we pray.¹²²³

Angels and God’s Word

The two thirds of God’s angels present do not comprise God’s Word as the third (demons and Satan) did. When we command them to work for us, it must always be in line with God’s Word. Whether by grace or under duress, angels don’t bend to malice, ungodly assignments or manipulation. They will only work when it is in the interest of God Almighty. No other name is able to trigger them but that of the Son of God. Through the name of Jesus, we trigger off angelic ministrations to the glory of God.

¹²¹⁷ Job 1:6 (emphasis added)

¹²¹⁸ John 1:12 (emphasis added).

¹²¹⁹ Gen. 1:26, 31; Ps. 8:4

¹²²⁰ Job 38

¹²²¹ Luke 15:10

¹²²² Matt. 26:53

¹²²³ Job 1:10

Allies in Spiritual Warfare

Sometimes, when we talk of spiritual warfare, we seem to paint a picture that angels are passive players in this ancient game. To the contrary, angels are ardent spiritual warriors who, collectively, have won many battles for God's people. Satan could not penetrate Job's household until God Himself decided to lift off His protection for a testing expedition.¹²²⁴ Michael and angels were responsible for evicting Satan and his demons from Heaven: "And there was *war* in heaven: Michael and his angels *fought* against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels [demons]."¹²²⁵ The devil always remembers this scene because it cost him heaven.¹²²⁶

Angels and Christians are allies in the conflict in which they fight to eject Satan from his position in the higher places. This is done, on the part of believers, by prevailing intercessory prayers that bring in more powerful angels to hinder Satan's work.¹²²⁷ In spiritual warfare, angels activate our spiritual weapons making them fatal against the devil's machinations. In actual sense, binding and loosening are the prerogative of humans augmented by the angels. To *bind* is to restrict the operation while to *loose* is to do the opposite. Hence, when we say, "We bind," we activate the angels to restrict Satan and his forces from achieving their diabolical mission. When we loosen the blessings in the heavenly places, angels start to unblock possible hindrances from the principalities, powers and dominions, thereby releasing to us our espoused spiritual blessings.¹²²⁸

Territorial Angels

Under the concept of territoriality, we examine the activities of holy angels at the expense of evil territorial spirits. We know for example, of the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece.¹²²⁹ And in the New Testament, we are aware of Paul's struggle "with the beasts at Ephesus."¹²³⁰ And this author remembers encountering a territorial

¹²²⁴ Job. 1:10

¹²²⁵ Rev. 12:7 (emphasis added).

¹²²⁶ Matt. 26:53; Is.14:12; Rev.12:9

¹²²⁷ Dan. 10:12-13

¹²²⁸ Eph. 1:3

¹²²⁹ Dan. 10:13, 20

¹²³⁰ 1 Corinthians. 15:32

spirit called *Nyami-nyami* at Livingstone, south of Zambia.

However, and in general, we are more ignorant of territorial holy angels than we are of demons. Some angels are assigned to a specific earthly territory. The Bible states that Israel and its cities are under angelic guardianship. Thus, we read in part: “And at that time shall Michael stand, the great prince which stands for the children of your people.”¹²³¹ Michael is, thence, represented as the Prince of Israel.

Prophet Ezekiel records hearing God speak to angels as, “Those who have charge over the city.”¹²³² In the New Testament, territorial angelic hosts stationed in Macedonia, in the famous *Macedonian Call*,¹²³³ begged Paul to go to preach in Macedonia. The “man” in that vision could easily be a territorial angel.

Angels are not capable of promulgating the Gospel message and little wonder in matters of preaching they always ask for a human agent. The reason is simple: Jesus Christ did not die for angels but for the humans. Peter’s experience with an angel in Joppa of Caesarea¹²³⁴ is a good lesson in territoriality.

Theological Efficacy

If the theological presumption of a third¹²³⁵ of angels are demons is to be efficacious, then God’s good angels outnumber the devil’s bad angels by two to one (2:1). This is supported by Elisha’s intimation:

Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” the servant asked. “Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.¹²³⁶

If demonology is anything to go by, then angelology (the study of

¹²³¹ Daniel 12:1

¹²³² Ezek. 9:1

¹²³³ Acts 16:6-10

¹²³⁴ Acts 10:1-48

¹²³⁵ Revelation 12:4

¹²³⁶ 2 Kings 6:14-17

angels) is a must for the survival of human existence. Spiritual warfare cannot be successfully waged without the presence of holy angels. We have the authority over the powers of Satan¹²³⁷ but angels have spiritual muscles to evacuate and annihilate Satan's offensives for our benefit.

When we command the enemy to go, and he resists, angels take it upon themselves to force the enemy out. That is why we should not mistake repeated commands of demons to go out of people as a weakness or a lack of faith. Demons are stubborn, and sometimes, with reinforcement from angels, we evacuate them after many commands. This is what makes us allies with angels in spiritual warfare.

This author has always invoked the ministration of angels whenever he has faced a demonic encounter. He remembers very vividly one day a demonic presence coming into his room and trying to prevent him from sleeping. He was very tired and all he needed was a peaceful night sleep. He prayed, "Father, I am tired and all I want is to sleep. I ask You to send Michael to come and deal with this evil presence. In Jesus' name, Amen." And off he went to sleep, and no evil presence troubled him thereafter. Indeed, angels are allies.

Précis

As a way of crowning it all, angels are highly useful and necessary. Like us, they are created beings and they do worship the Living God. They make the Word of God effective by doing God's pleasure, delivering and defending the saints in conflict¹²³⁸ and executing men's destiny.¹²³⁹ They also cause the saints to walk in evil-free paths and form a permanent fence for their security.¹²⁴⁰

¹²³⁷ Luke 10:19

¹²³⁸ Ps. 35:5-6; Acts 12:7

¹²³⁹ Ex. 23:20

¹²⁴⁰ Ps. 91:9-14 and Job 1:10

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Angelology
- Angels
- Archangel
- Archangel Gabriel
- Archangel Michael
- Beasts at Ephesus
- Chariots
- Cherubim
- Dragon
- Guardian angel
- Joppa of Caesarea
- Livingstone
- Lot
- Macedonian Call
- Ministering spirits
- Nyami-nyami
- Prince of Greece
- Prince of Persia
- Procedural fairness
- Seraphim
- Sodom
- Territoriality
- Theological efficacy
- Zambia

Multiple-choice Questions

1. ____ is the study of angels.
 - A. Angelology
 - B. Demonology
 - C. Exorcism
 - D. Satanism

2. The two broad categories of angels are ____
 - A. Cherubim and seraphim
 - B. Elohim and seraphim
 - C. Cherubim and Elohim
 - D. Moses and Elijah

3. Archangel Gabriel is a/an ____
 - A. Seraphim
 - B. Cherubim
 - C. Angel who conquered Lucifer
 - D. 24th elder

“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’” (Isaiah 6:1-13).

Answer questions 4 and 5 based on this passage:

4. Who is narrating the story?
 - A. Isaiah
 - B. God
 - C. An angel
 - D. King Uzziah

5. Why does the narrator take it for granted that the angel he saw was a seraphim?
 - A. Because it had six wings
 - B. Because the angel covered the face
 - C. Because the angel worshipped God
 - D. The foundations of the thresholds shook

6. If in the beginning God made one trillion angelic beings, what would be the number of holy angels now?
 - A. About 666,666,666,667
 - B. About 333,333,333,333
 - C. A myriad
 - D. Infinitum

7. All these may be territorial princes, except ____
 - A. Prince of Persia
 - B. Prince of Greece
 - C. The beasts at Ephesus
 - D. The Mayor of Catharge

8. Nyami-nyami is likely the principality over ____
 - A. Southern Zambia
 - B. Northern Zambia
 - C. Malawi
 - D. Northern Angola

PRAYER

9. What is the central difference between good or holy angels and demons?
- A. Angels don't marry
 - B. Demons do possess people
 - C. Angels obey every Word of God
 - D. Demons obey every Word of God
10. In the Bible, dragon may refer to Satan or to a/an ____
- A. Demon
 - B. Angel
 - C. Whale
 - D. Chinese gods
11. Who is the Prince of Israel?
- A. Adam
 - B. Michael
 - C. Gabriel
 - D. David
12. In the Old Testament, God called angels His sons, and human beings His ____
- A. Daughters
 - B. Works [of His hands]
 - C. Creatures
 - D. Pride

True/False Questions

1. Angels are created beings but demons and Satan are not.
T/F
2. Angels worship the Living God but demons and Satan dare to disobey Him. T/F
3. Angels make the Word of God effective by doing God's pleasure. T/F
4. Angels deliver and defend the saints in conflict between good and evil. T/F
5. Angels cause the saints to walk in evil-free paths and they form a permanent fence for their security. T/F
6. Human beings may command God of things concerning angels. T/F
7. Michael and angels were responsible for evicting Satan and his demons from Heaven. T/F
8. In order to release angels to work for us, only knowledge but not confidence is vital. T/F
9. Elijah prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see."
T/F
10. "Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hands command me" is quintessentially about prayer. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Discuss the consideration one must take into account to release angels.

[500 words or less].

2. “In general, we are more ignorant of territorial holy angels than we are of demons.” Discuss using contemporary examples.

[250 words or less].

3. Define Angelology, and provide biblical examples to highlight ways in which angels operate.

[1,500 words or less].

46 | SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND COUNSELING

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the nature of counseling
- You will be provided with general guidelines to counsel the demonized
- You will learn about the regiment to administer after deliverance
- You will learn about the qualities of successful counselors, and
- You will learn about the goals of counseling

Introduction

In Part V so far, we have given detailed discussions on the nature and operations of the demonic kingdom. From chapters 33 to 44, we have analyzed the satanic kingdom; manifestations of demons and their kinds; Satan's arsenal; covenants and curses; demonology; the heavenlies; tongues; and angelology. In this chapter, we provide general and universal guidelines in counseling those who have been delivered from various demonic bondages. In previous chapters, we defined the symptoms and diagnosed the conditions, but we now provide the formula for preserving the cure.

Nature of counseling

Before one can deal very well with issues of deliverance and counseling, certain tenets need to be very well internalized. Counseling is, generally, defined as a process by which a person is assisted to behave in a more rewarding manner. As a process, it takes place over a period of time and promotes healing, comfort, clarification and reconciliation. People who seek counseling usually have attempted to change their behavior by themselves but their efforts have come up short. So, they opt for seeking a mature and usually experienced

counselor who should offer them solutions, or attempt to offer them solutions.

There are three basic elements of counseling: The counselee; the counselor and the negative experience.

The counselee

The counselee is the person in pain desiring to be healed. The counselee identifies the negative experience and is helped to choose a path that is satisfactory. Those seeking help are experts in the problem and they could have been living with it for weeks, months or even years. Now they want it released.

The counselor

The counselor is the helper who listens. Once the counselee has recognized that they want to be released, it then becomes the counselor's duty to listen carefully and help the counselee spell out their needs. The counselor must prepare an atmosphere of acceptance and genuine care to facilitate the process.

The negative experience

And the negative experience is that which causes pain and distress. In this case, demonic influence, possession or attacks may be the negative experiences.

Qualities of Successful Counselors

In order to be a successful counselor , counselors must have the following qualities of successful counseling:

Genuineness

Genuineness is the quality most desired in counseling. Counselors should be genuinely concerned about the person they counsel. They must show empathy. Empathy is the ability that places oneself in another person's position. One can only convey one's understanding of

the counselee's problem through this basic quality of empathetic understanding.

Unconditional positive feedback

Allowing the counselee to expound on their problem and then to be understood is of great help in counseling. The counselor should have unconditional positive feedback or regard for the counselee. Whatever their clients tells them, counselors are still to be treated with the respect they deserve. They must be treated as persons and not problems. This means that the counselor needs to be non-judgmental.

Imaginable problems are faced in counseling, such as attempted suicide, rape, incest, drug addictions, child and spouse abuse, debilitating diseases, sexual harassment, homosexuality, cheating on spouse, witchcraft, murder, abortions, immorality, demon possession, and etc. The counselor should display positivism even in all these cases.

Dependability

Dependability is another desirable quality. The counselor must be a stable and dependable person who keeps both confidences and appointments.

Goals of Counseling

Counselors must set goals. Among the goals of counseling, counselors must plan to be successful in the counseling process. In counseling, there are both short-term and long-term goals. We begin with long-term goals. Long-term goals of counseling include removing symptoms; restoring to earlier levels of functionality; freeing the persons to reach their potential and helping them find personal meaning and values. In spiritual counseling involving satanic or demonic forces, long-term goals may involve a plan to study God's Word and learn how to pray.

Short-term goals include helping the persons to do what is in their best interest; reducing the emotional distress; and increasing relations with God and others. Meeting short-term goals will help both the counselor and the counselee to reach the long-term goals. These goals have value both in psychosocial and spiritual counseling.

Many problems encountered usually are psychospiritual. That means that they may have something to do both with spiritual and psychological influences. As such, the approach taken must ensure that clients are receiving the necessary spiritual and psychosocial help they need from competent counselors.

The aim of counseling is to help the counselee move from a state of brokenness towards wholeness. In many psychosocial counseling, healing is not considered a permanent cure but a reduction of, and, the healthy management of, the hurts in one's life. In this book, however, we view counseling as gearing towards healing, which is the total removal of the negative experience. For real healing of hurting people to take place, the counselor must be aware of the process by which counseling is carried out.

Conditions of Counseling

While specific counseling methods may vary, there are three essential conditions of counseling: Acceptance, reassurance and confidentiality.

Acceptance

Many people who come for counseling have experienced rejection in one way or the other. They must be accepted just the way they are. Attack the problem and not the person. Remove the sin but love the sinner. However, cases of biblical uncertainties must be taken with caution. If in doubt, ask for independent spiritual advice (ISA). ISA happens when a counselee seeks independent advice from another equally competent counselor before accepting the services of the counselor of record.

Reassurance

The wounded individual must feel that although their situation is causing a great deal of pain, it is not hopeless. Most often, people come to us asking for help, while they are fully persuaded in their heart of hearts that nothing can help. That is normal. And sometimes, it is true we can't help.

The counselor must not despair. She must find even the dimmest of help to render. Without this, the counselee may not find reason to continue.

Confidentiality

This is of utmost importance and we have alluded to it under “Dependability” above. The counselee must absolutely know that what they share will remain with the counselor and will not grow wings and fly. Cases of confidentiality would normally include cases in which the counselee appears to be a danger to themselves and to others. And this is very common in cases involving suicidal ideations, demon possession, suspected child and spousal abuses, HIV/AIDS, Covid-19, abortion, homosexuality, and etc. In most of these cases, the counselee must give the counselor informed consent, unless the former lacks the capacity to do so and the situation is critical.

In Church settings where the counselor is also the pastor, elder or leader, congregant-counsees should be assured that nothing would go to the pulpit. Turning one congregant’s or member’s problems into a sermon is a very weak way of conducting successful counseling. And holding a counselee’s version of problem as testimonial, equally fares far below the expectations of decency and dignity. In these situations, the Lord’s injunction is in order: “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”¹²⁴¹

Précis

This chapter has attempted to provide some guidelines on successful counseling. Counseling must come after exorcism, deliverance or prayer. In strategic levels of spiritual warfare where the negative experience could apply to a territory, counseling of the people concerned must be a priority. As in the Sin of Akan,¹²⁴² sometimes if one of the group members is hiding indignities or demonic portions or otherwise, I might affect successful group counseling.

¹²⁴¹ Matthew 6:3

¹²⁴² Josh. 7:1

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Abortion
- Acceptance
- Brokenness
- Child abuse
- Confidentiality
- Counselee
- Counseling
- Covid-19
- Decency
- Dependability
- Dignity
- Genuineness
- HIV/AIDS
- Homosexuality
- ISA
- Psychological counseling
- Psychological influences
- Reassurance
- Spiritual counseling
- Wholeness

Multiple-choice Questions

1. ISA stands for ____
 - A. Independent spiritual advice
 - B. Interdependent spiritual advice
 - C. Indiscreet spiritual advice
 - D. Independent satanic activities

2. All these constitute the three essential conditions of counseling, except ____
 - A. Acceptance
 - B. Reassurance
 - C. Confidentiality
 - D. Competence

3. The aim of ____ is to help the counselee move from a state of brokenness towards wholeness.
 - A. Counseling
 - B. Coaching
 - C. Deliverance
 - D. Negative experience

4. What are the long-term goals of counseling?
 - A. Removing symptoms
 - B. Restoring to earlier levels of functionality
 - C. Freeing the persons to reach their potential
 - D. All of the above

5. The quality of empathy in counseling is akin to ____
 - A. Dependability
 - B. Genuineness
 - C. Frugality
 - D. Confidentiality

True/False Questions

1. During counseling, attack the problem and the person.
T/F
2. Cases of confidentiality would normally include cases in which the counselee appears to be a danger to themselves and to others. T/F
3. Most often, people come to counseling asking for help, while they are fully persuaded in their heart of hearts that it will help them. T/F
4. For real healing of hurting people to take place, the counselor must be aware of the process by which counseling is carried out. T/F
5. In spiritual counseling involving satanic or demonic forces, long-term goals should not involve a plan to study God's Word and learn how to pray. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe the three conditions of counseling.
[250 words or less].
2. List and describe the three qualities of successful counseling.
[250 words or less].
3. Describe the spiritual nature of counseling in a case involving a formerly demon possessed individual.
[500 words or less].

PART VI

47 | CONCEPT OF REVIVAL

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define a revival
- You will trace revival terminology to Greek
- You will discover the levels of revival
- You will learn more about the Holy Spirit
- You will understand the operations and characteristics of the Holy Spirit, and
- You will link revival to prayer and grace

Introduction

The concept of revival is well illustrated in Ezekiel.¹²⁴³ Here, we are given a picture of a valley full of dry bones, very dry. God tells Ezekiel to prophecy sinew, tendons and skin on these dry bones. But they still remain only covered dry bones with no breath. Then, finally, God instructs the prophet to prophecy breath which finally makes these somewhat very dry bones become alive and a mighty army of Israel. To revive is to bring back to consciousness, to life and to strength; it is actually to bring back to existence. God commands a revival in this event; He even desires it. But it requires obedience. The Church *must* pray to see revival, and through revival, the Church can be catapulted to levels it has never seen in terms of praying. In this chapter, we explore the concept of revival and ascertain that prayer and grace cause, and in turn, are energized by revivals.

Definition of Revival from Greek's Point of View

In Greek, there are two words that mean revival: *Anathallo*, which means to flourish anew; and *Anazao*, which means to live again, to regain life. Putting together these two concepts, revival can be considered as a process by which that which was dead lives again or

¹²⁴³ Ezek. 37:1-10

that which had relapsed, come to flourish once again. In this conception, there is a presumption that something was once alive and flourishing but had backslidden for one reason or the other. Hence, revival does not happen but in regards to what was once dead or unresponsive. The Holy Spirit is the agent who brings back dead things to life.

And revivals happen for a purpose. A dead carcass is nothing but dead. It cannot pray, praise, love or engage in spiritual warfare. God desires to revive dead ministries, spiritually dead individuals, and backslidden Christians and churches into a mighty army, able to withstand all the wiles of the enemy and fulfilling the mandate of "...and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."¹²⁴⁴

Levels of Revival

It seems revival occurs at two levels: At personal or individual as well as at corporate or group levels. Where there is revival, individuals' commitments and love towards the LORD and His Word and their stand in the LORD become firm and immovable. Individuals might become so much engrossed in the "things of God" that their Christian experiences become a living style. Such individuals will pray more, evangelize more and strive more for holiness and fear of God. Such individuals will be so much flexible that they will become ready vessels to God for glorious usage.

When these individuals come together, they ignite a corporate revival. A group revival is extensive rather than intensive in scope. It transcends borders and nations. It almost always spells a spiritual revolution; a dramatic change in peoples' lives and attitudes. It can bring all evil spectrum to a standstill and whole villages, towns, cities and nations may find themselves craving for more of God.

In such situations, certain businesses like those dealing in liquor, cigarettes or prostitution come to a close. There is more affinity for the Word of God and multitude of people find Jesus as their personal LORD and Savior almost every second. In a revival situation, joy is consummated. Note: "When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with *laughter, and our tongue with singing.* Then they said among the nations,

¹²⁴⁴ Matthew 16:18 English Standard Version (ESV).

“The LORD has done great things for us whereof we are *glad*.”¹²⁴⁵

Joy is the river-bed of all revivals. People have their spiritual needs met, their embarrassments and ignominies vanish and a sense of freshness surfaces. Due to these and many benevolent experiences brought about by the Holy Spirit, people rejoice, exult and become merry. It is hilarious and there is tremendous sense of happiness such that relationships are restored, families become more united than ever and the spiritual infants are joyfully disciplined and tendered. What a time, Oh, what a moment of flourishing. Indeed, only revival is able to transform lukewarm churches and individuals into an army of joyous conquerors.

The Holy Spirit

The Greek word for Spirit is *pneuma*. The Holy Spirit is spoken of under various titles in the New Testament. Notice below various addresses given to the Holy Spirit, or simply Spirit or yet Holy Ghost in the Holy Scriptures: “Spirit” and “Ghost” are renderings of the same word *pneuma*; the advantage of the rendering Spirit is that it can always be used, whereas ‘Ghost’ always requires the word ‘Holy’ prefixed. The Holy Spirit is the number one factor in a revival. He is the one who blows that wind that brings life. In all major world revivals, it has always been the Holy Spirit who triggered the revivals. To *know* and *embrace* the Holy Spirit are two vital factors in sustainable lasting revivals. He brings dead lives back to life and causes societies to change and repent. Our role as humans includes recognizing and honoring His presence and being sensitive to His leadership at all times.

Holy Spirit Titles

Below are the titles used in the Bible to address the Holy Spirit:

1	Spirit	<i>Matt. 22:43</i>
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¹²⁴⁵ Ps. 126:1-3

CHARLES MWEWA

2	Eternal Spirit	<i>Heb. 9:14</i>
3	The Spirit	<i>Matt. 4:1</i>
4	Holy Spirit	<i>Matt. 1:18</i>
5	The Holy Spirit	<i>Matt. 28:19</i>
6	The Spirit, the Holy	<i>Matt. 12:32</i>
7	The Spirit of promise, the Holy	<i>Eph. 1:13</i>
8	Spirit of God	<i>Romans 8:9</i>
9	Spirit of the living God	<i>2 Cor. 3:3</i>
10	The Spirit of God	<i>1 Cor. 2:11</i>
11	The Spirit of our God	<i>1 Cor. 6:11</i>
12	The Spirit of God, the Holy	<i>Eph. 4:30</i>
13	The Spirit of glory and of God	<i>1 Peter 4:14</i>
14	The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead (i.e., God)	<i>Romans 8:11</i>
15	The Spirit of your Father	<i>Matt. 10:20</i>
16	The Spirit of His Son	<i>Gal. 4:6</i>
17	Spirit of the Lord	<i>Acts 8:39</i>

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18	The Spirit of the Lord	<i>Acts 5:9</i>
19	The Lord, the Spirit	<i>2 Cor. 3:18</i>
20	The Spirit of Jesus	<i>Acts 16:7</i>
21	Spirit of Christ	<i>Romans 8:9</i>
22	The Spirit of Jesus Christ	<i>Phil. 1:19</i>
23	Spirit of adoption	<i>Romans 8:15</i>
24	The Spirit of truth	<i>John 14:17</i>
25	The Spirit of life	<i>Romans 8:2</i>
26	The Spirit of grace	<i>Heb. 10:29</i>

The addresses or titles of the Holy Spirit in the Bible are phenomenal. He can be found on every letter of the English alphabet. That is to say that there are twenty-six titles in the Bible coinciding perfectly with the twenty-six letters on the alphabet.

The Holy Spirit is “He” and Not “It”

The personality of the Spirit is emphasized at the expense of strict grammatical procedure,¹²⁴⁶ where the emphatic Greek pronoun *ekeinos*, “He” is used of Him in the masculine; the noun *pneuma* is neuter in Greek, while the corresponding word in Aramaic, the language in which our Lord probably spoke, is feminine (*rucha*). The rendering “itself”¹²⁴⁷ is due to the Greek gender, which is corrected to “Himself” in the Revised Version.

¹²⁴⁶ See John 14:26, 16:8,13,14

¹²⁴⁷ See Romans 8:26

True Attributes

The subject of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament may be considered as to His divine attributes. In the first place, the Holy Spirit is God, hence He is *omnipotent*, and that is, all powerful. He is also omnipresent, or all-present and finally He is all-knowing or *omniscience*. In other words, the Spirit of God knows everything, has all power and is everywhere.

Second, the Holy Spirit has a distinct personality in the Godhead. Notice here that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What makes the Father or the Son God is exactly what makes the Holy Spirit God. He is truly God and has as much authority and power as the other two members of the Godhead have.

So, He is not *a* force, or power that God uses. But He works in harmony with the Father and the Son to bring divine results in the world. The order in the Godhead is neither by divine position nor for hierarchical arrangement but for functional purposes. If the Father is the final authority, then the Son is the way through which we can reach Him and the Spirit is the one who controls heavenly affairs on earth, and all are one.

Operations of the Holy Spirit

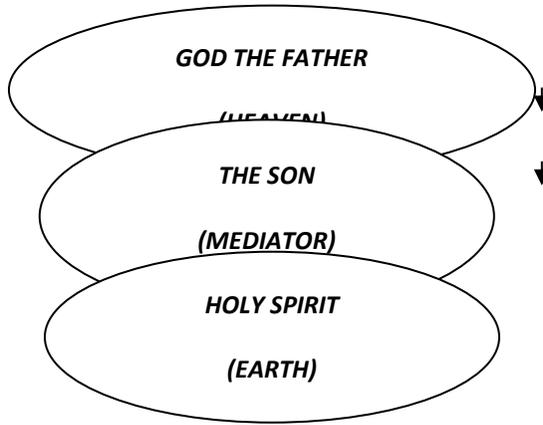
In pneumatology (or the study of the Spirit), we see the operation of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Lord Jesus in His birth, His life, His baptism, His death; His operations in the world, in the Church; His having been sent at Pentecost by the Father and by Christ.

We also see His operations in the individual believer; in the local church; His operation in the production of the Holy Scripture and His work in the world at large. We are warned not to quench the Spirit: “Do not quench the Spirit.”¹²⁴⁸ To quench in this context is to annoy, to disappoint, or to sin against.

The Holy Spirit is very, very sensitive to sin, unbelief and negative confessions. Each time we love the world at the expense of the Father, we quench the Holy Spirit. We quench Him in our worship services when we do not give Him respect. We quench Him in our daily life when we are disobedient to the will of God, and above all, we quench Him when we do not obey with all our soul, mind, heart and strength.

¹²⁴⁸ 1 Thess. 5:19

He likes it when we tell Him that we love Him and what He does in our lives. Just as we human beings have a personality and naturally feel great when we are told that we are loved, so does the Spirit of God. Below is a summary of the working relationship among the three members of the Godhead:



Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has five most important distinct yet related characteristics.

First, He is compared to wind, fire, water, oil and wine. The Holy Spirit is first likened to wind: “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the spirit.”¹²⁴⁹ The analogue to wind is critical to life. Breath is life.¹²⁵⁰ The Holy Spirit is seen as the initiator of the process of regeneration.

Second, wind denotes sovereignty. That is to say, we do not control wind but wind does control us. The Holy Spirit has power over nature and He cannot be dictated to. He operates as He wills.

Third, you cannot see the Holy Spirit but you can see what He does, the effects. The same is true with wind.

The systematic comparison of the Holy Spirit to fire is seen in the work of baptizing the saints into the power of God: “John answered,

¹²⁴⁹ John. 3:8

¹²⁵⁰ Ezekiel 37:1-10

saying to them all, 'I indeed baptize you with Water, but one mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'"¹²⁵¹ This is necessary for the work of witnessing¹²⁵² and for the miraculous.

Water, apart from having many other auxiliary uses, is principally used for refreshing purposes, quenching the thirst. The Holy Spirit comes to refresh our spiritual thirst. He gives us the energy to continue going as Christians.

Water is also used for cleansing purposes. So, that the Holy Spirit comes to clean us from sin by the work of conviction.¹²⁵³ Jesus revealed this when He said that the Holy Spirit gives living waters (true spiritual refreshment) which eternally refreshes our souls: "On the last day that great day of the feast, Jesus cried out, saying, '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.'"¹²⁵⁴

The Holy Spirit is also compared to sweet wine, which the Hebrews used to drink on ceremonious occasions. This is not the same as intoxicating beers the way we understand today: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹²⁵⁵

Effects of the Holy Spirit

From the above scriptural references, we learn that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will speak (about Christ and God's work), sing and give. These are the signs that accompany someone who is full of the Holy Spirit, not merely speaking in tongues.

The wine connotation

Wine is used in two senses in Greek. The first of these two words is *oinos*, which is a general word for wine. The drinking of wine could be a stumbling-block and the Apostle encourages abstinence in this

¹²⁵¹ "Luke 3:16 (emphasis added).

¹²⁵² Acts 1:8

¹²⁵³ John 16:8-9

¹²⁵⁴ John 7:37-38

¹²⁵⁵ Eph. 5:18-20

respect, as in others so as to avoid giving an occasion of stumbling to a brother.¹²⁵⁶ The word *oinos* is used metaphorically.

First, of evils ministered to the nations by religious Babylon, and second, of the contents of the cup of divine wrath upon the nations and Babylon.¹²⁵⁷

But the wine to which the Holy Spirit is compared is that which is represented by the word in Greek, *gleukos*, which denotes sweet “new wine,”¹²⁵⁸ where research shows that it was intoxicant free and must have been undergoing fermentation sometime. This is the kind of wine in the institution of the Lord’s Supper where He speaks of the contents of the cup as the “fruit of the vine.”¹²⁵⁹

This new wine, intoxicant free and sweet may be what the Bible speaks of when it compares wine to the Holy Spirit. It is not to be drunk so that we forget about the problems of the world, but it is to finish the troubles, gaining the tenacity and audacity to face negative challenges without fear or intimidation that we primarily imbibe in this holy awesome wine.

