
Prayer and Intercession

International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry

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Chapter One

Prayer

"And my message and my preaching was not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest upon the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. Yet, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom; however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for had they understood they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; but just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which has not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love HIM.' For to us, God revealed them through the Spirit; for the SPIRIT searches all things, EVEN THE DEPTHS OF GOD (I Corinthians 2:4-10)."

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss the deeper things of God and to come to a place of mutual communication and trust with Him that He might reveal to us secrets and depths of his character that we have not obtained before.

Through this communication and relationship He might share with us hidden wisdom that was predestined for us through the ages.

From this wisdom, we might gain and demonstrate a stature of maturity and display the faith of God to a lost world.

Method

By knowing that the whole plan and purpose in the mind of God in man's predestination and creation was for a relationship with our Creator; this lesson will attempt to explain our communication foundation of prayer.

As we discuss the different aspects of this communication vehicle, may our Lord inspire us into a deeper relationship with Himself, so we might stand in our calling and be used to stand for individuals, the Church, and even entire people groups.

As we begin this lesson, please stop, bow on your knees, and pray the following prayer that Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus: *" . . . that He would grant you, according to riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. . . . I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened . . . and that you might know the hope of His calling . . ."* (Eph. 3:16-19; 1:17-19).

MAY THIS PRAYER BECOME A REALITY IN YOUR LIFE FROM THIS DAY FORWARD. AS WE PROCEED THROUGH THIS LESSON, WE WILL DISCUSS OTHER APOSTOLIC PRAYERS.

WHAT ARE THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD? The entire premise of this lesson is based upon the following proclamation:

I believe the Bible is the Word of God! In Hebrews 4:12, we read: "The Word of God is quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the hearts." We read that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17)." Therefore, I contend that FAITH for those who are lost, cometh by

HEARING the WORD OF GOD and FAITH for those who are already saved to GROW into spiritual maturity, also comes by hearing the Word of God.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, CONSIDER JESUS, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to Him who appointed him, as Moses also was in all his house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, BUT THE BUILDER OF ALL THINGS IS GOD. Now, Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hopes firm until the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts (Hebrews 3:1-8)."

The Lord continues to look for those hearts here on earth that He might communicate His heart and treasures.

Isaiah 33:5,6 says, "The Lord is exalted; for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. And He shall be the stability of your times, a wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is his treasure."

II Chronicles 16:9a says, "His eyes continually run to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

As the Lord finds a HEARING heart, one softened and not restricted, He can impart His riches and the depths of His love. Throughout the discipline of the Holy Spirit and His revelation to us, God reveals His depths and riches.

The first thing to know and embrace is that the Word of God is LIVING. John 1:1 declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." If we fail to experience the living, energizing Word of God within and through us, "the depths of hearts" are not being touched. However, when the Word of God touches the depths of our hearts, we see the reality of God, and faith is released.

The next thing to know is that the Word of God is OPERATIVE. John 1:14 pronounces "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." It penetrates, brings glory, and literally redirects the course of the world. To break bone and joint, takes a sharp sword. When Jesus walked upon the earth, He broke down much hardness of tradition and displayed the reality of the Father God by becoming flesh. Never before had the depths and the character of God been revealed in this fullness. These depths reconciled the flesh and heart of man back to God. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." The deeper this light shines into a heart, the more the intentions and the thoughts of the heart are revealed. The more that heart allows the Light of God to shine within, the glory of God can shine outward effecting entire territories. The unveiling of the real nature of things enlightens us onto the true knowledge of God, ". . . for the Spirit searches all things, even the DEPTHS of God (I Corinthians 2:10)." In Himself, the Spirit of God does not need to search God to know God, for He is part of the Triune God. However, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell within us, and through Him, He opens the truth of God to us. This is called REVELATION. Once the Word of God is free to divide and manifest Himself in our hearts, we view situations from the light of the Father. God has given us the Holy Spirit to reveal all truth to us. True revelation and the riches of God cannot be revealed within our own capacity of mind and understanding. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither one who is sent greater than the one who sent him (John 13:16)." ". . . that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and DEPTH (Ephesians 3:18)." As the Holy Spirit of God penetrates the depths of our hearts and spirits, He makes us able to comprehend the depths and wisdom of God, and "know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Corinthians 2:12). We have all of these riches available to us, but do we know them? As we meditate upon the Word of God through the Holy Spirit, He illuminates the truth and they become revealed treasures to us.

John 3:5-6, 27 says, "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which born of the Spirit is spirit.'" ". . . John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.'" When the innermost recesses of our heart and spirit are touched by the heart of the Lord, we hear His voice and are illuminated with the revelation of His character and ways. From this we respond in COMMUNION and PRAYER.

Begin to meditate upon Romans 8:26,27: "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Through the help of the Blessed Spirit, we may pray when we know not how. Our spirits groan with creation, awaiting liberty from the Creator. We enter into the groanings of Jesus at the right hand of the throne who is interceding on behalf of all creation. Hebrews 3:7 says: "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart." By hearing His voice, you ascend to, approve of and consider what God says in Christ through the Spirit.

Chapter Two

What Is Communion and Prayer?

". . . For He is our God and we are the people of His Pasture, the flock under His care. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts . . ." Psalm 95:7,8.

A voice is the ability to make sound through the mouth, or anything regarded as vocal utterance that communicates to the mind or heart uttering an expressed wish, choice, or opinion.

Please turn at this time to Psalm 29. Read and meditate upon the characteristics of God's voice. Notice that it is necessary for man to recognize the voice of the Lord in order to honor and worship Him. The voice of God is our strength and our peace. Notice that His voice is powerful, majestic, and the originator of all things. In Colossians 1:16-18, we find the following: "For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church . . ." In Corinthians 3:16, we find the declaration that, ". . . You, yourself, are God's temple and the spirit of God lives in you." Therefore, when we begin to recognize the holiness and authority of God's voice in our lives, "in his temple, all will cry 'GLORY' (Psalm 29:9c)."

When God began to knit you together in your mother's womb, He created your inmost being and ordained and recorded all your days in a book. In actuality, He predestined a specific path for your life before you came into being. His thoughts toward you are very numerous and precious. You were made to be a delight in His eyes and in His sight (Psalm 139). Because He ordained each person with a special plan in mind, He longs to communicate those precious thoughts to man. That means of communication is recognized once we learn the sound and ways of His voice.

As stated in Psalm 139, God created our inmost beings (our spirits) which reside in the innermost depths of our hearts, so He might speak and direct His expressed wishes and opinions concerning heaven, hell, and earth. God longs to speak to His people, His sheep, so His ways and character might be imparted into them, and they might accomplish His purpose in their lives and affect the world around them (John 10:14-18).

"Does He who implanted the ear not hear? Does He who formed the eye not see? Does He who disciplines nations not punish? Does He who teaches man lack knowledge? The Lord know the thoughts of man; He knows that they are futile "(Psalm 94:9-11). So, not only does God have thoughts toward man and long to teach man what he needs to know, but God knows all of man's thoughts and intents within his heart. He knows whether a heart is soft enough to receive what He is longing to impart or whether it is hardened and rejects what He has to say. Therefore, God's ultimate purpose is to bring man's heart under subjection, to make it pliable and turn it toward Him. When this happens, His love is displayed and "shows us a more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:31). As this is happening, God has the ultimate desire that His heart and our heart might commune and be made one.

Communion is to hold conversation or converse with an interchange of thoughts; to share and possess in common and participate with. Communion with God means a ceaseless consulting with Him.

In Amos 3:3, we read, "Can two walk together, lest they agree?" God makes an appointment to meet the sinner at the Cross of Calvary. This is where all conversation with God must begin, for communion must originate around the purpose and life of His Son, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:20). This is the standard and place of communion where all things are reconciled, and He brings us into agreement with Himself (Hebrews 9:26). We are spared years of struggle and failure if we learn this principle first (Romans 5:10).

At the Cross is where we are to yield totally unto God and give our Beloved Lord our will, so He might recount His side of the story on all of our questions and circumstances. As

you read Romans 6:13, notice that the Lord asks us to take sides with Him against all that is in our lives from which we must be set free (II Corinthians 6:14-18). As we yield to Him our whole being, the Holy Spirit takes possession, cleanses the heart from old desires and reveals the living Christ to the spirit of man. Only from this point may we walk forth in happy communion with the Father and receive the daily provision of strength of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:19; John 16:27; II Corinthians 6:16).

There should never be any "gaps" in our communion from that day of yielding forth.

Conditions of Communion

- We must take care to give the Lord the very first moments of the day for consultation over our lives (Hebrews 10:19-22; Psalm 55:17).
- We must feed upon the heavenly food provided for us in the Word of God (Matthew 4:4; II Peter 3:16; Job 23:12; Hebrews 5:14).
- We must learn to live moment by moment. Vain regrets over the past and vague fears for the future can harass our minds enough to break our fellowship with God. As we have stated, communing means "consulting with the Lord." Take all apparent "mistakes" at once to Him (James 5:16; Matthew 5:23; Matthew 18:15). In Isaiah 40:3, we see that "God is making the crooked things straight." In Isaiah 58:8, we find that "His glory is our rearguard." He can gather up and straighten all that lies behind as well as the crooked things before you. Past and future are under His control!!!
- We must deal quickly with failure. Immediate, frank confession to God is what Satan seeks to keep us from (Jeremiah 3:7, 13; Luke 15:20).
- We must not expect to keep falling out of communion (Jude 24; Hebrews 7:25; I John 1:7; John 3:21). The blood of Jesus cleanses ("keeps cleansing") if we ceaselessly live under the searchlights of God, earnestly desiring Him to test our lives, where all is "wrought by Him, and in Him, for His glory."

As God imparts His voice to us and shares His character with us, we become victorious in His plans and purposes regarding our creation. If we, His people, will repent from our own thoughts and ways and allow our hearts to turn to Him and participate with Him, we might agree with Him in these plans. In Matthew 18:18-20, Jesus said, "Again, I tell you, that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in

heaven. I tell the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Because of the above, we see the necessity of recognizing that God is a loving Father and has a voice and a heart that longs to communicate to His people. Powerful results will be displayed when He finds a heart that is receptive to hear and agree with His plans, purposes, and character.

Stop and meditate upon Psalm 51.

Now, let us discern and discuss some ways that the Lord communicates with His people and how the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, guides, teaches, and leads us into all truth (Read John 10, 14, 16 & 17). As you read your Bible, notice each time that God, Jesus, or the prophets speak. Analyze those passages, so you may familiarize yourself with His voice.

What Is Prayer?

