

# **The Faith that Prays**

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# **God Says Prayer is Essential**

## **Chapter 1**

The spiritual life of the church and the kingdom of God can only be advanced through prayer and the ministry of the word. Not only do the people need to understand God's ways, it will be necessary to put the power of the Spirit to work through prayer. Not programs, but the Spirit's power is needed to lead people into the Lord's Kingdom-life.

In the early church we find the apostles calling the disciples together, and telling them to look for seven men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" to help coordinate the activities of the church. (Acts 6:3) While these newly appointed deacons were helping to meet the needs of the people, the apostles devoted themselves to another work: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (v. 4)

It is very easy for the spiritual leaders to become caught up in the "busyness" of doing routine things. While these things that take our time and attention on the natural plane of life are not sinful in themselves, they can take possession of our lives and separate us from the life and power of God. When we look at these things from our current temporal perspective, they often appear to be very important. But when looked at from an eternal perspective they are really nothing. Only what we permit the Spirit to do through us for the advancement of the eternal kingdom of God will pass through the testing fires of judgment.

The apostles were able to see how selfishness was beginning to creep into the church. The people were not showing the same divine love as in the beginning. Something was separating them from the life and power of God's Spirit. These duties were interfering with prayer and the ministry of the word. The furthering of God's kingdom of holy love would be dependent upon these leaders boldly speaking the truth and *giving themselves to prayer*. And what was the result of entering into this deeper dependence on prayer? "The word of God spread" and "the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly." (v. 7)

Church activities may absorb our time so much that it hinders our prayer-life. Whenever this occurs, worldliness and self-centeredness will begin to permeate the church. It is better to let other work go by default than to let the praying go by neglect. "Too busy to pray" leads to spiritual defeat and begins to mar all the good works that has taken place in the past. God's Kingdom-life of heavenly love will not advance until prayer is given first priority.

Any work that does not include persevering prayer will remain powerless. The capacity to live "right" has its source in God's Spirit—not in human works. And the life-changing power of the Spirit can only be put to work through prayer.

It has been said that God gave John Wesley so much work to do that he needed to spend several hours a day in prayer in order to insure the work could be completed. Obviously, this kind of spiritual wisdom, where the most important time is set aside for prayer, will not make sense to those who are still living on the natural plane of life.

The church is effectively disarmed when people attempt to do God's work through human effort and human wisdom.

This is what Jesus was guarding against when He told His disciples to wait in prayer until they were clothed with power from on high. These men could have developed benevolent social organizations without the power of the Holy Spirit. But human organizations cannot make people partakers with God in His life of holy love.

Without putting all the blame on the ministry of this generation, we believe it is time to declare to all the members of Christ's body that an effective ministry of the Word is dependent on effective praying. God will mightily use the servant who truly surrenders himself to a life of prayer. The Holy Spirit delights to openly honor those who spend much time with the Father in secret. "And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." (Matt. 6:6)

Persevering prayer always wins the favor of God. He yields to persistence and fidelity. He does not say No to anyone who prays as Moses did. God's wrath against Israel was held back by the praying of this one man. It is but an illustration of how much value the world can gain when God finds a few believers who are willing to give themselves to a life of persevering prayer.

We must press this scriptural view of the necessity of prayer, even at the cost of annoying repetition. The subject is too important for repetition to weaken or tire, too vital to be trite. We must feel the need anew. The fires of prayer have burned low. Ashes, not flames, are now at the altar.

Has the spirit of devotion enabled you to pray always and everywhere? That is the personal, pertinent, and all-important question for every soul. Do not rebel against this essential part of the true Christian life. Be filled with the Spirit

and begin to ceaselessly pray in harmony with the life of Jesus Christ so you too may do the greater works!

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

# The Only Teacher

## Chapter 2

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1)

Everyone who has truly set out to follow Jesus will sense the need to say with the first disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray.” As we grow in the Christian faith, there is an increasing desire to become more like our Lord. The Holy Spirit is the One who is leading us to become like Him. This increasing light will impress upon our heart the necessity of being able to help others through our prayers. As our Lord now lives to be an intercessor in prayer, we will want to know how to become like Him and do the same kind of work.

The powers of the eternal world have been placed at the disposal of Christ’s praying disciples. One of the objectives of the Christian faith is to learn how to put this power to work so we may be effective in spreading the kingdom of light in a world lost in darkness.

How quickly we are deceived into resting in a mere form of prayer, performing it as a duty, while the power is still missing! There is a tendency to give way to human wisdom and strength. It results in a kind of prayer that has no spiritual power. Consequently, little is achieved in advancing the true kingdom of God.

Jesus has opened a special school to teach His disciples how to pray. But we must agree to enroll. Enter it with the petition, “Lord! This is just what we need to learn! O teach us

to pray! We have heard the promises given to Your first disciples. We know there is power in prayer when it is through Your Name. We have seen how you were able to powerfully work through the members of the early church as they responded to these truths. We need to learn the same lessons so your power may also be put to work through our prayers!”

It is true that God’s Word, with its sure promises, can be read by everyone. But the fallen nature has so darkened our mind that we do not always grasp with our thoughts what is being taught. Even when we know what to ask for, we still do not know how to meet the requisite conditions to make our prayers acceptable to God. The Spirit will need to help us see how true prayer must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will, in full assurance of faith and in the Name of Jesus. We will then need to develop a persevering faith that refuses to be denied.

Each of these lessons must be learned before we can have an effective prayer-life. Let us enter into this discipleship training with the kind of yielded and teachable heart that will trust in the ability of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. (John 16:13) “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally... But let him ask in faith, with no doubting.” (Jam. 1:5-6)

God can speak to our hearts through a work of His Spirit. And He will teach us everything we need to know to make our prayers effective. We can also expect Him to reveal the things that have hindered our prayers. He will help us see where there needs to be an ever-deeper surrender to His ways. Through this process, as we learn to walk by His Spirit, He promises to enable us to obtain everything we ask in His Name.



## **Alone With God**

### **Chapter 3**

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

Jesus provided His first public teaching to His gathered disciples in what is now called His Sermon on the Mount. There He explained to His followers about the Kingdom of God—its laws and its way of life.

In God's kingdom we find that He is not only the divine Ruler, but He is also our Father. Jesus is trying to help us see the necessity of living as dependent little children—children who instinctively know that their parents are the source of everything they need. If we will depend on our heavenly Father in this same way, where we recognize the necessity of receiving everything from Him, we will gain access to the infinite resources of the kingdom of heaven. Let us keep in mind, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." (John 3:27) Through our communion with our heavenly Father, we will learn how He wants to be the source of everything we are and do. We will begin to see Him as the source of everything we need.

The Lord began by teaching His disciples to find a secret place for prayer. Every disciple needs to have some solitary spot where he can be alone with God. That spot can be anywhere. It can even change from day to day. But this

secret place must be a quiet place. The pupil needs a place where he can quiet himself and listen for the still small voice of the Spirit. It is then that he will begin to come into a closer relationship with the Father.

In His first words about prayer, we find Jesus using the name “Father” three times: “Pray to the Father”; “Your Father will reward you”; “Your Father knows the things you have need of.” The first thing we do in secret-prayer is to meet with our loving Father. Each thought or petition needs to come from a simple, childlike trust in Him.

“Pray to your Father who is in the secret place.” We must meet with God. We need to come into open fellowship with Him. But God must hide Himself to the carnal man. Those who want to pray so that others will hear them and think highly of what they are doing are living too much in the flesh to truly meet with God. Jesus said that this is what the self-exalting Pharisees did. God will not permit this flesh-life to come into His presence. As long as our worship continues to rise out of a self-centered or self-exalting nature, we will be prevented from entering into God’s presence. But to the man who is willing to become nothing in himself so that God may be his “All in All,” and then waits for Him in secret, the Father will reveal Himself.

“And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Here Jesus assures us that true prayer will inevitably be fruitful. The blessings we gain from our secret prayers will become evident in our lives. When we have truly begun to live through the Spirit, others will plainly see how God is an intimate part of our life. They will begin to see how God honors those who truly walk in the light. “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:21) Although the prayer is in secret, He will “reward you openly.”

Jesus also said, "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." At first sight it might appear as if it is not necessary to pray. Yes, God knows what we need far better than we do. But He still wants us to come before Him in dependent faith to express our need. But that does not mean we have complete freedom to have whatever we want. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) We are to surrender ourselves to a Spirit-directed way of life so we may share with God in His desires and seek the fulfillment of His will in our lives.

Once we are living by the Spirit and can hear our Lord's voice, we can then begin to ask according to His will. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice..." (John 10:27) As our Shepherd, He knows what we really need. And as we begin to see how He is leading us, we will know what we need to seek through our prayers. We will then have the wonderful confidence to say, "My Father knows this is something that is needed." If there is any delay in the answer, we will learn to hold on in quiet perseverance. He always answers the prayers of His children when they are being led by the Spirit. "And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

To be alone in secret with the Father should become one of the highest joys for a Christian. This promise of the Father to openly reward your secret prayers should be both your motivation to pray and an inspiration to place all your hope in Him. He wants you to look to Him to be the source of everything you need. "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19) Continue to come to His throne of grace. That is your true source of hope. There is not one mountain too large for Him to move out of the way when you live by faith in Him.

Your Father knows the plans He has for you. He wants you to enter into these plans and begin looking to Him in faith to be the source of the power that actually carries out the work. Then you will learn to come to Him in prayer. This is what enables Him to reveal to the world how He works through His children of light.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” (Jer. 29:11-12 NIV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

## The Certain Answer to Prayer

### Chapter 4

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matt. 7:7-8)

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss. (Jam. 4:3)

Observe how Jesus uses words that mean almost the same thing. Notice also how He repeats the promise each time so distinctly: “It will be given to you,” “you will find,” and “it will be opened to you.” We can see through this emphatic repetition how He wants to impress this one great truth deeply on our minds: We can know that we will receive answers to our prayers when we ask correctly and *persistently* in dependent faith.

The fact that Jesus considered it necessary to repeat the truth in so many forms is a lesson of deep importance. He knows our hearts. He is fully aware of our natural doubt and distrust. Even when we obediently respond to His command to pray, He knows how easily we give up without a real expectation of receiving definite answers.

Christ had good reason for speaking so unconditionally. Be careful not to weaken His Word with your human wisdom. Believe what He says even when He speaks to you about heavenly truths that are hard to understand. The little child does not need to understand the reasoning behind the words of his parents, he only needs to believe. Your responsibility

is to trust in your heavenly Father and believe He will keep His word.