It is important to highlight that the Bible takes it moderately when it comes to wine, the injunction centers not on drinking it, but on doing so wisely: “And be not drunk with wine, *wherein is excess*; but be filled with the Spirit; Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord.”¹²⁶⁰ Here, Paul intricately combines two literary techniques of metonymy and metaphor to elicit the desired effect.

Thus, in one respect, the effects of the Holy Spirit are compared to those of wine, but at the same time, he is cautious that some may abuse the privilege. This, therefore, calls for wisdom and must be managed in conjunction with the regulation led down in Romans 14:21: “It is good not to eat meat or *drink wine* or do anything that *causes your brother to stumble*.”¹²⁶¹ In other words, you can eat all you want or drink wine unless it causes your brother or sister to stumble.

¹²⁵⁶ Romans 14:21

¹²⁵⁷ Rev. 14:10; 16:19:15

¹²⁵⁸ Acts 2:13

¹²⁵⁹ Mark 14:25

¹²⁶⁰ Ephesians 5:18

¹²⁶¹ English Standard Version (ESV)

Revival, Prayer and Grace

We have established that the Holy Spirit is the major player in revivals. And prior to this, we discussed the fact that to revive is to bring back to life, and in this regard, to spiritual life. We are, thus, equipped to prepare an atmosphere in which a revival is possible.

The idea of revival has been included in this manual on prayer because it is our thinking that prayer is the foremost channel through which revivals both emerge and thrive. We have to pray if we want to experience true revival. Individuals as well as churches are called to pray in order to perpetuate this ancient grace. As we pray, the Holy Spirit will begin to trigger revivals and set the Church on fire.¹²⁶²

Prayer causes revival and in turn it is caused by revival: “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly,”¹²⁶³ and “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *Spirit of grace and of supplication [prayer]*...”¹²⁶⁴ Where there is revival, the Holy Spirit is there, and grace and prayer will be there in abundance.

Précis

The Church of Jesus Christ is an unstoppable living force on earth. It will forever transcend heaven and earth and will become the Kingdom of God. However, individual congregations and individual Christians do, from time to time, falter and sometimes slide back into lukewarmness. Lukewarm churches and Christians have no impact on earth. That is why they need revival. The Holy Spirit, prayer and grace combine together to create conditions that necessitate revivals.

¹²⁶² Fire is metaphorically used in the Bible to either burn chaff or as a cleansing agent. In connection with revival, fire may mean the ability to light up with joy and to exude the quality of a purified life or lifestyle.

¹²⁶³ Acts 4:31

¹²⁶⁴ Zechariah 12:10 [emphasis added].

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- *Anathallo*
- *Anazao*
- *Ekeinos*
- Ezekiel 37
- Ghost
- *Glenkos*
- Godhead
- Holy Spirit
- Live
- Omnipotent
- Omniscience
- *Pneuma*
- Pneumatology
- Purpose
- Refreshment
- Revival
- *Rucha*
- Wine
- Zion

Multiple-choice Questions

Multiple-choice questions are based on the following passage in Ezekiel:

37 The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign LORD, you alone know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!’ ⁵This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath^a enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” ⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. (Ezekiel 37:1-10).

1. Who is the “Spirit of the LORD” in this passage?
 - A. The Holy Spirit
 - B. The human spirit
 - C. Jesus Christ
 - D. God

2. "Bones" are a symbol of ____
 - A. Dead animals
 - B. The Church
 - C. Israel
 - D. Both (B) and (C) are correct

3. "...bones that were very dry," alludes to ____
 - A. A dead Jerusalem
 - B. A dead Church
 - C. A well roasted lamb
 - D. A lukewarm Israel

4. The injunction, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD...'" describes ____
 - A. Prayer of weeping
 - B. Prayer of groaning
 - C. Mountain moving prayer
 - D. Prayer of power

5. The statement, "I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life" defines ____
 - A. Israel
 - B. The Church
 - C. Revival
 - D. Victory

6. The statement, "And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone" speaks of two agents, which are these?
 - A. Prayer and grace
 - B. Prayer and Holy Spirit power
 - C. Prayer and sounds of joy
 - D. Prayer and speaking in tongues

7. The phrase, “I looked...” may describe which injunction given by the Lord in relation to prayer?
 - A. Watching
 - B. Fasting
 - C. Praising
 - D. Dreaming

8. The statement, “Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live,” may denote that revival cannot happen without ____
 - A. A whirlwind
 - B. The Holy Spirit
 - C. Prayer
 - D. Life

9. The phrase, “So I prophesied as he commanded me...” may connote ____
 - A. That revival requires obedience
 - B. That revivals may be inspired by God
 - C. That revivals involve prayer
 - D. All of the above

10. The phrase, “...and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army,” defines ____
 - A. Purpose of a revival
 - B. The foundation of revival
 - C. The spirit of a revival
 - D. The spiritual nature of a revival

True/False Questions

1. The Holy Spirit is an “It”. T/F
2. There are approximately 26 titles of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Bible. T/F
3. Pneumatology is the study of the Spirit. T/F
4. The Holy Spirit has no distinct personality in the Godhead. T/F
5. The Holy Spirit is Lord. T/F
6. The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of grace. T/F
7. Omnipotent means all-knowing. T/F
8. Wine is forbidden in the Bible. T/F
9. The Holy Spirit is compared to wind, and wind stands for the breath of life. T/F
10. Prayer and revival cause each other. T/F
11. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both grace and prayer. T/F
12. *Oimos* is the best suited definition of the Greek word “wine” comparable in New Testament Christianity. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and discuss at least 20 titles of the Holy Spirit.
[1,500 words or less].
2. List and describe at least two attributes of the Holy Spirit.
[250 words or less].
3. Define pneumatology and locate the Holy Spirit in the Godhead structure.
[250 words or less].
4. List and describe at least four characteristics of wine, and explain how related they are to the effect of the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.
[500 words or less].
5. Establish a relation among prayer, grace and revival, and explain why all are needed to have an effective Church.
[1,000 words or less].

48 | THE ANOINTING AND PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will link the anointing to the Old Testament
- You will learn about the nature of the anointing
- You will understand the benefits of the anointing
- You will be able to distinguish between the anointing and the baptism into the Holy Spirit, and
- You will know more about the significance of the anointing in a believer's prayer life

Introduction

Each year, preachers all over the world tackle the topic of the anointing (also known as God's anointing or the Holy Spirit anointing). And the description is usually correct (the definitive qualities of the topic). However, the prestricitive (application of the concept to real life situations) is usually misplaced. This chapter defines the anointing, tracing it through the pages of the Old Testament and provides or prescribes ways in which this grace is actioned in relation to prayer.

The Definitive Recap from the Old Testament

The Old Testament both defines the anointing and provides the operational use of the term. The anointing in the Old Testament (OT) was accomplished by means of oil or the transfer of power from an already anointed instrument to the new recipient. The instrument was always a person, the agent was either oil ("rubbing") or laying on of hands (impartation), and the *essence* was the Holy Spirit.

In a nutshell, the anointing can be defined as a rubbing with the *essence* of the Holy Spirit-represented oil or hands or prayer to set a specific person apart for a particular manifested order or office or duty, the enablement. The enablement (or *essence* of the Holy Spirit) is a specialized function or power bequeathed upon a human being by the

agency of the Holy Spirit which enables them to operate a gift of the Holy Spirit or to function in a divine office or to undertake divine, spiritual or unique tasks. The enablement can be in the form of specialized abilities, unique talents or specialized geniuses. Enablement's are bequeathed as permanent gifts or callings and are irrevocable (are final and cannot be rescinded): "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."¹²⁶⁵ And entablements may accompany certain individuals by virtue of the spiritual or divine offices they occupy, such as elders for the healing of the sick.¹²⁶⁶ More has been discussed under this theme in the section below under "The Three Types of the Anointing."

Three Types of the Anointing

Critical review of the Bible (both OT and New Testament or NT) may reveal that there are generally three types of the anointing. In the first place, anointing takes on a more general meaning as a symbol of beauty (with a beautifying essence) or freshness. In Ruth, we read: "Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking."¹²⁶⁷ The rendition of "anoint yourself and put on your best clothes" follows naturally from an understanding that, to be attractive to a suitor, a woman must apply oil and put on her best clothes. Naomi used the word "oil" here in this regard. This is the first type of anointing. In Daniel we read: "I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed."¹²⁶⁸ Daniel did not use oil for freshness, as is also instructed by the Lord to do during fasting.¹²⁶⁹ David might have used the word "anointed" both for beauty and freshness: "You have anointed my head with oil."¹²⁷⁰ And the nature of this fresh, beautifying oil must be freshest, the finest, and rich. The end was to make happy.¹²⁷¹

¹²⁶⁵ Romans 11:29

¹²⁶⁶ See James 5:14

¹²⁶⁷ Ruth 3:3

¹²⁶⁸ Daniel 10:3

¹²⁶⁹ Matthew 6:17

¹²⁷⁰ Psalm 23:5

¹²⁷¹ Psalm 92:10

The second type of anointing is the anointing for burial. This followed naturally from the need to preserve the body “to help fight the effects of the rapid decomposition that occurred in the Mediterranean heat.”¹²⁷² And this is what our Lord means here: “She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.”¹²⁷³ This was in keeping with the Jewish custom and burial rituals. But by spiritual extension, she also performed two other roles with it; she became a mourner of her Lord in advance of His death, “So, Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there and said to her, ‘Please pretend to be a true mourner, and put on mourning garments now, and do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead many days,’”¹²⁷⁴ and she became a witness to or a foreteller of the Lord’s resurrection.¹²⁷⁵

The last type of anointing embraces all the essences of setting apart for office or duty or the endorsement of certain privileges or abilities. This is the anointing most relevant to the topic under discussion. This third type of anointing seems to perform four functions.

First, it set one apart for a priestly or kingly office. Aaron and his children were set apart for priestly office this way: “You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests.”¹²⁷⁶ On Aaron, the anointing also merged the aesthetic functionality with the preciousness of the priestly office: “It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes.”¹²⁷⁷

Prophet Samuel anointed David as king over Israel: “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward*. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”¹²⁷⁸ In this function, oil is just a symbol; the real power comes from the Holy Spirit.

In rare circumstances, such as this, we see the same phrase used in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily

¹²⁷² HD Livingstone, “Jewish Burial Customs and Anointing Oils,” October 10, 2017 <<https://classroom.synonym.com/jewish-burial-customs-and-anointing-oils-12087702.html>> accessed on October 17th, 2022

¹²⁷³ Mark 14:8

¹²⁷⁴ 2 Samuel 14:2

¹²⁷⁵ John 12:3

¹²⁷⁶ Exodus 28:41; see also Exodus 30:30, Leviticus 8:30

¹²⁷⁷ Psalm 133:2

¹²⁷⁸ 1 Samuel 16:13 (emphasis added)

upon David from that day forward.” This is what happened in the Book of Acts at the Day of Pentecost. Occasionally, in the OT, the anointing was the means by which some very few individuals got “baptized” into the Holy Spirit.

Second, it set apart certain structures or utensils for God’s use. The tabernacle and its contents was anointed: “Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy.”¹²⁷⁹ Priests’ garments were consecrated with oil.¹²⁸⁰ Jacob anointed a pillar of stones as a memorial: “So, Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top.”¹²⁸¹

Third, the anointing of oil functioned as a grantor of gladness: “The oil of gladness instead of mourning.”¹²⁸² Used this way, oil symbolized wholeness, happiness and the absence of mourning: “All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad.”¹²⁸³

And fourth, in the NT, mostly, the anointing was used in healing the sick: “And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.”¹²⁸⁴ While the first apostles appear to have ministered oil directly in the healing of the sick, James’ guidelines seem to be clearer. Thus,

Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.¹²⁸⁵

Oil as a means of healing the sick has been given to the ministry of “elders” (bishops, reverends, priests, pastors, elders, deaconess and deacons and everyone who may be ordained to lay claim to church

¹²⁷⁹ Exodus 40:9

¹²⁸⁰ See Leviticus 8:30

¹²⁸¹ Genesis 28:18

¹²⁸² Isaiah 61:3

¹²⁸³ Psalm 45:8

¹²⁸⁴ Luke 6:13

¹²⁸⁵ James 5:14-16

sacraments and liturgies). The elders must pray in combination with the administration of the oils. This ceremony must be performed in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

There is an implied assumption from this passage, and this author is bound to comply, that this type of ministration includes for those who may be critically ill and may not have the capacity or chance to confess their sins (whether they live or die). The conditional, “and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him,” has credibility. Elders praying for the critically ill who may not have the capacity to ask God for forgiveness on their own, must ask for those sick people’s forgiveness in prayer to God. There is also credibility in the belief that those who pray for the people who are about to die, may save their souls from Hell fire if they can pray to God for the forgiveness of their sins. Similarly, prayer must be offered for those in comas for the forgiveness of their sins.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals may contend with this assumption. However, that would be to undermine the power of God’s grace. This grace, though, only appears to be with those who follow James’ regulation. And the regulation involves the anointing oil and prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.

Uniqueness of Jesus’ Anointing

We have seen that the *essence* of the anointing is the Holy Spirit. Oil on its own is impotent, except only in its use as an aesthetic. All anointings are vicarious orders, in other words, oil is used as the representation of the Holy Spirit. But verses like the following potentially upset that order: “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, *how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power*, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”¹²⁸⁶ Jesus is the only one who has been directly anointed with the Holy Spirit, and power. Isaiah had prophesized this long time ago before Christ: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”¹²⁸⁷

Jesus’ anointing has power to liberate people from demonic and other bondages. The unique anointing God had bestowed upon our

¹²⁸⁶ Acts 10:38 (emphasis added)

¹²⁸⁷ Isaiah 10:27

Lord may also be termed as the “oil of joy”: “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you above your companions with the oil of joy,”¹²⁸⁸ and according to the Bible, this anointing is unique and it is above all that others might have had experienced.

As James alludes to, each anointing, whether with oil or imparkation (the laying on of hands), must be done in the name of Jesus. Thus, and by this act, we directly share into the unique power of Jesus’ anointing, which as Isaiah wrote, proclaims the good news to the poor, proclaims freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, and sets the oppressed free. And, of course, it does good and heals all kinds of diseases.

The Anointing is Irrevocable

It is credible to state that those are anointed will remain so forever as long as they remain in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ: “But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don’t need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. *So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.*”¹²⁸⁹ Although the first part of this verse refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the second part, however, establishes a principle that is applicable to both the Holy Spirit baptismal and to the anointing. Remaining in fellowship with Christ sustains all graces and powers in a believer.

The irrevocability of God’s gifts and callings is trite. God would never rescind His gifts and calling, no matter what the recipient or officeholder does. Sometimes this assertion is tended to be minimized because of the apprehension of seeming to give license to sin or abuse. In fact, God is aware that some will abuse or misuse His gifts and callings. He’s been dealing with such characters since eternity, one of them being Lucifer. However, even in the OT when the recipient of the anointing sinned, what was revoked was not the gift; it was the glory, which in the OT was synonymous with grace. God may take away His presence or luster upon an individual or a nation or an entity or a spiritual being’s life but not the gift or abilities He had bequeathed upon them with the gift.

¹²⁸⁸ Psalm 45:7

¹²⁸⁹ 1 John 2:27

Five stories, juxtaposed upon each other, will illustrate. The first one is to do with “Ichabod”: “She named the boy *Ichabod*, saying, ‘The Glory [grace] has departed from Israel’—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband.”¹²⁹⁰ Israel as a nation was still sequestered as a nation chosen by God. That did not change although God’s glory might have dissipated from Israel. The second one has to do with King Soul:

After the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, a spirit of distress from the LORD began to torment him. Saul’s servants said to him, “Surely a spirit of distress from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command your servants here to seek out someone who can skillfully play the harp. Whenever the spirit of distress from God is upon you, he is to play it, and you will be well.” And Saul commanded his servants, “Find me someone who plays well, and bring him to me.” One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a mighty man of valor, a warrior, eloquent and handsome, and the LORD is with him.”¹²⁹¹

King Saul was the first anointed king of Israel. The anointing gave him the ability to govern and lead a nation. When King Saul disobeyed God, his governance abilities were not taken, but God’s glory (power and grace) were removed and he was tormented by an evil spirit. He still retained the ability to govern. He could still govern but through the power of the evil spirit. The calling and gift of office were his forever.

The third has to do with Absalom and Ahithophel. Absalom was King David’s son and Ahithophel was one of the officials in King David’s government. Both rebelled against David’s rule. David temporarily lost his power as king but Absalom did not gain the anointing to govern by overthrowing David, either: “Then David said to all his officers [officials; servants] who were with him in Jerusalem, ‘We must leave [flee] quickly. If we don’t, we won’t be able to get away from [escape] Absalom. We must hurry before he catches [overtakes] us and destroys us and kills the people of Jerusalem [brings disaster and puts the city to the sword].’”¹²⁹²

¹²⁹⁰ 1 Samuel 4:21 (emphasis added)

¹²⁹¹ 1 Samuel 16:14-18 (emphasis added)

¹²⁹² 2 Samuel 15:14

Circumstances do not diminish one's anointing for office and neither does it pre-empt God's glory (grace and power) upon them. David still had the wisdom to pray against the counsel (advice) of Ahithophel. Even in exile, David had the gift of perception and he had grace with God: "So, David prayed, 'Lord, please make [turn] Ahithophel's advice foolish [into foolishness].'"¹²⁹³ This was a strategic prayer only a true statesman could coin, and it portended two things. Absalom would not get the correct advice and Ahithophel would be irrelevant to Absalom. The end would benefit David.

It is equally important to note that hardships do not suggest even remotely that God's grace (power and glory as per OT connotation) has been withdrawn from an individual. Although grace may be defined as unmerited favor, favor is not the same thing as grace. Grace is a quality of remaining inside of God's providence despite the raging circumstances. Thus, a person may still be enjoying God's grace while being buttressed by sickness, disappointments and hardships. These do not reduce God's grace, on the contrary, they may even perfect it: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power [glory] is made perfect in weakness."¹²⁹⁴ Grace operates despite negative circumstances and increases to the extent to which negativity increases.¹²⁹⁵ Grace rides on every circumstance (negative or positive) to reach a divine result.

Those who are mature do not question the reason why good Christians may sometimes face hardships. They do not ask the reason why bad people may sometimes prosper, either. God's grace is sufficient regardless of the circumstances.

Mere favor deals only with positivity. And this is the thing often mistaken for grace. To some people, a person has lost favor with God who goes through tough times. Most people who misplace the relationship between grace and favor are at odds with passages like the following:

Even if I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me, or *because of these surpassingly great revelations. So to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.* Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is

¹²⁹³ *Ibid.*, verse 31

¹²⁹⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:9 (emphasis added)

¹²⁹⁵ See Romans 5:20-21

sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.”
Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that
the power of Christ may rest on me.¹²⁹⁶

To the immature, this passage baffles logic. Does God use evil for a divine purpose, they may ask? The irony is, yes, He may, but only if the end is for His glory or for the good of the individual. This is akin to Job’s experience:

“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give up all he owns in exchange for his life. 5But stretch out Your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse You to Your face.” All right!” the LORD replied. “Make Job suffer as much as you want, but just don’t kill him.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and infected Job with terrible boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.¹²⁹⁷

God used negative circumstances for good to Job in the OT and to Apostle Paul in the New Testament (NT). In both situations, although the devil was involved, it was God and His servants who emerged winners. When Apostle Paul urges us to pray at all times,¹²⁹⁸ it means in good and bad times. In good times, we ought to pray with thanksgiving, and during hard times, we ought to ask God for strength to endure. Paul declares: “I know how to live humbly, and I know how to abound. I am accustomed to *any and every situation*—to being filled and being hungry, to having plenty and having need. *I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.*”¹²⁹⁹ Sometimes, the right prayer to offer during trying times is not that God should remove the hardship, but rather that He should provide us with the strength to endure. When we have endured, we will come out pure as polished gold. Job declares, “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.”¹³⁰⁰ And *en route* to character formation and hope, every believer must pass through endurance, “...perseverance, character; and character, hope.”¹³⁰¹ When we are faced with hardships and negative circumstances, our attitude must be one of gratitude, because we then know that we are on our way to acquiring good

¹²⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:8 (emphasis added)

¹²⁹⁷ Job 2:4-8

¹²⁹⁸ Ephesians 6:18

¹²⁹⁹ Philippians 4:13 (emphasis added)

¹³⁰⁰ Job 23:10

¹³⁰¹ Romans 5:4

character and gaining hope. This is one of the ways in which grace supersedes mere favor.

The fourth story has to do with Lucifer. Thus,

Your pomp has been brought down to Sheol, along with the music of your harps. Maggots are your bed and worms your blanket. How you have fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the ground, O destroyer of nations. You said in your heart: "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north."¹³⁰²

Lucifer (Satan) was adorned with beauty by virtue of the anointing as captain of the angelic hosts. It is the anointing because it set him apart as a special angel. However, when he sinned, he was "cut down to the ground," where he destroys nations. The unction and enablement and *essence* of God have been long gone, but Satan has largely retained and abused the gifts that came with his office. He is called the god of this world,¹³⁰³ and the deceiver of the brethren.¹³⁰⁴ He is also known as the Abaddon — Hebrew for "destruction," accuser, adversary, Angel of Light (a being Satan can transform into), and angel of the bottomless pit. He is the Antichrist, Apollyon — Greek for "destroyer," beast, Beelzebub — or "Ruler of the demons." Satan is called Belial, Devil, Dragon, the enemy, and the Evil One. For what he does, Satan is the Father of Lies, King of the Bottomless Pit, the Lawless One, and Leviathan. For what he commits, he is the liar, the murderer, a power of darkness, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the ruler of the darkness, the ruler of this world, the Serpent of Old, Son of Perdition, tempter, thief, and the Fallen Star.¹³⁰⁵

These names suggest that, although fallen, Satan has continued to use, albeit abusively, the gifts that were given to him by God. If God's gifts and callings were revocable, Satan would have been a done deal. Similarly, there could be those who once were greatly anointed by God with various gifts and graces who may still be thriving in those gifts, but for other purposes. When a believer backslides and returns to God,

¹³⁰² Isaiah 14:11-13

¹³⁰³ 2 Corinthians 4:4

¹³⁰⁴ Revelation 12:9

¹³⁰⁵ "Names of Satan," <

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop16/names-satan> accessed on October 17th, 2022

the gifts and callings upon them simply become redirected to the use and honor of God. They neither lost them nor gained them back; they had always been there. The anointing gives one the power to acquire certain privileges, graces and abilities. But it does not prevent one from abusing them or using them amiss.

And the fifth story has to do with Samson. Samson's anointing or power rested in his hair. He was strong. By the agency of Delilah, the Philistines managed to weaken him by cutting off his hair:

Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, where he was bound with bronze shackles and forced to grind grain in the prison. However, the hair of his head began to grow back after it had been shaved. Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They rejoiced and said, "Our god has delivered Samson our enemy into our hands." And when the people saw him, they praised their god, saying: "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy who destroyed our land and multiplied our dead."... Then Samson called out to the LORD: "O Lord GOD, please remember me. Strengthen me, O God, just once more, so that with one vengeful blow I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes." ... And Samson reached out for the two central pillars supporting the temple. Bracing himself against them with his right hand on one pillar and his left hand on the other, Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people in it. So in his death he killed more than he had killed in his life.¹³⁰⁶

Samson prayed. His prayer was that God should strengthen him once again. Samson had learned that the gift of strength had not been taken back by God, although sin and intrigue had hugely weakened it. It is important to note that the anointing without a life of prayer can get weakened, too. Samson's story illustrates that the gifts of God are irrevocable although we have a duty to abide in Him and give Him thanks through prayer for the anointing.

Nature of the Anointing: OT v. NT

First, there is the finding, a setting apart for a particular use. Whether it was in the OT or it is in the NT, the anointing is the means by which God sets apart a people for a special use. The difference between these

¹³⁰⁶ Judges 16:21-22, 24-30

two dispensations is that in the OT, God set apart a few named people. For example, he set apart Saul and David for the kingly office: “After removing Saul, He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart; he will carry out My will in its entirety.’”¹³⁰⁷ Similarly, God anointed Jehu for the kingly office and Elisha for the priestly office: “Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.”¹³⁰⁸ Likewise, in the OT, one could only occupy one office at a time, kingly or priestly, except Melchizedek: “For this Melchizedek, *king* of Salem, *priest* of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him.”¹³⁰⁹ This rare combination did not exist in any other mortal, and we now know the reason – because Melchizedek was a type of the Christ, and Christ, in the future ages, would establish a new order (Order of Melchizedek), a duality of function under grace.

The NT anointing is based on the Order of Melchizedek and it includes everyone, no special favorites, which Apostle Peter christened as a “royal priesthood”: “But you are a chosen race, a *royal priesthood* [the blending of the kingly and priestly offices into one], a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”¹³¹⁰ This is hugely different from the OT where certain few named people only qualified, for example, “And what more shall I say? Time will not allow me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets...”¹³¹¹

Second, the agent was either oil or laying on of hands; the representation of the Holy Spirit. For example, in the OT, “So, Samuel took the horn of *oil* and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.”¹³¹² Likewise, Moses laid his hands upon Joshua and anointed him as his successor: “And the LORD

¹³⁰⁷ Acts 13:22

¹³⁰⁸ 1 Kings 19:16

¹³⁰⁹ Hebrews 7:1 (emphasis added)

¹³¹⁰ 1 Peter 2:9

¹³¹¹ Hebrews 11:32

¹³¹² 1 Samuel 16:13 (emphasis added)

replied to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man with the Spirit in him, and *lay your hands* on him.”¹³¹³

And there was some variances between oil and laying of hands. For example, Samuel added “kissing” to the routine: “Then Samuel took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul’s head, *kissed him*, and said, ‘Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over His inheritance?’”¹³¹⁴ In the NT, these variances may range from act to act, as the Holy Spirit gives guidance and leadership. And as we shall see later, in the NT, prayer mainly remains the vehicle of impartation.

Third, there is a unique transformation when imparted with the anointing, whether in the NT or the OT: “Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be *transformed into a different person*.”¹³¹⁵ And this is reiterated in the Book of Samuel: “As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God *changed* Saul’s heart, and all the signs came to pass that day.”¹³¹⁶ The anointing, thus, brings a special ability to transform a person into having special abilities uncommon to others. For the NT, the entire Body of Christ has potential for this special ability through the action of the Holy Spirit. The obligation is not with the giver or the gift, but with the recipient. If believers want to walk in special signs or wonders, it is available to them through the Holy Spirit whom our Lord Jesus Christ sent. And this is the assumption of, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”¹³¹⁷ But at the base of all anointing, is the readiness to be witnesses of all that Jesus was, did and said: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses....”¹³¹⁸ The anointing transforms people to be effective witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever abilities the anointing brings upon a person, the end is to glorify God.

Fourth, the OT anointing foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, or the grace dispensation: “Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest. He will do whatever is in My heart and mind.

¹³¹³ Numbers 27:18 (emphasis added)

¹³¹⁴ 1 Samuel 10:1 (emphasis added)

¹³¹⁵ 1 Samuel 10:6 (emphasis added)

¹³¹⁶ 1 Samuel 10:9 (emphasis added)

¹³¹⁷ John 14:12

¹³¹⁸ Acts 1:8

And I will build for him an enduring house, and he will walk before My *anointed one* for all time.”¹³¹⁹

And fifth, the anointing is not only specialized, but also individualized: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon *me*, because he hath anointed *me* to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent *me* to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”¹³²⁰

These verses of Scripture are usually quoted amiss and applied universally. That would be contract to both logic and Scripture. This was a particularized anointing for our Lord Jesus Christ only. While, every Christian may preach, heal, deliver and liberate, it is only through the power of the name of Jesus that such feats may be accomplished. This anointing upon our Lord Jesus Christ, is passed, vicariously, to those who believe and receive Him. But it was uniquely His and was individualized for Him.

When an anointing is upon an individual, those individuals flow uniquely in those areas. As mentioned, the anointing may come either as a gift (or gifts of the Holy Spirit) or as a calling. Upon whomever it lands, that person will have special abilities (talents, even) to accomplish great things for God.

There is an anointing for every grace under the heavens. Some may be anointed to bring justice (such as lawyers, judges, counsellors, and etc.), “Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights. I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring *justice* to the nations.”¹³²¹ Some, to bring liberty and deliverance, to say to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ and to those in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’ They will feed along the pathways, and find pasture on every barren hill.”¹³²²

Some, like our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach, heal or liberate, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners.”¹³²³ Some, to perform miracles, “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised,

¹³¹⁹ 1 Samuel 2:35 (emphasis added)

¹³²⁰ Luke 4: 18-19 (emphasis added)

¹³²¹ Isaiah 42:1 (emphasis added)

¹³²² Isaiah 49:9

¹³²³ Isaiah 61:1

and the good news is preached to the poor.”¹³²⁴ Some, to speak the Word of God with clarity and power, “For the One whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.”¹³²⁵ Others, to sing, invent technologies, lead, interpret, write (like Dr. Luke and this author), and many more.

Anointing, the Holy Spirit Baptism and Prayer

The anointing should not be confused with the in-filling of the Holy Spirit (or the initial baptism into the Holy Spirit). The two may be related, but they are not the same thing. The anointing is the “rubbing” of the *essence* of the Holy Spirit. The baptism is an in-filling, indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The laying on of hands had become a regular practice for those who wished to receive the Holy Spirit: “Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”¹³²⁶ This was also repeated here, “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied,”¹³²⁷ and here, “Why I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands.”¹³²⁸ The “gift of God” refers to the Holy Spirit.

However, the initial reception of the Holy Spirit is not the same as the anointing. The Holy Spirit is received to indwell every believer through as a promise from God. The anointing is an act on the part of the Holy Spirit, while indwelling an individual, He may also distribute to them special gifts or callings for effective ministry. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is receiving a “person” of the Holy Spirit; the anointing is the distribution of gifts by the Holy Spirit to persons who have already received the Holy Spirit. While laying on of hands and oil were or may still be relevant to the receiving of the Holy Spirit, prayer is essential to the receiving of the anointing. Prayer brought the anointing, and not the other way round.