In Genesis 5:24, we see a brief, but very comprehensive statement of the call and purpose of man: "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him . . ." The utmost experience of any creature is to walk with the Creator. One may feed the hungry, clothe the needy, visit the sick, read, write and publish, and yet never walk with God. The thought of this is very practical and should lead us to a deep desire to cultivate a hidden life with God.

In Genesis 4:26, we find that after Seth conceived Enoch, and he was birthed that "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." To "call upon, entreat or beseech the Lord" is what we mean by communion or prayer.

Prayer is the act or practice of imploring, beseeching or requesting one's needs from a superior or higher level authority. One makes this earnest request when they are deeply

convinced that a need should be supplied. To supply a request is "to give, furnish, provide, yield, or equip the requested of his petition."

In I Thessalonians 5:16-18, God's children are encouraged to: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing (constantly be making our requests and needs known to God) with thanksgiving; for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus."

To walk in this humble, earnest manner before our Maker will allow a constant flow of God's Spirit in our lives. As stated in verse 19, the Spirit of God will not be quenched or stopped from coming into our hearts and lives. We will also have a clear channel for God to speak to us, thus receiving prophetic utterances from the mouth of God. From this directive, we will be enabled to stay on the path that God ordained for our lives and accomplish our mission in this world.

At this time, read and analyze Philippians 4:4-7.

Prayer is the expression of man's dependence upon God and affords the privilege of close communion with God. On one hand, there arises a deep sense of need, of helplessness, and unworthiness; on the other hand, there comes an assurance of the divine fullness of love. This enlarges our heart and produces confidence that what we are asking will be heard and our request will be supplied or answered. "And this is the confidence --the assurance, the privilege of boldness -- which we have in Him; we are sure that if we ask anything [make any request] according to His will [in agreement with His own plan] He listens to and hears us. And since we positively know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we also know with settled and absolute knowledge that we have granted us as our present possessions the requests made of Him(I John 5:14, 15)."

From Where do We Commune?

Psalm 91 was probably penned by the Psalmist during a distressing time. As we take time to study and review this Psalm, we see that the rich promises of this entire chapter are dependent upon one's meeting the conditions of the first two verses. "He who dwells in the

shelter [or secret, hidden place] of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the Almighty [Whose power, no foe can withstand]. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, on Him I lean and rely, and in Him, I confidently put my trust."

When we are seated properly in our hidden or abiding place, we may commune with and obtain the secrets of God's heart. We are not exposed; we can see the enemy as he encircles and attempts to encamp about us, and we can challenge the power of his evil. Notice that the Psalmist declares his own faith in God before relishing in the promises that follow.

The moral basis of prayer and communication is dependent upon us seated positionally and conditionally with our Creator, God the Father.

Throughout God's Holy Word, He gives promise after promise of our prayers being answered. Many Christians question, "Why are there so many unanswered prayers?" Let us leave the answer for a moment and concern ourselves with those who ask.

We find that Christ teaches us that answers to prayer depend upon certain conditions. He speaks of faith, of perseverance, of praying in His Name and of praying in the will of God. However, our victory is summarized in the following: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7)

Conditions for Abiding Prayer

As stated, our goal is to come into cooperation with the Holy Spirit in such a way that Romans 8:26-28 is a reality in our lives. For the key to this passage, we must review Romans 8:12-16 which states, ". . . *we are debtors, but not to the flesh -- we are not obligated to our carnal nature -- to live a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates of the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit, you are habitually putting to death -- making extinct, deadening -- the evil deeds prompted by the body, you shall live forever. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, For the Spirit which you have now received is not a spirit of slavery to put you*

once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption producing sonship, by which we cry; 'ABBA! FATHER!' The Spirit Himself testifies together with our own spirit that we are children of God . . . making us fellow heirs with Christ."

No advance in the spiritual life can be realized without the foundation of the Cross. We must first be shown by the Holy Spirit how to stand in the death of Christ before the Spirit's intercessional prayer life can be truly known and we penetrate the heavenlies. In practice, this means that we ask the Spirit of God to apply the power of the death of Christ to all activities of the flesh. From this, the Holy Spirit may lead us into all the varied aspects of the life of the true child of God (Galatians 5:24).

The next most important principle for the believer to understand is the "spirit of adoption." This enables the child of God to know Him as "Father." This is where the Holy Spirit will then bear witness with the believer's spirit that he is a child of God (Romans 8:16).

We need to have an assurance that we have God's ear, and there is nothing in us that turns His head from us or that prevents our prayers from being heard or penetrating into His throne of grace. The following are some reasons why we may not experience prayer penetration:

- Prayer will not penetrate to God if I am acting presumptuously. In Deuteronomy 1:45, we find that the Lord would not hear Israel because they had disobeyed and gone up against the Amorites. Presumption occurs when we venture out and take risks assuming that the Lord will back us in our adventures. Presumption is the opposite of faith. Presumption does not listen to God but originates within the will and mind of man. Romans 10:17 states that "Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the Word of the Lord." In Hebrews 11:6, we find, "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." God will never reward our presumptuous acts. At this time, let God search out any presumptuous sins that may be entrenched within your heart or soul. Pray aloud to the Lord, Psalm 51, Psalm 19, and Deuteronomy 17:12, 13.

- Prayer will not penetrate to God if I reject His kingship. In I Samuel 8:18, Samuel began to warn Israel about taking a king of their choosing. He explained to them that they were beginning to violate some principles that the Lord had established for them before they entered the land that He had promised them. He told them that if they insisted on living without God's claim on their lives without acknowledging His ways of established authority, God would quickly block their prayers from His throne. By understanding and operating in and under authority properly, we release faith to

operate in our hearts. Read Luke 7:1-10. Notice that Jesus acknowledges that "no greater faith" had he seen in all of Israel than the man who understood authority. Ask the Lord to remove any rebellion, divination, insubordination, or idolatry from your heart, so our Lord might hear you clearly. Read and pray the principles in I Samuel 15.

- Prayer will not penetrate to God if you purposely desist in helping the needy. "Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard (Proverbs 21:13)." Our self-centered concerns prevent us from focusing on people or groups with greater need than ourselves. Our lack of concern for others' eternal welfare may keep our prayers from penetrating heaven. Read Matthew 6 and ask God to establish the compassion of Jesus within you.

- Prayer will not penetrate to God if I regard iniquity in my heart "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalm 66:18)." A grudge nursed against another, a bitter root, a religious nature that feeds itself on the praise of men, an offended spirit that murmurs when circumstances do not go their way, and character flaws nursed rather than killed, will block heaven.

We learn that in order to have effectual prayer and communication, there must be an obedient heart, an upright mind, and a good conscience. If your heart is not in communion with God, in its abiding hidden place, being ruled by His holy commandments, how can we possibly look for answers to our prayers?

STUDY THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES: I John 3:21-22; Hebrews 13:8; James 4:2; Matthew 6:22-24; John 15:1-11.

There is a vast amount of asking "amiss." Therefore, when we bow before the throne of grace, it should be with an uncondemning heart. Only by a full surrender to the life of abiding can our prayer life be active and truly healthy. Therefore, take time NOW before proceeding with this lesson to ask yourself:

- Do I have a clear conscience before God?
- Is our standing in Christ on the ground of Calvary?
- Am I shrinking from the application of the Cross to my life?
- Am I dwelling in the secret place of the Most High?
- Are my prayers more like orations than petitions?
- Is God hearing me?
- Am I capable of hearing His gentle voice within my spirit?

Wait on the Spirit of the Lord to cleanse and fill you afresh! Now, proclaim by faith, as stated in the remainder of Psalm 66: "Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer, but certainly has heard."

Hebrews 9:14 states, "how much will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God." A man must give himself up to live as entirely in Christ and for Christ as the branch in the vine and for the vine. Only a life full of the Holy Spirit can know the true power to ask in Christ's name. The ordinary Christian life needs a sound and vigorous spiritual life to pray in power.

Now, you can have assurance to make the following proclamation: "Now, I know that You hear me, and I know that I have the petition I desired of Him."

Prayer as a Cutting Edge

Prayer is the cutting edge of any work. Prayer is the work and the working power of any ministry. The expression of corporate life is not measured in statistics or numbers, but in prayer depth. By prayer depth, we refer to the beginning of this lesson to define the depths of God being released into heart of man and the wishes of God being accomplished here on earth.

Prayers that have blunted edges have no power of penetration. To inflict wounds, a "sharp" edge must be obtained. Our best endeavors ought to concentrate on preserving a razor-sharp edge in our communion and prayer life.

1. Prayer was never meant to be incidental to the Word of God. It is the work and working power of all that God would do through His people.

2. Without prayers and waiting on God for Him to reveal His will, we will have no power to move toward His goals.

3. Nothing of God's will is effectually executed that is not first begun and then carried out through prayer.

4. God-centered prayer with sharp edges cuts through all deception, primarily the prayer that is carried out under the light of the truth. This is reality.

5. Prayer must originate at the throne of God where all life and wisdom dwells. Prayer at this level is penetrating.

"Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. With all prayer and petition, pray at all time in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints . . . (Ephesians 6:17-18)."

You Have Not Because You Ask Not. . .

As we have discussed, "Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the Word of the Lord (Romans 10:17)." Faith is the substance by which the world was framed and is the operative character of our being that the Lord will be looking for upon His return (Hebrews 11:3; Luke 18). All of our actions should be a result of our moving and being "in faith".

Have you ever seen an individual who walks in true confidence before the Lord? Notice in I John 5:14 & 15 (Amplified Bible), we find the following: *"And this is the confidence -- the assurance, the (privilege of) boldness -- which we have in HIM: (we are sure) that if we ask anything (make any request) according to His will (in agreement with His own plan) He listens and hears us. And if (since) we (positively) know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we also know (with settled and absolute knowledge) that we have (granted us our present possessions) the requests made of Him."*

Therefore, for us to gain the vision, direction, and confidence that we need to stand before and in the place that our Lord would have us stand, there is a prerequisite that we ask. To "ask" means "to put a question to: inquire; request of or for; to require or call for; to expect or demand; to invite."

James 4:1-3 says, *"What leads to strife and quarrels? Do they not arise from sensual desires warring in your bodily members? You are jealous and you covet and your desires go unfulfilled; you become murderers. (To hate is to murder as far as your hearts are concerned.) You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain the gratification, contentment or happiness that you seek, so you fight and war. You do not have because you do not ask. Or you do ask God for them and fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil selfish motives."* With this, you can see, it is very important to the Lord that we learn to ask specifically in accordance with His will. As we learn to commune with Him around His character and through His Word, we get to the place with our Father that we express the desires of our hearts to Him. Then, when our desires come in line with His desires for us, we hear his voice and gain what we need from Him. He, then, imparts the confidence of Himself into our spirits to move forward in the vision that He has called us to accomplish.