If we do not receive an immediate response, we are not to give up in resignation without further thought. There may be something preventing Him from responding. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss.” (Jam. 4:3)

There is a need to seek out His guidance so we may pray in His will. We must learn to pray in harmony with the Son’s Spirit before we can know the answer will always come. It is far easier to give up without an answer than to permit our heart to be searched and purified by the Spirit. We must permit Him to remove the selfish desires from our heart. Some of these things are often hidden. And so we need to permit the Spirit to shine His light into our heart as we search for these hindrances. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

Yes, there will be personal needs to bring before our Father in prayer. And we are expected to ask Him to supply our needs. But we must make sure that everything we are doing is for God’s glory. “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31) Only as we are truly living for His honor and glory can we expect to be in a place where He will supply our needs through our prayers. “But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things {the necessities of life} shall be added to you.” (Luke 12:31)

The Father is looking for children who will live in a proper relationship with Him so He may respond to their petitions. He wants a large family of children who will live through His Son and be a means for Him to be glorified by what they do in His name. In effect, the Father intends to display His life

and works through Christ's body in this world today in the same way He displayed His life and works through the Son's mortal body. We therefore find Jesus saying, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13) "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (John 14:20) We come to realize that everything originates in the Father and comes to us through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus wants to bring His disciples—the members of His body—to the place where we can say with Him, "I do nothing of Myself... The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." (John 8:28-29) Jesus continued to explain how the Father was living through Him and doing the works. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father...the Father who dwells in Me does the works." (John 14:9-10)

The Father was glorified through the Son because the Father in heaven was the true source of everything the Son was doing. Similarly, if we will learn to walk by the Spirit and permit Him to direct our steps through life, we will learn what the Father has planned to do through our lives. We can then begin to pray in harmony with the Son and expect the Father to manifest His glory through us in the same way His glory was revealed through Jesus. "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

There may be times when a prayer cannot be answered because it is not in harmony with God's will. For example, Paul asked three times to have the thorn removed from him. (2 Cor. 12:7-9) Although the request was denied, he did receive an answer. God did not leave His servant in

uncertainty as to His will. The gods of the heathen world are dumb and cannot speak. In contrast, our loving Father lets His children know when His will differs from their requests.

The yielded child withdraws his petition as the Son did in Gethsemane. Both Paul the servant and Christ the Son were informed by the Spirit that their requests were not in accordance with the Father's will. However, if the burden of our prayer is known to be in harmony with the will of God, we need to be prepared to keep asking, seeking and knocking until the answer is received.

God will reveal His will by His Word and by His Spirit and by His providence when we have honestly looked to Him for help. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (Jam. 1:5) And we can expect Him to respond to our requests when we continually come to Him in faith with a yielded spirit. "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting... (Jam. 1:6)

We will need to learn to patiently wait on God. Our faith must have time to develop. God also needs time to prepare our hearts to receive the blessing. If we will continually adjust our steps according to His will, responding to the movements of His Spirit in faith, our persevering prayer will be answered.

Although certain prayers may be extended over days or weeks or even months, we should never put the prayer away until the answer comes, one way or the other. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who {persistently} knocks it will be opened."

How deeply our hearts must be estranged from God that we should find it so difficult to accept such promises as



being true! Let us not be content until the petitions we offer are carried to heaven on Jesus' own words: "Ask, and it shall be given you."

Learn this lesson well! Take Jesus at His word. *Here is where faith must begin its work.* Do not let your human reasonings weaken the force of God's Word. Believe it just as Jesus spoke the truth. Faith in God grows as we fully yield to increasing light. And as faith grows, it will become much easier to understand the deeper meaning of these lessons. Let us now simply believe what He has stated.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of surrendering to God's Word. If our faith proves to be true at this point, He will lead us into a prayer-life that will truly reflect His power and glory. "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (1 John 3:22)

# The Infinite Fatherliness of God

## Chapter 5

Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil {because your heart is naturally self-centered and self-seeking}, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven {with His nature of self-sacrificing love} give good things to those who ask Him! (Matt. 7:9-11)

Although this parable is simple and easy to understand, it contains a deep spiritual lesson that is often overlooked. The influence of the child's prayer is directly connected to his relationship with his parent. The child must be living as an obedient member of the family if he wants to exert real influence. The fulfillment of the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you," is dependent upon living in a submissive relationship with our Father.

True love for God is always expressed through obedience. (John 14:21) Jesus said, "The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." (John 8:29) He set this example to show His disciples how the children of God are expected to live. The child who forsakes his Father's house, finding no pleasure in obeying his Father, and then expects God to answer his prayers, will be greatly disappointed. God must hide His face from those who are resisting His light of truth.

Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. (Isa. 59:2)

The childlike privilege of having every prayer answered is directly linked to the necessity of living as a child under the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is what actually qualifies us as a true child of God. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14, emphasis added) Those who will repent and turn away from their old self-directed way of life so they may be led by the Spirit of God, will come into an intimate relationship with their heavenly Father. As they choose to walk by the Spirit, they will begin to hear from Him and learn of the divine will for their life. This enables them to walk with God, to pray in harmony with His Spirit and receive answers to their requests. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:25)

Those who will choose to walk in the Spirit as Jesus did can expect to learn of the Father’s will. And each submissive child will discover that Father-like giving is the Divine response to Son-like living. As we walk in the Spirit we can depend on Him to work out all things for our good.

As the child recognizes his own weaknesses, he will learn to depend more and more on his Father. In this dependent faith, where we are fully surrendered to God’s will, an abiding relationship develops. And as we continue to live in harmony with the purposes of our Father, the Son is able to manifest Himself through us. We then find that our weakness does not matter because we are not expected to do anything on our own. Our choice to permit the Son to manifest His life through us makes it possible to bear His divine fruit. He

comes to us “according to the power of an endless life.”  
(Heb. 7:16)

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (John 15:5, 7-8)

The Father requires His children to submit to His will and to live by dependent faith in Him. He must have the child's whole heart. The child who tries to live independent of the Father until he wants something, will be disappointed. But whoever permits God to always be the Father in everything, living by dependent faith in His love, will discover that such a life in God's infinite Fatherliness will result in continual answers to prayer. “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matt. 6:6)

## THE BOLDNESS OF GOD'S FRIENDS

### Chapter 6

Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him"; and he will answer from within and say, "Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you"? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. (Luke 11:5-8)

Let us confine ourselves to this chief thought: Prayer is an appeal to the friendship of God. The parable reveals a special quality that God looks for in His friends. If we are to have a right relationship with Him *we must live for the good of others*. The Son's self-sacrificing nature of love will need to become an innate part of our life. We must be prepared to lay down our lives in order to help people in need. (1 John 3:16) We can begin using the utmost liberty by insisting on answers to our requests once we have begun to sacrifice our time and resources in living to further God's kingdom.

There is a twofold use of prayer. The first is to obtain strength and blessing in our own lives. God needs to first bless us so that we may be a blessing to others and effectively serve in His kingdom. The Lord said to Abraham, "I will bless you...and you shall be a blessing." (Gen. 12:2) Abraham is referred to as the father of this way of faith. As he surrendered to the leading of God's Spirit he could be blessed by God and become a blessing to others.

The Scriptures reveal how it was in their intercession for others that Abraham and Moses, Samuel and Elijah, and all the holy men of long ago proved how God honors His children of faith by working through them with His power. It was through prayer that they prevailed over the foes of God's people and made His glory known.

Christ is seeking to lead each of His disciples into this same intercessory work. This work of seeking help for others through prayer becomes a mark of God's spiritual children. Prayer becomes the royal power that a child of God exercises on behalf of others as he serves as a priest in the Lord's kingdom.

Once we have died to self and have begun to live as a means for God to bless others, our spiritual life will continue to abound. For example, the Scripture says, "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." (Job 42:10) In this age when God is now rewarding His children with spiritual blessings from heaven we find that His spiritual life continues to flow into our soul with ever-increasing measure as we learn to pray for others in the Spirit.

This "friendship" with God requires a strict obedience to His ways. He says, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (John 15:14) Here is one of the keys to being in a position to receive answers to our prayers.

If we have been resisting His will and His purposes for our life in any manner, we cannot comfortably come before Him as a friend and ask for help. This was a prerequisite for Abraham to receive God's promises. "Do you see that faith

was working together with works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God...and he was called the friend of God.' (Jam. 2:22-23) We will become one of God's intimate friends when we have enough faith to fully submit to His ways and then seek out the fulfillment of His promises through prayer.

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (Heb. 6:10-16)

It is through our persevering prayer for others that our friendship with God is tested. God will be examining our lives to see if we have a real concern for the needy people around us. He will be looking to see if we are willing to sacrifice our own rest, and even pray past midnight, to obtain what they need.

What a heavenly mystery persevering prayer is! The God who has promised and who longs to give the blessing holds it back to cause us to learn to patiently wait on Him. As we wait for answers to our prayers, and the promises seem fruitless, the trial of faith, more precious than gold, takes place. It is through this trial, where faith continues to hold on

to God's promises, that our own prayer-life is purified and strengthened.

Let us thank Him that in developing our patience, He is also drawing us into a position of childlike dependence and humility. Because it is in this position of weakness in self and trust in Him that we will perfect His power through our lives. "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (Jam. 1:4) We will become all that God intends for us to be, and find that we lack nothing, when we are truly living by a pure faith that can patiently depend on Him for everything.

When we recognize how weak we are in this matter of doing the work of God and furthering His heavenly Kingdom-life here on earth, we will be in a condition to enter into a faith that is more reliant upon His power. This place of weakness in self and of dependent faith in God is what enables us to share with Christ in the power of His throne. (2 Cor. 12:9)

God is always training His disciples to live with Him in the fellowship of undoubting faith and trust, to indeed be obedient friends. We therefore need to keep our hearts on the hope that has been set before us as we pass through His testing fires. Our faith and love will be made full as our dependent faith is perfected. Then we will be enabled to receive whatever we ask in Jesus' Name.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses {the children of faith}, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking



unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...  
(Heb. 12:1-2)

## **Prayer Will Provide Help**

### Chapter 7

Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matt. 9:37-38)

Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, Christ wants His disciples to understand that prayer is not to be selfish. Christians are to display the light from Christ’s life of holy love by living for the good of others. He blesses our soul with His spiritual life from heaven so that we may be a source of blessing to others. “I will bless you...and you shall be a blessing.” (Gen. 12:2)

Why does the Lord ask His disciples to pray for more workers? Is He not able to pray Himself? Would not one of His prayers achieve more than a thousand of ours? Is God, the Lord of the harvest, not aware of the need? And would He not, in His own good time, send laborers even if His disciples did not pray? Such questions as these lead us into the deepest mysteries of prayer. The answer to these questions will convince us that prayer is indeed needed. This is His appointed means for moving His mighty hand.

