

Exploring Prayer With Jack Hyles

By Pastor Jack Hyles (1926-2001)

Introduction



The Apostles on many occasions heard Jesus preach; yet they never asked Him, "Lord, teach us to preach." They heard Him teach, but there is no record of their saying, "Lord, teach us to teach." They saw Him heal the sick, but there is no record of their asking him, "Lord, teach us to heal." They saw Him raise the dead, still the waves, calm the storm, open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears and cast out demons, but there is no record of their ever asking Him to teach them how to do these things. But when they heard Him pray, felt His compassion, saw His tears and witnessed the answers to His prayers, they said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

Before entering into the truths found in this book, this author simply asks the reader to bow his head and pray, "Lord, teach me to pray." May the Lord use this manuscript as a part of His answer to your prayer.

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Chapter 1 – God's Mind Can Be Changed

Genesis 6:6-7, "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Jonah 3:10, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Joel 2:12-14, "Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?"

The wickedness of man became great upon the earth until every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. This is not the purpose that God had for His creation. He created us for His glory and that He may enjoy fellowship with us, wanting us to offer Him voluntarily love. He equipped us with a will so we could choose to love and fellowship with Him. Now man has failed and failed miserably. His thoughts are wicked, his deeds are wicked, and God is grieved, for God CAN be grieved. Ephesians 4:30-32, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Here we find that bitterness grieves God, wrath grieves God, anger grieves God, clamour grieves God, evil speaking grieves God, malice grieves God. As God looked at the race He had made, He was so grieved that He changed His mind and wished that He had not made man. Genesis 6:6-7, "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Notice the word "repented" in verse 6 and the word "repenteth" in verse 7. This word means "a change of mind." This is not a doctrinal dissertation about the flood; it is simply an effort to establish the fact that God does, on occasion, change His mind, and that mind can be changed by man's behavior and, thank God, by man's requests and prayers.

There is a wonderful story in Exodus 32. Moses had been to Mount Sinai. As he returned from the mount, he found the people had made a golden calf and were worshipping it. God was displeased and wanted to destroy them. Exodus 32:7-10, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." Notice the words that God spoke to Moses in verse 10, "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them." Here is the omnipotent God talking to Moses, one of His creatures, and saying, "Let Me alone, so I can punish

My people." God wanted to do it, but interestingly enough He had made it so that Moses had veto power and actually could prevent God from consuming His people.

God did change His mind concerning consuming His people. **Exodus 32:11-14, "And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."** In verse 11 Moses explains to God that it was He Who had brought the people out of Egypt with a great power and mighty hand. Then in **verse 12 he beseeches God to change His mind. He uses the words, "Repent of this evil against Thy people."** Now Moses was not telling God to repent of a sin. The word "evil" there means that God was about to inflict punishment or consummation upon His people and Moses was asking Him to turn from His fierce wrath and change His mind.

Then in **verse 13** he tells God of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning multiplying their seed and making of them a great nation.

These are arguments that Moses used in his appeal to God to change His mind. In other words, he is saying, "Lord, You brought the people out, and the Egyptian people are going to speak evil of You if You consume the people." Then he said, "Don't forget the promises You made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." With these arguments he appealed to God not to go through with His consuming of Israel.

In **verse 14** we read, **"And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."** Once again, God changed His mind. It is very important that this truth be emphasized, for it was through prayer to God that Moses interceded for the people, and God changed His mind concerning their destruction.

God changed His mind concerning the destruction of Ninevah. The Word of the Lord had come unto Jonah the second time, telling him to go to Ninevah and preach. **Jonah 3:1-2, "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."** Jonah had learned his lesson and he did go to Ninevah to preach. A great revival followed and the entire city repented. **Jonah 3:5-8, "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."**

The people were led to believe that though Jonah had preached that God was going to destroy the city in forty days, perhaps God would change His mind, and not destroy the city. They felt that their repentance and their putting on of sackcloth and sitting in ashes might convince God to change His mind. This possibility is mentioned in **Jonah 3:9, "Who can tell if God will turn and**

repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" God did see their works and God did change His mind. In **Jonah 3:10**, notice especially the words, **"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."**

Jonah had come to Nineveh preaching the message that God gave him, that God was going to overthrow Nineveh in forty days, but because the people got right with God, God changed His mind and did not destroy Nineveh as Jonah had preached. This changing of God's mind is so evident, for the Scripture tells us that Jonah was not happy with God's decision to change His mind. Had not Jonah preached that God was going to destroy the city in forty days? Now God is not going to destroy the city, and Jonah is upset about it! **Jonah 4:1**, **"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."**

Now the secret to this entire story is found in **Jonah 3:8**, **"But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God."** There is the prayer. God changed His mind concerning Nineveh because of the prayers of Nineveh. Once again we come back to the main point of this chapter. Prayer can change the mind of God!

God changed His mind concerning Judah in the days of Joel. **Joel 2:12-14**, **"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?"** The judgment of God had been pronounced upon the people. However, the message came that God was a merciful God and that if the people would repent and turn to Him, He would change His mind and bless them. In fact, in **verse 14** the word **"repent"** is used which means "to change one's mind." Of course, over and over again in the Scriptures God withholds His judgment upon His people because of repentance, prayer, fasting and revival.

God changed His mind concerning Ephraim, but Ephraim got so far from God and so idolatrous that God decided just to leave him alone! **Hosea 4:17**, **"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."** Later on in Hosea God begins to muse and meditate about Ephraim. **Hosea 11:1-4**, **"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them."** Here God remembers Ephraim's childhood; that is, when Ephraim was a young tribe. He remembers how He helped Ephraim struggle in the early days. He likens that to teaching Ephraim to walk. He remembers how He healed them, how He loved them, how He protected them. Bear in mind that in **Hosea 4:17** He had said, **"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."** But after thinking, meditating and remembering, God comes to the place where He feels He simply cannot give Ephraim up. **Hosea 11:8**, **"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."** How beautiful are those words, **"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?"** God is saying that He lost His patience with Ephraim and then He got to thinking about it and changed His mind. He will not give Ephraim up after all. The last line of **verse 8** explains this when God says, **"My repentings are kindled together."** God is saying once again, "I am changing My mind."

God repented often concerning His people. **Jeremiah 15:6, "Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting."** That means that God had changed His mind so much about His people that He is getting a little weary of it. Again the point is stressed. God can, does and will change His mind in response to repentance and sincere prayer from His people.

In the third miracle in the second judgment of God upon Pharaoh, when God was using His wrath to unpry the hands of Pharaoh from His people that they might leave the land and be free, God had sent the frogs on the land. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and asked them if they could persuade God to take the frogs away. **Exodus 8:8, "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD."** Moses did come to God with Aaron and ask God to remove the frogs. **Exodus 8:12-13, " And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields."** The key statement here is in verse 13, **"And the LORD did according to the word of Moses."** Notice the power of prayer. Notice how God is influenced by the prayers of Moses.

This same thing is repeated concerning the thunderings and hail. **Exodus 9:27,28,33, "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth."**

The same thing is done concerning the locusts in **Exodus 10:16-19, " Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."** On each of these occasions Moses came to God and persuaded God to take certain action. In response to Moses' request, God did take this action.

In the case of Abimelech and his family, God healed them that they might bear children because Abraham prayed to God. **Genesis 20:17-18, "So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife."** God had closed up all the wombs of the ladies of the house of Abimelech. Abraham prayed to God and God responded to Abraham's prayer and healed the house of Abimelech.

In the life of Job God became angry with Eliphaz and Job's other false friends and pronounced His judgment upon them. Because of Job's prayers and their repentance God changed His mind and did not pour out His wrath. **Job 42:7-10, "And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the**

Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. And 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."

In any study of the subject of prayer it is fundamental and basic when we understand that if a man will meet the conditions of God and pray, God will respond to his prayer and perhaps even change the course of His direction. Naturally, such a teaching is distasteful to those who advance the heresy of hyper-Calvinism, limited atonement, irresistible grace, etc. These misguided students of the Bible are often sincere but somehow have never learned how to enter into the great heart of God to know His compassion, His love, His mercy, His longsuffering. Hence, we must establish once and for all that God is touchable, reachable and He will respond to the prayers of His people. This does not mean that an immature Christian can frivolously approach the throne of grace and change God's mind. It does mean that the great omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Jehovah God leans towards His children to hear what they say and longs to have them present their petitions to Him that He may give consideration to their requests.

Chapter 2 – The Atheism of Prayerlessness

James 4:8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

2nd Corinthians 1:20, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

It is really an amazing thing how little God's people pray. The truth of the matter, however, is that if we believed that we could come to God and get what we want and need, we would do it! There certainly must be a degree of atheism and unbelief that causes our prayerlessness.

God made the sun, the moon and the stars. He then made the lakes, rivers and oceans. He made the mountains, hills and deserts. He made the trees, flowers and grass. He made the fish, the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air. Then He made man. Man was the only one to whom He said, "I would like to talk with you and have you visit Me. I would like for us to have fellowship together."

Let us imagine what God may have said to man, "I made all of these things for you. In case you want one of these Hereford cattle, let Me know. If you want one of these birds, just ask Me. If you would like to have some fish, fruit or vegetables, please ask Me for it. Perhaps you need some water. Let Me know. If you are tired of rain, let Me know. If you get cold, tell Me and I'll kill an animal for you and use his skin for a coat. If you want some of these strawberries, just tell Me. I also have some metals you might like. I have gold, silver, and other metals. Just ask Me and I'll let you have what you want. Also let Me know if you don't feel well or if anything breaks, and I'll be more than happy to make you well and to fix it for you. I also have some pretty stones. I have diamonds, pearls, emeralds, sapphires, rubies and many other beautiful stones. In case you would like to have one or more of these, just ask Me. By the way, if you're not comfortable, I'll give you a thermostat called prayer. For all of this, all that I ask is that you be close to Me and I be close to you. When I see you coming, I'll run to meet you. We will have good fellowship. As long as we can be close to each other and abide with each other, you just let Me know what you want."

Of course, this is all fantasy, but it may be nearer the truth than we could realize. We have made prayer so complicated, and the simple truth is that there is a God Who loves us and wants to supply our needs and our wants in exchange for our total dedication and surrender to Him and our abiding in Him. This is what David meant in **Psalm 8:4-8, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."** Hence, God made man for Himself, and everything else He made for man. When He made the strawberries, He may have said, "Ah, I hope My people enjoy these." When He made the Daffodil, perhaps He said, "I hope My children enjoy looking at these." When He made the birds of the heavens to form feathered choirs for our enjoyment, maybe He said, "I hope My people enjoy listening to these."

How sad it is that we trade all that God has for us for the cheap fellowship of the world and forfeit the riches of His presence and provisions for a few fleeting thrills!

Now the shocking thing is that we don't take Him up on this offer. The question arises, "Why don't we?" The answer is very simple. We simply DON'T BELIEVE IT! Somehow we don't believe that a feeble mortal cry could enter into the ears of the Lord God of the heaven and earth. We find it impossible to believe that mortal man could stand on the gleaming pavement of Heaven, that the infinite God could be moved by the pleas of sinful man. We find it hard to believe that before Him the angels veil their faces, but that by prayer the armies of Heaven could be called to arms and that divine majesty could obey the orders of a worm like man. We find it difficult to believe that our prayers could restrain the powers of evil and that the wheels of providence could alter their course at the request of man, and all of this happens because some feeble sinner saved by grace kneels before the throne of grace and brings his petition to God!

Oh, if we could just BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT!, oh born-again atheist on your way to Heaven but not believing that God can care for your needs. BELIEVE IT, oh saved infidel, whose sins are forgiven and whose faith is in Christ for salvation but not for provisions. BELIEVE IT, oh forgiven skeptic, whose sins are under the blood, and yet you doubt that God's bounty is available to you. BELIEVE IT, oh converted agnostic, whose life has been transformed by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit but whose faith is too weak to trust the love and generosity of the God Who saved you. BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! Oh, the limitless power at your knee-tips! BELIEVE IT when the Bible says, **"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."** (James 4:8a) BELIEVE IT when God says, **"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."** (Jeremiah 33:3) BELIEVE IT when God says, **"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer Him."** (Psalm 91:15a) BELIEVE IT when God says, **"For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth."** (Psalm 72:12a) BELIEVE IT when God says, **"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** (John 15:7) BELIEVE IT when the Bible says, **"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart."** (Psalm 37:4) BELIEVE IT when God says, **"Ask, and it shall be given you."** (Matthew 7:7a).

BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT, little widow struggling to make ends meet and praying that the cruise of oil will hold until the children are grown. BELIEVE IT, weary bread winner with the responsibility of livelihood upon your shoulders. BELIEVE IT, needy college student, as you seek to make your days of training specimen days for your days of service. BELIEVE IT, lonely orphan. BELIEVE IT, thou with the empty cupboard. BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! Believe that there is a God. Believe that He is majesty and glory. Believe that He is all-powerful. Believe that He knows you. Believe that He loves you. Believe that He is rich. Believe that He wants to give to you. Believe He wants to care for you. Believe that He will care for you if you will ask.

A little girl was adopted into a new family. She was accustomed to the orphanage where she had lived before. She came to her new home and to her new parents. Her new mother gave her a big tall glass of milk to drink. The little girl held the glass of milk in her hands and looked up in her mother's face and said, "Please tell me how deep may I drink."

The mother spoke through tears and said, "Honey, drink it all. You are not in the orphanage any more. You are my child. It's all yours. Drink it all! There is more for you where that came from."

Oh, how often we look up at the face of God and say, "God, how deep may I drink?"

The Lord looks down with compassion and says, Oh, beloved children, I'm your heavenly Father. Drink it all! Drink it all! Drink it all! There is more where that came from."

Years ago an aged lady lived in poverty. The people of the church found out about her condition and came to visit her to see if they could help. The pastor inquired concerning her family. He asked her if she had any children. She said, "Yes, I have a son in South America."

He said, "Does your son ever write?"

She said, "No, he never writes."

The pastor said, "You mean you never receive a thing from him?"

"Oh yes," she said. "Once a month I receive a little green cardboard, but he never writes anything."

The pastor excitedly asked, "Where are those cardboards?"

She said, "Well, I needed to paper the back room, so I used them to paper the walls."

The pastor said to her, "Take me to the back room quickly." She did so. The pastor looked at her and said, "Lady, those are money orders. You are rich and don't realize it."

Beloved Christian, you too are rich and don't realize it. BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! Believe that God answers prayer. Prayer has divided seas. Prayer has rolled up flowing rivers. Prayer has brought streams of water from flinty rock. Prayer has opened barren wombs. Prayer has given life to sterile seed. Prayer has quenched flames of fire. Prayer has restrained the fury of lions. Prayer has nullified the poison serpent. Prayer has marshaled the stars of heaven to battle. Prayer has arrested the flight of the sun. Prayer has burst open gates of iron. Prayer has summoned the dead from their tombs. Prayer has beckoned angels from their starry homes. Prayer has called back the dead to life. Prayer has delivered God's people from the raging sea.

BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! Believe what God has for you in answer to prayer. Believe it, fretful soul. Believe it, doubting Thomas. Moses prayed and a sea was divided. Joshua prayed and Achan was discovered. Hannah prayed and Samuel was born. Elijah prayed and the windows of heaven were shut and opened. Daniel prayer and lions were restrained. Elisha prayed and the Jordan was divided. Paul prayed and prison doors swung open. The church prayed and Peter was delivered from prison. Jacob prayed and became a prince of God. Isaiah prayed and 185,000 Assyrians were destroyed. George Mueller prayed and 1700 orphans were fed. Asa prayed and victory came to the cause of God. The thief on the cross prayed and accompanied Jesus to paradise.

BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT, BELIEVE IT! Believe it, thou with a sick body. BELIEVE IT, though with a faint heart. BELIEVE IT, thou with a fearful soul. BELIEVE IT, thou with a perplexed mind. BELIEVE IT! Cannot the God Who parts the Red Sea send manna from Heaven? Cannot the God Who sends manna from Heaven send water from the rock in Horeb? Cannot the God Who caused the waters to gush forth from the smitten rock lead with a pillar of cloud by day? Cannot the God Who leads with the pillar of cloud by day lead with a pillar of fire by night? Cannot that God lead us across a wilderness of life and into the promised land of victory? Oh, yes, He can! I know He can! Ten thousand times ten thousand, I know He can!

BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT, weary pastor with the burdens of leadership upon your shoulder. BELIEVE IT, tired bread winner. BELIEVE IT, lonely widow. BELIEVE IT, orphan child. BELIEVE IT, sacrificing college student. BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT! BELIEVE IT! Believe that there is a God in Heaven. Believe that He is rich. Believe that He loves you. Believe that He offers you your

needs and your wants in exchange for your enjoying the blessedness of abiding in Him and having Him and His Word abiding in you!

Chapter 3 – God Wants to Answer Your prayers!

Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Just as an earthly father wants to give his child the desires of his heart and especially the needs of his life, even so does our heavenly father want to answer our prayers. The Bible is filled with evidences of this. For example, notice **Isaiah 45:11**, " Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me."

Notice the definite command, "**Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons.**" God wants us to ask because God wants to supply our needs, and He wants to answer our prayers. It is the delight of His heart to care for His own.

Now notice in the same verse the words, "**concerning the work of My hands command ye Me.**" The Lord is saying, "Tell Me what you want. Let Me know your needs. Let Me know your wants." The word "**command**" here means "charge." The Lord is saying, "Charge ye Me. Tell Me what to do." Now the Christian has no right to be presumptuous in ordering God to do things as a general would order a private in the army, but there is a blessed teaching here that a kind and merciful and loving Heavenly father is waiting with open arms, full coffers and packed cupboards for His children to ask!

Then there is a wonderful promise in **Romans 8:32**, "**He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**" This may be the most amazing prayer promise in the Bible! God is telling us that if He would give His own Son for us, that certainly should be evidence that He would supply our needs and answer our prayers.

Suppose someone had come to me years ago and said, "Brother Hyles, give me your boy David."

I would say, "But I love him. He is my only son, and he's just a little fellow, and I want to rear him. I have so many dreams for him."

Suppose the person prevailed until finally I said, "Okay, you can have my son. What do you plan to do with him?"

He says, "We plan to kill him." Now through the fondest imagination I would never have done such a thing, but suppose I did give my son and then the person said, "May I have his shoes?"

I would have said, "Good night, fellow. If I will give you my son, I dead sure will let you have his shoes."

Now the person asks, "May I have his clothes?"

"Of course, you may have his clothes. If I'll give you my son, I'll give you anything."

God looks down and says, "I want to give you things. I want to answer your prayers, and proof of it is Calvary." **John 3:16**, "**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that**

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God is saying that if He was willing to give His only begotten Son for us, isn't that proof that He wants to give us our needs and, yes, within the boundaries of right, our wants?

The word **"freely"** in **Romans 8:32** is the word "charisma" from which we get our words, "grace" and "gracious." God is saying that He will graciously give us all things. Oh, how he wants to answer our prayers!

The fact that God loves for us to pray is so beautifully given to us in **Revelation 5:8**, **"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."** The word **"odours"** in this verse means "perfume." Our prayers are like sweet-smelling perfume to our God. Sometimes we say, "Those words are music to my ears." God says, "Your prayers are perfume to my nostrils." He is saying that He loves to hear us pray. This is why in the great type of prayer of the altar of incense, God was burning sweet smelling spices, and the smoke of them went heaven-ward. This is a symbol of our prayers which are sweet aroma to our Heavenly father.

God's delight is beautifully given to us in **Micah 7:18**, **"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."** That last line is one of the most beautiful orchids in God's garden of flowers. Notice the words, **"He delighteth in mercy."** Oh, how God loves to hear us pray the prayer of repentance and of seeking forgiveness! The Lord in Heaven looks down and says, "Oh, I'm so glad about that. He asked for mercy. He asked forgiveness, and I delight to do that. I am so pleased he asked." That is why He reminds us early in the verse that "He retaineth not His anger forever." No wonder Micah said, **"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?"** It is no wonder that in **Micah 7:19** he said, **"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."** Why does God do this? He does it because He loves to do it! Now God cannot pardon us apart from the blood of Jesus because His justice demands that type of settlement, but how please is our God when we come according to the terms of His justice and ask forgiveness! How happy He is! How delighted it makes Him to extend mercy to us!

How sweet and precious are those verses in **II Chronicles 7:14,15**, **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place."** All of us are familiar with verse 14. It is the great revival verse in the Bible, but after God tells us that if we will humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways, that He will hear from heaven, forgive our sins and heal our land, then a beautiful statement is made by our Heavenly father when He says, **"Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place."** God says, "I gave you a promise; I'll be watching for you to come, and I'll be listening for you to pray." The implication here is like a person who is waiting for an important message, perhaps one who is waiting for a wanted phone call. God is saying, "I made you a deal. I gave you a good offer. I think you will like it, and I'll be watching and I'll be listening for you to take me up on it." How tender! How beautiful! How blessed!

Then, of course, there is that amazing kingdom promise that opens the door to the nature of God which is found in **Isaiah 65:24**, **"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."** God so wants to answer our prayers that sometimes

when He knows what we are going to pray for, He answers before we pray. He looks over our shoulder and sees what is on our prayer list! He even reads our minds and knows for what we are going to ask! He loves to answer our prayers so much that it is not uncommon for Him to go ahead and give us what we are going to ask for even before we ask.

Oh, if we could just realize the limitless power and resources we have in prayer! If we could just realize how our Lord wants us to draw nigh unto Him and how He longs to give us things that He would give us if we would ever present our claim! The Psalmist burst forth in praise in **Psalm 65:2**, "**O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.**" Ah, what a beautiful statement! David just looks up to Heaven and calls God by a different name. He calls Him, "**Thou that hearest prayer.**" This could even be one of the names of God. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Bless His holy name! He answers prayer. HE ANSWERS PRAYER! HE ANSWERS PRAYER! HE ANSWERS PRAYER! Hear it, hungry one. Hear it, needy one. Hear it, lonely one. Hear it, suffering one. Hear it, saddened one. Hear it, melancholy one. HE ANSWERS PRAYER! HE ANSWERS PRAYER! HE ANSWERS PRAYER! Hear it! hear it! hear it! Oh pastor, tell your parishioners that He answers prayer! Preacher, tell your congregation that He answers prayer! Teacher, tell your students that He answers prayer! Parents, tell your children that He answers prayer!

Did you know God is so desirous to hear and answer prayer that He will even sometimes hear the prayers of the unsaved? **Genesis 21:14-17**, "**And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.**"

There is another example in **Acts 10:1-4**, "**There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.**"

Notice also **Jonah 1:5,14**, "**Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.**"

There are three beautiful examples. God heard Hagar as she left Abraham and Sarah, carrying her illegitimate son. The merciful, compassionate, loving Heavenly Father heard the cry of the child and felt the heartbeat of the mother. God was so pleased with the sincerity of Cornelius that He heard him because God knew Cornelius was on his way to Jesus. Likewise, the cry of the sailors was heard in the book of Jonah. Though, theologically, one who does not know Jesus as Saviour cannot enter into the presence of God, sometimes God *DOES* hear the cry of the unsaved and from His heart of compassion helps him.

Beloved, are we not made in the image of God? Hence, whatever is good about us is a reflection of the personality of God. Then if we love to answer the requests of our children, would not God want to answer us? There are so many places in the Bible that show us God wants to be *loved* as we want to be *loved*. He likes *attention* as we like *attention*. He loves *praise* as we love *praise*. He loves *adoration* as we love *adoration*, and yes, he loves to answer His children as we love to answer ours.

One of the sweetest examples of this is in **Luke 24:28,29**, "**And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.**" This is so sweet and beautiful. I love those words, "**And he made as though he would have gone further.**" Our Lord has been walking with the disciples on the Emmaus road. (Bear in mind, He was in His resurrection body, for this was after the resurrection.) They got to their destination and the Bible says, "**He made as though he would have gone further.**" I like that. Have you ever been at someone's house and it was about time for you to go and they asked you to stay for dinner? You wanted to stay, but you wanted to know for sure that they wanted you to stay, so very shyly you said, "Oh, no, I must go! You are about to eat, and I have to go," and you hoped they would say, "Please stay." When they asked again, "Won't you stay, please? We really want you to," you said, "Oh, I guess I will." This is exactly what was happening to the Lord Jesus. He just acted like He was going farther. He wanted to stay. The Bible says, "But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us," and then it says, "**He went in to tarry with them.**" What a Saviour!

Our Lord was a great deal like us also in **II Kings 19:14,15**, "**And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.**" Hezekiah took a letter and spread it before the Lord and said, "Lord, You can read it for Yourself." How beautiful! Now the Lord had already read the letter, but He was such a friend and so personal to Hezekiah that Hezekiah said, "Here, Lord, You can read it for Yourself." Then in **verse 15** Hezekiah sort of "battered up" the Lord a little bit when he said, "**O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.**" Then after Hezekiah bragged on God, he said in **verse 16**, "**LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see.**"

Not long ago I decided to take our three married daughters, Becky, Linda, and Cindy shopping. Our daughter-in-law, Paula, was also visiting in our home at the time, and since Paula and Becky live a good distance away, I took this opportunity to take all four of them to a ladies' shop to buy them each a new dress. We were in the van driving over to the ladies' apparel store. Becky said to me, "Dad, isn't your hair getting thicker?" Now she has used that little trick on me for years, but do you know, she took me by surprise and I didn't even realize what she had in mind!

I said, "Well, thank you, Puddin', but I don't really think it is."

"Oh," said Becky, "Dad, your hair is getting thicker. You're not losing your hair like you used to. I think it's growing back in."

I gullibly fell hook, line and sinker, and though I did not know it, I was being led as a lamb to the slaughter, dumb before his shearers! "Well," said I, "maybe I just learned how to 'rat it' a little bit."

Linda chimed in and said, "Dad, I have been thinking about that too. Your hair is getting thicker."

Cindy said, "Linda and I have been talking about it, and we both agree."

Paula said, "That's right. You've got more hair than you used to have!"

With a blush on my face and as modest a look as I could generate, I said, "Well, thank you."

A couple of hours later we came out of the ladies' store, and each of them had gotten three dresses! It was the next day when I suddenly realized that I had been taken. They knew how to get things from Dad!

Hezekiah knew how to get things from God, too. He reminded God of His greatness, and God didn't mind a bit.

This same method is used in **II Samuel 7:21,22**, "**For Thy word's sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou done all these great things, to make Thy servant know them. Wherefore Thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee.**" Is it that God is like us or that we are like God? Be that as it may, there is a similarity. The great heart of God enjoys being loved, being praised, being adored, being worshipped.

Now notice **II Samuel 7:25**, "**And now, O LORD God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said.**" Notice those last five words, "**do as Thou hast said.**" Ah, this is beautiful! How close is the relationship that the servant of God had with his God! Then in **verse 27** David reminds God of His promise, "**For Thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee.**" Notice those words, "**for Thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house.**" David said, "Lord, You told me You would do it. Now You are such a wonderful God! I know You will do this because You always keep Your promise!" Look at **verse 28**, "**And now, O Lord GOD, Thou art that God, and Thy words be true, and Thou hast promised this goodness unto Thy servant.**" Here David reminds God that He is That God and that His words are true. How intimate was the relationship between David and His God! No wonder David was a man after God's own heart! No wonder he held such a special place in the heart of God!