Let the Lord very carefully focus your heart upon Him and His desires for you. May He bring each of us into more specific communion.

Faith Overcomes Unbelief: The Hindrance of Unanswered Prayer

Prayer is not limited to any human possibilities. Prayer is a work of faith. The purpose of prevailing prayer is to bring to pass things that are divinely possible and that are in God's will. In prevailing prayer, you are asking God to do things you can accomplish in no other way. To prevail, you need to desire and hunger deeply, to pray with fervor and passion. In addition, we need the dynamic of faith. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world -- our faith (I John 5:4)."

James 1:6 admonishes us to "ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed." In Matthew 9:28, Jesus asked two blind men, "Do

you believe that I am able to do this?" He is constantly asking us the same questions as obstacles appear within the circumstances of our lives and awaiting our response. Will we say "Yes, Lord" or will we answer "No, Lord?"

Lack of faith or unbelief is the greatest hindrance to our prayers, it is the root of all idolatry and sin. It is the hindrance to the miraculous occurring. Let's look at Jesus' words concerning lack of faith:

"Where is your faith (Luke 8:25)?"

"Do you still have no faith (Mark 4:40)?"

"Because you have so little faith (Matthew 17:20)."

"Stop doubting and believe (John 20:27)!"

"He was amazed at their lack of faith (Mark 6:6)."

"He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith (Matthew 13:58)."

"He rebuked them for their lack of faith (Mark 16:14)."

Take time to study and view each of the circumstances that surround these admonishments from our Lord. Relate each circumstance to the present burden of your heart.

Worship Releases Faith and Confidence to Ask

". . . Behold there came a synagogue official, who bowed down and worshipped before him sayings, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live'" (Matthew 9:18). Worship expresses the heart of the creature to the Creator. As you worship before our Lord, you begin to appeal to God's heart of love. Your prayer moves him deeply. Notice in verse 19, the response of the Lord to this worshipping request: "And Jesus rose and began to follow him, and so did His disciples."

What a glorious, triumphant confidence to know that our worship can move the Lord to follow our request. "And when Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute players and the crowd in noisy disorder . . . He removed the crowd . . . He entered and took

her by the hand, and the girl arose (verse 23-25)!" Notice the effects of this worship as Jesus followed this earnest worshipful request: "And this news went into all the land (verse 26)."

WHEN WE WORSHIP AND RELEASE FAITH, THE ENTIRE TERRITORY OF WHERE WE DWELL IS EFFECTED!!

Chapter Three

Will He Find Faith on Earth?

Now, let's look at Luke 18. There was a widow in town that kept coming to the judge, asking for him to grant her justice against her adversary. Because of her persistence, the judge granted her victory over her adversary. Then, the Lord interpreted this situation (Jesus was one with His Father and only said what the Father said): "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice to his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

In other words, will He find someone who is persistently communicating with, listening to and walking with Him? Anytime the voice of God departs from the throne of heaven, faith is released and spread where His voice is imparted. God's voice is pure. His voice will always be tested by man. If God has spoken, His voice can always withstand the test of man or Satan. This is the number one judge of whether or not the voice you are hearing is God's. In Romans 10, we find, "The word is near you, it is in your mouth and in your heart. If you will believe the word in your heart and confess it with your mouth, you will be saved . . . for everyone who believes and calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (paraphrased)." Romans 10 continues to say that not all the Israelites would accept the Word, resulting in unbelief rather than faith. "For faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the WORD of the Lord (Romans 10:17)." Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now, faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title -- deed) of things we hope for, being proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality -- faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses (Amplified)."

When the voice of God is released from heaven, His character of faithfulness is released. If God has spoken to us, and we are proclaiming what He has said, His character of faithfulness and steadfastness will be demonstrated. Consequently, Satan's voice (our enemy)

and all of his strategies of war are against this aspect of God's character. Satan is in a constant manipulative battle to strip that assurance from God's persistent man or woman. This is why we must hear God clearly and stand in what He says, so His character of faithfulness might penetrate and permeate the earth.

Faith Precedes Prevailing Prayer and Intercession

In Prevailing Prayer by Wesley Dewel, we find the following concerning faith in relationship to prayer and intercession:

1. Faith accepts God's revelation that you are created in image of God, created to represent Him on earth and to rule on His behalf making you an ambassador of Christ (Genesis 1:26-28).
2. Faith accepts Christ's redemption, making you a child of God with the spiritual right of access to God at any time for your need (Ephesians 2:18).
3. Faith accepts your identity with Jesus, not only in His death, but also in His resurrection and exaltation, so that you now sit in the heavenlies with Christ at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 2:6).
4. Faith accepts your role as a king and a priest to God (Rev. 1:6; I Peter 2:5.9; Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6; Revelation 5:10, 20:6).
5. Faith recognizes the Spirit's aid as He indwells you and deepens your desires and guides you into intercession (Romans 8:26-27).
6. Faith gives determination for you to be all that God wants you to be through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

Abide: Ask and It Shall Be Given unto You

"And in that day, you will ask me no question. Truly, Truly, I say to you, if you will ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name . . . At that day, you shall ask in My name . . . The Father Himself loveth you (John 16:23-27)."

"At that day, you shall ask in My name." This does not mean that we will use the name of the Lord as a magic word. What this word does mean is that we will become so intimate and in oneness with the heart of our Father, that we will beseech Him according to His character. "That day" is a day meant for here and now. When our union is so complete, and absolute with the Father, and we have entered into the depths of His love, we ask Him according to His heart and desires and not our own fleshly wishes. Our desires become His desires (Psalm 37:4-6).

Our Lord does not mean that life will be free from external complexities and perplexed situations, but that just as He knows the Father's heart and mind, so by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, He can now lift us into the heavenly place where He can reveal the counsel of God to us (Ephesians 1 and 2).

"That day" is a day of undisturbed relationship between God and the saint. Just as Jesus stood unsullied in the presence of His Father, so by the mighty power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we can also be lifted into that relationship.

". . . He will give it you." Jesus says that God will recognize our prayers! By the resurrection and ascension power of Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, we can be lifted into such a relationship with the Father that we are at one with the perfect sovereign will of God by our free choice even as Jesus was. In that wonderful position, placed there by Jesus Christ, we can pray to God in His name, in His nature. Jesus says, "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you (John 16:23)." The sovereign character of Jesus Christ is always approved within us by His own character and statements.

This is what the Lord means as spoken through the prophet Isaiah (65:24): "It will come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Benefits of Consistent Prayer

Prayer, constituting the most direct expression of religious feeling and consciousness, is the principle means by which men, created in the image of God, have displayed their attitude toward Him (refer to Genesis 4:26). From this early beginning, prayer formed an integral part of public worship. Wherever the patriarchs erected an altar for worship, they did so with the view of calling upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8; 13:4; 21:33).

Even though the law did not prescribe any prayer of public worship, except the confession of sin on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:21), thanksgiving when the firstling was being offered, as well as the tithe (Deuteronomy 26:3), for God's holy men and women, prayer and communion were a way of life that was entered into daily. It was not usual for the Levites to offer prayer morning and evening, while incense was burned. Please review the duty of the Levites as they were revised for temple worship in 1 Chronicles 23:24-32. Verse 30 states, "And they are to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening." May we as God's leaders of His latter day Church, covenant with Him to see this accomplished.

1. Consistent prayer makes you a candidate for visitation from God.

Study Luke 1:5-13. Notice how Zechariah's faithfulness to perform priesthood duty made him available to God to visit, deliver a word to him, make he and his wife fruitful, and produce the forerunner that would pave the way for our Savior. Do not be fearful and overcome with unbelief if the Lord visits you during your disciplined time of prayer.

2. Consistent prayer makes us victorious over our enemies.

As David was in the midst of his treacherous enemies, he stated in Psalm 55:16-18, that "As for me, I shall call upon God, and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I utter my complaint and moan and He will hear My voice. He will then redeem my soul in peace from the battle that is against me." Know that there is victory as we consistently call upon the name of our God. Not only will we know His voice as we communicate with Him, but like any Father, He will be aware of our voice as well.

3. Consistent prayer produces an extraordinary spirit within us.

Let's look at the example God has given us in the man Daniel. Daniel, as we stated earlier, was a man of tremendous insight and wisdom. As we look at Chapter 6 in the book of Daniel, we find that an injunction or law had been created to prevent any petition from being made to a higher authority or god than Darius (remember the definition of prayer). As you read verse 3, you will find the reason for the decree. Because of Daniel's insight and wisdom, the King had planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. The verse even acknowledges that Daniel possessed an "extraordinary spirit." Verse 10 states, "Now, when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber, he had the windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees, three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously." Daniel knew that God had made his spirit extraordinary through his consistent fellowship and communion. He knew that all insight and wisdom that he received to influence Babylon for the sake of his people came from God. Therefore, it was imperative that he maintain this communion and fellowship with the higher ruler, God Almighty, than to turn his petitions to a lower nature of the earthy kingship.

4. Consistent prayer produces faithfulness to the King of kings.

Continuing to analyze this portion of Daniel's life, he continued to consistently commune three times a day in faithful prayer to the Father. Of course, this resulted in him suffering the consequences of the violation of the decree, but he maintained his fellowship with God,

which enabled him later to receive latter day revelation. Renounce any fear that would cause you to withdraw from your constant, consistent communion with God, the Father.

5. Consistent prayer allows the Lord to manifest the spirit of boldness upon and within you.

Let's turn to Acts now to notice the miracles that happened with Peter as he consistently maintained his prayer times. In Acts 2, as the followers of Jesus corporately met in one place and in one accord as they had consistently done for several days after His Ascension, the Spirit of God fell upon them, manifested Himself to them, and filled them. They received what the Lord had promised them (John 14). At that point, Peter began to speak and preach with boldness, and many were saved.

6. Consistent prayer makes us available to be used in the miraculous.

Later, in chapter 3 verse 1, as they were gone for their hour of prayer, the Spirit of God manifested Himself to them to perform the miracle of healing the lame man at the gate. In Acts 10:9, as Peter went up on the housetop for his normal noon hour of prayer, God began to give him revelation that would revolutionize and expand the Church. Notice in verse 10 that he was "hungry and desiring to eat." Many times our flesh distracts us from receiving what the Lord would give us.

Stay consistent in your praying so the Lord may empower you, use you in the miraculous, and reveal necessary revelation so His Church may move forward.