God raised up men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Elijah, separating them to Himself, so He could give them authority to call the powers of heaven to their aid in helping others in need. Jesus, as He used this same power through prayer, realized that this power would only work through individuals for a limited time while they remained in this world. After His departure, there would be a

continual need for new members of His body representing God in this world by living to bring blessings to others through their prayers. There would therefore always need to be more workers.

The disciples of Christ must understand that God has purposely chosen to work through His children in this world. Although the actual dominion would remain at the throne of power in the heavenly realms, each Spirit-led child would be given dominion over an appointed sphere of labor where they would carry out God's work through their prayers.

This responsibility to pray for additional helpers in the glorious work of furthering God's eternal kingdom would not be merely for show. The success of their work in advancing the kingdom of light throughout the world would actually depend on their faithfulness in prayer.

How few Christians really sense the deep need for more "Spirit-filled" laborers who can call down the powers of heaven to advance the true kingdom of God! How little they believe that our labor supply depends on our persistent prayers; and that prayer will actually provide "as many as he needs."

Here is a great truth. The Lord has surrendered His work to His church. Even though He is the Head, the actual work must be carried out by His body. Let us learn this lesson well. If the body lacks members who are filled with Christ's Spirit and praying in His Name, the work of furthering His Kingdom-life here on earth will be greatly hindered.

# **The Secret of Believing Prayer**

## **Chapter 8**

Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. (Mark 11:22-23)

Before Jesus made this wonderful promise to His disciples, He specifically explained where their faith was to be placed. “Have faith in God.” Even our best friends cannot always fulfill what they have promised to do. They are limited in their capacity. But not so with God! Not only is He faithful, He has the capacity to do everything He has promised.

The assurance of receiving what we have sought through faith is only as good as the promiser. “Have faith in God.” When our faith is in God we can have the assurance that He will fulfill our requests. “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:24)

If we question the faithfulness of someone who has made a promise, or if we doubt in his power or his ability to do what he has said, then doubt will prevail. Jesus wanted to make sure that our faith was in the one God who is both perfect in faithfulness and omnipotent in power. Our Lord did not want to leave any room for doubt or unbelief.

God has established a spiritual law that will give His children the right to put the power of His Spirit to work. We

refer to it as the work of faith. “According to your faith will it be done to you.” (Matt. 9:29) As long as the covenant conditions are met, the absolute faithfulness of God requires Him to do what He has stated.

We can expect God to test our faith in Him. He tests our faith by how we respond to the light of His revealed will. For example, God tested Abraham to see if he was fully surrendered to the divine will, even to the point of sacrificing his dearly loved son, before He gave Abraham the capacity to be a real blessing to others. He said, “Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you... In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Gen. 22:16-18)

Our faith in God is shown to be genuine as we surrender to all revealed light. Because many of God’s children do not understand this direct link between walking in the light and the *prayer of faith*, their experience with the power of prayer is very limited. They have been tested by God and found wanting.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) Here is the key to living as God’s children and being in a place where our prayers can be answered. Once we have fully consecrated both ourselves and our possessions to Him, we can begin walking with God in open fellowship. It brings us into the place where we can share with Him in His life and His will. It is in this place of walking in His Spirit that we can hear from Him and also rely on Him to work out all things for our eternal good and His glory. The prayer of faith then becomes a natural part of our Christian walk. We live as a seed of Abraham’s faith where we become a source of blessing to others.

For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them;* and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing {anything that is not fully devoted to the Lord}; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Having therefore these promises {where our prayer-answering God will manifest His life and works through us}, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor 6:16-7:1 KJV)

Let us become like Abraham and live as children of faith. God intends to lead each one of us into His life of promise so that we too may become a means for Him to bless others. There is much work that needs to be done for the kingdom of God. Today is the day to enter into this full salvation where we manifest His life of holy love and carry out these glorious works of His kingdom through our prayers of faith.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:12-14)

# Prayer and Fasting

## Chapter 9

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out." So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Matt. 17:19-21)

When the disciples observed how Jesus received power to cast the evil spirit out of the epileptic whom "they could not cure," they asked their Master why they had failed. They had previously received "power and authority over all devils, and to cure all diseases." They had already exercised this divine power through the Spirit. But at this point, when Jesus was away from them on the Mount, they had utterly failed.

The Son proved there was nothing in the will of God or in the nature of the case to prevent the miracle from occurring. And from their question, Why could we not?, they had apparently tried hard to cast the spirit out. But everything they did was in vain.

Christ's answer was direct and plain: "Because of your unbelief." Christ's success was not the result of having access to a power not available to His disciples. Everything He did had its source in the Father and was worked out through dependent faith. He had already been teaching them about this spiritual law, or this principle of faith. But something was missing in their application.

The one great power to which everything must bow is the divine power of the Holy Spirit being put to work through faith. Once man's will is fully yielded to and has become molded by God's will, his faith in God can begin unlocking the infinite power of the Spirit. And nothing is impossible with God.

The power received by the disciples to cast out evil spirits did not belong to them as a permanent gift or possession. The power always remains with the Spirit of God. Faith begins by permitting the Spirit to have full possession of us. The Spirit can only work powerfully through our lives when He is in full control of everything we are doing. This relationship with God, which is an intricate part of living by faith, needs to be understood. God will only work through our prayers as we are walking in and by His Spirit.

Even though faith is a simple exercise in the spiritual life, it is also the highest. Our spirit must yield itself in perfect receptivity to God's Spirit and become strengthened for this activity. If there is a separation from Him in any matter, our faith will be weakened.

Here is the secret to having power with God. His power works through those who are actually living in fellowship with Him. They receive their spiritual life directly from Him. This brings us to the real meaning of prayer and fasting. The power of God's Spirit can freely work through these souls because they have stopped looking to the world and its things for their spiritual sustenance. Having separated from the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of the world, God is able to "dwell in" and "walk in" them. (2 Cor. 6:16-17)

Do not love the world or the things in the world.  
If anyone loves the world {tries to find their



spiritual life from the world}, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides {in His eternal life} forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

Fasting involves a withdrawal from everything that tends to give strength to the flesh and prevents us from being moved by every leading of the Spirit. There are temporal things that tend to give strength to the old flesh-life. In prayer and fasting the Spirit is given an opportunity to regain complete control over everything we do. And as the Spirit gains control over our every action, we gain access to His spiritual power.

Fasting is not limited to separating ourselves from food. God expects us to stop feeding ourselves spiritually on the temporal things of this world. “Do not love the world or the things in the world.” (1 John 2:15) God requires us to sustain ourselves spiritually on the food that comes down from heaven. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst... This is the bread which came down from heaven... He who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:35, 58) Those who still find themselves hungering and thirsting for temporal things, and looking to these things to sustain themselves spiritually, can know they are not yet eating of the heavenly food that comes down from above. As Jesus has clearly stated, we “never” hunger for the things of

this world when we are truly sharing with Him in the fullness of His life. (See also John 4:14)

Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live {in the everlasting life} (Isa. 55:2-3)

Prayer is “the hand” by which we grasp the invisible. Fasting, on the other hand, is the means we use to separate from the temporal food of this world. Those who will separate their hearts from this world have access to every spiritual blessing residing in Christ’s life within the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3) That is where our heart needs to be. We are to begin living with Him and walking with Him. (2 Cor. 6:17) This is the inheritance that our heavenly Father is now ready to begin sharing with His obedient children so we may be partakers with the Son in the power of His throne.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Our enjoyment of food holds us to the visible world as much as anything else. The first thought suggested by Jesus’ words in regard to fasting and prayer is that only in a life of self-denial will there be sufficient heart and strength to pray as God requires. Those who are still being led by the desires of the flesh will lack persevering faith. They will keep running off to please their latest fleshly desire.

Everything we do must be under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the one means for entering into a prayer-life that is clearly connected with the power of God.

There will be times when it is strongly felt that the appetites of the body are keeping the flesh-life strong and active. We will sense that these lusts of the flesh are hindering the growth of our spiritual life. We sense the necessity of keeping even our natural desires subdued. The Spirit is telling us to enter into a period of fasting. This form of fasting will often entail separating ourselves for a time, or even permanently, from things that are perfectly innocent.

Christians generally assume that if God has not forbidden something as sinful, it is permissible for them. So they try to retain as much of this world as possible. They find their enjoyments in their possessions and their activities. The consecrated soul, however, is like a soldier. After joining the Lord's army he carries only what is necessary in serving the kingdom of God. This was Paul's instruction to Timothy: "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer." (2 Tim. 2:3-4)

Because the real child of faith has freed himself from all unnecessary weight, he is able to combat all the temptations of the flesh. He recognizes how the cares of this world can sap his spiritual strength. He therefore chooses to live a consecrated life that has been specifically set apart for the Lord and His service.

But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with...cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. (Luke 21:34)

Without this voluntary separation—a fasting from the world—even from what is lawful, it is not possible to have consistent power in prayer. Such power comes only through fasting. It requires a very special faith and separation to God. And so, even though Christ’s disciples were previously given access to power in prayer, they were not fully separated from the world and its ways. Yes, they had come out to follow Jesus. But some of the ways of this world were still clinging to their hearts. And it was not until they had entered into a real spiritual fast and had their hearts purified that they could truly be clothed with power from on high.

Thus, after the first disciples experienced their Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit, they began to put God’s power to work mightily through their prayers. “For assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Jesus assures us, “If you have faith, nothing will be impossible to you.” Let this promise encourage you to turn from the world and its ways. Those who will come out from the world through spiritual fasting and enter into this heavenly communion with God will find themselves being lifted spiritually into the Son’s Kingdom-life. And it is here, sharing with Him in the power of His throne, that prayer truly becomes effectual. “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20)

# The Power of United Prayer

## Chapter 10

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:19-20)

One of Christ's first lessons in His school of prayer was to teach us to avoid praying in a way that seeks to be seen and heard. He instructed us to go into our closet where we would be hidden, saying "and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Now He provides a second lesson: There is also a need for united prayer. For those who have truly died to their old self-exalting spirit and no longer seek their own glory, He provides a very special promise. When two or more of these disciples come together in the Spirit and pray in the Son's Name over the same burden they will amplify His power.

There are special requirements for united prayer. The first relates to having a common desire. It is not enough to merely consent to agree with others about certain things. The object of our prayers must have its source in the Spirit. Convincing others to pray with us over our own desires is not the same. We need to determine those things where we have a common burden from the Spirit leading us to pray.

The second element is to gather in the Name of Jesus. We must permit Christ to be the Head over every matter of our life if we are to pray in His name. Later on we will go into much more depth about what it means to pray in the Name of Jesus. But now we need to recognize it as the bond of this

united prayer. We are members of His body and He must be permitted to act as our Head.