There is a closeness that the Christian can have with his God. This is when the Christian and his God become more than just the Creator-creature, or just the God-people, and even more than just the Father-child. This is when the Christian obeys the commandments of his Lord and becomes a soul winner and a servant and henceforth becomes His friend. **John 15:14**, "**Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**" As a friend there is a certain intimacy that the Christian can enjoy with his God that is so sacred, so beautiful and so intimate!

On one occasion when God was tempted to destroy His people, Moses spoke as a friend to God and told the Lord that he was afraid the Egyptians were sure going to be critical of Him because He had promised that His people would be taken to the promised land, Moses said, "Lord, when the Egyptians hear this, they are not going to like it, and they're not going to have much faith in You."

How clear it is, God loves to answer the prayers of His people! God wants to answer prayers!

Chapter 4 – Why Does God Want Us to pray?

Luke 18:1, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

I Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing."

Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Why in the economy of God did He ask us to pray in order to receive our needs? Could He not simply give us our needs? He knows them before we pray; in fact, He knows them better than we do. Why would God have us beg for some of our needs? Since He loves us so much, why doesn't He simply give us what He knows we need, or at least require us to make only one requisition? The answer to this is in the very purpose for our being. God made man for the praise of His glory that He might enjoy fellowship with him. There are several reasons why God uses prayer as a means to His supplying our needs and, yes, our wants.

1. *Prayer is a way of starting a conversation.* Continual prayer is a way that God uses in perpetuating that conversation. Suppose one of our daughters came to me when she was a child and said, "Daddy, can I have some ice cream?"

I would say, "Now Linda, why would you want ice cream?"

Linda would say, "'Cause I like it."

I would say, "You just had some last week."

She would reply, "But I want some today."

I would ask her, "Give me some good reasons why you should have some ice cream."

She would reply, "'Cause you're the best daddy in the whole world!"

"Give me another good reason."

"'Cause you're the handsomest daddy in the whole world!"

"Do you have any other reasons?"

"'Cause you're the strongest and smartest daddy in the whole world."

I would say, "Linda, do you really want some ice cream?"

She would say, "Daddy, please give me some ice cream!"

Then I might say, "Give me a big hug and a kiss." She would hug me and kiss me, and then I would give her the ice cream.

Now the truth is I was going to give her the ice cream all along. There was never any doubt in my mind but that Linda could have the ice cream. Why then did I make her beg? Why did I make her hug and kiss me? That was a sure way I could get some loving. This is why sometimes God waits to answer. He wants some lovin'. If He is going to spend some time with us, He often has to prolong His response in order that we may fellowship with Him. Since most of our talking with God is asking, God uses this tool, no doubt, in order that many may desire to spend time with Him.

2. *Prayer enables the mind of God to flow through our minds.* **Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."** When two people talk, their minds merge. No person is exactly the same after talking to another. Communication between individuals causes a merging of the minds that is impossible to prevent.

Years ago I set out to know older pastors. I was pastoring at the age of 21. I realized that there were some things that a 21-year-old mind could not possess. I set out to have older men preach in my pulpit. I invited men who were in their sixties and seventies and even eighties to preach for me. Perhaps I could have had younger men who would have been more dynamic and maybe even could have preached greater revival meetings, but I wanted to get to know older men. I realized that there was something they could give my people that I could not give them. I also realized that there was something they could do for me that nothing else could do. Though I did not presume on their time, I did take advantage of every opportunity to eat with them, to drive them places and to be around them. I was letting their minds empty into mine, and as our minds merged, I believe I matured more quickly than I could have had I not allowed their minds to flow into mine. Through prayer my mind merges with the great mind of God. This enables His mind to flow into mine. This is just another reason why God did not choose to supply our needs apart from our asking. He knew that His influence on us could be immeasurable if our minds could merge with His in prayer.

3. *Prayer makes the journey more enjoyable oftentimes than the destination.* The fellowship with God can be more wonderful than the receiving of the answer to prayer.

Suppose a boy said to his girlfriend, "Walk down to the store with me while I get some milk and bread." On the trip to and from the store they laugh and have fun and may even snicker a little, "I like you," or an "I love you." Now which was the most fun—getting the milk and the bread, or going to the store together?

The Lord said, "You can have the milk and bread, but I'm not going to have it delivered to your house. I want us to go to the store together that we may enjoy fellowship one with the other." Perhaps the richest thing about prayer is not the receiving of our request but the means of receiving it; that is, fellowship with the very God of God's and the Creator of the universe.

Years ago I was in the country of Jamaica. I decided to buy one of the straw purses for which they are so famous. I went to the straw market, picked out one merchant and found the purse that I liked best and asked, "How much is that purse?"

He said, "Fifteen dollars."

I said, "I'll give you five."

He said, "Oh, no, no. It cost me more than that, but you can have it for \$12."

I said, "I'll give you eight dollars, and that's it! You can take it or leave it!"

He said, "Mister, I wouldn't sell you the purse for \$15 now because you have taken my bargaining power away. You've taken all the joy out of selling you the purse. There is no amount of money that you could give me for the purse now."

I did not buy the purse, because he would not sell it to me, but I did extend my hand and tell him that I admired him. It was his trade that gave him joy and not the receipt of money. He just liked to bargain, and if he couldn't bargain, he wasn't interested in selling.

Yes, God could have sent to us our needs having already known them, but God knew that there was a much more enjoyable way for us to get our needs and wants from Him.

4. *Prayer always makes God's provisions a delightful surprise.* If He simply delivered our needs and wants to our doorsteps, we would not be surprised. It would become just a normal thing. Yet even the possessor of the strongest faith always has an element of delightful surprise when he receives from God the answers to his prayers. I have been walking with God for many years. I have been asking Him for things and pleading with Him to supply the needs of my ministry for over a third of a century, but to be quite frank, I am still often surprised when I get the answer. I still light up like a child and want to share with others the marvellous answers to prayer that God gives to me. It seems as if after all these years, I would not be surprised, but God likes it that way! He likes to see the brightness of our eyes! He likes to see our hands clap together and our feet leap for joy when He provides our needs!

5. *The use of prayer is a means whereby God supplies our needs and prevents us from taking God for granted.* While the Israelites were in the wilderness, God could have sent them enough manna at one time to last them for a month, but He chose to require them to gather the manna every day. This kept them constantly praying and believing and, yes, even needing. This brought a certain amount of growing love as each day they enjoyed the blessing of gathering the manna rather than just having that blessing monthly.

When I arrive at church in the morning, the security guards meet me at the car and walk me to my office. They escort me to my car at night and watch over me. When I arrive at church in the morning I am glad to see them. They are glad to see me. We joke a little bit together and "howdy" for a little while. This is only for a few minutes, but it is very enjoyable to all of us. Now those guards do not have to meet me at my car. They could protect me just as easily if they were on the roof of the building, watching down, as I walk from the car to the office. Why then do they meet me at the car? Why don't they just post themselves on the roof of the building for surveillance purposes? I'll tell you why. We love to fellowship! I like it and they like it. If they just protected me, we would miss a great deal. God in Heaven looks down on us. He could from a distance simply supply our needs, but God wants to come down where we are and He wants us to be where He is so that through prayer that which He knows to do for us can be done just as well and much more enjoyably. He wants to be with us. He wants to make His providing for us a delight to Him and to us. He loves our fellowship. Through prayer His great mind can flow into our finite minds making it possible for us to serve others better and to let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. Not only does God want to provide for us, but God wants to use the tool of prayer as a means of this provision in order that He may fellowship with us as He supplies our needs and our wants. What a blessed bonus this is to the child of God! Not only does he have the great security of God's provision and protection, but the child of God has the great intimacy of God's fellowship as He protects and as He secures His children.

Chapter 5 – The Original Purpose of Prayer

Genesis 1:26, " And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Man was given dominion over all the earth. He was God's representative or viceroy. God gave him two main purpose: fellowship and work. Because of the fellowship and the work, man was given this dominion, and prayer was the tool of dominion. Note the divine order—fellowship, work, dominion and prayer. As God's earthly viceroy, man had to apply for his needs to carry out his work. This applying was prayer. Now the wishes of man were to be granted with two prerequisites—fellowship and work.

But man fell! When he fell, his fellowship with God was broken. Hence, he lost his rule or dominion. Since he had no rule or dominion, he lost his desire to pray, for no longer was he God's viceroy.

God, however, in His mercy and grace planned a way of restitution. Man who is saved now is both the first creature and the second creature. He is that creature made for dominion as is shown in **Psalm 8:4-8, " What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"**

Man is also that creature who is dominated. There is the old nature that is dominated and the new nature that is meant to dominate. This new nature has been restored to fellowship and work. Because man has been restored to fellowship and work, to what degree he fellowships with God and works, he has that same amount of dominion. So he needs to pray again, for as God's viceroy he needs to requisition God for his needs with which to carry on the work. Since prayer is needed for dominion, and since dominion is allowed by fellowship and work, to whatever degree we abide in Christ and work, we have that amount of dominion and, hence, that degree of power in prayer.

John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

It's up to you! If you abide in Christ much and work much, you have much dominion and power in God's economy and God's plan. If you abide in Christ little and work little, you have little dominion.

Man was originally created to have total dominion; hence, he had total prayer. When man lost his dominion, he lost his desire for prayer, for he had no reason to requisition God. Now that man through Christ has had the opportunity for fellowship and work for God restored, he can have as much dominion as he chooses to work and abide in Christ. It is entirely up to man how much

dominion he has. When he has this dominion, he will need provisions, help, power and blessing. He will requisition God for these, and this is prayer!

The millennial age when Jesus rules and reigns for 1000 years will restore man's dominion completely. **Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."**

Perhaps the depth of this teaching should be summarized as follows:

1. *Man was created and given dominion over all the earth.*
2. *In return for this dominion or power, he was asked to give God fellowship and work.*
3. *Because he had this dominion and fellowship and work, it was necessary for him to pray in order to receive the needs to carry out his work.*
4. *The only prerequisites for this prayer were fellowship and work.* With that, man earned dominion, and with dominion, man needed to pray.
5. *Man fell.* Sin broke the fellowship. Man lost his dominion and lost his desire to pray.
6. *God planned a way of restoration through the death and resurrection of Christ.*
7. *Redeemed man has both the first creature and the second creature—that one made for dominion and that one who is dominated.*
8. *The new one can have fellowship and work.*
9. *Hence, to whatever degree man fellowships with God and works for God, he can have dominion again.*
10. *Because he has dominion, he wants to pray again.*
11. *Since prayer is needed by dominion, and dominion is allowed by fellowship and work, to whatever degree man abides in Christ and works, God gives man that degree of dominion and, hence, that degree of power in prayer.*
12. *The millennium will restore that dominion completely because it restores the fellowship and work completely.* Hence, it restores our total dependence on Christ and our desire to requisition Him for our needs which, of course, is prayer.

Chapter 6 — Answered Prayer Depends on a Changeless God

In **Malachi 3:6** we find that God does not change. **"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."** In **Hebrews 13:8** we find that God the Son does not change. **"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."** Then we find that the Spirit is called the eternal spirit; hence, God the Holy Spirit does not change. Our triune God, then, is a changeless God. The Father never changes, the Son never changes and the Spirit never changes. Now notice **James 1:17**, **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."** Note the words, **"no variableness."** The word **"variableness"** means "two views of the same person." There is only one view of God; there will never be another, for in Him there are no two views or variableness! Note also the words, **"neither shadow of turning."** This means that no shadowing can put a shadow over the unchanging One.

Now notice that His changelessness is connected with His providing for us. He is talking about His gifts to us. His providing for us and giving to us are beautifully connected in this same verse. He wants us to know that His gifts are always available on the same basis. He never changes; hence, His giving never changes. As is mentioned in other chapters, there is a great danger of ultra-dispensationalism. Some things in the Bible do change, but some things never change; some things outlive a dispensation and cross over the line between the dispensations.

For example, symbols change; substance never changes. Once Jewish boys were required to be circumcised. This is because circumcision was a symbol. Now the symbol is changed and in this age Jewish boys are not required to be circumcised. **Galatians 5:6**, **"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."**

Once the priests brought animal sacrifices to the altar. These were symbols, and symbols change. No longer does a priest bring sacrifices to the altar. **Hebrews 10:11,26**, **"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."**

Once Jewish families rigidly observed the sabbath, but these sabbaths were only symbols. They are no longer to be kept. **Colossians 2:14-17**, **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."**

There was a time when Jewish families observed seasons and holy days. They were symbols. These symbols have changed. No longer are these days to be observed. **Galatians 5:4**, **"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."**

At one time Jewish families restrained from certain meats. These were symbols. The symbols have changed. **I Timothy 4:4,5**, **"For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."**

However, substance does not change. That which was symbolized by the symbol does not change. Salvation, for example, is the same in every age. **Acts 10:43, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."** The nature of God is the same in every age. **Malachi 3:6, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."** His answering of prayer is the same in every age. **Psalm 65:2, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."**

This means that all general prayer promises are for all people. Substance does not change. For example, **II Chronicles 7:14** applies today as much as it did in the day of Solomon when it was given. **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."** **Jeremiah 33:3** is as much for today as it was the day it was written by Jeremiah. **"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."** **John 15:7** is as much for today as it was the day when Jesus spoke it. **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** These are things of substance, and substance does not change. The types of Jesus change, but Jesus never changes. **Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."** The symbols of God the Father change, but God the Father never changes. **Malachi 3:6, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."** It is because of His changelessness that He answers prayer. That is why He connects the two in the same passage so beautifully and so closely.

Now observe carefully the following:

1. *God the Father has never changed.*
2. *God the Son has never changed.*
3. *God the Holy Spirit has never changed.*
4. *Hence, Jesus was always the God-human in His personality.* He is still the God-man. For example, **I Timothy 2:5** says, **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man..."** Who is that mediator today? That mediator is **"the man Christ Jesus."** Notice, He is still called in His glorified body "the man Christ Jesus." Hence, His humanity was always, just as His deity was always!
6. *We are made in His image.*
7. *The God-man was not just an afterthought, nor did Jesus just become the God-man in Bethlehem.* This is not to say that Jesus could ever sin, but He has always been what He is today.
8. *God made us to have a race, shall we say, of "little Jesuses" that He may enjoy fellowship with that race.*
9. *Jesus came not only to save us and die for us and to pay the penalty for our sins, but He came to show us what we were meant to be.*

Thank God for His changelessness which gives us confidence that His answering of prayer is likewise changeless. God in His wisdom links His changelessness to His giving to us, teaching us that in every age and in every dispensation He is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God!

Chapter 7 – Prayer and the Sovereignty of God

Psalm 2, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Some argue that because God is sovereign, He determines all that there is to be. These say that God is dependent only upon Himself; hence, mere mortals could never influence His actions. How then could He be moved to action by the prayer of a mortal? They say if God is such, then an answer to our prayers would mean condescension to our weakness.

Now this would be true if God were only one Person, but fortunately, God is three Persons, and in the great doctrine of the trinity, we reconcile God's sovereignty and man's influence on Him to do what He would not have done had man not have prayed. Let us begin this reconciliation.

1. *God gave His Son equality and fellowship with Himself.* John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

2. *God gave His Son a place as counsellor.* Isaiah 9:6,7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." As is mentioned in other chapters, the word "counsellor" here means mainly that Jesus was and is the Heavenly Father's counsellor.

3. *God gave Jesus asking privileges.* Psalm 2:6-8, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Note the words, "Thou always hearest Me," in John 11:42. So the first praying was done by Jesus to the Father.

4. *The Father and Son always were together.* Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The word "God" here is the word "Elohim," which is a word that means "plurality and unity." Notice also Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Especially look at the words, "Our image." Here we have the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit working together in unity.

5. *All that God does is done through prayer.* **John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."** Jesus said, "Father, let's make a world," and that world was made.

6. *Hence, prayer had its source in the very being of God Himself, as the Father listened to the counsel and prayer of His Son.*

7. *This means that the Son has influence on the Father.*

8. *Since the Son influences the Father, if we can influence the Son, we can influence the Father.* **John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** **John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** We have to come through the Son to the Father. Now the key to this is the Son's union with the Father and our union with the Son. **Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."** This is why the unbelieving Jew cannot pray. This is why the liberal who denies the deity of Jesus cannot pray. It IS true that mortal men cannot determine the actions of a sovereign God, but the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, can determine the actions of His Father, and since Jesus is the God-man of the trinity, this very nature makes it possible. Man could not enter into a union with God, but as God, Jesus can, and God could not enter into a union with man, but as man, Jesus can. So we contact the Man, Christ Jesus, and the Father contacts the God, Christ Jesus; hence, man contacts God through His Counsellor, and our Saviour, the God-man, Christ Jesus.

Perhaps a small chapter like this is not vital in the average Christian's prayer life, but to one who dwells upon the greatness of God, such a thought is sweet and precious. We as men can influence the Man, Christ Jesus. Our Heavenly Father as God can be influenced by the God, Christ Jesus. Hence, through Jesus man can be used as a tool with which to open the great heart of God.

Chapter 8 – The Philosophy Behind Prayer and fasting

Matthew 17:19-21, " Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Jesus had returned from the mount of transfiguration. He performed a miracle that the disciples tried to perform in His absence and could not. They asked Him, "Why could we not?" His answer was, "Because of your unbelief." Their question and His answer leads us to several conclusions.

1. *Faith is the ONE condition on which all divine power rests.* The Lord Jesus said, "**According to your faith be it unto you.**" (Matthew 9:29a) Again He said, "**All things are possible to him that believeth.**" (Mark 9:23b)

2. *There are degrees of faith.* The Lord Jesus said, "**According to your faith be it unto you,**" which means little faith, little answered prayer—more faith, more answered prayer—much faith, much answered prayer.

3. *If answered prayer comes because of faith, and if there are degrees of faith, then there are degrees of answered prayer.* The same Saviour Who said, "**According to your faith,**" said, "**be it unto you.**" He said, "**This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting,**" which means that there are degrees of answered prayer. Small faith gets small answers—more faith gets larger answers—much faith gets the largest answers.

4. *This means if we are to get our prayers to grow, we must get our faith to grow.* If faith is the one condition on which all divine power rests, and if there are degrees of faith, there are also degrees of answered prayer. Hence, we must find some way to get our faith to grow.

5. *When the Lord Jesus says, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting,"* He is teaching us that prayer and fasting generate faith. (Mark 9:29) This means that faith needs both prayer and fasting. Prayer is the grasping of the invisible. Fasting is the letting go of the visible. One's degree of faith depends on the degree between the visible and the invisible. As we fast, that is, withdraw ourselves from physical appetites and the satisfying of the senses, we are letting go of the visible. As we pray, we are grasping the invisible.

6. *There must be times that we let go of the visible completely and hold completely to the invisible if we are to reach the ultimate in prayer.* Now to be sure, we are left here on earth in physical bodies. We must be fed, we must have our physical appetites satisfied, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that if it is not done to excess. There should, however, be seasons when we let go of the visible completely and grasp the invisible with all of our hearts. These are the seasons when we need miracles to take place.

This also means that our release of the visible should depend upon the greatness of our needs in answer to prayer. Just as fasting and praying is grasping completely the invisible and letting go completely of the visible, there are degrees of fasting and praying which would be determined by the size of our needs and the bigness of our prayers.

There are dangers. One danger is holding on to the invisible and not letting go of the visible. Another would be letting go of the visible but not holding on to the invisible. For example, there are times when I feel that I should fast one day a week. I may have some need that is greater than usual and I might give one day a week to fasting and to as much praying as possible. Suppose the offerings were down at church and I had a burden about them. Suppose I had the need for several hundred dollars in my own life. Needs of this magnitude might drive me to letting go of the visible for one day a week and for as much time as possible during that day holding on to the invisible, which is prayer and fasting.

At other times, however, while the children were growing up, I might have been really concerned about them. I remember one time one of the children was just not doing well at all, and I was really heartbroken. I prayed and fasted for that child for three or four days. This was because the need was of a greater magnitude than that of a weekly financial need at church or the need or the need of a few hundred dollars in my personal life.

Then there were the days when I was praying for God to give us Hyles-Anderson College campus. This beautiful 78-acre campus with unbelievably built buildings was seemingly unavailable, but I knew that God wanted us to have it, so I would fast maybe for a week at a time and pray that God would give us the campus. Then one night a month I would pray all night long. You see, when the burden was bigger, the need was of a greater magnitude. For even greater needs, I have fasted as long as two weeks. Now it does little good to fast unless one prays. It does little good to let go of the visible if one does not grasp the invisible.

If one thinks that all is lawful unless it is expressly forbidden in the Bible, then he will never know great power in prayer. We are not only to lay aside every sin, but as a runner in the race for God, we are to lay aside every weight. **Hebrews 12:1, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."** The soldier in warfare takes only what is needed for battle. There are many things that he cannot take that would not be sinful to take, but those things are too cumbersome, and the battle would be lost. A runner in a race not only lays aside his drinking and smoking, but he also lays aside his overcoat, his heavy boots and things that are not sinful to wear but would cause him not to win the race. Eating is not wrong if it is not done in excess. Physical love within the plan of God is not wrong. The enjoyment of nature is not wrong, but there are times when we have to lay aside that which is not wrong in order that we may let go for a season of the visible and grasp the invisible so that we may know the miracle-working power of God in answer to our prayers.

Hence, since faith is the one condition on which all divine power rests, and since there are degrees of faith, there must also be degrees of answered prayer. Therefore, if we are to get our answers to grow, we must get our faith to grow. Our faith grows by prayer, which is the grasping of the invisible, and by fasting, which is the letting go of the visible. As we do these two things, our faith grows, and as our faith grows, our answered prayer grows. This is the philosophy behind prayer and fasting.

Chapter 9 – God Is Trying to Get It to You!

I heard a sincere, but misguided, preacher preach who listed every condition for answered prayer one after the other, as though these conditions formed an obstacle course. He said that if we wanted to have our prayers answered, first we would have to have faith! **Matthew 9:29b**, "According to your faith be it unto you." **Matthew 21:22**, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." **Mark 9:23**, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." **Matthew 21:21**, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." **Mark 11:22-24**, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

That preacher then said that after we have faith, we must find somebody with whom we can pray and with whom we can agree concerning the petition! **Matthew 18:19**, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Now that he was over two obstacles of the course, the preacher came to fasting. **Mark 9:29**, "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Now that we have faith, and we have found someone to share the prayer with us, and we have fasted, according to that preacher's message, we still would not be able to receive our answer because we are also supposed to ask in Jesus' name! **John 14:13,14**, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it."

He then added to this obstacle course, abiding in Christ and His Word abiding in us. **John 15:7**, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

He concluded by adding the requirement of keeping on asking! **Luke 18:7**, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

So, he added these six things together—faith plus praying with someone who is in agreement plus fasting plus asking in Jesus' name plus abiding in Christ and His Word abiding in us plus perseverance in prayer. "Now," he said, "God will answer our prayer."

This dear brother misunderstands God! God is not making it difficult for us to get our prayers answered! God wants us to have our prayers answered! These are not six steps to answered prayer—these are six different ways that we can have our prayers answered. It is not all of these, but rather, any of these! It is not faith plus an agreeing prayer partner plus fasting plus asking in Jesus' name plus abiding plus perseverance. It is faith or praying with someone in agreement or fasting or asking in Jesus' name or abiding or perseverance.

Let us imagine a Christian coming to God to pray. He claims a promise on faith such as **Matthew 9:29, "Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."** However, the truth is, we sometimes cannot believe! Many times our prayers are answered and we are surprised. In fact, in big answers to prayer we are almost always surprised. So the Christian comes to God and says, "Dear God, I'm afraid I can't get my prayer answered because I just don't have enough faith."

The Lord says, "Wait a minute! I have another way. Don't leave. Try this: Find somebody who can agree with you on this matter, and come and ask Me again. Claim **Matthew 18:19, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."**

However, it is harder than one thinks to find someone to agree with him and share his burden in prayer. Each has his own needs, burdens and ministry, so it is sometimes hard to find someone with whom we can truly unite in prayer.

I remember a number of years ago when Hyles-Anderson College was purchasing our present campus. We had to raise two and one-half million dollars in 18 months, and we came close to the deadline without the money! Having faith in the prayers of Dr. John R. Rice, I asked him one day if he would join me in a prayer meeting for the money. He agreed to do so. So we knelt to pray. I prayed something like this: "Oh, Lord, please supply our needs. You know that our college is dedicated to You, and You know it is Your college. Lord, please give us the two and one-half million dollars." I continued to pray in that manner, and then it came Dr. Rice's time to pray.

He prayed something like this: "Dear Lord, bless the Sword of the Lord and supply the needs, and dear Lord, don't forget the Voice of Revival broadcast. Please help us to meet the needs there. Lord, bless the Sword Conferences." He continued to pray for every ministry that was his and then said, "Amen." He hadn't said a word about the two and one-half million dollars that our college needed. His burden was not my burden; and my burden was not his!

Once he asked me to pray with him the same way. He prayed for his needs and then asked me to pray. I intended to pray for his needs, but I got so busy praying for my own ministry that I was a long time arriving at the place where I could pray for him. I finally looked up, and he was gone. He had given up on my sharing his burden!

So the Christian must come to God claiming the promises by faith, but he finds he cannot have the necessary faith. God says, "Okay, get someone to pray with you who can share the burden." Again he returns to the Father and says, "Father, I'm sorry, I have failed; I can't find anyone to share the burden," whereupon God says, "Don't leave! I have another way. You may ask for what you want in Jesus' name." **John 14:13,14, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it."**

So the Christian tries to ask in Jesus' name, and however hard he tries, he finds himself asking for something he wants, and the truth is, he cannot ask in Jesus' name because it is something that he wants for himself. Once again it seems futile. Then he hears the voice of God saying, "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I have another way! You can fast and pray." **Mark 9:29, "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."** So the believer attempts to fast and pray and after a few hours he gets mighty hungry and finds he is failing at this attempt also. In futility he turns to leave, when our compassionate Heavenly Father says, "Wait a minute! Don't leave yet! Try this: Keep on praying. Persevere in prayer." **Luke 18:7, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"**

Ah, we have a wonderful God—a God Who loves us devotedly and longs to give us what we ask, but so far we have failed! Our faith is weak, our prayer partner does not share our burden, we cannot honestly and sincerely ask in Jesus' name, we have failed in fasting, and somehow or another perseverance is difficult for us. Once again our Heavenly Father advances another prayer promise to us. **John 15:7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** Thank God for His mercy, His patience, His longsuffering and His love for His children!

When I have a special need, I often choose one prayer promise for the entire season of supplication and begging God. For four years in college, I kept claiming **Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."** It was the verse that literally took me through college! At other times I have claimed other verses such as **John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** **Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."** **Jeremiah 32:17, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."**

One of the great enemies of prayer is the temptation to take a prayer promise and apply it to some other age or dispensation, invalidating most of the Bible and its promises to us in this age. To be sure, there is a dispensational teaching in the Bible (though I think much too much emphasis is placed on it). It is true that many of the promises in the Bible are given for a particular people at a particular time. In most cases, however, God's attitude toward one era and toward one people is the same as His attitude toward another era and another people. In the promises of God we learn something about the principles of God, the character of God and the nature of God.

For example, **II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."** This is a great promise. True, it was given to another people at another time and pertains to God's people under King Solomon; however, though God was speaking to a particular people at a particular time, it is still the nature of God in our day and it has always been the nature of God to react the same way to the same stimulus. If God's people of any age will humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways, God will hear from Heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land! This not only was true in Bible times, but it is true today in America or Poland or England or Sweden or Germany or Russia or in any other country of the world!