Scriptural Promises of Answered Prayer

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Matthew 7:7,8

"And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

Matthew 21:22

"And whatsoever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13

"If you shall abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7

"And in that day, you shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you: Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give to you." John 16:23

"Again, I say unto you: That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I AM in the midst of them." Matthew 18:19-20

"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mark 11:24

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

"Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of thine heart." Psalm 37:4

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him." Psalm 91:15

"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them." Psalm 145:18-19

"The Lord is far from the wicked; but He heareth the prayer of the righteous." Proverbs 15:29

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

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut the door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:6

"And what so ever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." I John 3:22

The Meaning of Prayer

For further study on the meaning of prayer throughout the Word of God, please refer to the following:

- Prayer as supplication: Psalm 65:2; 80:4; Isaiah 1:15; Job 16:17.
- Prayer as supplication or intercession for others: II Kings 19:4; Isaiah 37:4;

Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14.

- Prayer meaning to judge, or mediate: Genesis 20:7; Deuteronomy 9:20; I Samuel 7:5; Job 42:8; Psalm 5:2; I Samuel 1:26; II Samuel 7:27.

- Prayer meaning to strive, contend or plead a cause: Job 15:4; Psalm 55:17; Isaiah 1:17 (for the widow); Isaiah 51:22.

- Prayer meaning to burn incense: Job 33:26; Revelation 5:8.

- Prayer as to strive to please (to entreat God's favor): Zechariah 7:2; Psalm 21:22.

Chapter Four

Consistent Abiding Releases Revelation and Vision

Revelation is where the Word of God divides the spirit of man from his soul and discloses or manifests to us what God sees. Jesus said in John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of His own initiative, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will disclose or manifest to you what is to come." Therefore, revelation enables us to see what God sees. Hebrews 4:13 says "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Any covering that prevents us from seeing and having vision covers the eyes of our heart, not God's. In Luke 24, we see an account of two men on the road to Emmaus that were communing between themselves about the circumstances that surrounded Jesus and the crucifixion (this was after Jesus' resurrection).

In verse 15, 16 we find: "And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him." Jesus began to remind them of the revelation and truth that had been given earlier while He was alive. As they began to abide at the table and commune with Him, verse 31 and 32 states "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another. 'Why were not our hearts burning within us, while He was speaking to us on the road, and while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?'" Once the revelation of His resurrection had come into them, their response was as follows: "And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread (verse 35)." Spiritual vision is developed and seen through eyes of faith.

Through this revelation of Jesus Christ, we uncover the riches that He has planned for His people. Through this, our vision and direction come. Paul says in Ephesians 1, "since I have heard of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus . . . I pray for your wisdom, insights and inner illumination which will make you realize how great your hope and calling is (verses 18-19)." Through this hope, we seek our Lord. As we do, He releases revelation of His character, which gives us the "keys" that will allow us to unlock the gates for the Church, individually and corporately, to move forward by the Spirit.

"But, you must realize that so long as an heir is a child, though he is destined to be master of everything, He is, in practice, no different from a servant. He has to obey a guardian or trustee until the father has chosen for him to receive his inheritance (Galatians 4:1)."

As the character of the Lord Jesus is revealed to us, this inheritance becomes more and more clear, and we begin to mature. We experientially begin to receive and walk in more and more of His promises by faith. Our vision, direction, and purpose gain clarity.

As each key to His inheritance and character is revealed, more and more power is released in our life to the overcomers. We transfer all our sins and inherent weaknesses into the overcoming blood of the lamb. This blood, then, begins to flow through our veins so that we might become fruitful. "It is because that you really are His sons that God has sent the Spirit of His son into our hearts to cry 'Abba, Father' (Galatians 4:7)."

Prayer Releases Constant Revelation from the Throne

As we have stated before, in I Peter 2:9, God calls the gathering of believer's (the Church), His bride, "A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light; for once, you were not a people and now, you are a people of God . . ."

God, who was in the beginning, has always had a plan to reconcile mankind to Himself. In Ephesians 1, we find: *"For consider what He has done - before the foundation of the world, he has chosen us to become, in Christ, His holy and blameless children, living within His constant care. He planned in His purpose of love, that we should be adopted as His own children through Jesus Christ - that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of His which has made us welcome in the everlasting love he bears towards His beloved . . . For God has allowed us to know that secret of history shall be consummated in Christ. That everything that exists in heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. And here is the staggering thing -- that in all which will one day belong to him, we have been promised a share . . . (Ephesians 1:4-12 - Phillips translation)."*

To know that we may "share" in the inherent riches of the glory of the Lord is a staggering thought. "Now, faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality -- faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses (Hebrews 11:1)." "Since faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of the Lord," it is important that we hear what the Father is saying to the Church, His people to whom He has passed His inheritance.

I John 5:4 says "For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world: and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith." The Church was born by the faith of the Father through revelation of His Son. As stated in Matthew 16:13-17, we have access to this overcoming power: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not overpower it (Verse 18)!"

Peter did not yet have the reality of this revelation in his head, but it had been placed deep within his heart. Even though Peter denied his earthly relationship with Jesus, he could not deny the revelation that the Father had released into him from heaven.

Once the revelation of Jesus was released into Peter, notice the promise the Lord gave him: "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on

earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19).”

Let's look at these keys and how the Father dispenses these riches of revelation that produce our inheritance.

The Book of Revelation begins by John saying that "this is a Revelation of Jesus Christ to reveal to His bond servants the things which must shortly take place." He acknowledged from where his revelation was coming in Revelation 1:5, from Jesus Christ:

- 1) the faithful witness
- 2) the first-born of the dead; and
- 3) the ruler of kings of the earth.

This revelation was given for the seven churches in Asia (which are types of all churches today), and then given back to "Him who loves us, who released us from our sins by His blood." Verse 6 again states our heritage, "He has made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father; to Him be the glory and dominion forever . . ."

"This same Jesus" will return in full headship, so that all may see Him whom they have "pierced and mourn over Him (Revelation 7; Acts 1:7-8,11; Ephesians 4:7-14; Zechariah 12:10-14).” This is the intercessory call of the Church today, to the members, and a lost world to "Him whom they have pierced."

Jesus reiterates the revelation of Himself and what He has to offer. He shows how to cooperate and agree with Him to receive all that He has for us. "Do not be afraid, I AM the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead and behold, I AM alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hell. Therefore, write what you have seen, the things which are, and the things which are to take place."

As Jesus began to give revelation of the seven types of Churches and the role of the seven angels that stood by those churches, he began to admonish them for their weaknesses

and warn them of the necessary steps of action, through repentance, to take and receive the promise of their overcoming inheritance.

Today, the call to the Church has not changed. The same promises that were released prophetically to John are calling and beckoning to our ears. Thus saith the Lord: "OVERCOME".

Relating this to missions and the establishment of the Church throughout the world, we must see that God has a dual purpose.

1. The redemption of mankind
2. The elimination of Satan's rebellion

To accomplish this, we must receive the inheritance of our King, flowing mightily through us individually and then, corporately where the overflow of King Jesus is manifested through us individually -- there the Church becomes. Because Jesus longs to redeem mankind and reconcile the world to Him, He begins to stir faith in an individual's heart. Because that individual eventually cannot contain all that is within him, he hears the Spirit saying "Go," and he responds "Here I am." Jesus can then send him into a remote part of the earth to overflow and establish the Church. In this way, the inheritance of the seed of our Lord and Savior is dispersed, and His commission is fulfilled.

What position does God give the Church? What is the vision that God entrusts to the Church on earth? Why does He permit Satan, whose head is already crushed, to remain on earth? Watchman Nee, in *God's Plan and the Overcomers*, states: "God leaves the Church on the earth not only to preach the gospel to save sinners, but also to demonstrate the victory of Christ on the cross." He permits Satan to remain on the earth for the sake of creating opportunity to prove the victory of His Son. Consequently, He would have no believer be defeated.

On the cross, Christ accomplished redemption and won the ultimate victory for mankind. The kingdom of God is to manifest this victory which Christ has achieved.

Matthew 16:23, 24 expresses through revelation that our Lord will build His Church and give His keys to that Church, so that through His Kingdom His victorious authority and power may be executed. Through His cross and suffering, we can gain the necessary revelation to receive His overcoming power. Philippians 3:10 states, "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." The reason the church remains on earth is to maintain and demonstrate the victory of the cross of Christ by binding Satan in every place he roams, just as the Lord Himself - the Head of the Church - bound Satan at Calvary. "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every one who is born of the Spirit (John 3:8)."

In life there will be much suffering. Many of God's people will be walking toward the cross, but many will turn away. Why? Because upon reaching that cross, many will not recognize Him because they do not know Him and the depths of His unsearchable riches and love. Because they do not recognize Him in His suffering, they cannot receive Him in His power.

We are made ministers of the Gospel by this grace and equipped with this power to proclaim the incalculable riches of Christ, making plain to all men the meaning of His divine secret. And what is this purpose and plan? "The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which He centered in Christ Jesus, Our Lord (Ephesians 3:7-10 - Phillips translation)."

Chapter Five

Prayer in the Church

Prayer was the power by which the primitive Church flourished and triumphed. Is this not the one need of the Church of our days?

Principles of Prayer in the Church

Let us look at how the principles of prayer truly govern our church work:

1. Heaven is still as full of blessings as it was in the day of the early Church.

"Bless by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly place in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3)."

2. God still delights to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

"And I say to you, ask and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened. Now, suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake, instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:9-13)?"

3. Our life and work are still as dependent on the direct impartation of divine power as they were at the time of Pentecost.

". . . but you shall receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you (Acts 1:8)."

4. Prayer is still the appointed means for drawing down these heavenly blessings in power on ourselves and those around us.

"Once God has spoken: Twice, I heard this: That power belongs to God . . . and thou dost recompense a man according to his work" (Psalm 62:11).

"Let the groaning of the prisoner come before Thee; According to the greatness of thy power preserve those who are doomed to die (Psalm 79:11)."

"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen (Matthew 6:13)."

Lloyd Ogilvie has written; "Offering as much as we know of ourselves to as much we know of Him, opens the flood gate of the Lord's power in our life."

5. God still seeks for men and women who will, with all their other work of ministering, especially give themselves to preserving prayer.

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

The Form of the Church Prayer Meeting

The impression that one often gets at prayer meetings is that petition is the pivot upon which prayer turns, and that the main function of prayer is to handle life's emergencies.

Prayer is a much greater avenue for our Father's riches than just to handle life's emergencies.

The Church, with Jesus as the Head, is the final triumpher against the "gates of hell." From this, we should deduce that her prayer meeting and the communion with God of her members should be the most vibrant thing occurring on the earth. Corporate prayer occurs when the local church comes into a place of united intercession against the powers of darkness.