The third element is the sure answer: "It will be done for them by My Father." Our prayer meetings are the most effective means for carrying out the work of God's kingdom. Since it is the Lord who is putting together a kingdom that He will eventually hand over to His Father, we need to come together as individual members of His body and carry out these "greater works" through our prayers.

We must determine our needs and then expect the answer. If we do not have something we are seeking as a single body, with a real expectation of receiving an answer, we have not entered into real united prayer. The evidence that there has been true, united prayer, is the fruit.

Church members generally gather together for self-edification. They seldom desire to come together for the purpose of furthering the kingdom of God. *They seem to be blind to the fact that God rules the world by the prayers of His saints, that prayer is the power by which Satan is overcome, and that prayer is the one means for gaining access to the powers of the heavenly world.*

God's people must begin to realize what it means to meet as "one" in the Name of Jesus. The Lord will meet with those who have died to their own will and ways in order to serve Him in the power of His Spirit. In this unity of life, where each of the members of His body are living for the will of the Father in heaven, the church body will boldly claim His promises and put the power of His Spirit to work. This kind of church body can expect to begin turning the surrounding world from darkness to light.



## **The Power of Persevering Prayer**

### Chapter 11

Then he spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith in the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8)

Of all the fundamental concepts of effective prayer, the need for perseverance seems to be the hardest to grasp. It is easy to become sluggish in our Christian walk when our prayers remain unanswered. There is a tendency to think

that God has an unknown reason for withholding His answer to our requests. Faith alone can overcome this difficulty.

Once faith has taken its stand on God's Word, has chosen to trust in the Lord's power, has yielded to the leading of His Spirit and has determined to pray for a need that would clearly be for the good of His kingdom, there is no reason to be discouraged by delay. We must not become bogged down and lose hope. The Scripture therefore says, "Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:12)

Our prayers often need to be "heaped up" until the measure of faith has become full. God, knowing when everything has been properly prepared, will suddenly grant the blessing. He intends to fulfill our requests because the fruit that comes out of these answered prayers reveals His power and glory. "You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit..."

Every single believing prayer takes us a step closer to the goal of our faith. These prayers are accumulated in heaven until the balance scale is tipped and the answer comes "speedily."

Depending on the situation, God knows the appropriate time to bless those who have been persevering in prayer. "The Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!" (Isa. 30:18 NIV) The word "justice" refers to His perfect faithfulness in doing what He promises.

Jesus uses the word speedily to describe the sudden results. The blessing is all prepared. God will not delay one



moment longer than is absolutely necessary. “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.” And He is the One who is glorified when the obvious answer suddenly comes through an act of divine power.

God, in perfect love, is always working for the good of all concerned. His timing is always perfect. Because He desires to reveal Himself as a God of love, we can trust in Him and expect Him to respond to our requests. “Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed.” (Isa. 49:23)

But why—if this is true and God’s power is infinite—does it often take so long to receive the answers to our prayers? And why must God’s own elect so often, when darkness seems to be prevailing all around them, cry day and night? In part, He wants to teach us to live by faith in Him. It is here, in persevering faith, that we are taught to trust in our all-wise and all-loving God. He must develop within our heart a patient faith that is able to persevere. This is what brings us into the place where we will never lack anything that is needed in our service to Him. “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (Jam. 1:4)

Our faith needs to be both tested and strengthened. The time we spend in communion with God will develop our relationship with Him. It is this persevering prayer that eventually perfects our faith. And then, when all of our trust and dependence is in God, we find that we are “lacking nothing.”

Every husbandman longs for his harvest. But, because he knows it must have its full term of sunshine and rain, he patiently waits until the fruit is ripe. A child so often wants to

pick the half-ripe fruit. But the experienced farmer knows to wait until the proper time. Let us learn to show our trust in God by waiting on Him as our all-knowing Husbandman.

The time of persevering prayer is also a time of self-examination. God knows the moment when the soul or the church has been properly prepared for what He intends to do. In its proper time He will give His blessing “speedily.” But in the meantime, we need to be examining ourselves to make sure we are fully surrendered to the light of truth as revealed through Jesus. He answers the prayers of those who are living in harmony with His life. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” (John 15:7)

There is nothing that examines the heart more closely than the prayer of faith. It teaches us to discover, confess, and give up everything that hinders the coming of the blessing. The more we desire to become effective instruments of God’s power, the more yielded we become to the slightest movements of the Holy Spirit. It is in this sense that “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (Jam. 5:16)

The great danger is the temptation to begin thinking that it may not be God’s will to respond to the burden on our heart. If our prayer is in agreement with God’s Word and we sense a harmony with His Spirit, we need to remain persistent. Day by day, as we are kept waiting, our faith will be given an opportunity to prove its reality. It will grow and ripen until the Great Husbandman knows when it is time to bear the fruit. We must not lose patience with God. Our all-wise Father is the One who determines the times and seasons.

All labor, *including prayer*, requires time and effort. Nature reveals her secrets and yields her treasures to those who are diligent and thoughtful in their labor. Spiritual husbandry is the same: The seeds we sow in the soil of heaven and the efforts we put forth in the harvest fields of this world will depend on our full surrender to this labor of prayer. The flesh-life, with its great desire for human activity—like the seed—will need to be buried in the ground before it is possible to produce “much grain.” (John 12:24-26) Those who are willing to labor on in prayer, holding on to their hope and faith, will reap an abundant harvest.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work... Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness. (2 Cor. 9:8-11)

# Prayer in Harmony With God

## Chapter 12

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Gen. 1:26)

When we look at what God has purposed to do through His praying children, there is a tendency to question how a mere man can have such a place of power. Our thoughts have become so degraded by the fallen nature in this world of carnal darkness that it is hard to grasp God's original plan for His human children. We must go back to His own record of man's creation to uncover His actual purpose.

In preparing to do this, we need to recognize how Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is referred to as the Second Adam. His example will help us to see how God intended for the first Adam to live. We also need to realize that Christ has become the Head of a new lineage of people who live in God's image.

The first man, after being created as a child of God, was enabled by God's indwelling Spirit to manifest the divine spiritual image or character. A glorious destiny was planned for him. He was to *fill, subdue*, and to *have dominion* over the activities taking place on the earth. It was God's will that man would walk in the "light of life" from heaven (as Jesus did) and govern the activities of God's kingdom in this world.

When an earthly king sends a representative to a distant province, that representative tells the king what is needed in his appointed sphere of control. The king, even though he is the one who is sovereign, follows that advice. He will do whatever is necessary to enact the policy and maintain the

dignity of his empire. If the sovereign, however, does not approve of the policy, he replaces the representative with someone who has a better understanding of his ways. But when the representative is trusted and acts in accordance with the sovereign's will, his advice is carried out.

Man was to be God's representative here on earth. After being created to be a partaker of the same divine nature of the King, man was sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit to rule the world according to the King's established order. According to God's original plan, as each individual was guided by the Holy Spirit, and as he lived to carry out the work of God's kingdom, the light from God's life of holy love would be revealed to the world through his activities. The fruit produced would actually be the work of God.

Prayer was to be the natural channel through which man communicated with the Lord in heaven and carried out His plans. The Father would bestow His blessings to the world based on the prayers of His children.

This dominion over the world was man's destiny from the foundation of the world. But God could only entrust people with this high calling while they were personally living in His spiritual image and likeness. As long as they were living as vessels of His life of holy love, they would be entrusted with power from on high.

Man was to be a prophet, priest and king. He was to interpret God's will, to represent the needs of the world to the King, and to receive and disperse God's bounty. He was indeed so much like God—so capable of entering into God's purposes and carrying out His plans in divine love—that God could entrust him with the wonderful privilege of asking for and obtaining "whatever" the world might need.

Unfortunately, in the fall, man lost the spiritual image of God. Instead of remaining a partaker of God's nature of self-giving love, his nature became self-centered and self-seeking. He then began to live like the devil by seeking his own honor and glory. Since God will never share His power and glory with the flesh-life of any man, it has separated man from his original purpose. "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy {with its source in self-exaltation} and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:15-16)

This self-exalting and self-seeking nature that came out of the fall has prevented God from showing forth His life of love and power in the world. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." (Jam. 4:3) You still have your old self-centered nature.

God's work of redemption has been designed to restore the spiritual image that Adam lost in the fall. We enter into God's life of divine love by receiving our spiritual life directly from the Son. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him... Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:9, 17) When we truly submit to having the mind that was in Christ, which entails following the course of the Second Adam, we will find that we are once again highly exalted by the power of God into the place where we can share with the Son in His dominion over the world. We are restored to the original place of usefulness that God planned for His children.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...made Himself of no reputation {rejecting the self-exalting ways of the devil}, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man {living as Adam should have lived}, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death {living in absolute submissiveness to the Spirit regardless of where it led}... Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow {to Him as King}... (Phil. 2:5-10)

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God {by submitting to the same mind that was in Christ}, that He may exalt you in due time... But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in dying out to your old self-originated form of life}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you {so you may share with Him in the power of His throne}. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 5:6-11)

God has purposed to restore His original order. Those who are willing to follow the Son in His way of the cross can expect to be lifted by the power of God into the position that Adam lost. The divine image will be restored and these Spirit-led children are enabled to put God's mighty power to work in their appointed sphere of labor. As representatives of the King, they share in His dominion. This blessing enables them to subdue the darkness in their sphere of labor and begin filling the world with children of light.

So God created man in His own image... Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply {the same Kingdom-life of divine love}; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion... (Gen. 1:27-28)

It is by receiving an abundant measure of grace that we are enabled to overcome the fallen Adam-life and begin reigning with Christ. “For if by the one man’s offense {Adam’s sin} death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17) The Son’s Kingdom-life is more powerful than the fallen life that everyone receives through Adam’s family line. Those who truly believe in Christ, and choose to yield their whole being to His plans, can therefore be restored to the original purpose that God had for man.

The promise of receiving whatever we desire has nothing to do with the things that carnal (self-centered) people might want for themselves. Once we have received the “abundance of grace” and “the gift of righteousness” that establishes God’s nature of holy love within our heart, our one desire is to live for God and His glory. It is because we live for His purposes rather than our own that He shares His power with us.

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if one died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. 5:14-15)



Spiritual Christians, as they live through the Son's life of heavenly love, understand how their redemption through Christ has brought them back to their original destiny. They are to live for the one purpose of revealing His life of holy love to the world. This "light of life" is what manifests His glory. And so they are given power to carry out their assigned work through their prayers of faith.

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. (1 John 1:2)

In Him was {eternal} life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:4)

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me {has the mind of Christ} shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (John 8:12)

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (1 John 5:11)

Such men and women indeed have access to divine power—each in his own appointed sphere of labor or walk of life—to obtain and dispense the blessings of heaven here on earth. They live as kings by sharing with Christ in both His eternal life and the power of His throne. They live as priests by ceaselessly communing with God in His presence and by dispensing His blessings.

