

The Principles Of Prayer

Volume V

The Way Of Enoch

Thomas M. Mitchell

The Principles Of Prayer – The Way of Enoch Volume V
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Walk With God Ministries adopted these Chinese characters that are part of a course created by Pastor Archie Parish as a symbol of the message that is at the heart of our vision. Over the years these characters have been used by many believers to introduce the Gospel.

2500 years before the birth of Christ and 2100 years before the first recorded crucifixion, the Chinese language gave us the secret of how to live forever... *the secret to eternal life*.

Cross The first character depicted is a cross.



Man Next is a man placed on a cross... a great man dying.



Two Men Two men are crucified along side of this great man. The full character depicts Jesus dying on the cross with the two thieves crucified alongside Him. One thief rejected Him (Luke 23:39) and the other one believed Him (Luke 23:40-42). This is the character Lai, which means *Come*.



Mouth

言

The second character begins with a man's word coming out of his mouth.

Standing

信

This character represents a man standing by his word. Combined this is the character Xin, which means *Believe*.

Lai Xin

來信

When these two characters are taken together they represent *Come and Believe*. The circle surrounding them represents eternity.

2500 years before the birth of Jesus the Chinese language clearly stated the Gospel message and depicted the only road to eternal life... Jesus. Come to Jesus and Believe that He died for your sins, that you might have eternal life. Here we are some 4,500 years later and His Word is still true:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

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INTRODUCTION

As human beings we were created with the ability to communicate, and when we don't we become frustrated and tend to crawl into a shell. It's almost impossible for us to be with someone for an extended period of time without talking because there are so many things that we want to share with them; whether they want to hear them or not. And yet, isn't it ironic that we have the immediate ear of the One who really cares and we don't often think about talking to Him? We want to pour out everything to those nearest to us and, more often than not, they aren't really interested in hearing us because they want to tell us what's important to them.

As we move into a deeper relationship with our bridegroom we realize that Jesus created us with a special need that only He can satisfy, and in our prayers we are acknowledging that fact. Adam destroyed the bridge to that satisfaction but God rebuilt it in Jesus with the *wood of the Cross*. It's God's pleasure that we need Him and reach out in communion to tell Him of that need. Throughout the Bible we're shown our need for God and our continual resistance to that fact. On the other hand, we also see those men and women who had a strong prayer life and the difference it made in their lives. We need that close relationship that comes from prayer. In this book we'll examine prayer and the important part it plays in our daily lives.

Prayer is an integral part of building up and strengthening our faith, and without a strong prayer life we're handicapping ourselves and hindering the Holy Spirit in His effort to move us deeper into the realm of spiritual maturity. Without communicating with God we're isolating ourselves from the very source of all that we need to fully enter into His rest and become all that we were created to be. But we will discover that prayer isn't just an act of communicating. If it's to be successful, prayer must become a way of life that can only be learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and adopted by our commitment.

This book is not intended to be a total and complete compendium on prayer. Rather it's intended to be a means of exhorting you to dig deeper into what prayer is all about, and encourage you to develop a life of prayer. And while there are many facets to that prayer life, the key element is to move it from the area of the mechanical and rote prayers into a meaningful conversation with Jesus. A conversation that is open, honest, and based on love and a genuine desire to build a relationship with the One who not only created you but is deeply in love with you.

It's only through prayer that we are able to open ourselves up to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit that will draw us ever closer to Jesus and conform us into His image, a little more each day. In the process, it's by our prayers that we pour ourselves out to God, and in return He pours Himself out to us in His grace. And that is a wonderful place for us to begin.

CHAPTER 1

A TWO-WAY STREET

Grace Is God Speaking To Us, Prayer Is Our Speaking To God.

Recognizing that our cause is, and will be, combated by mighty, determined and relentless forces, we will, trusting in him who is the Prince of Peace, meet argument with argument, misjudgment with patience, denunciations with kindness, and all our difficulties and dangers with prayer.

Francis Elizabeth Caroline Willard

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

We should all become so dependent upon the Holy Spirit that we remain in a constant state of prayer. The best way to understand this is to picture two friends walking side by side. When one wants to speak to the other he only needs turn slightly and he finds an open ear. By His Spirit, Jesus is always there with an open ear. The question is, are we? He is always ready to speak to us, but are we ready to listen? Jesus wants a relationship outside of crisis, are we willing to give Him one?

Prayer is the vehicle that keeps us close to Jesus and in touch with Him. God designed us to be communicators and He intended

that our communicative efforts should focus on Him, Jesus taught us to be obedient to that through prayer. The problem is that prayer isn't something that our old soulish nature (the old man) gets excited about. But without a solid prayer life we'll never develop that close relationship that our spirit craves. Let's start by looking at some basics from Nelson's Bible Dictionary (my emphasis):

*Communication with God: **Because God is personal, all people can offer prayers. However, sinners who have not trusted Jesus Christ for their salvation remain alienated from God. So while unbelievers may pray, they do not have the basis for a rewarding fellowship with God. They have not met the conditions laid down in the Bible for effectiveness in prayer.***

Christians recognize their dependence upon their Creator. They have every reason to express gratitude for God's blessings. But they have far more reason to respond to God than this. They respond to the love of God for them. God's love is revealed through the marvelous incarnation and life of Christ, His atoning provision at the Cross, His resurrection, as well as His continuing presence through the Holy Spirit.

***Devout good works in a needy world cannot replace prayer. Important as service to others is, at times we must turn away from it to God, who is distinct from all things and over all things.** Neither should prayer be thought of as a mystical experience in which people lose their identity in the infinite reality. Effective prayer must be a scripturally informed response of persons saved by grace to the living God who can hear and answer on the basis of Christ's payment of the penalty, which sinners deserved. As such, prayer involves several important aspects.*

It's important to understand that God hears the prayers of the believer and the non-believer alike. The difference is that the non-believer, because of his present condition, has no understanding of true communication with God. Without a personal relationship the non-believer is just offering up hopeful prayers, albeit sincere ones, for which he has no way of hearing a response. Without a relationship based upon salvation by grace through faith the communication is just *wish'n and hope'n*. On the other hand, we as the bride of Christ have been given the opportunity—the obligation—to build a solid prayer life and receive all the benefits that come with it.

BENEFITS OF PRAYER

Revelation

Jer 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

The key is to *call* on God (*the idea of accosting a person, calling out to*). If we will, He promises to hear us. Only then will the Holy Spirit lead us into the deeper things of God. Jeremiah was inside a prison cell and God stood ready to show him mighty things, things that up to that point had not been available. Don't we find ourselves in prisons (circumstances) many times just like Jeremiah, and don't we also need to call upon and allow God to show us things:

Ps 91:15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him

We only need to ask Him and trust Him and He will show us those things that are hard for us to understand. However, this has a price attached to it that we must be willing to pay, along with a risk we must be willing to take.

God told Jeremiah that the idolaters were calling on their gods for information about what was going on, but they weren't getting a response. He told him to *call on me* and He would tell him things about the future. Do you know that God will do this for you? He doesn't want you to be ignorant of the things that are to come because He doesn't want the enemy to catch you unaware. He wants you fully equipped and prepared for the task. On the other hand, He isn't in the business of telling you things just so you'll know the future. With God there is always a Kingdom Purpose in what He shows us about the future.

Unlike the Psychic Friends Network, God is truly concerned that we are aware of what is going on in our lives; 800 Psychic is only interested in your money. It was actually discovered that people off the street were being paid by the Psychic Hotline to answer the phones. P.T. Barnum really was right! We are admonished to stay away from these seers and psychics—daily horoscopes—not just because they're frauds but because they can open the door to demonic influence... garbage in - garbage out.

God desires that we seek His wisdom in every situation we face because it's His truth that we need, not someone's opinion or prediction. The Word tells us to ask God for what we need since asking is part of the foundation of prayer, but at the same time we need to realize that we're not to make God into our personal psychic.

Matt 21:22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

The Word also tells us to ask God for wisdom if we lack it and He will grant it to us, *if we believe*:

Jas 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But don't forget the next verse:

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Don't ask unless you fully believe that God will provide the wisdom you ask for, that's *unwavering faith*. When we look at prayer as simple, honest, faithful conversation with God we will approach our walk with Him in a totally different way. Prayer helps us to deal with fear in a whole new way.

Overcoming Fear

Ps 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

I sought in the Hebrew means more than just looking for something (*diligently inquiring or asking of*). David showed us the right pathway to follow to first “seek” the Lord, and then we will hear from Him. And note the result, he wasn't just delivered from his fears, he was delivered from the “source” of the fears; his enemies. God is always ready to deliver us from our enemy (Satan) and his attacks (fears), but without prayer the fear we face can

easily become our captor. Look at the progression of verse 4: *I sought, He heard, and He delivered.*

David wrote this psalm when he was running from Saul. He wisely placed his trust in God and not his own wisdom and actions. Now look at the very last part of the verse... *all my fears*. The better translation in Hebrew is *from all the objects of my fears*. This is the same expression used in *Isaiah 66:4*:

Isa 66:4 So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight.