Let us review Matthew 18:19 again: "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask; it shall be done for them of My father which is in heaven." One necessary condition of our prayers is cordial agreement through oneness of mind. We should sound like a symphony in our Father's ears. We should make one common sound before Him. "And when the Day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place . . . and they were all filled with Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)." There was a unanimity about their praying. We must get to a place corporately that we come before the throne of Grace in holy harmony of mind and spirit.

Another condition of our prayer meeting is that we should come together with some definite object on our hearts, that we might wait together before God. In Acts 2, they were

waiting, according to the Lord's instructions, for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Without exception, they all had one definite object in mind. And the promise fell upon them with power. Today, we must still ask, not for the Comforter to come for He has already done so, but for His blessed power to be displayed.

In Francis Frangipane's book, *The Three Battlegrounds*, we find the following requirements for corporate prayer:

1. Worship should be a part of warfare. With great variety, worship and praise should be integrated into warfare, prayer, and intercessions.

2. Prayer and intercession should flow corporately, in union with the Father, from the throne of God. When you pray corporately, there is a common fountain from which those who pray must draw. Be responsive to the subtle changes of the Spirit as He guides the group into creative agreement.

3. Seek to remain consistent to scheduled prayer times. More people can commit themselves if there are scheduled times. However, stay open for those special seasons when the Lord orders additional intercessions.

4. Do not become presumptuous. In prayer, use the Word, the Spirit, and the Name of Jesus.

5. Keep all talk to a minimum. Save all but essential conversation for after prayer.

Let us cooperate with the Holy Spirit and come into agreement that the prayer meeting be restored to the Church.

Constant Revelation is like the Flow of a River

Notice how we have discussed prayer as fellowship and communion with God and how this fervent fellowship allows for revelation to flow from the throne of God into our spirits to strengthen and direct the Church, thus, allowing it to move continually in overcoming the gates of hell on earth.

Psalm 46:4 says: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the Holy dwelling places of the Most High." This river is the very thing that quenches our thirst for a Living God. Psalm 36:8 states, "They drink their fill of the abundance of Thy House; and Thou dost give them to drink of the river of their delights." Jesus said to the woman at the well in John 4:14: "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." This water flows directly from the throne of God, bringing life and light to our darkened eyes. "For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light, we see light."

Intercession is always linked with vision. It is the forming and clearing of the path that revelations and light might be dispersed to a lost and dying world. Isaiah 40:1-8 admonishes us to "clear the path" for the Lord's glory to be seen. As this happens, there is a clear flow and a clarity of vision. Clear vision is necessary for clear impartation of revelation.

Revelation is always linked with wisdom, and wisdom establishes the foundation of the Church. Revelation takes the following course:

1. God initiates all revelation and prayer.
2. Man has the choice to respond and commit to the revelation that is flowing from heaven.
3. God responds to man's commitment through Divine visitation.

Lord has always had a people to rise to His overcoming call to move forward. The continuous call of the Father to His children is one of intercession. At this point in history, it is evident to see our Lord, extending that call, so His glorious Bride may be established in a way that she has not been before.

From Ephesians 1:17-23, we prayed earlier in the lesson for "our eyes to be enlightened that we might know the hope of His calling." Let's open our hearts to this truth that we might see this through the death and resurrection of our Lord. He was "seated at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places." This seat shows His enemies to be totally overcome as "His

footstool (Psalm 110:1).” Upon being seated there, He has been given all authority to "rule in the midst of His enemies (verse 2).”

As stated earlier, when we enter into the "death" of the Lord Jesus Christ through communion and prayer, we experientially begin to realize one of the most glorious truths to be revealed to the believer. In Ephesians 2:5 and 6, we find "even when we were dead in our transgressions, (but God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved); and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of grace." What a marvelous enlightenment to know that we are seated next to Christ with the capacity to view personal and earthly circumstance from His view. Notice that our commission is to show the "surpassing riches of Grace" to ages to come.

May we hear our Father calling clearly through His Commander and Head, Jesus, the commission to reveal this manifold wisdom to the ages. May we accept this call and enter into agreement to intercede for His Bride. From this prevailing, may we see a manifestation of His Glory occur.

Chapter Six

What Is Intercession?

In Joel 2:1, we find, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm on My Holy Mount Zion. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of judgment of the Lord is coming, it is close at hand."

Let's look at this trumpet call. When the *shofar* (trumpet) was blown in early Bible days, it signified a call to arms for war.

1. The *shofar* was used exclusively for warlike purposes.
2. It gave a signal to arms (Judges 6:34; I Samuel 13:3).
3. It warned of the approach of the enemy (Amos 3:6; Jeremiah 6:5).
4. It was blown continuously throughout the battle until victory occurred (Isaiah 40:1-8).

When we intercede, we gain conditionally the position of our seat. One who intercedes will gain a position with God, so that a situation or relationship, or country, etc. might be reconciled to the heart of God. Isaiah 53:12 states: "Therefore, I will allot him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong. Because he poured out himself unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; Yet, he himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors."

Intercession is the "act of pleading or making a request on the behalf of another or others; to intervene for the purpose of producing agreement: mediation."

As stated earlier in the lesson, there should never be any "gaps" in our communication from the first day we yield to the Lord. Once gaps occur, there must be reconciliation to God to restore those breaches. "To reconcile" means to establish friendship between; to settle as a dispute; to make compatible or consistent.

That God seeks intercessors but seldom finds them is brought clearly to our attention in Isaiah 59:16. "And He saw that there was no man and astonished that there was no one to

intercede" We also find this same exclamation from the prophet Ezekiel in Chapter 22, verse 30: "And I searched for a man from among them that should build up my wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none."

Believers, in general, have considered intercession as intensified form of prayer. As we have discussed throughout this lesson, prayer is a daily function or discipline where an individual meets with his/her Creator for fellowship, guidance, direction, and blessing. It is a discipline that must occur in the believer's life to maintain a victorious walk with the Lord.

However, intercession occurs where Satan has so deeply entrenched himself in a person's life that normal prayer will not remedy the situation. The individual who will receive a call to intercede will be guided, step by step, by the Holy Spirit, until overcoming faith is loosed in the circumstance, whether that circumstance is related to an individual or a nation. God, then, extends a call through His Son, and by His Spirit to stand in the gap where fellowship has been broken.

Therefore, we must emphasize the word "intensified." Because of this, many do not heed this call of the Lord. Let's look at three areas of qualification for an intercessor, which are not normally found in regular prayer.

Identification

As stated earlier in Isaiah 53:12, we can see the identification of our Savior for whom He interceded. As the Divine Intercessor, interceding for a lost world, He drained the cup of our lost condition to its last drop. He "tasted death for every man" and actually descended from His throne in heaven and came and sat in our lost condition here on earth (Ephesians 4:10).

To accomplish the assignment from the Father, Jesus had to:

- take our nature upon Himself;
- learn obedience through the things He suffered;
- be tempted in all points as we are tempted;
- become poor for our sakes; and finally

- be made sin for us!

In Hebrews 7:25-27 we find, *"Hence also He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through him, since He always lived to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first, for His Own sins, and then, for the sins of the people because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."* By doing this, He gained the position with the fullest authority as the Captain of our Salvation, made perfect through suffering. From this gained position, He understands all that we go through. From this vantage point, He can even live to make intercession for us and effectively plead with the Father. From these pleadings, He is "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

He pleads effectively, because He gave His life for those whom He pleads. He is their representative before heaven and hell and has submerged His self-interest in their needs and suffering. He has literally taken our place.

Study and mediate on John 14-17, Isaiah 53, and Hebrews 7-9.

Through identification with Jesus Christ and the way He feels about others, we enter into the burden of intercession for individuals and entire people groups. Isaiah 53:11 says: "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it, and be satisfied; By His knowledge, the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities."

Agony

Let us look at Romans 8:26, 27. We see that there is another Intercessor, and in Him, we see the agony of this ministry. For He, the Holy Spirit, "maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." The Holy Spirit is the only present intercessor on earth. When God finds a heart and a body that will allow His Son to be made manifest through the Holy Spirit and become His dwelling place, he can lay His burdens upon that person.

Through them, He does His intercessory work on earth, and they become intercessors by reason of the Intercessor within them. It is a reality of the Savior's life that these are called.

Before He can lead a chosen vessel into the life of intercession, He must first deal with all that is natural and carnal. For example, love of money, personal ambition, natural affection for individuals, the appetites of the body, the love of life (all that makes man live unto himself for his own comfort, advantage, or advancement) all must go to the cross of Calvary. Only the Holy Ghost Himself can accomplish this crucifixion with Christ and make it experiential for the servant. As self is released into the hands of the blessed Spirit of Christ and crucifixion proceeds, intercession begins. All control of self and the lives of others must be extinguished through the Lord, who is interceding at the right hand of the Father, "releasing" His burden to us, the Spirit, then, begins to call us to outward obedience. As we obey and yield to the Spirit, He begins to live His own life of love and sacrifice and express the heart of the Father for a lost and dying world.

As you meditate upon Romans 8:26-39, and this becomes a reality, we can pray Romans 9:23: "For I could wish that I, myself, were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." This is the intercessor in action. When the Holy Ghost really lives His life in a chosen vessel, there are no limits to the extremes of death that He will proceed with this individual, until His ministry to warn, reconcile, and redeem the lost is accomplished.

As you study the early prophets, notice this principle: Isaiah had to walk barefoot and naked for three years; Jeremiah was not allowed to marry, Ezekiel was not allowed to shed a tear at the death of his wife, "the desire of his eyes" (Ezekiel 2:4); Hosea had to marry one who would become a harlot, live in vagrant sin, and then, be reconciled to God.

Stop now and meditate upon the making of a chosen vessel: (John 13:18; John 15:16-19; Jeremiah 17-18; Acts 1:2, 9:15, 10:41; I Corinthians 1:27-28; I Peter 2:4,9; and Revelation 17:14).

Authority

Not only is intercession identification and agony done through the Holy Spirit, but it is the gaining of results through the release of authority, resulting in abundant grace. In John 12:23-26, we find: *"And Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, Truly, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains by itself, alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If any one serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.'*" Intercession is operated in the law of the grain of wheat and harvest. By dying, harvest will occur. Intercession so identifies the intercessor with the agony of the sufferer that a prevailing place of authority with God is obtained. Authority is a release of power, producing justice. The intercessor can come into such a prevailing place before God that He moves His heart to change His mind. See Moses' reaction to God for the salvation and redemption of Israel in Exodus 32:11-18. Notice how Moses reminded God of His covenant with Abraham in verse 13, and then, verse 14 proclaims: "So, the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people." Once the price is paid, the obedience is fulfilled, the inner wrestling and groanings take their full course and the gained position of intercession occurs, "The Word of the Lord" for the situation comes. The chosen vessel, clothed with authority by the Holy Ghost, can speak this word of deliverance to the individual or the nation.