There is no anointing for prayer. Prayer is a command, “Pray without ceasing.”¹³²⁹ God has, thus, commanded everyone to pray. As

¹³²⁴ Matthew 11:5

¹³²⁵ John 3:34

¹³²⁶ Acts 8:17

¹³²⁷ Acts 19:6

¹³²⁸ 2 Timothy 1:6.

¹³²⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:17

discussed under “Intercession,” some people may have the “gift” of intercession, but all believers are commanded to pray. The reason is because prayer is the means through which people receive the impartation of the Holy Spirit for living and ministry. Apostle Paul is very explicit on this, he makes a distinction between a calling and gift, and prayer. Thus, Apostle Paul was called (anointed) to preach, teach and be an apostle, but prayer is for everyone: “For this reason I was appointed as a preacher, an apostle, and a faithful and true teacher of the Gentiles. I am telling the truth; I am not lying about anything. Therefore, I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or dissension.”¹³³⁰

There is no impartation for prayer; every child of God is urged, encouraged and even ordered to pray. While an anointing may sometimes result in a deeper prayer life, prayer leads to anointing. Those who pray will receive an impartation of the Holy Spirit in one way or the other. The Holy Spirit first came upon those who were praying:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near the city, a Sabbath day’s journey away. When they arrived, they went to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. With one accord they all *continued in prayer*, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.¹³³¹

Prayer took the place of the physical presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, prayer is a suitable replacement for the presence of the Lord. Prayer played a role before and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It might be written that prayer is relevant when the Lord is present in the body as it was relevant before the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers on earth. And after the rapture, those who will believe, will depend on prayer, even in the tribulation, to see them across.

¹³³⁰ 1 Timothy 2:7-8

¹³³¹ Acts 1:12-14

Précis

The Holy Spirit is key to the anointing and prayer is the avenue through which a believer receives the anointing. In the OT, God chose a few people whose prayers and relationship with God achieved either the royal or priestly impartation. However, in the NT, everyone who believes in Jesus Christ has been chosen to receive both the kingly and priestly anointing all in one. The Holy Spirit is available to transform people into effective witnesses or to distribute to them divers gifts, abilities, talents and the power to function in any one or more areas of specialty. The quintessential Anointed One is Jesus Christ, our Lord. By faith and trust in His name and through His name, every believer can operate in His anointing. Thus, through the name of Jesus Christ, the power of God is available and present to heal bodies and minds, save souls and deliver those who may be in bondage.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Anointing
- Holy Spirit
- Impartation
- Laying on of hands
- Oil

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The prescriptive connotation of the anointing informs ____
 - A. Its application
 - B. Its description
 - C. Its definition
 - D. Its conceptualization
2. The anointing involves at least three factors.
 - A. The source, the instrument and the recipient
 - B. The giver, the receiver and the source
 - C. The recipient, the receiver, and the giver
 - D. The recipient, the agent and the source
3. The ____ is the essence of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. Enablement
 - B. Endorsement
 - C. Empowerment
 - D. Endearment

PRAYER

4. Each of these may be the form in which the enablement manifests, except ____
 - A. Hope
 - B. Abilities
 - C. Talents
 - D. Callings

5. One of these is a function of an anointing.
 - A. Setting apart
 - B. Sanctification
 - C. Redemption
 - D. Salvation

6. The New Testament follows after the ____ anointing.
 - A. Melchizedek
 - B. Aaron
 - C. Levitical
 - D. Canonical

7. The anointing does each of these, except ____
 - A. It makes people speak in tongues
 - B. It transforms recipients into different people
 - C. The Holy Spirit works mightily in such people
 - D. It endorses with geniuses

8. ____ was used as the symbol of the ____
 - A. Oil; Holy Spirit
 - B. Oil; anointing
 - C. Laying on of hands; anointing
 - D. Laying on of hands; oil

9. What is the meaning of the irrevocability of God's gifts, including the anointing?
- A. God can't take them back
 - B. God can take them back
 - C. They are temporary bequeathments
 - D. Sin ends their existence
10. What is assumed in this statement: "Jesus Christ was uniquely anointed."
- A. That the anointing is individualized
 - B. That the anointing is general in nature
 - C. That Jesus' anointing applies to every believer
 - D. That Jesus can lose His anointing.

True/False Questions

1. There is a unique transformation when imparted with the anointing. T/F
2. The OT anointing foreshadowed the ministry of grace. T/F
3. The anointing is the same thing as the in-filling, in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. T/F
4. Prayer brings the anointing. T/F
5. Lucifer, Samson, King Saul and Ichabod all justify the irrevocability of God's anointing (callings). T/F
6. Grace is the same as favor. T/F
7. Hardships and negative circumstances diminish the anointing. T/F
8. Oil on its own is impotent; it is the Holy Spirit-infused prayer that gives it the unique anointing power. T/F
9. The Holy Spirit and power are always present when a person is operating under an anointing. T/F
10. Only elders can heal the sick in the name of Jesus Christ. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. James 5:14-16 seems to suggest that the elders' prayer of faith accompanied by anointing with oil in the name of Jesus can cause those people's sins to be forgiven. Discuss.

[500 words or less].

2. Distinguish grace from favor.

[500 words or less].

3. What does the idea of a holy-priesthood show?

[500 words or less].

4. Review 1 Samuel 21. How did the kingly anointing compliment the priestly anointing? How does the concept of grace feature into David-Ahimelek encounter at Nob?

[1000 words or less].

5. Discuss the different uses of oil in the Bible.

[500 words or less].

49 | PRAYER AND CHURCH GROWTH

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define Church Growth
- You will learn that prayerlessness hinders church growth
- You will understand the reason why prayer is important to the local church
- You will understand the reason why prayer is important to the universal Body of Christ, and
- You will be able to deduce the relationship between prayer and church growth

Introduction

In Chapter 47, we saw that prayer does more than just ignite revivals. It is also instrumental to the growth of local churches and the Church. In this chapter, we discuss prayer and church growth.

Definition of Church Growth

Any working definition of church growth must take into account indices of *quantity*: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,’”¹³³² *quality*: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles,”¹³³³ and *organizational complexity*: “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the

¹³³² Matt. 28:18-20

¹³³³ Acts 2:42-43

Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So, after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”¹³³⁴

The Importance of Prayer to Church Growth

Prayer is absolutely important in any religious activity, more especially in Christianity. Christianity is a living entity; and that being so, it demands that its constituent parts be nourished, nurtured and tendered. Every professing Christian must be defined by prayer because a Christian is born by prayer.

Prayerlessness is detrimental to God’s work on earth. Many things we term impossible or difficult, are only so because we do not take them to God in prayer. Someone once said, “There is no such word as ‘impossible’ in the dictionary of God.” Those who pray become like their God who makes *impossible* circumstances and situations *possible*.

When we pray, we unblock the heavenly barrages that release the heavenly water to irrigate the earthly fields. Prayer is a primary tool in church growth. But in spite of this, most churches still do not pray. This is noticed during most church programing.

Prayer is almost not a priority. And one of the challenges at our disposal comes when the Church invites the congregation to a time of prayer and fasting. Few people normally would turn up. This is one of indications that prayer is either placed lowest on the list or is deemed difficult or even boring.

Prayer meetings, in most churches, are poorly attended, and missionary prayer meetings are usually left to the elderly, at least in the West. Prayerlessness seen to be the Church’s major ill. There are progressive dinners, visits to old people’s homes (again, in Western churches), youth outings, musician’s practices, home Bible studies (especially, in African churches) and numerous committees. But prayer meetings are fewer in numbers, and if any, they are very poorly attended.

Moreover, this trend resurfaces when we consider prayer books lying unpurchased in bookshops. Prayer books are rarely bought and yet they make a whole difference between church growth and church stagnation.

¹³³⁴ Acts 13:1-3; see also Acts6:1-7

Classification of Church Growth

The above observation just points to the neglect of prayer in the Church. While we appreciate Bible studies, musical concerts, wedding festivities, outings and the like, we should not abandon prayer meetings. The difference between big and small churches is among other factors, their prayer lives.

Church growth is classified into four categories: Quality or internal growth; expansion growth; extension growth; and bridging growth.

Quality or Internal Growth

This takes place when a church is edified and is growing in grace toward Christian maturity. It is sometimes known as *teleological growth*. It often results in and from evangelism among the children of church members. Examples of such kind of growth are found in Scripture.¹³³⁵

Expansion Growth

This class of growth occurs within a community and is mostly from evangelism when converts are won from the same culture or social group as the evangelizing church.

Extension Growth

This growth describes church planting. That is, when a mother church establishes a branch or daughter church in another community. Again, it is mostly the product of evangelism within the same cultural or social group.

Bridging Growth

Bridging growth is sometimes known as *commissioning growth*. This occurs when churches are planted within communities, which, compared with the originating church or community, are significantly different in terms of culture, race, language or socio-economic status. It may result from evangelism in which the target community is totally different from the witnessing community. Expansion, extension and

¹³³⁵ See 1 Corinthians. 2:6, 3:1, 13:11; Eph. 4:14; Phil. 3:15; Heb. 5:14, 6:1.

bridging growth will also necessitate growth in organizational complexity.

The Essence of Prayer to Church Growth

There are five reasons why prayer is essential in church growth:

Its impact on church leaders

There is a great need to pray for everyone in the Church, especially for church leaders. By church leaders we mean first and foremost, the fivefold ministers: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the *perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we *all* come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.¹³³⁶

The fivefold ministers have more responsibility, and, of course, accountability than any worker in the church. Jesus has appointed them to be His representatives on earth to perfect the saints for the work of ministry leading to “all” coming to that coveted unity of the faith (Kingdom of God) till we all measure up to Christ. These church leaders have much more responsibilities over them than the average church members, but the mandate is a unified aim.

A church leader can be the most burn out individual you can ever find. Looking after sheep can be a boring activity sometimes. But looking after human souls is rather tough. They need grace from God. More often than not, it is church leaders who are accused of the church’s lack of growth.

And with much responsibility, also comes much accountability. Church leaders are accountable to their words, time and reputation. Moreover, church leaders may be more subject to temptation than mere church members. The reason is simple: Because the high up you go on the ladder of Christian leadership, the higher you go on Satan’s hit list. The devil will tempt these Christians with riches, popularity,

¹³³⁶ Eph. 4:11-13

pride, material gains, sex and the list is unending. This may be the reason why some church leaders may not progress, so they need prayer so that they cannot fall into temptations but concentrate on enhancing church growth.

They are chief targets of spiritual warfare. It has now become known that over the last several years, satanists, witches, new ages, occult practitioners, charmers, spiritists and other servants of darkness, have entered into an evil covenant to pray to Satan for the breakdown of the marriages of church leaders. This is, of course, expected.

Church leaders have more influence on others due to the nature of their job. This is the reason why if church leaders fail, sin or are seen to do something 'unchristian,' the negative impact is global. Church leaders have more visibility than other church members. Since they are upfront, they will be closely observed. No wonder, if they do something good no one seems to appreciate but if they do bad things, the entire society breaks loose on them.

Its impact on preaching

Prayer is vital to church growth because it ensures boldness on the spoken word. We noted above that evangelism is key to church growth. It, therefore, follows that preacher women and men need prayer so that they can promulgate the Gospel with much boldness. The first century Christians¹³³⁷ prayed that God would grant them boldness. And that resulted in many souls being won to the Lord.

Its impact on church organizational structures

Leadership is very, very important in any living organization. Without a proper leadership machinery, a big and growing church may suddenly crumble. It is imperative to pray that right leaders are positioned in right leadership capacities. Leadership appointments should never be based on flimsy grounds but on prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

After praying, God can show us persons after His own heart. Additionally, these individuals must be loyal both to God and their overall leadership. And they must also be spiritually achievers, not failures. They must exhibit a defined good and acceptable Christian

¹³³⁷ See Acts 4

character and should be able to be good caretakers of their own gifts.

Its capacity to generate power

The fourth reason why we need to pray for church growth is because prayer releases power in the church. This is necessary for the supernatural. Power is essential in our quest to expel demons from tormenting humanity. Power is what brings masses to church.

When they know that their sicknesses will be healed and their difficulties will be solved, they will rush to church. But if there is no power in the church, people will rather go elsewhere. Spiritual power is clearly not a luxury of human tricks; it is generated when people spend time in the presence of God. It is theirs by authority of Christ, and it becomes available through the Holy Spirit.

Its impact on spiritual warfare

Last, prayer is important in church growth because of spiritual warfare. We can defeat the messengers of Satan by warfare prayers, among other spiritual weapons. We can release people from the chains of bondage to find Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Furthermore, we can prevent many malevolent tactics of the devil from stagnating God's work. The Bible says that we do not fight human beings,¹³³⁸ but satanic forces, and so it is only right to engage them in spiritual warfare through prayer.

Prayer's impact on spiritual warfare cannot be underestimated. It demobilizes the enemy forcing him to capitulate: "...the Kingdom of Heaven has been *forcefully advancing*, and *violent people are attacking it*."¹³³⁹ Note here that the Kingdom of Heaven is not in a state of violence. It advances violently (or forcefully) against a violent Kingdom of Satan.

The Kingdom of Heaven is a spiritual system that disarms the devil and his forces thereby limiting their impact on the Church. With consistent and fervent praying the church can release the power necessary to liberating the masses into spiritual freedom. People as a result will be able to have their eyes opened to see the goodness and the glory of the world to come. The church must pray its growth through.

¹³³⁸ Ephesians 6:12

¹³³⁹ Matthew 11:12 (emphasis added).

Précis

The relationship between prayer and church growth is like that between people and their shadows. Where there is one, there must be the other as well. It is inconceivable that a non-praying church can grow. The Church is a supernatural entity. Growth is only possible through prayer, through association with its source, who is God.

Professional organizations, associations, industries or earthly institutions can easily grow without recourse to any metaphysical experiences. But with the Church, it is different. Prayer is a must. Preaching, church organization and administration are also necessary for a church to have a balanced growth. And it is prayer that ensure that the church is well organized and that preaching has power.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Apostle
- Bridging
- Commissioning growth
- Community
- Church growth
- Church leaders
- Cultural or social group
- Evangelism
- Evangelist
- Expansion
- Extension
- Fivefold ministries
- Impact
- Language
- Organizational complexity
- Pastor
- Prophet
- Quality
- Quantity
- Race,
- Socio-economic status
- Teacher
- Teleological growth
- Violence

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Church growth must be defined in relation to all these, except ____
 - A. Organizational complexity
 - B. Quality
 - C. Effectiveness
 - D. Quantity

2. A church may be classified in terms of all of the following, except ____
 - A. Its expansion
 - B. Its position
 - C. Its extension
 - D. Its bridging effect

3. Jesus said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Which class of church growth is depicted in this order?
 - A. Quality
 - B. Bridging
 - C. Teleological
 - D. Quantity

4. The other name for bridging growth is ____
 - A. Commissioning growth
 - B. Organizational growth
 - C. Purity growth
 - D. Quality growth

5. “Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all” (Acts 2:36-42, see 41). What class of church growth happened in this context?
- A. Expansion growth
 - B. Extension growth
 - C. Bridging growth
 - D. Internal growth
6. “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ And after they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them off,” (Acts 13:2-3). What class of church growth happened in this context?
- A. Expansion growth
 - B. Extension growth
 - C. Bridging growth
 - D. Internal growth
7. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs,” (Acts 2:42-43). What class of church growth happened in this context?
- A. Expansion growth
 - B. Extension growth
 - C. Bridging growth
 - D. Internal growth
8. What is the other name for internal growth?
- A. Quality
 - B. Quantity
 - C. Bridging
 - D. Commissioning

PRAYER

9. This class of growth happens where there is a significant difference in terms of culture, race, language or socio-economic status with the originating church.
- A. Quality
 - B. Quantity
 - C. Bridging
 - D. Commissioning
10. “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So, after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off,” (Acts 13:1-3). This type of collaboration explains
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- A. Organizational complexity
 - B. Ministration compromise
 - C. Evangelistic precogitation
 - D. Missionary ingenuity

True/False Questions

1. Teleological growth and internal growth mean the same thing. T/F
2. Elders and deacons are members of the fivefold ministers. T/F
3. The fivefold ministers are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. T/F
4. Church leaders are never burned out because they have the power of the Holy Spirit in them. T/F
5. Prayer is irrelevant to church growth. T/F
6. The Church is a living organization. T/F
7. There is something like having the right leaders in the right leadership positions in churches. T/F
8. Prayer is the only weapon we have in the Church. T/F
9. Prayer generates spiritual power for church growth. T/F
10. The Kingdom of Heaven is in a state of violence. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Explain this passage in relation to the impact of leadership on church growth.

[500 words or less].

2. “But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile believers. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with the Gentiles, because he was afraid of those who were in favor of circumcising them. The other Jewish believers also started acting like cowards along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action. When I saw that they were not walking a straight path in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?” (Galatians 2:11-14).

Using all the knowledge you have acquired in this chapter, discuss the above passage, by giving relevant examples.

[1,500 words or less].

50 | PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC PRAYER

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to distinguish private prayer from public prayer
- You will learn about the foibles of public praying
- You will learn about the indices of good public prayer and praying
- You will know how to lead a public prayer engagement, and
- You will know the steps to take to prepare for a public prayer meeting

Introduction

In *Measure for Measure*, we read, “When I would pray and think, I think and pray....”¹³⁴⁰ Thoughts are precious. But vocalized thoughts can be sensitive, because once thoughts become words, they cannot be retrieved. In Ecclesiastes we are warned: “Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words.”¹³⁴¹ In principle, public praying goes against the grains of the secretive regulation: “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”¹³⁴² However, in practice, it may be unavoidable. Most of the events in which our Lord prayed publicly,¹³⁴³ or in which some of the heroes of faith in the Old Testament prayed publicly¹³⁴⁴ had to do with intercession, and not personal prayers. In this chapter, we look at a very delicate subject of public praying.

¹³⁴⁰ II: iv: 1

¹³⁴¹ Ecclesiastes 5:2-3

¹³⁴² Matthew 6:6

¹³⁴³ See Luke. 23:34 or John 17

¹³⁴⁴ See 2 Chronicles 20:13-17; 1 Kings 8:22-61; Ezra 9:3-11; etc.

The Domain of Public Praying

As much as we are all aware that prayer must primarily glorify and please God, we should not, however, forget the fact that it is offered on earth, the domain of man. Owing to the secretive injunction given by the Lord Himself, some basic principles of making a mature prayer in the public are presented. Public prayer must sound sweet but more importantly, it must be effective. In Chapter 26, we defined a powerful prayer as “that which causes the prayer to achieve the purpose for which it was made.” However sweet the prayer might sound, if it cannot deliver the goods it was made for, it is not a powerful prayer. Conversely, if the prayer sounds awful, but it delivers the goods, it is still effective or powerful. But, it is better that the prayer is both beautiful (well delivered) and powerful.

Not uttered in a vacuum

This author has been asked several times why his prayers sound sweet and edifying. His answer may shock you. They are made to be. You may ask, are we to impress people at the expense of God? The answer is definitely no. If the state of the heart is right, the good delivery of the prayer is justified, and vice versa. Public prayer is not done in a vacuum. There is an audience before us.

Variability of the audience

The audience is an assortment of all kinds of people. It may not be homogenous all the time. Some people in the audience may be rich, others poor; some may be educated, others uneducated; some may be excitedly interested in the prayer meeting, others may show disinterestedness; some may be *laissez faire*, others critical.

Hitting a punch

Our public utterance should have a punch. It should bring heaven down on earth. It should not leave people wondering what they were doing or why they had attended the meeting. The prayer should not leave people in a quandary. It should be beautifully prayed before men and powerfully delivered before God.

Praiseful inducement

After we pray in public, people should feel good and praise God. After we pray in public, people should be excited and be helped to reflect. After we pray in public, people should like it and desire to do so themselves. It should be good and pleasing to God.

Constructed with knowledge and heart

A good prayer is not an accident; it must be constructed with knowledge and heart. When people address their earthly dignitaries, they carve their speeches so beautifully that the impact of those speeches can instantly be felt. We are standing before the God of gods, the Maker of the universe. If we are to minister before Him, it must be with excellence and dignity, a divine pageantry that reflects the glory, majesty and splendor of the One who is God.

Indices of a Good Public Prayer

A good public prayer must be constructed with the following three indices in mind: Logos, pathos and ethos.

Logos

This is the logical content of the prayer. We can say that it is the rational thought of the prayer. This is what we have consciously prepared to say to God, in form of request, praise, thanksgiving, worship or concern.

This is the message that we have thoroughly thought through and we would like to deliver to God before men. It is the aim of our prayer, logically arranged and dutifully uttered in public to the glory of God. The advantage of Logos is in the fact that it will help us to avoid vain repetitions in prayer.¹³⁴⁵

Well, it is true that the Spirit will lead us into saying something, but it is not true that He will speak anything apart from that which we have collected in our logic. The Logos is the material upon which He will create the end. We should not be fooled into thinking that we can just say anything to God in any disorganized way because He knows

¹³⁴⁵ See Matthew 6:7

everything. We will need to organize our thoughts properly and know what we want to say.

This calls for a subject, a theme and subsequent points to accomplish our aim. What is the subject of a prayer, is to open a church service, to pray before dinner or supper, before going to bed, when in need of money, and so on? Similar questions may be asked for public prayer. Of course, it is not always that we start outright from our theme, we might need first to acknowledge God and offer thanksgiving. The only time we do not need a Logos is when we are before our persecutors and the Spirit will speak through us.¹³⁴⁶ At that time, we need a *rhema* word.

Pathos

This is the emotional content of the prayer. When we are speaking or praying, we need to capture the attention of our audience through this quality. The Pathos is what we do when we want our audience to sympathize, laugh, rejoice or enjoy with us. We achieve this through the choice of words, expression on our face; the posture in our stance; our figures of speech or the use of imagery. This is also achieved by the sound and the rhythm of the words we are producing.

Jesus revealed a secret which is undermined because of the subject characters involved, but it is valid, nevertheless: “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to *pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men [public prayer]*. I tell you the truth, *they have received their reward in full.*”¹³⁴⁷ This, in combination with, “Again, truly I tell you that if two [or more] of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven,”¹³⁴⁸ suggest that a public prayer attracts immediate answers. The reason is because it is a quintessential prayer of agreement.¹³⁴⁹ When people pray together in unity in the name of Jesus, God answers instantly. A public prayer may, therefore, be one of the most answer-guaranteed propositions. Because, by its nature, it meets the elements of a prayer of agreement as long as there is unity.

¹³⁴⁶ See Matt. 10:16-20

¹³⁴⁷ Matthew 6:5 (emphasis added)

¹³⁴⁸ Matthew 18:19

¹³⁴⁹ See Chapter 25 for a discussion on the Prayer of Agreement.

Ethos

Ethos is the character of the speaker. We have to be always what we are. Our prayer must come naturally without any extortion. Our lives must be open before men and blameless before God. The hearers must attest to our prayer; giving credit to the fact that the prayer and the *prayor* (the one praying) are one and the same.

By this we mean, the one praying and their prayer are not different. Let the audience say 'yes' or 'amen' at the end of the prayer without doubt. In other words, Christian character and one's way of life must come out under this aspect.

Leading Public Prayer Meetings

Leading public prayer meetings can be a very difficult task at times, especially to those who have had no experience. Basically, spiritual, personal as well as physical preparations are vital before leading the meetings.

Spiritual preparation

The leader must get ready as early as possible. They must pray and seek God's leadership in the meeting. Before selecting prayer items or requests, they must pray and ask for God's guidance. If possible, they should choose their items prayerfully.

A serious leader will need to avoid such things as may cause them to become cold for God, especially a day before the meeting. The previous night before the meeting, they should find a cool atmosphere where they can be alone and listen to the Holy Spirit. If possible, they should receive a passage or scriptural verse from the Holy Spirit. If there is no theme for the meeting, this might help them in the commencement of the meeting.

Personal preparation

Personal preparation is also very much important. The leader must ensure that they are decently dressed. They must have all the necessary tools and effects to assist them lead, such as paper towels, handkerchiefs and voice tuning in good condition.

If using a public announcing system, the leader must avoid holding the microphone (mic) closer or in contact with their lips. This is both for hygienic purposes as well as to void disturbing echoes. The mic must be just reasonably nearer to their mouths that they can sufficiently be heard by everyone.

The leader must ensure that the tone of their voice is set in parallel with the *spiritual wavelength* of the meeting. The spiritual wavelength of the prayer meeting is the strength at which it is being conducted. It is the *spiritual mood* of the meeting. It could be low or high. If there are *auxiliaries* (those who may be called upon to help lead the meeting in prayer), they should ensure, too, that they maintain the acclaimed spiritual wavelength, also known as the *wave-tone*. This is very important, because lack of sensitiveness in this matter may dampen the spirit of the leader, and even of the prayer meeting.

The spiritual wavelength is the rhythmic tone, timing and trajectory at which the prayer leader is operating. Auxiliaries must make sure that they are at the same strength as the leader. When this is done, it will ensure that the *progression* is the same. Progression is the continuous flow of the prayer meeting from request to request until the meeting is done. *Prayer items or prayer requests* constitute the list of all the items on the agenda to be prayed for. The piece of paper (or a board, a tab, a marker, a sticker, or a label) on which prayer requests are written is the *prayer docket*. The heightened podium or pulpit on which the prayer leader conducts public prayers is called a *prayer rostrum*.

Some people have a tendency to either lowering or increasing the spiritual wavelength thereby causing the leader to restart the spiritual mood. This can be both discouraging and frustrating. If an auxiliary has either a lower or higher voice than the leader, they should try, if possible, to motion to the sound engineer to increase the pitch or volume on their mics and vice versa, to bringing themselves within the attendant spiritual mood.

Physical preparation

Since electric praise and worship are a must before intercession, physical preparation of the place is necessary. There can never be powerful breakthroughs without an electric prayer of praise and of worship and some anointed music. The worship leader, especially, must be in tune with the physical demands of the meeting.

The place or *venue* must be reasonably clean with all the instruments in place before hand. Musicians, too, must report early in order to rehearse with other stakeholders of a prayer meeting. The leader of the prayer meeting is also the master of ceremonies (emcee) and they should ensure that all that will be needed during the meeting is readily available.

It will be a failure on the part of the leader to come when everyone has already arrived. This is retrogressive for two reasons: First, it is an attitude of pride, and second, it does not do well for them in the event that something goes wrong. When the last happens, all the blame will be heaped on the leader. Punctuality will always help to save the day.

Précis

The contents of this chapter constitute the procedural aspect of the substance of Chapter 54, especially as it relates to national prayer day proclamation. When conducting national prayer days, the details highlighted in this chapter are germane. Otherwise, all churches that conduct weekly prayers and group or corporate prayer and fasting meetings are provided with a ready resource for conducting such meetings successfully.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Auxiliaries
- Domain
- Emcee
- Ethos
- Laissez faire
- Logos
- Maker
- Pathos
- Prayer docket
- Prayer items or requests
- Prayer leader
- Prayer rostrum
- Prayor
- Progression
- Public announcing system
- Public prayers
- Spiritual mood
- Spiritual wavelength
- Venue
- Wave-tone
- Worship leader

Multiple-choice Questions

1. All these apply to public prayer, except ____
 - A. Preparation
 - B. Sensitive
 - C. Unspiritual
 - D. Prayer leader

2. A place of the public prayer meeting is called ____
 - A. Venue
 - B. Cathedral
 - C. Synagogue
 - D. Rally

3. “The continuous flow of the prayer meeting from request to request until the meeting is done” defines ____
 - A. Progression
 - B. Spiritual wavelength
 - C. Wave-tone
 - D. Prayer items

“And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose.... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground” (Nehemiah 8:2-6).

Answer questions 4 to 6 based on the passage above:

4. In this passage, Ezra is the ____
 - A. Prayer leader
 - B. Grand Master
 - C. Volunteer
 - D. Cheerleader

5. In the statement, “And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose,” a pulpit of wood is the ____
 - A. Prayer rostrum
 - B. Prayer docket
 - C. Prayer book
 - D. Prayer request

6. The phrase, “And he read therein before the street...And all the people answered, Amen, Amen,” denotes a ____
 - A. Public prayer
 - B. Street betting
 - C. Public showoff
 - D. Large crowd

7. All these are forms of preparations required in conducting a successful public prayer meeting, except ____
 - A. Grandstanding
 - B. Physical
 - C. Spiritual
 - D. Personal

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8. What establishes the mood of a public prayer meeting?
- A. Spiritual wavelength
 - B. The prayer leader
 - C. The items carefully selected for the meeting
 - D. A committee of experts
9. All these are indexes of a successful public prayer meeting, except ____
- A. Dagos
 - B. Pathos
 - C. Ethos
 - D. Logos
10. What is the purpose of making an eloquently beautiful and sweet prayer in public?
- A. It glorifies God
 - B. It dignifies God
 - C. It settles and attracts the audience's attention
 - D. All of the above
11. In public praying, the domain is ____
- A. Subject to a variety of expectations
 - B. Private
 - C. A vacuum
 - D. Antisocial
12. The immediate benefit of a public prayer meeting is ____
- A. Praiseful inducement
 - B. Answer to prayers
 - C. A sense of unity
 - D. All of the above

True/False Questions

1. Public praying is anti-New Testament. T/F
2. The leader of the prayer meeting is also its emcee.
T/F
3. In conducting a public prayer meeting, personal preparation is more important than either spiritual or physical preparations. T/F
4. Worship is not very important to public prayer.
T/F
5. Auxiliaries can start at any wavelength they so desire.
T/F
6. In conducting public prayer meetings, the prayer and the prayor must be one and the same. T/F
7. The emotive content of the prayer is also known as logos.
T/F
8. The prayer leader must not be punctual; the auxiliaries can do the job. T/F
9. There is a relationship between the prayer of agreement and public prayer. T/F
10. Public praying relates directly to national days of prayer proclaimed in some countries. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Define the following terms:
 - a) Auxiliaries
 - b) EMCEE
 - c) Ethos
 - d) Logos
 - e) Pathos
 - f) Personal preparation
 - g) Physical preparation
 - h) Prayer docket
 - i) Prayer items (prayer requests)
 - j) Prayer leader
 - k) Prayer rostrum
 - l) Progression
 - m) Spiritual preparation
 - n) Spiritual wavelength
 - o) Venue

[1,500 words or less].