We need to spend a little more time on this verse because it's so critical for us to understand how to deal with fear. Here David, in contrast to *Ps 34*, showed us the wrong way as he dealt with the fear of the things the servants of Achish had said. Remember that his fear made him do some foolish things:

1 Sam 21:12-13 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13 And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

First he *laid up* (took charge of, ownership of, committed to) in his heart the words of the servants of Achish. He was running from Saul and didn't want Achish to reject him because of who he was:

1 Sam 21:11-12 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his

*thousands, and David his ten thousands? 12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and **was sore afraid of Achish** the king of Gath. 13 **And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.***

And the result was verse 13. He became the object of his fears and let them control his actions; his fears attacked his flesh and his flesh responded as only it can.

What a difference we see in *Ps 34* after David changed his behavior. Not only did God deliver him from death, He delivered him from the fear of death. How often have we found that the fear is worse than the thing we feared? Jesus commanded us to *fear not*, but that isn't possible without first turning to the very One who command us. Through prayer we reach out to the Lord in our times of fear, and just as He delivered David He will deliver us, and one of the results will be His peace.

Peace

Peace is a word with several different meanings in the Old and New Testaments. Let's take a look at some background.

*The Old Testament meaning of peace was **completeness, soundness, and well-being of the total person.** This peace was considered God-given, obtained by following the Law (*Ps 119:165*). ⁰⁰Peace sometimes had a physical meaning, suggesting security (*Ps 4:8*), contentment (*Is 26:3*), prosperity (*Ps 122:6-7*) and the absence of war (*1 Sam 7:14*). The traditional Jewish greeting, *shalom*, was a wish for peace.*

In the New Testament, peace often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ. This understanding was originally expressed in the Old Testament writings about the coming Messiah (Isa 9:6-7). The peace that Jesus Christ spoke of was a combination of hope, trust, and quiet in the mind and soul, brought about by reconciliation with God. Such peace was proclaimed by the host of angels at Christ's birth (Luke 2:14), and by Christ Himself in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:9) and during His ministry. He also taught about this kind of peace at the Lord's Supper, shortly before His death (John 14:27). The apostle Paul later wrote that such peace and spiritual blessedness was a direct result of faith in Christ (Rom 5:1). Nelsons Bible Dictionary

Phil 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

There are two key words in this passage found in verses 4 and 6: rejoice and moderation.

Rejoice—the joy of the bride of Christ isn't a passing thing that is observed just once in awhile. It was designed to be uninterrupted and unbroken. Paul told us to rejoice two times in verse 4. In spite of annoyance, disagreement, persecution, etc., we are to rejoice. He said the same thing to the churches at Thessalonica (*1 Thess 5:17*) and Corinth (*2 Cor 6:10*). Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit (*Gal 5:16-26*).

Moderation—this word (*elpieke*) means *gentleness* or *patience*. Today we define it as the direct opposite of the world we live in, which is brusque, assertive, blunt, and curt. When we introduce gentleness into this environment the result is courteous, kind, restrained, and self-effacing. Remember that gentleness is also one of the fruits of the Spirit.

In verse 6 we are told to be careful for (*be anxious about*) nothing. We aren't to be filled with anxiety, worry, confusion, or uncertainty. Another word that sums up these fruits of fear is depression; the result of being weighed down by anxiety. Here is a good definition of anxiety (the opposite of peace):

The futile, frustrating, debilitating attempt to bear the burdens of life and especially of the future, ourselves, alone.

Maxie Dunnam

So what is the answer? Verse 7: *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*. The peace that only comes from God, which to the natural mind makes no sense at all. It comes as a direct result of prayer (6), the kind of prayer that takes our circumstances and puts them squarely in the hands of the Lord. This requires faith in Him, a faith that can only be cultivated through prayer. But can we really trust someone we never talk to, someone we really don't know? It's a full circle and without prayer or faith the circle is broken.

As our faith increases our tolerance for uncertain circumstances will grow and through prayer our anxiety will decrease; the circle stays intact. As a result we find ourselves experiencing that deep, abiding peace in the middle of our circumstances. Not just

unconcern for the circumstances but the peace from God that gives us hope and confidence.

Finally, note the word *keep* in verse 7. It's the Greek word *phroureo*, meaning to guard like soldiers watching over a city. This is God's inner peace, and it has nothing to do with the circumstances, nor do they influence it. It guards over our mind and replaces anxiety with peace. How? Consider what Paul said to the Corinthians:

2 Cor 4:16-18 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The bottom line is that the eternal peace of Jesus far outweighs our afflictions of the moment. And the only way to appropriate that eternal peace is through communion with Him through prayer and by our faith in His Word. So many times we get caught up in thinking that our prayers need to follow some prescribed format or that our prayers aren't as eloquent as those of others. The real issue isn't the form of the prayer but rather the heart from which it comes. God longs for us to just take time and "talk" with Him. I know that doesn't sound very religious... *it wasn't intended to be!*

When we pour out our heart to a close and trusted friend we don't often take time to couch our words into a certain framework or contemplate any hidden meaning. We just pour out the concerns of our heart and that is exactly what God wants from us. He isn't shy, He's heard what we have to say many times before from many different believers. The key is that He wants to hear it from us.

After all, He already knows what's in our heart. We just need to realize that when we open up a conversation and are honest with Him, He is more than ready to deal with our problems and shower us with His grace and the peace that passes all understanding.

Let's not hold onto our fears, rather let's be faithful and *cast our cares* on Jesus (*1 Pet 5:7*), the author and finisher of our faith. He stands ready, willing, and more than able to listen and respond to our heartfelt cries. He is standing right beside us just, waiting for us to open up the conversation.

CHAPTER 2

CONDITIONS TO SUCCESSFUL PRAYER

Prayer should not be used to avoid action on our part. The Lord told Moses to stop praying and get moving! Prayer must have a vital place in our life, but there is also a place for action. Sometimes we know what to do, but we pray for more guidance as an excuse to postpone doing it. If we know what we should do, then it is time to get moving. But we first need to be sure that we understand the conditions that accompany the prayer that precede our action.

Unknown

PRAY WITHOUT INIQUITY

Ps 66:18-20 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: 19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

In Hebrew the word for iniquity is *aawen*, meaning to exert one's self in vanity or wickedness. It's an active word meaning *I choose to do it*. That's a very interesting thought considering the

implications—I have control over whether God hears me or not. This refers to keeping sin in our hearts by having the intent to sin or continue sinning, the opposite of being holy and intending to remain holy. In other words, if we expect God to hear our prayers we must be willing to forsake all sin in our lives. Here is a very good description of what God means by *regarding iniquity in my heart*:

Isa 58:3-7 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Here are both the negative and the positive sides of this statement:

The evidence that he has heard me is at the same time proof to my mind that I do not love sin. As it is a settled and universal principle that God does not hear prayer when there is in the heart a cherished love and purpose of iniquity, so it follows that, if there is evidence that he has heard our prayers, it is

proof that he has seen that our hearts are sincere, and that we truly desire to forsake all forms of sin. It kind of works like one of those “if/then” logic gates: (1) if our prayers are not answered we may be harboring sin in our hearts, on the other hand (2) if our prayers are answered it is a sign that we are not. Finally, we need to be sure we understand what regarding sin in this passage means.

The word regard indicates an approval and in this case it means to know you have sin and are either ignoring it or intend to keep on doing it. This is different than having sin in our lives that we are not aware of. That is the venue of the Holy Spirit and if we are in a right relationship with the Lord the Holy Spirit will be faithful to point out that sin and help us deal with it. In either circumstance the answer is the same ... we must rid ourselves of the sin in order to have a successful prayer life. Sin is a barrier to our prayers... they rise up but immediately fall back. The only prayer that breaks the barrier is the one of confession and repentance and that only comes as we believe His Word.

Albert Barnes

PRAY BELIEVING

*Matt 21:21-22 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also **if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.**22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Matt 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of

mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

The doubt was not as to whether or not Jesus was the Messiah but as to His words given to the disciples. Look at it this way for a moment. Commanding a mountain to be removed (21) because you think to do it is far different than commanding a mountain to be removed because God asked you to do it. I fully believe Jesus was speaking to the circumstances in our lives. We need to know what the Lord has to say about a given circumstance and then act in faith according to His will.

I like to apply this to one of the bigger mountains in life; fear. Jesus told us to cast out fear in perfect love, therefore His will is that we fear not (*1 John 4:18*). By applying faith to Jesus' words we can ask in prayer (believing) that fear be removed and replaced with love and expect it to be done. Believing (*pisteuo*) implicates entrusting your spiritual well being to Jesus; believing with trust.