Dr. Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), in *The Rent Veil*, said, "God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human priesthood is one of the essential parts of His eternal plan.

To rule creation by man has always been God's design... God is seeking kings, and it is not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen man must furnish Him with the rulers of His universe. Human hands must wield the scepter, human heads must wear the crown." In other words, Christ is now looking for disciples who will follow Him through the cross and into His Kingdom-life of holy love so He may share with them in the power of His throne.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1:3-4)

To him who overcomes {the flesh-life}, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Rev. 3:21-22 NIV)

Church of the living God! Your calling is higher and holier than you have ever perceived! God wants to rule the world through your members. He wants you to be His kings and priests. Your prayers can now bestow and withhold the blessings of heaven!

The world has fallen into its terrible condition because God has so few children who are willing to live under the control and power of His Spirit. Let us change this situation. The world is in desperate need of vessels of divine light who are empowered to call down God's blessings and begin changing the current trend of things in their appointed sphere of labor. God is able to do much more than we have

ever imagined by the power that can now begin working through us.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. (Eph. 3:20-21)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels {weak mortal bodies}, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Cor. 4:7)

Those who are not content with merely being reconciled to God, but who are willing to plant the seed in the ground and die to self, can expect to become fruitful members of God's kingdom. He now wants to show forth the glory that was planned in man's original destiny. We have been created to be His masterpieces by displaying His life of holy love and power in this world. This is the redemption that Jesus has made available to everyone who will choose to walk as He did.

May God help us to understand His purpose for our lives! Those who are fully redeemed and enter into God's original purpose will be granted the privilege of sharing with the Lord in His dominion in the world through their prayers.

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:18-20)

Grace to you and peace from Him who is...the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth...*and {He} has made us kings and priests to His God and Father* {to share in His dominion}, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Rev 1:4-6)

## Power for Working

### Chapter 13

Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me. (John 11:41-42)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

The Son surrendered His right to assert His own power and authority when He came to live as a man in a mortal body. Because He was fully man, He too had to live by faith and receive everything from His Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. He knew that if He was to live according to God's original plan for man it would be necessary to receive everything from above. "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." (John 3:27) He would need to permit the Father to be the source of everything He did. Thus, the Son never did anything on His own.

I do nothing of Myself... And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:28-29)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but *the Father*

*who dwells in Me does the works.* Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. (John 14:10-11)

Jesus chose to live as a vessel of the Father's life and works. Through communion with His Father He was able to learn of the Father's will and then carry it out through His prayers of faith. He was enabled to pray in harmony with His Father's will because He waited on the Father to communicate to Him through the Spirit what needed to be done. This is what enabled Him to receive answers to His prayers.

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear {from the Spirit}, I judge {make decisions and respond}; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (John 5:30)

The Son did not ask His Father to answer His prayers just for show. He too had to depend on the Spirit to guide Him and to show Him what the Father was intending to work out through Him. And then, as He lived as a man without His own power, He carried out the works of His Father through the power of the Holy Spirit based on His prayers of faith.

Jesus knew that He would always be heard by the Father because He was totally committed to doing His Father's will. Even at the age of twelve, we hear Him saying, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) He did not "do anything" or "say anything" that was not received from the heavenly realms through the Holy Spirit. This is why His judgments were always righteous. As He

lived “as one” with His Father, everything He did came from His Father in heaven.

We too are expected to receive our spiritual life and our daily guidance from heaven and then carry out His works through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to live as a vessel of His life and works in the same way He lived as a vessel of His Father’s life and works. Those who will stop living in a self-originated form of life and begin responding to the still small voice of the Spirit will be led into a place where they can begin sharing with the Son in an abundantly full measure of His eternal life and begin doing His “greater works.”

My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me.  
And I give them eternal life... (John 10:26)

*The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you shall {be led through these greater works to} build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In {as you carry out the work of establishing the true kingdom of God }. (Isa. 58:11-12)*

When we learn to walk in the Spirit as Jesus did, which entails receiving everything from Him, He begins to do His “greater works” of restoring the eternal kingdom of God through us. “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” (John

14:12-14) Now that He has all power and authority in heaven and earth He can begin sharing His dominion and power with His disciples so that His eternal kingdom can be established within the hearts of other men and women in this world.

Not only did the Son come to show the children of God how they are to live, but thanks be to God, our resurrected Lord is now a “life giving spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) As the Father was the source of His life in a mortal body, He can now become the source of everything we do. “I will come to you... At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (John 14:18, 20) “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 18:20)

The Holy Spirit is the One who takes of the shared life of the Trinity and reveals this heavenly life within our inner being. Jesus said, “He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. {The Father and the Son share in the same life and will within the Trinity.} That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” (John 16:14 NIV)

The Spirit is able to reveal the Son’s life and will through our mortal bodies as we choose to walk by His Spirit. And as we share with Him in His spiritual life, we can also share with Him in the power of His throne.

This may help us to understand how the prayers of man, coming through the Son, can have such an effect on the Father. His decrees are not made without reference to the Son. In effect, our words become expressions of the Son’s own petitions. Every request that reaches the Father comes through the Son.



The Lord Jesus is the first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things. As the Representative of all God's children, the Son of Man always has a voice in the Father's decisions. The same holds true for the petitions of the members of His body who have fully surrendered to live as vessels of His life and works. By dying to the old self-originated form of life and choosing to be united together with the Son's life and will, these children of God can then draw near to the Father through their prayer-union with the Son. "For in Christ all the fullness of Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is head over every power and authority." (Col. 2:9 NIV)

Is there any wonder why our prayers can have such power? Through our union with the Son, we enter into the workings that are now taking place within the Blessed Trinity. Because we receive this "fullness" of divine life in "bodily form" from Christ (John 1:16), we can be restored to the divine image and put His mighty power to work through our prayers. This is the glorious privilege of the Spirit-led children of God in this age of fulfillment.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand {on the throne of power where He now has all dominion} in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:18-20 NIV)

The first lesson Jesus provided was simple: Be childlike, pray believingly, and trust the Father to be your provider. Now He points to something much higher. His disciples are to be the source of His work in this world. As the members of His body here on earth, the furthering of His eternal kingdom has been entrusted into the hands of His disciples. Prayer is to be the channel through which the power for that work is received and dispersed. With Christ's ascension to the throne of power and through the disciple's union with His spiritual life in the heavenly realms, a new epoch for both their working and their praying then commenced. "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {to the old self-originated form of life}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. 6:5)

F. B. Meyer exhorts every Christians to enter into this glorious privilege. "If any will dare to venture on the path of separation [from the ways of this world]—cutting themselves aloof from all human aid and from all self-originated effort, content to walk alone with God with no help from any but Him—such will find that all the resources of the divine almightiness will be placed at their disposal."

This connection comes out clearly in our text from the fourteenth chapter of John. After dying out to their flesh-life and becoming vessels of the Son's life and works, the disciples, as His body here on earth, were enabled to do an even greater work than He did before being glorified. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

His going away to be glorified—a place where He would possess all power and authority—would provide the disciples with a double blessing. It would enable them to have the

divine image restored and exalt them to a place where they could pray in His Name. This relationship would enable them to begin doing the greater works of furthering His eternal Kingdom-life here on earth. And He is still seeking out disciples today who will follow Him into the light of His eternal life and begin spreading this gospel—this good news—about the kingdom of God.

Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel. (Mark 1:14-15)

Has your faith begun to rise up and provide a little understanding of your glorious privilege? You too can be exalted to a special place in the kingdom of God and begin living as a means for your Lord to reveal His power and glory and dominion. We are now in the age of fulfillment when He can accomplish these “greater works” through His disciples. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.”

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time {to the place where you may begin sharing with Him in His reigning life and in the power of His throne} ... But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in dying out to the old flesh-life}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you {in the eternal Kingdom-life}. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 5:6, 10-11)

And how true it was! Jesus, during three years of personal labor on earth could not lead anyone into His

Kingdom-life of holy love. But after He had paid the price for our sins and was living in His glorified state with the Father, He was in a place to begin communicating His spiritual life to people here on earth. This is something that Jesus could not do while still living in a mortal body. At that point He could only say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17) The Kingdom-life was near to them, but was not yet in them. "Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you." (Luke 10:11) Thus, Jesus said it would be better for His disciples after He went away and could become the very source of their life.

Jesus was able to reveal this heavenly "light of life," but He could not share it with anyone until He was glorified. Let us praise the Lord! Now that He has received the right to fill every vessel, we can become vessels of His life and works. "He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." (Eph. 4:10)

We have records to show how men like Peter and Paul, after being clothed with heavenly power, began leading others into God's heavenly kingdom. Multitudes were enabled to share with the Son in His submissive nature and began doing God's will here on earth with the same kind of yieldedness as it is done in heaven. And this is exactly what we need to be praying for in our day.

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come {into the hearts of men and women in this world}. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:9-10)

For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14:17)

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. (Eph. 5:8-9)

Our fleshly human efforts may have some use in restraining sin, in creating social organizations and in preparing the way for a blessing, but the true kingdom of God cannot be advanced without the work of God's divine power. We might even become as great as John the Baptist in leading others to a repentance that results in the remission of sins and reconciliation with God; but if we are to do the "greater works" of drawing others into our Lord's heavenly Kingdom-life of holy love we must begin using a greater power than was available to John the Baptist in his day.

The disciple who lives wholly for the kingdom of God, for Christ's will and honor alone, shall be given the power to appropriate His promises. Anyone who tries to take hold of these promises only when he wants something for himself will be disappointed. God will not honor those who try to make Jesus the servant of their own pleasures. (Jam. 4:3) But those who will choose to die to their old self-exalting and self-seeking way of life so they may begin to pray the effective prayer of faith that accomplishes the greater works of their Master, can depend on Him to hear their prayers. He always grants the requests of those who have His mind and are living for His interests.

Whoever is "faithful over a few things, I will make...ruler over many things." (Matt. 25:21) With the amount of grace you have already received, give yourself to the work of your Master! If you will be faithful in the little things, you can count on Him to begin leading you into His greater works. As you surrender fully to serve God, you will feel that this great

promise of answered prayer is exactly what you need for accomplishing your appointed tasks.