51 | HINTS ON SETTING UP A PRAYER MINISTRY

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to recognize that prayer is a business, and
- You will learn about the seven hints of setting up a Prayer Department

Introduction

Thomas Otway¹³⁵⁰ once said, “No praying, it spoils business.” The prayer ministry is like the engine of the local church. It is through this that sufficient spiritual power is generated to accomplish divine assignments. It will be an error of judgment for churches to suppose that the congregation will automatically pray. From this author’s long history and experience in the prayer business, he has realized that many church people do not willfully pray unless they are strongly motivated. It is one thing to acknowledge the value of prayer but another to put it in practice. This idea of putting prayer in practice is the reason why this chapter is included in this book.

The Prayer Department: Business of prayer

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines business as “a person’s regular occupation, profession, or trade.” Everyone in the church is called to pray. However, this calling is only in relation to personal growth. In terms of church growth, in general, prayer must be organized in church.

There should be a dedicated department whose specialty is prayer. The department may be called Prayer Department (or Department of Prayer) or Prayer Ministry (Ministry of Prayer). This department must have prayer as its “regular occupation, profession, or trade.” If possible, the department must involve a fulltime or regular personnel or an individual who may be variously called, a prayer pastor, an elder in charge of prayer, prayer leader, and etc. The department leader may

¹³⁵⁰ 1652-85

be paid or a volunteer. The pastor of the church can also be the leader of prayer in the church in which they minister. But for whatever they are, their duty is to lead and develop prayer in the church.

Hints for Setting Up a Prayer Department

Need for the institutionalization of prayer

Let the prayer ministry be institutionalized. By this we mean putting a structure of prayer in place rather than leaving it running on its own.

Need for the establishment of a leadership structure

As a follow up to the structuring of the ministry, establish a leadership structure. A prayer ministry like the church itself is a living institution. It outlives its leaders and should, therefore, be made in such a way that it works with a structure of leadership.

The training of prayer leaders should be primary

Prayer leaders should not be those who operate only by faith. They must be trained in the principles of leadership and they should be mature. They should always undergo refresher training in order to be braced with emerging trends in the prayer movement.

Working with the principle of motivation

Usually, this ministry requires constant motivation. The leader of the church should not be negligent enough to negate the impact of prayer, but, rather, should endorse it in preaching, talks and even casually. Prayerless people usually have a tendency to degrade those who pray; but this is unnecessary. Even a slight negative comment regarding the vitality of prayer can adversely affect the prayer potential of a local church.

Need for the coordination of prayer

Prayer is a network. It involves the entire church. And as a result, it must be coordinated. The leader of prayer may also be called the prayer

coordinator because their job is not to lead only but to synchronize the activities of prayer in the system as well.

They must be aware of the prayer temperature in the church and ensure that people are praying as individuals as well as corporately. This will call for a system of prayer monitoring. The best way to do this is to decentralize prayer, but centralize its leadership. This means that every other ministries in the church may have their own prayer programs but with the knowledge and blessings of the church prayer coordinator. This will avoid the haphazard running of nominal prayer rebels.

With each level of decentralization should also come the appointment of sub leaders whose job is to follow up the progress and report to the coordinator. During the general prayer meetings which involve a large group of people or the entire church, the coordinator and the pastor of the church should lead the prayers. They may also ask other leaders (auxiliaries) to pray or lead in prayer in a well-coordinated manner. The coordinator must be a mature and faithful member of the church who has demonstrated keen interest in prayer. He may not be full time but should meet regularly with the pastor to pray together and chat the spiritual temperature of the church.

Need for documentation

Every prayer item should be documented. Record keeping is very important because it ensures that all the items prayed for are properly documented. This is essential as it will allow the leadership to monitor progress and give glory to God. Record keeping in itself is a dynamic source of thanksgiving in later times. For this reason, it may be ideal to appoint a prayer secretary who reports directly to the prayer coordinator.

Need for logistical support

The church should make sure that there is adequate space for the people to pray, a venue. A prayer room should be set apart and kept neat and available to the members on a twenty-four-hour basis. If the church does not have a permanent building, logistical arrangements should be made to rent a room. If the church lacks the means for such, prayer mountains or open spaces may be used. Creativity is key and

God can make a way.¹³⁵¹

The cleanliness of the prayer room should be emphasized. It is not advisable to conduct prayers in dirty conditions, let alone in poorly ventilated rooms. Prayer should be dignified in the same way we dignify the abode of our earthly dignitaries. The condition of the place will affect the quality of praying. Sometimes, the room may be too small to necessitate quality praying or too uncouth to render the sense of honor that God requires.

The prayer room or venue must be accessible to all who desire to pray in the church. It should also be accessible by anyone who may need to pray. However, accountability procedures must be put in place. These will ensure that there is security and safety of all concerned.

Need for functionality

Prayer administration is a must if a prayer ministry has to function. In the church, we have a wrong theory that the spirit will lead. So, we leave things to chance and hope that something will happen. A prayer department must be functional and must be managed on a day-to-day basis. This book will prove to be a useful source of materials to be used for such and all other prayer purposes in the church.

Once a strong prayer ministry exists in the church, it will reduce the load off the pastor, thereby allowing them to deliver well-baked and researched sermons. It will also ensure that there is sufficient power to do the works of grace. May the Lord find us not only believing but also praying when He comes back in His glory and power.

Précis

This chapter is ended on a point of grace: “Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”¹³⁵² In the New Testament, every activity or responsibility must be tempered with grace. So, too, is the creation of prayer departments or ministries. Church is not the work of man; it is the Body of Christ. Christ Jesus Himself is its head. Therefore, even in the setting up of prayer departments, the Lord of

¹³⁵¹ See Isaiah 43:19

¹³⁵² Psalm 127:1

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the House must be consulted. Christ, who Himself was a great prayer enthusiast and *prayer*, will always be available to provide the necessary grace to excel in the ministry He called the House of Prayer.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Coordination
- Creativity
- Department of prayer
- Functionality
- Institutionalization
- Leadership structure
- Logistics
- Ministry of prayer
- Motivation
- Prayer coordinator
- Prayer department
- Prayer ministry
- Prayer secretary
- Record keeping
- Training

Multiple-choice Questions

1. All these be involved in a business, except ____
 - A. Occupation
 - B. Profession
 - C. Trade
 - D. Prayer

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2. The prayer leader managing a prayer department may be called ____
 - A. Prayer pastor
 - B. Elder in charge of prayer
 - C. Prayer coordinator
 - D. All of the above

3. The prayer department must ____
 - A. Be managed
 - B. Be coordinated
 - C. Left to chance
 - D. Both (A) and (B) are correct

4. Any of these can suffice as a prayer room ____
 - A. Church building
 - B. Mountains
 - C. Home
 - D. All of the above

5. The prayer coordinator must ____
 - A. Be autonomous so that they can receive dreams and visions
 - B. Be very educated so that they can manage effectively
 - C. Be faithful to God, willing to learn and loyal to God and church leadership
 - D. Be good at praying that everyone opens their eyes when they stand to pray

True/False Questions

1. All one needs is a college degree to set up and manage a prayer department. T/F
2. Church is a living organization and a prayer ministry within it must also be a living organization. T/F
3. The pastor of the church cannot be the coordinator of prayer in the same church in which they pastor. T/F
4. Church must centralize prayer leadership across the board. T/F
5. At the minimum, a leader of a prayer department must know how to delegate, garner logistical support, document as record the operations of the department, and lead in prayer. T/F
6. Once a strong prayer ministry exists in the church, it will reduce the load off the pastor, thereby allowing them to enjoy coffee. T/F
7. Record keeping in itself is a dynamic source of thanksgiving in later times. T/F
8. During the general prayer meetings which involve a large group of people or the entire church, the coordinator and the pastor of the church should lead the prayers. T/F
9. A prayer room must be kept clean and neat. T/F
10. A prayer room must be accessible, but with safeguards in place to ensure the health, safety and security of everyone involved. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and discuss the eight hints needed to set up a thriving and successful church prayer department.

[1,500 words or less].

52 | PRAYER AND TECHNOLOGY

At the end of this chapter:

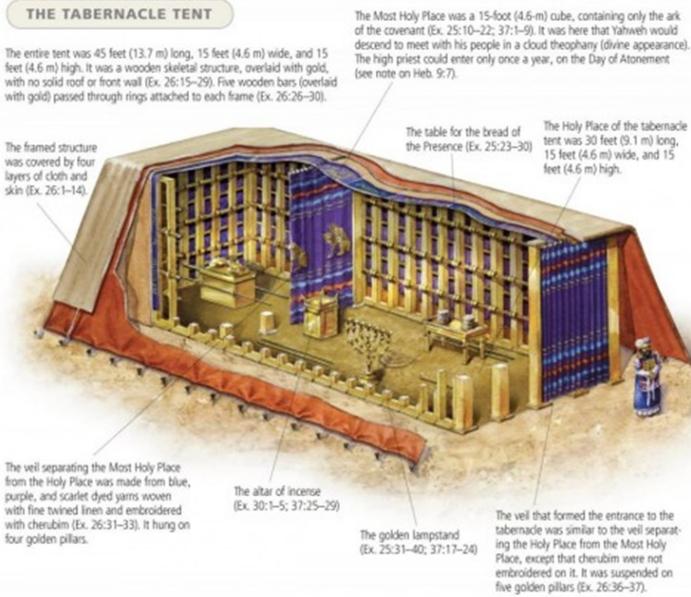
- You will be able to define technology
- You will be able to understand the biblical basis of technology
- You will easily explain the rationale behind the use of technologies in prayer
- You will be able to appreciate the use of prayer applications or tools in the enhancement of your prayer life, and
- You will learn more about some of the inaugural prayer applications in use today, and the benefits of using them.

Introduction

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing a prayer life that is rich and abiding. This, too, reveals the extent of God’s grace that He has poured liberally and without reservation. The Bible is very clear on technology. Apostle Paul gives a guideline: “Everything is permissible for me’--but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible for me’ – but I will not be mastered by anything.”¹³⁵³ Prayer technology is among some of those rare things that are both permissible (lawful) and beneficial (useful). The Bible and the Church have no equals when it comes to the use of technology. Indeed, throughout history, we see enormous innovations brought about by Bible-believing scholars, inventors, sculptors, architects, and so on. Among the Bible momentous moments when technologically-oriented inventions were used, was in the construction of both the tabernacle and the temples.

In this chapter, we will explain the biblical basis of technology and highlight some useful technologies out there for those who seek to enhance their prayer lives.

¹³⁵³ 1 Corinthians 6:12



(Source: Illustration from the ESV Study Bible, copyright (c) 2008 Crossway Bibles)¹³⁵⁴

Biblical Basis of Technology

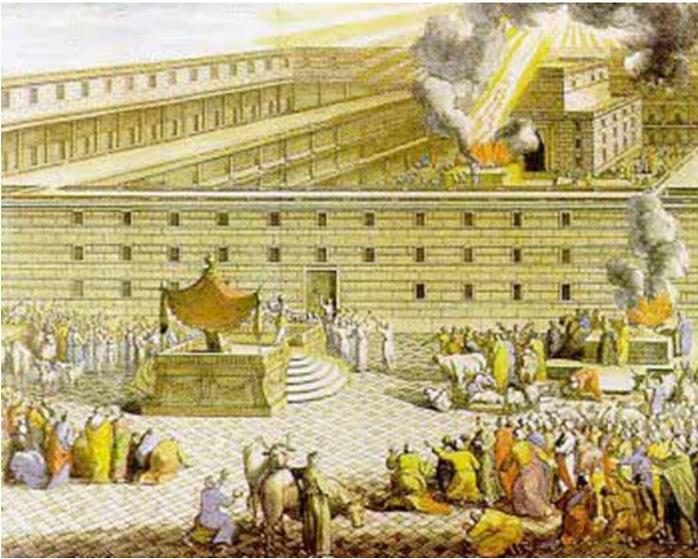
Technology is any invention that helps humans to solve problems. However, not every invention that solves people’s problem is technology. To be technology such an invention should be able to bring the solution much easier. For prayer, for example, technology would be any invention that solves the prayerless problem and enables those who pray to be able to receive responses or answers to their prayers easier. Thus, any invention that encourages one to pray and when they pray they can easily find prayer solutions (or answers to their prayers) is a prayer technology.

The Bible is littered with technological spurts from Genesis to Revelations. Cain could have only built a great city for his son, Enoch, with the aid of technology: “Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.”¹³⁵⁵ And Tubal Cain could only have forged things out of iron and bronze due to technology: “Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out

¹³⁵⁴ <https://www.theGospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-does-the-tabernacle-symbolize/> (accessed on September 24th, 2022)

¹³⁵⁵ Genesis 4:17

of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naaman.”¹³⁵⁶ Noah’s ark and the then tallest building on earth at Babel could only have been forged by some elevated technology.¹³⁵⁷ The tabernacle was a technological masterpiece in bronze, silver and gold architecture. It was a dwelling place of God: “Tabernacle, Hebrew *mishkan*, (‘dwelling’), in Jewish history, the portable sanctuary constructed by Moses as a place of worship for the Hebrew tribes during the period of wandering that preceded their arrival in the Promised Land.”¹³⁵⁸ The elaborate construction of the tabernacle is depicted by Britannica this way:



(Artist’s rendering of Solomon’s Temple)¹³⁵⁹

The entire Tabernacle complex—whose specifications were dictated by God, according to the biblical account—consisted of a large court surrounding a comparatively small building that was the Tabernacle proper. The court, enclosed by linen hangings, had the shape of two adjacent squares. In the center of the eastern square stood the altar of sacrifice for burnt offerings; nearby stood a basin holding water used by the priests for ritual ablutions. The

¹³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, verse 22

¹³⁵⁷ See Genesis 6; Genesis 11:1-9; and 1 Kings 6.

¹³⁵⁸ “Tabernacle,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tabernacle> (accessed on September 24th, 2022)

¹³⁵⁹ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-first-temple-solomon-s-temple>)accessed on September 24th, 2022)

corresponding position in the western square was occupied by the ark of the Law situated in the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle.¹³⁶⁰

King Solomon goes even a step further in using an elaborate state-of-the-art technology in the construction of the temple:

The Bible's description of Solomon's Temple (also called The First Temple) suggests that the inside ceiling was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The highest point on the Temple that King Solomon built was actually 120 cubits tall (about 20 stories or about 207 feet). According to the Tanach (II Chronicles): 3:3- "The length by cubits after the ancient measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits." 3:4- "And the porch that was before the house, the length of it, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the height a hundred and twenty; and he overlaid it within with pure gold." Solomon spared no expense for the building's creation. He ordered vast quantities of cedar wood from King Hiram of Tyre (I Kings 5:20-25), had huge blocks of the choicest stone quarried, and commanded that the building's foundation be laid with hewn stone. To complete the massive project, he imposed forced labor on all his subjects, drafting people for work shifts that sometimes lasted a month at a time. Some 3,300 officials were appointed to oversee the Temple's erection (5:27-30). Solomon assumed such heavy debts in building the Temple that he is forced to pay off King Hiram by handing over twenty towns in the Galilee (I Kings 9:11). When the Temple was completed, Solomon inaugurated it with prayer and sacrifice, and even invited non-Jews to come and pray there. He urged God to pay particular heed to their prayers: "Thus all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and revere You, as does Your people Israel; and they will recognize that Your name is attached to this House that I have built" (I Kings 8:43).¹³⁶¹

And finally in the temple-series, was the magnificent Herod Temple. It took 80 years to complete and conveniently replaced the Zerubbabel temples before it:

Herod (reigned from ca. 40–4 BC) was one of the great builders of antiquity; his goal in rebuilding the temple was to create *one of the most magnificent buildings in his day* and in the process to try to please his subjects, the Jews. Herod began to build his temple in ca. 20 BC—

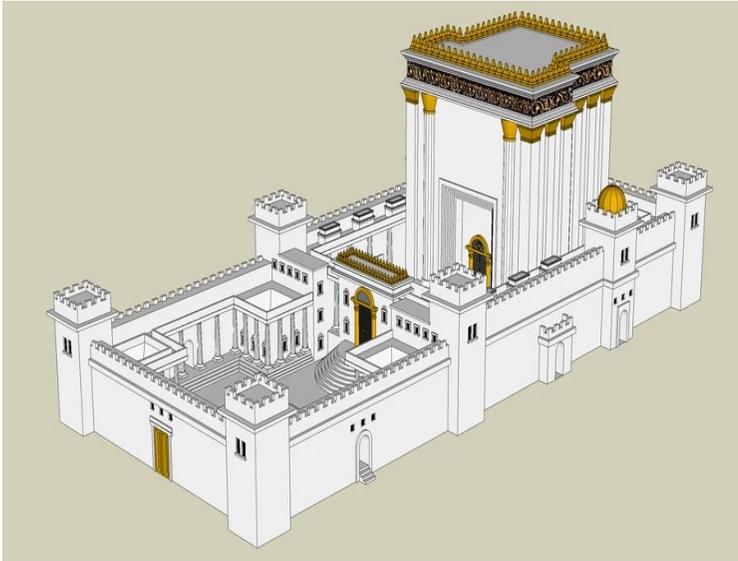
¹³⁶⁰ Tabernacle, *supra*.

¹³⁶¹ "The Jewish Temples: The First Temple - Solomon's Temple,"

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-first-temple-solomon-s-temple> (accessed on September 24th, 2022)

although the temple was not completed until ca. AD 63. According to Josephus, Herod believed that building the temple would be a task great enough “to assure his eternal remembrance” (Antiquities 15.380). Herod’s temple was *one of the wonders of the ancient world—a beautiful building and a marvel of engineering*. Josephus, who was an eyewitness of the temple, reported, “The exterior of the building lacked nothing that could astound either mind or eye....To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not over laid with gold was of purest white” (Jewish War 5.222–23). Ancient sources pertaining to Herod’s temple include the writings of Josephus (ca. AD 37–100)[6] and Philo (ca. 20 BC–AD 50)[7]—both eyewitnesses of the temple, and tractates in the Mishnah: Middoth (“measurements”), Tamid (“the permanent sacrifice”), Yoma (“the Day of Atonement”), and Shekalim (“the shekel dues”).[8] While there is no archaeological evidence of the temple proper, there are many architectural and archaeological evidences of the Temple Mount, including several important inscriptions. Looking West to the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. Looking West to the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. Josephus records that Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign (20–19 BC), gave a speech to the people in which he proposed to rebuild Zerubbabel’s temple in gratitude for the fact that he had, “by the will of God, brought the Jewish nation to such a state of prosperity as it has never known before” (Antiquities 15.383). His envisioned rebuilding project was a delicate operation since it would involve the complete demolition of Zerubbabel’s temple and the expeditious building of the new temple.[10] In order to assuage the fears of the people that he would not build the new temple after demolishing the old one, in consultation with religious leaders Herod first prepared all the necessary materials for his temple. Next, he allegedly appointed ten thousand men to rebuild the temple and specifically trained a thousand priests as builders and stonemasons so they would be able to carry out the construction in the inner courts of the temple where non-priests would not be allowed to enter (Antiquities 15.390–91). For the erection of the altar, Herod followed the biblical prescription (Exodus 20:22) and used stones quarried nearby not touched by iron (Jewish War 5.225). The temple proper was built in a year and a half and the surrounding porticos and courtyards in eight years (Antiquities 15.420–21). However, construction on the whole complex continued for more than eighty years from the time it was begun and was only completed in AD 63 (Antiquities 20.219; compare John 2:19).¹³⁶²

¹³⁶² “Herod’s Temple (ca. 20 BC–AD 70),” <https://rsc.byu.edu/new-testament-history-culture-society/temple-herod> (accessed on September 24th, 2022) (Emphasis added).



(Three D warehouse sketch of Herod's Temple)¹³⁶³

In the New Testament, our Lord Himself worked in the carpentry shop using tools that were available at that time. The great Apostle Paul utilized letter technology to its efficient ebb.

A quintessential verse on the necessity of technology especially in these end times is the injunction given to Daniel: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and from, and knowledge shall increase.”¹³⁶⁴

Technological Rationale

Consider a journey to the end of the earth via air or ship. In the olden days when technology was absent or in short supply, it would take a visit to a prophet or fasting to know the state of the weather and conditions of days when the trip would take place. Prayer and discernment would surely be needed and faith required to believe that the weather would be conducive for the voyage. But with technology, time and effect would be saved with the help of meteorological mappings and technology. It is now possible through technology to

¹³⁶³ (Source: <https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com/model/5308991be9bd083fad8a06dbec1d115/Herods-Temple> - accessed on September 24th, 2022)

¹³⁶⁴ Daniel 12:4

know when hurricanes will move, or volcanos will erupt or turbulence will be encountered or generally the geographical conditions over a prolonged period of time.

With such knowledge, it is easier to predict when to travel and therefore, to pray for less requests than if there was no technology. In a sense, such technologies make it easier to solve the journey problem. It would be the same for a land surveyor, a fisherman, a medical doctor, an engineer, even a lawyer who is equipped with vital technologies. They would be able to know in advance the nature of the problem and the right prayer to offer to lead to the quick solutions. Thus, technology would make it easier to both know and anticipate the outcome and thereby spending more time giving God thanks or concentrating on other areas in which they have least knowledge or understanding. In each case, God is glorified and the person achieves easier solutions to their problems.

Some technologies may be necessary to predict war, famines and earthquakes. “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”¹³⁶⁵ In fact, such technologies exist for earthquakes. There are certain technologies and equipment that are used to detect and monitor earthquakes. Technologies such as seismographs, creepmeters, and laser beams are used to detect seismic events.¹³⁶⁶ And, of course, “And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.”¹³⁶⁷ A polygraph, also known as a lie detector test, is one such technology that can be harnessed to even tell whether a prophet is true or false.

And crowning it all is the famous ignorance verse: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”¹³⁶⁸ Technologies engender mass knowledge. Ignorance has a deleterious effect on one’s not only wellbeing but spirituality as well. Thus, those with superior knowledge (technologies) will also be Last Days leaders of religion and spirituality. While in times past, divination, prophesying and

¹³⁶⁵ Matthew 24:7

¹³⁶⁶ “Earthquakes: Seismographs & Technology,”

<https://schoolworkhelper.net/earthquakes-seismographs-technology/#> (accessed on September 23rd, 2022)

¹³⁶⁷ Matthew 24:11

¹³⁶⁸ Hosea 4:6

discernment played a key role in causing the will of God to be done on earth, through technology, we can interpret heavenly phenomena better and reach necessary conclusions to help us prepare better for the Last Days.¹³⁶⁹

A verse most notorious for being oxymoronic is this: “Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”¹³⁷⁰ On one hand, there is a presumption of ignorance, but on the other, there is a command to be ready. The discrepancy created by this verse can partly be filled by technology. Through technology, we can read the frequency of natural disasters and heavenly phenomena, and through technology, we can calibrate the imminency of the Lord’s return. The marriage of science, philosophy and religion here is a blessing that ought to be harnessed for the end days.

Prayer Technology Tools (Applications or Apps)

In modern times, advances in technology have enabled us to reach wider audiences in a variety of ways using technologies such as: Letters, books, megaphones, radio, magazines, television, movies, satellites, the Internet, social media.¹³⁷¹ The increase in technology (knowledge) and the expansion in our brain size, go hand in hand. And, of course, of consequence, even for naïve believers, will be the chip technology during the desolation days: “Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.”¹³⁷² Applied Digital Solutions’ (ADS) VeriChip is already in use today.¹³⁷³

Many credit cards now contain radio chips that let consumers wave their credit card at a terminal to pay without entering a PIN code or signing a receipt. Smartphone are now using similar technology to transform it into a virtual wallet.¹³⁷⁴ Brandon Dalaly who owned a Tesla

¹³⁶⁹ See Luke 21:11b

¹³⁷⁰ Matthew 24:44

¹³⁷¹ <https://get.tithe.ly/blog/technology-in-the-bible> (accessed on September 23rd, 2022)

¹³⁷² Revelation 13:16-17

¹³⁷³ *CBC News*, “Microchip implants in humans on the market,” November 2002

¹³⁷⁴ *CTV News*, “New technology could turn Smartphone into virtual wallet,” July 6th, 2011

showed how his car key chip was permanently implanted in his hand to unlock his vehicle.¹³⁷⁵

Prayer can benefit from technology. No longer do people feel a drudge to pray; they can easily tap into certain technologies that make it easier and less a routine than a pleasure to pray. The more people pray, by using technology, the more answers to prayer there will be, and the better the world will get in the long run.

Some prayer technologies available at a glance on the online market today include:

1. Abide
2. Daily Prayer Guide
3. Echo Prayer
4. My Daily Prayer & Devotion
5. Ora
6. Pray.com
7. Prayer App
8. Prayer Guide
9. Prayer Promoter
10. PrayerMate
11. Prayers & Blessings Daily
12. YouVersion Bible App

Ten Benefits of the Prayer App Technologies

There are many benefits of the prayer applications' technology. Here, we identify about ten:

1. They help to combine life with prayer;
2. They lead to unintentional thoughts and conversations with and about God;
3. They a great source of being around everybody but alone with God, and forgetting everything;
4. They are very necessary for the spiritual improvement of a person;

¹³⁷⁵ Theo Wagt, *New York Post*, "Tesla owner implants car keys in his hand using microchip," August 26th, 2022

5. In difficult moments of life, they can offer that layer of help that prepares a person to concentrate their mental and physical strength on God;
6. They provide ready access to all the main Bible devotions that one can read and re-read as often as they need;
7. They ensure that we do not underestimate our conversation with God;
8. They remind us that prayer is the most important of all affairs of the day; and
9. They “go hand in hand with the modern technologies and trends of our time along with staying connected to the traditional religious roots”;
10. They let us listen and actually pray through biblical meditations, leading to better sleep and a stress less experience with Christ

Précis

Technology is here with us to stay, and it is a blessing. As our routines get more and more integrated into our work schedules and the inconveniences of public transport, Covid-19, hybrid systems of operation and social media, time may seem to seep off from us. Prayer applications and technologies become our solutions in those circumstances. With them, we can predict events, be ready for the end times, commune with God more frequently and more frequently see answers to prayer, be alert and sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and pray more. The benefits as itemized above are a testament to the inevitability of prayer technologies in our days.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Grace
- Prayer
- Prayer apps
- Prayer technology
- Technology
- Technological rationale

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What does the use of prayer technologies reveal?
 - A. The will of God
 - B. The grace of God
 - C. The mercy of God
 - D. The wisdom of God
2. What is technology?
 - A. It is an invention
 - B. It is an invention that helps to solve problems
 - C. It is an invention that helps to solve people's problems
 - D. It is an invention that makes it easier to solve people's problems
3. Any one of them, used technology to enhance God's agenda, except:
 - A. Moses
 - B. Solomon
 - C. Cain
 - D. Eve

4. Each of these is a prayer app, except:
 - A. Abide
 - B. Daily prayer guide
 - C. My daily prayer and devotion
 - D. Games of prayer guides

5. Which of the following is one of the benefits of a prayer app?
 - A. Great source of being alone with God
 - B. Great source of changing natural forces
 - C. Ideal tool of teaching on fasting
 - D. Ideal tool of sharing Gospel truths

True and False Questions

1. Prayer apps are a recent phenomenon. T/F

2. The Bible is devoid of technological examples. T/F

3. Technology is anything that solves people's problems quickly.
T/F

4. Prayer apps underestimate our conversations with God.
T/F

5. Prayer can benefit from technology. T/F

6. Prayer is the most important affair of the day. T/F

7. Prayer technology makes it easier for us to know and anticipate how God might respond to our prayers.
T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Explain the technological rationale of prayer in the Bible.

[500 words or less].

2. Identify one of the prayer apps. Explain the reason why you think it is beneficial.

[250 words or less].

3. Conduct a research on the 12 prayer apps identified in this chapter. What element/s would you wish to recommend for the next generation of prayer app innovations? Cite a Bible verse/s to support your view.

[500 words or less].

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At the end of this chapter

- You will be able to learn about the university of prayer;
- You will, specifically, note that all the glory belongs to God
- You will also understand that, as we give glory to God, He makes all favor (grace) available to us here and now on earth and
- You will learn more about the so-called “Lord’s Prayer,” because without it, we all may be praying amiss.

Introduction

The great multitudes of the heavenly hosts rendered prayer’s university in this salutation: “*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.*”¹³⁷⁶ Two themes emerge from this refrain, and these constitute the essence of our praying attitude towards God. These two themes are (1) Glorifying God; and (2) resting in the peaceful favor of God here on earth.

The Lord’s Prayer

The Lord Jesus Christ left us with a regulatory and an illustrative prayer both in one. In other words, the prayer is enough in itself and it also acts as a model of how we should prayer or the themes we should focus on in our praying. The so-called “Lord’s Prayer” highlights those themes, thus:

Our Father, which art in heaven,

¹³⁷⁶ Luke 2:14 (emphasis added)

Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.¹³⁷⁷

Glory and Favor (Grace) Themes in the Lord's Prayer

The glory of God themes are contained in the following lines: Our Father; which art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; as it is in heaven [God's will]; and forgive us our trespasses; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. The peaceful favor on earth themes are contained in the following lines: Thy will be done in earth; give us this day our daily bread; and as we forgive those who trespass against us.

To understand the significance of glory, a quick review of the topic is warranted. The first time there was a mention of the glory of God in the Bible was when Moses and Aaron, as a protest, warned the children of Israel that they would see “the glory of God” in the morning. The children of Israel had been murmuring.¹³⁷⁸ And, indeed, the glory of God did appear.¹³⁷⁹ There was an allusion to the glory of God when it rested upon Mount Sinai, depicted in the cloud over the Holy Mountain (Mount Sinai).