Most of God's promises reveal to us His nature and His response to a certain stimulus. It is wise for us to realize that God always responds the same way to the same stimulus. He never changes. Therefore, it may be that a particular Bible promise may not be primarily given to us, yet it shows to us the nature, compassion, love, forgiveness and mercy of God. You see, what God wants for some of His people, He wants for all of His people. People often want to defend certain dress styles by taking such a message as **Deuteronomy 22:5, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God,"** and saying that was not for the Gentiles; that was for the Jews. However, Gentile people are shaped basically like Jewish people, and I am sure that what God would want for His own nation, He would want for other nations, and what He would want for the Jew, He would want for the Gentile.

Much harm has been done to the cause of Christ by non-soul winning theologians who take far too much Bible from us and leave far too little Bible for us. We are so busy relegating the promises of

God to another era that we are nearly bereft of His promises for today. I am not disputing dispensational truth; I am disputing that kind of ultra-dispensationalism that almost makes it necessary for God to give us an audible promise for today since all the others have been used up in other dispensations! This is especially dangerous when we leave the impression, for example, that the dispensation of grace started at Pentecost. The dispensation of grace started the minute Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Adam was saved by grace, Abraham was saved by grace, David was saved by grace, and though I am sure the theologian does not intend to teach that salvation was ever any other way but by grace, he nevertheless leaves the impression to the immature mind by the very nature of the term, "dispensation of grace." The fact that THE dispensation of grace is mentioned implies that there was a time when we were not under the dispensation of grace. Every soul that has been saved since Adam and that will be saved until the last one comes to Christ in the millennium will be saved by grace through faith in God's provision for our salvation through the finished work of His Son, Jesus, on Calvary!

Chapter 10 – God Often Answers Before We Pray

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

One thing must always be kept in mind by the believer, and that is that God always WANTS to give us things.

Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Sometimes He has a hard time waiting to give us things, and gives them to us even before we pray.

Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Here He mentions giving us things, but prayer is not mentioned. **Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."** Here He promises to give us things we don't even know about. Not only will He give us the things for which we pray, but He gives us things that **"thou knowest not."**

Psalm 81:10, "I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." God promises to fill our mouths if we will open them wide. Once again, nothing is said about prayer. **Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** Here we have God giving us things, and yet prayer is not mentioned. The same is true in **Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."**

This does not mean that a Christian who never prays can get many things from God before he asks. It does mean that the Christian who prays regularly will sometimes get things from God before he asks. Notice again **Isaiah 65:24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."**

Sometimes it is hard for a parent to wait until the child asks. This is why dad will buy his two-week-old son a football or an electric train. He has not bought these gifts because the son asked for them; he bought them because he knew someday the son would want them and would ask, and it was such a delight for dad to provide these things for the son that he had a hard time waiting! Since God chooses to call us children and to call Himself our Father, perhaps He feels the same way about us!

Did you ever buy a gift for someone and couldn't wait to give it to that person? Maybe it was a Christmas gift, but you were so excited about the gift you gave it before Christmas. Could it be that God gets so excited about what He is going to give us that He sometimes gives it to us early, even before we ask? This is because He loves us, and He loves to see us happy. If we are rightly related with Him, He oftentimes does not want to wait to see our faces when we receive what He has for us.

I heard of a wife who made herself a little note to remind herself to ask her husband for something. She did not give him the note, nor did she ask, but he discovered the note around the house. Before she got around to asking him, he purchased the item which she wanted and gave it to her! Did you ever make a note to ask God for something? God looked over your shoulder and saw you make the note! He knows you love Him; He knows you are close to Him; He knows you are

serving Him; He knows you are abiding in Him; He knows that His Word is abiding in you, so the Heavenly Father, knowing that you are going to ask Him, goes ahead and answers before you ask. How sweet and how precious is this relationship that God has for those who love Him!

There are times when I just think in my mind about something for which I want to ask God. Since God knows my thoughts, He knows I am thinking it and He wants to surprise me. Of course, this is only possible when the child of God is living in a sweet, close relationship with His Heavenly Father.

I watch for the desires of those whom I love, so do you. Then would not the great heart of God be watching carefully for the desires of those whom He loves and those who are very close to Him? Of course, He does, and like earthly parents, He wants to give good things to us. **Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"** Oh, yes, the normal and usual way for God to supply our needs and to satisfy our wants is to answer our prayers, but loving us as He does and being our Heavenly Father, He occasionally wants to surprise those who live especially close to Him by answering before the prayer is spoken.

The oil that keeps us warm from the wintry blast was planned and prepared for us centuries ago. The coal that is stoked in the furnace has been centuries in preparation. When a baby is born, God has long been preparing the breast of his dear mother, and just a few moments after childbirth God begins preparing milk from the mother's body to be given as food for the newborn babe. He also tickles the lips of the baby instantly as they begin to pucker to prepare for God's miracle of provision. God loves us! He is gracious in answering us WHEN we call; He is infinitely more gracious in answering us oftentimes BEFORE we call!

Have you ever gotten a desired item before you prayed for it, but wished you had prayed first so you could have given God the credit and added another illustration of answered prayer to your growing list? Sometimes we take credit for being a great person of prayer instead of giving God the credit as a great answerer, so occasionally God will just show us where it really comes from and give it to us before we pray in order that He might receive the glory, the praise and the honor!

How tender is our God! How gracious is His heart! How compassionate are His dealings! How merciful is He toward us! Thank God for the thousands of times that He has answered in response to prayer. Thank God for those times when His great heart becomes a bit impatient because He longs to see us receive that for which we are going to ask, and knowing that we will ask, He rushes it to us in advance!

Oh, I know that **Isaiah 65:24** is a millennial promise. **"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."** During the millennium it will be the usual way that God cares for us, but occasionally God likes to bring a little of the millennium to us early. He thinks that His nature now is the same that His nature will be in the kingdom, so when He finds a Christian who can live anywhere near a kingdom life, perhaps He will prematurely give to that Christian a kingdom promise!

Chapter 11 – If We Do Not Pray

God incarnate, the virgin-born Son of God Himself felt a need to pray. In **Matthew 14:23** we read, **"He went up into a mountain apart to pray."** In **Matthew 26:36** He said, **"Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."** In **Mark 6:46** it says, **"He departed into a mountain to pray."** In **Luke 6:12** we read, **"He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."**

In **Luke 11:1** it says that, **"He was praying in a certain place."** The word **"certain"** here means "special," "solid," "firm," "safe." He had a special place where He prayed that was a solid place, a firm place and a safe place. No doubt it was the same place on the Mount of Olives where He loved to meet the Father.

The Bible in **Luke 11:1** says, **"When He ceased."** In other words, they could not interrupt Him. He prayed until He felt it was time to stop. Then the disciples said, **"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."** To paraphrase that, we could say, "Lord, teach us to ask as John also taught his disciples to ask." If the Son of God Himself, Who was the sinless, perfect, blameless, second Person of the Godhead, needed to pray, how much more do frail creatures of dust need to pray!

In spite of this, most Christians do not pray at all. There are several things that happen when God's people do not pray.

1. *We sin.* **I Samuel 12:23**, **"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way."** What could be plainer? If we do not pray, we sin. If we do not pray for others, we sin. Prayerlessness is no doubt behind every other sin. I talked to a preacher who had gone so far into sin he had left the ministry and was living a wasted, barren life. I asked him where it all started. He said, "That's easy. It started the day I did not go to the prayer closet."

2. *We do not receive what we need.* **James 4:2**, **"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."** Dr. Rice used to fantasize that he went to Heaven and that he saw building after building filled with beautiful things. There were so many beautiful packages and wonderful things that God had. In his fantasy Dr. Rice would ask, "Dear Father, what are these?" and the Father would say with a sad voice, "These are things I had for my children, but they never asked for them." We have no because we ask not!

3. *We go without wisdom.* **James 1:5**, **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."** Three things are on the top of my prayer list: power, wisdom and love. This means that at least to this preacher, wisdom is one of the three most important things that he can possess. What a pity for parents to go without wisdom in rearing their children because they do not pray! What a pity for pastors to go without wisdom in leading their churches because they do not pray! What a pity for teachers to go without wisdom in teaching their classes because they do not pray! Oh, to tap the source of the great mind of God for wisdom! It is available. If we do not have it, it is because we do not ask for it.

4. *We are often sick.* **James 5:13-15**, **"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall**

save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Many are sick and afflicted because they do not pray. This does not mean all Christians should be well all the time. It does mean that many are sick because they do not pray.

5. *Many die prematurely.* II Chronicles 16:12,13, "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign." I Chronicles 10:13,14, "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse." Isaiah 38:1, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live."

6. *Others die.* Exodus 32:9-14, "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

We are prone to categorize sin. We have a few sins that we categorize as giants ones. We list murder, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, killing, cursing, etc. Let me suggest that you put one sin at the top of the list: the sin of prayerlessness. It is the greatest of all the sins, for it includes in it a degree of atheism. If we really believed that there is a God in Heaven Who hears our prayers and Who can answer them and give us our needs and yes, even our wants, we should pray! We do not pray because we do not believe in our hearts that He will answer. What a wicked sin! It is comparable to that of being an infidel!

Not only should prayerlessness be at the top of the list because of the immensity of its evil, but also because it is the father of all other sins. When we pray, we abide in Christ and build resistance against temptation.

For those who do not pray, a good prayer with which to start would be, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.**"

Chapter 12 – The Right to Pray

John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Notice the words, "I will." Now note **Mark 14:36, "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."** Note the words, "Not what I will, but what Thou wilt." What is the difference? Why did Jesus say, "I will," at one place and "not what I will, but what Thou wilt" in another?

To understand this, one must understand the tabernacle in the wilderness. There were two alters in the tabernacle—the brazen alter and the alter of incense. The brazen alter was located just inside the gate in the courtyard. The alter of incense was located just outside the Holy of Holies in the Holy Place itself. Both of these alters had smoke rising to Heaven continually. This smoke rising to Heaven symbolizes prayer. Both of these alters, likewise, symbolize the Lord Jesus. The brazen alter on which the lamb was offered symbolized the cross on which the Lamb of God was offered as the only sacrifice acceptable to God for the sins of man. When John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus Christ he introduced Him as the Lamb of God, **John 1:29, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** Over and over again in the Revelation Jesus is called the Lamb. For example, **Revelation 14:4b, "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."** He is also called our Passover. **I Corinthians 5:7, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."** The brazen alter where the sacrifices were made was a type of the cross where Jesus, our Sacrifice, was offered. From this alter smoke, symbolizing prayer, rose heavenward.

The alter of incense also had smoke rising heavenward, and it pictured Jesus as our High Priest. **Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."** Now this alter was right outside the Holy of Holies, and when the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, this alter was at the right hand of the Shekinah, symbolizing the presence of God as it hovered over the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. This pictures our Saviour interceding for us at the right hand of the father.

Now notice that the coals on the alter of incense came from the brazen alter. There could be no sweet-smelling incense rising heavenward until there had been the smoke of sacrifice rising heavenward. This means that Jesus could not be our Priest until He had been our Sacrifice. Hence, He had to say, **"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,"** before He could say, **"I will."** As our Sacrifice He said, **"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."** As our risen High Priest He could say, **"I will."**

It is the desire of every child of God who prays to be able to say, "I will have my request" and "I will receive my answer." However, the "I will" of prayer cannot come until the "Not what I will, but as Thou wilt" has come. This means the Christian's alter of incense cannot come until he has been laid on the brazen alter. **Romans 12:1,2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** There is no need for us to become a dead sacrifice as did the Lamb of God. God wants a living sacrifice. A person cannot pray until he has been to the brazen alter and trusted the Lamb of

God, even Jesus, God's only acceptable Sacrifice. Once he has been to the brazen alter, that is, the cross, he then can go to the alter of incense, that is, prayer.

In a sense, the child of God must place himself on that alter as a living sacrifice before he can know the fulness of his prayer life. The alter of sacrifice comes first. **Romans 12:1a, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."** Then we go to the alter of prayer. **Revelation 5:8, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."**

Would you be mighty in prayer? Then you must be mighty in sacrifice. Would you have the fragrance of your prayers always rising heavenward? Then you must have the odor of your sacrifice rising heavenward.

There is a certain kind of Christianity abroad in the land that is a "white glove" kind of Christianity. It is for the dress parade and not for the battle. The writer said, "To the old rugged cross I will ever be true, its SHAME and REPROACH gladly bear." Crowning time cannot come until cross-bearing time has come. Victory cannot come until the battle has come. Resurrection cannot come until death has come. The glories of the alter of incense will never be known until the suffering of the brazen alter is known. It is at this brazen alter where we trust the Lamb of God and have our sins placed on Him and where we lay ourselves as a sacrifice to God that we have the right to pray as is typified at the alter of incense.

Chapter 13 – Feeling at Home with God

Perhaps this little chapter could be titled, "On Being Intimate with God." One of the things I have noticed about great men is that as they grow older, they crave tenderness. I remember how tender and gentle Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. was. Through years of observation I noticed the gentleness and tenderness of Dr. John R. Rice. I remember hearing Dr. R.G. Lee, just before his death, finish a masterpiece of a sermon and then walk off the platform and say to me, "Dr. Hyles, did I do alright?" There was a hunger for tenderness. As I grow older, I find gentle little expressions meaning more and more. The pinch of the elbow by a loving friend, the squeeze of the hand by one who cares, the note under the door, the encouraging word, the Reese peanut butter cup (my favorite candy) placed under the office door, the little child getting on his hands and knees outside my office door and shouting, "I wuv you, Peecher!"

Occasionally someone will come in my office and voice the fact that he is nervous and afraid of me. This always saddens me, for the older I get the closer I feel to my people, and the closer I want them to feel to me.

Why does this happen to the child of God as he grows older and as he grows in grace? This is not hard to know. It is the fact that he is becoming more like Jesus. With our limited ability to love, we crave affection, and if we do, how much more does the great heart of God crave tenderness and affection! Oh, to offer it to Him and to give Him the love that He wants and needs from His own! You can see this trait in **Romans 8:15**, "**For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**" Notice the word, "**Abba.**" This was the Jewish term comparable with our term, "Papa" or "Daddy." God yearns for us to use this term of familiarity and tenderness concerning Himself. This is one reason I am opposed to what is commonly called the formal worship service, the high church ritual, and why I am for the sweet personal type of worship that God's child can give to his Saviour.

If you were God, which would you like best? The formal stately ritualistic adoration or the sweet, "I love you," "You're a wonderful Saviour," and "I love you, Abba, father."

When the Lord Jesus was talking to Simon Peter, He asked him the question, "**Lovest thou me?**"

Peter responded, "**Thou knowest that I love Thee.**"

The two words used for love are different. Jesus was using the stronger word for love, "agape." He was asking Peter if he dearly loved Him and deeply loved Him. Peter was using the milder word for love which could even be translated, "a fondness."

Jesus was saying, "Peter, do you deeply love me?"

Peter was replying, "Lord, I am fond of Thee."

Again Jesus asked, "Peter, do you deeply love Me?"

Again Peter replied, "I am fond of You."

What was Jesus doing? He was longing for Peter to say, "I deeply love You, Lord."

No doubt He longs to hear you and me say, "I deeply love You, Lord."

On one occasion Jesus asked the disciples, "**Whom say men that I am?**"

The disciples began to answer that some said He was Elijah; and some, John the Baptist, and some, Jeremiah. Jesus then asked, "Whom say YE that I am?"

Jesus knew that they believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, but He wanted to hear it.

I love that little poster where a little boy says to a girl, "Tell me if you love me or not. You told me once, but I forgot." That is sort of what Jesus was saying. "Tell Me if I am the Christ or not. You told Me once, but I forgot."

"Call Me, Abba, Papa" says the Father. "You called Me that once, but I forgot."

In the model prayer our Lord admonishes us to pray, "**OUR Father.**" He could have just said, "Pray, Father," but no, He wanted that possessive pronoun, "**Our Father.**" He wants us to call Him our own. You remember, don't you, the words of Thomas, "**MY Lord and MY God.**" Notice again the possessive pronoun. Our Lord likes that.

It is also noteworthy that in the model prayer where we are admonished to pray, "**OUR Father which art in Heaven,**" this is the first time that the title of Father is attributed to God. It is here that He interjects His desire to have a relationship with us as a father would have with his son. Oh, how the great heart of God wants us to be intimate with Him!

Notice **John 4:23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."** Look at those sweet words, "**the Father seeketh such to worship Him.**" Remember, God called Abraham His friend.

I often use the term, "practice His presence." I love that!

I remember when Dr. John Rice would pray before a service, he would say something like this: "Lord, I'm an old man now, but Caleb was going strong at 80. Lord, was Caleb Your pet? Couldn't You keep me strong and well in my old age?"

I remember Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., as he would pray, "Jesus, if I heard You were at Jerusalem today, I would get on the next plane and fly there, and I would wait in line if I had to for days just to get to shake Your hand and look upon Your face, or for that matter, Lord, if I heard You were anywhere in the world, I would rush quickly where You were so I could see You, and I would wait as long as I had to just to touch You one time." (Dr. Bob has seen Jesus now for many years!)

I was very pleased recently. Several months ago a person who is very nervous, very tense and very fearful came to my office. I tried to set him at ease, but it seemed that I failed. It was really an ordeal for him to come and see the Preacher, but counsel was needed. Another counseling session was scheduled and another and another. A few days ago he left, he paused at the door and with quivering lips said, "Pastor, I want you to know I feel more at ease now than I once did." I was pleased!

There is a way that the Christian can get to know God better until he feels more at ease in the presence of his Father. God likes that.

Chapter 14 – Be Definite in Your Prayers

We are constantly reminded in the Bible to pray for what we want. In **Mark 11:24** we are told, "what things soever ye desire." In **John 15:7**, "ask what ye will." In **John 14:14**, "ask any thing." **Psalm 37:4**, "the desires of thine heart." **Philippians 4:6**, "in every thing by prayer, let your request be made known unto God."

This means we are supposed to be definite in our praying. **Matthew 6:11**, "Give us this day our daily bread." **Luke 11:5**, "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves." **I Samuel 1:10-13**, "And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken."

We are to be so definite that we are to prepare for the answer. **II Kings 18:23**, " Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them." Notice that God will provide the horses if we provide the riders.

For years the First Baptist Church of Hammond has led the way in the bus ministry. Thousands ride our buses every week to Sunday School and church on Sunday morning. I am often asked, "Where did it all start? Over 20 years ago I prayed for God to give us some buses. At that time we did not own one single bus. A fine couple in the church called me and said they had \$6,000 they would like to invest in the Lord's work, but they wanted it to be invested in something that would reap souls. What a wonderful answer to prayer! We bought six buses (used ones, of course), but we also needed at least one good, new bus that we could use that was dependable. At that time Meredith Plopper (who has been with me on the staff now for 22 years) was our financial secretary. I called Meredith in and asked her to pray with me that God would give us two new buses. This would total \$14,000. We prayed, and I made it a matter of prayer for several days, and I'm sure Meredith did also.

One day I was out soul winning and I went to visit a man who had visited our church the previous Sunday. He lived in an apartment house in downtown Hammond. I walked up on the front porch and saw an elderly lady sitting in an old-fashioned swing that was hanging from the ceiling. I spoke with her and found that she was the owner of the apartment house. I asked her if the gentleman whom I wanted to visit were at home. She said, "I'm sorry, but he is not." I was intrigued by the porch swing on which she sat, and I chatted with her for a few moments about it. She asked me to sit down beside her and swing, and so I did. We got to talking with each other. I asked her where she was from and if she had any children. She told me that she did, and then she went in and got the family album and brought it to the front porch, and we sat there on the swing and looked at the family album. I guess I stayed about fifteen minutes chatting with the dear lady, and then I went on my way. Some time passed. One day I got a call from St. Margaret Hospital saying it was an emergency. Someone who was a patient in the hospital needed to see me. I went to the hospital, walked in the room, and there was the elderly lady with whom I shared the swing on the front porch of the apartment house. She looked up at me and in a very stern voice said something like

this, "I am the old lady that you visited. I enjoyed our visit so much that when you left I said, 'If I ever get bad sick, that's the Preacher I want to pray for me.' Now I'm bad sick—pray!"

I obeyed and asked God to heal her. (This He did.) After I had prayed she looked at me and said, "Now you have been nice to me; I want to be nice to you. Is there something that your church needs that I could buy for you as a gift?"

I thought of the usual "sacrificial" Baptist gift—perhaps a book marker for the Bible on the communion table, but I told her I would rather not tell her of any needs that we had. If the Lord spoke to her heart concerning what she should do, then she could obey Him. She asked, "Doesn't your church run some buses?"

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

She said, "Would it be all right with you if I bought you a new bus?"

Praise the Lord! That's \$7,000 for just fifteen minutes on a porch swing and one prayer!

On the way back to the office I began to rejoice, and then suddenly it dawned on me—Meredith and I had been praying for God to give us two buses! Then I felt a little saddened and embarrassed to tell Meredith about the new bus that the lady was giving us. I went to my office, sat behind the desk, picked up the phone to call Meredith, then put it down, then picked it up again, then put it down. I hated to disappoint her. While I was halting between two decisions, the phone rang. The operator said, "Long distance from Perryville, Indiana, for Pastor Jack Hyles." I received the call. A male voice on the other end of the line said, "My name is Bob Crist. I own a bus sales company in Perryville, Indiana. Are you the Preacher that the old lady in the hospital is buying a bus for?"

He said, "She called me to order the bus, and before she hung up, she said, 'By the way, Mr. Crist, make that two buses while you are at it.' "

Glory to God! Praise the Lord! Amen! God had answered our prayers. Now we had been definite. We did not pray for God to provide some form of transportation; we told Him we wanted buses. We told Him what kind of buses we wanted, and we told Him how many we wanted.

In **Mark 10:48** the blind man said to our Lord, "**Have mercy on me.**"

Jesus answered in **verse 51** asking exactly what it was he wanted. Now our Lord knew what the blind man wanted, but He wanted to hear Him ask. A general prayer like, "**Have mercy on me,**" could mean any one of many things. Then the blind man told Him exactly what he wanted, and he got his answer!

Notice **Matthew 20:29-34**, "**And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.**"

The Sunday school teacher should not just say, "Lord, bless my class," but rather "Lord, help Susie at school," "Keep Mary pure," "Bless Betty's home life."

Christians should not just simply say, "Lord, supply my needs." How much better it would be to say, "Lord, give us \$280 for rent, and give us something to eat for supper."

The child of God should not limit his prayer to, "Lord, forgive my sins," but he should go on to say, "Forgive my jealousy, forgive the hatred in my heart, forgive my envy."

The parent should not simply say, "Lord, help Johnny to be a good boy." He should go on to pray, "Lord, help Johnny to quit his lying. Help him to make good grades in school. Help him to work hard at his job."

When I was in the army I was never taught to shoot at a crowd. I was taught to shoot at individuals. All of our practice shooting on the rifle range was at the likeness of a man.

God wants us to tell Him what we want. I like that prayer in Luke 11 when the man begged for bread because he had a friend who came at midnight and had nothing to feed him. He didn't say, "Friend, give me some food for my friend." He told him what kind of food he wanted. He asked for bread. Then he told him exactly how much bread he wanted. He wanted three loaves. Many go without their needs supplied because God wants to know what needs that we have in mind. Many go unforgiven because they do not tell God what sins they want forgiven.

There are several advantages in definite praying in addition to getting from God what you request. One is that you will enjoy the answer more if you pray for a definite thing and receive it.

Several years ago we had to have \$5,000 for our ministry. Now in the early days \$5,000 was a lot of money, and so I went to my secretary, who at the time was Sandra Plopper, and I said, "Sandi, join me in prayer that God will give us \$5,000 by Friday afternoon at 4:30." She agreed to do so. I prayed diligently, and I'm sure she did, but the week passed and the money did not come. Just a few minutes before 4:30 on Friday I heard Sandi complaining in her office. She was saying, "Lord, that isn't fair. Brother Hyles works hard and sacrifices, and now he has a need, and You haven't given it to him." It was just a few minutes before 4:30 when the receptionist called and told me that there was an old man in the hallway who wanted to see me. I looked out in the hall and saw an old man who looked like he might be off the street. I told my secretary I was busy praying for \$5,000 that I had to have in just a few minutes, and then finally I just gave up. I said, "Forget it. I'll see the man."

I called Sandi and told her that I was going to quit praying. The old man came in and told me he was from Joliet, Illinois, and that he had just lost his wife and had heard about me and thought he could come to me for comfort. I did what I could to comfort him and encourage his heart. I finished talking to him about 4:29. He walked out in the hallway, and to be quite frank, I was a little perturbed at God for not answering my prayer. The \$5,000 was not for me; it was for the work. It was not for my work, it was for God's work. I couldn't understand why He wouldn't finance it. Just then the old man turned around in the hallway and said, "Oh, reverend, I forgot something. I got the settlement on my wife's insurance, and I wanted to give you this check for your work." You guessed it—the check was for \$5,000. The memory of it makes me want to shout!

One day I had a need for just a small amount of money. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but I think it was \$54.17. There was a bill that I had to pay that was due that very day. I pleaded with God to give me the money. In the mail that day was an envelope with nothing in it but a check for \$54.21.

I had prayed for \$54.17. I couldn't understand it. Of course, I rejoiced that God had supplied my need, but if God was going to come that close, why couldn't He have hit it right on the head? Then it dawned on me. This was a bill that must be mailed, and a postage stamp at that time cost 4 cents. Praise the Lord! I had asked God for \$54.17 so I could mail in a check on a certain day. He sent me the exact amount, plus postage. Don't we have a wonderful God? If we are definite in our praying, the answer will be much more enjoyable.

Another advantage to praying definitely in addition to receiving the answer is that God will get more glory and praise for the answer. Then, of course, answered prayer also builds faith. That pleases God.

Now notice what Jesus said to the blind man in **Mark 10:51**, "**What WILT thou?**" He did not say, "**What WISH thou?**" He said, "**What WILT thou?**" I once heard a certain preacher, "You just tell God your wishes and let Him decide what is best." No, no, no! Ten thousand times, no! You tell God your will, not your wishes. Jesus was saying to the blind man, "What is it that you will have?"

The blind man said, "**I WILL have my sight.**"

How well do I remember the story of that little lady in Texas who was dying with cancer! She had a child to rear. I anointed her with oil and prayed for God to heal her, and then she prayed. I will never forget those words. She said, "Dear Lord, my child needs me, and I'm not going to die today. I'm going to live today to rear my child. I will not die yet." She lived that day, and the next day she prayed the same prayer. "I'm not going to die today," and she didn't. And, bless God, she reared the child!

God does not want short wishes sent to Heaven. He wants constantly our wills to bombard the throne of grace. **John 15:7**, "**If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**" Notice the words, "**ask what ye WILL.**" Basically, that's what salvation is. When a person knows he is a sinner, knows that sinners are lost, knows that Jesus came as the virgin-born Son of God and died on the cross as his substitute and his sacrifice, and says, "I WILL have eternal life because of God's plan," then he has eternal life!

What a happy way to live—to have a God Who hears our prayers and Who loves us enough to grant our desires and enjoys giving specific answers to definite prayers!