Believers in Jesus! You have been called to do the work of God. The Son is now sitting at the right hand of the Father where He possesses all power and authority. And He wants to share His dominion with you for the purpose of furthering His Kingdom-life in this world. We now ask you, are you going to respond to His conditions so you may enter into this glorious privilege? These are His words: "If you abide in Me...you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." Do you truly believe in Jesus? If you do, become a true disciple of His. For the sake of this dying world, fully abandon yourselves to God so you may become an instrument of this glorious work of the Lord.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed." (John 8:31)

# The Chief End of Prayer

## Chapter 14

I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:12-13)

“That the Father may be glorified in the Son.” It is to this end that Jesus will use the power He now possesses as He sits on His throne of glory. Every answer to prayer will have this as its objective. Our prayers will go unanswered if we are still seeking in some way to have our own honor and glory. God cannot respond to us when we are living to exalt ourselves. The Son never does anything that takes away from the Father’s glory.

One of the reasons why the church has had so little power in these days is because many of the members are seeking to build up their own reputation. This pride of life separates them from the life and power of God. The only way to be highly exalted by the power of God is to follow the Son’s downward course into becoming the lowest of servants.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...*made Himself of no reputation*, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men {in order to reveal God’s original design}... He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death... *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him...* (Phil. 2:5-9)

I do not receive honor from men... How can you believe {in the true Christ}, who receive honor from

one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? (John 5:41, 44)

Here is where we must begin to permit God's word to abide in our heart. He requires His disciples to surrender to the light of truth that He displayed. As the Living Word, He revealed in bodily form what the written word teaches. And He assures us that those who have chosen to become "the least," as He did, will be lifted by God into the highest places of power in His eternal kingdom. (Luke 9:48)

It was because the Son was willing to become nothing in Himself and permit the Father to receive all the glory that He could be honored by the Father and highly exalted to the place of greatest power. Can you begin to see why so many people within the church today cannot be honored by God with power from the spiritual realm? Very few have been willing to take on the mind of Christ.

Are you truly following Jesus Christ? Do you have His mind? Can you honestly say with Him, "I do not receive honor from men"?

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you {with His self-emptying way of life}—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Cor. 13:5)

If you are seeking to have a reputation of your own through your own works you are actually following the course of the devil. Why do you think Satan chose to live independently of God? You will need to understand the full implications of his fallen way of life if you intend to avoid spending your eternity with him. With only a little spiritual



insight you will begin to see why he chose to live independently of God. The only way he could ever have his own glory was by doing his own works. This is what separated Him from the heavenly life of God. And it is the form of life that he passed on to this world. We therefore find created beings choosing to live independently of God so they may do their own works and have their own glory.

In contrast, Jesus never did anything out from Himself. Everything He did had its source in the Father. He said, “the Father who dwells in Me does the works.” (John 14:10) Jesus walked as God intended for man by living as a vessel of the Father’s life and works. This is why He never had a reason to seek or receive honor from men. When you do not do your own works through your own power you are never in a place to receive honor and glory for what you have done.

God has set up an eternal order where He would be the source of everything. It would enable Him to be in the place where He would naturally receive all the honor and glory. Fallen man, having been deceived by the devil, has rejected this order and been seeking to make himself great through the works of his own flesh. Feeding on the pride of life, worldly-minded people naturally seek to have a reputation of their own by what they accomplish through their own pursuits. The leaders, recognizing this desire for personal honor and glory, use these fleshly desires to motivate others into helping them carry out their greater works. This is what enables the leaders to receive the greatest honor and glory.

The people of this fallen world obviously have a very high esteem for this self-exalting way of life. We can find it in every organization. It is the very foundation of “the spirit of the world.” Because it is taught to us from a very early age and becomes a part of everything we do, we naturally

consider it as a very harmless activity. But this is where we need to pay very close attention to the words of Jesus so we are not deceived by “the spirit of this world.” “And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’ ” (Luke 16:15) Thus, while the self-exalting and self-seeking way of life is highly valued by the people of this world, it is detestable in the sight of God.

This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy {with its source in self-exaltation} and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. (Jam. 3:15-16)

This matter of living for personal honor and glory is a very serious sin. The reason that Jesus will say He does not know the “many” who have referred to Him as their Lord is because they did not have His mind and follow Him in His self-emptying way of life. (Matt. 7:21-23) They neglected to deny and die to their old self-exalting form of life so they could find the eternal Kingdom-life He established in bodily form. (Matt. 16:24-25) May God help you to hear and respond to the words in our Lord’s teachings before it is too late!

Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. {You do not like what it says because it is contrary to your flesh-life.} You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father {his self-exalting way of life} you want to do. (John 8:43-44)

God is able to recognize even the most hidden forms of self-exaltation and self-seeking. *And He will not honor anyone by exalting them into a place of spiritual power until they have stopped trying to build their own reputation.* Let us therefore begin examining our lives by the light of God's Spirit to see whether we are following Jesus or the devil.

By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6)

Jesus said He did not seek His own honor, but the honor of His Father. These simple words reveal the essence of His way of life. He was living as a real Son. When we become "one spirit with Him," we take on a new nature that naturally becomes like Him and enables us to walk as He did. We too must let the glory of the Father be the link between our asking in prayer and the Son's doing! "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." (John 15:7) "And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13)

Although they are deceived, we must say that "many" church members are living a lie. While this may sound like a harsh statement, it is the essence of what the apostle John was implying when He said, "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4) Those who are still living for their own honor and glory fall into this category. It includes everyone who seeks out special positions and titles for the purpose of building their own reputation. While they may maintain certain strict outward standards of holiness as the Pharisees did, they are essentially

rejecting the fundamental principles of Christ's teachings. They do not have the mind of Christ. It makes them a liar, and no liar will inherit the kingdom of God.

Here is where we must choose the course we plan to follow. Either we are going to follow Christ and His self-emptying way of life or the devil and his self-exalting way of life. Quite obviously, when you consider the two extremes, it is not possible to serve two masters. God has established an order for His eternal kingdom and we must choose to enter into that eternal order today if we intend to live eternally with Him in the heavenly realms.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor 1:27-29)

Desire for the glory of the Father is not something we can periodically arouse when we seek something from God through prayer. Only when the whole life and our very being is given over to doing everything for God's glory can we really pray in harmony with the life of the Son. If we do not have a deep inward desire to make ourselves of no reputation where the Father can be truly glorified in everything, we have a real need to be filled with the Son's Spirit. Seeking honor for self makes true faith impossible.

“How can you believe, who receive honor from one another...?” (John 5:44)

The commands are clear: “Do all to the glory of God” and “Ask all to the glory of God.” These twin commands are inseparable. You cannot live for your own glory at all. God sees into the heart, and He cannot be deceived or mocked. Choosing to live for God’s glory alone is an essential prerequisite to being saved from a life of sin and having your prayers answered through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Creation exists to show forth God’s glory. Everything that fails to glorify Him remains in darkness. Let us enter into Christ’s “light of life” by having His mind and walking as He did. We will then begin doing everything for the glory of our heavenly Father. “And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

What the Son of Man did—giving Himself wholly to be a vessel of the Father’s life, works and glory—is the only life that He gives to His disciples. Have you truly surrendered your whole being to receive His life into your heart? Are you permitting Him to live through you so that the life and works of the Father may also be displayed through your mortal body? You can know when you are sharing with the Son in His eternal Kingdom-life by the way His very nature becomes an innate part of your nature.

At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (John 14:20)

Can we begin see why the church has been so powerless in these last days? No wonder there are so many unanswered prayers! Here we have the source of the problem. We have been seeking to further our own interests

by promoting our own glory. Let us begin with a confession! Knowledge and then confession of sin is the means for being delivered from this evil. There are many who are going the wrong way, and they do not want to come out from their darkness because they prefer the devil's way of life. And if they refuse to repent, God requires you to turn away from them.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves...boasters, proud...headstrong...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!  
(2 Tim 3:1-5)

# THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CONDITION

## Chapter 15

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)

The Father listens to the intercessory prayers of the Son. This is why we need to abide in Him and pray in harmony with His Name. He is the one who carries the prayers through to the Father. By choosing to live through Him, where His teachings become an innate part of our very nature, we can come into a place where our prayers can be consistently answered by the Father.

In all God's relations with us, His *promises* remain inseparable from His *conditions*. If we fulfill the conditions, He fulfills the promises.

There are many prayers that go up to God without ever bringing an answer. The cause is either from not fulfilling the conditions or from God not fulfilling His promises. Believers in general are not willing to admit either. And so they end up devising ways to escape from their dilemma. Rather than honestly examining themselves, they make up restrictive clauses to excuse their unanswered prayers. It enables them to feel better about their Christian walk while maintaining God's integrity. Consequently, they never examine their own hearts to determine why they do not meet the covenant conditions.

We will need to hold fast to God's stated truth as it stands in Scripture if we are to become spiritual Christians. Once we begin to see the discrepancies between what God wants

to do through our lives and what He has been able to do, it becomes easier to recognize and confess our failure in fulfilling the conditions. It is the only explanation.

God is right in everything He does. His integrity will not permit Him to do anything that is not in harmony with His established truth. Paul says, "He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. 2:13) He must fulfill everything He has stated in His Word. We must assume that we are in some way self-deceived and have not responded to His covenant conditions if the promises do not come true in our lives.

"If you abide in me." Again, we cannot abide in Christ while we are still living for ourselves and looking for honor from men. Much self-will passes unnoticed in our lives. The heart is deceitful above all things. This is why we need to study the Scriptures and search our hearts while depending on God to reveal everything that is contrary to the truth as revealed through His Son. Since the Spirit was given to lead us into all truth, we can depend on Him to reveal everything that is not right.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (Jer. 17:9-10)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Ps. 139:23-24)



However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth... (John 16:13)

*Faith and obedience* are given to us as the *pathway to blessing*. Before providing the parable of the vine and the branches, Jesus described the blessings His Father would give to His followers. Three times over He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." The disciple who would choose to respond to Him with his or her regenerate heart would gain access to a threefold blessing. He promised these results: the fullness of His Spirit, a manifestation of Himself (His indwelling life of holy love), and His coming with the Father to make the heart a place for their banquet feast.

Beloved fellow-believer! Let us confess that because we have not been willing to enter into Christ's spiritual life as the truth has now been opened to us, the Church has become impotent. May we see how our minds have remained on earthly things. But let us not be discouraged. This abiding with Him in the heavenly realms is within our reach. Let us be ready to say with Paul, "I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection..." (Phil. 3:7-10)

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ {His way of dying to self-will and self-glory}: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose

glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship {our place of life} is in heaven... (Phil. 3:17-20)

If then you were raised with Christ {through the new birth}, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Accept the truth that when prayer is what it should be, or rather when we are what we should be, the answer must be expected. It will bring us out from those deceitful refuges where we have comforted ourselves with unanswered prayer. It will show us the place of power to which Christ has appointed His church, a place which she has occupied so little in these latter days.