A new position of grace is gained and maintained and can be appropriated and applied from that time forth under direct guidance of the Spirit. "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father." John 14:12 "Greater works" are done.

When an intercessor has gained the place of intercession in a certain realm, he enters into the "grace of faith" which opens up an immeasurable sea of riches to him. This occurs in areas of government, healing, deliverance, etc. This is a major principle of providing for the restoration of the Church.

Let us now take time to analyze a prayer by the Apostle Paul for the Colossian church. Stop and read Colossians 2:1-15. See how identification, agony, and authority is applied through this prayer.

Paul begins to identify with the people of Colossae through verse 5. "For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit . . ." As he identified with them, he began to rejoice over "the stability of their faith." However, you could see that there was trouble in his spirit, and it concerned this group of believers. "For I want you to know how great a struggle (conflict) I have on your behalf . . ." "Conflict" is our word for agony. This is a prayer of agony. For this church, there was a grave danger of going off in one of two directions and of losing sight of the person of Christ. Lost vision and revelation of a church in a territorial area allows demonic worship to establish strongholds. Paul's authority to pray for them in their "conflict" came because he had overcome many of the same problems himself. He began to point them toward God and the deity of Jesus Christ. He revealed to them that true unity occurs when we are in harmony with God. We are never commanded to unify the church. He puts all believers into one body, and we are told to keep unity with the Spirit. Evidently, Paul saw individuals attempting to "beguile them with enticing words" (verse 4). Beguile means "to victimize." Enticing words means "a lot of oratory and sweet talk."

The Colossian Church had a reputation for steadfastness, and Paul wanted them to continue like that and not be led astray by legalistic oratory. Paul had laid aside all philosophy, vain deceit and tradition of men in his own life, and had established Jesus as head. He had the authority to point the Colossian Church in the same direction (verse 8-14).

From this, they would gain all authority to win victories over the principalities of the area
(verse 15).

Chapter Seven

Warfare in Intercession

A call to intercession is a call to war. *"For though we live in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare in the flesh and using mere human weapons. For the weapons of our warfare are not physical (weapons of flesh and blood), but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds. In as much as we refute agreements, theories, reasoning, and every proud and lofty thing that sets up against the true knowledge of God; and we lead every thought captive into the obedience of Christ, the Messiah and the Anointed One. Being in readiness to punish every insubordinate for his disobedience, when your own submitted obedience as a church are fully secured and complete (II Corinthians 10:3-5 - Amplified)."*

That which we are warring against attempts to steal what God has given to us from the foundation of the world. *"Put on God's whole armor -- the armor of a heavily armed soldier, which God supplies -- that you may be able to successfully stand up against all the strategies and deceits of the devil. For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood -- contending only with physical opponents -- but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly supernatural spheres. Therefore, put on God's whole armor that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day of danger, and having done all the crisis demands to stand firmly in your place (Ephesians 6:11-13 - Amplified)."*

A part of intercession is the continual conflict or agony as we have stated. That conflict is termed as warfare. Warfare is the "action of waging war; armed conflict; open armed conflict between nations or factions within nations; any active hostility or contention."

Again, we have been raised and seated with Jesus, making us an established nation above all nations. We communicate with our Father through prayer; He shares with us the intimacy of relationships and how we have the responsibility to administer justice within His universe.

We have discussed how intercession, the self-sacrificing love of our Lord Jesus Christ, establishes justice in an area. As Christians, we must see who our conflict is against and who is behind all the "agony" produced in this reconciliation to the Father.

It is evident from the gospel that the Son of God dealt with the powers of darkness as the active, primary cause of the sin and suffering of this world. An aggressive part of His and His disciple's ministries were directed against them (Luke 10:19). On the one hand, He dealt with the deceiver of the world and "bound the strongman (Mark 3:27)." On the other hand, He taught the truth about God to the people, to destroy the lies which the prince of darkness had placed in their minds about His Father and Himself (II Corinthians 4:4).

There is one Satan, one devil, one prince of demons, directing all opposition to Christ and His people. However, there are myriad of wicked spirits called demons (lying spirits, foul spirits, deceiving spirits, unclean spirits, etc.). These are wholly given up to every manner of wickedness, deception, and lying works.

The Lord did not attempt to convince the Pharisees of His claims as the Messiah, nor take the opportunity of winning the Jews by yielding to their desire as an earthly king. His goals on earth were to:

1. Conquer the Satanic prince of the world by death on the cross (Hebrews 2:14).
2. Deliver His captives from Satan's control and defeat the invisible hosts of the prince of darkness who are working at the back of mankind (I John 3:8).

John Dawson, in *Taking Our Cities For God*, lists several elements concerning Satan's kingdom. Begin by mediating on these two important passages:

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colosians 1:13)."

" . . . having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He as taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having

disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it (Colossians 2:14-15).”

1. We assume that Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to the devil (as church tradition has taught). He is called "Shining One" in that passage. From the Latin translation of that title, we get the name Lucifer.

2. God divided responsibility among several high-ranking angels. One of these angels was named Lucifer. He may have been an archangel, although Michael is the only one specifically called an archangel in the Bible (Jude 1:9).

3. Through rebellion, Lucifer fell from heaven, taking one-third of the angels with Him. Every free moral creature in the universe must, at one time, make a final decision, whether to give allegiance to God or to self. Lucifer chose self (Revelation 12:7-9).

4. Some of the fallen angels were cast down to hell and chained until judgment day while others were left free to oppose God and His kingdom (II Peter 2:4).

5. Lucifer became "the adversary," which is the meaning of the name Satan (the Hebrew word *ha' satan* means the adversary or enemy). He is the enemy of both God and man. Satan is filled with vindictive rage against the redeemed children of Adam, who will rule with Christ in glory.

6. Satan and his fallen angels were defeated at the cross and will finally be condemned (Colossians 2:15; Matthew 25:41).

7. Demons are the force operating behind false religions, idolatry, magic, and witchcraft (Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 96:5; I Corinthians 10:19-20; Revelation 9:20-21).

8. Satan and demons are in a state of continual war against the Church, and all believers are exhorted to combat all levels of evil spiritual forces in the unseen realm (Ephesians 6:10-15).

9. Demons are permitted by God to tempt and deceive in a limited way, but they cannot override the human will (I Corinthians 10:13; Job 1:12).

10. The devil is allowed limited control over natural phenomenon within the earth's atmosphere (Job 1:19).

11. Satan has two primary characteristics, which are also his weapons against humanity and the Church: he is an accuser and a deceiver (Revelation 12:7-10).

12. The Bible records characteristics of demonic oppression, such as mental anguish, physical sickness, masochism, nakedness and the inability to speak (Matthew 8:28-33; Mark 5:1-6; Luke 8:26-39; Matthew 9:32).

13. Satan has assigned certain demons to certain territories, nations, cities, and subcultures. These demons seek to pervert the people in their territory and to turn them against God. For example, Ezekiel 28:12 contains reference to the King of Tyre. In the context of the passage, it seems that the Spirit of God is not referring to an earthly ruler, but to a principality or power, such as those referred to in Ephesians 6:12.

14. Jesus demonstrated His power over demons and has passed this power onto His followers (Mark 16:17; Revelation 12:11).

Far more important than the study of angels and demons is the study of God Himself. Consider this passage from the book of Revelation 19:4-6. *"And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, who sat on the throne saying 'Amen!' 'Alleluia!' Then, a voice came from the throne saying, 'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!' And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying 'Alleluia!' For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"*

This is the sound of heaven exalting over the destruction of the works of Satan in the final judgment. I cannot wait! One thing is certain: to follow Jesus is to march toward a final and complete victory.

As we worship and commune with our Father, let's look at weapons that He has given us in our intercession.

PRAYER

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

- Ephesians 6:18
- Prophecy: I Timothy 1:18; 4:14
Ezra 5:1; Revelation 19:10
- Commanding the enemy: Luke 8:29
3:19;
- Submission/Authority: James 4:7
- A controlled mind: Isaiah 26:3
Philippians 4:7; Proverbs 23:7
25.
- Truth (at all costs): John 8:32
Solomon
- Fasting: Matthew 17:21
- Claiming territory: Joshua 1:3;
110
Jeremiah 5:1
- Tongues: Mark 16:17-18;
I Corinthians 14:14
- Esteeming the blood: Revelation 12:11
- Binding: Luke 8:30; Matthew 12:29
58:1
- Gifts Operating: I Corinthians 12-14
- Anointing objects for sanctification:
Exodus 31:25; 40:10; Acts 19:11
- II Chronicles 20
- Prophecy on instruments: II Kings 3:15
I Chronicles 25:3; Joel 3:1
- Handclapping: Psalms 47:1; Nahum
- Ezekiel 25:6; II Kings 11:12;
Lamentations 2:15
- Processionals: Joshua 6; Psalm 68:24-
25.
- Carrying banners: Psalm 20; Song of
2:4, 6:10; Psalm 60:4; Isaiah 13:2
- Laughter: I Kings 18:27; Psalm 2; Psalm
- Singing: Psalm 144:9; Isaiah 54:1;
Exodus 15; Revelation 15
- Dancing: Isaiah 13:8; 23:4; 26:18; 66:7-8
- Crying Aloud: Isaiah 12:6; 15:4; 26:17;
- Shouting: Jeremiah 51:14; Joshua 6:5;
- I Samuel 4:5

- Communion: I Corinthians 11
- Forgiveness: II Corinthians 2:10-12

The reason there is a war, and the reason we must battle is because Jesus is longing to manifest the glory of the Lord to us, and Hell is longing to keep us from receiving this glory. It is never too late for any territory or people group to turn (repent) and tear down through prayer the demonic structures that are holding back our Lord's glory or to touch His heart, so His love is poured out from heaven (Joel 2:28).

Satan cannot overcome the personal risen Jesus Christ. Yet if he is able to put Christ to shame through the corporate body, the conclusion will be made that the Head has been defeated. This is why there is such an attempt by the enemy to show Jesus powerless through his saints. This ploy focuses an attempt to capture the Church in many territories and keep her from becoming fruitful.

John 4:24 states: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth (reality)." Man was created in the image of God and given inherent power. In this creation, the only way for total fulfillment is through touching the Creator with your heart.