Chapter 15 – A Miracle-Working God

So often misguided people say, "Miracles are past. They were only for Jesus' day because He was trying to prove His Messiahship." Nothing could be farther from the truth! Jesus did *not* perform His miracles to prove His Messiahship. On occasion He even performed a miracle and told the people involved or the person involved not to tell anyone. **Matthew 9:30, "And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it."** **Luke 8:51,56, "And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And her parents were astonished: but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done."** We also find that on at least one occasion He answered a prayer in answer to faith. **Mark 2:5, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."** We also find that our Lord healed people and performed miracles simply because He had compassion. **Luke 7:13-15, "And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."**

Then comes the feeble effort of some to disprove present-day miracles. Such people say, "Miracles were for the period until the Bible was written. Now that we have the Bible, miracles are over." God never says that! I know better. I have seen it happen too many times. We are told that miracles will follow those that believe, as they carry out the great commission, which is **Mark 16:15, "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."**

The pastor of the great First Baptist Church of New Castle, Delaware, is my friend, Ron Adrian. His brother, Ken, who pastors in Detroit, Michigan, and others in his family have been my friends for years. When their father and mother lived in Wichita, Kansas, where his father pastored, I used to preach often for him. One year Dr. John Rice and I were there together for a Sword of the Lord Conference, and Mrs. Adrian, the wife of the Pastor and the mother of Ken and Ron was dying with cancer of the brain. I can see that little wilted body now. I can see the color of her face. I can see her arms that just simply looked like bones wrapped in skin. She had terminal cancer with just a few days to live. We got a little olive oil and gathered around her one day in a room, anointed her with oil and prayed for God to heal her. God did! Many years have passed now, and the last time I saw her she was well and happy in the service of the Lord.

God does not heal everyone who is sick, and we are not necessarily to pray every morning, "Give us this day our daily miracle," but we need to realize our God is a big God, and there is nothing too hard for Him! **Genesis 18:14, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."** **Jeremiah 32:17, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."** We need to realize that all things are possible to him that believeth. **Mark 9:23, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."** We need to realize the limitless power of our God. **Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."** **I Corinthians 10:1-6, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our**

examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." I Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." This is not fanaticism; this is faith.

Two young men in the First Baptist Church of Hammond lost their father by death. Upon hearing it, one of the young men went to the hospital where his father was lying lifeless. He had so wanted to talk with his dad before his dad passed away, and wanted to be there when his dad died. He went over to the corpse, pulled the sheet back and said, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!" His daddy opened his eyes, and his boy got to talk with him. The next day his father died. The obituary was called into the newspaper, and I announced the death on the radio broadcast. Again the son went to his daddy's body and said, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!" Again the man opened his eyes and lived for enough time for his boy to talk with him a while longer. When the Dad got to Heaven, as soon as he got there the Lord said, "I think your boy wants to talk with you again. I'll send you back just for a few minutes, but I can't let you stay very long, for I want you up here now." Then he went on to Heaven to stay. This should not seem so unusual. This doesn't happen every day; in fact, this is the only case like it that I have known in my ministry, but I'm convinced that God can do that if He wants to.

Several years ago while our present auditorium was being built, our church conducted services in the local Civic Center for about five months. One Sunday morning I was preaching there when one of our blind men who was at the time 57 years of age came running down the aisle shouting, "I can see! I can see! I can see!" He ran up on the platform and told me. He said, "Brother Hyles, standing back there a while ago during the invitation, I saw my shoe and then I could see the crowd. Now, Brother Hyles, I can see you." He jokingly said, "You're not near as pretty as I thought you would be." Then he stood to tell the people what had happened.

One Sunday night I was preaching on the subject of miracles. Suddenly I was overcome with the fact that God was performing a miracle in the service at that time. I had never before said this, nor have I said it since, but I stopped the sermon and said, "I am convinced that God is performing a miracle at this time." The next week I received a letter from a student at Moody Bible Institute. She told how she had been in the service that previous Sunday night and that during the sermon one of her eyes that had been blind with dead nerve endings for years suddenly came alive and she could see out of it. Now I have been preaching for 37 years. These are the only two cases like this that I have known. I have never had a healing service nor a healing line, nor do I claim to possess the gifts of miracles, nor do I claim to be a mighty man of faith. I just claim to have a mighty God Who loves His children and is all powerful and is capable and sometimes willing to go beyond the natural in order to do the supernatural, and I contend that He is not old, tired and worn out, but that He is the same God that He always was!

Chapter 16 – The Kinds of Prayer

In seminary I was taught that prayer is praise, confession, adoration, meditation, thanksgiving and petition. Now all of these forms of communicating with God are Scriptural, but the truth is, prayer is asking! The terminology, "We pray the court," is used in the courtroom. This simply means, "We ask the court." The word "prayer" itself means "asking." This means that praise is not prayer, thanksgiving is not prayer, adoration is not prayer, meditation is not prayer. These are necessary forms of communication with God, but unless something is asked and a petition is made, it is not prayer. Sometimes in the Bible when prayer is mentioned, it is mentioned WITH one of the other things. For example, prayer AND confession or prayer AND thanksgiving. **Daniel 9:4, "And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments." Colossians 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."** This chapter could be entitled then, "Kinds of Asking."

1. *Asking for needs.* This is the first petition of the model prayer. **"Give us this day our daily bread,"** and it is the most basic form of prayer. **Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."** **Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** This is the prayer for food, for clothing, for shelter and for our daily normal needs.

2. *Continual praying or praying without ceasing.* **1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing."** The words **"without ceasing"** are used other places in the Bible concerning preaching, working, patience, teaching, etc. For example, **Acts 5:42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."** Note **Ephesians 6:18,19, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."** This means that the child of God should be praying all the time. His entire life should be one heartbeat of petition to God. "Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear! All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." God wants us to pray all the time. God never wants us to quit praying. As we drive down the road, as we do our daily work, as we eat, as we have our interaction with friends and family, we are supposed to be praying. As is often mentioned on these pages, I have the words, "Pray for Power" written on the mirror where I shave at home, on the mirror where I shave in my office, inside my briefcase, inside each of my Bibles, on my desk, on the office door. When I shave, I pray for power. When I study, I pray for power. When I drive down the road, I pray for power. Constantly I am saying, "God, give me power, O God, give me power! Lord, help me to have power while I preach. God, give me the power of the Holy Spirit." This is as natural as breathing. It is praying without ceasing!

3. *Supplication.* **Acts 1:14, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."** **Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."** **Ephesians 6:18, Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."** This is continual asking. There are times when the request is of such a nature that God must know our sincerity. In such times we must continue to ask and continue to ask and continue to ask until the answer comes. Sometimes this supplication is for ten days; such was the case of the church in the upper room before Pentecost. Sometimes this continual asking is for weeks,

sometimes for months, sometimes even for years. I prayed for 17 years for the salvation of my father-in-law. Finally on his 70th birthday I won him to Christ and baptized him that night. As he entered the baptistry he said to me, "Son, I have two birthdays today, don't I?" Yes, he did, because of the supplication.

There are many Scriptures that seem so simple on the surface. For example, **James 4:2,3, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** Just to look at the passage, one might feel that if a person wants something, he just comes to God and says, "I want it; please give it to me," and God gives it to him. For example, James says, **"Ye have not because ye ask not."** Now the word **"ask"** here is durative or linear, and the word **"have"** is likewise in the same tense. It means, "You have not and have not and have not because you ask not and ask not and ask not and ask not." Often, some well-meaning but misguided preacher will make light of tarrying before the Lord. He doesn't know God as some do. Supplication is a very important part of the prayer life of the child of God.

4. *Importunity.* **Luke 11:8, "I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."**

Importunity means simply begging. The story is told in the early verses of Luke 11 about a man who at midnight went to his friend pleading for bread because a friend had dropped in to visit with him and he had no bread to serve him. Now this was certainly an embarrassing thing for the Easterner, for every good host immediately offered a guest some refreshment. However, this guest came at midnight. To us, midnight is not considered so late, but they had no radios, televisions or electric lights, and people would go to bed soon after dark.

In the Eastern homes, especially in Bible days, the entire family slept on one big bed. It was usually built across the end of the room. Can you picture the mom and the dad and all the children in bed? It is the middle of the night and there is a cry from without. The father wakes up, the mother wakes up, and all the children wake up. If there were other members of the family, such as grandparents, they were in the same bed that was built across the end of the room. So the friend cries from without, and Dad wakes up, Mother wakes up, Grandpa wakes up, Grandma wakes up, Johnny wakes up, and Susie wakes up. The awakened man goes to the window and sees a friend. His friend says, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him."

The man replies, "My children are in bed with me. Come back in the morning and I will give you bread."

The man turns to go home to his embarrassment because he has no bread to set before his friend. He finds himself unable to face his friend. He simply must have bread. So he turns again and shouts to his other friend who has the bread. That friend wakes up, his wife wakes up, Grandma wakes up, Grandpa wakes up, Johnny wakes up, Susie wakes up. Again he goes to the window. Outside is the same man.

"Friend, I've got to have three loaves! A friend of mine in his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him, and I can't face him without bread!"

Again the answer is, "No," Dad goes back to sleep, Mama goes back to sleep, Grandpa goes back to sleep, Grandma goes back to sleep, Johnny goes back to sleep, Susie goes back to sleep, and the friend returns to his other friend who is waiting for bread. As he makes his journey homeward, his heart is broken. "How can I face my friend without bread? I must go back and plead some more!"

He turns to the house of the friend who has some bread and shouts from without. His friend wakes up, his wife wakes up, Grandpa wakes up, Grandma wakes up, Johnny wakes up, Susie wakes up. He goes to the window and raises it only to hear again, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him! Maybe he said something like this, "I can't go back! I'm going to stay out here and keep begging! I've got to have the bread! Please give me the bread! I beg you, give me the bread! I plead with you for some bread!"

Finally, the friend with his bread goes to the cupboard, gets the bread and gives it to the friend who had no bread. Our text says that he did not give him this bread because he was his friend, but he gave him the bread because of his importunity; that is, his much begging.

Oh, the liberals have a hay day here! "God is not a Santa Claus," they say, "to Whom we come and plead." Little do they know of the marvelous blessings that God has for those whom plead for His power.

This type of prayer, yes, begging, is usually associated with praying for the power of God or praying for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. This is what our Lord means when He says, "I will pour water on him who is thirsty." He is saying, "I will pour water on him whose mouth is dry, who is about to starve for lack of water, who feels that death is coming soon, who longs for just some water to cool his parched tongue and to satisfy his thirsting throat." On this kind of condition, a person begs for water. In the Bible, water often symbolizes the Holy Spirit. How we need to beg with God to give us His power! Oh, for the refreshing showers of His Holy Spirit power and blessing! May God give us some men who plead with Him for the fulness of the Holy Spirit! May God give us some men whose closets of prayer are bathed with their tears of thirsting!

5. *Prayer and fasting.* **Mark 9:29, "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."** Into the life of the child of God come all types of needs. Some are relatively small, and some are of giant proportions. Some are things that God can provide with the use of human instruments. There are some, however, that only God can give that transcend all of the natural and move into the supernatural. This is what is meant in this passage by the term, "**this kind.**" This special kind that only God can give, this supernatural kind, "**this kind**" involves a miracle. There are answers to prayer that can come by simply asking. There are other answers that can be gotten only by praying without ceasing. There are still others that require supplication. Others require importunity, or begging, but "**this kind**" cometh forth by nothing but by praying and fasting. The Christian sets aside certain seasons when he deprives himself of satisfying his physical appetites because of a broken heart, a burden and a need for a miracle. Sometimes this prayer and fasting should be for an entire day, sometimes for several days, sometimes for a week, sometimes for several weeks. Of course, this should not be the regular routine of the Christian's life, but each of us comes to the time when he faces a wall. He sees no way out. Human help fails. There is no possible, visible way. God must do it! A miracle must come! A "this kind" of prayer answer must be known. Then it is time for prayer and fasting.

6. *All night praying.* In the story about the friend who came asking bread for another friend, notice he came at midnight and he kept begging. Obviously he prayed well into the night. The Bible often speaks about all-night praying. **Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** **Mark 13:33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."** **Luke 21:36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."** **Mark 14:38, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."** **Luke 22:40,46, "And when He was**

at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Really, this is a form of fasting, for a person is going without sleep to pray, and it is an amazing way of showing our sincerity.

Again, observe the man who came begging for bread at midnight. This parable is but an extension of the model prayer. In the early verses of **Luke 11** the model prayer (which is often erroneously called the Lord's Prayer) is given. This is in response to the disciples' request, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.**" When the model prayer is ended, our Lord continues His lesson on prayer which includes the story of the friend who came to another friend at midnight begging bread. Now there is an earlier mention of bread. The first petition of the model prayer is, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" You will notice the words, "**this day.**" Notice, the bread for ourselves is sought through the daytime hours and is received quickly, because God does not want us to spend a lot of the daylight hours asking for our own needs. So we quickly ask and He quickly gives us our daily bread. Then in the nighttime we seek bread for others. The person who is going to be used mightily of God must work while others are awake and plead for power while others are asleep. Oftentimes he will be pleading with God while others are doing what they call fellowshipping. While others are together at midnight at a restaurant, he will be walking with God and pleading for God's power and blessings.

I have pastored five churches. Three of those churches were great churches. All three of these churches were born in seasons of all-night prayer. In 1952 I became pastor of the Miller Road Baptist church of Garland, Texas. Forty-four people showed up the first Sunday. The church miraculously began to grow. In a matter of about three years we were running well over a thousand in Sunday school, and to be quite frank, the church was too big for me. I was yet in my twenties, and I felt that the church had grown beyond my ability to be its pastor. I felt totally inadequate and decided that God would have me to resign the church and go to a smaller work and try to build it up. On New Year's Eve, 1954, I went to my study completely baptized in a feeling of inadequacy. The next day was Sunday. I sat behind the desk and wrote my resignation, which I was to read the next morning. I laid the resignation on the floor and fell to my knees about eleven o'clock. Through tears I prayed, "Lord, unless You can give me something that I do not have now, I will have to read this resignation tomorrow morning." I prayed from 11:00 until 12:00 and from 12:00 to 1:00. About one o'clock in the morning I heard a knock on the door. I went to the door, and it was one of my deacons. He obviously had already been to bed. His pajamas extended a couple of inches below his trousers, his eyes were red, his hair was messed, and there he stood saying, "Preacher, what's wrong?" The Lord told me something was wrong with my Preacher. I called your home to find what might be the trouble, and they said you were not there."

I invited him in, told him the story and showed him the letter of resignation. He began to weep and pleaded, "Preacher, you can't leave us. You have won most of us to Christ. We are your children in the Lord." We fell to our faces and began to pray. He prayed and I prayed, and he prayed and I prayed, and he prayed and I prayed. We prayed from 1:00 until 2:00, from 2:00 until 3:00, from 3:00 until 4:00, from 4:00 until 5:00, and sometime between five and six o'clock in the morning on that New Year's Day, I knew that God had given me a fresh anointing for my ministry. I looked up at my deacon and told him. We embraced and danced with joy around the room. A new day dawned in the church. When I preached that morning, people came by and said, "Preacher, something has happened to you." Yes, bless God, something had happened in response to praying all night.

In the summer of 1960 I decided to resign the First Baptist Church of Hammond. The battles had been many, the burdens heavy, the questions seemed unanswerable, the problems seemed unsolvable, and the burdens seemed unbearable. I was preaching for a week at the Bill Rice Ranch. I was going to come back and resign the next Sunday. Shortly after ten o'clock on Friday night I

went to bed, but the Lord would not let me sleep. I tossed and tumbled for almost two hours and then got out of bed, fell to my knees beside the bed and prayed all night. It was in that night of prayer that the First Baptist Church of Hammond as it is known today was born.

Into the life of every Christian there comes a time when he must pray until the sun rises. There is a certain response that God had to the Christian who will pray through the night watches.

Hyles-Anderson College was born in the wee hours of the morning as I prayed with God all night in southern California. The campus which now houses the college was miraculously given to us by God after this simple preacher prayed all night one night each month for a year.

Oh, to know the mighty power of God! Oh, to have the dew of Heaven to settle on the child of God! Oh, to have His answers to prayer! Oh, to walk with Him, to talk with Him, to know His mighty power and His miraculous blessing wrought through prayer!

Chapter 17 – Prayer and Love

Matthew 5:23,24, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

In the Bible, prayer is amazingly interwoven with love and forgiveness. Such statements as these come from the sacred Scriptures, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:15) "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matthew 18:35) "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32) "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) Notice the theme of these Scriptures: If we ask forgiveness, we must give forgiveness. If we ask mercy, we must be merciful. In other words, for a Christian to know the fulness of his prayer life, he must have love in his heart for his fellowman. I John 4:20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1st John 3:18-21, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." I John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Matthew 5:7,8,22,38-48, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The general theme of all these passages indicates that the degree of success that a Christian enjoys in his prayer life is dependent to a great extent to the degree of success he enjoys in his love and forgiveness life. Now this does not mean that a Christian who finds it difficult to love someone can never have a prayer answered; that is, all other things being in order in a Christian's life. In Matthew 5:23,23, and Mark 11:25 God seems to give us a divine order concerning love and prayer.

1. *Giving.* Notice that when a person comes to the altar and realizes that his brother has ought against him, he is not to take his gift back with him as he seeks reconciliation to his brother. He is to leave his gift at the altar. This does not mean that a person is exempt from giving because his brother has ought against him. It merely teaches the matter of priority. Both giving and reconciliation are important, but reconciliation is more important. However, neglecting one does not give license to neglect the other!

2. *Praying for personal needs.* Even in this model prayer Jesus places "Give us this day our daily bread," before he mentions "forgive us our debts."

God takes care of His own people as far as their daily needs are concerned not because they are good children, but God feeds us because they are His children. The degree and quality of His provision may depend upon our being good children, but God feeds us because we are His own. He feeds us not because of our condition but because of our position. In the wilderness the children of Israel were backslidden. They had come to Kadesh-Barnea and had refused to enter into the door of the Promised Land. Because of this, God punished them and cast them into the wilderness for 40 years. Those over age 20 died and never got to see the Promised Land. In spite of this, God fed them. Every morning He dropped manna from Heaven (It is called "angel food" in the Bible.) in order that these backsliders might be nourished. He gave them water from the rock and preserved their clothing and their shoes for 40 years. All of this was done in spite of the fact that they were backslidden and had refused to obey the will of God.

When Elijah ran from Jezebel and hid under the juniper tree with a depressed and defeated spirit, he was backslidden. He was outside the will of God. He was complaining. He was fearful and yet God sent him food in a miraculous manner. God did not feed him because he was being a good child but because he was His child. Elijah's condition did not bring him food; his position brought him food.

When Jonah was called by God to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to them, he refused to go; instead, he went to Joppa and there caught a ship for Tarsus. He was cast off the ship and was in a backslidden condition, being outside of the will of God. Yet God protected him. The great fish swallowed him and he was protected.

In none of these stories were God's people the objects of lavish provisions. God did not drop filet mignon, a baked potato with sour cream, a combination salad and pecan pie out of Heaven in order to feed the Israelites, but He did feed them. God did not deliver prime rib and a chef's salad to Elijah, but He did feed him. God did not provide Jonah with the presidential suite at the Hilton, but He did protect him. A good parent may spank his child when he misbehaves, but he will not starve him.

3. *Being reconciled to those against whom we have ought.* **Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."** This means that the Christian should be sure there is nothing in his heart against anyone. Notice this far in this little outline we have advanced, nothing has been said about big praying—praying for the power of God, asking for miracles, etc. These cannot come if our hearts are not right with others. One cannot hate the body of Christ and expect his big prayers to be answered. One cannot hate the bride of Christ and expect to receive miracles in answer to his prayers. In mistreating God's people, we mistreat Jesus. He Himself said, **"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."** (Matthew 25:40b) Any parent understands this. A good deed done to one of his children is a good deed done to the parent.

When Saul of Tarsus (later to become the Apostle Paul) was smitten on the road to Damascus, he asked, **"Who art Thou, Lord?"** The response was, **"I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest."** (Acts 9:5) Paul was not persecuting Jesus, and yet he was, because Paul was persecuting His people. Jesus was saying, "When you persecute My people, you persecute Me." "When you hurt My people, you hurt Me." "When you would My people, you would Me." "When you slander My people, you slander Me." "When you mistreat My people in any way, you mistreat Me." Rest assured that God will not allow a Christian great power in prayer until bitterness, hatred, envy, jealousy and strife toward others are emptied from his heart.

4. Receiving big answers to his prayers. Now that the heart is right toward others, God is more favorable to turning His ear our way and to responding to our requests for more than food and raiment. Ah, 'tis a wonderful thing to see God work in mighty power! On a recent Sunday night a father brought with him an infant son to my office and asked if I would anoint him with oil and pray for him. The doctors had discovered that he had a hole in his heart. I anointed the baby and we earnestly prayed for God to intervene. The very next day the father took his son to the doctor, extensive tests were run, and the doctor told the young man that the hole in his boy's heart had been closed and there was no sign whatsoever of any heart condition. Praise the Lord! God has so many answers to prayer available for us, but He will not answer us abundantly until our hearts are right with others.

Our son, Dave, and his wife, Paula, wanted to have a child. Paula had some disease that prevented conception, so Dave asked me if I'd keep my eyes open for a baby they could adopt. God answered our prayer concerning this and the way was cleared for the adoption of what was to be a precious daughter. However, before the baby was born that they were to adopt, Paula came to my office and told me that she was so happy that they were going to adopt a child, but through tears she said that she really hoped and wished that in addition to the one they were going to adopt she could have one of her own. I got the little bottle of olive oil that I keep in my office and anointed Paula's brow with oil. We prayed for God to open her womb and to give her and David a child of their own. Before the child that they were to adopt was born, Paula was expecting her own baby, and God marvelously and miraculously allowed her to deliver another sweet little girl! God answers prayer! God answers big prayers, but our hearts must be right!

Of course, there are other things that can prevent God answering prayer, such as a lack of faithfulness to God's house. **Proverb 28:9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."**

Refusing to give God the tithes and offerings will close the windows of Heaven and prevent the type prayer life that God wants to give us. **Malachi 3:7-10, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."** Suppose that once a week someone came to your house and committed robbery. Would you support him? If he asked you for some special favor, would you grant it? Of course you wouldn't, and neither will God.

An impure thought life will hinder our prayers being answered. **Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."**

These are just a few of the many hindrances to prayer mentioned in the Word of God, but high on that list is being wrong with others.

5. *Being right with those who have ought against us.* **Matthew 5:23,24, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."** Of course, this is not as great a sin as having something in our hearts against someone else. It is something that is vital in the life of every Christian. At first glance, one would wonder why would the person whose heart is clean be commanded to seek reconciliation with the one who has ought against him? God in His omniscience knew that if two people were estranged, the more spiritual of the two would come nearer initiating reconciliation. He did not place this in the same area of importance as getting your own heart right, but it is important! Even if reconciliation fails, we are supposed to seek such even if the animosity is totally on the other side.

Of course, this is just being Christlike. When man's fellowship with God was broken, immediately God announced that He would seek reconciliation. **Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."** In the entire Bible is a marvelous love story telling how God, Who was sinned against, has done everything within His justice to seek reconciliation with man, the guilty party. Would you be Christlike? Then seek to be reconciled to those who hate you. Not only are we to love our enemies, pray for those that spitefully use us, bless those that curse us, love those that hate us, do good to those who do us evil, but we are to seek reconciliation actively with them.

6. *Fellowship with God.* This is the great bonus for seeking reconciliation with those who have ought against us. God will answer prayers before He will give us intimacy with Himself. The dear Lord seems to say, "If you will try to be reconciled with those that hate you, then I can relate to you because I did the same thing, and since the two of us are agreed, we can walk together, and I will give you a closer walk than you have ever known, a sweeter fellowship than you have ever known."

There are three forms of communication with God mentioned in this little outline—praying for our personal needs, praying for big answers, and having intimate fellowship with God. Notice right before each there is something that we are to do. Before praying for our personal needs, we are to give. Before praying for big answers, we are to be sure that we have made it right with those against whom we harbor ill will, and before we can have intimate fellowship with God we are to seek reconciliation with those who have something in their hearts against us.

A preacher recently asked me, "How does your fire stay burning? Every time I hear you preach, you light my fire. Now what lights yours?"

I immediately replied, "The act of love."

I said, "It is the setting of some time each day during which you think your way into the lives of others."

What is love? Love is a college student dwelling on a middle-aged man who once was young and handsome and heard that a baby was coming. He called the insurance company and made plans because he wanted the baby, who is now the college student, to have what he never had. He saved and worked and was a buddy to his child even though he was weary when he returned from work daily. When the child became a teenager, the man wasn't prepared for it. He was lonely

during the years of gradual severance. Soon the child grew up. (Too soon!) That middle-aged man still goes to work but his incentive is different now. He is sending a check every month to a college for the education of one for whom he has worked for years. Love is sitting in a college dormitory and thinking about Dad, loving him and thanking God for him! Love is remembering a young person dwelling on a middle-aged woman who carried that young person in her own body. She was so pleased when you came. It seemed then like eighteen years were forever. Forever now has come! She looks at your picture and remembers. Your room is a sanctuary. Your empty chair at the kitchen table is now an altar. Love is calling Mother and saying, "I appreciate every meal, every moment of toil, every truth that you taught." Love is thinking about her, remembering her!

What is love? Love is dwelling on a preach who for years has made a small salary, who has no retirement plan though retirement is so soon. He has no house that is his. He has no close friends that he has made because he changed churches several times during his ministry. He has no way to explain his side when criticized. He is sincere but often misunderstood. He has no pastor. He is not well known. His heart is often broken by those who have stumbled. Love is pausing to thank God for your pastor and to think of him, even into his life.

What is love? Love is thinking about a grandmother who doesn't feel attractive anymore. She doesn't feel needed. She sits by a telephone which refuses to ring. She visits a mailbox daily which refuses to yield a letter. Her roommates are pictures; her dreams are memories. She always feels a little bit that she is "in the way," and she wonders how near the rest home really is. She wonders if you ever think of her. Love is when you pause to think, to think regularly, to think daily of Grandmother! Love is a long distance phone call that would excite her beyond compare.

What is love? Love is Dr. Jack Hyles sitting in a motel room thinking about his people, hoping they are happy; praying that the college students and the high school students and the grade school students can stay in school; wishing that he could be a part of each family, hoping you know he loves you; realizing you have it rough, hoping your room is warm, thinking of your burdens, wishing he had more time with your family; rejoicing when you serve Jesus, hurting when you go astray; thinking about the working men, praying for the busy mothers, asking God to watch over the little children. Love is a pastor taking time regularly to perform the act of love; that is, setting some time each day during which he thinks his way into the lives of his people.