Let us follow Paul's example by choosing to count "as loss" the things we have used to exalt ourselves. These things from the natural plane are what separate the church from the resurrection power of Christ's Spirit. Each one of us needs to come into the place where we can put God's power to work through our prayers to further His kingdom of light.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the...incomparably great power for us who believe. (Eph. 1:18-19 NIV)

# The All-Powerful Plea

## Chapter 16

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do... If you ask anything in My name, I will do it... Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive... In that day you will ask in My name. (John 14:13-14; 16:24-26)

Through this point in their discipleship training, just prior to Jesus' death, the disciples had not yet prayed *in the Name of Christ*. While they had been with Jesus for three years, had followed Him in a separation from the ways of the world, and had done miracles by faith, they were still unable to ask in "His Name." The long-awaited age of fulfillment when Christ would begin to share His eternal Kingdom-life of holy love with each of His disciples had not yet arrived. But here, in His parting words, Jesus repeats the same promise in various forms. He wanted them to know He would answer every prayer in "His Name" to the fullest extent of its meaning: "Whatever" and "Anything."

The free use of someone else's name requires a unity between the two. When a person gives someone else the use of his name to act for him, he still expects to have his will and purposes represented. He will therefore make sure the representative is first qualified to act in the right way.

What does it mean to do something in the name of another? It is to come with his power and authority, as his representative and substitute. Using another's name always presupposes a common interest. No one would provide someone else with the free use of their name without first

being assured that his honor and his interests would be respected.

Using the Son's Name presupposes the surrender of our own interests to Him. We are to become vessels of His life and will—to be made one with each other. He has made this possible by providing each one of us with access to the “glory” that filled the temple of His body when He walked as a man. These are His words: “And the glory which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one {sharing in the same life and nature}: I in them, and You in Me...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:22-23, 26)

It is by emptying ourselves of our own glory, as the Son did, that we may be filled with the glory that has its source in the Father. This is how we come to the place where we can become one with Him and pray in harmony with His Name. The power that works through our lives will be directly related to the measure of our life-union with Christ.

The Name and the Spirit of Jesus are one. “Whatever you ask in my Name” literally means “in my nature.” We are enabled to share with Him in His nature of holy love by choosing to live through Him. (1 John 4:9) When we are truly filled with His Spirit and walking in His Spirit we become like Him in His nature of love in this world. (v. 17)

Asking in Christ's Name does not mean that we say at the end of our requests, “This I ask in the Name of Jesus Christ.” It is much more than this. It means we must pray *according to His nature*.

The nature of the Son shows itself in a love that does not seek its own will or glory. Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” (John 6:38) “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me...” (John 8:54) We can only be honored by the Father by choosing to follow the Son in His way of the cross. When we become like Him in His death to self-will and self-glory we will be in a place to share with Him in the power of His resurrection. By choosing to follow Him in His way of the cross we can be filled with His glory and begin praying in harmony with His nature.

The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone {separated from God and His throne of power}; but if it dies, it produces much grain... If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me {through the cross}; and where I am {at the throne of power}, *there My servant will be also*. If anyone serves Me {by living in the Spirit}, him My Father will honor. (John 12:23-26)

Everything depends on sharing with Christ in His Kingdom-life. It is the only way we can truly pray in His Name and share with Him in the power of His throne. There is more than one expression in Scripture that makes this clear. “Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus” is the prerequisite to “asking all” and receiving “whatever you ask.”

The Name and nature of Christ must rule every part of our life. God not only looks to see what comes out of our mouth, but He also looks at our daily walk to see what His Name really means to us.

My brothers and sisters, heaven is open to you! The treasures and powers of the eternal spiritual world will be placed at your disposal to help those around you. Let all Christians awake and hear this message: Your prayers can obtain the needed blessings that have been withheld from the world. God has not been able to work as He would like because He has lacked human children who have been willing to prepare themselves to pray in Jesus' Name! You can accomplish through your prayers what otherwise must remain undone! O awake, and fully surrender your lives to the Lord so you may be lifted spiritually into a position to use the Name of Jesus and begin opening the treasures of heaven for this perishing world!

The promises Jesus provided during His last night with His disciples will remain a sealed book to those who are looking at their life from a selfish perspective. The promises are given in order to bear fruit for the glory of God. They were given to disciples who were being sent out to serve Another by living for the perishing people of this world. This power can only work through those who have denied themselves and followed Jesus in His way of the cross.

We therefore plead with you to open your heart to Jesus and fully surrender to His will so that His words will begin to have meaning within your heart. God opens the understanding to everyone who truly comes to Him with a heart that is dependent upon Him and open to change. We pray it will never be said of you, "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do." (John 8:43-44)

I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
that You have hidden these things from the wise

and prudent and have revealed them to babes.  
(Matt. 11:25)

Now we can better understand what it means to pray in the Name of Jesus, and why it has such power. To pray in His Name, in His Spirit, and in real union with His life and will is the active and effective intercession of Jesus Christ Himself. Everyone who will choose to live through Him and share with Him in His nature of holy love will not only share with Him in the power of His throne, but also share with Him in His heavenly joy. “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23-24)

The Son’s intercessory work, which He carries out for the purpose of furthering His eternal kingdom, needs to pass through His church body before it reaches the Father. His work goes forward as the members of His body enter into His prayer-life. Let us therefore surrender ourselves to His plans. Let us all say, Lord, reveal to us what you have planned to do through us so that we may begin to accomplish your “greater works” through our prayers!

Some may think this is putting too much power into the hands of man. But all power must come through Christ Jesus. (Luke 10:19) God will only give man dominion over his appointed sphere of labor through the Son. It is as we abide in Him and He in us that we are enabled to learn of His will and carry out His works.

Our prayers are like pipes that are used to carry water from a mountain stream to a town some distance away. The pipes cannot make the water willing to flow down from the hills, nor do the pipes provide the power to bless and

refresh. These blessings come from the very nature of the water. The pipes merely act as the means to supply the needed blessing. And if the pipes are removed there will be people who do not receive the water they need for life.

The very nature of God is to love and to bless. His love flows in a general sense to everyone in the world. But He also longs to come down to individuals with His quickening and refreshing streams of divine spiritual life. And He has chosen to permit His Spirit-led children to direct these blessings through their prayers. We are here to live as a means to channel Christ's "rivers" of Living Water to dry and thirsty souls that will soon perish without this heavenly source of life.



# THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

## Chapter 17

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am {sharing in the life and power of the kingdom}, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me... (John 17:24)

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me {through the cross}; and where I am {at the throne of power}, *there My servant will be also*. If anyone serves Me {in the resurrection power of the Spirit}, him My Father will honor. (John 12:25-26)

But you shall be named the priests of the Lord, they shall call you the servants of our God. (Isa. 61:6)

A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:5)

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore... (Rev. 7:15-16)

God intends for His children to enter into the firstfruits of the heavenly life that exists in His eternal kingdom while we are in this world. The Holy Spirit is able to take of this heavenly form of life and begin making it known within our inner being. (1 Cor. 2:9-10; John 16:14-15) We can begin to

know the glory of our Great King and begin serving Him night and day as priests at His throne of power. When we are sharing with Him in His life our soul is satisfied and He keeps us from hungering and thirsting after the things of this world. He completely sets us free from its self-seeking and self-exalting ways so that we may serve Him with undivided devotion.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

But God...because of His great love...made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4-6)

Today is the day to choose to enter into this great salvation. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord...?” (Heb. 2: 3)

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to become the Great High Priest. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me.” (Isa. 61: 1; Luke 4:18) We too can now share with Him in that same anointing. “But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things...and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” (1 John 2:27) This anointing with the Holy Spirit teaches us to abide in the Son so we may live with Him and share with Him in the power and the glory of His throne.

Christ's disciples, through this divine anointing, become as one with the Great High Priest and Intercessor. They are made high priests who live to bring blessings to others through the ministry of intercession.

Like every son of Aaron, every member of Christ's body has a right to enter into the priesthood. But not every Christian exercises their right and enters into their inheritance. They possess a birthright, but not everyone enters into the blessing. Many are still entirely ignorant of it. "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. 22:14) In fact, there are many, like Esau, who end up trading this birthright so they may live for the temporal pleasures they can have from this world. (Heb. 12:16) God sees it as spiritual adultery. (Jam. 4:4)

We need to lay hold of an understanding of what our Lord's salvation was really intended to do if we hope to avoid missing out on this glorious inheritance in the saints. As priests we are to stop living for ourselves so that we are free to serve the Lord night and day at His throne of power. Living wholly to carry out the "greater works" of leading others into the eternal kingdom of God becomes the clearest sign we are abiding in the One who "always lives to make intercession." (Heb. 7:25)

God used the tribe of Levi as an example to help reveal the work of a priest. "The Lord separated the tribe of Levi...to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless His Name." (Deut. 10:8) The priest's role of blessing the Name of the Lord included leading others into a close relationship with God.

The priest had the right to dwell with the Lord in His house and to be a means for bringing blessings to the

people. He was also responsible for making the people aware of the sacrifices required of them. After the priest had determined that an acceptable sacrifice was made, he would present it to God. Only then could he ask and receive the blessing.

As priests of the Lord today we are in a place to make petitions for the heavenly bread that is able to sustain God's eternal life within the soul. Once the sacrifice has been examined, and we are sure it is complete and without blemish, we can begin praying for the blessing.

A priest is thus a man who does not live for himself. He walks in communion with God and lives to serve the Lord and His purposes. His work is to call people to repentance and to explain how they must present themselves to God as living sacrifices so they may come into a right relationship with Him. (Rom. 12:1) The priest knows that God will only send the fire from heaven to show His acceptance of the offering when their sacrifice is offered without blemish.

Christians, after being called out by God through the new birth, need to be led to the point where they are willing to present themselves to the Lord without holding anything back. The offering must be total before it is considered "unblemished." The objective is to bring them to the place where the fire from heaven comes down to consume the remains of the old self-exalting and self-seeking nature. It is in this sense that A.W. Tozer speaks of Christians needing to be men and women who have come out of the fire. Jesus Himself said, "For everyone will be seasoned with fire." (Mark 9:49)

Isaiah once asked, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?" (33:14) In verse 15 and 16 he says that it is

those who “walk uprightly.” Once the flesh-life has been consumed, the child of God is able to reside in the presence of the Holy Fire without feeling pain. It is only painful when the flesh-life is alive and active. The fire only consumes what is not of God. Once the believer has passed through this consuming fire he “shall dwell on high” and become a partaker with the life of our holy God. While this consuming of the flesh-life is painful, it enables us to become “partakers of His holiness.” (Heb. 12:10)

Malachi, as God’s prophet, told the people how the Lord would come as a refiner’s fire to purify the temple and enable the Levites (those who were consecrated to God) to walk in righteousness. (Mal. 3:1-3) When the Refiner came no one would be able to “stand” in the pride of life. He comes to destroy the old self-exalting nature so that no flesh will ever glory in His presence.