This is one of the reasons that prayer, or communing with God, is so important. We can ask according to His will and expect, by faith, that He will grant our request. But we can't do this if we don't know His will, and that only comes through time spent with Him in prayer. Someone once said, *faithless prayers are empty because faith must be in all things*. Isn't that what our Walk With God is all about? The goal is total faith in Him, an abiding faith.

PRAY WHILE ABIDING

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

In *Col 3:16* we are told to let the word of Christ dwell in us *richly and in all wisdom*. It's His word in us that brings about the proper type of prayer. Once again, we see that the key to answered prayer fits hand-in-glove with the Will of God. If we are abiding (*expectantly staying in place*) in Jesus we'll know what His Perfect Will is and be able to ask in accordance with His mind. Look at these two scriptures:

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "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.***

*Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, **I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.***

If we abide in Christ and His words abide in us, *every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:15)*. We won't desire or ask for anything that is out of His Will. Just as an aside, this ties in with the fact that God gives us the desire of our hearts (*Ps 37:4*). God is faithful to put His desire in our hearts making it our desire, and the key to this process is to stay in a relationship with Jesus. This is how we establish confidence in Him to answer our prayers.

One of the most rewarding revelations in my life has been this concept. For so many years I wandered through life trying to determine God's plan, and then working hard to please him. More often the path I chose was going against what seemed to be the peaceful path. Yet it was what "I thought" God wanted me to do. Then during one particularly deep valley I heard the Spirit tell me to *just wait; just wait*.

As I waited nothing happened and I heard nothing more. So as I prepared to determine what God's Perfect Will was that same voice came again; *just wait*. This process went on for several weeks until I got the message. Wait for God to show you! If you are constantly putting your mind and energy into looking for it you can't hear Him when He shows it to you. That's where abiding in Him comes into play. By abiding in Jesus we are effectively waiting on Him to provide the direction for us, and then when He does we can be certain that it's His Perfect Will. Then that desire will become our own. But I hear you saying, how do we know? That's where the only guidepost I have ever found gives us the answer; peace in the Word of God.

Over the years I've learned that God will bring that *peace that passeth all understanding* when we allow Him to give us the desires of our heart. When you think about it, it really does make sense. If He created us and gave us everything we need to complete the walk He has set before us, then it follows that He will lead us into that walk. It's in that walk that we will find His Perfect Peace in all situations. When we're in the lowest valley we will have His Peace, just as we do on the highest mountain peak. It's His peace that comes from His Word that should lead us every day. If there is no abiding peace on the inside in spite of the circumstances, then the trail has gone cold and we need to retrace our steps and pick up the right trail again. And the way you pick up that trail is by His Word and the leading of His Spirit.

One of the really neat things about training a good retriever is watching him begin to associate that wonderful nose he has with what he was made to do; hunt. If that dog were left alone and not trained he would use his gift (his keen sense of smell) to fulfill his basic need; food and companionship. On the other hand, with the help of his master that gift is employed in ways that accomplish

much greater things. Watching a dog use that gift in full submission to his master's instructions is a perfect picture of what God wants for each of us. But the key word is submission, and when that's in place there is no conflict or hesitation, only joy in doing the master's bidding. What the master desires has become the desire of the servant, because the servant has faith that what the master desires is the best for him. With that premise well founded in the servant, he will be able to walk in perfect peace (*Isa 26:3*).

I have worked with many, many older dogs that were brought to me without that mindset and learning that lesson was sometimes painful for both of us. But sooner or later the dog decides to stop fighting, settles in, and determines that following the master is a much better way than being headstrong and self-willed. Only once did I fail to help a fine dog make that transition. Old Ace just wouldn't submit to my teaching, and no matter what I did he was resolved to do things his way. I could have beaten that dog into submission and used my power to override his will, but what would I have; a perfect machine that only operated out of fear and took no joy in his work; a dog with a heart under constant tension between his way and my way; a dog that found no joy in doing what he was created to do and would forever look for ways to override my command? I think you get the point. We have the choice to fill our lives with peace and joy, and God will no more override your desire than I would that dog. The best result comes by following the master out of love; the path of perfect peace.

Now, finally, we come back to the key to making all this work. Don't expect God to somehow magically accomplish His Perfect Will for you without your participation. The key is to submit and listen to the Master's voice.

... observe, in order to have influence with God, we must: 1. Be united to Christ (if ye abide in me); 2. That in order to be preserved in this union, we must have our lives regulated by the doctrine of Christ (and my words abide in you); 3. That to profit by this union and doctrine, we must pray (ye shall ask); 4. That every heavenly blessing shall be given to those who continue in this union, with a loving, obedient, praying spirit (ye shall ask what ye will, etc.).

Adam Clarke

PRAY IN JESUS' NAME

John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

As a preface to this verse, we should note that in verse 15 Jesus said *in that day*; the days after He returned to His Father. He told us that we are to ask the Father in His name. Praying in the authority of Jesus allows us to pray in union with Him, which ensures that we're not praying outside of His Will.

Saint Augustine said: *prayer in Christ's name must be consistent with Christ's character, and that He fulfills it as Saviour.* When we're asking in conformance with the will of God we can be sure that He will *make our joy to be full* (fulfilled). His will for our life is always designed to fulfill our joy and keeping His commandments is a way to insure that His joy permanently abides in us (*John 15:11*). Notice that I didn't say it would always make us happy, but it will make our joy "full" (*pleroo; fully or perfectly supplied, accomplished, satisfied*).

Having our character changed by the Holy Spirit isn't always a happy (temporal) condition, but the end result, being conformed into the likeness (character) of Jesus, is joyful (eternal). Joy is our

strength and so we are advised to ask in the name of the Jesus that we might be strong. Like *Jer 5:16*, when we *eat the Word*, joy results and strength follows. Nehemiah told us that *the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh 8:10)*. Like everything with the Lord, it all comes together for our benefit.

Now, back to *John 16:24*. Remember that Jesus was talking to His disciples, who had been questioning Him directly. Look at the preceding verses:

*John 16:17-18 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, **What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?** 18 They said therefore, **What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith.***

He was preparing them for the time when He would no longer be with them. In so doing, He set the precedent for the church from that time forward. It's the Father whom we ask, but we ask in the name of Jesus because He is the one who gave us access to the Father so we can ask. He is the foundation upon which we stand when we petition the Father with our requests. John Calvin said, *We have the heart of God as soon as we place before him the name of the son*. And God wants us to go to His Son because He has given everything to Him (*Ps 8:6; 1 Cor 15:27-28; Eph 1:22*).

PRAY ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

In the Gospels, primarily in *John*, Jesus is said to be acting not according to His own will but according to the will of the heavenly Father (*John 5:30; 6:38*). Doing the will of the Father is Jesus'

nourishment (*John 4:34*), and He doesn't (to this very day) do anything apart from the Father's will (*John 5:19*). Luke confirmed that when he quoted Jesus' statement in the Garden of Gethsemane:

*Luke 22:42 Father, if it is Your will, remove this cup from me, nevertheless **not my will, but yours**, be done.*

John put this in context for the bride of Christ:

*1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will**, he heareth 15 And **if we know that he hear us**, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

In verse 14 John told us that if we ask *according to His will* He hears us, but verse 15 says that *we must know that He hears us*; thus faith enters the equation. We have already seen that we are to ask in accordance with His will, and therefore we should be able to attach our faith to that request. Do you see how it is all built together so that we are gently led onto the path that God has so carefully designed for each one of us? He wants us to spend one hundred percent of our time in His perfect will (in the Holiest Place) so we won't be in fear, our prayers will be answered, and our joy will be full. And the neat part is that, if we allow Him, He will make His desires the desires our heart, desiring what God desires; what is best for us.

In verse 14 one of the key words is *confidence*, or as it is better translated here, *boldness*. If we know that we're asking in conformance with His will we won't come sheepishly before the throne, we'll *come boldly into the throne room of grace* (*Heb 4:16*). And how important is it that we know that He will hear us if we ask? There isn't anything more frustrating than trying to ask

something of someone who either can't or won't hear us. But in Jesus we have the assurance that if we ask in His name, He will hear and grant our petition.

Finally, let's look again at the perfect example of praying the will of God (*Luke 22:42*). In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus petitioned the Father for His desire, *let this cup pass from me*. But He placed the Father's will above His own, *nevertheless not my will but yours be done*. I often think of this when I am petitioning God for something. If I have perfect peace I am sure it is in keeping with His will and I am confident of what I'm asking for. On the other hand, if there is uncertainty I am pretty certain it's either not in His Will or I haven't fully understood it. That's when it's time to stop and seek His Perfect Will and wait. In that way I am always sure the answer is the right one; according to His will. We can be certain that the Holy Spirit will put a "check" in our spirit if we are moving out of God's will. Our conscience—the voice of our spirit—will let us know—if we're listening and not forging ahead on our own.