¹³⁷⁷ Matthew 6:9-13

¹³⁷⁸ Exodus 16:7

¹³⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 10

However, this quickly turned into a devouring fire around the mountain.¹³⁸⁰ Glory itself may symbolize beauty and honor,¹³⁸¹ and these two - glory and honor - may be separated in other circumstances.¹³⁸²

When God manifests Himself, that aspect of His presence is referred to as the *Shekinah Glory*, and this kind of glory sanctifies or separates for God's special utility anything it comes across.¹³⁸³ But when Moses asked God to be shown God's glory,¹³⁸⁴ Moses seemed to have been asking for more than just the manifested presence of God. Moses could not be asking for the manifested presence or the *Shekinah Glory* because this had become a recurring experience in the wilderness. Moses was asking God for something more. He was asking that God should show Moses God's face: "And while my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."¹³⁸⁵

Other than through Jesus, God came much closer to revealing Himself to Moses. In this verse of the Holy Scripture, we hear something God rarely did and even said. Before reaching here, we learn that God spoke to Moses not as to one of his creatures, but as if to his friend, "And the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend."¹³⁸⁶ Of course, we are aware of God's passionate conversations with Abraham, the patriarch whom God said was his friend: "Did not you, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and gave it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?"¹³⁸⁷

So, through the pages of ancient biblical history, we have established that God had a commitment to two characters that he regarded as friends; Abraham and Moses. However, even to these great Jewish patriarchs, God could not let them see His face. He

¹³⁸⁰ See Exodus 24:16 and 17

¹³⁸¹ Exodus 28:2

¹³⁸² *Ibid*, 40

¹³⁸³ Exodus 29:43

¹³⁸⁴ Exodus 33:18

¹³⁸⁵ Exodus 33:22

¹³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, verse 11

¹³⁸⁷ 2 Chronicles 20:7

did, though, allow Moses to see His back, and that is how far a human being has been able to “see” God. Only one person, Jesus Christ, has both seen and been with the Father prior to His coming to earth.¹³⁸⁸

After they sojourned from the land of captivity in Egypt via the wilderness towards Canaan, God instructed Moses that they should build a tabernacle or a Tent of Meeting. The constitution of this august place was of divine design and was to consist of three areas: The Outer Court; the Holy Place; and the Holy of Holies (the Most Holy Place). The ultimate locale of the tabernacle was the Arc of the Covenant, which was the earthly representation of the glory of God.¹³⁸⁹

When the tabernacle was completed, God’s glory (presence) descended upon it and remained there for a considerable period of time. The glory of God then monitored the movements of the Israelites; designated by a cloud in the day and fire in the night. When the cloud was lifted off the tabernacle, the Israelites made movements, and vice-versa.¹³⁹⁰

The hosts of heaven, therefore, understood glory much more differently than the children of Israel did. The Israelites understood a glimpse of glory, manifesting through a small box in the tabernacle as well as the enveloping canopy that guided them in the wilderness. Even in that symbolic gesture, God’s partial glory provided protection, guidance and comfort to the Israelites. However, the full glory of God was manifested through Jesus Christ: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another [from glory to glory]. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”¹³⁹¹ In seeing Jesus, the saw the face of God – and the manifestation and the character of His glory through acts of kindness, mercy, love and miracles and wonders.

¹³⁸⁸ John 5:37

¹³⁸⁹ See Exodus 40 for the design, components and the instructions as to how the Tabernacle was to be constructed.

¹³⁹⁰ See Exodus 40:34-38

¹³⁹¹ 2 Corinthians 3:18

This verse of scriptures reveal that glory has degrees. Thus, it can be construed that the glory so manifested to the Israelites in the wilderness was just one level or degree of glory: “There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.”¹³⁹² And the revealed glory, is the one exemplified through the life of Jesus while He was here on earth. And there will be the ultimate glory when we shall see God face to face.

The Glory-Grace Factors

Now, coming to the gist of the “Glory-factor” in the Lord’s Prayer, the following precepts may be illustrative:

Our Father

God, the creator of the entire universe, is our Father. *Bibliatodo Reflections* identifies six benefits of being children of God:¹³⁹³ A new life;¹³⁹⁴ eternal life;¹³⁹⁵ supernatural experiences; hope, peace and security;¹³⁹⁶ promises of rewards;¹³⁹⁷ and promises of God to enjoy on earth and in heaven. *The Good Book*¹³⁹⁸ identifies seven privileges of being children of God: Security; authority (children as opposed to slaves); intimacy; assurance; inheritance; discipline; and family likeness.

¹³⁹² 1 Corinthians 15:40-41

¹³⁹³ Bibliatodo Reflections, “Benefits of being a child of God,” February 16th, 2022, <https://www.bibliatodo.com/En/christian-reflections/benefits-of-being-a-child-of-god/> (accessed on September 25th, 2022)

¹³⁹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹³⁹⁵ John 3:16

¹³⁹⁶ John 14:27; Romans 8:28

¹³⁹⁷ Psalm 24:1

¹³⁹⁸ Timothy Keller, “Seven breath-taking privileges of being a child of God,” December 8th, 2016,

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/blog/interestingthoughts/2016/12/08/seven-breath-taking-privileges-of-being-a-child-of-/> (accessed on September 25th, 2022)

However, the most critical issue to review is whether all these benefits and privileges did not exist prior to Jesus' birth and resurrection. The truth is, they did. Some angels were even called "sons of God."¹³⁹⁹ David's psalms are filled with prayers for security, inheritance, intimacy, assurance, hope, peace, security and many saints had great and undeniable miraculous and supernatural encounters with God. Abraham was even called a friend of God as shown before: "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend."¹⁴⁰⁰

The critical difference between the saints of God and the New Testament believers is that the later have received grace: "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."¹⁴⁰¹ God's love being resident in our hearts, is called grace. That means, that there is nothing we can ever commit or omit to do that can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.¹⁴⁰² All the benefits of sonship were apparent in those who believed in God, even under the Law. But the Law was impotent of one thing, grace: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."¹⁴⁰³ And because of grace, the door to heaven is wildly open: "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."¹⁴⁰⁴

As "Father" who also became ours, dominion and power belong to Him. This illustrates glory. However, as One who was once only our God, but through Jesus Christ, has also begotten us into the family of God, as Apostle Paul prayed: "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,"¹⁴⁰⁵ we have been adopted as His

¹³⁹⁹Job 1:6; Job 2:1;

¹⁴⁰⁰James 2:23

¹⁴⁰¹Romans 5:5

¹⁴⁰²See also Romans 8:31-39

¹⁴⁰³John 1:17

¹⁴⁰⁴Hebrews 4:16

¹⁴⁰⁵Ephesians 3:14-15 (emphasis added)

own children. Again, “He predestined us for adoption as His sons [and daughters] through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will.”¹⁴⁰⁶ This act of adopting us as His own children through Christ, even without any merit on our part, connotes a grace theme. God is *our* Father; He has us first on the heavenly family’s agenda. We share a familial, intimate relationship.

Which art in heaven

And again, the allusion to “which art in heaven,” is not a rendition of the presence of God or of the notable fact that God lives in heaven. God has always been known as the heavenly God. The ancient knew this. For example, the Psalmist declares: “The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne - or his throne and the heavens. From there he observes everyone on earth and his eyes examine them.”¹⁴⁰⁷

What makes the phrase “which art in heaven” notable, is grace: “Let us then approach *God’s throne of grace with confidence*, so that we may *receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need*.” Heaven is now not a throne of judgment, but of mercy and grace. This is revolutionizing. Kings and rulers sit on their thrones to administer justice. But here we are told the very opposite. We are re-educated that the throne of God in heaven is a place of mercy and grace. Consider this; in the Old Testament, God had this planned already. In the Holy of Holies existed an Ark of the Covenant:

In Judaism and Christianity, the ornate, gold-plated wooden chest that in biblical times housed the two tablets of the Law given to Moses by God. The Ark rested in the Holy of Holies inside the Tabernacle of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem and was seen only by the high priest of the Israelites on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.¹⁴⁰⁸

¹⁴⁰⁶ Ephesians 1:5 (emphasis added)

¹⁴⁰⁷ Psalm 11; see also Genesis 22:11

¹⁴⁰⁸ Britannica, “Ark of the Covenant,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ark-of-the-Covenant> (accessed on September 25th, 2022)

God had always intended that His throne would be one of mercy, but time was not ripe for that. It had continued to be one of judgment until grace appeared. A High Priest had a rare chance once in a year on the Day of Atonement to access it, but that was with stringency and it was highly regulated.¹⁴⁰⁹ It was so sacred, and almost impossible to approach, that even Aaron himself risked death. But grace made it so easy to approach that even extra incentives exist for approaching it, such as the meeting of all our needs there. When Jesus Christ brought grace, with it the freeway to heaven, to the very throne of God, one of mercy, opened. Indeed, and to a lesser extent, through this verse, it also makes it clear that we have only One God, One Father: “And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.”¹⁴¹⁰

Hallowed be thy Name

This phrase depicts glory incarnated. In Matthew 6:9, we find various renditions of “hallowed be your name” by several Bible translations: *Hallowed be your name* (New International Version); *may your name be kept holy* (New Living Translation); *hallowed be thy name* (King James Version); *your name be honored as holy* (Christian Standard Bible); *help us to honor your name* (Contemporary English Version); *may your name be kept holy* (International Standard Version); and *holy be your name* (New Heart English Bible).

Two things emerge from this translation plethora: Holiness and honor. God’s holiness is infinite; it will never change. But you may notice that in the prayer, our Lord and Master doesn’t action us to be holy, but rather directs our attention at God’s infinite holiness. We are called to recognize God’s holiness and honor it all the days of our lives. This recognition transcends this life and continues even into the New Jerusalem. Apostle Peter admonishes: “But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’ Since you call on a *Father* who judges each

¹⁴⁰⁹ Leviticus 16

¹⁴¹⁰ Matthew 23:9

one's work impartially, conduct yourselves in reverent fear during your stay as foreigners."¹⁴¹¹

Notice the juxtaposition of "Father" and holiness. Indeed, we have now attained to legal sonship status, but we ought not to forget that our *Father*, though approachable in relationship, in position, is still holy and demands honor.

God's name is honored. Here is the rule: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."¹⁴¹² In the New Testament, swearing upon God or His holy script is strictly forbidden: "Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.' But I tell you not to swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King."¹⁴¹³ For those of us in the law, it is recommended from this passage of scriptures to affirm rather than swearing on the Bible when giving evidence in court. Our "yes" must be yes; and our "no" must be no.¹⁴¹⁴ We must show God, *Our Father*, honor in our words, speech, attitudes and thoughts, practices and conversations and actions.

We should honor God with our bodies: "You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."¹⁴¹⁵ We should honor God with our wealth: "Honor the Lord with your wealth [substance]."¹⁴¹⁶ We should honor God in all that we do, eating or drinking: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."¹⁴¹⁷ We must honor God with our time, "My times are in your hands."¹⁴¹⁸ We should honor God with our lips,

¹⁴¹¹ 1 Peter 1:15-17 (emphasis added).

¹⁴¹² Exodus 20:7

¹⁴¹³ Matthew 5:33-35

¹⁴¹⁴ Matthew 5:37

¹⁴¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:20

¹⁴¹⁶ Proverbs 3:9

¹⁴¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:31

¹⁴¹⁸ Psalm 31:15

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me,¹⁴¹⁹ and hearts.¹⁴²⁰

To hallow God’s name also means not to curse, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”¹⁴²¹ It means to seal our lips to the culture and not to use the name of Jesus as a swear word. We must show our respect for God, yes, even to bow, kneel or lay prostrate, if required. But we must do so out of a grateful heart and not sheer showmanship: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”¹⁴²² This injunction is not only limited to money; it involves everything we do in the name of God.

Indeed, grace has given us freedom to do anything or say anything except to flounder God’s glory: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”¹⁴²³ For in a way, grace also subscribes to glory: “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*”¹⁴²⁴

Thus, in the Lord’s Prayer, we are told to hallow (glorify, sanctify, make holy, and honor) God’s name. This is a perpetual declaration, and is foundational to our prayer success. A prayer that is rooted in the fact that God is holy and is to be honored above anything else, is a mark of sonship and fellowship with the one who is *Our Father*. It solidifies the eternal claim that God is One: “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”¹⁴²⁵ And, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”¹⁴²⁶ This same One God of Israel has also become our God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We do not worship idols; we worship the One true God.

¹⁴¹⁹ Matthew 15:8

¹⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²¹ Romans 12:14

¹⁴²² 2 Corinthians 9:7

¹⁴²³ Isaiah 42:8

¹⁴²⁴ 2 Peter 1:2-3 (emphasis added)

¹⁴²⁵ 1 Timothy 2:5

¹⁴²⁶ Deuteronomy 6:4

Thy Kingdom come

This has been the hope of all those who have gone before us. It is our hope. And the hope of those who will come after us. The current state of affairs is dominated, on earth, by the rule of Satan: “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.”¹⁴²⁷ Since the advent of Christ, the Kingdom of God has been near:

When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God *will not come with observable signs*. Nor will people say, ‘Look, here it is,’ or ‘There it is.’ For you see, the *kingdom of God is in your midst*.” Then He said to the disciples, “The time is coming when *you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it*. People will tell you, ‘Look, there He is!’ or ‘Look, here He is!’ Do not go out or chase after them. For just as the *lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so will be the Son of Man in His day*. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of *Noah*, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of *Lot*: People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.¹⁴²⁸

Although somehow related, the Kingdom of God ought to be differentiated from the end of days. In this passage, our Lord is talking about the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 24, Jesus was answering a specific question about, “what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age.”¹⁴²⁹ The delineation is very clear:

¹⁴²⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:4

¹⁴²⁸ Luke 17:20-29 (emphasis added).

¹⁴²⁹ Matthew 24:3

One is about the signs that would precede Jesus' second return, the other is about the critical physical inception of the Kingdom of God.

There are three lessons of note in Luke 17. First, it is the specific reference to when the Kingdom of God will come. And the inference here is that, it is a specific, tangible or physical manifestation of the reign of Christ. In principle, *this* Kingdom is a person, and as *that* person is Christ Himself, and that Kingdom was already in their midst. This also eliminates the assumption that it is a superficial, spiritual kingdom. The oft-quoted scripture in the Bible is John 3:3, but the context goes beyond chapter three; it includes the following verses:

Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time to be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.¹⁴³⁰

Jesus Christ addresses an idea of sight or perception: "No-one can *see* the Kingdom of God unless he's born again." Discerning Christ takes a revelation. Those who come to receive the revelation that Jesus Christ is, in fact, the Kingdom of God incarnate, receive a newness of life by faith. These can see in Jesus Christ all the fundamentals of the will-be reign of God.

Jesus then addresses the expected understanding of the Kingdom of God, and that is of "entering" into it. Those who will enter into the manifested Kingdom of God would have been cleansed by the Word of God and would have had a spiritual rebirth.

Thus, those who believe in Jesus Christ would have also seen the nature of the Kingdom of God and these will also enter into it someday.

Second, the Kingdom of God will manifest itself suddenly. Unlike the signs of the second coming of Christ which are preceded

¹⁴³⁰ John 3:3-5

by *force majeure* or acts of God (such as earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, droughts, and etc.), the Kingdom of God will come at once in great power, just like lightning. There is a causal relationship, though, with these two events; one leads up to the other.

And third, the appearing of the Kingdom of God has precedent. Two upheavals of the ancient days are referenced: Noah and Lot. In both of these cases, warnings preceded the flood and the fire, respectively. The Kingdom of God comes without signs but with warnings. It will come just when people are comfortable and going about their day-to-day affairs. The one who will enter it, will be the one who is ready for it, on a day-to-day basis.

It is because, partly, of this last point that our Lord taught us to ask for the Kingdom of God to come. Implied in that request is the constant reminder to be ready. And this was not the first time the Lord urged His disciples to be ready: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”¹⁴³¹ This injunction also illustrates the reason why it is only those who would have been born again, born of the Spirit, who could be saved. Because being weak (with sin) the flesh is unable to discern or appreciate the timings of God. Apostle Paul gives a very radical admonition¹⁴³² on the same matter: “Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

Praying His Kingdom to come is motivated by grace. It is unlikely that those who pray this way will miss it when the Kingdom of God finally manifests itself in power. They would have been preparing their spirits to join into the redeemed and everlasting existence.

¹⁴³¹ Matthew 26:41

¹⁴³² Ephesians 5:15-17

[God's will] as it is in heaven; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

This aspect of the Lord's Prayer establishes the grace-glory dynamics of the university of prayer. It can be discussed either under the glory-factor or the favor-factor. For God to demand that we pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, is grace. And, indeed, heaven is the quintessence of His glory. Thus, God desires that we experience life here on earth exactly as the angels and the elders in heaven do.

In a nutshell, God desires us to be with Him here on earth just as He is present in heaven:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: "Behold, the *dwelling place of God is with man*, and He *will dwell with them*. *They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God*. 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,' and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away." And the One seated on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are faithful and true."¹⁴³³

A life of struggle, disease, death and sorrow as we experience it on earth, does not exist in heaven. Our Lord reaffirmed this prayer in His own prayer: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not of the world*, even as I am not of the world. I pray *not that thou shouldst take them out of the world*, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."¹⁴³⁴

Even in His life on earth, our Lord was very concerned about those who believed in Him and who would still be in this world. He prayed for them the same way He wanted them to pray for themselves. If they could ask for God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, God would intervene daily to cushion them

¹⁴³³ Revelations 21:3-5 (emphasis added).

¹⁴³⁴ John 17:11, 14-15 (emphasis added).

from the wiles of the devil.¹⁴³⁵ In other words, they could be full of cheer while being surrounded by a lot of trouble.¹⁴³⁶

We can only engage the evil one in the strength and weaponry inspired by God:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.¹⁴³⁷

To ask the Lord to deliver us from evil should be a daily prayer for every believer. This is because the devil, daily, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.¹⁴³⁸ It is unwise, and even dangerous, to start each day without entrusting it into the hands of Him who alone is able to defeat the devil. The least we can do is to pray so that God can keep us away from evil and the evil one. Because when we pray this way, temptations will come, but God will give us endurance or provide a way of escape: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”¹⁴³⁹

Give us this day our daily bread

This a principled-approach to praying. It establishes both a practice and a principle. On one hand, we ought to ask for our daily food, daily. On the other, we learn that like food, prayer itself must be a daily routine. Apostle Paul urges us to, “Pray without ceasing,” and he also said; “in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God

¹⁴³⁵ See Ephesians 6:11

¹⁴³⁶ See John 16:33

¹⁴³⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴³⁸ 1 Peter 5:8

¹⁴³⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:13

in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.”¹⁴⁴⁰ Those who had this kind of prayer habit in the Bible easily stood out: “Now when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house, where the windows of his upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, *just as he had done before*.”¹⁴⁴¹ It was Daniel’s routine to pray this way this frequent. And the New Testament admonishment is: “Pray in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition. To this end, stay alert with all perseverance in your prayers for all the saints.”¹⁴⁴²

In the assertion, “Give us this day our daily bread,”¹⁴⁴³ scripture aligns with what God had constantly done in the lives of many heroes of faith. Thus, “When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had attended to His people by providing them with food, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to leave the land of Moab.”¹⁴⁴⁴ We may have money, power, resources and means, but at the end of the day, it is God who provides both the food and the appetite to enjoy it.

It is God, too, who keeps us away from poverty: “Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the bread that is my portion.”¹⁴⁴⁵ This may seem uncouth, but both extremes of poverty and extravagance are unwarranted. They both attract the same temptations, pride and disillusionment. We must be grateful to God that we have enough to live a balanced life, and if God should provide us with more than needed, He should have a bigger purpose in mind. Our job is find it and fulfill it.

The *security of food* has been inscribed into these words: “He will dwell on the heights; the mountain fortress will be his refuge; his food will be provided and his water assured.”¹⁴⁴⁶ But within this

¹⁴⁴⁰ 1 Thess. 5:17–19

¹⁴⁴¹ Daniel 6:10 (emphasis added).

¹⁴⁴² Ephesians 6:18

¹⁴⁴³ Matthew 6:11

¹⁴⁴⁴ Ruth 1:6

¹⁴⁴⁵ Proverbs 30:8

¹⁴⁴⁶ Isaiah 33:16

security of food concept, God has given a universal guideline, that food will be provided on a daily basis: “Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out *each day and gather enough for that day*. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.”¹⁴⁴⁷ And this has been reinforced in the New Testament: “Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”¹⁴⁴⁸ And He did the same for the water: “In their hunger You gave them bread from heaven; in their thirst You brought them water from the rock. You told them to go in and possess the land which You had sworn to give them.”¹⁴⁴⁹

Thus, God gave them food and water. He gave them daily. When they needed it, it was provided to them. It was not for keeps or as a symbol of luxury; it was meant to meet a need, and God provided for that need daily. Similarly, each day, we ought to pray that God provides us with our daily requirements. If we have excess, we should always remember the poor and those who have nothing, so that we can be like our Father who is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread,” also implies that prayer must be done daily, just as food is taken in daily, unless one is fasting. In fact, some even compare prayer to breathing, which would mean that prayer is made each second, but that’s not the implied assumption in this injunction. What is clear is that prayer must be engaged in on a daily basis. And there is a justification to that. If prayer keeps us away from evil, helps us to forgive others, exalts God and brings to earth His will, power and Kingdom, then praying daily makes sense.

And forgive us our trespasses; as we forgive them that trespass against us

It is among the kindest of God’s glory factors that He forgives our sins and does so on an ongoing basis. But it is also of great grace

¹⁴⁴⁷ Exodus 16:4 (emphasis added)

¹⁴⁴⁸ John 6:31; see also 1 Corinthians 10:3; Exodus 15:25; Exodus 16:15; Deuteronomy 8:2

¹⁴⁴⁹ Nehemiah 9:15

that He is not tired of forgiving us. The mistake is not in sinning, but failure to ask for forgiveness when we sin.

In this prayer, there is a presumption of sinfulness on the part of the humans. God does not expect that we will live sin-free lives. Everything around us is corrupt; we are surrounded by a world which keeps on inventing sins like a fashion industry. When we go to sleep, sin is reinvented and remodified. When we wake up, we are bombarded by new sins and new ways of sinning. We are not immune, and God is aware of it.

When teaching His disciples on how to pray, our Lord does not prevaricate over our proclivity towards sinfulness. Our propensity to sinning is implied, and this is the reason why it is not a condition. The Lord did not say, "If you sin ask for forgiveness," but, rather, "And forgive us our trespasses." Because, we will need such a prayer.

Forgiveness is a foregone conclusion; it is a necessity. Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."¹⁴⁵⁰ Thus, men's number to forgiving others is 490 per day. However, for God to forgive men, it is defined as infinity: "...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."¹⁴⁵¹ We should never get tired of asking God for forgiveness, even for the same kind of sins. There is no grace if there is no sin: "The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more."¹⁴⁵²

There are those who tend to underestimate the power of grace. They conceive that confessing repeated sins is underrating the power of grace. And it seems sensible, how else would one conclude if a person keeps committing the same sin repentance after repentance. However, grace remains steadfast despite the number of sinning repetitions. Because a person who is truly redeemed will not go on sinning in principle, but in practice, they

¹⁴⁵⁰ Matthew 18: 21-22

¹⁴⁵¹ Psalm 103:12

¹⁴⁵² Romans 5:20

will. And since grace is in abundance, confessions will keep such in fellowship with God. It is wrong to tell people to stop confessing when they sin; it is prudent to tell them to keep confessing no matter how many times they fail. It is for such that Jesus Christ came and died, and for such that the grace dispensation exists. And of course, it is taught of us by the Lord Himself; *forgive our trespasses*.

A person who asks God for forgiveness must themselves be able to forgive those who sin against them. That is the rule: “But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”¹⁴⁵³ The first assessment anyone going before God to pray makes is asking if there are people or a person themselves have not yet forgiven: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”¹⁴⁵⁴ You can’t pray for yourself or others before you forgive another person or people. That’s just it.

We ought to be just and faithful in forgiving others, just as God is: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins; He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned; we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.”¹⁴⁵⁵ When it comes to forgiving and being forgiven, God and we are alike; we both must exercise our freewill to forgiving others, just as God exercises His to forgiving us.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever

These salutations are universal in nature. They prefix the reputation and character of God. They exist, whether we mention them or not. However, it is important that we understand that the Kingdom is God’s and which He has also graciously given to us: “Do not be

¹⁴⁵³ Matthew 6:15

¹⁴⁵⁴ Matthew 5:23-24

¹⁴⁵⁵ 1 John 1:9

afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”¹⁴⁵⁶

Power and glory belong to God. Even in perpetuity, we shall be refraining on God’s power and glory, long after grace, salvation, redemption have vanished. And this universal chant, supersedes pre-millennial and post-millennials: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come....You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”¹⁴⁵⁷

Rationale for the University of Prayer

The real need for the inhabitants of earth is to live as God would wish they lived. Indeed, God, too, desires that all human races will reach to His ways and live as He does live. Thus, as in heaven it is, so does God want it to be here on earth till He establishes all things uniformly according to His plan. In the interim, God will continue to hear and answer people’s daily prayers, giving them a livelihood daily as the need arises. Thus, we have a lifeline daily to depend upon God to provide our food and every necessary need. Our duty is to pray daily for the provisions we need, just as they needed a daily provision of manna and quail in the wilderness. Indeed, this world remains a wilderness till the Lord comes in His second re-appearing.

To achieve this, we need to be in a constant state of righteousness; forgiving others of their sins against us as we desire that God should forgive our sins daily. Thus, everyone who has this hope of the re-appearing of Christ, should keep themselves pure by daily prayer, daily confession of sins and daily forgiving of those who wrong them. God has not forgotten His people. Even in this temporary dispensation of grace, He desires that all should be saved and come into the union of His dearest son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Luke 12:32

¹⁴⁵⁷ Revelation 4:8,11

One of the central tenets that keeps all of His children in union with Him till He comes is prayer.

The ultimate purpose of prayer, whether prayed individually or in masses, corporate prayer, is universal order. At the end of all living and dying, God will establish a universal order to which all mankind, believers or not, will subscribe. When we pray, directly or indirectly, we are invoking that universal order in which One God would be the source and hope of all things. The Bible is explicit on this:

The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.¹⁴⁵⁸

Creation means everything – humans, animals and plants – all are presently in a state of futility. They await the day when the redeemed sons and daughters of God will awake and retake their rightful position before their God. In that day, all things will resume their rightful order to the honor and glory of God. It will be the day when the Lord's Prayer, thus, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...for thine is the power, the glory and majesty forever and ever, Amen," will have reached its crescendo.

Précis

Everyone who desires to be part of the world to come, ought, first, to pray, and second, to pray according to the university of prayer. That demands that all the glory be given to God and that our own existence on earth, should be lived daily in the understanding that God will give us daily favors – in terms of purity from sin, living

¹⁴⁵⁸ Romans 8:19-21

according to God's will and forgiving others as He has forgiven us. For all our daily needs, prayer establishes that perpetual link with God so that we lack nothing that we need for health and volition. This calls on us to pray for all that we need daily; and God has promised to provide as we pray. This is the universal requirement: That we give God all the glory; and that we pray for His favor to manifest in all our life endeavors, daily.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Creation
- Favor towards all people
- God's glory
- Lords' Prayer
- University of prayer

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The university of prayer informs two factors:
 - A. Glory and favor
 - B. Glory and power
 - C. Favor and honor
 - D. Favor and majesty
2. The "Lord's Prayer" is ____
 - A. Both a regulatory and a model prayer
 - B. Only a regulatory prayer
 - C. Only a model prayer
 - D. Neither a regulatory nor a model prayer
3. "Our Father" is a ____ factor in the "Lord's Prayer."
 - A. Glory
 - B. Favor
 - C. Both glory and favor
 - D. Neither a glory nor a favor

4. Through the juxtaposition of ____ and ____ we have this rare combination of favor and glory enshrined in one event.
 - A. Father and Son
 - B. Holiness and Holy Spirit
 - C. Father and holiness
 - D. Holiness and honor

5. The greatest hindrance to prayer is ____
 - A. Lack of faith
 - B. Unrepentance
 - C. Prayerlessness
 - D. Unforgiveness

6. What is the ultimate purpose of prayer, whether prayed individually or in mass, corporate prayer?
 - A. Universal order
 - B. Happiness
 - C. Peace
 - D. Unspeakable joy

7. What is one of the central tenets that keeps all of God's children in union with Him till Jesus Christ comes back?
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Fasting
 - C. Temptations
 - D. Dancing

PRAYER

8. "Give us this day our daily bread," is a _____ to praying:
- A. Principled-approach
 - B. Naïve-approach
 - C. New Testament-approach
 - D. Divine-approach

True and False Questions

- 1. The true university of prayer must embrace glory and favor themes. T/F
- 2. Jesus knew that we would have a troublesome life here on earth because of the presence of evil and the devil. T/F
- 3. There is no proven way of evading sin and sinfulness other than prayer. T/F
- 4. "Kingdom come" and "daily bread" are the only glory themes in the Lord's Prayer. T/F
- 5. Grace (favor) is an infinite refrain from God's perspective. T/F
- 6. God doesn't wish that all the people of the world should live as He does. T/F
- 7. Prayer is the most important affair of the day; those who pray daily, also enjoy relatively less stressful and evil dealings. T/F

Short Essay-type Questions

1. Explain the *security of food* in relation to the Lord's Prayer

[500 words or less].

2. Give a rationale for the universality of prayer.

[500 words or less].

3. Identify at least five (5) benefits of being children of God. Why is it important to belong to the family of God? If children of God, how ought we to pray?

[500 words or less].

54 | PRAYER AND POLITICS

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about prayer and politics
- You will begin to appreciate the mutuality of public and private prayers
- You will learn about the principles of national praying
- You will be able to distinguish between public prayers in both the Old and New Testaments, and
- You will learn about the seven points of contemporary national day of prayers

Introduction

Indeed, a theologian has noted: “God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.”¹⁴⁵⁹ This prayer is neither religious nor political; it is apolitical. In this chapter, we discuss, generally, *Prayer and Politics*, and specifically, the national days of prayer. This is a unique aspect of praying. Prayer is inevitable to national governing. Religion and morality establish righteous nations; evil tarnishes the aura of prosperity and goodwill. And morality cannot be maintained without religion. Thus, social happiness cannot exist, nor the blessings of a free government be enjoyed absent a widespread public morality rooted in religious conviction.¹⁴⁶⁰ Prayer makes that link between morality and political governance.

Principles of National Prayer

There are five (5) principles of national prayer constituted in the following five questions:

¹⁴⁵⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr

¹⁴⁶⁰ John Adams

Who is listening?