When we touch God and sense His heart and mind, we have touched reality. We then have been given the authority by God to establish that reality here on earth. Who will define this reality of spiritual warfare on earth? Will the prince of this world define reality, or will God, working in relationship with man through the Word of God define it? What would the Lord say concerning these evil forces? "EXPOSE THEM (Ephesians 5:11)!"

Breaking Oppressive Bands and Strategies of the Enemy

"Therefore He humbled their heart with labor . . . then, they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and broke their bands apart (Psalm 107:12-14)."

When Israel was in Babylon, their experience was like a man shut up in prison, wrapped in the darkness and gloom, unable to free himself. The reason they had been assigned to imprisonment is found in Psalm 107:11, "they had rebelled against the Word of the Lord." Captivity always occurs when we rebel against the Word that God has sent, for His Word is liberating and comes so the captive might be free (Isaiah 6; Luke 4). The leadership of entire nations can rebel against the Word of the Lord and produce captivity for the totality of the people group.

Through rejection and rebellion against the Word of the Lord, Satan, the oppressor, is allowed to develop strategies throughout a territory that hinders the presence of God from moving freely. Rebellion is always a result of idolatry and is "as the sin of witchcraft." Through stubborn hearts against the Word of the Lord, idolatry has an inroad to establish bands of wickedness individually, corporately and nationally (I Samuel 15:23).

That is what forms our gaps in communion and allows for oppression to have its way. To oppress means "to subjugate or persecute by unjust use of force; to weigh heavily upon so as to depress; something that produces difficulty, harshness or distressing time, physically or mentally." To depress means "to sadden; dispirit; to press or hold down; to lower to a lesser value."

Satan's ploy is to allow our obedience to be less than full, therefore, allowing him to strap us and hold us from our *heavenly seat*. These bands are similar to yokes that keep us from walking fully in the Spirit and riches of God. A yoke signifies work. Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, My burden is light." When we receive and yoke with the Word of God, our

"yoke becomes easy." When we reject His ways and words, bands that create hard labor are allowed to oppress and weigh us down.

We must meditate upon the Word of God (Joshua 1:8-9). It is through the Word of God that the Spirit of God comes in its fullness as the secret of our strength. All bands of wickedness must break when the Lord finds one who allows His strength to come in unthwarted power. These are the chosen ones of the Lord, who can stand in the gap to break the oppression that prevents justice from reigning in a land. In Isaiah 59:15, we find: "Now, the Lord saw, and it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice, and He saw that there was no man . . . to intercede."

Justice is "the quality of being righteous, the act of impartiality; fairness; the use of authority and power to uphold what is right, just, or lawful; the administration of law through reconciliation." God looks for men and women who will hold Him up as the standard for living and example of the Lord. Jesus, being the Word of God, becomes the standard, instead of our own ways and ideologies. A standard is "something established for use as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging capacity, quantity, content, extent, value, quality, etc.; something used by general agreement to determine whether or not a thing is as it should be; a level or grade of excellence or attainment regarded as a goal of adequacy (see Matthew 18:19)." When the people or leaders of a land practice idolatry and reject the standard that God has given (which is His Son), oppression occurs. Ezekiel 22:29-30 states: "The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice, And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap . . ."

"But they humbled themselves and cried to the Lord . . . and He broke their bands." When we come to the place of humility and crying before the Lord, He looses our captivity and breaks the yoke of the oppressor. "For Thou shalt break the yoke of their burden and the staff of their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian (Isaiah 9:4)."

There comes a time through travail and warfare against the foes of Hell that oppression will cease. In Isaiah 14:3-4 we find: "And it will be in the day when the Lord gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved, that you will take up this taunt against the King of Babylon and say `How the oppressor has ceased.'" Through prayer and our heeding of God's call of intercession, oppression breaks. As we prevail, the Word of the Lord is released and the yokes and bands in the heavenlies are broken apart. The heavens open and the glory of God descends (Isaiah 64:1; Psalm 78:21-23; Psalm 106:10, 44-48).

“So, it will be in that day that His burden will be removed from your shoulders and His yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be broken because of the anointing (Isaiah 10:27).” When the heavens open, the presence of God is released. The presence of God is that anointing that Hell cannot withstand.

Isaiah 58:6-9 says, " is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? . . . Then you will call, and I will answer."

"O Lord, surely, I am thy servant. I am Thy servant, the son of thy handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds (Psalm 116:16).”

"The cords of death encompassed me, and the torrents of ungodliness terrified me, the cords of *Sheol* surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears" (Psalm 18:4-6).

Chapter Eight

Fasting

Fasting is Necessary to Break the Bands of Weakness

"Now, in the church (assembly) at Antioch there were prophets, inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God, and teachers . . . while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said . . . (Acts 13:1-2)."

Throughout Scripture, fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. Fasting is not exclusively a Christian discipline. All religions in the world recognize its merit, both spiritually and physically. Fasting can be motivated for vanity's sake or the desire of power. Many use fasting in the form of hunger strikes for political reasons. However, biblical fasting always centers on spiritual purposes. This form of fasting and its relation to the voice of God is what I will address in this article.

In most cases, fasting is a private matter, never to be done for any public show. According to Jesus' instructions in Matthew 6:16, fasting should be done with joy. Jesus never said that fasting was a command, but taught how the discipline should be experienced. He also encouraged in this passage that fasting should never be done in an attempt to motivate or manipulate God into doing what we would like. If our fasting is not incorporated with worship in an attempt for an increase in the subduing of our flesh to become more obedient to the ways and character of God, we have failed in the call to fast. Even though Jesus taught much on the personal discipline, there were times throughout the Word where corporate fasts were encouraged. When this occurred, God displayed His power and glory, enemies were overcome, and directives were obtained (II Chronicles 20; Ezra 8).

The primary purpose of fasting is to reveal control and hindrances that keep us from receiving the glory of God in our lives. As we fast, we are to "break every yoke" of hindrance. I Corinthians 6:12-13 states: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are

profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. The body is for the Lord . . . and the Lord is for the Body."

I Corinthians 9:27: ". . . but I buffet my body and make it my slave; less possibly, after I have preached to others, I, myself, should be disqualified."

Psalm 35:13: "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer kept returning to my bosom."

Please turn now to Joel, Chapters 2 and 3. Read carefully how the people humbled themselves in prayer and fasting and God promised restoration and then, encouraged them toward a world harvest to come.

Once we have fasted and hindrances have been broken in our own lives, God may bring us into a fast to break control banks over other individuals, cities, and nations.

Types Of Fasts

Let us now review the types of fasts, their purpose, origin, and what each individual who fasted accomplished

A normal fast means abstaining from all food sources, except water. When Jesus went into the wilderness after His baptism, he set out on the fast that had been ordained for Him. His fast aided his intense communion with the Father during this wilderness experience. It was this fellowship with God and meditation upon His Word which enable Jesus to withstand the temptations of the devil.

A partial fast is a restriction of diet, but not total abstinence. Daniel fasted this way many times in Babylon, so the cultures of that nation would not infiltrate his body, pervert his relationship with the Lord, or distort the revelation that God would bring into his spirit. By fasting and denying himself, he was able to continually influence his people, influence the

government of Babylon, and receive the necessary revelation for latter days that has effect upon our lives today.

The absolute fast consists of no food or water. This fast should be dictated as a clear directive from the throne of God and should not exceed three days. Esther participated in a fast like this and a group of people (the Jews) were saved. Read Esther 4 on how the Lord changed circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Other examples in Scripture where individuals fasted, and the results of hindrances being broken are as follows:

- Acts 9:9 "and he was three days without sight, and neither ate or drank"
Occurrence: Involuntary fast inflicted on Paul from the Lord.
Result: Call and vision occurred which brought salvation to the Gentile nations.
- Deuteronomy 9:9 "When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets . . . I neither ate bread or drank water" (See Exodus 24-32).
Occurrence: God called Moses to establish covenant with His people.
Result: Received the pattern for the tabernacle and Levitical worship.
- I Kings 19:8 "So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God".
Occurrence: Jezebel's threat had caused Elijah to flee from his prophetic mission in Israel.
Result: Heard the voice of God and gained strategy on how to overcome the wicked rule of Ahab and Jezebel.
- Joel 2:15 -- "Blow a trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly . . ."
Occurrence: Israel in desolation as a nation.
Result: God promised restoration (Joel 2:18-32).

- Ezra 8:21-23 "Then, I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava . . ."

Occurrence: Ezra attempting to lead people from Babylon.

Result: Deliverance from the hand of the enemy and ambushes by the way.

Fasting in Modern Times

Why would our Lord be concerned that we fast in these modern times? Jesus said that His disciples had no need to fast while He was with them. However, there would come a time when the Bridegroom would be taken away from them. At that time, the necessity would arise for them to abstain (fast), so they might find direction. In this same context, Matthew 9:9-17, Jesus immediately begins to teach on new wineskins and their production. In these days, when a decline in the inward reality of Jesus Christ has occurred, we must fast regularly, until we hear in our spirits, "Behold the Bridegroom. Come out to meet Him (Matthew 25:6)."

In these days, when God is shifting His beloved Bride from one garment (wineskin) to another, which is radiant and spotless, we must fast during the weaving of this spiritual material. As we do, we may stand against the impurities and flawed thread that would keep this garment from being overcoming and spotless.

In these days, when the world and its ways, both materialistically and spiritually, has infiltrated the Church, we must fast to obtain purification and the "breaking forth" of His light and revelation.

In these days, when judging and criticism rule our thought patterns, keeping us entrapped in carnality, our minds must be renewed. Our spirits are cleansed of these strongholds, and our joy made full.

Please read Isaiah 58. The fast in which we participate should not be one where our religious nature is displayed. Instead, the fast God chooses for us will result in a manifestation of His presence. The bands that hold us yoked to worldly ways will be broken, oppression will flee, and break-through in the area we are interceding will occur.

As you worship before the Lord, may He choose the fast for you in order for personal, corporate, and national yokes to be broken Here are some suggestions for your fast.

Set your face to be victorious

Intercession and the overcoming of the demonic cannot be established and accomplished unless you set your heart to follow God until the burden that He has placed upon your spirit is released.

The demonic world of principalities, powers, and dominions know a man, woman, or group who have "set their face" to follow the Lord Jesus and participate in His communion, baptism, and power.

In Luke 9:51, we find: "And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem." Jesus had been sent from heaven to accomplish the mission of reconciling mankind to the Father. In Luke 12:50, Jesus said, "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division!"

Baptism always refers to separation, death, and new beginning. Jesus had "set his face" to redeem mankind from the powers that had separated them from the Father. On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus met many obstacles that would hinder Him from His destination, even His disciples were encouraging Him not to go. The obstacles were set to stop what He was going to accomplish; however, in "him was eternity" and love to obey the father.