What is love? Love is a person wanting to see another's needs filled and wanting to be the one who fills those needs and wanting that person to fill all of his needs. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the doorway through which the human soul passes from selfishness to service. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the key to the universe which unlocks all its doors. Love is that which gives its all yet still has more to give. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which causes us to look at another's faults through a telescope and at our own through a microscope. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the medicine that cures all hatred, malice, envy and jealousy. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the marriage of the soul. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the divine vitality that enriches and restores like to mankind, strengthens the weak and lifts up the fallen. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the sacred flower plucked from God's garden of graces whose early bud is happiness and whose bloom is service and sacrifice. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is not blind, yet because it sees more, it is willing to see less and volunteer blindness! Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the essence of God given for the good of man that makes God's man like man's God. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that for which we were born and that which can make us in the hearts of others never die. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which enables a wife to sing while she mops the floor after her husband has walked across it in his barn boots! Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which maketh halitosis sweet to the lover. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is what Ingersoll called a "divine swoon." Love is that which hopes when reason despairs and cares when reason flees and forsakes. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the weapon that is needed to conquer rebel man when all else has failed and when wrath has swooned. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which melts the winter of the heart whose thaw is as a smile of sunshine on the face. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the fuel for the vehicle of kindness, benevolence, compassion and mercy. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the raging river of emotion whose expression overflows its banks, whose tide cannot be stopped, and whose thirst is never quenched. Love is that menu which feeds the unlovely as well as the lovely, the unloved as well as the loved and the unloving as well as the loving. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is selfishly unselfish, confidently jealous and quietly raging. Love is the ladder upon which man climbs to the heavenlies and reaches the graces. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the bridge between the land of the living and the land of the dead. Love is the greatest gift exchanged between mortal men. Love is the marvelous illness that has no cure or remedy whose germs make it delightfully contagious. Yet, Love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the sunshine as midnight and warmth in January. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the measuring stick of duty in service to humanity. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is two hearts beating as one and two souls with a single thought. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a deed which ne'er knoweth repentance and needeth no remorse. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is God's special gift to man alone which His other creatures cannot share. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which binds heart to heart, mind to mind and soul to soul. Love is one heart betrothing another, the marriage of one soul to another, and a union of two minds. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the silver link and the silken tie between two hearts. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that sacred triangle between one's soul, his God and another which puts God first, others second and self last. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is caring for a baby who through a toothless smile returns to Mother the food that he just ate. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is lecturing a child who in one breath says, "I wuv you," and the next minute is holding that breath until he turns blue! Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is patient with the teenager who cleans his room to a high gloss one day and the next day leaves it looking like Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is devotion for a wife who is as warm as an Alaskan stove one day and as cold as an Eskimo's igloo the next. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a wife's patience with her husband who spends an hour one day looking for flowers to put on the inside of the house and refuses to spend ten minutes a year chopping the weeds on the outside. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a bridegroom pursuing his new bride who yesterday left Mama to go with him and today leaves him to go to mama! Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the parishioner's patience with a preacher who is an Apollos one Sunday and couldn't pass the high school speech class the next Sunday. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a teacher's patience with a junior boy whose horns protrude through his halo, for yesterday he put an apple on her desk and today he put a lizard in her desk! Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a mother's care for a junior girl who is a combination of an angelic demon, a demon-possessed angel and a heavenly devil. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that rarest of the gems that is mined only in the depths of Heaven which combines the sapphire's gleam, the tint of the topaz, the diamond's sparkle, the emerald's beauty and the glitter of opal. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a constant vacation in paradise. Love is that holy flame fallen from Heaven to earth which returns to Heaven from earth. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a widow standing at a graveside and speaking to a departed husband, saying, "I would rather be your widow than the wife of any man on earth." Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is the paying of a debt that respect owes. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a tender plant nourished by meditation, musing and caring. Love is the soul orbiting in the vast space of service, sacrifice and selflessness. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that fountain of youth and tree of life that makes a little piece of dust called mortal man flirt with eternity and betroth deity. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a secure yawn, an eye twinkle, a speaking silence. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is a mother saying, "I don't want any," and a dad on his way to work at daybreak. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is that which makes two people thousands of miles apart watch a sunrise "together" at noonday and midnight. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? Love is just being there. Love is two hands reaching for the same popcorn. Yet, love is more than that.

What is love? God is love. Love is that indefinable word, that indescribable scene, that unfathomable depth, that unreachable height, that unknowable fact; yet, all the orators with their eloquence, all the artists with their brushes, and the sculptors with their chisels, and all the writers with their quills have not been able to describe love! As was written once on the wall of an insane asylum:

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the sky of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man ascribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

Maybe that person with his mind temporarily ill was saner than all of us, and maybe he understood more about love than the scholars.

Whatever love is, when God's children know it, it is the key that unlocks the coffers of glory and propels the generosity of God to send needs and wants to His children which they have requisitioned of Him!

Chapter 18 – Ask According to His Will

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

Can we really come to God and ask Him for anything that we want? Or must we ask for His will to be done? There are passages of Scripture which seem to teach that we may have anything we want. Then there are passages which lead us to believe that we must ask according to the will of God. The two of these can be reconciled as follows:

1. *Concerning the will of God, there are two wills.* First, there is His revealed will; then, there is His secret will. Under His secret will would be His perfect will and His permissive or acceptable will. God has a plan for each of our lives. This plan is what we call the perfect will of God. However, often sin causes us to forfeit the perfect will of God. Then, bless His name, He tells us not to go away, that He has another will for our lives, and this would be the permissive will of God, or perhaps better still, the acceptable will of God. **Romans 12:1,2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** Sometimes sin causes the Christian to forfeit the right to do the perfect will of God. Then God says to us, "Don't go away. I have another will for you." When we have forfeited our right to do His perfect will, praise His name, He does not discard us from usefulness. Perhaps one cannot no longer do His perfect will, but he can still be used by God. It matters not where the child of God is or how far away from God's perfect will he has strayed, God can still use him in some capacity.

I am thinking of a man who was called to preach, and, no doubt, the perfect will of God for his life was to pastor. Sin came into the picture and prevented him from continuing to pursue the perfect will of God. However, he got right with God and is now serving as a layman in a good fundamental church. He has a bus route and is a wonderful soul winner. God is using him in a wonderful way, though not as he could have used him had he not forfeited the right to stay in the perfect will of God.

This acceptable or permissive will of God could be called the improvised will of God. In football the coach draws the play on the board. Every player knows exactly what he is supposed to do. If the play works, it will be highly successful, and sometimes it does work just as it is drawn on the board. However, many times something may cause the play to go awry. The quarterback has the ball, he fades back to pass, but a lineman fails to block his man. The quarterback finds the play "busted." He then begins to improvise. They call this scrambling. It may be that the end who was supposed to receive the pass from the quarterback at a certain place at a certain time will find the ball not there when he arrives, so he begins to run an alternate pattern trying to get open. The quarterback is scrambling in the backfield. The entire play has fallen apart, but many games have been won and many touchdowns have been scored through improvised plays. Fran Tarkington, the scrambler, and Roger Staubach, who was called "Roger the dodger," became famous for being able to improvise plays.

It may be that in your life you have known from childhood the perfect will of God. How blessed and how wonderful when such is the case! However, some reader may be saying, "The play has been

broken for me. I have forfeited my right to the perfect will of God." Ah, dear reader, there is still a God in Heaven Who wants to use you and He will if you will diligently seek His acceptable will, or His permissive will, or perhaps even better, His improvised will. You may not score as many points as you would have scored had you stayed in the perfect will, but you can still win the game and you can be used of God! Do not panic or fret because you have forfeited the perfect will. Scramble to the improvised will. God can still use you.

2. *The revealed will is the Word of God.* This is the will that God is talking about in **I John 5:14,15, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."** God is saying that if you would ask anything according to His revealed will, He would do it. KNOWING the revealed will of God becomes the important thing! How tragic for people not to know God's will because they do not know God's Word! The child of God who would know and do the will of God must bathe himself in the Word of God in order that he may know most of the things concerning God's will and in order that he may have more power in prayer.

3. *God's revealed will tells us of His principles and His promises.* In contrast with this, God's secret will is that which He reveals to us which is not written in the Word of God. For example, we know that it is the will of God that we win souls because it is in the Word, but the Word does not tell me in what city I am to live while I win souls. This is the secret will of God, which I must find from Him. One must remember, however, that the secret will of God will be exceedingly difficult to find unless one knows the revealed will of God. If the Christian is not interested enough to seek what God has written concerning His will, God will be very reluctant to give him added instruction concerning His will.

So, the revealed will of God tells us principles by which we may live and promises that God gives to us. God is telling us that His answers to our prayers will be dependent upon our praying within the will of God, within the principles of God or within the promises of God.

4. *Within that will of God, He hears us, our text says.* Better translated, He gives us a hearing. Because we have read the Bible and learned therefrom its principles and promises, God gives us a hearing. He will listen to our petition. The implication is that God will not give us a hearing unless our prayers are according to the principles and promises of God. For example, the Supreme Court is petitioned concerning a case. First, the court must decide whether it will hear the case. If the justices feel that the case has merit, they will then hear it. The first investigation is to decide if the case will be heard. The second is the trial itself. This is what God is telling us. Whether or not He hears the case depends on our asking according to His revealed will. If, after examination, it is found that our petition is according to His revealed will, that is, the Word of God, He agrees to hear us.

Here is a Christian who obeys the Great Commission to carry the Gospel to the unsaved. It may be that he has chosen to go to a mission field. When he decides he is going to share the Gospel, he obeys the will of God as revealed in the Word of God. Then he receives a hearing concerning the secret will of God. This would be finding from God exactly on what mission field he should serve. Suppose he needs a car on the mission field in order to carry out his work. God gives him a hearing because he is living according to His will, and God says, "I will listen to your petition concerning your need of a car."

Here is another illustration: The revealed will of God tells us that we are to care for the orphans. A Christian decides to obey this command and believes that God wants him to start an orphanage.

Now he needs a building. God will hear him or give him a hearing. He may feel free to ask now because he has acted according to the revealed will of God.

Many years ago I decided to obey the revealed will of God, that is, the Word of God, and become a soul winner. God then revealed His secret will to me and let me know that I was to be a full-time soul winner, or pastor. He further revealed His will to me by leading me to pastor a church. However, the church was 100 miles from where we lived, and I had no car. Since I was obeying the revealed will of God and He had further shown me His secret will, then I had a right to ask for a hearing concerning a car. I did ask, and I did receive! God marvelously provided a car.

Notice **James 4:3**, "**Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**" Notice especially the words, "**because ye ask amiss.**" Perhaps this asking amiss is asking without the right to have a hearing. There are many things that God wants us to have that we do not have because we "**ask amiss.**" It behooves us to live in the Word of God in order that we may find His revealed will. Then we can live on our knees in order to find His secret will. So many Christians think that something is the will of God but do not know that it is. They are asking for a hearing because of what they are guessing is the secret will of God. Using this logic one can ask for almost anything, but since we are humans, we are often wrong concerning the secret will of God. So, thank God, the hearing in this passage is based not upon our human judgment of the will of God but upon what is plainly stated in the Word of God to be His will.

5. *If the secret will of God is not revealed immediately, the Christian should do the revealed will of God.* Suppose a person comes to an area where there has been a tornado. Many are injured. Many houses have been destroyed. It would seem that God would not mind a person starting where he is trying to save the person nearest to him, or help where the nearest need is found. If God does not reveal to him which person to help, he should just start helping where he is. Suppose then that a Christian has a difficult time finding the secret will of God where he should win souls. In such a case, let him start at his house and try to win his own loved ones. Then let him go to his neighbors and to his friends, then to others farther away. I doubt if God would mind saving a soul that He did not point out to the Christian, and I am convinced that if one will begin doing the revealed will of God where he is, he will have a far better chance of having the secret will of God revealed to him.

Often a young man will come to me who is graduating from Hyles-Anderson College. He knows God wants him to pastor, but he is having a difficult time finding where he is to do so. Of course, I lead him to pray diligently and seek the secret will of God as to where he should start a church. If many months pass, I then suggest to him that he ask the Lord to control his mind and that he claim **Philippians 2:5**, "**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.**" He is claiming the mind of Christ. Of course, there are many other bits of advice that I give to him concerning seeking the will of God, but it seems so foolish for one to waste a lifetime doing nothing because the secret will of God has not been revealed when he has a Book full of things that are the revealed will of God.

Let us live in the Book that we may know His revealed will in order that God may reveal to us His secret will and in order that we may have a hearing concerning the things that we need and want.

Chapter 19 – A Schedule for Daily Prayer Time

The Christian should set aside a portion of his day for the regularly scheduled time of prayer. Following is an outline for such a prayer time:

1. *Remind yourself to do the other things that require conversation with God.* This includes such things as praise, adoration, confession, meditation, humbling, thanksgiving, etc. Quickly make a list of things for which you ought to praise God. Then spend a few minutes in praise. Then spend a few minutes in adoring Him. Schedule your adoration time. Allow yourself so many minutes a day just for adoring God. Bear in mind that you are not praying yet, because prayer is asking. Praise is not prayer. Adoration is not prayer. Confession is not prayer. Meditation is not prayer. Humbling is not prayer. Thanksgiving is not prayer. ASKING is prayer, but we are commanded in the Bible to do those other things too, so the Christian should usually allow praise to precede his prayer time and this could be followed by a few moments of adoration.

Confession could then follow adoration. **Daniel 9:4, "And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments."** Make a list of the sins that you ought to confess. Then one by one ask God to forgive you and to cleanse you. **I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** Perhaps throughout the day between times of prayer, a sin will cross your mind. You could make a note that when prayer time comes you are going to confess that sin before your pray. It is so important to make outlines, to make lists. It is important not to trust the memory! That's why it is wise to write down the things for which you ought to praise God. If during the day between prayer times you think of something that is worthy of praise and you are too busy to give it its proper allotment of time in your schedule, write it down and then when praise time comes, take out your notes and remind yourself of that for which you ought to praise the Lord. The same thing is true concerning confession.

Then before praying, spend some time in meditation and then in humbling. **II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."**

Then spend some time in thanksgiving. **Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."** **I Timothy 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."** Once again, a list could be made of the things for which you are thankful. As you go through the day's schedule, keep a little card handy. When you see something for which you are thankful, write it down. When you realize there is a sin in your life, write it down. When you see something for which you ought to praise the Lord, write it down. Then when you have time in your schedule you can look at the lists you have made and without trusting your memory, you can praise God for the things that have crossed your mind during the day; you can confess the sins of which you have thought during the day; and you can thank the Lord for the things for which you have been thankful through the day.

2. *Write down a prayer promise for the day.* You might select a particular prayer promise for the week or for the month or for a certain thing for which you are praying or a project that you are pursuing. Following are some good prayer promises: **I John 3:22, "And whatsoever we ask, we**

receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." John 16:24, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." John 14:14, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Matthew 7:8, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Mathew 21:22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

3. *Remind the Lord of His reputation.* II Kings 19:14,15, "And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth." Elijah reminded the Lord of Who He is when he said, "Let it be known that Thou only art God." Joshua did this when he asked, "What wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" (Joshua 7:9) Hezekiah did so when he prayed, "Save Thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only." (II Kings 19:19)

4. *Remind God that you have met His conditions.* II Kings 20:1-3, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."

5. Present your argument to God. Job 23:3,4, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." The word "argue" here is a legal term. It means, "prepare your case." It is as an attorney would prepare his case in court.

6. *Remind God of His Word.* II Samuel 7:21,25-28, "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant." Take your promise to Him. Remind God that He said it. Jacob said at Jabbok, "And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." (Genesis 32:12) David came to God and said, "Do as Thou hast said." Solomon said at the dedication of the temple, "Remember the words spoken to David and bless this place." Joshua reminded God of His promise when he said, "Not one good thing had failed of all that God hath promised. All have come to pass."

One time Becky asked me for a new dress. I told her I would give it to her if she did a certain thing. She said, "Dad, write that down." I did write it down, and signed it. She came back later and said, "Dad, I'm ready for my new dress."

I said, "What new dress?"

She said, "Dad, you promised me a new dress if I would do a certain thing, and I have done it."

I said, "I don't remember that."

Becky pulled out a piece of paper and held it in front of me and said, "Did you write that?"

I said, "I sure did."

She said, "What is it?"

I said, "It's a promise I would buy you a new dress if you fulfilled certain conditions."

She said, "Well, Dad, what are you going to do about it?"

I said, "I'm going to keep my promise," and I bought her a new dress!

God is pleased when we remind Him of His promises and of His Word.

Abraham reminded God of His attributes when He said, **"That be far from Thee to do after this manner to slay the righteous with the wicked."** David reminded God of His record when he said, **"Thou hast been my help."** Moses did likewise when he said, **"Thou didst bring this people out of Egypt."** Moses was asking God to continue to lead His people, He first reminded God that it was He Who was responsible for their starting the journey and it was His responsibility to complete the job He had started.

7. *Pray over your regular list.* For example, I have a regular list that includes power, wisdom, love, members of the family, close friends, preachers, churches, etc.

8. *Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make a list.* **Romans 8:26,27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."** The words, **"maketh intercession,"** in these two verses are not quite the same. In one, the Holy Spirit maketh intercession **"to us"**; in the other, the Holy Spirit maketh intercession **"with us."** This means that we ask the Holy Spirit to make intercession to us for what we ought to pray. Ask Him to tell you what you ought to pray for when you go to the throne of grace. Then as He reminds you of things you should place on your prayer list, write them down. After He has made intercession to you, then He wants to make intercession with you. He then will go to the throne of grace with you and if there are things for which you ought to ask the Father that you forget to ask, the Holy Spirit will remind the Father for you. The Holy Spirit is your prayer partner. In other words, He tells you what to pray for; then you write it down as He inspires you to make your prayer list. Then as you go to the Father, ask the Holy Spirit to go with you and be your prayer partner as you present your petitions to the Father. You are saying that you don't know what you ought to pray for; the Holy Spirit does know. You ask Him; He tells you. You make a list. Then you go together to the Father to present your petitions.

9. *Put Scriptures beside your list.* If you are asking for healing, you could write **James 5:13, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."** Psalm 103:3b, **"Who healeth all thy diseases."** If you are asking for power, you could write **Luke 11:13, "If ye then,**

being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" If you are asking for forgiveness, you could write I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Psalm 103:3a, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." If you are asking for food, you could write Psalm 103:5, "Who satisfieth they mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" If you are asking for clothing, you could write Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If you are asking for your personal desires, you could write Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thing heart." Before you go to the Father with the Holy Spirit to present the list that the Holy Spirit has reminded you to make, remember to write down some prayer promises and present them to the Father as a basis for your claim.

10. *Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of your sins.* Make a list of them and ask God to forgive you.

11. *Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of your enemies.* Be sure to pray for them. **Matthew 5:44**, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

12. *Prepare for the answer.* II Kings 18:23, "Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them."

Several years ago there was a couple in our church who wanted to have a baby. The doctor said it was impossible, but they believe that God would answer their prayers. They came to me and asked me to anoint them with oil. Then they remodeled a room and made a nursery out of it. (Bear in mind, the lady was not pregnant nor did the doctor give them any hope that she ever could be, but they were preparing for the answer to their prayers.) Some friends even got together and gave them a shower. No baby was on the way, but they had a baby shower. They were preparing for the answer. Miraculously God opened the way where they could adopt a baby. They prepared for the answer, and God gave it to them. Then God gave them seven of their own! This is what the Lord may have meant in **Jeremiah 33:3** when He said, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

The Christian life should be a disciplined one. The Lord chose to call us His disciples or His "disciplined ones." The aforementioned schedule of prayer is not the only one, but if one would take about 30 minutes a day, he would have ample time to do all the things that are suggested, and he would be amazed as to how God would hear and answer his prayers. The things that we do spontaneously are not done regularly. The things that we do regularly by schedule do get done. Prayer should be on purpose and should be planned as a part of our daily schedule. May God help us to discipline ourselves to pray!

Chapter 20 – Ask, Seek and Knock

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

The three words, "ask", "seek" and "knock," are not synonyms. They are not three types of praying, nor are they synonymous with the word "pray," but rather, they are three steps to getting answers to prayer.

There are three people that must be moved if we get what we want and need: first, God; second, me; third, others. Each of these words deal with one of these people. "Ask" deals with God; "seek" deals with me; and "knock" deals with others.

The word "ask" has to do with things that only God can give. There is nothing that man can do; God provides these answers by Himself. For example, the power of the Holy Spirit, rain, etc. are answers which only God can give. I have nothing to do with it, neither does anyone else.

"Seek" has to do with some things that God and I can do together. Notice, first I just asked. That was all I could do. Now "seek" is added to asking, which means that there is something I am to do. This would deal with things that I seek from God that God and I do together. An illustration of this would be preaching. I ask God to help me while I preach, but I have to help also. This means God and I labor together. An illustration of this would be farming. Of course, the farmer should ask God for rain, for sunshine, for strength and for other things, but God does not do all the work. The farmer enters into a yoke with God, and he and God become co-laborers.

Then there are some things that require God and me and others. This leads us to the word "knock." This is an endeavor which would require God working, me working and others responding. An illustration of this would be soulwinning. God gives the power and does the saving and convicting. I carry the message, but another must respond. Another illustration would be building a Sunday school class or a bus route or pastoring a church, or for that matter, getting married. Each of these endeavors require the help of God, my own help and a response by someone else.

Consequently, one form of prayer is asking. That's all I do. God must give the answer. Another form of prayer is asking and seeking. God and I are co-laborers in the venture. Another form of prayer is asking and seeking and knocking when God and I join together in a venture which requires the response of someone else. Hence, I am to do all three. In fact, I am to continue at all three, for all of these verbs are in the linear or durative tense. When I need something done that only God can do and that man can have nothing to do with, I must ask and ask and ask and ask and keep on asking, but I must seek and seek and keep on seeking. Then we come to the place where God and I join in a venture which requires the response of someone else. Then I must keep on asking and asking and asking and continue to ask. I must keep on working and working and working and continue to work, which is another way to say I must continue to seek. Then I must keep on knocking and knocking and knocking until other respond. When God must be moved, I keep on asking. When God and I must be moved, I keep on asking and keep on seeking. When God and I and others must be moved I keep on asking and seeking and knocking.

An example would be selling. I must ask God to give the sales. I must seek the customers, and then I must keep after them until I have sold.

Another example would be soul winning. I must ask God for souls. I must seek them, and then I must keep knocking until those who reject decide to accept.

Another example would be rearing children. I must keep asking for God to help my children to turn out right. I must keep seeking this by constant training and teaching. And then I must keep knocking and not give up if they reject.

Another illustration would be that of finding a job. I must ask and continue to ask for God to give me a job. Then I must seek and continue to seek employment, and then I must keep knocking and continue to keep knocking until an employer gives me a chance.

Each of these is vital and necessary to a well-rounded prayer life. One who just asks will not work; one who just asks and works does not persevere and will not succeed, but one who keeps asking and seeking and knocking will know what prayer is really all about.

It is important that we ask as if all depended on God, that we seek as if all depended on us and that we knock as if all depended on others!

Chapter 21 – God Needs Your Personality

Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

God made you to fill a particular need. You are different from everyone else who came before you, and you are different from everyone else who will come after you. This means you are unique! There has never been anybody like you, and there will never be anybody like you. Just as there are no two snowflakes alike, no two grains of sand alike, even so, no two people are alike. That leads us to several conclusions:

1. God's need for you is unique. There is something that you can do for God that no one else can do. Since man was made for the praise of God's glory and for fellowship with his God, then each man has a particular fellowship to offer God that no other man has. I love that. If I do not praise God and offer Him my praise, there is a unique praise He will not receive, for nobody's praise is exactly like mine and nobody's worship is exactly like mine, for nobody's soul or personality is exactly like mine.

2. Your relationship with Him is unique. We are not simply a choir of robots chanting praises to God; each of us has his own personality made by God to fill an appetite. There is no one who can give God exactly what you can give him. For example, among His Apostles was one such as beloved John, who was affectionate and steady, and there was one like Peter, who was quick to speak and yet very zealous. There was Andrew, unspectacular, a good children's worker, but very predictable, and then there was James, who was very businesslike and pastoral. No two apostles gave to Jesus exactly the same thing. Each had his own peculiar relationship with Christ.

This is true in a church. There are thousands of members of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, but each member offers to his pastor something that no other member can offer, and each relationship is unique to itself. I find this true on my church staff. There are no two people who offer the same thing. Each relationship is different and none is like it.

Years ago I was teaching my soul-winning course in Jacksonville, Florida. It was taught in the afternoon, and after the course was over, a man was driving home on a trip of about 40 miles, I think, in order to get his wife to bring her back to the service that evening. He had just taken the soul-winning course and was wanting to put into practice what he had learned. He pulled over to the shoulder of the highway and offered a ride to a hitchhiker. When the hitchhiker got into the car, he pulled a weapon on the man and announced that he was going to kill him. The man said, "All right, go ahead and kill me, but I just took a course on how to win a soul, and while you are killing me I am going to be telling you about Jesus and how you can go to Heaven when you die." Soon the would-be murderer bowed his head and received Christ as his Saviour and the would-be murdered became a soul winner. The new convert handed the weapon to the one who had led him to Christ and came back to church with him that night. It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience when the man who was going to kill stood beside the man who was going to be killed, arm in arm praising the Lord together.

The strange thing was the way people responded that night. I remember one red-faced fellow jumped up in the back and shouted, "Well, glory!" I recall another fellow who got so happy he laughed and laughed and could not control his laughter. While one was shouting, "Well, glory!" and

one was laughing out of control, I was weeping. Over in the corner another was so happy he was clapping his hands, and dear Dr. John R. Rice was saying very sweetly, "Amen! Amen! Amen!" Don't you see? Each of us shared the same experience with the rest of us, and yet no two of us responded exactly alike.

Even so, Jesus needs you to fill a particular need that no one else can fill. He needed a Mary to sit at His feet and worship Him. He needed a Martha to prepare His meal. He needed a John to lean on His breast. He needed a David to play his harp. He needed a Jeremiah to weep. Thank God that none of these can offer God what I can offer Him. I cannot offer Him as much as they, but I can offer Him something different. That means He needs me, and He needs you!

3. *Your privileges are unique.* An illustration of this would be the staff of the First Baptist Church of Hammond. Randy Ericson, the dear man who oversees all the maintenance of our church, meets with me weekly and we have a good time. Steve Sloan, one of our custodians meets me at my care when I arrive every morning and we chat together for a few minutes. Larry Weller drives the van and chauffeurs me from the airport each week and often drives me to speaking engagements, so we are together in a different way. Elmer Fernandez sees me every other week for appointment, and he almost always brings me a bite to eat. All of the men on my staff are important, but each one has privileges and contact with the boss that none of the others have. Ray Young, John Colsten, Larry Bullard, Keith McKinney, Bill Schutt, Roy Moffit, Jim Wertz, Eddie Lapina, etc. have different and unique privileges that they receive from me and contributions that they make to me. The same is true with God. You have privileges that nobody else has. There is something that He allows you to do that He allows no one else to do in the same way.

4. *Your responsibilities are unique.* My mother is, at this writing, 94 years of age. I have one living sister (two are in Heaven). Now my sister has one type relationship with my mother and I have another. Both are important, but they are different. I provide for Mother and have for years. My sister very patiently and gently cares for Mother. They live together, and no one could be any more careful or loving toward her mother than is my sister. Mother needs me because it is my responsibility to care for her financially and to offer her security. She needs my sister as much as she needs me, but in a different way. She needs my sister to help her get to church, to give her companionship at home and to watch over her health and care.

I am grateful to God that I am different. He has millions of children, but not any is exactly like I am. I have a relationship with Him that is different from that of any of His children. He needs me in a way that is different from His need for any of His other children. My privileges with Him are different from any other child of God, and my responsibilities toward Him are unique and different. This means that I can love Him in a way that no one else can love Him. I can praise Him in a way that no one else can praise Him. I can serve Him in a way that no one else can serve Him. I can be to Him what no one else can be to Him. This does not mean that I serve Him better or praise Him better or that He loves me more; it just means that I am different from every other child of God, and since I am different, my relationship is like none other. How wonderful! How blessed! Praise God, He needs me! I am so glad!