In a reference to this promise, John the Baptist said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance {for the remission of sins—Mark 1:4}, but...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matt 3:11) It was the tongues of fire coming to rest on each individual disciple in the upper room on the day of Pentecost that purified their hearts and turned them into vessels of God’s glory—His life of self-sacrificing love. (Acts 2:1-3; 15:8-9) These priests of God, once their hearts were purified, were then able to use intercessory prayer to bind and loose here on earth. (Matt. 16:19)

This is the high calling of every believer. Every member of Christ’s body has been redeemed for the one purpose of becoming one of God’s sanctified priests in the midst of the perishing millions around them. In conformity to Jesus, who is our Great High Priest, they are to be the ministers and stewards of God’s grace in the world. After leading the

people to make the required sacrifice, they are to bind the work by asking the Father to sanctify the hearts of these true worshippers. The fully sanctified priests of God, in this sense, have been given the keys to the kingdom of God.

As God is holy, so the priest was to be especially holy. This implies not only being separated from everything unclean, but completely devoted to serving the Lord. They had to be set apart to live for His purposes alone. They were not permitted to have personal ownership. Everything in their possession truly belonged to God. Only as they lived in this form of relationship with God could they serve Him as a priest within the holy place.

It is important to understand this principle about the priestly tribes having no earthly inheritance of their own. God was to be their inheritance. They were to live by faith. Set apart unto God, they were to live on Him as well as for Him. Their hearts were not to be tied to anything from this world.

This is all symbolic of how the New Testament priest was to live in this age of fulfillment. The true Christian life is a very special calling. Every believer was to become a priest unto God. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people." (1 Pet. 2:9) And as God's holy and heavenly priesthood we were to live as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11:13) We are not to expend our time and energies seeking to possess temporal things. We are to overcome the world and reside within the eternal Kingdom-life of our Lord where we are empowered by the grace of God to expend ourselves in a life of living for the good of others.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored

more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (1 Cor 15:10)

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain... Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:1-2)

God had chosen all of Aaron's sons to be priests. Each was a priest by birth. However, they could not begin their work without a special act of consecration. They were required to consecrate themselves entirely to God. Similarly, every Christian is a priest by right of his blood relationship to the Great High Priest. But the believer's inheritance, which includes sharing with Christ in His divine life and power, can only be received by entering into a full consecration to Him.

Aaron and his sons were consecrated in a special way. (Ex. 29) After being washed and clothed in new garments, they were anointed with the holy oil. After preparing themselves according to God's specifications, they were sprinkled with the blood and the oil together. In a spiritual sense, the blood in this special anointing represents Christ's power to do away with the sinful nature and the oil represents the new nature—the fruit of God's Spirit.

As a penitent, when the future priest first sought forgiveness for his sins, the blood was sprinkled on the altar—not on his person. But now, for priestly consecration, there was to be a closer contact with the blood. The ear, hand and foot (the parts of the body in contact with the world and needed for God's service) were brought under its power through this special baptism. The whole being was then sanctified or set apart entirely for God's service. This is the blood that cleanses from "all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:7)

It destroys the independent nature—the source of self-will and sin.

When the believer is led to seek full priestly access to God, he feels the need of a fuller and more enduring experience of the power of the blood. Where he had previously been content to have the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat to gain his needed pardon, he now needs a more personal sprinkling and cleansing of his heart. He desires to be fully separated from the old man. This purifying work of the blood is what permits the priest to come into the presence of God within the holy place and live as an effective intercessor before His throne. “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8)

Are you willing to stop living for yourself and live as a priest unto God, within His presence, so you may begin performing this holy work? You know what kind of surrender it demands: The seed must be buried in the ground where it completely breaks down into nothingness before it can rise up. (John 12:24-26) You cannot live in God’s Presence while you are still seeking to have some of your own honor and glory. There needs to be a real loss of this old form of life before it is possible to be highly exalted to the place where there can be a sharing with Christ in the power of His throne.

Abiding in this heavenly union with the Great High Priest, “You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” You will have power to pray the effective prayer that accomplishes much for the kingdom of God.

Come, brother and sister, come! Be a priest, *only* a priest, and *all* priest! Let go of the world so that God Himself can become your inheritance. Continue to wait on God until you are walking before the Lord in the full consciousness that He



has personally anointed you with His life of intercessory prayer.

# A LIFE OF PRAYER

## Chapter 18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Christ has both the power and the authority to make us partakers with Himself in His prayer-life. We know He lives as the Great High Priest and He is always interceding for others. When He comes as the Great High Priest to share His endless life with us, included in the blessings found in Him are His prayer-life. “There arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.” (Heb. 7:15-16)

The dead letter of the law does not supply the power needed to fulfill God’s requirement to “pray without ceasing.” But when we choose to exchange our old form of life for His life we can begin looking to Him to share with us in a nature that is always praying to the Father. We can then do by nature what He requires.

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me {the Son} by taking from what is mine {including the life of intercessory prayer} and making it known to you. (John 16:14 NIV)

No one can pray without ceasing in their own strength. We actually need to lose our life, including our self-sufficiency, before we can share with Christ in the power of His endless life. “For whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:25) Then, and only then, is it possible to truly obey His command: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.” (1 Thess. 5:6)

For we are the circumcision {who have had the strength of the flesh-life cut off}, who worship God in the Spirit {live through the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

The child of God who has lost all confidence in the flesh begins to learn that only what is from God can truly glorify Him. We begin to know more than ever that “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.” (John 3:27) The whole life begins looking up, with a cry from the innermost heart, for God to prove His power and love, and to reveal His glory. Listen closely to what F. J. Huegel has said on this matter:

The reason why many are finding prayer so unsatisfactory and the life of prayer so unattractive, is because they have attempted to enter into the celestial realms of prayer in the strength of the “old-man”. The “old-man” can no more wield these weapons which “are not carnal but mighty through God” than he can “love his enemies,” or “rejoice always,” or “have the mind which was in Christ Jesus,” or fulfill any other Christian grace. He (the old-man) may imitate these graces, but actually possess them, never. They are “the fruit of the Spirit.” They come from above. They are the out-workings of the Christ-nature imparted to the believer and incorporated in his being on the basis of the Cross.

True prayer can only be inaugurated on the basis of “co-crucifixion.” This is the prime condition. “If ye abide in Me and I in you, ye shall ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you.” We must be “in Christ.” But we cannot be in Christ in the fullest sense, without first committing to death,

in the power of the Savior's death, the "old-life" [the old self-sufficiency that has its source in the flesh].

It is when we realize our oneness with Christ in death [where we have died to the natural strength of the flesh] and in resurrection [where there is a real sense of living by His Spirit], that prayer becomes the marvelous force that we find it was in the life of the Savior... It is then that our spirits, liberated by the power of the Cross from the fleshly and the soulish entanglements, "mount up on wings as eagles."... It is then that the injunction: "Pray without ceasing," ceases to be an unintelligible command... It is then that prayer, energized by the Spirit of the living God, which it cannot be until it is freed from all selfish ingredients, becomes at times a groaning which is unutterable, and which does not fail to move mountains, and achieve the impossible. It is then that prayer becomes a working out of the will of God, and therefore, must prevail, be the difficulties what they may, however staggering the problem, however great the need. It is then that the great disparity between what the Master said that prayer could accomplish, and the miserable caricature that it is in the actual practice of millions, is removed, and prayer blossoms out in all the glory of its true nature.

We need to begin to see how everything in the life of the Son is ours and is given to us when we give ourselves completely to Him. To abide in Him implies looking to Him alone to be the source of the fruit that comes out of us. "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) He merely asks that we continually come to our loving Father as dependent little children looking to share with Him in the power of His endless prayer-life. Our whole life is to be given up to this walk of faith where we expect everything of significance to take place through the working of His power.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God. (Gal. 2:20)

Because we are all creatures of time and subject to the law of growth, it takes time for our prayer-life to develop and become effective. But we should also realize that not one single prayer of faith is ever lost. There is sometimes a need for accumulating our prayers before the answer can be granted. This is where patience will need to have its perfect work. We must permit the Spirit to bring us into that place of rest where our faith is in God, rather than in our fleshly works, before we will truly find ourselves “lacking nothing.” (Jam. 1:4)

Throughout history God’s children have thought there were difficulties in the heavenly world to overcome before their prayers could be answered. They pleaded with God for the removal of the unknown obstacles. But this has not always been the real problem. The Spirit has led some of these earnest souls to begin searching their own lives. This self-examination has brought them to a state of brokenness and a real sense of helplessness. It was there, when they had lost all confidence in the flesh and had become nothing in themselves, that God was able to exalt them to a place of great power in the Spirit. With their hope and faith in God alone, they could begin to take hold of Him and His promises. The hindrance, which really had its source in their own independence and self-sufficiency, was suddenly overcome. Once God had fully conquered them, they could be raised spiritually and begin working in the resurrection power of Christ’s Spirit.

Yes, to the world that thrives on the activity of the flesh this way of the Spirit will appear to be a complete mystery. They will think we are foolish when we follow God's instruction to enter His rest of faith where everyone ceases from their own works. (Heb. 4:10) But this is the way that Jesus walked and it is how we will walk when we are living through Him. May we all learn this secret as it has been so aptly expressed by Armin Gesswein.

Our generation has yet to see prayer as a ministry, and to take God at His Word on this subject. It is while we pray that God works... Our idea is, "Let us pray, and then get on with the work." But prayer is our real work. We so often think of prayer as a prefix or a suffix to an otherwise busy round. But God's works are wrought as we pray, and while we pray.

It brings a revolution to any minister or Christian, once he believes God's Word on this point. His works are done through prayer, for He always works out from His throne by intercession. It is not only His intercession, but ours too: for, by His Spirit, He not only prays for us, but in us. He gives us of His own great praying...

We are not just to imitate His praying, but to enter into it, receive it, and have it enter into us. That is how we enter into His works, become "laborers together with God", and learn to cease from our own works. We learn in this way to work with Him, instead of for Him. Sons, and no longer slaves.

Then after we have prayed, we walk with the Lord Jesus into the works He has wrought in answer to prayer. Prayer is our real work. Working is drudgery. Even working for the Lord is dreary. But working with Him is a delight. In His Kingdom [where He is the source of everything], it is those

whom He ministers within who minister. The conquered conquer, and the followers of Christ lead others.

This, then, is the secret to succeeding in our work. As God prevails over us, and we are perfected in the way of faith, we find that we begin to prevail with God. Because He becomes the source of everything we do, we naturally rejoice in Him. To Him be the power and honor and glory!

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:21 NIV)