The greatest hindrance to accomplishing massive, spiritual breakthroughs and obedience are the results of compromise. Once a heart is determined to be obedient, there is no room

for compromise. Compromise exposes you to danger, disrepute or suspicion (Exodus 23:20, 21; John 8:44).

Many times we refer to the Lord's prayer as the model prayer which was taught to the disciples in Matthew 6:8-13. Please pause to read, meditate, and dissect the principles that the Lord communicated in this prayer. However, notice another prayer in action for our redemption. Because Jesus was in such single, united purpose with the Father, He was able to win the gained place of intercession for us through His agonizing in Gethsemane. In Luke 22:41-46, notice our Lord's "set face" in praying: "And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, 'Father, if thou are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet, not my will but thine be done.'" Notice what the Father did in response immediately at the outset of the prayer " . . . an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening him." When the Father has set our course, and we respond with an obedient heart; no matter how difficult that course becomes, he will send the necessary help to strengthen us to complete the task of reconciliation that is needed.

"And being in agony, he was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down from the ground." As Jesus, in His intercession, identified with sinful man and the call and the commission of the Father to lay all of our sins upon the heart of the Son his agony was displayed in an unequalled way. However, because He had set His face to accomplish in Jerusalem the necessary task of obedience that would produce resurrection, He gained authority over all powers and principalities.

At this point, let us ask ourselves some serious questions:

- Am I expressing the determination Jesus expressed?
- Is the enmity God expressed between the devil and Jesus being displayed in me?
 - Am I seeking any détente, coexistence, or peace through compromise?
 - Am I available to my Lord as a willing instrument, ready for His use to

overcome principalities and powers that are affecting the redemption of mankind today?

- Have I now been made aware of the conflicts that are occurring and the identification, agony, and authority necessary to overcome these conflicts?

Chapter Nine

A Summary of Intercession Principles

1. Victory in intercession is based only on the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are then asked to take on that life in your body by His Spirit, fellowship with His death, and receive His resurrection power. Therefore, Christ Himself must be demonstrated through you (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:26-27; Philippians 3:10).

2. Over every territory, there are controlling demonic spirits. These spirits infiltrate individuals, enter into our churches, and keep the power of God from moving. When beginning to pray for a territory, ask the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit, to:

- Open your spiritual eyes that you may see these spirits.
 - Break any claim they might have over your personal life.
 - Give you power to release the presence of God in that territory.
- (Ephesians 6:10-18; II Timothy 2:1-5; I Timothy 6:12; Acts 9, 16)
-

3. Do not assume anything in intercession. Do not lean on your own understanding. Simply ask and obey. Remember, Jeremiah prophesied of the coming destruction of Jerusalem through the conquering nation of Babylon. Then, the Lord sovereignly located Daniel in Babylon to pray the situation through. Only do your part!!

4. Many times evil forces will bring such opposition and resistance to the will of God that only the Holy Spirit and His supernatural manifestations of faith will overcome (Daniel 10; Ephesians 6; Revelations 12:11).

5. Intercession is not substitution for sin. There has only been one substitute for a world of sinners: Jesus, the Son of God (John 15:13; I John 2:1-2).

6. In intercession, love is produced! Love breaks all barriers (Galatians 5:4-6)!

A Call to Harvest: A Commission to Pray:

With the Spirit crying in our hearts, "Abba, Father," the Lord is beginning to call His Bride in a new way, into a depth of intercession that we have never been called. From this, His inherent overcoming riches will be displayed in this world in a way never seen before.

Malachi 4:2 states, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." With the "day of the Lord" approaching in full climax, we should again be aware of how the Lord is calling His Bride.

The Day of the Lord is the moment when He grasps the reins of His Bride, individually and corporately. With this day approaching, God will reestablish apostolic and prophetic mantles throughout the Church "and He shall turn (and reconcile) the hearts of the estranged fathers to the ungodly children, and the hearts of the rebellious children to the piety of their fathers (a reconciliation produced by repentance of the ungodly); lest I come and smite the land with a curse (and a band of utter destruction -- Malachi 4:6)."

With "the Day of the Lord" approaching, God is calling His Church into a way of intercession where they have not been before (Daniel 11:32). With the *shophar* (trumpet) blowing, we see a call to intercession that prompts us to respond with prevailing prayer against the hordes of Hell. It is a call of repentance, so that restoration resulting in revival and visitation may occur. "And I will restore the years the locusts have eaten, the hopping locust, the stripping locust, and the crawling locust. My great army that I sent among you . . . And you shall know that I am in your midst and that I, the Lord, am your God, and there is no one else. My people shall never be put to shame. And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream." As the Lord has called this generation to war, He is telling us not to turn back in the day of battle (verse 9), but make our spirit steadfast and faithful. We, in leadership, must quit following

the ways of the world and begin to operate in the integrity and character of God, so that the world and every territory and nation might see His love, power, and glory.

Isaiah 4 proclaims: "In that day, the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and lovely to those who have escaped of Israel . . . after the Lord has washed away the moral filth of the daughters of Zion (pride, vanity, haughtiness) and shall have purged the blood stains of Jerusalem from the midst of it by the spirit and blast of judgment and by the spirit and blast of burning and sifting (Verse 2-4)."

The Spirit of God is calling a breed of men and women that will demonstrate the deeds of the Lord. No longer would He have a group held captive because of their lack of knowledge of His ways. "Therefore My people go into captivity to their enemies without knowing it and because they have no knowledge of God. And their honorable men - their glory - are famished, and their common people are parched with thirst (Isaiah 5:13)."

God always deals with His leadership first by purifying, empowering, and returning them to a higher level of integrity. Isaiah 4:5 says, "And the Lord will create over the whole site, over every dwelling place of Mount Zion and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be a canopy -- a defense of divine love and protection." This canopy of God's glory is forming again over His Bride through His men and women, praying for the restoration of the years the locust have eaten.

What does the Lord want His leaders to look like? What would He have them accomplish? To where is He pointing them?

There is a prayer in Psalm 90 that I have been praying to our Lord for his leadership: *"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should. Jehovah, come and bless us! How long will you delay? Turn away your anger from us. Satisfy us as in our earliest youth with your loving kindness, giving us constant joy to the end of our lives. Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good. Let us see your miracles again; let our children see glorious things, the kind you*

used to do, and let the Lord, our God, favor us and give us success. May He give permanence to all that we do."

We will only have revival if we pray. Revival means "those times of divine visitation where God stirs the Church, believers are set ablaze for Christ, and unbelievers are convicted by the Holy Spirit, and a wave of repentance occurs, creating a fresh inrush of divine life.

Look at the following characteristics of revival prayer, which result in a true movement of the Holy Spirit in Revival:

- God will not depend upon our human personality.
- God will not depend upon money, organization, and advertising.
- The movement will be entirely under the control of the Spirit, and God will know when human hands have touched the glory.
- The Lord Jesus Christ will be the center of attraction.

God is specifically extending a call to the Church of war and intercession over two specific areas:

1. The upcoming generation.
2. Developed leadership.

Psalm 78:1-8 says, *"Listen, O my people, to my instruction: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children. But, tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and his wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children; that the generation to come might know, and even the children yet to be born that they may arise and tell them to their children. They should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and*

rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its hearts, and whose spirit was not faithful to God."

For the present leadership and for those to come, God is longing for a group of men who can demonstrate His miracles again to an unbelieving world. A group of men and women that He can trust with His power. Those who will not abuse his gifts for their gain. "O, God, we have heard of the glorious miracles you did long ago. Our forefathers have told us how you drove the heathen nations from this land and gave it all to us . . . not by their own strength and skill, but by your mighty power and because you smiled on them and favored them."

God wants to speak to the world and say *"See my men of faith! See my women of faith!"*

As said of the Apostle Paul and Silas in Acts 17 while they were in Thessolonica, "they set the town in an uproar" because they preached and demonstrated the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. They even said, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also." God wants men and women that can turn cities and nations upside down. That is His requirement for the leadership that He is setting apart (Psalm 4:3). These individuals will carry the very example of Jesus in their body, demonstrating His death and the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10).

There is a door of opportunity that is directed toward world harvest that the Lord is holding open for those who will enter in. Never has the harvest been so ripe and never has there been so many demonic forces standing against our Lord's leadership in the Church as we attempt to move forward now to reap. "Do you not say it is still four months until harvest come? Look! I tell you, raise your eyes and observe the fields and see how they already white for harvesting. Already, the reaper is getting his wages - he who does the cutting now has his reward - for he is gathering fruit (crop) unto life eternal . . . (John 4:34-36)."

"Again, I looked and lo, I saw a white cloud, and sitting on the white cloud, one resembling a Son of man, with a crown of gold on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand.

And another angel came out of the temple sanctuary, calling with a mighty voice to Him Who was sitting upon the cloud, 'Put in Your scythe and reap, for the hour has arrived to gather the harvest, for the earth's crop is fully ripened (Revelation 14:14-20).'"

God is preparing His body to reap. "Put in the sickle for the vintage harvest is ripe; come, get down and tread the grapes, for the wine press is full, vats overflow; for the wickedness of the people is great, Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For their day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:13-14). Joel 3 is a picture of the latter day Church which is to move us a step closer and bring to completion what began in Acts 2.

God is raising leadership to accomplish His vision. "For the Lord had looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God (Psalm 14:2)."

He is saying to the Church: "Arise and thresh. Arise from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you; rise to a new life! Shine -- be radiant with the glory of the Lord; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you" (Isaiah 60:1-Amp.).

Just as prayer and intercession have been the most important key in every historical visitation from the Almighty God, it will be the key for God's people as He prepares to meet them again. He has revealed His intention to build a house (II Samuel 7:27). Therefore, we need to set ourselves to seek the Lord; God's house is to be a House of Prayer (Luke 19:46). As the people of God, we need "to give God no rest until He established a Zion as a praise in the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7)."

Continue to pray and intercede that the Church may be found faithful in its ordained place in God's great world harvest!

Prayer and Intercession Final Exam

1. What kind of heart does God need to find so that he can impart His riches and the depths of His love?

2. When the Spirit of God opens the truth of God to us, what is that called?

3. List four of the five conditions for communion given in this course.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

4. What is the definition of prayer?

5. List two of the four reasons our prayers may not penetrate to God.

a. _____

b. _____

6. What can we do to release faith and confidence to ask?

7. List four of the six benefits of consistent prayer.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

8. Define Intercession.

9. What three things are common in intercession that are not normally found in ordinary prayer?

10. List the three kinds of fasts described in this course.

International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry

Prayer and Intercession

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