Chapter 22 – Pray Without Ceasing

1st Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." Notice the words, "Rejoice evermore," of I Thessalonians 5:16 are yoked with the words, "Pray without ceasing." God is saying, the more praying, the more rejoicing! The less praying, the less rejoicing! Then note the statement in the next verse, "In every thing gives thanks." Ah, how sweet! When joy and prayer are married, their firstborn child is gratitude.

Now what does it mean, "Pray without ceasing"? Does it mean we are to be speaking words constantly? Of course not! Does it mean that the Christian should stay on his knees every moment of every day? This is impossible. Does it mean that there is a certain place where we must go and stay in order to pray? No, it does not. There are several things meant by our Lord when He says we are to pray without ceasing.

1. *There is no time when the Christian should not pray.* There is not one unholy second in a minute. There is no one unholy minute of the day. There is not one unholy day of the week. There is not one unholy week of the year. There is not one unholy year of our lives. From January 1 through December 31, all days are red-letter days. Every day is a Sabbath day and every moment is a sacred moment. There is not time when a Christian should not pray.

How wonderful are the early morning hours when the Christian steals away alone with his God and prays with a choir of birds, the humming of the cricket, the amen of a rooster, a chandelier made of the rising sun, a congregation of trees, a chancel made of a cluster of daffodils! Ah, how wonderful are the early morning hours for prayer! When a Christian neglects the early morning prayer watch, he is robbing himself not only of a mighty power but of blessed fellowship.

How sacred are the closing hours of the day when God's rheostat has slowly dimmed the chandelier, and the peaceful tranquility of the sunset and the evening darkness make God seem even nearer and dearer!

How powerful then is the midnight hour as the servant of God wrestles, pleading with God for power, for provision, for blessing!

How strengthening then is the noontime when the Christian may attach his cable to God's booster for help during the day's toil!

2. *There is no place where the Christian should not pray.* Every place is holy ground. Every bush is a burning bush. Every hill is an altar. Every valley is a sanctuary. You can come to the mercyseat from where you are. As someone has said, "It is only a knee away."

Kings hold their levees on appointed days. The Kings of kings holds a constant levee. Those under King Ahasuerus were slain who approached him when he was not holding out his scepter. The King of kings is always holding out His scepter. The dead of night is not too late; the morning's break is not too early; at eventide He is not too weary. The kitchen sink can be an altar, the work bench can be a chancel, the school room can be a sanctuary, the sofa can be a mourner's bench, even the rest room can be a prayer closet!

3. *The Christian should be in conversation with God all the time.* There are several ways this can be done. For example, I have on my desk in my office a piece of wood about three feet long on

which are burned the words, "Pray for power." In every Bible that I own I have the words, "Pray for power." On my office door are the words, "pray for power." Inside my briefcase are the words, "Pray for power." At the mirror where I shave at home are the words, "pray for power." The mirror in my washroom at church has written on it the words, "pray for power." Hundreds of times a day I pray for the power of God. This perhaps is at least a part of what God meant when He admonished us to pray without ceasing.

The Christian should be constantly sending out little darts of prayer. When the cares of this life, the daily work and toil of life make us unable to load the furnace, we can send little sparks rising in the form of words, thoughts and even looks to our Heavenly father.

For years I spent many hours a month with Dr. John R. Rice. For over 22 years I shared pulpits and platforms across America with him. Over 2200 times he and I have preached on the same program. I have stayed with him in motel rooms, eaten with him in restaurants, prayed with him in classrooms. Many times when nothing was being said I would see his lips moving. I would hear a mumble just above a whisper. What was he doing? He was praying! He was sending up brief messages. I can remember that when we would be driving to the service at night I would overhear him saying just above a whisper, "Lord, help me. Lord, give me power. Lord, bless the service, help us."

The Christian's magnetized needle should always be pointing north toward his God. Years ago the marvelous Christian and great preacher Evangelist Lester Roloff preached for me on a Wednesday night. The next night he was to preach in Canton, Ohio, and I was to preach in Akron, Ohio. He suggested that I fly with him in his private plane to the Akron-Canton airport. I agree to do so. What a wonderful time of fellowship we had until suddenly Brother Roloff looked at me and through pale lips said, "Brother Jack, we are lost! The compass is broken! We are over Lake Erie and we don't have much gasoline left! Unless this compass is repaired quickly, we may have to crash land in the lake! Both of us were, to say the least, apprehensive. I nervously reached up on the dash of the airplane and took the can of pecans down and ate a few. When I removed the pecan can, the compass went back to perfect operation. One little can of pecans at the wrong place had gotten us off course. When the child of God has something between him and his God and between him and his prayer life, he will soon be off course.

I am alone very much. Fifty weeks a year, I fly on Monday from O'Hare Field in Chicago to some place in America where I preach on Monday night and Tuesday. I fly over 200,000 miles a year. I spend hundreds of hours a year in motel rooms. I try to keep in constant contact with Heaven. I often sing those beautiful words, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." There is no burden so great that God doesn't want to help us bear it. There is no burden so small but that God wants to help us solve it. There is no problem so great but that God wants to help us solve it. There is no problem so small that does not attract the attention of our God, and He wants to help us find a solution. There is no question so hard but that God can answer it. There is no question so simple but that God wants to help us find the answer. God is interested in your shopping; talk to Him about it. God is interested in your work; talk to Him about it. God is interested in your school; talk to Him about it. God is interested in your housekeeping; talk to Him about it. There is no area of life that should be kept from God, and we should be in constant touch with Heaven presenting our petitions and finding grace to help in time of need.

One Sunday night I was leaving my study to walk down the alley behind the church on my way to the evening service. As I left the office, I had a funny taste in my mouth. I said, "Dear Lord, some peppermint sure would taste good right now." As I was walking through the door, one of our fine

deacons walked up, reached in his pocket and took out a little piece of peppermint candy and said, "Pastor, would you like to have a piece of candy before you preach?" My heart leaped with joy. I said, "Thank You, Lord." Sometimes the sweetest answers to prayer are the smallest ones when God is mindful of our little needs in the commonplace events of our life.

One day I didn't have time to go out for lunch, but I was so hungry! I said, "Lord, I sure would like something to eat." Within a few seconds I heard someone knocking at the door of my study. I went to the door. Someone had left a cheese quarter-pounder and some French fries outside my door. I smiled and said, "Thank You, Lord," and enjoyed my lunch.

God wants us to abide in Him. He wants us to abide in prayer. He wants us to walk in prayer. Mrs. Billy Sunday ("Ma" Sunday) was a dear friend of mine during her latter years. Though I never met her husband, I got to know Ma very well. On several occasions she would tell me some things about her husband. One day she talked to me about his prayer life. She told me how she and her husband would be walking down the street, and Billy Sunday would talk to her awhile and then to God awhile, to her awhile and then to God awhile. She said it was often difficult for her to know to which one he was talking. He had learned to pray without ceasing!

Chapter 23 – Persevering in Prayer

Luke 18:1-8, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Recently I received a letter from a fine Christian lady listing the things she had prayed for in recent weeks that had not been answered. She was not bitter to God but was concerned. Somehow or other it is easy for us to believe that prayer is an Aladdin's lamp and that we simply rub it and tell what we want and it will come immediately. Such is not the case. Sometimes it may take continual coming to God with our prayers. **Luke 18:5, "Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."** Sometimes it takes crying day and night for a long time. **Luke 18:7, " And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"**

A young lady comes to God and prays and tells God she wants a certain young man for a husband. Sometimes she even gives Him a time schedule. A man says that he wants a certain job. He comes to God and asks for that job and tells God where he wants to work and when he wants to work. When God does not answer immediately or at the appointed time, Disappointment and even doubt may occur.

It must be understood that God does not always answer immediately. He wants us to persevere in prayer. Sometimes the time is not right. Just like the husbandman who spends much time in panting and waiting as the seed germinates, even so God's people must spend time in waiting until God gives the answer. Of course, this waiting should also be a time of continually praying and pleading with God for the answer.

Why would God want to make us wait and why would He allow His children whom He loves and for whom He wants to provide to continue to agonize and persevere in prayer? There are many reasons. Some are listed in other chapters, but there are three special ones worthy of note:

1. *God knows WHAT is best.* Sometimes the Christian comes to God to present his petition, and God knows that it is a prayer for that which is second best for us. He may have something better. Now He often does, if we persist, give us that which is second best. Such was the case in the story of Balaam. When the messengers came from Moab asking him to come to prophesy in Moab, Balaam sought the Lord, and the Lord told him not to go. Still other messengers were sent who offered him rewards and honor. Again Balaam came to God in prayer, and this time God allowed him to go. It was not God's first choice for Balaam. God told him His first choice the first time he came, but Balaam continued asking, and God granted him permission to go to Moab.

Many Christians have second best because they want their prayers answered quickly. Sometimes the Lord delays to see if we will wait for His best for us. I am thinking of a young lady who asked God for a Christian husband. She thought she was in love with a young man, and the wedding date

was set. The ceremony was planned, the wedding gown was purchased, and then something happened. Those who loved her and knew her best felt that she was settling for second best, so she withdrew her prayer to God, cancelled the wedding and prayed for God's best. In God's good time He answered this prayer. Oh, how happy she is now! Isn't it wonderful that God knows what we need more than we know ourselves, and isn't it wonderful that sometimes He delays answering our prayers hoping that we will trust Him because He knows WHAT is best.

2. *God knows WHEN is best.* He knows when we are ready for the answers to our prayers. Sometimes a young lady will plead for God to give her a certain young man, and this young man is the will of God for the life of this young lady. However, God knows that perhaps she is not ready for marriage yet, so He waits to answer, and then when the time is right, He presents His answer to her. Sometimes a young ministerial student graduates from college or seminary and asks God to give him a church. God knows there is more ripening and maturing that he needs first, so God in His mercy withholds His answer until the proper time. If the answer comes sooner, it may be that the young preacher, not being ready yet, will make some mistake that would injure his own ministry or the life of the church. So God waits, and while He waits the young man continues to pray. God has the answer all ready wrapped, addressed and postmarked, but His timing is important. The WHEN is just as important as the WHAT.

I know a young couple who asked God for a child. A year or two passed and they did not have one. They became bitter with God. The very fact that they would become bitter with God because He did not answer in their appointed time implied that they were not ready for a child. There was some more maturing to do. They continued to pray, and as they prayed they matured and as they matured they withdrew their bitterness. Then they relied upon God not only to give them a child but to know when it was best. As they matured, God prepared them for the answer that He had already had set aside for them in Heaven.

When we ask the first time, God often puts our answer aside, puts our name on it and holds it for us. He wants us to have it, but He wants us to have it at the right time.

There are some things for which I am praying right now. I know God has them set aside for me, and my name is written on them. I also know that I am not prepared for them yet. I need to grow some more. I need to mature some more. I need to pray some more. So as I continue to wait and to pray and to plead with God to give them to me, I am trusting Him to know when.

I knew for years that God was going to lead me to start a college for the training of young people for His service. I prayed and prayed and prayed and waited and waited and waited, but God was not ready yet. I kept praying and kept praying and kept praying and kept waiting. God knew when I was ready, and with the passing of the years I continued to persevere. In God's good time He knew when I was prepared and ready for the answer. So when the time came, He took the answer that He had already set aside for me and sent it my way. Only God knows what time the Christian is ready and only God knows the times and seasons.

It is a temptation to the child of God to think that since God lingers, He is not going to answer the prayer. We must remember that if our prayer be according to the will of God, if we are praying in the Spirit, God may answer our prayer if we will give Him time.

3. *God knows when the answer is ripe.* Sometimes we pray for something and God sets it aside for us but the answer itself is not ready for us. The farmer wants the harvest but he has to have patience until it is fully ripe and ready for harvesting. Sometimes we ask for something and we may

be prepared for it, but the fruit may not be ripened. God has marked it for us and He will give it to us if we will continue to pray, but we have to wait 'til the answer is ripe.

For example, a young man prays and asks God for a young lady to be his wife. God sets her aside for him and it is the will of God that he receive her, but perhaps she is not yet prepared to be a wife. Perhaps the Lord lingers until she ripens, matures and will make a much better wife, and then the beginning of married life will be much happier.

The Christian, therefore, should pray. He should pray believing, but he should realize that God may set the answer aside for him but not send it right away. It may be that it is not God's time yet. Perhaps the Christian who prays is not ready for the answer. Perhaps the answer is not ready for the Christian or maybe the request is second best and God has something better. Believing this, the temptation could be to quit praying. Oh, no, no, no, beloved! We need to pray for God to give us the desires of our hearts! He knows; knows when the harvest is ripe. It is ours to continue to pray.

James 5:7,8, " Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Chapter 24 – Hope or Hopelessness in Prayer

We are admonished in the Word of God to keep on praying. **Luke 18:1**, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." **I Thessalonians 5:17**, "Pray without ceasing." **Matthew 7:7-11**, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Now this will lead to one of three things:

1. *An answer.*
2. *A hope.*
3. *A hopelessness.*

Of course, the first is the most desirable to us, for we want an answer quickly, and sometimes the answer comes for which we can praise God. Let's suppose, for example, that we are praying for John Doe to get right with God. The first thing that could happen is the answer—John Doe could get right with God. If, however, John Doe does not get right with God, we are to keep on praying. The next possibility would be hope. Hope says to faith, "Hold on till I get there." Hope is when you know it is coming. It is faith in its purity. It is undiluted faith. Note **Mark 9:24**, "**And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.**" Belief is always tainted with unbelief. When belief is not so tainted, it is hope. God tells us that the answer is going to come.

Let's go back to our prayer for John Doe. If we do not get the answer, then we can keep on praying and keep on praying until we are sure the answer is coming. This is undiluted faith, which in reality is hope. Notice **Titus 2:13**, "**Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.**" Here it speaks of the blessed hope. That means we know Jesus is coming. We don't hope He is coming; we have a hope that He is coming. This is undiluted faith. There is no unbelief in this belief. There is no doubt in this faith. It is pure faith, which is hope. The Apostle Paul said, "**Christ in me, the hope of glory.**" This is pure faith. We know that we are going to glory. I know that I am going to Heaven. It is not just faith; it is pure faith, which is hope. The writer put it this way, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

Someone asked Raphael one time, "What is your best painting?"

He replied, "The next one."

That is hope.

Henry Francis Lyte had but a few months to live. He prayed and the Bible fell open to **Luke 24:29**. He read the words, "**Abide with us, for it is toward the evening and the day is far spent.**" Faith changed to hope, and he wrote:

"Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Some of the old timers call this "praying through." They meant that when we pray for something and the answer does not come, we keep on praying and keep on praying and keep on praying until suddenly God gives us the assurance the answer is going to come! This means He gives us hope!

As a young preacher I used to preach revivals a great deal. I recall preaching a revival in a little wide place in the road called Hall, Louisiana, which was not many miles from the city of Vivian, Louisiana. I prayed and prayed and prayed that God would give revival. Nothing was happening, but one day I prayed through, and God gave me a sweet peace that revival was going to come. No longer was my faith mingled with doubt or my belief mingled with unbelief. I knew revival was coming! Faith had become a hope. Sure enough, one night the quarterback on the Vivian state championship football team came to hear me preach. He came with his girlfriend and got saved. The next night he brought the entire football squad with him, and to a man, every player got saved! That night after the service, they went out to eat at their usual gathering place. Just before they ate, the captain of the team said, "Hey, men, we're saved now. We're supposed to say grace." They all bowed their heads. He began to pray and then stopped and looked up and said, "Hey, men, this is no way to prayer. We are supposed to kneel to pray." The entire squad got on their knees and prayed. Revival broke out in that little country church! God had given me a hope!

Often when I have prayed for the sick I have not received the answer, but I have received the hope. They were not yet well, but I knew they were going to get well.

Let's go back to John Doe. We pray that he will get right with God. The answer would be that he gets right with God. If this does not take place, we continue praying and continue praying. Then God may give us the hope that he will get right. We know he will, through he hasn't yet. We have been given the peace and assurance.

Then there is a third halt to our prayers. This is hopelessness. **Romans 1:24,26,28**, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." Hosea 4:17, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." I John 5:14-17, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." These passages teach us that when we keep on praying sometimes our prayers will be ended by hopelessness; that is, God will say, "Don't pray anymore. There is no need. This person will never get right with God. He has crossed the deadline. I have given him up." Such was the case of the homosexuals in **Romans 1:24,26,28**.

So many times I have prayed and prayed for someone. I have gone to them and witnessed. They continue to say, "No," and to say, "No," until one day God said to me, "Don't pray any more." The burden was lifted, and there was no need to pray.

Now back to John Doe. We pray that he will get right with God. The answer is that he gets right with God. If the answer doesn't come, we continue to pray, and that will lead us either to hope or hopelessness. The time will come when God will give us the assurance that the victory is going to come and faith becomes undiluted, which is hope. There are times, however, when we continue to pray and we do not have this assurance, and then God says, "All is hopeless. I have withdrawn. Do not pray for him anymore." Oh, what a sad thing this is, but how real it is!

Let us then continue to pray until we get the answer or until we have the hope or until God says it is hopeless!

Chapter 25 – God's "No" Is Often Temporary

Matthew 15:21-28, "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Sometimes God says, "No," when He means, "After awhile, yes; but now, no." Here is a lady who sought deliverance from our Lord. Imagine her preparation. She had spent all her money on the physicians. I wonder how many times a good doctor had been recommended to her. I wonder how many times her hopes had been lifted only to fall again when a physician failed. I wonder how many times she had come home and cried herself to sleep believing that there was not another who could help. I wonder how many times she had given up completely and then taken faith when someone else would recommend a new remedy, and now she hears that Jesus is nearby! Can you see her rising early in the morning? Can you feel her heartbeat as she gets closer to the Saviour? Then finally she gets to touch Him and to ask for help. Then the Scripture says, **"He answered not a word."** She was completely ignored. Jesus was saying, "No," but He didn't mean "no" permanently. It was only a temporary "no." He wanted to see if she meant business. He said, **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."** Maybe He was saying, "This is not your dispensation. This is the dispensation of the Jew. He then discourages her more when He said, **"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs."** Ah, but she wasn't through yet! She reminded him that even the dogs have a right to hang around the table and catch the crumbs. After saying, "No," and after testing her sincerity, the dear Saviour then said, **"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."**

I wonder how many people have quit right before the answer came. I wonder how many races could have been won because the victory was just around the next corner when the runner quit.

The question comes, "How do I know how long to ask?" Now that is your problem! The words, "How long?" are your problem. You are wanting to know when you quit asking, but that fact that you consider quitting is your problem. I'll tell you exactly how long it will be before you have your prayer answered—when He knows you won't quit. There is no time limit placed upon pleading with God for an answer! Then there will come a time when God will say, "That fellow is not going to quit bothering me. He is going to keep on praying." Then the dear Lord's "no" becomes a "yes."

We fail to understand **Luke 11:9,10, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."** This is all in the linear or continual tense. It is something never stopped; for example, we will sleep as long as we live on this earth. We will eat as long as we live on this earth. Now if we keep pleading with God as long as we live on this earth, and He knows that we will, He will often change a "no" to a "yes."

This is the meaning of **Luke 18:1, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."** This is the meaning of the parable of the unjust judge who became so weary because the lady pleaded with him to avenge her of her adversary that he finally said, "You leave me alone, and I'll grant your request." If an unjust judge would do this, how much more would a Heavenly Father do this when He knows that we will not take "no" for an answer?

This is what Moses meant in **Exodus 32:32, " Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."**

Sometimes God says, "No!" now, but it is a temporary "no" because sometimes it is not best for us now. Later it may be best. So keep on praying; sometimes His "no's" become "yeses."

Sometimes God wants us to prove our desire. He wants to know how much we want something. When He finds that we want it so much that we will keep on asking and keep on asking and keep on asking, He changes a "no" to a "yes."

Sometimes He tarries just to be with the Christian. He wants to be with you. The only way many of us will spend time with God is if we are pleading for something from Him, so often He says, "No," at first so that we will continue pleading.

Did you ever have a little puppy dog who was barking for a piece of meat? You held the piece of meat above him and he barked again. You enticed him with it, and he jumped up high and barked again. You knew you were going to give him the meat; you just wanted to hear him bark for awhile! Often, God intends to give you the meat; but He wants to hear you bark. It's the only chance He gets to hear you bark. Sometimes He says, "No," at first and then He says, "Yes," later because He wants to be with you.

Then sometimes He says, "No," now and "Yes" later because the Christian is not ready yet for the answer. If you had the answer now, it would do you harm, but after you have prayed and fasted and persevered in supplication, you are able to take the answer to prayer, and God's timing is delayed until you are ready to accept and use properly His answer.

Sometimes God says, "No," today, but it will be "Yes" tomorrow. Sometimes He says, "No," today, but it will be "Yes" next year. Sometimes He says, "No," today, but it will be "Yes" many years from now. Promise that you are going to continue praying and pleading and begging. Convince yourself that you will never quit. When God is convinced, He often changes a "no" to a "yes," for God's "no" is often temporary.

Chapter 26 – Preparation for Petition

It has often been mentioned in this book that prayer is only one form of talking to God. Prayer is asking, or making a petition to God. Praise may be talking to God, but it is not prayer. Confession is talking to God, but it is not prayer. Thanksgiving is talking to God, but it is not prayer. Prayer is requesting, asking, or the presentation of a petition to God.

Because of this, it is unwise to rush to the throne of grace without thought or preparation. God wants us to have what we want. Now this can pose a problem. We must be careful what we want. Many parents have ruined children because they grant a request of the child. One parent said to me after his child had been seriously injured in a motorcycle accident, "I knew I shouldn't have gotten him one." With such promises as **John 15:7; Jeremiah 33:3**; etc. in the Bible, a Christian must take every care to be sure that his petitions are carefully thrown out before he prays. We must be sure that what we want is right for us.

II Corinthians 7:6,7, "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more." Before we pray, we should pray for the right desires. **Psalms 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."** **Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."** We are simply asking God to give us the desires we should have before we come to the throne of grace to present them.

It is also a good idea for the praying Christian to ask God to reveal to him the sins about which the Christian does not know. **Psalms 19:12, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults."** The words, "secret faults," here mean "sins that I do not even know about." The Christian may confess and forsake his open sins. He may even go on to confess and forsake those sins that only he and God know about. As one grows in grace, he finds that there are sins being revealed to him from time to time, and there are things that he is doing that are sinful of which he was not aware. This is what the Psalmist is asking. He is asking God to reveal to him the sins and faults about which he knows nothing so that he with confession and repentance can take these sins to God for forgiveness.

Before the Christian presents his petition, he may want God to reveal His commandments to him. **Psalms 119:12,26,33,66,108, "Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me Thy statutes. Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. Accept, I beseech Thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Thy judgments."**

All of us have seen little boxes containing cards on which are written Scripture verses. Almost always these verses are promises that God has given to His people. However, few, if any, of us have ever seen a box of Scripture verses on which are written commandments. There are many commandments without promises. **Malachi 3:9,10, "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."** **John 15:7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye**

will, and it shall be done unto you." Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." II Chronicles 7:14, "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Notice in each passage there are promises, but before these promises are the commandments. Before the promise of answered prayer, there's the commandment to abide in Christ and have His Word abide in you. Before the promise of God giving us great and mighty things of which we know not, there is the commandment to call on Him. Before the promise of forgiving sin and healing our land, are the commandments to humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, turn from our wicked ways. Before presenting his petition to God, the Christian should be well aware of God's commandments, in order that he may obey them before claiming the promises.

The Christian should also pray to the Holy Spirit and ask Him for what he should pray when he presents his petition to God. Romans 8:26,27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Since I have needs of which I know not, and since I know not what tomorrow holds, I do not know what tomorrow's needs may be, but He who knows all knows my needs today and tomorrow can reveal them to me before I pray. Likewise, the Christian should pray for other Christians to know their needs and know what petitions they should bring to God. Colossians 1:9, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Ephesians 1:16-18, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Then there are times when Christians should counsel with each other concerning things for which they should pray. Romans 15:14, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

Once we have used all the avenues possible for the finding of our sins so we can confess them and the finding of our needs so we can petition for them, we then may prepare our prayers. Ephesians 3:11,12, "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." Once this has been done, we can come boldly to the throne of grace. Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Coming boldly means to come with a warm simple confidence that we are His child and He is our Father, that we love Him and that He loves us, and that we are coming in a spiritual attitude to claim those things which are best for us.

Coming boldly also means that we can come to God and present our case which in one place in the Bible is called "argument." This is the type argument that an attorney would present in court. Job 23:4, "I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Then there is an amazing Scripture in the Bible concerning our boldness before God in Isaiah 45:11, "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye me."

We are even reminded in the Bible that we can pray for boldness. Acts 4:28,29, "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold

their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word."

We are also told that that prayer can be answered, and boldness can be ours. **Acts 4:31**, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

We are likewise reminded that we can pray for boldness for each other. **Ephesians 6:18-20**, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

As an attorney, with respect, propriety, dignity and perhaps even a degree of reverence, comes before the judge with a well-prepared case, believing that he has a right to present it and that the judge will hear him with justice, so the Christian may do likewise at the throne of grace. **Isaiah 43:25,26**, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put Me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified."

We are His children. We have a right to come before Him, but let us not do so glibly! Let us prepare our hearts and prepare our case before we come to His throne presenting our petitions.

Chapter 27 – The Model Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Luke 11:2-4, "And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

This is what is commonly known as the Lord's prayer. However, this is not a prayer prayed by our Lord. This is often called "the model prayer," or perhaps it could better be called "a good outline for praying." Since it is an outline for the Christian's prayer, it is worthy of careful investigation.

1. *Jesus introduces a new title for God.* Luke 11:2a, "And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, **Our Father...**" No one had before this time addressed God as Father except the Lord Jesus. Luke 2:49, "And he said unto them, **How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?**" Now He comes to tell us that HIS Father can now be OUR Father. So when the Christian talks to God to ask Him for his needs, he is instructed that it is to be as a child talks to a father. In transferring our needs to us and in our asking for our needs to be supplied, God could have chosen for it to be done as an employee would make a request from his boss or as a soldier would make a request from his commanding officer or as a businessman would make a request from one of his peers, but God wanted there to be more of a personal touch in the dispensing of our needs, so He chose the tender yet secure relationship of a child and his father.

2. *Before we pray, God wants a time of praise and worship.* Note the words, "**Hallowed by Thy name**" in **verse 2** of **Luke 11**. We have just been introduced to a new name for God. None of the Old Testament prophets or Christians ever called God their Father. It is natural then for those of us who have been given this new privilege to rejoice in His name. So we have the expression, "**Hallowed by Thy name.**" No doubt He is talking about the name "**Father**" to which He has just introduced us.

Bear in mind, this is not praying, for praying is asking for something; this is preparatory to praying. We are adoring God, worshipping God and praising Him. We are about to ask Him for something. It certainly won't hurt our chances any to tell Him how wonderful He is and to praise His name, to worship Him and to exalt Him. If our children on earth are going to ask us for something, it certainly enhances their chances of receiving it if they spend a few minutes telling us what good parents we are and how much they love us.