Are you uncertain if what you want is His Perfect Will? Well the first thing to do is ask. Don't be afraid to ask. He will faithfully give you the answer because He told us that if we lack wisdom we are to ask and He will not begrudge us the answer (*Jas 1:5*). And the first place to look for that answer is in His Word, not in our own thoughts. And remember, to ask is to communicate, and to communicate is to pray. I really get excited when I look at how God has put this all together with but one thing in mind—you and me!

CHAPTER 3

HOW DO WE PRAY?

We cannot remove worry until we replace it with something better—prayer. Imagine never worrying about anything! It seems like impossibility—we all have worries on the job, in our home, at school. But Paul’s advice is to turn our worries into prayers. Do you want to worry less? Then pray more! Whenever you start to worry, stop and pray.

Neil S. Wilson

BY GOD'S PATTERN

*Mt 6:9-13 after this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.** 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

This scripture has always been referred to as the Lord’s Prayer because it represents the pattern set by Jesus. But if we want to truly see an example of Jesus praying to the Father we need to study *John 17*; take time just now to read it before reading on.

In chapter 17 we see Jesus in open prayer to the Father, and we need to take note of what He was praying:

- In verses 1-5 He prayed for Himself;
- In verses 6-19 He prayed for His disciples; and
- In verses 20-24 He prayed for all of us who have received Him.

There something very powerful in this prayer regarding what Jesus prayed for. It was all about His bride (the true church), for which He considered Himself personally responsible. We can clearly see the foundation of intercessory prayer demonstrated here for us to emulate. We'll take a look at intercession a little later, but first let's step back and look at what Jesus taught us with His prayer in *Matthew 6*.

We learn first to address our prayer to the one to whom we're making our petition, and recognize Him for who and what He is; *Our Father who art in heaven*. Secondly, we present our petitions to God and, as Jesus prayed, there were six:

1. *Hallowed be thy name*—we are to give glory to God.
2. *Thy kingdom come*—we are to pray for the Gospel.
3. *Thy will be done in heaven as it is in earth*—we are to pray that since His kingdom has come (Jesus) that we are to be obedient to it (Him).
4. *Give us this day our daily bread*—we are to pray for our physical well-being as it is central to our spiritual well-being.
5. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*—we are to pray for forgiveness and acknowledge His commandment that we are to forgive others.

6. *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil*—we are to pray that we won't return to sin and for protection from Satan; pray not to be tested.

And then we close with praise and thanksgiving: *for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever, Amen*. We don't do this because He needs it but because He deserves it. This is the beginning of our praise here on earth that will continue on into eternity. Matthew Henry said, *Praise is the work and happiness of heaven; and all that would go to heaven hereafter, must begin their heaven now*.

Our prayer should be that we experience the full sovereignty of God within us now so that we fulfill His divine purpose here on earth. We should never forget that eternity started for each one of us the moment we asked Jesus to come into our heart; we are already living in eternity. When God says Amen it means *so be it*, and when we say it we're agreeing by acknowledgement; *let it be*. Our best position is to always agree with Him, and that will surely save a lot of heartache, trouble, and pain.

SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD

*Ps 27:8 When thou sadist, **Seek ye my face**; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*

*1 Chr 16:11 Seek the LORD and his strength, **seek his face** continually.*

*2 Chr 15:2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye **seek him**, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

Psalms 9:10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

*Psalms 24:3-6 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place: 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 **this is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face,** O Jacob. Selah.*

Our face represents our unique and identifying characteristics; that which sets us apart. The presence and glory of God have been fully revealed in the face—the person—of Jesus (*2 Cor 4:6*). This is the same presence that Adam and Eve hid themselves from in *Gen 3:8* and that Jacob saw in *Gen 32:30*. We won't clearly see His face until we stand in His presence (*1 Cor 13:12*), however, these verses are among many that caution us to spend our lives here on earth seeking to do just that. There is nothing more important than to seek God's face—His presence. As one Hebrew writer put it: *To seek God's face is to seek an audience with Him*. Isn't that what we really want when we set aside our quiet time to be with Him in the Holiest Place? And one of the best ways to seek His face is to study the Word, where He is seen on every page.

*John 1:14 And **the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,** (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

That same glory is contained in the Word of God, and we can see it if we'll look closely enough. What better way to seek an

audience with God than to spend time in His Word, where we're assured that *He will be found (2 Chr 15:2)*. But just looking isn't enough. Look at *Ps 24:3-6* and note some of the conditions for those who want to seek God: having clean hands, a pure heart, and being honest and truthful.

Purity and holiness are what God desires of His wife and what Jesus desires of His bride. We're not to lift ourselves up in vanity (pride) and lies (deceit). The ones who seek Him (His face) are those who will ascend into His presence and His presence is found in the Holiest Place. But we can't enter there without clean hands and a pure heart for *no flesh shall glory in the presence of the Lord (1 Cor 1:29)*. That should be our only desire. But what do we do when we get there?

BE STILL

You can't find God if your soul isn't quiet. But when our old nature is put under control, our spirit will rise up and He will be found. The Lord said that He would be exalted above the heathen, but we must first exalt Him above our old soulish nature.

*Ps 46:10 **Be still, and know that I am God:** I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

To know that God is God is to experience Him in the quietness of our heart. To have a relationship with Him we need to *be still* and let His peace fill us. Be still here means more than just being quiet, it carries the object of being relaxed and not making an effort (*raphah; cease, become idle, draw toward*). In *Ex 14:13* the same expression is used and it means to be without anxiety; to be calm and trustful.

*Ex 14:13-14 And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not, stand still**, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. **14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.***

In the face of Pharaoh's army rushing toward them, Moses told the Hebrews to *fear not and stand still*. The expression stand still (*hityatsbuw*) is better translated *be steadfast, be firm*. Consider that whole passage of scripture in which they had to stand still "all night long" while the wind blew to dry the seabed. While they were waiting the only thing between them and Pharaoh's army was a pillar of fire. What a challenge!

Well it hasn't changed today as the bride is in the same position, only the Holy Spirit and God's angels stand between us and the enemy. And we are to cease from all our worry and strife in the midst of the circumstances just as Israel did, to know Him as God. If we look at *Ex 14:14* we can grab hold of a real nugget—*The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace*. In the midst of our battles we only need to stand still in peace and let God be God. That means we are to refrain from complaining.

Next the Psalmist tells us that we are to know He is God (*Ps 46:10a*). We are to look at what He has done, that which nobody else could have done. Charles Spurgeon said: *We do not know what God is, but we know that He is God; we cannot comprehend Him, but we apprehend this much—that He is God*. Being still before Him is required in order to hear His voice because the shepherd's voice is only heard by the sheep when they're listening and not bleating!

EARLY

Ps 63:1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

The Hebrew expression *early will I see thee* means to seek early and diligently with longing. If you're longing for Jesus your soul is thirsting for Him (*Ps 42:1-2*). When we find ourselves in a wilderness we need to let our thirst for Jesus control our worldly desires and seek Him early; put Him first. The desert (our thirst) is also a good place to be still. David wrote *Psalms 63* while in the wilderness of Judah, where Saul was constantly driving him. David said he would seek God the very first thing in the morning before he dealt with anything else.

We need to add more to seeking Him early than just getting out of bed earlier. One time the Lord gave me something simple to remember all of the definitions of the word "diligent:"

We must *study* and use our *imagination* while *meditating* on our *endeavor*, *revolving it over in our minds*, so we will be *exact*, moving *earnestly forward* with *zeal* in our *work*, *carefully hastening* to our goal *promptly* as that day grows near.

David told us that his soul thirsted and his flesh longed for God. That's a wonderful example for us to follow both in and out of our wilderness experiences. Go back and read *Ps 42:1-2* again and see the deer panting for water as an example of how our soul should pant for God. Look at these definitions and attach them to how we should seek the Lord:

- *Study*—take action.

- *With our Imagination*—putting our mind into it.
- *Meditating*—taking time to ponder.
- *Making it our sole Endeavor*—our project.
- *Revolving it over in our minds*—examine every facet.
- *We are to be Exact*—precise in coming to our conclusion.
- *Move earnestly forward*—once we have determined the conclusion then we are to sincerely move ahead.
- *With zeal*—wrapping our work (His task) in passion.
- *Carefully Hasten*—move quickly with caution; stay in the spirit.
- *Promptly*—at the appointed time; the day of His coming draws near and time is running out.

Yes, why wouldn't we want to seek Him early and diligently if we are indeed thirsty for His presence? Only His presence can give us the *Living Water* that will satisfy our thirst in this dry and desolate land. And that thirst will only be satisfied if we're diligent in our prayers and, in my opinion, being diligent not only means being obedient and entering into prayer consistently, it means pressing in and hanging on like Jacob until we get our answer. So, how do we pray? Diligently and fervently!

CHAPTER 4

WHO AND WHAT DO WE PRAY FOR?

It is of no use to pray for the old days; stand square where you are and make the present better than any past has been.