National prayers are addressed to God, like any other type of prayer. However, they are more than just normal Sunday prayers. They require both wisdom and the understanding of the various political players that may be involved. Generally, it is not only God who will be listening; political interests, too, will be. As someone has said, “Prayer is language that is nonthreatening across those boundary lines of left, middle, and right.”¹⁴⁶¹ In other words, national prayers must rise above petty political squabbles. Those who organize such prayers and those who participate must understand that the goal of national prayers is to avert a national crisis, and not to showcase partisan or religious interests.

Who the audience is?

And not only does who is listening matters, but what and who the audience is. In national days of prayers, the audience is much larger than the four corners of one’s church building. It is both God and the nation. This makes this type of prayer ideally sensitive. While, generally, God will understand, the people may be offended if right words and references are not used. National prayers bring together radical enemies and faithful lovers to the same table. Wisdom demands that those assigned with the responsibility of these kinds of prayer choose their expressions wisely and responsibly. The gist is not to politicize the program, but to attempt and meet all different players where they are. The mantra should always be, do no harm.

What the setting is?

The place where the national day of prayer is conducted is as vital as the aim of the program itself. In olden days, they assembled at the temple. In contemporary times, an unwise choice of the place may be a detriment. Some nations have certain buildings designated for national prayers, but all other countries have national assemblies. It is important to hold such prayer meetings in places accepted by all and removed from partisan politics. If no neutral place exists, the event may be held at a place purposely selected to be neutral and non-political.

¹⁴⁶¹ Bob Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches

What the policy is?

The policy is the authority for conducting national day of prayers. There are two sources of authority, the Word of God, and national consensus or law. Apostle Paul gives a regulation:

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear a sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore, you must be subject, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’s sake. For because of this, you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, custom to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no-one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another had fulfilled the law.”¹⁴⁶²

This passage is a good summary of the source of Christian authority for obedience to governments. Others include, “You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people,”¹⁴⁶³ “He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God,”¹⁴⁶⁴ “Indeed, I have given him as...a leader and commander for the people,”¹⁴⁶⁵ and “They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”¹⁴⁶⁶

The policy is a dual dagger; it requires that the people respect and submit to their governments, but it also requires that such leaders are moral, just and insightful. And the injunction is that so long as leaders are making an effect to be moral and upright, the people must always submit. If the governors are carefree, careless and immoral, the people may find moral ways to remove them from power. In democratic

¹⁴⁶² Romans 13:1-8

¹⁴⁶³ Exodus 22:28

¹⁴⁶⁴ 2 Samuel 23:3

¹⁴⁶⁵ Isaiah 55:4

¹⁴⁶⁶ Matthew 15:14

nations, this can easily be done through elections. In authoritarian countries the Church may attempt to pray such leaders out of office. National days of prayer necessitates the synergizing of these two ideals – a deserved leadership and an obedient people.

Which attitude?

And finally, what the attitude is. Apostle Paul instructs: “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, *without wrath and doubting*.”¹⁴⁶⁷ In conducting national days of prayer, the attitude should be that of moderation towards diverging interests. It should be one based on love – all manners of wrath and apathy must be vacated. God will honor such national prayers that bring opposing interests together rather than those that highlight their dominant political lines.

Old Testament Conception of Public Prayer

If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send a plague among My people, 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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.¹⁴⁶⁸

This classic national prayer advisory has three parts: First, there is a national disaster. In the case of Israel, it was drought, locusts and a plague. To this list we could add national distress, poverty or war or the threat of war and social unrest and etc.

Second, the people as a nation must pray. The nature of this prayer is as follows. It must be conducted in humility. There is a sense of dedicated resolve to seeking God’s mercy and favor. The people must genuinely be united in this. Repentance is presumed and idealized. In other words, the events, acts or behaviors that caused the national disaster must be addressed through repentance. The people must be ordered to bring their hearts bare before God and entreat Him for the disaster to rescind. The so-called “sin of the nation” must be confessed and recanted.

¹⁴⁶⁷ 1 Timothy 2:8 (emphasis added)

¹⁴⁶⁸ 2 Chronicles 7:13-15

And third, God will answer and avert the national disaster. It can be construed that the nation must be united unhyppocritically to move the hand of God. The incident of Akan may illustrate:

“But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord’s anger burned against Israel... The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction...”¹⁴⁶⁹

The so-called “Sin of Akan” made Israel fail to stand against its enemies. It aroused the Lord’s anger. This was due to the disobedience (theft) of one individual, leading to the entire nation coming under a curse. The spirit of this event is in sync with 2 Chronicles 7:13-15.¹⁴⁷⁰ In such situations, the damned event must be removed, just the entire nation must repent and seek God’s face when engaging God in national prayers. It is unlikely, though, that the sin of one person might plunge the entire nation into distress. The dispensation of grace has changed all that. However, the principle remains: Leaders and all concerned must identify with the sin of their people and collectively seek to receive God’s forgiveness without pointing fingers or blaming one another.

The Place of Public Prayer

There was a presumption of place – in the Old Testament – the place where prayer was made was as important as the prayer itself. For example, the temple was considered to be the right place to offer national prayer: “...then may You hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You. Then all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and they will know that this *house* I have built

¹⁴⁶⁹ Joshua 7:1–26 (check verses 7, 10-11)

¹⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

is called by Your Name.”¹⁴⁷¹

There is a subtle connection between the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem and the temple. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall, Ezra the temple: “The connection between the temple and the wall is significant for the theology of work. The temple might seem to be a religious institution, while the walls are a secular one. But God led Nehemiah to work on the walls, no less than he led Ezra to work on the temple.”¹⁴⁷² The wall depicted a nation, and the temple, its religious institutions. Both to operate properly, they must be complementary to each other. Nehemiah (likely a politician) instigated, through prayer and advocacy, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and Ezra (the prophet) of the temple.

The usual practice in the Old Testament was that both kings and prophets could pray or lead their nation into prayer. Jehoshaphat illustrates: “Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.”¹⁴⁷³ Any reference to “city” in the Old Testament, alludes to national affairs. Thus, Jehoshaphat, a politician, gathers his people (a nation) and leads it himself in national prayer.

In summary, the Old Testament allows us to deduce the following:

1. National prayer was conducted when a nation was in distress and needed the intervention of God;
2. National prayer was led by a king or a prophet;
3. There was a presumption of good faith – all those who united in prayer must have committed to repenting and forsaking the sin(s) that led to the need for national prayer; and
4. The prayer was national in character – a mishap of one individual would negatively affect the outcome of the national prayer.

New Testament Conception of Public Prayer

¹⁴⁷¹ 2 Chronicles 6:33 (emphasis added)

¹⁴⁷² Theology of Work Project, “Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:1-7:73),” <https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/ezra-nehemiah-esther/nehemiah/restoration-of-the-wall-of-jerusalem-nehemiah-11-773> accessed on November 13th, 2022

¹⁴⁷³ 2 Chronicles 20: 3-4

As noted under the Old Testament, there was dichotomy of the political (kingly) office and the prophetic office in who had the jurisdiction for national prayer. This dichotomous interplay should not be lost in our days. In the early New Testament period, the early apostles advocated for private prayers for their nation as opposite to public national prayers: “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for *all people— for kings and all those in authority*, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”¹⁴⁷⁴

The nation of Israel was under Roman colonial control at the time of Paul’s directive. Rome did not share the same national religion as Israel. However, Rome had realized that it could not impose its rule on Israel effectively without bequeathing religious powers to the Israelites. In addition, Rome wanted to appease the Israelites by imposing upon them a “king” and King Herod became a foreign imposed sovereign but without the power of the olden kings such as the Davidic royalty. And around the time, Israel was in a transition – from quintessential Judaism to a commixture of Judaism and Christianity. A good deal of upheavals arose on the question of religious authenticity and most disciples of Jesus Christ were considered to be rebels against both Roman rule and the established Jewish traditions.

Thus, Apostle Paul brings a new regulation which bridges the gap between the Church and the established Jewish religion, and this had to be conducted with the requirement to obey Roman rule. In that atmosphere of intolerance, it was very difficult to conduct national prayers. However, Apostle Paul appealed to different churches to remember to pray for all the people, including kings and other politicians. And the trajectory of the prayers were not be of national character, but one of maintaining peace and harmony with different political entities in order to give the Church a chance to propagate the Gospel while living “peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”

Contemporary Times and National Prayer

Modern times are widely different from both the Old Testament Jewish religion establishment and the New Testament Church epoch.

¹⁴⁷⁴ 1 Timothy 2:1-2

In most modern societies, there are neither established theocratic regimes nor Church-governed nations. Even modern Israel is mostly a democratic society and the Vatican is not a full-fledged nation-state. As a result, national prayers in modern times have to be an adaption to many variables – borrowing from the Old Testament, the New Testament and contemporary pragmatic experimentation.

The following seven points must be taken into consideration when designating national prayer days:

The proclamation may be according to law

The United States of America has designated the first Thursday of May as National Prayer Day with the jurisdictional blessing of Congress.¹⁴⁷⁵ Zambia,¹⁴⁷⁶ too, has designated October 18th as National Day of Prayer. Most modern countries are democratic with an array of different religions interacting within their borderlines. Nearly all the nations of the world, even where Islam is hugely dominant, have religious minorities who in the sense of national synergy ought not to be overlooked. Thus, the decision to have national prayer days must be subjected to the people's will. The nature and character of these national prayer day should be based on a combination of factors, including the reach, the choice of holy books and the sources of clergy backgrounds.

The declaration must be done in good faith

The advisory of the first Christians is germane here; they recognized that they would have to defer to the state on matters of nationality and conduct their prayer activities in private for all people and the political establishments. In countries without national prayer days, it is important that the clergy mobilize different churches in unity and conduct such activities on consensus model. But where there is no national convention or political proclamation, it is important that such activities do no undermine other religions equally accepted in those countries.

¹⁴⁷⁵ See 36 U.S.C. § 119: US Code – Section 119: National Day of Prayer

¹⁴⁷⁶ See Presidential Statutory Instrument No.78 of 2015, and Gazette Notice of October 23rd, 2015.

Temporary linkage between religion with politics

Both legislated and non-legislated national prayer days must be organized with the blessing of the political establishments. And where possible, organizers should seek national leaders' attendance in person or by proxy. This gives the national day of prayer legitimacy and the much required oneness for God to move on behalf of the nation.

An exercise in humility and repentance

There must be an assumption and agenda of humility. Both religious and political leaders should be prepared to assume the responsibility of turning away from evil ways on their own, and on behalf of the people. God cannot be mocked. A national prayer day does not achieve much in itself, it is only as effective as the genuineness of the hearts involved.

Pre-written prayers

If possible, the prayers should be written down and circulated in advance of the national day of prayer. This will ensure that there is no language or attitude that denigrates other religious or political parties. There should be transparency and a sense of unity, even in the agenda and the prayer content.

Official participation

There should be deliberation in the choice of official participants. In nations where there is a multiplicity of religions, it is important to include all the key religious figures from all representative religions. It might seem compromising and even redundant (for some religions' approach to doctrine and belief system may strikingly be different from Christianity), but God judges the hearts of people. When they gather together in the name of unity, God will honor the nation's unity and answer their prayers.

Recorded for historical reference

And seventh and last, the prayers must be recorded in a retrieval

system. This gives a testimonial credibility to the prayers. It also ensures that a nation is not going back on its unified determination to seek God’s intervention. And last, this is good for history – so that one generation to another may know and appreciate how God had been its refuge and a present help in their time of need.¹⁴⁷⁷

Content of the National Prayers

Any prayers offered on the National Day of Prayer much adhere much closely to the Prayer of Jehoshaphat. That prayer itself, is considered to have been much closer to the prayer in which the Lord Jesus Christ showed His disciples how to pray (“The Lord’s Prayer”):

And 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? [*Our Father who art in heaven*] You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations [*Your kingdom come*]. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you [*For thine is kingdom, the power and honor forever and ever*]. Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? [*Give us this day our daily bread*]. And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment,^[s] or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save’ [*Hallowed be your name; give us this day our daily bread*]. And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit [*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*]. O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? [*forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*] For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us [*deliver us from evil*]. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”¹⁴⁷⁸

There are five (5) procedural requirements addressed in this prayer, which adhere very closely to the Lord’s Prayer, and must be adopted

¹⁴⁷⁷ Psalm 46:1

¹⁴⁷⁸ 2 Chronicles 20: 5-12 (emphasis added)

for the national prayer:

1. The acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God over the land and His relationship to His people;
2. The identification of sins or faults that have brought about the national distress;
3. The repentance of those sins and the commitment not to repeat them;
4. The request to God to provide what is lacking (the purpose for the national day of prayer); and
5. The thanksgiving, praise and honor of God.

These procedural requirements have a universal appeal to them. In many nations' constitution, there is an acknowledgment of the sovereign of God either that object of praise or the ultimate own of the land. The Canadian constitution is such one document, and in its national anthem, this line, "God keep our land glorious and free,"¹⁴⁷⁹ attests to the recognition of the providence of God. Some countries may not have designated national days of prayer, but they may acknowledge similar days, such the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church which falls on the first Sunday of November.

Précis

Although in character and in principle, national prayer days may look alike, in terms of national political arrangements, the practicality of each may be a challenge. Unlike in the Old Testament Jewish state where the national religious establishment was kneadly tied to the political system, in contemporary times, religion and state don't always merge. However, both religious and political leaders may appreciate that God could intervene in times of national distress to ameliorate conditions and situations. When conducting national days of prayers, consensus should be sought with all major religious leaders to enhance unity. The nation must be willing to repent and leave behind its old ways, and, where possible, to seek reconciliation with factious parties in the country. National days of prayers must be documented, agreed upon and be recorded in retrieval systems.

¹⁴⁷⁹ "Anthems of Canada," < <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/anthems-canada.html> > accessed on November 13th, 2022

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Humility
- National day of prayer
- Non-partisan
- Policy
- Prayer and politics
- Procedural requirements
- Proclamation
- Repentance
- Roman colonial control

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The national day of prayer policy should:
 - A. Be based on politics
 - B. Be framed around the whims of government
 - C. Be based on a dual and mutual understanding of governmental and religious jurisdictions
 - D. Be based on the Bible alone

2. “The acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God over the land and His relationship to His people,” is a ____
 - A. Content of prayer
 - B. An Old Testament deduction
 - C. Procedural requirement
 - D. Policy statement

PRAYER

3. The Prayer of Jehoshaphat connotes very closely to ____
 - A. The historical attack by the Moabites
 - B. The national day of prayer
 - C. The Lord's Prayer
 - D. Proper leadership ethics

4. This classic national prayer advisory has ____ parts.
 - A. 2
 - B. 4
 - C. 3
 - D. 5

5. The lynchpin of any nation that desires to thrive in righteousness and prosperity is ____
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Good leadership
 - C. Morality
 - D. Good governance

True/False Questions

1. Both the USA and Zambia have national days of prayer.
T/F
2. National day of prayers must be creatures of politics alone.
T/F
3. When a nation gathers to pray, many competing interests are involved. T/F
4. The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church falls on the first Sunday of November. T/F
5. The Old Testament national prayer was a matter of individualized preference. T/F
6. Paul advises that prayer must be made for kings only.
T/F
7. The language of the day of prayer must be such that it does not evoke political indoctrinations T/F
8. In national days of prayer, the audience is God alone.
T/F
9. Being under Roman colonial control made it impractical to conduct public prayers in Israel. T/F
10. The content of the prayers offered at national days of prayer must be in tune with the elements that constitute the audience. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Justify the Prayer of Jehoshaphat in relation to the Lord's Prayer.

[500 words or less].

2. List and explain the seven points that must be taken into consideration when designating national prayer days.

[500 words or less].

3. "There is a subtle connection between the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem and the temple." Explain how politics complement religion.

[250 words or less].

4. List and describe the principles of national prayer.

[500 words or less].

5. "National days of prayer necessitates the synergizing of these two ideals – a deserved leadership and an obedient people." Explain.

[250 or less words].

PART VII

55 | INTRODUCTION TO THE TABERNACLE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn that the tabernacle was God’s idea
- You will be able to explicate biblical symbolism
- You will understand the meaning of colors
- You will understand the symbolism of certain selected items, You will denote the uses of spices, and
- You will be able to revisit the idea of prayer and the anointing

Introduction

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying; Speak to the children of Israel that they bring me an offering. From everyone who gives willingly with his heart you shall take my offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them; gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goat’s hair; ram’s skin dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary, which I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.¹⁴⁸⁰ In this passage, a tabernacle is defined. It is a “sanctuary, which I may dwell among them.” It is God’s meeting place with His people. Unlike the temple, the tabernacle was portable.

God’s Idea

The story of the tabernacle was God’s idea, “Then the Lord spoke to Moses.” It was God Himself who initiated this thought. After the deliverance of the Israelites from the 430 years captivity in Egypt, God desired that they should make Him a meeting place so that He could

¹⁴⁸⁰ Exodus 25:1-9

commune with them. God, who had caused favor to come upon the Israelites in Egypt, now wanted these people to give Him an offering from the spoils they had gathered in form of gold, silver, bronze and cloth. The response was fantastic: “And they spoke to Moses, saying, the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded us to do. Moses gave a commandment and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, ‘let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary’. And the people were restrained from bringing.”¹⁴⁸¹

God caused favor to come upon the Israelites in Egypt so that He could use the resources to make a sanctuary. God expects us to use the worldly resources such as money, goods and talents for His kingdom. God’s sufficiency demands that He blesses us more than enough so that we can give the best to His causes. God is generous, and so should we. Although in the same place He is the one who gave us everything, whenever He needs something from us, He does not compel us. He tells Moses, “From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take my offering.”¹⁴⁸² The reason He does this is because He “loves a cheerful giver.”¹⁴⁸³ Thus, the tabernacle foreshadowed grace as well.

Biblical Symbolism

The offering God demanded from His people were only symbolic. And the table below illustrates:

OFFERINGS	SYMBOLISM
Gold	Divinity
Silver	Redemption
Brass/bronze	Endurance/suffering
Blue	Son of God
Purple	Royalty/kingship
Red/scarlet	Salvation
White/linen	Perfect man
Goat’s hair	Prophetic voice

¹⁴⁸¹ Exodus 36:5, 6

¹⁴⁸² Exodus 25:26

¹⁴⁸³ 2 Corinthians. 9:7

Ram's skin dyed red	Prefect sacrifice
Badger skins	Unattractiveness
Acacia/shittim wood	Incorruptible
Spices/precious stones	Fragrance/beauty

The Meaning of Colors

Closer evaluation of these colors reveals that they all point to Christ as He is portrayed in the Gospels. For in the Gospel according to John Jesus is Blue or the Son of God; in Matthew He is Purple or the Sovereign King; in Luke He is Red or the Savor; and finally, in Mark Jesus is White, the Perfect Man.

Other Meanings

Goat's hair is a symbol of a prophet and Jesus is revealed in the Word as the Great Prophet. The ram is an animal of sacrifice and by its skin dyed red means that it has to be killed. When Abraham was about to kill his son, Isaac, the angel of the Lord stopped him and instead provided him with a ram. Abraham made an altar and called it Jehovah Jireh: "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen."¹⁴⁸⁴

A badger is a highly unattractive animal. Its dull skin is used in the Bible as a symbol of unattractiveness. It is said of Jesus, "There is no beauty that we should desire Him."¹⁴⁸⁵ This does not mean that Jesus was not physically attractive, it is a theological way of saying that Jesus came not in the way of the world but of God. Jesus came as a Lamb that was slain, yet He was the Lion of Judah. Those who looked at Christ from afar, did not find it attractive to have Him in their hearts, just as when the heathen nations looked at the tabernacle from the outside, they did not see any beauty due to its fence made from the badger skin. Yet, inside it was beautiful: "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him."¹⁴⁸⁶

Acacia wood, sometimes known as shittim wood, was the strongest wood that could withstand the desert condition. It is a symbol of the incorruptible nature of Christ who did not see corruption, "For you

¹⁴⁸⁴ Genesis 22:14

¹⁴⁸⁵ Is.53:26

¹⁴⁸⁶ Psalm 34:8 NLT

will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.”¹⁴⁸⁷ And again: “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”¹⁴⁸⁸

Oil in the Bible is a sign of the anointing. The anointing is used to set people apart for specific divine functions and, as the case in the New Testament, can be used for healing the sick: “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?”¹⁴⁸⁹

In this way, Saul was set apart to oversee God’s inheritance, the children of Israel. The oil was used by Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. From then he was the Lord’s anointed. The oil carried the presence of the Holy Spirit and God used a great deal such rare men. They were a very small class of people who benefited from this grace, namely kings, prophets and priests. But notice again: “Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided myself a king among his sons ... then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”¹⁴⁹⁰

In the similar way, David was set apart as king over Israel by the anointing. Yet, you might have noticed the statement “and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David...” This, essentially, is what the anointing does; it fills the anointed with the Holy Spirit. We could emphatically say that what differentiates a truly called man or woman of God from everyone else is the anointing. In the New Testament, we see the anointing oil used to invoke healing done by dedicated church elders or ordained leaders: “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.”¹⁴⁹¹

Spices are already specified, it is “for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense.” Precious stones, as the name indicates, are to show that

¹⁴⁸⁷ Psalm 16:10

¹⁴⁸⁸ Acts 2:23-24

¹⁴⁸⁹ 1 Sam.10:1

¹⁴⁹⁰ 1 Sam 16:13

¹⁴⁹¹ James 4:14

Jesus is precious; “Unto you who believe He is therefore precious.”¹⁴⁹² Basically, the stones were twelve and were to be placed into the Ephod worn by the High Priest over a cloak called the Phylactery. The twelve stones stood for the twelve tribes of Israel. The High Priest carried them on his heart into the presence of God. This has a symbolic connotation to the power of intercession. An intercessor should carry the people in their heart into the presence of God. A good High Priest was one who was both merciful and faithful, “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest”¹⁴⁹³ and they were willing, if things went bad, to die for the people.

Mercy is defined as having godly pity and love for the people one intercedes for. The intercessor must sympathize with the people’s shortcomings and always remembering that they are just as weak as those they interceded for. And faithful because intercessors must present those they interceded for before God persistently and consistently.

The Anointing Oil and Prayer

You need to observe the importance of prayer here. The anointing oil is just an emblem; the real thing here is the prayer of faith: “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.”¹⁴⁹⁴ Therefore, it is not enough to just have the oil, it is even more important to have the faith and to use it in prayer through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The anointing is extensively discussed in Chapter 48 of this book.

¹⁴⁹² 1 Peter 2:7

¹⁴⁹³ Hebrew 2:17

¹⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, verse 15

Précis

God facilitated the erecting of the tabernacle by putting down the design Himself. As the fullness of time was getting closer, when the Lord would make it happen,¹⁴⁹⁵ for Christ to come,¹⁴⁹⁶ God prepared the hearts of His people to see the reality through the tabernacle. The tabernacle, thus, illustrates God's wisdom in showcasing the manifold height and depth of His love for mankind. Just like the tabernacle was always with the Israelites, God would send His only begotten Son into the world,¹⁴⁹⁷ so that from hence, He would be Emmanuel, or God with us.¹⁴⁹⁸

¹⁴⁹⁵ Isaiah 60:22.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Galatians 4:4

¹⁴⁹⁷ John 3:16

¹⁴⁹⁸ Matthew 1:22-23

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Acacia wood
- Badger
- Badger skins
- Blue
- Breastplate
- Bronze
- Ephod
- Fine linen (white)
- Goat's hair
- Gold
- Gold
- Great Prophet
- Jehovah Jireh
- Oil for light
- Onyx stones
- Phylactery
- Purple
- Ram's skin dyed red
- Sanctuary
- Scarlet thread (red)
- Silver
- Spices for the anointing oil
- Sweet incense
- Tabernacle

Multiple-choice Questions

1. Whose idea was the tabernacle?
 - A. God's
 - B. Man's
 - C. Moses'
 - D. Aaron's

2. Red is a symbol of ____
 - A. Salvation
 - B. Perfect man
 - C. Divinity
 - D. Acacia wood

3. The name of Jesus mostly depictive of the tabernacle is ____
 - A. Emmanuel
 - B. Savior
 - C. Messiah
 - D. Christ

4. The High Priest wore a cloak known as ____
 - A. Phylactery
 - B. Ephod
 - C. Gown
 - D. Litany

5. In the ____ were twelve stones depicting the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - A. Phylactery
 - B. Ephod
 - C. Gown
 - D. Litany

True/False Questions

1. The anointing oil literally carries the presence of the real Holy Spirit. T/F
2. Acacia wood is also known as shittim wood. T/F
3. Intercessors should have mercy but not pity. T/F
4. Jesse was a Capernaumite. T/F
5. Jesus died as Lion and yet He was a Lamb. T/F
6. Purple stands for legality. T/F
7. God wants silver and gold from us because He is broke. T/F
8. Biblical symbolism shows us that Mark's Gospel focuses on Christ's purity. T/F
9. David was set apart as king over Israel by the anointing. T/F
10. Tabernacle literally means a portable sanctuary. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Complete the table below:

Item	What it stands for
Gold	
	Redemption
Brass/bronze	
	Son of God
Purple	
	Salvation
White/linen	
	Prophetic voice
Ram's skin dyed red	
	Unattractiveness
Acacia/shittim wood	
	Fragrance/beauty

56 | CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the estimated cost of constructing the tabernacle
- You will know the rationale for the construction of tabernacle
- You will learn about the main divisions of the tabernacle, and
- You will be able to decipher the significance of numbers in the Bible

Introduction

After they had gathered all the specified materials, then God said, “Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” God above desired to dwell in their midst. Even today, God desires to have a room in our hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord: “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.”¹⁴⁹⁹ What God has done now in Christ Jesus was what was foreshadowed in the tabernacle. To them, it was an illusion of the things to come; to us, it is the reality of those things. This chapter will briefly discuss how the tabernacle was constructed.

The Cost of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle was a portable tent constructed at great cost and skill. All the materials used – gold, silver, brass, curtain materials, wood, and garments for the priests and precious stones – valued at the then rate, well over US250,000. The paradox is that such an enormous amount of resources was raised in the wilderness.¹⁵⁰⁰

The answer is that the resources came from God through the people. In our modern times, the cost could be astronomical. But with God, nothing is impossible. The plan and selection of the builders was

¹⁴⁹⁹ John 14:23

¹⁵⁰⁰ Or desert

done by God Himself. This is what God told Moses: “See I have called Bazaleel and have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and understanding, and in all manner of workmanship.”¹⁵⁰¹ So, God is able to fill us with the Holy Spirit for the purposes of granting us wisdom to accomplish a technological feat.¹⁵⁰²

God had instructed Moses earlier to construct it, “According to all that I show you, which is the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make.”¹⁵⁰³ The tabernacle rested on the foundation of silver. Silver is a symbol of redemption. The moneys or silver which was to be collected for this purpose was to be “atonement money of the children of Israel.”¹⁵⁰⁴ If the tabernacle was the symbol of the Church to come, then it is correct to note that just as the tabernacle rested on the blood of atonement, even so has the Church rested on the blood of the dearest Lamb of God, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter secures this reality, thus: “For you know that it was not with *perishable things such as silver or gold* that you were *redeemed* from the empty way of life you inherited from your forefathers, but with the *precious blood of Christ*, a lamb without blemish or spot. He was known before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in the last times for your sake.”¹⁵⁰⁵ Temporarily, silver could atone for the Israelites’ sins; but permanently, the blood of Jesus has atoned for all our sins – past, present and future.

Rationale for the Construction of the Tabernacle

From the Bible, it is evident that God had two reasons or purposes for instructing Moses to construct the tabernacle. First, it was to be a meeting place between God and humanity. And second, the tabernacle was structured to invite humanity to the most treasured aspect of worship.

It was a sacred tent accessible only through the blood of animals. Due to that fact, the tabernacle was also a center for acceptable sacrifices to God. This, though, has been replaced by our own bodies in the New Testament: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in

¹⁵⁰¹ Exodus 31:1-2

¹⁵⁰² See prayer and technology in Chapter 52

¹⁵⁰³ Ex. 25:9

¹⁵⁰⁴ Ex. 30:15

¹⁵⁰⁵ 1 Peter 1:19 (emphasis added).

view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”¹⁵⁰⁶

Throughout the construction of the tabernacle, only three minerals or metals were used, and as we saw, these were gold, silver and bronze. And only four colors were used, namely blue, purple, red and white. The only wood which was used was the acacia and goat’s hair provided strong ropes. Nails and pegs were of bronze unless God instructed otherwise. All the tools *outside* the sanctuary such as folks, shovels, and so on, were of bronze. But the utensils used *inside* the sanctuary such as pans, trimming hooks, folks, trays, and so on, were of silver in the Holy Place.

The tabernacle had six pieces of furniture in total distributed as follows:

OUTER COURT	HOLY PLACE	HOLY OF HOLIES
Brazen altar	Altar of incense	Ark of covenant
Laver	Table of showbread	
	Lampstand	

The entrance into the tabernacle was through a *gate*, while that to the sanctuary was through a *door*. Thus, the rendition, “...enter His *gates* with thanksgiving and His *courts* with praise.”¹⁵⁰⁷

The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were separated by a curtain, also known as a *veil*. The tabernacle’s veil was akin to the one in the temple, “The temple veil was the thickness of a man’s hand embroidered with figures of cherubim like those Ezekiel saw guarding God’s throne. The veil was also a picture of death whereby we enter the presence of God. Scripture says [that] when Jesus died, the veil was torn from top to bottom.”¹⁵⁰⁸ The veil in the tabernacle was similar.¹⁵⁰⁹

¹⁵⁰⁶ Romans 12:1

¹⁵⁰⁷ Psalm 100:4 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁰⁸ <https://www.progress-index.com/story/lifestyle/faith/2009/11/28/pastor-explains-significance-veil-being/985994007/> accessed on December 23rd, 2022

¹⁵⁰⁹ See Exod. 26.31; 36.35

Observe that the tabernacle was the entire rectangular shelter which housed the Outer Court and the sanctuary. The sanctuary was square in shape. It comprised the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

The Significance of Numbers in the Bible

The significance of numbers is nowhere better illustrated than in the tabernacle. The table below will show what certain numbers in the Bible mean. Computing the numbers is as follows: Two-digit numbers are arrived at their significance by multiplication. For example, 60 is either 12x5 or 10x6. So, 60 may either mean “The government of power or grace” or “Man’s responsibility.”