3. *There are basically only three requests in this outline.* The first is found in **Luke 11:3**. Here is a simple request for daily bread. Notice the word "**us**." Compare this to the word "**our**" in **verse 2**. It seems as if God intends for us to pray some together because we have the first person plural mentioned throughout the Lord's Prayer. In **verse 2**, "**OUR Father**"; in **verse 3**, "**Give US day by day OUR daily bread**"; in **verse 4**, "**And forgive US OUR sins; for WE also forgive every one that is indebted to US. And lead US not into temptation; but deliver US from evil.**"

The second request made in the Lord's Prayer has to do with forgiveness of sin. Notice **verse 4**. **"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."**

The third request is a request for bread for a friend. **Luke 11:5,6**, **"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?"**

These are the only requests mentioned in our Lord's outline of prayer: bread for self, forgiveness, and bread for others. Notice that this is a primary prayer, a learner's prayer. Our Lord was teaching them this prayer in answer to their request, **"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."** (**Luke 11:1**) The first need of the body is bread. The first need of the soul is forgiveness; so in this basic learner's prayer there are only two requests—bread and forgiveness. There are two requests concerning bread, however; bread for me and bread for others.

It is also interesting to note that the prayer starts off with the word **"Thy."** Notice, **"THY name," "THY kingdom," "THY will be done," "Lead US," "Deliver US."** Then it turns to a friend of mine, or **"others"** in **verse 5**.

There are two friends mentioned in the model prayer. (It must be remembered that the lesson on prayer goes beyond what we usually call the model prayer. **Verses 5-13** are as much a part of this outline as are **verses 1-4**.) In **verse 5** the prayer goes to a friend at midnight who has the bread. In **verse 6** he speaks of a friend who came to see him. The friend who has the bread is our Heavenly Father. The friend who needs bread who has come to see him is the sinner. Notice that our right to requisition the friend who has the bread is based upon our being a friend to the one who needs bread. He who is not a friend of sinners and does not seek to win them to the Saviour cannot claim closeness of friendship with the Father. In fact our Saviour gave us a requirement for friendship with Him—our obedience to His commandments. **John 15:14**, **"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."** His main commandment is reaching the unsaved with the Gospel. **Matthew 28:19,20**, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** We call this "the great commission"; hence, it is His great commandment. Our Lord is telling us that our intimacy with Him as a friend is dependent upon our friendship with sinners; that is, leading them to Christ and being concerned about their salvation. A friend had come at midnight, and because he was his friend, the Christian was driven to seek the other friend who had the bread. The teaching here is that our degree of intimacy with Christ depends upon our faithfulness in obeying His commandments. It must always be remembered that Jesus came, lived, died and rose again for the salvation of lost souls. **Luke 19:10**, **"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."** Only when we become this type of friend to the unsaved can we enter into the sweetness and closeness of the friend relationship with our God.

4. The location of forgiveness in this outline is after bread for self and before bread for others. God is telling us that He will feed us because we are His children, but He will not let us enter into the work of feeding others with Him until we have sought forgiveness. Anyone for a few pennies can go to the store and buy a loaf of bread. This is a very small task which is speedily executed, but getting a job in the bakery is much more difficult. This requires application, references, interviews, etc. God feeds US because we are His children; God allows us to enter into the great work of getting the Bread of Life to others after our hearts have been made right with Him; that is, being forgiven of our sins and forgiving others of their sins against us.

5. *God requires the Christian to forgive others before He offers forgiveness.* Being forgiven is not Christ like, for Christ never sinned; hence, He never needed forgiveness. Forgiving IS Christ like, for Christ does forgive. This makes the little outline read as follows: (1) Bread for me, (2) Forgiveness of others, (3) Forgiveness for me, (4) Bread for others.

6. *It requires much longer to receive bread for others than it does to receive bread for self.* **Luke 11:3, "Give us day by day our daily bread." Luke 11:7,8, "And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."** Bread for self comes with a simple daily prayer, but bread for others comes only after pleading. In verse 7 the friend that had the bread said, **"Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee."** However, the person in need of bread continued and pleaded. The word **"importunity"** in **verse 8** means "much begging."

So I come to God and ask for bread for myself. I simply say, "Lord, give me this day my daily bread." Notice only one mention of myself, but when I come after having forgiven and been forgiven and I begin to plead, "Lord, bread for others, please. Give bread for others. Others, Lord, give bread for others. Give bread for others. Please, Lord, give bread for others." Perhaps God wants our thought dwelling more on others. As we plead for others we think of others and become more burdened for others. If God had made us plead for our own bread, we would have dwelt on ourselves too much, so God wants us to get our minds off of ourselves. We ask for bread for self one time, and He gives it to us. Then since He wants us to dwell on others, love others and have compassion on others, He requires much praying and much begging for that bread.

7. *Our Prayer for self is done in the daytime.* **Luke 11:3, "Give us day by day our daily bread."** Our prayer for others is made at midnight. **Luke 11:5, "And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves."** Most of the Christian's long intercessory prayers should come during the nighttime hours. A little motto I have had for years is as follows: I will help others while they are awake and pray for them while they sleep. Lengthy praying is usually not for the daytime hours, because in the daytime hours we are supposed to be busy dispensing the bread and caring for the needs of others. However, while they rest, the bakery is turning out the bread, ready for delivery the next morning. Oh, the need of midnight praying! God give us parents who pray in the wee hours of the morning for children. God give us midnight prayers for the blessings of God upon our churches. No one will ever know the depth of prayer until he has learned to pray while others sleep.

8. *This praying for bread for others is symbolic of praying for the power of the Holy Spirit.* **Luke 11:11-13, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"** He, the Holy Spirit, is the power by which we witness. Whatever the price we must pay, it must be paid. No amount of human wisdom or human cunning will take the place of the mighty power of the Holy Spirit of God. When we learn to pay the price at the midnight hour, through the wee hours of the morning, pleading with God for His mighty power, we then get that blessed power of the Holy Spirit.

Churches often chant the model prayer as part of their worship service. Many children are taught to pray this prayer before they go to bed at night. I am not saying that this is sinful, but if this is all the model prayer is to the child of God, he is missing the entire teaching. The disciples had seen Him pray, they had heard Him pray, and they wanted to know how to pray as He prayed. They had

heard Him preach, but never said, "Teach us to preach." They heard Him teach, but never said, "Teach us to teach." They heard Him pray and said, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.**" In response to that request, He teaches them and gives them this little outline. Then they follow and present their petitions at the throne of grace.

Chapter 28 – Be Careful What You Pray

This chapter could be called, "Safety in Prayer," "Safeguards in Prayer," or "Don't Pray the Wrong Thing."

In a previous chapter we dealt with the great heart of God and how God wants and loves to answer our prayers. Now because He does have such a tremendous desire, we must be very careful for what we pray. We have such promises in the Bible as, **"Ask what ye will."** This places a great responsibility on the Christian to be careful of what He prays. With a God Who loves us so much and Who in many ways almost places a carte blanche before us if we walk close to Him and abide in Him, we must take special care for those things that are best for us and for God's work.

There is an interesting story in **Numbers 22**, Balaam had been invited to do an unwise thing; that is, to leave the will of God and go to Moab. Balaam, being the faithful preacher that he was, went to God and asked God what he should do. God very plainly said, **"Thou shalt not go with them." (Numbers 22:12)** Balaam returned to the princes of Balak and said in **verse 13**, **"The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."** Now that should have settled it, but Balaam was not careful in his prayer, for Balak became more insistent than ever. Balak sent more princes with more authority than the others, and again sought for Balaam's willingness to come to Moab. Balaam was again very emphatic when in **verse 18** he said, **"I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more,"** but he made a tragic mistake! In **verse 19** he said, **"Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more."** The Lord didn't have to say anything more to Balaam! He had already told Balaam what to do, but Balaam did not build a safeguard around his prayers. He came back again, and for some reason known only to the great heart of God, God told Balaam this time to go ahead!

Why did God change His mind? Was He allowing Balaam to go ahead just to show him the consequences of doubting God's commandment? Was He trying to teach Balaam to be careful in the future? Did God acquiesce because He was weary? Was it that God wanted Balaam to have what he wanted? I don't know, but I do know that Balaam went to Moab and that an entire race was corrupted because of it! Tragedy came to thousands and thousands of lives because Balaam was not safe in his praying.

This same type of thing is found concerning divorce. God never wants any couple to divorce for any reason, but He does give permission for divorce in the case of fornication. God is saying, "I want one thing, but I will permit another. I would prefer you not to divorce ever for any reason, but because your hearts are hard, I will allow you to do it for just one reason."

These safeguards in prayer that we will mention in this chapter are needful because God does tell us to ask WHAT WE WANT. **Mark 11:24**, **"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."** **John 15:7**, **"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** **Psalm 37:4**, **"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."** **Philippians 4:6**, **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."** **John 14:14**, **"If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it."** All of these promises and others remind us that with such a blank check, we must be careful, very careful!

Of course, in prayer, as in salvation, we can come to God only through Jesus. **Hebrews 4:14-16, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."** **John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."** Hence, all prayer goes through Jesus, or to use a figure of speech, passes across His desk before it goes to the Father. Of course, all prayer is heard by Him because He is sitting on the right hand of the Father all the time.

There are several different attitudes that Jesus could have concerning our prayers as they come through Him to the Father. He may approve them; He may endorse them; He may recommend them; He may even plead for them. Hence, you can see that He could show different degrees of enthusiasm. There are many Scriptures in the Bible that teach us that the Father seeks counsel from the Son. **Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."** The word "counsellor" here deals mainly with the relationship that the Father has with the Son. Jesus is the wonderful counsellor. Especially is this true in His relationship with the Father. He counsels with His father; so as Jesus counsels with the Father, He may approve our prayer requests. He may be even more enthusiastic than that—He may endorse a prayer request; or He may go farther than that—He may recommend it; or He may even go so far as to plead for it. I wonder how many earthly parents love their children so much that they give them too much in response to the child's request. When one stops to realize how much God loves us, it is no wonder that we should be careful when we come to Him in prayer.

There are, thank God, some safeguards that we should remember concerning prayer.

1. *Pray according to Bible principles.* The Christian should know his Bible and know it well. This will lead him to pray according to the principles set down in the Word of God. This gives a great security, safety and safeguard to our praying.

2. *Pray in the will of God.* **I John 5:14,15, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."** Notice how Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. **Matthew 26:38,39, "Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me. And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."** He told the Father His will, but then He prayed for the Father's will to be done. It is commonly believed that Jesus was talking about the cup of death, the cup of suffering or the cup of becoming accursed for sin. No, no, no! Jesus wasn't asking the Father to keep Him from dying; He knew He was going to die! He came to die! His death was called **"the glory that was set before Him."** He set His face like a flint toward Jerusalem. He wanted to die for us. He gladly laid down His life for us.

When He was praying, **"let this cup pass from Me,"** He was afraid that He was going to die then; that is, there in the garden of Gethsemane. He knew that it was not the plan of God for Him to die there. He knew that He was supposed to go to Calvary on the day of the Passover and become our Passover and in so doing, pay the penalty for our sins. He was saying, "Father, let the cup of death pass from Me now." Let Me wait for the cross. That is why I came." Then He says, **"Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done."** He said, "Father, You know best. I want it to be done according to

Thy will." Added light is thrown upon this in **Hebrews 5:7**, "**Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.**" A real safeguard in prayer is always to pray in the will of God.

3. *Live a spiritual life.* **Psalm 37:4**, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." **John 15:7**, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." **Psalm 1:1-3**, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." If we walk in the Spirit and live a spiritual-filled life, we will then pray in the Spirit. How dangerous it is for a Christian to get in the flesh, as perhaps Balaam did when he came the second time and sought for God's permission to go to Moab!

4. *Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make your list of requests that you are to take to the Father.* **Romans 8:26,27**, "**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**" As is mentioned in another chapter of this book, the intercession that the Apostle speaks about in **Romans 8:26** is the Holy Spirit making intercession TO the one praying. In other words, the Holy Spirit tells us what to pray. Ah, here is a blessed safeguard! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make your prayer list. With His help and His leadership there is great safety, and we can avoid making foolish requests. In **verse 27** the intercession means intercession WITH us. Once the Holy Spirit has made intercession to us in telling us what to pray for, He then goes to the Father with us and makes intercession with us before the Father. Actually the Holy Spirit becomes our prayer partner as we present our petitions to the Father. This is a great way to prevent making a prayer that is a foolish one and risking God allowing us to do something that is not His first choice, such as in the case of Balaam.

5. *Pray from the will of God.* Oh yes, pray in the will of God, but always pray from the will of God. Always be in His will. When we are praying from His perfect will or, if we have forfeited His perfect will, from His permissive or acceptable or improvised will, we are adding another ticket to the fence of protection against an unwise request.

6. *Remember how the prayer worked out in the past.* Stop to think if it was best before. Use the past as a pattern for the future.

Because we have a God Who loves us so much, Who delights in answering our prayers and Who has given us so many amazing promises, we must be careful what we pray.

Chapter 29 – Four Relationships in Prayer

Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?"

The first words recorded of our Lord while He was on earth were these: **"How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)** Notice especially the words, **"My Father's."** The last words recorded by our Lord before He gave up the ghost on Calvary were these: **"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." (Luke 23:46)** Again, notice the use of the word **"Father."** Between the first words recorded and the last words recorded are such terms as these: **"the will of My Father," "ye blessed of My Father," "their angels do behold the face of My Father,"** and **"My Father is greater than them all."**

The first words of Calvary were, **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)** The last words of Calvary were, **"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."** Notice again the emphasizing of the word, **"Father."** Hear our Lord in **John 17** in the great prayer of intercession: In **verse 1, "Father, the hour is come."** In **verse 5, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self."** **Verse 11, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those Whom Thou hast given Me."** **Verse 21, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee."** **Verse 24, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."** **Verse 25, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee."** Notice in each of these verses the use of the words, **"Father," "My father," "holy Father"** or **"the Father."**

I am stunned than at the middle cry of Calvary when the Lord Jesus said, **"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"** Why was it always "Father" and now suddenly it is "My God, My God"? Our sins were placed on Jesus. The Father turned His back upon His Son, and Jesus cried, **"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"** The word **"forsaken"** is a large word. It includes, **"My God, My God, why hast Thou indicted Me? Why hast Thou convicted Me? Why hast Thou sentenced Me? Why hast Thou disowned Me?"** Though Jesus was still the Son of God on the cross, He could not call God His Father because He was bearing our sins. He was identifying Himself with sinners, and the Father, Who is holy and just, cannot look upon sin. Hence, He turned His back upon His Son and in that moment disowned Him that His justice might be satisfied and that a way of reconciliation for sinners like you and me could be made.

This leads to four relationships mankind can have with his God.

1. *Creator-creature.* This takes place at birth.
2. *God-people.* This takes place at salvation.
3. *Father-child.* This takes place at separation.
4. *Friend-friend.* This takes place at service.

When the creature accepts Christ as His Saviour and by faith appropriates God's gift of eternal life, he then enters into a new relationship with His God. It is the relationship of God-people. However, notice **II Corinthians 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? 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; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Notice especially the words in verse 18, "and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." Now this does not mean that the Christian was not already a child of God; it does mean that one can be a child and not enjoy the intimate relationship that he should with his Father. Here in **II Corinthians 6:14-17** we have the requirement that God gives for those of us who are His children to enter into a sweet Father-child relationship. It is the great doctrine of separation. In **verse 14** we are told not to be yoked together with unbelievers. We are told that righteousness should not fellowship with unrighteousness. We are told that light should not commune with darkness. We are told in **verse 15** that Christ hath not concord with Belial and that believers should have no part with infidels. We are told in **verse 16** that the temple of God hath no agreement with idols. We have the reminder in the last part of **verse 16** that the believer is one of God's people and that he has a God-people relationship with the Father. Then in **verse 17** God speaks to the believer and says that if he will come out from among them, that is, the unbelievers, unrighteous, darkness, Belial, infidels and idols, and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, that God will receive him and will be a Father unto him and the believer shall be as a son or daughter. (**Verse 18**) This is a wonderful, blessed truth.

One night our son, Dave, got in the wrong crowd. He came home. When I realized with what crowd he had been, I said, "Go to your room."

He said, "But, Dad . . . "

I said, "Don't 'Dad' me. 'Doctor Hyles' me."

He said, "Well, Dad . . . "

I said, "Don't say 'Dad' to me. You 'Doctor Hyles' me." I went upstairs and made him say "Doctor Hyles, Doctor Hyles, Doctor Hyles," over and over again. Now he was my son, but we were not close at that particular time because he had been in the wrong crowd. The believer in Christ is still God's child, but he has forfeited his Father-child intimacy if he runs with the wrong crowd.

Notice **Romans 8:14,15**, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Here we have another passage that teaches the same truth. We are told that the sons of God are those who are led by the Spirit of God. **Romans 8** deals with the Spirit of God, leading the child of God, to lead the spiritual life and not the carnal life. If the child of God follows the leadership of the Holy Spirit into a spiritual life, he then becomes the *son* of God. This does not mean that he was not already God's child. It means that he now has a relationship as a father and a son should have. This same teaching is implied in **Matthew 5:9**, "**Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**"

A little boy was bad. His dad sent him to his room and then spanked him. He then told the boy to stay in his room and think what a bad boy he had been. After while dinner was ready. The dad very curtly said, "Son, come on to the table and eat!" The boy came to the table. His parents were still his parents, but he had lost the sweet relationship with them that a child should have with his parents. His dad then looked over to him and in a very stern voice said, "Heavenly Father, I thank Thee that Thou prepest a table before me (sob, sob, sob) in the presence of my enemies."

When our girls were small, I had dates with them. For many years I had dates with Becky, who is our oldest daughter. I used to say, "Becky, do you want to have a date with Daddy?"

Her little three or four or five-year old voice would say, "Goodie, goodie, goodie! I'm going to have a date with Daddy!" I would escort her to the car and ask her where she wanted to go. She would always say she wanted to go to the ice cream store. We would drive to the ice cream store. A waitress would come up and ask to take our order. Becky would always order a chocolate milk shake. I would likewise order a chocolate milk shake. When the waitress brought the milk shakes, she put Becky's in front of her and mine in front of me and a straw in each, whereupon Becky would say, "Daddy, let's drink out of the same milk shake together." I put my milk shake to the side and put my straw in Becky's and we would share the same milk shake. People would walk by and say, "Look at that mean old man drinking that little girl's milk shake! (I did get more than Becky got because I had a better sucker than Becky had!)"

After we would have a milk shake we would go to the Jack and Jill shop and I would buy Becky a dress or something else that she might have needed. Then we would get in the car and go to Riverside Park and swing. Becky would get in the swing and I would push her. I would get in the swing and she would try to push me. We did this every week. It was a ritual with us. This continued while Becky was three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen; but when she became thirteen and fourteen, one day I said, "Becky, do you want to have a date with Daddy?"

She said, "No, sir."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"No, sir, I mean I don't want to have a date."

I said, "Why?"

She said, "Because Tim is going to call."

Who was Tim? Tim was a boy she had learned to like better than her dad, and she would rather wait for a phone call from Tim than to have a date with her dad. (Every parent who has ever reared a child knows how I felt!) I went to my prayer closet and asked, "What's wrong? I've lost my daughter!"

The Heavenly Father is asking "What's wrong?" between Him and many of us because we have lost our sweet relationship that we once had.

I decided to add to the incentive. I was going to preach in the Los Angeles area and so I said, "Becky, would you like to go to Los Angeles with Daddy? We will go to Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland, we will fly in a big airplane, have a few days in a hotel, enjoy room service and breakfast in bed!"

She asked, "Can Tim go?"

I said, "No, Tim cannot go!"

She said, "Then I don't want to go."

Finally one day I was taking a trip to the Holy Land. I said, "Becky, would you like to go to London, Paris, Rome, Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Bethany, Nazareth, Cana of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum and Jericho with Daddy?"

"Is Tim going? Becky said.

"No," I said, "Tim is not going!"

"Then I don't want to go," Becky said.

She would rather talk with Tim on the telephone than go around the world with me! (I did not know at the time that this was the natural thing. I know it now. I did not know it then.)

Becky and Tim got married. God has given them three lovely children. When the first child was just a baby, they came home for a visit. I had to go to the store, and I announced that I was going to the store. Becky said, "Daddy, can I go, and can we have a date?"

My eyes filled with tears and my heart leaped with joy as my daughter wanted to have a date again with me. It had been years!

I put out my arm and escorted her to the car. I said, "Puddin', where would you like to go?"

She said, "To the ice cream store."

To the ice cream store we went! A waitress came to take our order. (It was not the same waitress.) Becky said, "I would like to order a chocolate milk shake."

Through tears I said, "Make that two chocolate milk shakes!"

The waitress brought the milk shakes, put Becky's in front of Becky and mine in front of me and a straw in each. Becky said, "Daddy, could we drink out of the same milk shake together?"

I said, "Why sure Puddin'." I put my milk shake on the side, put my straw in Becky's and we drank out of the same milk shake. (I still got more than she did because my sucker was still better than hers!)

After we shared her milk shake, we shared mine. Then I said, "Puddin', you wouldn't like to buy a new dress, would you?" (Don't ever ask an adult lady that question!)

She said, "Yes, I would." We didn't go to the Jack and Jill Shop, we went to Rosalee's, a women's store, and Becky picked out a dress just like we used to do.

I said, "Puddin', we had better go home."

She said, "Daddy, aren't we going to go to the park and swing?"

I said, "You want to go to the park and swing?"

She said, "We always do on our dates, don't we?" So we went to Riverside Park! Becky sat in the swing and I pushed her, then I sat in the swing and she tried to push me.

Then we went home, and I went to my prayer closet, got on my knees and said, "Lord, does it make You as happy when I love to be with You as it makes me when my children love to be with me?"

Yes, it does, except then thousand times more! The great heart of God wants to have a sweet relationship with His children, and He wants not only positionally to be our Father but practically He wants to treat us as a Father would treat a child.

When a famous ball player was first born again, he was interviewed by an adult magazine which is filled with nudity and pornography. Someone asked him why he did that since he claimed to be born again. He said that Jesus would have been interviewed by that magazine. Now this football player might be born again, but when he comes to his prayer closet he will have to say, "Dear God" and not, "Dear father."

A famous Hollywood singer sings in nightclubs using his charisma to attract people to the liquor and other sins of nightclub life. Then on Sunday he goes to a church and tells how much Jesus means to him. He may be saved, but when he comes to pray he has forfeited the right to say, "Dear father."

There is a wonderful relationship that God wants to have with us and to offer to us, but that relationship must be based on our being separated. Do you have God's money in your pocket, rock music on your record player, soap operas on your television? Then though He is your Heavenly Father, you may not treat Him as such, and though you are His child, the treatment will not be as intimate as He would like it to be, and it will not be so until you are separated!

We have noticed that the Creator-creature relationship comes at birth, the God-people relationship comes at salvation, and the father-child relationship comes with separation, but there is yet a fourth relationship, and that is Friend-friend. **John 15:14, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."** This comes at service when we obey our Heavenly Father's commands. Of course, His great command was to go and teach all nations. In other words, the great command is to be a soul winner. God spoke of Abraham as being His friend. Moses spoke to God face to face as a friend. God wants to have that sweet Friend-to-friend relationship with His people, but He will enter into that sacred relationship only when we become soul winners and faithful servants of our Lord.

Many years ago I was invited by Dr. John R. Rice to preach at a Sword of the Lord Conference in Lake Louis, Georgia. The speakers were to be Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., Dr. R. G. Lee, Dr. John Rice, Dr. Bill Rice and others. I was still in my twenties and could not believe Dr. Rice meant that he wanted me to come. I thought the letter was sent to me by mistake, so I had my secretary call Dr. Rice's office to confirm the invitation. Not long after that I sat on the same platform with Dr. R.G. Lee when he preached his famous sermon, "Payday Someday," and then I was introduced to speak. I looked at my outline and was almost ashamed to preach. How could a kid preacher like me follow the most famous sermon of our generation? After I had preached I sat at the same table with Dr. John R. Rice, Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., Dr. R. G. Lee and others. I could not believe that it was true. Then for 22 years I shared the platform with Dr. Rice, and at over 2200 occasions he and I preached on the same program!

A few years after I had begun preaching with Dr. Rice, I asked him very privately if he would unofficially adopt me as a son. I said, "Dr. Rice, you have six daughters; you have no sons, and my father has been dead for a long time. If I don't tell anybody about this while you are alive, and if I do not presume upon our relationship, could we have an understanding that I am sort of your adopted son?"

He put his right hand in mine and his left hand on my shoulder and said, "You've got yourself a deal, son."

For 22 years I never missed sending him a Father's Day gift not did I fail to call him on father's Day. (I never told anyone this—not even my family or closest friends.) When he was well up in years, Dr. Rice suffered a serious heart attack and a stroke and was unable to travel, and in 1980 he went to Heaven. I miss Dr. Rice very much , but there is a Father-son relationship that I may always enjoy, and there is a Friend=friend relationship that can be mine. I became His creature when I was born. I became one of His people when I was born-again at the age of nearly 11. I entered into a Father-child relationship with Him on Christmas night, 1944, when I decided to live a separated life, and then when I became a soul winner and His servant, I became His friend, and He became my Friend.

I have always felt very close to my son, David, but we have been in many ways more than just dad and son; we have been friends. For many years we have shared the same burden for America and for the Lord's work. When this burden is shared, friendship is shared.

Now each of these relationships offers new intimacies in prayer. A friend can pray in a way that even a son cannot pray. As we enter into a new closer relationship with our Heavenly Father, we enter into a new area of prayer. How blessed is the prayer life of a Christian with his God! How much more blessed is that prayer life of a son with his Father! How heavenly is the prayer life of a friend with a Friend.

Chapter 30 – Prayer and Separation and Soul Winning

If the average Christian were to place in proper order the three Christian activities mentioned in our chapter title, the most popular order, no doubt, would be: (1) separation, (2) prayer, and (3) soul winning. Yet this is not so in God's order. For example, in the Word of God prayer comes after soul winning. **John 15:16**, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." Also notice **John 14:12-14**, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it." **1st John 3:22**, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." **James 5:16**, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Now, that is not to say that the Christian should not pray before going soul winning. It is to say that when a person is saved, he is to become a soul winner immediately. The woman at Sychar's well fled to the city immediately upon receiving Christ to tell the people about Jesus.

The statement concerning prayer coming after soul winning is not so much chronological as it is priority. It may be academic as to which comes first. It may be like the hen and the egg, but since soul winning is so often maligned, over looked and discouraged, someone needs to stress its importance and elevate its dignity. The point is not to advocate the Christian sitting down and listing what he is going to do first—go soul winning or pray. For that matter, they can be done at the same time, but in the heart of God, saving sinners has top priority. Jesus prayed while He was on earth. **Luke 19:10** says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Paul wrote Timothy and said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (**1 Timothy 1:15b**) Entering one's closet to pray causes no person embarrassment, causes no one to hurl an accusation of fanaticism.

Bear in mind, this entire manuscript is sent forth to emphasize prayer. This writer is pleading with God's people to pray, but God gave His Son to save sinners. Christ left Heaven and came to earth to save sinners. Jesus died on the cross to save sinners. He rose after three days and three nights to save sinners. He ascended to the right hand of the Father to plead the sinner's case, and the point the author is making is that a person doesn't have to be a seasoned prayer warrior in order to go soul winning! He doesn't have to grow in grace for six months and go to Bible college before he begins to go soul winning! He is supposed to start telling others about Jesus as soon as he gets off his knees after having received the Saviour himself!

In the second place, soul winning also comes before separation. **John 15:2,3**, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." Notice the bearing of fruit comes before the purging. No doubt the woman at the well in Sychar had a lot of changing to do in her life, but that was not her first thought. Her first thought was to get to the people and tell them she had found the Saviour. To be sure, a person who is separated will bring forth more fruit. In fact, that's God's order—fruit, purging, more fruit. I can remember my dad out in the back yard at 3936 Denley Drive in Dallas, Texas, cutting some branches off the tree. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "Son, I believe this tree would give

more peaches if we would cut off some off the dead branches." He did cut off dead branches of a tree that was already bringing forth fruit, but then it brought forth more fruit.