Oswald Chambers

Who and What to pray for are certainly open-ended questions. We could literally spend pages reflecting on what the Word of God has to say about the subject. I know that on more than one occasion as I entered into prayer my mind became flooded with things and people to pray for. So much so that at times I found myself feeling guilty because I was sure that I'd left someone or something off the list. Sadly that's our problem most of the time. Our prayer time—our communion time with Jesus—becomes just reciting a long grocery list.

Let me suggest that if we will spend more time “listening” to the Holy Spirit than talking we might just find out just what His priorities are. Now before you scream at me, I am not suggesting that we don't keep a list of prayer requests. It's just that we sometimes fall into a routine of simply offering up our petitions rather than pressing into what God wants to tell us. Too often we complete our list, wrap things up *in Jesus' name*, and head out the

door. Perhaps we should at that point wait on the Lord and see if He doesn't have something to say.

The following is by no means intended to be the answer to our opening question, rather it's intended to get us thinking about some core issues for prayer that are always on God's list. They are areas of prayer that are foundationally sound and good food for contemplation; they will always put you in the position to be led somewhere by the Holy Spirit.

FOR THE UNSAVED

Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Paul's prayer for his Roman brothers isn't any different than our prayers for the many souls God has brought into our life. They were seeking to establish their own self-righteousness and in so doing they weren't submitting to God. Even though they were being obstinate, God was still waiting for them to repent and turn to Him. How many do we know today that believe that if they just live a good enough life they will ultimately end up in heaven? Paul's Roman brothers were doing just that only they were trying to do it on the basis of God's Law; an impossible task. Jesus is the only One who ever fulfilled all of the Law and the Prophets (all of the Old Testament).

We, like Paul, need to make it *our heart's desire* to pray for the salvation of those God has put before us. He waits patiently for them as well, but time is growing short. God is holding back His hand of judgment but one day, as John revealed in the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, the Lamb of God will come as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. I sure don't want to look back with regret upon things I left unsaid and prayers that I failed to utter.

FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

*1 Tim 2:1-4 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, **supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.***

Supplication (*deesis*) carries the thought of petitions arising out of a sense of need, being addressed to all men. Prayer (*proseuche*) implies earnest prayers of devotion, and intercession (*enteuxeis*) means coming with child-like faith on behalf of another.

Our first duty is to pray for the salvation of all those in the world, then specifically for kings and those in authority; our leaders. When God has placed His man in authority, His people are to intercede for that man irrespective of their personal feelings. My how that is a challenge today, one that many of us don't want and refuse take up based upon personal feelings and prejudices.

We are exhorted to pray and make intercession for our leaders no matter what their actions tell us. Note that Paul asked Timothy to pray for the very ones that were persecuting the church. Why? So that *we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodness and honesty*, and because *this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*. In praying and interceding for those in authority, we are praying for a *quiet* (not troubled from without) and *peaceable* (not troubled from within) life. Let the example set by God for the Jews through the lips of Jeremiah concerning praying for pagan rulers be food for thought (I know I need to feed on it):

*Jer 29:7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: **for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.***

Pray for good rulers to continue doing well and for bad rulers to be prevented from doing evil. Either way, the desired result of our prayers is public peace as a result of goodness and honesty from the hands of those in authority. However, we must never forget that the primary goal is not our peace and quiet—*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* That's the prayer that unbelieving leaders need, perhaps for some of those who believe as well.

FOR THE HARVEST

*Mt 9:37-38 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few;38 **Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.***

Those who are fittest for the work are generally most backward to the employment. The man who is forward to become a preacher knows little of God, of human nature, or of his own heart. It is God's province to thrust out such preachers as shall labour; and it is our duty to entreat him to do so. A minister of Christ is represented as a day-laborer: he comes into the harvest, not to become lord of it, not to live on the labour of others, but to work, and to labour his day. Though the work may be very severe, yet, to use a familiar expression, there is good wages in the harvest-home; and the day, though hot, is but a short one. How earnestly should the flock of Christ pray to the good Shepherd to send them pastors after his own heart, who will feed them with knowledge, and who shall be the means of spreading the knowledge of his truth and the savour of his grace over the face of the whole earth!

Adam Clarke

We need to pray that there are more of the bride that will minister the Gospel in these last days; in the world, in the pulpit, at work, and in the home. The storm clouds of judgment are already on the horizon.

*Rev 14:15-20 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; **for the harvest of the earth is ripe.** 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

For the harvest of the earth is ripe can also refer to the fullness of the wicked in the world; a time when God will no longer tolerate all of the vile things going on in this world. His response will be to *thrust in His sickle*. But note in verse 20 that the grapes are thrust into the winepress of God's wrath. What a contrast from our normal vision of *Matt 9:37-38* where we envision many coming to salvation by the Gospel. There will be a final harvest by the Lord of the Harvest but the reaping will not be unto salvation. We all need to heed that soon coming day and earnestly pray for the harvest of souls before it is too late.

FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES

The following are some of the most powerful words you can pray over others or yourself. I have seen the daily confession of these words over loved ones bring dramatic results. As you read them go over the requests very slowly and let them sink in. The next time you need big results put His mighty power to work.

*Eph 1:16-23 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power: 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, 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: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

Sometimes we forget to earnestly pray for people after they have been saved. Paul prayed for the continued spiritual growth of the Ephesians, he wanted the Holy Spirit to open their spiritual eyes—the eyes of their understanding—by revelation so that they would fully experience Him in knowledge; *to know God is to be wise* (Wycliffe). We are the body (a living receptacle), which is to be filled with the fullness of God summed up in Christ:

*Col 1:19 For it pleased the Father that **in him should all fullness dwell**;*

Jesus is the fullness of God, and that fullness is passed to us as He fills His body.

This is the highest honor of the church, that the Son of God regards himself as in a certain sense imperfect unless he is joined to us. The church constitutes the ‘complete body’ of the Redeemer. A body is complete when it has all its members and limbs in proper proportions, and those members might be said to be the ‘completion,’ or the ‘filling-up’, or the ‘fullness’ of the body or the person.

Martin Luther

What a wonderful thought. Without each of us the bride of Christ isn’t quite complete. How much more wonderful that will be when both Jew and Gentile are united into His bride forever *in that day* (Luke 6:23). Now let’s look at a second prayer Paul had for the Ephesians:

*Eph 3:14-21 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit **in the inner man**; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being **rooted and grounded in love**, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the **breadth, and length, and depth, and height**; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the*

*church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.
Amen.*

Here Paul prayed for the strengthening of their *inner man* out of the abundance of God's grace. He wanted them to be able to bear up under trials and perform their duties so that God would be glorified. The key to this is faith in His indwelling presence; the Holy Spirit. This takes us back to abiding in Him. It always comes back to the branch and the vine doesn't it? He is to take root in our hearts so that we are firmly planted and grounded (founded as in a solid foundation). Paul prayed that the love of Jesus would be to them like a firm foundation is to a building.

With Jesus as our foundation we can comprehend *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height* of His love. Paul wanted the Ephesians to fully understand just how big is BIG! It should be our prayer for others and ourselves that we all fully comprehend the magnitude of Jesus' love. In knowing His love we will realize that it's so large that it's really beyond our ability to know it. That should give us pause for thought. What little we know about our universe is great in comparison to what little we know about Jesus' love for His bride. It's like we understand a great deal about our universe (the Milky Way) but there are millions and millions of other universes that we don't know anything about; or that many of them actually exist and we've never seen them.

Put this in perspective. The Milky Way is 100,000 light years across and if we travel at the speed of light (286,000 miles per second) it would take us 100,000 years to go from one end to the other. That's almost impossible to comprehend when you factor in that there are millions and millions of other galaxies. If our knowledge of God's love equates to what we know only about the Milky Way then understanding the full extent of God's love for us is unimaginable.

Prayer is an awesome responsibility and a tremendous opportunity. Think back to all of the rules and regulations that

Israel had to deal with under the Law concerning their relationship with God until Jesus died on the Cross. Here we are today, over 2000 years after the veil was rent, and the Holiest Place still remains open to us, and we are invited to boldly come before the throne of God at any time. It certainly causes me pause to think that the Creator of the universe thought so much of me as one of His kids that He sent His Son to die that I might have open access to come and sit at His feet. Me, one little speck on a planet that is less than one little speck in the entire universe.

In the next chapter we're going to look at some of the different types of prayer, but let's not let that in any way compartmentalize it. Don't forget that it's the foundation of our communion with God. God speaks to us through His Word and we speak to Him through our prayers. It's not a complex or complicated process, it's just opening up our heart in order to see His. If we'll just let the Holy Spirit lead our prayer life we'll find that our agendas, our plans, and our desires will get set aside as He reveals the Father's heart to us. Every need and every request we have will be presented, but I guarantee you that it will free up your prayer life and give you not only a new perspective on prayer but a new strength and boldness.