The computation of three or more-digit numbers whose second number is one of 1 to 9 but not 0, calculate first how many digits there are then the significance of each of the three numbers. Thus, 666 is three sixes, which comes to, “A man claiming to be perfect or divine or a God.”

NUMBER	SIGNIFICANCE
1	Unity
2	Separation/division/witness
3	Divine perfection
4	Number of the world/city
5	God’s power/grace
6	Number of man
7	Spiritual perfection/completion
8	Number of resurrection
9	Number of finality
10	Perfect order/number of responsibility
12	Perfect government
40	Probation

Précis

As discussed, the tabernacle was constructed at both great cost and skill. The materials selected were divinely inspired, and so were the significance of the numbers exemplified in the structure. God had a hidden message imbedded into the symbolism of every device, material and recommendations He made. It is apparent from the study of the tabernacle that God's grace, wisdom and power merged to create for humanity a safe way into true redemption. In our prayers, we must realize that the way to God's throne into His presence involved both the cost and alacrity of a divine mastermind. Prayer is, thus, a privilege, a pleasure and a grace dearly bequeathed to us from our Father whose desire is to be with His children.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Altar of incense
- Ark of covenant
- Blood
- Brazen altar
- Bronze
- City
- Cost
- Divine perfection
- Division
- Finality
- God's grace
- God's power
- Gold
- Lampstand
- Laver
- Number of man
- Numbers
- Perfect government
- Perfect order
- Perfection
- Probation
- Responsibility
- Resurrection
- Separation
- Silver
- Spiritual completion
- Table of showbread
- Unity
- Witness
- World

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The number 50 may mean ____
 - A. The grace of God's order
 - B. Perfect order
 - C. Perfect government
 - D. Grace in action

2. The number 11 may mean all of these, except ____
 - A. Ungovernable
 - B. Government in attrition
 - C. Incomplete order
 - D. Sophistication

Questions 3 to 6 are based on the verse of Scripture below:

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy-seven times,’” (Matthew 18:21-22). Compute the significance of “seven seventy-seven times.”

3. What is the significance of the number seven?
 - A. Perfect order
 - B. Divine perfection
 - C. Spiritual perfection
 - D. Human completion

4. The number 70 may be symbolized by all these, except ____
 - A. 10 (perfect order) x 7 (spiritual completion)
 - B. 10 (responsibility) x 7 (spiritual perfection)
 - C. 10 (perfect score) x 7 (perfect completion)
 - D. 10 (responsibility) x 7 (spiritual completion)

5. The number 70 may mean ____
- A. In relation to angels, those on a mission to deliver a divine message for redemption
 - B. In relation to elders in heaven, those who never leave God's presence
 - C. In relation to God's instructions, to gather a group of intercessors to pray for revival
 - D. In relation to the two witnesses at the end of eschatological period, those who will confront Satan and the Anti-Christ
6. To forgive "seven seventy-seven times" is ____
- A. The will of God
 - B. The will of God and desired spiritually
 - C. The will of God, desired spiritually and is complete in effect
 - D. The will of God, desired spiritually, is complete in effect and the responsibility for a perpetually forgiven life
7. In the New Testament, thanksgiving is ____
- A. The key to the Holy of Holies
 - B. The lock to the Holy Place
 - C. Necessary to prayer
 - D. The antithesis of praise
8. The number 666 may be all these, except ____
- A. A man claiming to be perfect
 - B. A man claiming to be divine
 - C. A man claiming to be God
 - D. A God claiming to be a man

PRAYER

9. In the verse, “And David took his staff in his hand, selected five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag,” the five stones may be a symbol of ____
- A. God’s grace
 - B. God’s power
 - C. God’s ingenuity
 - D. God’s engineered victory

True/False Questions

1. The tabernacle was constructed at both great cost and skill.
T/F
2. The materials selected for the construction of the tabernacle were divinely inspired. T/F
3. The numbers used in the Bible have no other significance other than that they are numbers. T/F
4. God had a hidden message imbedded into the symbolism of every device, material and recommendations He made.
T/F
5. It is apparent from the study of the tabernacle that God’s grace, wisdom and power have not merged in creating a super human being. T/F
6. In our prayers, we must realize that the way to God’s throne into His presence involved both the cost and the alacrity of a divine mastermind. T/F
7. Prayer is a privilege but not a grace. T/F
8. The computation of three or more-digit numbers whose second number is one of 1 to 9 but not 0, must be calculated

by considering how many digits there are and then the significance of each of the three numbers must be validated.
T/F

9. The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were separated by a curtain. T/F
10. The veil of the tabernacle was ripped from top to bottom on the day Jesus died. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Identify the purposes for the construction of the tabernacle. Discuss their efficacy.

[500 or less words].
2. Discuss color symbolism in the Bible and ascertain its significance.

[500 words or less].
3. Explicate the number “1000” using the symbolism of biblical numericity.

[500 words or less].

57 | THE OUTER COURT

At the end of this chapter:

- You will learn about the Outer Court in greater details
- You will locate the position of the gate
- You will locate the placement of the components in the Outer Court
- You will learn more about the altar of burnt offering and the laver, and
- You will relate the significance of the Outer Court to prayer

Introduction

In Chapter 55, we introduced the tabernacle. We discovered that it was God's idea, God's initiative to have the tabernacle to be constructed in the wilderness. The tabernacle was full of symbolism. In Chapter 56, we began to explore the choice and meaning of the materials and the numericity God had instructed Moses to use. And in this chapter, we explore further the choice of furniture and its symbolism in the first component of the tabernacle called the Outer Court.

Composition and Symbolism of the Outer Court

As we have noted, the tabernacle was divided into three parts: The Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were partitioned by a veil inside a square sanctuary in the tabernacle. The Outer Court comprised the fence (of badger skin), the gate, the altar of burnt offering (also known as the brazen altar) and the laver. The boards or the poles of the fence were made from the hard, incorruptible acacia wood. The boards were to be cut, cleaned and clothed.

For a person to fit into the Body of Christ, they have, first, to be cut from the world, cleansed in the blood of Jesus and then clothed

with the divine nature.¹⁵¹⁰ There were sixty poles or boards altogether around the tabernacle; twenty on the north and twenty on the south, *ten* on the east and *ten* on the west. The tabernacle's Outer Court was meant for man; it was his responsibility.

As we have alluded to, the fence of the Outer Court was made of the badger skin. The one from outside the tabernacle saw it as unattractive and dull, but the one inside viewed it as beautiful and attractive. Isn't it any wonder that the unregenerate and the lost think of Christianity as boring and unattractive, but to those who have been redeemed, it is "altogether lovely."¹⁵¹¹

The Gate

The tabernacle faced the east and had only one gate. The gate had four colors: Blue, purple, scarlet (red) and white. In the gate, immediately we meet the Son of God, the King of Kings, the Savior of the world and the Perfect Man.¹⁵¹² This is our Lord Jesus Christ. The fence is shelter from outside influences: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence."¹⁵¹³ There was a gate on the fence. In fact, the gate was technically called the *way*. Thus, when Jesus told the disciples that He was the Way,¹⁵¹⁴ those leaned in the intricacies of the tabernacle should have understood Him clearly.

It is amazing that we find *five* poles at the gate which are a symbol of God's grace and power. We enter into God's presence because of His grace. Each pole was held to the ground by a rope of goat's skin which is *prophetic* and each rope was fixed to a brazen nail halfway in the ground, which is a sign of the *resurrection* of Christ who would bring a prophetic message and suffer for humanity. The gate faced the east, the direction from which the sun rises. It is true that the first thing we ought to do immediately we wake up is to seek the presence of God in prayer.

¹⁵¹⁰ 1Peter 1:4

¹⁵¹¹ Song of Solomon 5:16

¹⁵¹² See "The Meaning of Colors," in Chapter 55

¹⁵¹³ Psalm 91:1

¹⁵¹⁴ John 14:6

Altar of Burnt Offering

This altar was made of bronze; thus, it was also known as the brazen altar of burnt offering: “You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide – the altar shall be square – and its height shall be three cubits. You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. Also, you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its fire pans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze....”¹⁵¹⁵

We may identify four (4) characteristics of the altar of burnt offering:

It was made of wood and bronze

Immediately they entered through the gate, they came face to face with the altar of burnt offering. The altar was made of bronze and wood, symbolic of human nature. The farther away they were from the sanctuary, the more human and worldlier they were. The altar served three important functions: namely, that it was a place of sacrifice, the shedding of blood and death. Notice, too, all the utensils used here, pans for receiving ashes, shovels for removing ashes, basins for carrying blood, forks for holding the animal and fire pans for controlling the fire.

A place of sacrifice

There can never be any experience of the true presence of God without a surrendered life. God uses broken vessels, humble and contrite. It is our sacrificial living of praise that necessitates our entrance into the presence of Father God. In those days, animals took the place of people, but now Christ Himself has taken our place by becoming God’s Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.¹⁵¹⁶

However, His sacrificial death does not guarantee our careless living, but that since He took our place physically, we ought to live as “living sacrifices” before God. That means that, in our quest to live holy, we will have to constantly praise and honor God. It is said of

¹⁵¹⁵ Ex. 27:1-8

¹⁵¹⁶ See John 1:29

Moses: “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”¹⁵¹⁷ A life of sacrificial praise enables us to live right for God.

Writing to the Roman believers, Paul exhorts them to, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.”¹⁵¹⁸ This is the first thing needed in understanding the goodness and presence of God. At this altar, we meet Jesus – and that is where we precisely sacrifice our fleshly desires. God is Spirit. On earth, He needs a human body to dwell in, and we, corporately as the Body of Christ, and individually as believers, give Him the necessary lodging place. That place is our bodies.

A place of the shedding of blood

The animal shed its innocent blood on behalf of a guilty sinner at the altar. So, Jesus, likewise at Calvary, shed His precious blood that we should be able to reach His Father: “Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”¹⁵¹⁹

This could not have been possible had it not been for the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ for our sins. Christ has already shed His blood for us and we do not need to, but we ought to live as those who are redeemed and not as those who have not received God’s love and mercy. Shedding blood means giving away something as precious as life, and we know that life is in the blood. By grace we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ; practically, we subject our bodies daily to death from world pleasures and desires.

A place of death

Every animal that went on the altar, died. The animals were burnt to ashes, and hence the phraseology, “Altar of burnt offering.” We cannot enjoy the presence of God if we are not dead to pleasures which lead to sin. In relation to prayer, this place is very important in the sense that without undergoing the death of the flesh, we may not enjoy an

¹⁵¹⁷ Heb 11:24-25

¹⁵¹⁸ Rom 12:1

¹⁵¹⁹ Heb. 4:16

audience with God.

This is the time in prayer when we feel fatigued or a feeling of giving up. This is the time when our fleshly cravings suddenly become violent and our appetites are induced. The issue is that the flesh is protesting; it does not want to die. Have you not seen that when an animal is about to die, that is when it puts up a bitter fight? The same is true of the flesh. After we negotiate this experience, we then discover that our prayer has become meaningful and sweet.

Brazen altar in relation to a life of prayer

Prayer experts have discovered that the more a person stays in prayer the more their flesh is being subdued. People who are not prayerful and hence whose flesh have a louder voice than their spirit, find it difficult to breakthrough into the presence of God. These are the people who need to be cranked during prayer and worship services.

But if all the people were praying, we could see a situation where just at the introduction of one song of worship the entire congregation goes into deeper praises and worship. When lecturing the students in the “School of Intercession,” this author always invited students to imagining a priest carrying a live goat beyond the brazen altar which was prohibited. If by chance such a priest would find himself into God’s presence, that goat would betray him. It would make noise and hinder his services.

That is what will happen if we want to serve God with live appetites for sin. It is always vital to check ourselves before entering into the presence of God whether we have surrendered our appetites or not. Our minds may wonder and our eyes may begin to covet our sisters and brothers while in the midst of a prayer or worship service.

The Bible states that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. So, we will always need to ask for the cleansing in the blood of the lamb. If concentrating on God is becoming a challenge, we may need to revisit the lesson on meditative prayer.¹⁵²⁰ From the altar of burnt offering, we then go straight to the laver.

The Laver

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying: You should also make a laver

¹⁵²⁰ See “Meditative Prayer,” in Chapter 5

of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die¹⁵²¹ This was an important aspect of tabernacle ministration. It stood between life and death, especially for the ministering priests. it had the following characteristics:

It was made from brazen mirrors

The brazen laver constituted the second piece of furniture in the Outer Court of the tabernacle. It stood between the altar of burnt offering and the *door* of the sanctuary (Holy Place and Holy of Holies). This piece of furniture was, in fact, made from the brazen mirrors which the women offered: “He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”¹⁵²²

There are no further details given concerning the size of this piece. It is said that this alludes to the Holy Spirit who cannot be measured.¹⁵²³ The purpose of the laver is, however, given, *it was for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet in as they served in the tabernacle*. We know from its material set that it provided, apart from the cleansing effect of water, the chance to re-evaluate oneself in the perfect mirror¹⁵²⁴ of the Word of God before proceeding further into God’s presence. The washing of hands and feet speak of our need of being holy in our service and witness to the world, respectively. Hands stand for *service* while feet for the *preaching of the Gospel*.¹⁵²⁵

Position of the laver

The position and strictness of the laver need to be acknowledged. It was situated at the middle of the altar of burnt offering and the door. This, essentially and effectively, means that it could not be used before

¹⁵²¹ Ex. 30:17-21

¹⁵²² Ex. 38:8

¹⁵²³ See John 3:8

¹⁵²⁴ See James 1:22-23

¹⁵²⁵ See Ps. 119:48 and Rom. 10:15

the shedding of blood. The altar stood for the blood of Christ shed on Calvary and the laver for the Word of God. It follows that no one may understand and relevantly interpret the Scripture without spiritual regeneration.

Moreover, the servants of God in the tabernacle could not enter into the sanctuary without washing at the laver. They were slain instantly. This means that we can die, spiritually, if we do not take in the Word of God adequately. It also means that God demands holiness without which no one can see Him.¹⁵²⁶ A holy life is a must for anyone who would love to experience the presence of God. The story of Joshua the high priest¹⁵²⁷ clearly illustrates this fact. It is a story of what happens when we go to God in unrighteousness. When we are dirty before God, Satan finds a loop hole and takes advantage of us. The result is that we may become fearful. Joshua, for instance, could not rebuke the devil because he was filthy and, therefore, powerless.

We only have authority over evil and Satan when our lives are holy before God. And this is a done deal. Our righteousness, and eventually, our holiness, does not come from our efforts,¹⁵²⁸ but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Human or manufactured righteousness (holiness) cannot protect us against Satan's schemes nor can it suffice in the presence of God. Our position in Christ offers us protection against the machinations of Satan and adds favor with God.

The laver in relation to a life of prayer

In relation to prayer, we reach a time as we are praying when suddenly our prayer starts to make sense. From yawning just before sacrificing. And dying at the altar. To the emergence of joy just after the altar. We start to see ourselves the way we are, immediately before we enter into the sanctuary. Here, we begin to construct meaningful and scriptural-filled prayers. This happens because we are now ready to meet with God. The door to the sanctuary is depicted in Christ as the door to green pastures (the presence of God): "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep...if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."¹⁵²⁹

¹⁵²⁶ Hebrews 12:14

¹⁵²⁷ Zechariah 3:1-10

¹⁵²⁸ See Isaiah 64:6

¹⁵²⁹ John 10:7-15 (9)

Précis

From the gate, we move sacrificially through the altar to the washing clean of our filth at the laver, and it is time to enter at the door into the sanctuary. There in the Holy Place, we will begin to understand the brilliance and grace of being in the presence of God. Symbolically, Christ has already accomplished the titivations of the Outer Court through His sacrifice at Calgary. Our role is to appropriate His victory into a meaningful enjoyment of the presence of God.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Alter of burnt offering
- Door
- Gate
- Laver
- Outer Court
- Priests
- Sacrifice

Multiple-choice Questions

1. The tabernacle was divided into three parts. Which one of the following does not form part of that composition?
 - A. Outer Court
 - B. Holy Place
 - C. Holy of Holies
 - D. Gate
2. Each of these was part of the Outer Court, except ____
 - A. Fence
 - B. Gate
 - C. Altar of burnt offering
 - D. Ark of the Covenant
3. The fence to the Outer Court of the tabernacle was made of ____
 - A. Badger skin
 - B. Bronze
 - C. Silver
 - D. Goat skin

4. The other name for the altar of burnt offering was ____
- A. Brazen altar
 - B. Altar of burnt incense
 - C. Silvery altar
 - D. Calvary
5. The boards of the fence of the Outer Court were also known as ____
- A. Poles
 - B. Drywallers
 - C. Acacia wood
 - D. Beams
6. The boards of the fence of the Outer Court were made from ____
- A. Hard acacia wood
 - B. Incorruptible acacia wood
 - C. Cut, cleaned and clothed acacia wood
 - D. All of the above are correct
7. The gate to the Outer Court had ____ colors.
- A. 2
 - B. 3
 - C. 4
 - D. 5
8. All these colors were in the gate to the Outer Court of the tabernacle, except ____
- A. Blue
 - B. Purple
 - C. Scarlet
 - D. Grey

PRAYER

9. In appearance, all these apply to a badger, except ____
- A. Dull
 - B. Ugly
 - C. Beautiful
 - D. Grey
10. "It was for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet in as they served in the tabernacle." What was it?
- A. Laver
 - B. Altar
 - C. Basin
 - D. Folks

True/False Questions

- 1. The laver was made of bronze. T/F
- 2. If Aaron or his children did not wash at the laver they might die. T/F
- 3. The laver stood between the altar of burnt offering and the door of the sanctuary. T/F
- 4. The sanctuary consisted of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. T/F
- 5. There are details given concerning the size of the laver. T/F
- 6. *Hands* stand for service. T/F
- 7. *Feet* stands for the preaching of the Gospel. T/F
- 8. A holy life is a must for anyone who must experience the presence of God. T/F

9. The story of Joshua the high priest is the story of the same Joshua who succeeded Moses. T/F
10. Jesus was at the center of the Outer Court although this was shrouded in symbolism at the time. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. List and describe the characteristics of the laver.
[500 words or less].
2. Relate the laver to a life of prayer using scriptural references.
[500 or less words].
3. List and describe the characteristics of the altar of burnt offering.
[500 words or less].
4. Relate the altar of burnt offering to a life of prayer using scriptural references.
[500 or less words].
5. List and describe the characteristics of the gate.
[500 words or less].
6. Relate the gate to a life of prayer using scriptural references.
[500 or less words].

58 | THE HOLY PLACE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will distinguish the tent from the rest of the tabernacle
- You will understand the significance of the altar of incense
- You will know the significance of the lampstand
- You will understand the reason why the table of the showbread was placed in the Holy Place, and
- You will associate gold to true prayer

Introduction

In Chapter 55, we introduced the tabernacle. We discovered that it was God's idea, God's initiative to have the tabernacle to be constructed in the wilderness. The tabernacle was full of symbolism. In Chapter 56, we began to explore the choice and meaning of the materials and the numericity God had instructed Moses to use. In Chapter 57, we explored further the choice of furniture and its symbolism in the first component of the tabernacle called the Outer Court. In this chapter, we move from everything bronze to everything gold; we explore the next most holy place in the divine configuration, the Holy Place.

The Sanctuary

The real tent or sanctuary was a cabinet which was demarcated in two by a curtain. The first room was called the Holy Place and the second room was the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. To enter into the sanctuary, they used a central door which opened into the Holy Place. The gate and the door were similar, not only in quality or function but also in quantity or material. They were the same area – the gate was 20 cubits by 5 cubits whilst the door was equal in length and breadth, 10 cubits by 10 cubits. They were both made of fine linen material of blue, purple, scarlet and white.

This is describing the same person from different perspectives. At

the gate, there were *four* pillars of wood which were overlaid with bronze, while at the door there were *five* pillars and they were overlaid with gold. At the gate we behold the humanity of Christ while at the door we behold the divinity of the Christ.

Since the door was also known as the *truth*, we immediately realize that what Jesus is saying in the New Testament is that He is the Way and the Truth is true.¹⁵³⁰ The door was an access to acceptable prayer, to accustomed light, to abiding fellowship, to absolute safety, and to advantageous relationship.

These are respective descriptions of the composition of the Holy Place. In this chamber were three pieces of furniture: The altar of incense, the golden lampstand (or candlelight), and the table of showbread (or the bread of the presence).

The Altar of Incense

In the bible we read: “You shall make an altar to burn incense on, you shall make it of acacia wood...And you shall overlay its top, its sides all round, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make a molding of gold all round”¹⁵³¹ The altar of incense was square – one cubit in both length and width. It stood just adjacent to the curtain. It was the first thing they saw immediately they opened the door. It was here that incense was burned by being placed on coals which were ever glowing. The burning of the incense (which was not allowed to be compounded for personal use or to be imitated) brought a sweet perfume before the presence of God. The altar of burnt incense is a place of intercession.

This altar is placed in the same line as the altar of burnt offering, the laver and the *mercy seat* in the Holy of Holies. This may mean that an intercessor is supposed to go through all these stages. They should be dead to worldly passions, washed in the Word of God and have access to God’s mercy seat, respectively.

This also reveals that our intercessions are like sweet smelling perfume into God’s nostrils. The presence of the horns on this altar also speaks of the power of intercession, for *horns* stand for *power*. It was also a place of praise. Remember that they stammered and struggled at the altar of burnt offering before they came to the

¹⁵³⁰ See John 14:6

¹⁵³¹ Ex. 30:1-10

constructed and well-organized scriptural-filled prayer at the laver.

We come to melody filled praise. It is here where the Bible declares: "Praise the Lord. For it is good to sing praises to our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful."¹⁵³² It is here that prayer is sung and becomes praise. It is here that God-born melodies start to fill our hearts.

It says praise is pleasant and beautiful. That is incredible. What is being said here is that there is pleasure in praise. This is the point at which true joy starts to emanate from the bottom of our hearts. Here the Bible says: "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."¹⁵³³ Here again the term "pleasure" is repeated. Those who reach this far know what it means to sing to the Lord a new song. They know what it means to be filled with foolish clamor – to go wild and crazy for God. It is as if one has been intoxicated by strong wine. It is a place of dance and celebration.

The Golden Lampstand

Of the golden lampstand, we read: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually...."¹⁵³⁴ This was the second piece of furniture in the Holy Place and the only piece of furniture which had no wood in its make. It had six branches and one shaft, the total of seven. This has a spiritual significance. It was all pure gold. It was a symbol of divinity and spiritual perfection. It is said that we are the branches and the Christ is the trunk or the vine.¹⁵³⁵

We were chosen in Christ to be His from the foundation of the earth.¹⁵³⁶ This piece of furniture was not also given measurements like the laver. And we said that it represented the Holy Spirit who is measureless. The candlelight had bowls, knobs and flowers. It is, generally, believed that the bowls were almonds, the knobs represented the pomegranates and flowers were lilies. The lilies remind us of the spotless purity of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵³⁷ Pomegranates are an

¹⁵³² Ps. 147:1

¹⁵³³ Ps. 16:11

¹⁵³⁴ Lev. 24:1-4, also Ex. 25:31-40

¹⁵³⁵ John 15:1-5

¹⁵³⁶ Eph. 1:4

¹⁵³⁷ See Song of Solomon 2:1

emblem of fruitfulness and here they stand for Christ in His life of productivity. The almonds speak of Christ in His power. Considering Aaron's rod which budded, blossomed and bore almonds overnight, this would also speak of the resurrection of Christ.¹⁵³⁸ The candlelight was made to give light. It was a type of life.¹⁵³⁹

Four things are worthy of our notice in relation to the light in the Holy Place. First, it shone before the Lord.¹⁵⁴⁰ Our first obligation as Christians is to shine or live before God.

Second, it shone upon the table of showbread. When we are living to please God, we are revealing Christ to the world as the Bread of Life.¹⁵⁴¹ People can actually see us in the bread they need for their impoverished souls by the bright joyful light of the consecrated life.

Third, it shone upon the altar of incense. The power of prayer and praise will be seen and felt through the life that is lived before God. The God who answers prayer is the God who also answers by the fire of a holy, God-glorifying life.

Fourth and last, it shone upon itself. We need to shine as stars in the darkness. Accordingly,¹⁵⁴² light was meant to be burning continually, it was to be a perpetual light. The priests cleaned and replenished the lamps. We, likewise, ought to clean our lives and continually be filled in the Spirit of God.

The Table of Showbread

The table of showbread is talked about in this fashion: "You shall also make a table of acacia wood...and you shall overlay it with pure gold; and make a molding of gold all round."¹⁵⁴³ And, "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it...you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the Lord."¹⁵⁴⁴ The table of showbread was placed in the Holy Place directly opposite the candlelight on the north side. A table, generally, alludes to food, fellowship and friendship. The table stands for fellowship of believers with God. Twelve loaves of bread were placed on the table with

¹⁵³⁸ See Num. 17:8

¹⁵³⁹ See John 1:4

¹⁵⁴⁰ See Ex. 40:20

¹⁵⁴¹ See John 6:35

¹⁵⁴² See Lev. 24:1-4

¹⁵⁴³ Ex. 25:23-30

¹⁵⁴⁴ Lev. 24 5-10

frankincense to prepare it for a week before it could be replaced and eaten in the presence of God by the sons of Aaron. Notice that the bread was eaten in God's presence. It follows that in the presence of God, we find satisfaction. The goodness of God satisfies our souls. A soul in need of God, is weak and empty. It longs for fulfilment in things which it does not achieve.

Oh, soul of man, that you could re-evaluate your intimations, that you could stop briefly and reason; look to Emmanuel's food house where the real bread has been baked; the bread that those who eat never get hungry again. It is the bread full of life; come, take and be satisfied. From the Holy Place we are just a *veil* away from the Holy of Holies, God's innermost chamber.

Précis

The Holy Place is the first component of the sanctuary that introduces us to the real presence of God. Even though we are know that we have entrance into the Outer Court, it is not until we come to the Holy Place that we begin to know the true presence of God. The essence of human life is a dream, a dream that one day we shall be with God. Just as the human spirit cannot be totally complete without God, so does our longing. We long for the true consummation of the divine quarters, which only finds its true joy and happiness in God. In the Holy of Holies there lies our true consummation, and in the next chapter, we will discuss the Holy of Holies.

Chapter Review

Words and Phrases

- Altar of incense
- Candlelight
- Fellowship
- Food
- Friendship
- Golden lampstand
- Holy Place
- Table of showbread

Multiple-choice Questions

1. A table, generally, alludes to all these, except ____
 - A. Food
 - B. Fellowship
 - C. Friendship
 - D. Sorrow

2. How many loaves of bread were placed on the table of showbread with frankincense to prepare it for a week before it could be replaced and eaten in the presence of God by the sons of Aaron?
 - A. 12
 - B. 6
 - C. 3
 - D. 24

PRAYER

3. In the Holy Place, bread was eaten ____
 - A. When fresh
 - B. In the presence of God
 - C. After seven days
 - D. Only by Aaron

4. The Bread of Life gives all these, except ____
 - A. Satisfaction
 - B. Goodness
 - C. Fulfilment
 - D. Hunger

5. The knobs on the golden lampstand represented ____
 - A. Pomegranates and flowers
 - B. Lilies and flowers
 - C. Pomegranates and lilies
 - D. Flowers and goblets

True/False

1. The showbread table was made of acacia wood. T/F

2. In the Holy Place, there was perpetual light. T/F

3. The purpose of frankincense was to preserve the bread for at least a week. T/F

4. The golden candlelight also symbolized life. T/F

5. The candlelight, like the laver, had measurements. T/F

6. The candlelight had wood in it. T/F

7. The altar of incense was rectangular. T/F
8. The altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering, the laver and the mercy seat were placed in the same line. T/F
9. In God's presence is fullness of joy. T/F
10. At God's right hand is the pleasures called Jesus Christ.
T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Compare the altar of burnt offering in the Outer Court to the altar of incense in the Holy Place of the tabernacle. What the similarities and difference can you identify?

[250 words or less].
2. Discuss the presence of the showbread in the Holy Place and the fact that Jesus Christ claimed to be the Bread of Life.

[500 words or less].
3. By using symbolism leaned in Chapter 55, discuss the following: "At the gate, there were four pillars of wood which were overlaid with bronze, while at the door there were five pillars and they were overlaid with gold."

[500 words or less].

59 | THE HOLY OF HOLIES

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to define the presence of God
- You will understand the significance of the Ark of Covenant
- You will begin to understand why the mercy seat is the most important aspect of the presence of God, and
- You will learn about the most definitive branch of the tabernacle, the Holy of holies

Introduction

In Chapter 55, we introduced the tabernacle. We discovered that it was God's idea, God's initiative to have the tabernacle to be constructed in the wilderness. The tabernacle was full of symbolism. In Chapter 56, we began to explore the choice and meaning of the materials and the numericity God had instructed Moses to use. In Chapter 57, we explored further the choice of furniture and its symbolism in the first compartment of the tabernacle called the Outer Court. In Chapter 58, we moved from everything bronze to everything gold; we explored the next most holy place in the tabernacle's divine configuration, the Holy Place. In this chapter, we end the divine trip by discussing the Most Holy Place, also known as the Holy of Holies.

The Holiest Place of All

The Holy of Holies was hidden from the common view by a veil or curtain. It was the holiest of them all. In the Bible, we read: "You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple and scarlet thread, and with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the Holy Place and the Most

Holy [Place].”¹⁵⁴⁵

You may also be aware by now that the gate, the door and the veil or curtain all stood for one Person [Jesus Christ], for they all had blue, purple, white and scarlet. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. It was only through the veil that the High Priest could enter into the holy presence where the Shekinah Glory of God rested between the cherubim. The veil was only parted once every year when the High Priest on the Day of Atonement and as the representative of the people, entered into the Most Holy Place.