When we struggle with our prayers God doesn't turn us off, He cherishes every word and thought. What He wants is for us to be "free" in our prayer life and not bound up in a bunch of do's and don'ts. When the Holy Spirit prioritizes our prayers we become the prayer warrior our spirit wants us to be, with prayers of worship and praise to warfare and intercession.

So the next time you enter into your prayer closet, spend some time worshipping and praising Him and let the Holy Spirit lead you into what comes next. After all, He knows what the Father is thinking and He wants to pass it along to you. And here is a closing thought to ponder: Have you ever felt that God didn't hear your prayers? Are you praying with a submitted spirit, willing to

do what God wants? God always responds to the prayers of His obedient children.

CHAPTER 5

TYPES OF PRAYER

God entrusted his reputation to ordinary people. Yet in some way invisible to us, those ordinary people filled with the Spirit are helping to restore the universe to its place under the reign of God. At our repentance, the angels rejoice. By our prayers, mountains are moved.

Philip Yancy

There are all kinds of prayer but I chose nine key types that sort of paint a picture of a healthy prayer life. As we go through them we'll see how they're all actually tied together and support one another.

PRAYERS OF FAITH

The most meaningful prayer comes from a heart that places its trust in the God who has acted and spoken in the Jesus of history and the teachings of the Bible. God speaks to us through the Bible, and we in turn speak to Him in trustful, believing prayer. Assured by the Scripture that God is personal, living, active, all-knowing, all wise, and all-powerful, we know that God can hear and help us. A confident prayer life

is built on the cornerstone of Christ's work and words as shown by the prophets and apostles in the Spirit-inspired writings of the Bible.

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James summarized this for us:

*Jas 5:15 And **the prayer of faith** shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him*

Our prayer, offered in faith, is powerful. It's our confidence in Jesus that helps others to build up their faith. This is especially true when our prayer of faith is based upon the Word of God. Remember that Paul told us in *Rom 10:17* that *faith comes by hearing by the Word of God*. The Word builds up our faith to pray for others and it builds up their faith to believe in that prayer. *Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6)* and I think we can extend that to prayers without faith; they are without substance. We must come to God in prayer, believing that we receive (*Matt 21:22*); that's faith.

PRAYERS OF WORSHIP

In worship we recognize what is of highest worth—not ourselves, others, or our work, but God. Only the highest divine being deserves our highest respect. Guided by Scripture, we set our values in accord with God's will and perfect standards. Before God, angels hide their faces and cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts (Isa 6:3).

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We often forget that worship is a form of prayer. When we're worshipping Him with our voice, our instruments, our dance, and our tithes and offerings we're lifting up prayers to Him. The Hebrew word for worship is *shachah*, which means to depress or bow down. This is the very foundation of prayer, bowing in assent either physically or mentally to the One True God with a reverential attitude of body and mind. Paul's prayers regularly opened with references to praying. A key is to *pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17)*, it's a mindset that recognizes that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and He is resident 24x7. If we're to pray without ceasing then we will be praying in our worship. It is a constant awareness that the Holy Spirit is with us all the time.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Awareness of God's holiness leads to consciousness of our own sinfulness. Like the prophet Isaiah, we exclaim, Woe is me, for I am undone! Because 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 (Isa 6:5). By sinning we hurt ourselves and those closest to us; but first of all, and worst of all, sin is against God (Ps 51:4) and we must confess our sins to God to get right with Him. We need not confess them to another being. But we should confess them directly to God,

who promises to forgive us of all our unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

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A prayer of confession is the first prayer we utter in becoming a Christian, and it should be a constant prayer from that day forward. David found out the importance of confession, and in *Psalms 51* he singled out the most important aspect of sin: *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*

Confession (*1 John 1:9*) is the first step to restoration and it comes before repenting. A prayer of confession is the key to keeping our communion with God active and fruitful. With unconfessed sin in our heart our prayer life is compromised and ineffective. Remember, *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16)*. The righteous man is the one who is in fellowship with God, but unconfessed sin will break that fellowship. David learned that it was better to confess and repent than to try and walk in his “own” righteousness. Perhaps that had something to do with the fact that he was a man “after God’s own heart.”

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

God is love, and He has demonstrated His love in the gift of His Son. The greatest desire of God is that we love Him with our whole being (Matt 22:37). Our love should be expressed, as His has been expressed, in both deeds and words. People sometimes find it difficult to say to others and to God, “I love you.” But when love for God fills our lives, we will express our love in prayer to the one who is ultimately responsible for all that we are.

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Adoration should be the outward result of the love for God that rests in our heart. Sometimes in my life I've had to walk down some hard roads to learn that His love was really there inside my heart all the time. But once I accepted that fact, the ability to begin reaching out with that love for Him and for others became the natural result. To "adore" Him is to worship him, or as Daniel Webster said: *to adore is to be mad or passionate about*. I guess that pretty well sums it up. If we are passionately mad about our love for Jesus then we're going to be offering up prayers of adoration.

PRAYERS OF PRAISE

The natural outgrowth of faith, worship, confession, and adoration is praise. We speak well of one whom we highly esteem and love. The one whom we respect and love above all others naturally receives our highest commendation. We praise Him for His mighty acts... according to His excellent greatness (Ps 150:2), and for His righteous judgments (Ps 119:164) For God Himself, for His works, and for His words, His people give sincere praise.

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Praise, like worship, is the natural result of our love affair with Jesus. When we praise Him we are openly and publicly proclaiming honor and acclaim for Him. The keyword is "proclaiming" and it follows that others are able to hear us proclaim our love for Him. Yes, it's possible to praise Him in our heart, but is that how we handle praise for others? Aren't we quick to vocalize our praise for those in our life that we determine have earned that praise? We need to be just a quick to praise Jesus to others as a witness of our love and admiration for Him.

We often tie praise and worship together but I believe this shows us the difference. We are praising God when we tell others

of the great and wonderful things He has done for us, for the sacrifice He made for us or for the peace He has brought to our heart. That may be done in song but it's just the same when spoken in a soft voice from the heart. When we're worshipping Him it's personal, recognizing who He is and whose we are.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Are we unthankful because we think we have not received what we deserve? But if we got what we “deserved,” we would be condemned because of our guilt. As sinners, we are not people of God by nature. We have no claim upon His mercy or grace. Nevertheless, He has forgiven our sins, granted us acceptance as His people, and given us His righteous standing and a new heart and life. Ingratitude marks the ungodly (Rom 1:21). Believers, in contrast, live thankfully. God has been at work on our behalf in countless ways. So in everything, even for the discipline that is unpleasant, we give thanks (Col 3:17; 1Thes 5:18).

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I once heard someone say that they were most thankful that they didn't get the things they deserved. How true! We deserve everything that is the absolute opposite of what God has given us, like condemnation, unforgiveness, darkness, and separation. And the greatest thing He has given us is His Son, and in Him we're relieved of all the things we deserve and granted all those things we don't deserve. Aren't you glad that God determined that the first should be last and the last first (*Matt 19:30*)? We don't need anything other than being forgiven of our sins to cause us to spend a lifetime in thanking Him.

Many times we've heard of those who have come back from a near death experience to tell us that now their outlook on life is completely different. They now have a new respect for each day

and a whole new appreciation for the sanctity of the life they have been given. Isn't it sad that we, as Christians, don't see our salvation in that same light? Is there any difference? No, we just don't always appreciate life in the same way as those who have faced death and returned. Even those who don't believe come back profoundly affected and appreciative of the life they have along with a second chance to get it right. Maybe we need to take a little quiet time and think about the near "spiritual death" we've experienced. The alternative—that which we deserve—is worth contemplating. It should inspire our prayers to be full of Thanksgiving.

PRAYERS OF DEDICATED ACTION

Christ's example does not require us to withdraw from society, but to render service to the needy in a spirit of prayer. He wept over Jerusalem in compassionate prayer, and then He went into the city to give His life a ransom for many. Authentic prayer will be the source of courage and productivity, as it was for the prophets and apostles.

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Our Walk With God is all about unlocking God's Perfect Plan for our life and using all that He has given us to advance the part of His Kingdom that He's placed in our care.

James told us that faith without works is dead and, not that it makes any difference, I certainly agree. Our faith is the foundation of our salvation and James told us that the works that we do reflect that salvation. It's not the works that bring about salvation but, said James, if I don't see the works of faith in your life I wonder if you have really made a commitment to Jesus (my paraphrase).

Our prayer life should reflect that process. We should be focused on our individual calling, a calling for which God has fully equipped us. However, that calling is not one of self-service but of

service to others. That's where the prayer of dedication comes into play. When we dedicate our prayers to His service He will enable us to take the action necessary to Walk the Walk. Too often I have found myself dedicated to just Talking the Talk... ouch!

PRAYERS OF PETITION

Prayer is not only response to God's grace as brought to us in the life and work of Jesus and the teaching of Scripture; it is also request for our needs and the needs of others. For good reasons God's holy and wise purpose does not permit Him to grant every petition just as it is asked. Several hindrances to answered prayer are mentioned in the Bible: iniquity in the heart (Ps 66:18), refusal to hear God's law (Prov 28:9), an estranged heart (Isa 29:13), sinful separation from God (Isa 59:2), waywardness (Jer 14:10-12), offering unworthy sacrifices (Mal 1:7-9), praying to be seen of men (Matt 6:5-6), pride in fasting and tithing (Luke 18:11-14), lack of faith (Heb 11:6), and doubting or double-mindedness (James 4:3).

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At one time or another I have been guilty on all accounts and I've grown enough in my walk to acknowledge that I will be guilty again. That's the reason you have heard me say so often that the key is to find God's Will and stay in it. In so doing you will avoid these pitfalls and all of your requests will be heard and answered. Finding His Perfect Will first and staying in it should be the first prayer we utter after "Jesus, Save Me."

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group. The sinful nature of this world separates

human beings from God. It has always been necessary, therefore, for righteous individuals to go before God to seek reconciliation between Him and His fallen creation. The sacrifices and prayers of Old Testament priests (Ex 29:42; 30:7) were acts of intercession, which point forward to the work of Christ. Christ is, of course, the greatest intercessor. He prayed on behalf of Peter (Luke 22:32) and His disciples (John 17). Then in the most selfless intercession of all; He petitioned God on behalf of those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). But Christ's intercessory work did not cease when He returned to heaven. In heaven He intercedes for His church (Heb 7:25). His Holy Spirit pleads on behalf of the individual Christian (Rom 8:26-27). Finally, because of their unique relationship to God through Christ, Christians are urged to intercede for all people (1 Tim 2:1).

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While we are urged to pray for all people, the most successful prayer warriors I know are the ones who intercede for the object of their prayer. I've met some incredible intercessors in my life and almost every one of them will tell you that God tells them who they are to intercede for. It's not some mysterious process, it's a simple answer to prayer, they go before God and ask Him and He never fails to show them.

It happens to me every morning in prayer. There will always be a point at which a face or a name comes up before me. Sometimes God will show me what to pray for and sometimes He doesn't. My response is to intercede on their behalf in either case; to place myself between them and God and lift them up or come against what is attacking them. And the intensity of the intercession is dependent upon two things: how pressing the need is and how willing I am to press in.

Intercession can be a very demanding task as often the one that God is asking you to pray for is unable to pray for themselves.

Many times that person is under a spiritual attack in mind or body and unable to gather the resources to pray. These are critical prayers and we should rejoice that the Lord has trusted us to stand in the gap for that person. And that is really the way we should look at it; standing in the gap between the problem and the person, taking on the burdens and needs of that person and delivering them to God.

Intercession is selfless and thankless in the eyes of man, but I believe in the eyes of God it is like pure gold. When He asks us to take on a difficult task for someone, and there is not one person on the face of the earth to notice or praise us for it, that is true selfless prayer. Isn't that what the blood of Jesus is doing for us in heaven at this very moment? The presence of His blood is ever standing in the gap for us. How can we do any less for the One who suffered and died a horrible death for the right to intercede for us?

The next time you are awakened in the night from a deep sleep, don't immediately focus on going back to sleep. Try saying, *here am I Lord, send me (Isa 6:8)*. You may be blessed with the opportunity to carry some urgent prayers to the throne of God. It's an awesome thing to be asked and a tremendous blessing to respond.

LOSING OUR FOCUS

Although he was a Universalist, theologian Hosea Ballou summed up the framework of prayer: *Between the humble and contrite heart and the majesty of heaven, there are no barriers; the only password is prayer*. But we have the capacity to erect barriers that go beyond humbleness and contrition and hinder our prayers.

There are many hindrances to prayer, those which the enemy generates and those that come from the cares and trials of the world. Many times, however, we generate these hindrances ourselves by allowing distractions and soulish concerns and desires

to take center stage. But there is one hindrance that at times is subtle, deceptive, and puts on the disguise of “well doing.”

*Luke 10:38-42 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 and she had a sister called **Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.** 40 **But Martha was cumbered about much serving,** and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42 **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.***

If I were to look at my life and identify one thing that has hindered my prayer life more than anything else it would be “being busy.” It’s a constant problem as I move through each day, especially when it involves the Lord’s work. Sometimes it’s like the mentally disturbed man that keeps banging his head against the wall—the more he bangs it the more it hurts and the more it hurts the more he is focused on the pain. All the time the voice telling him to stop gets pushed deeper and deeper into the corner. That’s when I find myself so caught up in work for the Lord that I haven’t even spent one minute of the day with Him.

In this scripture we have that very same thing happening to Martha. She found herself getting all worked up because she wasn’t able to hear what Jesus was saying while doing all the work, and there sat Mary at Jesus’ feet. The word “sat” (*parakathestheisa*) means to sit beside, and it’s only found here in verse 39. It’s the perfect picture of where a disciple should be. It tells us that not only was she sitting there, she *heard His word*; (*akouo: understood*). I can picture her sitting there very restful and attentive as Martha ran in and out trying to serve the master.

Verse 40 tells us that Martha was “cumbered” (*distracted*) as she scurried all around serving Jesus, and she was bothered that her sister had left her alone to do the work. It bothered her so much that she scolded Jesus: “Don’t you care? Tell Mary to get up and help me.” Jesus, as always, hit the nail right on the head: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful [careful] and troubled [anxious, bothered] about many things*. Don’t we get that way sometimes when we’re busy with our work? Sounds like a comment similar to another one from Jesus:

Matt 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Jesus went on to tell Mary that she hadn’t made a bad choice, rather the least of the two choices. She could choose to busy herself with the work of serving Him, which would die with her (a good thing to do), or she could choose to hear His word like Mary, which would never be taken from her (a better thing to do). He told her that *one thing is needful (demanded or required)* that comes first, all the rest come later. Mary had chosen the eternal thing and Martha had chosen the temporal thing.

The first rule in communication is to focus on the person with whom you are trying to communicate, and then don't just “listen,” “hear” the message they're trying to communicate. So, since prayer is communicating with the Lord we first need to focus on Him. Let me give you a great tip concerning focus during those times when you’re being distracted by your mind. Pray out loud and you will cut your mind out of the process and eliminate the distractions. Our minds don’t like to process more than one thing at a time and the one making the most noise always wins. Ever wonder why the devil is hollering in your ear most of the time? Now you know, he isn’t trying to scare you, although that is sometimes the byproduct,

he is trying to distract you. When we're speaking, our mind turns everything else off. We love to hear our own voice, it really gets our full attention. We get so wrapped up in what we are trying "to do" for Jesus that we forget He just wants us "to sit" at His feet and hear His Word. If we'll get in the habit of spending a little more time praying and listening, our life will be enriched beyond measure. We've all been distracted like Martha and at complete peace like Mary. Which makes more sense?

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Whether our prayers are about faith, worship, confession, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, action, request, or intercession, they all contain a singular center of focus—Jesus. As a result, we need to pause before we enter into prayer and realize that at that very moment He is prepared to give us His full attention. The Creator has turned His ear to hear our petitions. If we approach prayer that way I think our mindset will be different, and as a result our communion with Him will be on a whole different level. Too often prayers get "thrown" up at the last minute as if we were passing along a shopping list. That shouldn't be the case as the Lord has a special interest in hearing from our heart, and that means our prayers need to get below the surface.

But that won't happen if we don't spend the time we need to enter into the Holiest Place, into His presence. Can you picture the high priest just running into the Holy of Holies to drop off some requests for the people? We need to spend some time looking back at our spiritual heritage—Abraham—and consider his reverence for God that was passed down to Israel. Yes, Jesus is a friend who is closer than a brother (*Pro 18:24*), but He is still a member of the triune God and when we come before Him we are coming before the throne of God.

Along with faith, prayer is probably the most precious gift that God has given us, short of our redemption and His Holy Spirit. To

be able to boldly come before His throne with our petitions is an awesome privilege and one we can't afford to take lightly. As Jesus' bride we have been given open access to Him day or night. And that's for a reason, He has much to tell us. Let's make sure we don't take that privilege—that blessing—for granted or allow it to be hindered in any way.

CHAPTER 6

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

From the beginning of time, prayer has been the method by which man formed his image of God. It was in the time of Enos — the son of Seth—that *man began to call upon the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26)*. The name Enos means “frailty” and was representative of the condition of the Sethites, as opposed to the pride of the decedents of Cain (Canaanites). It was their pride that kept them from seeking God while the Sethites actively looked to God for their strength. That has continued on down through Israel to us, and we are still seeking his strength:

Prov 18:10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Over the centuries we have found that prayer produces a conscious dependence upon God in our mind. Through it we develop faith, love, a receiving heart, and an appreciation of God's blessings in His answers and His grace. Prayer can range from supplication to worship, with everything in between: confession, thanksgiving, and adoration. However, every prayer carries with it the requirement that it must conform to God's Will for us. That has always been the difficult part for me, and yet it represents the totality of our dependence upon Him.