It was always a secretive annual ceremony – for as Aaron entered dressed in the white linen coat and breeches, he entered on behalf of the people. His movement inside was known by the tinkling of the bells on the border of the holy garments. These very bells were also a sign of his coming back. This veil was also known as the *life*, for by penetrating it, the High Priest stood between life and death. His coming back in peace was a sign of life. Jesus said that He is the Life.¹⁵⁴⁶ Hence, Jesus is the gate (the Way), the door (the Truth) and the veil (the Life).

It was true that without going through these three entrances, no one could reach the Mercy Seat. Jesus says, “Without Me you can do nothing”¹⁵⁴⁷ and also that, “No one comes to the Father except by Me.”¹⁵⁴⁸ Oh, how appropriate that the tabernacle was a reveler of the coming Christ. The veil, too, represented the Body of Christ which was broken. Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention that the curtain was divinely rent into two from top to bottom at the death of Christ.

It is the same veil that was in the tabernacle which was in the temple. The significance of this divine rending is so that we could have access to the Holiest Place by means of a new and living way: “We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.”¹⁵⁴⁹

It was from top to bottom, signifying that the initiative to open the veil was God’s and not man’s. It was, furthermore, rent at the center to indicate that there could be no other way to the throne of God except through Jesus Christ. However, in tabernacle days, the curtain

¹⁵⁴⁵ Exodus 26:31-33

¹⁵⁴⁶ See John 14:6

¹⁵⁴⁷ John 15:5

¹⁵⁴⁸ John 14:6, *supra*.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Heb. 10:19–20

was intact and Aaron entered in once every year to perform the sacred ceremony of atonement with blood which he had to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat. Inside the Most Holy Place, there was one important item – the Ark of Covenant, which was overshadowed by two cherubim.

The Ark of Covenant

And you shall make an arc of acacia wood, two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half shall be its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all round. You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side. And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. You shall make a Mercy Seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you should make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the Mercy Seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the Mercy Seat. You shall put the Mercy Seat on top of the ark, and in the ark, you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.¹⁵⁵⁰

From the ark to the gate

It must be borne in mind that the LORD God's ordering of the furnishing of the tabernacle was from the ark to the gate. We, however, as humans view things from the outside in. So, we decided also to first present the outer before the inner. The Mercy Seat was the throne of God and the tabernacle was also known as "The tent of His splendor."

No Israelite ever entered the Holiest Place to examine the ark, but we have been privileged to do so now. The Ark was made of two materials, acacia wood which was overlaid with gold. This Ark was the

¹⁵⁵⁰ Ex. 25:10-22

reason why God commanded the Israelites to build Him a tabernacle. Therefore, it was the most important part of the tabernacle.

Purpose of the ark

God's purpose in constructing this facility was so that He should dwell among His people, that they might know Him and that they should know how to come in and worship Him. The Ark of the Testimony (Ark) was always located in the center of the camp. Jesus Christ is the center of all the plan of God. Through the Son, God made all things. And so we ought to focus on Christ in our quest to pleasing God.

Three components of the ark

Similarly, in Revelation, we see Jesus as the lamb that was slain at the middle of the throne.¹⁵⁵¹ Jesus must be at the center of our hearts. Three items were placed inside the Ark and each represented what Christ has done for us. These were the tablet of the *law*, the pot of *manna* and the *rod* of Aaron that budded.

The law points to the way, the manna represents the truth and the budded rod speaks of life, again confirming, "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life."¹⁵⁵² The Law of Moses or the *Decalogue* (the Ten Commandments) which no man could keep, God had to keep it secure in the Ark. This was to be revealed in Christ. He came to fulfil it and not to abolish it.¹⁵⁵³

We must know that one other reason why the curtain was torn by God was so that we could have access to the Father directly and receive His law in our hearts. We keep His law by the Holy Spirit. In the Ark, there was also the golden pot that contained manna.¹⁵⁵⁴ Manna in English simply means food. But in Hebrew, it means "What is it?" Probably, this is accurate because its provision was a wonder to the Israelites. Manna is likened to Christ Himself as the Bread of Life.¹⁵⁵⁵

In Exodus,¹⁵⁵⁶ manna was small, representing the humility of Christ; it was round, speaking of the perfection of Christ; it was white, which

¹⁵⁵¹ Revelations 1:13, 7:17

¹⁵⁵² John 14:6, *supra*.

¹⁵⁵³ Matt. 5:17

¹⁵⁵⁴ Hebrew 9:4

¹⁵⁵⁵ John 6:31-38

¹⁵⁵⁶ See Exodus 16

speaks of the holiness of Christ; it was like frost, standing for freshness of Christ; the manna was also like coriander seed, speaking of the fragrance of Christ; it was like the taste of fresh oil, which denotes the authority of the anointed Christ. Manna was like wafers made with honey, speaking of the sweetness of Christ. Not only that, but manna was also like the color of bdellium, speaking of the preciousness of Christ.¹⁵⁵⁷

When they came into the Holy Place, they found bread which had been baked by human hands and had to be replaced every Saturday. But in the Most Holy Place, they found *the* bread baked by God Himself which satisfied the hungry soul forever.

It was the unrevealed real Bread of Life which those who eat would never die spiritually. The bread of the innermost sanctuary was the bread that came from heaven.¹⁵⁵⁸ In Numbers,¹⁵⁵⁹ we are told of the *rod* of Aaron that budded. The rod represents God's chosen priesthood. Aaron's stick at first was dry and dead, and then it was made to bud and blossom. It is also the sign of resurrection for in Numbers again, we read: "The rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, has budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."¹⁵⁶⁰ The budding of the rod of Aaron reveals the resurrection of Christ while the blossoming reveals His ascension to heaven. The almonds, no doubt, typify glorification. So, in the budding, Christ rises; in the blossoming, He ascends; and in the almonds, He is glorified.

God instructed Moses to make a crown of gold around the Ark.¹⁵⁶¹ The crown is a symbol of glory. This speaks of Christ who was crowned with glory and honor. The crown is also a symbol of power and security. In Christ's glorification, we have received power and security. The crown was made to prevent the lid or the Mercy Seat from moving. Fifty thousand and seventy (50,070) men of Bethlehem died in one day for trying to remove the lid and peep into the Ark.¹⁵⁶² Since the Mercy Seat stands for the seat of God's rule, and the crown stands for power and authority, we are, therefore, quick to conclude that the throne of God is anchored by power; it is the Throne of Power as well as the Throne of Mercy. It is also a Throne of Grace because

¹⁵⁵⁷ Consider: Ex. 16:14, 31-34; Numbers 11:1-9; and Song of Songs 1:3, 2:3.

¹⁵⁵⁸ John 1:14

¹⁵⁵⁹ Numbers 16 and 17

¹⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid*, Numbers 17:8

¹⁵⁶¹ Ex.25:11

¹⁵⁶² 1 Sam 6:19

power plus mercy gives birth to grace.

The four rings of gold and the poles of acacia wood covered or overlaid with gold and placed through the rings, provided for the transportation of the Ark. The Ark was portable because of the wondering nature of the Israelites at this time. The Ark found its final resting place in the temple that Solomon built.

It was only the priests who were allowed to carry the Ark. Priests carried the Ark using the golden covered acacia wood poles. This means that only true believers can carry the presence of God. We also should carry the presence of God in our hearts. A believer who enjoys the fulfilled presence of God is one who has made Jesus Lord of their heart and who constantly check themselves whether they are living in obedience. It is only such who keep their temples (bodies) holy and who have clean hands who carry God's Ark in their hearts. And this, too, is an act of grace.

The mercy seat

This was a slab of pure gold. It was the only seat in the entire tabernacle, symbolic that it was the end result. All the activities, ceremonies and duties in the tabernacle were leading to this end. It was here between the cherubim that the Shekinah Glory of God rested.

The Mercy Seat is symbolic of God's mercy. However, mercy could not flow until blood was shed at the altar of burnt offering. Remember, too, that the High Priest could take the blood in the Holy of Holies which he sprinkled on the Mercy Seat once every year on the Day of Atonement. Christ, who is our High Priest, also entered heaven once for all, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with His own blood that He might atone for all our sins, and that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. This is Good News (*Gospel*) for all who wish to enter in and enjoy God's presence.

When the High Priest Aaron entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of animals, uncertainties loomed whether he would come out alive, for he was a sinner like every other Israelite. But Christ, who was perfect, knew no sin and was made sin for us that in Him we might become the righteousness of God,¹⁵⁶³ has appeared with His precious blood which speaks of better things than either the blood of Abel or the bulls and goats, and God to indicate that Christ's sacrifice was

¹⁵⁶³ 2 Corinthians 5:17

perfect and acceptable, rent the curtain from the top to bottom in the middle and abolished all other sacrifices. This means that we all, through Christ, can enter into God's throne room without guilt or fear of death. It is because of Christ's death on Calvary that God has accepted us in and has called us His children.

We are a royal priesthood.¹⁵⁶⁴ We now wear purple; we are a kingship. A king is not a priest. Kings and priest then like now played different roles, one ministered to the people on behalf of God (the king), while the other ministered to God on behalf of the people (the priest). What happened was that priests could enter into the Holy Place in their daily routines of trimming the wick and working, but they could never enter into the Holy of Holies. But now that the veil or curtain has been rent, both the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place are one; they who enter in one have entered in both. We have become kings and priests simultaneously or simply a royal priesthood. And the Psalmist asks:¹⁵⁶⁵ "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill?" The answer is only those who walk upright and do the will of God in truth, and by grace through Jesus Christ, we have met that standard.

The Holy of Holies, a Place of True Worship

In relation to the Mercy Seat, the Lord tells Moses and Aaron: "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the Ark of the Testimony [Ark of Covenant], about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel."¹⁵⁶⁶ There was a place where God met His people. The Israelites met Him through their High Priest at the Mercy Seat. We meet Him through the Lord Jesus Christ at the heavenly throne. This is the place where God's goodness becomes evident.

It is amazing that each time Aaron met God at the Mercy Seat; he never revealed to the people what God had told him. He, like Mary, pondered everything in his heart. At the altar of incense, they offered God true intercession and acceptable praise: "When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you

¹⁵⁶⁴ 2 Pet. 2:9

¹⁵⁶⁵ See Palms 15

¹⁵⁶⁶ Exodus 25:22 (emphasis added).

have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him? And the son of man that you Visit him? You have put all things under his feet.”¹⁵⁶⁷

At the altar of incense, they celebrated the power of God, the workings of God, the skill of God, the wisdom of God, the goodness of God, the victory of God, the operations and manifestations of God Almighty. At the altar of praise in our hearts, we sing loudly, clap our hands, shake our bodies, dance with alacrity, and gyrate with dexterity. Here we shower God with absolute praise – and as the Psalmist says, “Praise is beautiful”¹⁵⁶⁸

But at the Mercy Seat, in the Most Holy Place, they came in reverent fear, they came to give God the glory due to His name for, “He is feared above all gods”¹⁵⁶⁹ Perhaps the best description of this experience is what David commands: “Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Tremble before Him, all the earth.”¹⁵⁷⁰ This was the sacred place. It was here that safety was at its peak. The deer is a smelly animal, and every time it comes across a predator, it is meat for the predator. It cannot hide in the hole because it could be sniffed; it cannot climb a tree because it would be pounced upon. But it knows exactly what to do. It runs to the river and plunges itself completely into the water, and only then can the predator retreat. When it submerges completely, all its scents disappear with it and it is safe in there. This is exactly what the sons of Korah had in mind when they sang: “As the hart [deer] pants for the water brooks, so pangs my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”¹⁵⁷¹

Our spirits, the regenerate inner man, does not have many longings; his major longing is the presence of God. Our body longs for food, our senses for pleasure, but the spirit man longs for God: “God, you are my God; early, will I seek you; my soul thirst for you; my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So, I have looked for you in the *sanctuary*. To see your power and your glory.”¹⁵⁷² Yes, it is only in the sanctuary, at the throne of God, where we behold power and glory. It is here in the presence of God where our words are few; where God’s Shekinah Glory rests and where we

¹⁵⁶⁷ Ps. 8:3-8

¹⁵⁶⁸ See Psalm 147:1

¹⁵⁶⁹ Ps. 96:46

¹⁵⁷⁰ Ps. 96:9

¹⁵⁷¹ Ps. 42:1-2

¹⁵⁷² Ps. 63:1-2 (emphasis added).

PRAYER

barrack before Him. It is here where we touch the ground with our foreheads and whisper – “You are holy, O Most High.”

Précis

The tabernacle has revealed that praise and prayer go hand in hand. God had instructed Moses to construct the tabernacle from the ark to the gate. The rationale is that the worship and praise of God come first before service. From the brazen burnt offering to the sweet smelly incense offering to the mercy seat, God was training His people, through the tabernacle, how that all these three processes would be completed through one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Christ, the tabernacle of God is now with His people everywhere. And there is no catch; it is all of grace.

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Aaron
- Almonds
- Altar of incense
- Ark of the Covenant
- Ark of the Testimony
- Bdellium
- Cherubim
- Coriander seed
- Day of Atonement
- Fragrance
- Gold
- Good News
- Gospel
- High Priest
- Holy of Holies
- Law
- Manna
- Mercy Seat
- Most Holy Place
- Resurrection
- Rod
- Sanctuary
- Shekinah Glory
- Tent of His splendor
- Testimony
- Veil
- Wafers
- Worship

Multiple-choice Questions

1. How many times did the High Priest enter into the Holy of Holies?
 - A. Once every year
 - B. Twice every year
 - C. Three times every
 - D. Never

2. Coriander seeds are, generally, believed to represent ____
 - A. Resurrection
 - B. Fragrance
 - C. Sweetness
 - D. Preciousness

3. The mercy seat was made of ____
 - A. Gold
 - B. Silver
 - C. Bronze
 - D. Bdelium

4. The instructions to construct the tabernacle was from ____
 - A. Inside out
 - B. Throne to the gate
 - C. Divinity to humanity
 - D. All of the above

5. The sanctuary was divided in two by a ____
 - A. Veil
 - B. Cherubim
 - C. Aaron's curtain
 - D. Hedge of fire

6. All these constituted the contents of the Ark, except ____
 - A. Law
 - B. Rod
 - C. Manna
 - D. Almonds

7. The ultimate end of the tabernacle was ____
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Worship
 - C. Glory
 - D. Fear of God

8. The current status whereby believers in Christ can represent people before God and at the same time represent God before the people, is called ____
 - A. Regal
 - B. Legal
 - C. Royal priesthood
 - D. Holy nation

9. The relationship among the contents of the Ark is that ____
 - A. One is food, a tree and a law
 - B. One is earthly and two are divine
 - C. They all came from God
 - D. They can be lost easily

10. The glory that sat on the Mercy Seat is sometimes known as ____
 - A. Effordance glory
 - B. Effulgence glory
 - C. Shekinah glory
 - D. Barrack

True/False Questions

1. High Priest Aaron entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of animals. T/F
2. It was uncertain whether Aaron would return dead or alive when he entered into the Holy of Holies. T/F
3. Christ was perfect, knew no sin and was made sin for us. T/F
4. The blood of Abel, bulls and goats could permanently take away the sins of the people. T/F
5. Because of Christ's death on Calvary, God has accepted us in and has called us His children. T/F
6. Exactly 50,700 men of Bethlehem one day died for trying to remove the lid and peep into the Ark. T/F
7. Gospel means Gossip News. T/F
8. The Ark found its final resting place in the temple that Solomon built. T/F
9. When power meets mercy, the result is grace. T/F
10. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is patterned upon Aaron's. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. Design the sanctuary from the description given in this chapter.
 - a) What are its component features?
 - b) What is the general purpose of the sanctuary?
 - c) Why do you think the sanctuary was square in shape?
 - d) What qualities make manna a true divine food?
 - e) What happened to Aaron's stick?
 - f) Which kind of law was included into the Ark?
 - g) Why is the Ark called "Ark of Covenant" or "Ark of Testimony"?
 - h) What overshadows the mercy seat and why?
 - i) Why is the mercy seat made of gold?
 - j) State the reason why the structure, contents, purpose of the sanctuary all pointed to Christ.

[2000 words or less].

2. List and briefly discuss at least five (5) representations of manna.

[250 words or less].

60 | BENEFITS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

At the end of this chapter:

- You will be able to relate the import of the tabernacle to the outcomes, and
- You will be able to appreciate the presence of God

Introduction

The aim of prayer is to lead us back to God. God wants us back, in every way. His mission in creating us was so that we could have fellowship together. He adopted us into His family as children. As our Father, His greatest desire is to spend time, within the realm of the physical nature, with Him, and in the new world, in perpetuity. Our response should be prayer – the single most vital spiritual tool graciously given to humanity. In this chapter, we list and briefly discuss twenty-one benefits of the presence of God.

Benefits of the Presence of God

Below is a list of at least twenty-one (21) identified benefits of the presence of God:

Anointing

We derive the anointing in the presence of God: “The Spirit of the Sovereign God *is upon me* because he has anointed me....”¹⁵⁷³

Blessings

If we hope to continuously overflow with thankfulness and praise, we should learn to seek the presence of God: “Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young – even your Altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and My God.

¹⁵⁷³ Is.61, Luke 4:18-19 (emphasis added).

*Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they will be praising you.*¹⁵⁷⁴

Character Renewal

You cannot be in God's presence and you are not transformed: "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you shall prophesy; and you will be changed into a different person."¹⁵⁷⁵

Confidence

The presence of God brings confidence in our lives: "Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God *will be with you wherever you go.*"¹⁵⁷⁶

Creativity

When we have God's presence, we can do all that our hands find to do: "Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, *for God is with you.*"¹⁵⁷⁷

Distinction

It is only the presence of God that distinguishes us from everybody else: "If your presence does not go with us... what else will distinguish me and your people from all other people on the face of the earth?"¹⁵⁷⁸

Favor

Favor is almost always the requisite of the presence of God: "O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes then *let the Lord go with us.*"¹⁵⁷⁹

Godly Counsel

Our God will give us good pieces of advice when we seek it in His

¹⁵⁷⁴ Ps. 84:3-4 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁷⁵ 1 Sam.10:6

¹⁵⁷⁶ Jos.1:9 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁷⁷ 1 Sam.10:7 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁷⁸ Ex.33:15

¹⁵⁷⁹ Ex.34:9 (emphasis added).

presence: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor *to be with you forever...*”¹⁵⁸⁰

Grace

Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.”¹⁵⁸¹

Healing

Power to heal and perform miracles is in the presence of God: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went about around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, *because God was with him.*”¹⁵⁸²

His Presence is Incomparable

You can be anywhere else but it cannot be the same as being in His presence: “For a day in your courts is better than a thousand, I would rather be a door keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”¹⁵⁸³

His Presence is Rewarding

The LORD told Abraham, “*I am* your shield, your great reward.”¹⁵⁸⁴

Imperative

God’s presence is an imperative: “Then Moses said to him, ‘If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.’”¹⁵⁸⁵

Joy

True joy is in abundance in the presence of God: “You will fill me with

¹⁵⁸⁰ John 14:16 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁸¹ John 15:5

¹⁵⁸² Acts 10:38 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁸³ Ps 84:10

¹⁵⁸⁴ Gen.15:1 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁸⁵ Exodus 33:15

joy in your presence.”¹⁵⁸⁶

Loveliness

Once you get into His presence, nothing else is as lovely: “How lovely is Your tabernacle LORD of hosts. My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out to the living God.”¹⁵⁸⁷

Productivity

Isaac planted in a drought land and harvested plenty because God was with him: “Isaac planted crops in the land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him.”¹⁵⁸⁸

Prosperity

Joseph prospered in Egypt only because God was with him: “*The LORD was with Joseph* and he prospered.”¹⁵⁸⁹

Rest

God’s presence brings rest to our souls: “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”¹⁵⁹⁰

Riches

God’s presence brings us physical and material blessings: “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, *because of the ark of God.*”¹⁵⁹¹

Success

True and good success comes in harmony with God’s presence. When

¹⁵⁸⁶ Ps.16:11

¹⁵⁸⁷ Ps. 84:1-2

¹⁵⁸⁸ Gen. 26:3, 12

¹⁵⁸⁹ Gen 39:2

¹⁵⁹⁰ Ex.33:14

¹⁵⁹¹ 1 Chr.13:14, 1 Sam. 6:12 (emphasis added).

you are with God, you cannot fail or if you fail, you will rise up again: “And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.”¹⁵⁹²

Victory

Without a doubt, God’s presence brings victory: “I will be with you, and will strike down all the Midianites together.”¹⁵⁹³

Précis

Moses and David understood the imperative of God’s presence. It was Moses who demanded no movement unless God went with Him. And David when challenged to fall into people’s or God’s hands, he chose God’s. The rationale here is that these heroes of faith had a revelation. The revelation was that with God their victory, favor, power, blessings and everything they needed in every way, were guaranteed. Even at his lowest ebb, David still chose to be closer to God. Moses would not even dare to move an inch. The presence of God must be the most coveted jackpot of everyone. It must be the only desire of the redeemed people’s souls. It must be the motivation and the excuse for whatever we do for God and for people. The presence of God is everything.

¹⁵⁹² Neh.2:8

¹⁵⁹³ Judg.6:16

Chapter Review

Key Words and Phrases

- Anointing
- Benefits
- Blessings
- Character
- Confidence
- Counsel
- Creativity
- David
- Distinction
- Favor
- Grace
- Healing
- Imperative
- Incomparable
- Joy
- Loveliness
- Moses
- Presence of God
- Productivity
- Prosperity
- Renewal
- Rest
- Rewarding
- Riches
- Success
- Victory

Multiple-choice Questions

1. God's presence must be ____
 - A. Everything
 - B. Everywhere
 - C. Coveted
 - D. All of the above

2. Each of these sought the presence of God, except ____
 - A. Satan
 - B. Moses
 - C. David
 - D. All of them sought God's presence without exception

3. Each of these words is related to the benefits of the presence of God except ____
 - A. Confidence
 - B. Failure
 - C. Victory
 - D. Blessings

4. What is to the fullness in the presence of God?
 - A. Character formation
 - B. Joy
 - C. Anointing
 - D. All of the above

5. Which of God's names conceptualizes His presence?
 - A. I AM
 - B. Jireh
 - C. Rapha
 - D. Jehovah

True/False Questions

1. God's presence brings victory. T/F
2. When you are with God, you cannot fail. T/F
3. God's presence is intimidating. T/F
4. Those who did mightily also loved to be in the presence of God, for example, Moses and David. T/F
5. Confidence is not one of the benefits of the presence of God. T/F
6. In biblical parlance, favor and grace are the same thing. T/F
7. Seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness is the same as seeking the presence of God. T/F
8. It is better to seek the blesser than the blessing, because the blessing will always be with the blesser. T/F
9. Even Satan has sought God's presence before. T/F
10. Prayer is the foremost and quintessential mode of seeking God's presence. T/F

Essay-type Questions

1. In relation to the presence of God, discuss how the hare (deer)'s character and strategy fits in very well within some of the benefits of the presence of God.

[2000 words or less].

THE DOXOLOGY

The *doxa*, the glory,
The nature and acts of God in all their self-manifestation;
And this is what God is and does,
Revealed in all of creation and
exaltation,
And which has been exhibited in ways
And means God desires to be
known
And particularly in the person of Christ Jesus,
God's Son of glorious
renown,
In whom essentially God's glory
Has been shone
Generations after generations
And made available to men by means of grace
And power to many nations.
To God our Father,
Maker and Sustainer
Be all the glory,
Now and forever.

For in the days of his flesh,
Jesus Christ manifested glory
By deeds and miracles
And released many from bondage,
Captivity, sickness and deadly shackles –
At Cana,
Where he turned water into pure wine
To feed many a thirsty soul;
At the tomb,
Where he raised Lazarus from the dead
And there many eyes saw;
At the Mount of His Glory,
There he taught many
Of the things to come
And at the Mountain of Transfiguration,
Eyes glittered and hearts were calm.
To God our Father,
Maker and Sustainer

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Be all the glory,
Now and forever.

His attributes and power
Have been revealed
Through the entire creation,
The world falls short of His righteousness,
Character and manifested perfection,
For the might of His glory,
The praise of the glory of His everlasting grace
Has been revealed to the ends of the earth,
To many a nation and race;
The Father of Glory is He,
From whence
And to whom all things emanate,
The source of all good things
Spread wide for all
And to all they illuminate.
To God our Father,
Maker and Sustainer
Be all the glory,
Now and forever.

To date,
And through the lives of those
Who believe in His word and name,
And who wait with intent
For that blessedness
Filled with glory and fame,
The blessedness into which
Believers are to enter
Now and hereafter,
As they are brought
Into the likeness of Christ,
And hence thereafter,
To be with Him
Through the body of His glory,
The brightness of His splendor,
And enchant them forever as their God,
Their light and their defender.
To God our Father,
Maker and Sustainer
Be all the glory,

PRAYER

Now and forever.

The Shekinah Glory,
In the pillar of cloud
Of the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies,
Was only but an emblem
Of the glory
Of the Church of God's own families,
And will be made manifest
In the appearing
Of the only and our great God,
The Savior Jesus Christ,
Whose throne is surrounded
By marble and gold,
As one who won His Father's good reputation,
Praise and due honor
Who deserves all our worship,
And must to us all
Be our favor and banner.
To God our Father,
Maker and Sustainer
Be all the glory,
Now and forever.

How lovely is your Tabernacle,
God my Savior;
The wonder of your beauty
And power of your throne,
Compel me to bow –

Your glory fills the heavens
As frost cover the earth;
And when I look,
I behold the ramblings
And the rays of
Your shining glory.

When from afar off –
In dire inquisition and
Adventure I draw nearer;
To behold the duller of
The skins that covered
The inner courts and its

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Beautiful embroidery;
I come in great humility
And contrite of heart
And at the Gate there I find you-

Son of God, in the blue:
The Savior of mankind
In scarlet red:
The King of all kings
In the purple:
And the Perfect Man,
In the fine linen.

Then I was drawn by my
Inadequacy and sin
For I had desired to come in
To view the beauty of
Your spacious courts.
At the Altar of Burnt Offering,
You were there as
My substitute,
You were the Lamb of God
That was slain
To take away my sins.
Oh, that pain you felt for me;
The anguish of shedding
Living blood;
And the deep agony
Of sacrificing for my salvation.

At the Brazen Laver, Oh, Lord,
I saw you in the shining glass,
You were the mirror of life
That reflected my visage,
Brightened my wrinkled face
And changed my life forever!
All my doubts finished
When you took my shame away
And washed my hands clean
That I might serve you in purity.
And washed my feet, too,
That I might walk in righteous.
At the basin of ancient waters

PRAYER

At which Aaron and
His Leviticus priesthood
Carefully washed,
There I saw myself the way I am.

And at the Door, you were the Truth,
The reality which make us free
So you can usher us into the
Inner chamber
To behold you at the Altar of Incense,
At which true intercession
And perfect praise
Pour gladly from redeemed
And grateful souls.
O, how beautiful are your altars;
O – how illuminating are
Your Candlelight, O, God;
O-how satisfying also is
Your tables of perfumed bread!

I would rather be a door keeper-
To smell the aroma of
Your sweet breads;
And to enjoy the warmth
Of your never-consumed
Candlesticks;
And to be filled with the fatness
That your anointing oils bring -
Than to dwell in the tents
Of the wicked.

Oh, rend and part,
Rend the skilled-woven veil,
Break it and part it
That I might behold
The seat of the only true
And Sovereign One.

You that sits on the throne,
You are holy and good.
Mighty and power
And all Blessings
Are yours forevermore!

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You that is enthroned
In between the cherubim
On top of the Mercy Seat;
You that sits on the perfect
 Law of liberty;
You that give life to the dead
And feed us with perfect manna,
The bread that comes from above,
 The small, round,
 Perfumed and white bread.
You that fills our months
With the pure Bread of Life,
 How lovely
 Is your Tabernacle!
 O God, our Savior.
 We will praise you
 And worship you
 Forever and ever,
 Amen.

I have loved you, O Lord
With every breath within me
 I have thought of you
 In the concourses of the shadows
When my mind and heart have met trouble;
I have cried to you when all I cherish diminished
 And I have desired your presence
 More than my necessary meal.
O, my soul knows it needs the Lord,
 My heart pants for His courts,
As David who danced before the Arc;
 I attend to my every sob
Like one who knew not where to go;
 I listen to the palpitations thereof
 As one whose brain boils;
 Yet, I have known no one
Whose countenance shines brightly,
 Who trains my hands to hold truth
 And my mouth to utter joy.
There is no one on earth, who listens,
 No one among the children of men
 Whoever hears my longings,
For at your feet, there my needs are met

PRAYER

At the altar of scented incense
There my soul finds solace;
Lord, you have been good to me;
In my human reasoning I have tested you,
In my fallen frailty I have stretched the limit of your grace,
In my unbridled reflections I have desired vain,
And in my manly ambitions I have looked at sin;
Yet when I come to your inner chamber,
My heart you fill with peace,
My soul you gown with righteousness.
I have loved your inner sanctuary,
And the place where your glory dwells;
I have treasured your Word,
More than my first meal after a fast.
I have walked by your side
And yet as thought a baby in its mother's bosom.
I have heard your whisper,
As if the waters were at attention;
I have dreamed of heaven,
In deed and in truth,
I have grown from my errors
And become better with every mistake,
All because you give second chances,
All because you are merciful,
All because you never give up on me.
O, the wonders of your love,
How deep the sum of it all,
How marvelous the thought of it!
Your love has compelled me,
Your mercies have drawn me,
Your compassion has captivated me,
To look at the children of the earth with pity,
To author politics and challenge minds,
To stand for them and demand for justice,
To speak for the weak and fend for the poor.
This, my Lord, is the portion you have afforded me,
This, my God, is the goodness of the land
That my life should remain a legacy,
For my struggles are testimony,
And my love for the African nation
And its people,
Be the reward that you have set for me,
The burden you have laid heavily

CHARLES MWEWA

On my shoulders.
O, my God, blessed is a man
Who loves to pray,
A man who enjoys your presence,
A man who comes back to you
Even when he has erred,
For in and to you belong all good,
And from you comes all wisdom.
We have given You
The glory from the babes
And in these guidelines of prayer,
Entreated all men everywhere
To direct their prayers to You.
May all nations at Your feet bow,
To give You glory, honor, power and beauty,
For You are worthy of them all.
Receive, Lord, our heartfelt thanks,
Now, and forever more,
Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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