Prayer is request to a personal Lord who answers as He knows best. We should not think that we will always have success in obtaining the things for which we ask. In His wisdom, God hears and answers in the way that is best.

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We must always fall back on the firm foundation Jesus laid for us because without a total commitment to His Will we're destined for disappointment. Why? Because God knows that many of the things we pray for are detrimental to our relationship with Him. But if we're *seeking Him first (Matt 6:33)* that won't be an issue. On the other hand, if we're following after our own self-interest (*Matt 6:31*) we're going to come face-to-face with the same issue that faced the Canaanites; pride. If that's the case, our prayer life is in trouble at the outset.

As we've moved through this study I've tried to implant the concept that prayer isn't some complicated, mystical process whereby we beg God to "make something happen" or "to give us something." Quite the contrary, it's the way He provided for us to communicate with Him and learn from Him through talks that come from the heart.

We sometimes forget that He already knows what is first and foremost in our thoughts, so why do we try and beat around the bush? We know that it's eventually going to come out so why do we cause ourselves so much pain and suffering by holding back? The Word tells us that *pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov 16:18)*. I can't think of anything worse than allowing our pride to shut off communication with God. I've done it and it's a lonely place in which you find yourself.

The secret to a successful prayer life is to keep the lines of communication open at all times. That job falls directly upon each one of us, and to accomplish it we need to be like David and be quick to confess and repent, and remain steadfast like Abraham and let our faith undergird our prayers. But most of all we need to

be like Jesus and pray for the accomplishment of God's Perfect Will above our own. When we do that we move into a whole new realm in our prayer life. When we're so totally submitted and committed that nothing but His Will matters, then our life will take on an entirely new perspective.

We move from disappointment to the fullness of joy as we begin to see life as God sees it and sin as He sees it. It's then that our prayers will embody the things that are important to the advancement of His Kingdom and not our own world. Fear and worry are replaced with His love and our heart reaches out in new directions that only He can show us. What a wonderful change to a life that struggles: What do I pray for? When should I pray? What is an acceptable prayer? What do I do now?

Prayer is an opportunity to bring our will into line with God's plan and to demonstrate our trust in God. A good place to begin the process is to look up the following scriptures and meditate on them. I'm not sure where I got them but I had written them down in my Bible.

- *Psalms 4:1-8*—Prayer is speaking with God.
- *Hebrews 4:14-16*—Prayer is an awesome privilege.
- *Genesis 25:19-34*—Prayer reflects our dependence.
- *Exodus 17:1-7*—Prayer is far better than complaining.
- *Judges 16:23-31*—Prayer can restore our relationship.
- *Ezra 8:1-36*—Pray with an attitude of deep respect.
- *Nehemiah 2:1-10*—Pray with confidence in God's grace.
- *Matthew 6:5-15*—Pray with humility and sincerity.
- *Colossians 1:1-14*—Pray for others.
- *Joshua 7:1-26*—Pray with humility and honesty.
- *2 Chronicles 6:1-42*—Pray both wide-ranging and specific.
- *Matthew 6:5-15*—Prayer is personal and recognizes God's position and our position, demonstrating complete dependence on God for guidance.
- *John 17:1-26*—Prayer recognizes spiritual warfare.

And my favorite... Jesus has been where we are:

Heb 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

The bottom line—prayer is truly awesome! And in light of that let me close with a quote from the famous psychologist William James who struggled with bouts of depression and thoughts of suicide. Somewhere in his searching he wrote something that sums up my feelings about prayer and its impact on my relationship with Jesus. I know it can do the same for you:

God is more real to me than any thought or thing or person. I feel him in the sunshine or rain; and all mingled with a delicious restfulness most nearly describes my feelings. I talk to him as to a companion in prayer and praise, and our communion is delightful. He answers me again and again, often in words so clearly spoken that it seems my outer ear must have carried the tone, but generally in strong mental impressions. Usually a text of Scripture, unfolding some new view of him and his love for me, and care for my safety; that he is mine and I am his never leaves me; it is an abiding joy. Without it life would be a blank, a desert, a shoreless, trackless waste.

Without Jesus, life would truly be a *trackless waste*. Thank God that we are His and He is ours. Can you think of a better reason to seek Him in your prayers? He awaits the thoughts that

are in your heart to pass from your lips to His ears. We dare not disappoint Him.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pastor Tom Mitchell has spent the better part of his ministry years exhorting, challenging, and encouraging the bride of Christ to move ever deeper into her relationship with her bridegroom. Over the past 30 years through Walk With God Ministries he has authored 13 books, written numerous articles, and has taught the Word of God from the pulpit, in the classroom, and through his weekly blog at: <http://WalkWithGod.org>.

His published works include *Wake Up And Rest – The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril*, along with its four companion books, *The Doorway to Rest*; *The Pathway to Rest*; *The Dangers to Rest*; and *The Battle For Rest* that challenge Jesus' bride to wake up and fulfill the role He has given her in preparing the way for His Kingdom. By anyone's clock, the time until His return is growing very short. *Wake Up And Rest* is a timely challenge the bride can ill afford to ignore, for if she does she does so at her own peril. This series reflects the urgency of the message the Lord has impressed upon Tom for His bride, to wake up and remember to whom she has committed herself and make herself ready for His soon return. The hour grows short and there is much at stake, both here and now and for all eternity. The question is... *will she wake up?*

His most recent work is the eight volume series, *The Way of Enoch*, that explores the foundation and sound scriptural doctrine that underlies God's plan for our lives. It is a journey that begins with learning who God really is and culminates in discovering how we are to walk out a loving and obedient relationship with our bridegroom. *The Way of Enoch* is a great resource for both the

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The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril... This book is a wakeup call to those who have made their personal commitment to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are the ones who hold the key to survival the world is looking for and they cannot fail to share it. But to do so they have to overcome their human side and allow their spirit to take charge and lead them through this “wilderness” we find ourselves in. And the key to that is to stop and take a long hard look at their relationship with the One to whom they’re engaged to be married. Do we really know Him? What is He expecting of us? How can we find the answers? These questions and many more have to be answered if we’re going to be able to step up and become all that He created us to be. *Wake Up and Rest* is a guidepost to a fruitful walk with our bridegroom as we prepare ourselves for our wedding day.

The Doorway To Rest—The Brides’ Invitation... When we consider Solomon’s Song we can easily see the relationship between Christ and His bride portrayed in many ways. Think of the “sun’s” relationship with the moon being like our relationship with the “Son.” This book is a detailed, verse-by-verse study of the *Song of Solomon*, revealing the true view of bride of Christ through

His eyes and a life changing view of the bridegroom through the eyes of the bride as she opens *The Doorway to Rest*.

The Pathway To Rest—The Brides’ Purpose... As we looked at the message of the *Song of Solomon* we were given a clear picture of not only who our bridegroom is, but equally important how He sees us and how we should see Him. His invitation opened the doorway to His Rest and now, as we walk out the days of our *ketubah*—our betrothal—we need to find out what that means and what it entails along *The Pathway To Rest*. For that we turn to the book of *Hebrews*, where we learn through each verse what sewing our wedding dress means and how important it is for us to be ready and watching for His soon return as we move up the path to spiritual maturity.

The Dangers To Rest—The Brides’ Warning... We have been inundated with not the shout of triumph but the incessant worldly scream of pending disaster. The country’s economics have been turned upside down and fear and panic have grabbed the headlines as the Middle East falls into chaos. The news is full of rampant pandemics, meteorological disasters, hopeless individuals committing tragic acts and families destroyed. And sadly, the majority of the bride of Christ is not prepared for His return. We have allowed the world and its supreme ruler to distract us from the path the lies in front of us. Now He has finally released me to write this verse-by-verse study—*The Dangers To Rest*—out of the book of *Revelation* that He put on my heart 18 years ago concerning His letters that not only deal with why He is coming back but also what we, His bride, are supposed to be doing and not doing as we wait and watch.

The Battle For Rest—The Brides’ Armor... Spiritual warfare is a war between the forces of God and the forces of rebellion led by Satan. And the bride is engaged in this spiritual war between light

and darkness, good and evil, heaven and hell and Christ and Satan. But sadly, many aren't even aware of the fact that they are in a spiritual battle every day of their life. As believing Christians we're in a grim conflict and we're not on a worldly cruise ship or a showboat; it's a battleship. It's a fight to the finish with no holds barred and we can't be neutral and we can't call a truce. This war is a personal one; very personal. In *The Battle For Rest* I have taken a detailed verse-by-verse study of the part of the book of *Ephesians* that deals with the enemy, his strategies and his goals and most importantly the battle orders we have been given to ensure victory over those personal strongholds.

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