How sad it is when sincere but misguided preachers and Bible teachers insinuate or even teach that soul winning is for the seasoned Christian, the one who has paid the price in separation! No, soul winning is for the new Christian as well as the old, and God will purge him if He sees he is bringing forth fruit. God looks down to a Christian who is winning souls and says, "Ah, I see fruit coming from that limb. I'm going to take away those cigarettes and hot temper, those movies, etc. and help him to bring forth even more fruit."

Now notice **John 15:2,7,8,16**, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." A careful look at those verses will find God's divine order: (1) fruit, (2) purging, (3) more fruit, (4) abiding, (5) much fruit.

This is not meant in any way to minimize prayer and separation. You will not find a preacher anywhere that preaches more strongly on separation than this author, and remember, the purpose of this entire book is to encourage the Christian to pray, but there has to be some great purpose for it all! While Jesus was on earth, He healed the sick, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost. While He was on earth, He opened blind eyes and deaf ears, He caused the dumb to speak and the lame to leap like a hart, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost. While Jesus was on earth, He blessed little children, He stilled the waves and calmed the storm and spoke peace to the nervous and restless, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost. While Jesus was on earth He taught, preached, edified, encouraged and blessed, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost. While Jesus was on earth, He scolded, chastened, exhorted and rebuked, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost. While Jesus was on earth He comforted and cheered, and He read the holy Scriptures, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

There are many things involved in the birth of a child. There is the love of the parents, the discomfort of the mother, the gaining of weight, the changing of appetites, the discomfort in waiting, the preparation of the layette, the shower, the choosing of names, the visits to the doctors office, the eating of the right foods, the dieting, the weighing, the exercising, the choosing of a hospital, the laboring and many other things, but all of these are for one purpose—the birth of the baby!

There are many things involved in the Christian life. Included in these are prayer and separation, but all of the Christian life is wrapped up in one great heartbeat in the personality of the Godhead—the saving of sinners, the redeeming of a people to the praise and honor of our great God.

May we in no way minimize the importance of separation, but rather magnify it. May we in no way minimize the importance of prayer, but rather magnify it, but we may elevate that great central purpose of the plan of God—the reconciling of an estranged race to its God and the proclamation of the means of reconciliation through the finished work of our Saviour on Calvary.

Chapter 31 – Prayer and Greater Works Than Jesus Did

John 14:12,13, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

I have often used the first part of **John 14:12**; that is, **"the works that I do shall ye do also."** I have often tried to avoid the last part. I find it easy to shrink from it. I find myself not wanting to use such a term as doing **"greater works"** than Jesus did.

I remember when I first pastored a church that was larger than my home church in Dallas, Texas, I felt a twinge of guilt and even sadness and perhaps loneliness as I realized that I was pastoring a church larger than the church in which I grew up. Multiply that by ten million and you will see my feelings concerning the statement, **"greater works than these shall ye do."** I find myself not wanting to do greater works than Jesus, but it is in the Bible, and I must face it. I must confess that I never understood that verse completely until recently when I was on an airplane. I had no commentary; I had no books with me except the Bible/ I was reading this passage. Suddenly it hit me! I shouted, "I know what that means! Praise the Lord!"

The fellow beside me said, "What did you say?"

I said, "Praise the Lord! Glory to God! I think I just found the meaning of **John 14:12.**"

With a puzzled look on his face he scratched his head and went back to his reading.

Now let us examine the petals of this lovely orchid.

1. *Jesus said that the Christian could do the works that He did. What works did He do.* **Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."** **1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."** It is easy to see that Jesus sought the lost and came to save sinners. These are His works. The Bible says that we are to do those same works.

2. *Who can do the works that Jesus did?* Notice in **John 14:12** the words, **"He that believeth on Me."** This means the 60-year old that believeth on Him and the 6-year-old that believeth on Him. This means the adult that believeth on Him and the teenager that believeth on Him. This means the learned that believeth on Him and the unlearned that believeth on Him. This means the one who has been to Bible college who believeth on Him and the one who has never been to Bible college that believeth on Him. Every single believer is supposed to do the work that Jesus did, and we must be reminded that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost and that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That means that every Christian is to be a soul winner. Each Christian can be a soul winner and should be a soul winner, and if he is right with God, he is a soul winner. Soul winning is not a command given to the preacher behind the pulpit, but it is given to the layman in the pew, and to the Christian who is not in the pew but should be.

3. *Notice a second promise: "Greater works than these."* Also notice why we can do **"greater works than these."** The answer is simple—"because I go unto My Father." It took me years to see this, and then one day, as I mentioned, on the airplane it dawned on me. Here are two promises and two conditions. The first promise is, **"The works that I do shall ye do also."** This is for those

who believe on Jesus. This is for every Christian. However, there is something else available. **"Greater works than these."** We do the works that Jesus did because we believe on Him, but we can do greater works because He went to His Father.

He went away so the Comforter could come, and through the power of the Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit, we may do greater works than these. Notice the first promise is, **"the works that I do shall ye do."** This is for all believers. The second promise is, **"greater works than these shall ye do."** This is for those who have the power of the Holy Spirit upon their lives, or shall we say, those who are Spirit-filled. Praise the Lord! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Bless His holy name! As a believer in Christ I can do the works that He did, but because He went to the Father and sent His holy Spirit, now in the energy of the Spirit-filled life I can do greater works than these.

4. *Prayer is also a part of that greater works than these.* **John 14:13, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."** Notice the word **"and."** This connects it with the previous promise. It is talking about prayer. God is saying that if we live the Spirit-filled life and the prayer life, our works can be multiplied into the area of "great works."

In conclusion, there are three conditions to these greater works: (1) work, (2) Spirit-fullness, and (3) prayer. 'Tis sad but true, some do only one of the three. Some work, but they do it in their own energy and do not live the prayer life. Some seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit but do not work and do not pray. Some believe they have been given the ministry of prayer only, but they know nothing about the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, nor do the work.

Then there are some who do two of the three. They might seek the power of the Holy Spirit and pray but refuse to work. They might pray and work but not receive the power of the Holy Spirit. All three are necessary for a person to do greater works than these. Ah, what blessedness is found in these truths simply because I believe and I can do the same works that Jesus did! Did not the woman at the well upon her faith in Christ flee to the city to tell others about the Saviour? She was doing the same work that Jesus had just done with her, but there is more. There is the promise of greater works, and this promise hinges on three conditions—work, Spirit-fullness and prayer. My soul, my soul, my soul, what keeps us from shouting! What keeps us from running to the field to work, running to the closet to pray and falling on our faces to plead for and claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit!

Chapter 32 – Abiding in Christ

John 15:1-7, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." The term "abiding in Christ," is often mentioned but seldom explained. This chapter will seek to explain exactly what it means to abide in Christ.

1. *When a person comes to Christ, he believes with his heart.* Romans 10:9-11, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." Now the word "heart" means, "the seat of the affections of man." We call that "faith" when a person believes with his heart.

2. *When a person comes to Christ, he then learns that some things are expected of him, and WITH HIS WILL he begins to do them.* Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." This is called "obedience," and it is done by the will. A person says, "I will tithe." "I will read my Bible," and "I will go soul winning." He is obeying the Lord. We sing the song, "Trust and Obey." The trust is done with the heart and the obedience is done with the will.

3. *Something is still missing, and that is the mind.* The heart and the will are in tune with God, yet we still do that which the heart and the will do not want us to do. Why? Both the heart and the will are immediate! The heart believes; the will decides. Salvation is a one-time proposition. We obey one thing at a time.

4. *There is a part of us which is not immediate, like the heart and the will, and that part is the mind.* The mind is the dweller of the human being. It is the abider. The heart trusts the Saviour, the will obeys Him, but the mind is the dweller or the abider.

Many years ago I resigned the Miller Road Baptist Church of Garland, Texas, to become the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. Yet for sixteen months I continued to dwell or abide in the church in Garland, Texas. I would sit on the platform of the First Baptist Church of Hammond on Sunday morning and wonder what was going on at the Miller Road Baptist Church in Garland. I would picture the people of Garland sitting in their usual places. During the invitation at First Baptist Church of Hammond I would find myself praying for the invitation in Garland. What had I done? With my heart I believed God wanted me in Hammond; with my will I came to Hammond; but with my mind I stayed in Garland. I was abiding in Garland and living in Hammond. Recently I preached in Garland and I sat on the platform there thinking about the work in Hammond. What a transition! Why? For many years I have not only been living in Hammond but I have been abiding in Hammond. Now I still love the people in Garland, but I do not abide there.

A young lady falls in love with a young man. She accepts his proposal of marriage. To do this she uses the heart and the will. Then one day he fills her mind. When they are apart, everything relates to him. When she enjoys something, she wishes he could be there to enjoy it with her. When she receives something, she wishes he had one too. When she has her hair fixed, she has it fixed the way that she thinks he will like it. When she buys clothes, she buys the kind that she thinks he will like the best. When she prepares a meal, she prepares what she thinks he would like to eat. Shopping at the store, she thinks of what he would want her to buy. When she hears a funny story, she makes a note to tell him because she wants to share it with him.

One person often says to another, "Your mind is a thousand miles away." He is abiding somewhere else. Hence, to abide in Christ is to dwell on Christ, to think of Him when we go shopping and wonder what He would want us to buy. When we eat, we wonder what He would want us to eat. He fills our minds. We dwell on Him. We practice His presence. Not only do we live close to Him, but we are constantly thinking of His presence and realizing how wonderful it is. Perhaps this is what the Apostle had in mind in **Philippians 2:5**, "**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.**" Now notice **John 15:7**, "**If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**" There are two types of abiding here. First, we are to abide in Christ. That means to keep our minds on Him, to think of Him, to love Him, to be aware of Him, to meditate upon Him. Then, His Word is to abide in us.

The young lady who relates everything to the man that she loves, when she thinks of him, she thinks of sweet things that he has said. She remembers the times he has said, "I love you." She thinks on the times that he said, "You look lovely tonight" She thinks of the gracious words that have come from his lips and have thrilled her. When we abide in Christ and His words abide in us, we think of the words that He said. We think of His sweet expressions of love, His promises and His message to us in the Bible.

So with the heart we believe, with the will we obey, and with the mind we abide. Then the Lord Jesus says, "When you get to that place where your mind dwells on Me constantly and on My words constantly, than I believe I can trust you with a blank check. At that point in your Christian life, ask what you will, and it will be given to you." Hence, abiding in Christ is one of the most necessary of the requirements for answered prayer.

Chapter 33 – The Place to Pray

Let us establish first and foremost that the child of God can pray anywhere. In **John 4:21-24** Jesus told the woman at the well that the day had come when **"they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."** This statement was made in response to her telling him that the Jews worshipped in Jerusalem and the Samaritans worshipped in Sychar. So the child of God can worship and pray from any place on earth.

It IS, however, a good idea to have a set time to meet God on a regular basis. It is also a good idea to have a certain place. **Matthew 6:6, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to Thy Father which is in secret; and Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."** Notice, the Lord Jesus suggests that we enter into a closet. In other words, He is suggesting a special place where we meet Him.

A person can eat anywhere in the house. He can eat in the bedroom, the bathroom, the family room, the basement or the attic. We all sometimes do eat a bite or so in various places around the house; however, there is one room in the house that we designate as the eating place. This does not mean we always eat every bite of food there, but it does mean that there are regular times when we go there to eat.

One can sleep anywhere in the house. He can sleep in the kitchen. He can sleep in the bathroom. He can sleep in the dining room, but there is a designated place and a designated time for sleep. Sometimes a person may fall asleep in a chair in the living room, or he may lie down on the sofa and fall off to sleep, but there is a special place designated for sleep where most sleeping is done.

A person can bathe anywhere in the house. When I was a boy we had no bathtub, so I bathed in a #2 tub in the front room. However, we have in our houses a place called the bathroom. It is there that we normally bathe.

Now it is not conducive to good health for us to decide to eat some time in some place, but rather to eat at the same time in the same place. It is not conducive to good health for us to sleep some time at some place when we get around to it. It is best for us to sleep at the same time at the same place. It is not wise for us to decide to bathe some time at some place, but rather to bathe at the same time at the same place. It is best to form the habit of meeting God on a regular basis at the same time at the same place. This does not mean that we should not be in communication with God all the time; it simply means that there should be scheduled times when we meet God at a certain place. This is certainly within the boundaries of the Word of God.

Daniel met God at a window. **Daniel 6:10, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."** Peter met God on the rooftop. **Acts 10:9, "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour."** Lydia met God beside a river. **Acts 16:13, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither."** The disciples met God in an upper room. **Acts 1:13,14, "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one**

accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

Some met God at the house of God. **II Chronicles 7:15**, "Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place." **Isaiah 56:7**, " Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." The Lord Jesus met God in the garden of Gethsemane on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

God wants us to include prayer in our lives of self-discipline and schedule. He knows that we will pray more if we will have set times and set places. This is not to say that we are to make holy places, and we are not to believe that God will come nearer meeting us there than He would somewhere else, but it is good for us to associate a certain place with our prayer time, just like we associate a certain place with preaching time, with Sunday school time, etc. It may be a special closet, a special chair, a window, a tree, a lake, a road, a corner of a room.

For 20 years Jacob was away from Bethel. Often he heard the call to come back to Bethel. This was the call to come back to God, for it was at Bethel where Jacob met God, where he built an altar and where he began tithing. **Genesis 31:11-13**, "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." Jacob could have gotten right with God where he was. He could have chosen any hill, any mound, any valley, any river, any tree and could have gotten right with God, but he found it easier to get right with God at Bethel. God was not at Bethel any more than God was at Haran, but somehow Jacob knew that if he could get back to Bethel, it would remind him of his early days of fellowship with his God.

I love to go to that little spot just outside the back door of the Fernwood Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, where almost a half century ago I knelt and received Christ. I love to kneel there and thank God for saving me. Now I can thank God for saving me wherever I am, and I often thank Him for salvation. This gratitude rises from many places across the country, but somehow I'm a little more grateful and my gratitude is a little more unique when I go to that little place where I first received the Saviour.

Isn't it easier to get hungry sitting at the table? Isn't it easier to get sleepy lying on the bed? It might be that if we had a special little place where we pray, we may learn to associate that place with prayer.

Why did the disciples choose that upper room as a place of prayer? Perhaps it was because it was there where they had observed the last supper. It was there where they heard the incomparable words of Jesus in **John 14:1-3**, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It was there where the Lord Jesus washed their feet. Somehow that upper room was a dear place to them. Now they did not have to pray in the upper room. They could have had their prayer meeting in any room or in any place, and God would have heard.

It must be emphasized and reiterated that God does not meet us just at one place. It is so easy to make a place sacred, and that is not the purpose of this chapter. This kind of reasoning leads to worship centers, divided chancels, ritualistic services and other similar forms of foolishness. The entire purpose for the author advancing this suggestion is for our own self-discipline. Having a place and a time to pray does not make the time or the place more sacred than any other time or place; it simply causes frail creatures like you and me to be a lot more disciplined and to take time to pray.

This is one reason why we get sleepy at night and hungry at noon. We have formed the habit of getting sleepy at night and hungry at noon. This is the main reason God gives us a place and a time to tithe. **1st Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."** This is the reason that many of us like to sit in the same place at church. This is not because God meets us at this particular pew. It is not confining God to one location or one time at all. It is simply enabling feeble souls such as yours and mine to meet God on a regular basis at a particular place in order that we may remember to meet Him.

Chapter 34 – Grace to Help

Recently at the First Baptist Church of Hammond funeral services were conducted for an elderly lady who had lived one of the most unselfish lives that we had ever witnessed. Something very sweet and blessed happened at her funeral. A young man stood up and said, "She paid my way through college. Nobody knew about it, but very quietly with little fanfare she helped me through college."

A young lady stood up and said that the deceased woman had been like a mother to her. She had no living mother, and the lady to whom we were paying respects had taken her and treated her as her own daughter. Then all over the building people stood up testifying to the fact that this dear lady who had just recently entered into the presence of her Lord had helped them.

How did she get this way? The answer is in **Hebrews 4:16**, "**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**" Notice the words, "**find grace to help in time of need.**" We normally associate these words with finding grace to help us in the time of our needs, but there is more here than that. This also means that when we come boldly to the throne of grace we may find grace *to help others* in their time of need. It is in the prayer closet where one meets unselfishness. It is in the prayer room where one dies to self. It is at the throne of grace where one learns to live for others. Notice that this passage does not say, "Find grace to *be helped* in time of need," but it says, "**find grace to help in the time of need.**" This grace is found at the throne of grace where grace is dispensed to the children of God. It takes grace to help others. It takes grace to forget self. It takes grace to forget your own needs and remember those of another. Ah, there is a graduate course on prayer in this wonderful passage.

Most of the Christian life is selfish. Most of us got saved in order that we might go to Heaven and escape the fires of Hell, or perhaps we got saved to find peace, contentment, joy and fulfillment. Many of us serve the Lord in order to avoid chastening. We tithe in order that the windows of Heaven may be opened and that God will pour "**out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.**" (**Malachi 3:10**) We separate ourselves from the world in order to avoid the chastening rod of God. We pray in order to get things for ourselves. We read the Bible and meditate in order that we may be successful and prosperous. **Psalm 1:1-3**, "**Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**"

These things are not wrong. It is not wrong to get saved in order to escape Hell and go to Heaven. It is not wrong to meet the conditions to tithe in order to open the windows of Heaven in order that we might receive a bountiful blessing, but there *is* a life into which we can enter that gives us more lofty motives. It is possible for a person to get saved because he wants his life to bring glory to God. It is possible for a person to serve God because he loves Him. It is possible for a person to tithe because he wants to be a co-laborer with God. It is possible for a person to pray and ask God for the needs of others. This advanced post-graduate life is conceived at home at the throne of grace. It is there that we lose ourselves in the service of others. It is there that we find grace to help others in their time of need. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with coming to the throne of grace in order that we find grace to be helped in the time of need, but there is a way that the

Christian can come to the throne of grace in order that he might find grace to help others in their time of need, and to think, this unselfish life for others is available, yea, bountifully so, at the throne of grace! What a way to live!

Chapter 35 – Praying for Laborers

Matthew 9:37,38, "Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

People often ask me, "Where do you get all those good workers?"

I reply, "I pray for them." The Lord Jesus told His disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest (that is, the Holy Spirit) that He would send (thrust) laborers into the fields. These words were spoken to His disciples. He had called them. He knew that they would need help, so He told them, "When you need help, ask Me," or "Pray Me." God knows that we need laborers, and He could send them without our praying, but if He can accomplish the same end and at the same time have a little fellowship with us, it is so much more delightful for Him and, yes, for us. Ah, this is so simple and so sweet and yet so profound!

Often Christian schools across America call Hyles-Anderson College on the phone requesting some teachers. They need laborers, so they call the college and ask if we have any to send.

An army officer may need reinforcing troops. He calls headquarters and requisitions more men, and the reinforcements are sent. The troops are there waiting to be sent. Headquarters is waiting for the requisition.

Pastors all across America and around the world lament the fact that they have so few workers and yet they never make requisition. They never call headquarters and ask for workers! How sad, how sad, how sad it is that we go without laborers when the Lord of the harvest has them available and waiting for us but we do not ask for them! The difference between the church that has soul winners and the church that doesn't have soul winners is prayer. The difference between the church that has a scarcity of Sunday school teachers is prayers. God has the laborers. He wants us to have them. He wants to send them, but somehow Christian leaders have a trace of atheism in them. We somehow do not believe that God will supply our needs in answer to our requests; so we set out to connive and plan with our human reasoning to get workers "by hook or by crook."

Then you ask, "If God knows we need workers, and if God has the workers, why doesn't He just send them without our praying?" This again goes back to the very nature of God. He wants us to work with Him. He wants us to be co-laborers with Him.

He also wants to increase our burden for the work. If we spend enough time praying for laborers, then we ourselves become better laborers. If we are required to look at the harvest fields and to plead with God to send laborers into those fields, we ourselves will have our burden for the work increased which will be followed by a new zeal and dedication to the work. As is mentioned elsewhere in other chapters, we often become the answer to our prayer. As we become more burdened for the work because we pray for laborers, sometimes we become one of those laborers. For a long time I poured my heart out to God asking Him to send somebody to Chicago. Little did I know that I would be that somebody. Now for approximately a quarter of a century I have been the answer to my own prayers.

Please note to whom we are to pray. In **Matthew 9:38** He says, "**Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest.**" The Lord of the harvest in the Holy Spirit, and so we ask the Holy Spirit to give us

laborers for the harvest fields. Immediately someone will rise to say, "Oh, no, no, no! That's not prayer! We pray TO the Father, THROUGH the Son, IN the Spirit!" Well, I think that is certainly theologically correct, but since the Holy Spirit is a Person, there is nothing wrong with addressing Him or talking to Him, and since He is the One Who sends laborers into the harvest, why not ask Him for laborers?

I remember one night years ago when Dr. John R. Rice and I were at a Bible conference together. Before he preached, he prayed something like this, "Oh, Father, breathe on me. Lord Jesus, help me to preach tonight. Holy Spirit, give me power."

After the service a young preacher came to Dr. Rice and said, "You made a serious mistake while you prayed to God the Father, then you prayed to Jesus, then you prayed to the Holy Spirit." He continued, "The proper procedure is to pray to the Father through the Son in the Spirit."

Dr. Rice looked at him with a sheepish grin and replied, "Son, I've been in the family long enough until I know all of Them personally. I just talk to whichever One I need to talk to at the time." The old giant patted the young man on the shoulder and went his way.

There is nothing wrong with the child of God saying, "Jesus, I love You," "Father, supply my needs," and "Holy Spirit, give me power." Sometimes we can be so busy being theologically correct that we can be spiritually empty! Oh, for the heartbeat of the Christian faith! Oh, for the lilt and joy! Oh, for the tears and the burden! Oh, for the warmth and the tenderness!

Praying for laborers also makes us willing to go and makes us willing to let our own go. When a person sees the harvest fields and becomes burdened for them, he is much more willing to allow his child to go into the fields of harvest and he is much more willing to go himself.

An old missionary broken in health returned from the mission field. He stood before a great convention of people and pleaded for someone to go and take his place. The hearts were cold to his appeal, and he was unable to find anybody to take his place. Finally he broke down and cried and said, "I'll go back." He did go back and gave his life on the fields of a foreign country.

Years ago in Texas a well-known preacher was appealing for mission volunteers for a needy overseas country. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he made his appeal. During the invitation time his own daughter came and volunteered to be a foreign missionary. He looked at her and said, "Not you, honey! Oh, not you, honey!"

She said, "But, Daddy, you made the appeal in such a manner that I have to go!"

Now notice in **Matthew 9:36**, "**But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.**" Notice why the laborers are needed. **John 4:35b**, "**Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.**" We say the field are hard; God says the fields are white unto harvest. We say that hearts are hard; God says the fields are white unto harvest. We say this is a hard age; yet God says the fields are white unto harvest.

Years ago I visited a farmer who was backslidden. I was trying to lead him back to Jesus. He said, "I haven't got time to come to church. Come with me, Pastor." He took me out into his fields. He said, "Look at that harvest. It's ready to be gathered now, and I can't find anybody willing to work. I've never seen such an age in my life. People are lazy. Young folks won't work. I'm willing to pay good wages, but my crop will waste before I can gather it all because I have no laborers. I worked

hard. I have the best crop I have had in years, but there is no way I can harvest it because there is no one willing to work."

I put my hand on his shoulder and through tears I said, "That's exactly why I'm here, my brother. God said His fields are white unto harvest but the laborers are few. I'm here to plead with you to help God harvest His crop. Somehow, my brother, I feel if you will go into God's harvest fields, He will supply you with laborers for your fields." The point was well taken. The man began to weep. We bowed and he came back to God and launched again into the harvest fields. It was not surprising to this Preacher, then, to see that in a few days God provided him with sufficient laborers to gather the best harvest he had ever had.

Have you requisitioned Heaven lately for necessary workers? Do your fields go unharvested because you have not prayed the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers? This is His plan. Would God we would believe it enough to do it!

Chapter 36 – “Lead Us Not into Temptation”

This is one of the most important prayers in the Bible. It is a part of the model prayer, which means it is very important that the child of God know its meaning.

1. *God does not tempt.* James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." Oh, there is a sense in which the word "tempt" means "to test," and to this extent, God does tempt or test. Genesis 22:1, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am."

2. *Satan tempts.* Matthew 4:1-3, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Mark 1:13, "And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

3. *God delivers us on occasion to Satan for tempting and even destruction.* I Corinthians 5:5, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

4. *God limits Satan's ability to tempt us.* I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

5. *God can keep us from temptation.* Revelation 3:10, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

6. *Watching and praying keeps us from temptation.* Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." There is a difference between watching and praying. Watching is an extension of praying. It deals here with the night watches. A person can pray at any time. When he watches and prays, he is praying in the nighttime. Matthew 6:9-13, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

7. *God tells us what we are to pray.* James 1:14,15, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Notice the order here. First, lust; second, temptation; third, strength to say, "No." Hence, this prayer keeps us two steps from sin. It gives us extra safety. If we can keep from lusting, we can keep from temptation. If we can keep from temptation, we can keep from sin. When we think of the word "lust" we always think of sensuality and sex sins. However, the word "lust" simply means "a desire." If we can keep from wanting what we should not want, and if we have our desires curbed, then we can keep ourselves from temptation, and as we keep ourselves from temptation, we keep ourselves from sin!

Now notice the progression—desire (lust), then temptation, then sin, then death. Watching and praying prevents desire or the lust. Preventing lust prevents temptation. Preventing temptation prevents sin. Preventing sin prevents death. Death comes because of sin. Sin comes because of temptation. Temptation comes because of lust. Lust comes because we do not watch and pray. This is why the Saviour said, **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."**

Chapter 37 – Asking in Jesus' Name

John 14:13,14,26, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." John 16:23,24,26, "And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you."

There is a special promise made for a special purpose. To go in the name of another means to go with the power and authority of that person, as his representative and substitute. A businessman goes away on a trip. He leaves a trusted assistant in charge of his business. Of course, he chooses someone who has earned the right to represent him while he is away. He chooses someone who carries the same burden he carries, who has proven himself a hard worker, trustworthy and loyal. While the businessman is away, his substitute may have to order materials or make requisitions. He gives this trusted employee the right to order in his name. Our Master has gone away. There are those who are His own who have proven themselves to be trustworthy and loyal and to have a burden for the work. To such people He gives the authority to go to the throne of grace in His name and make requisitions. This authority is earned by dedication to the same task.

While our Lord is away, we are told to do the same work that He did. **John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."** It is interesting that this precedes the first mention of asking in Jesus' name. God is saying that this promise is only for His work. He precedes it with one of the greatest verses in the Bible about His work. Our Lord is saying that if we do the work He did and even greater works than He did, then He can trust us to go in His name to the Father and requisition our needs.

Now notice **John 16:23,24,26, "And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you."** It is interesting that "ask in My name" is preceded by "do all in My name." When we do all in His name, we may ask all in His name. The asking is earned by the doing. This is no prayer promise to babes in Christ or to novices in His work. This is a promise to those who have given their lives to doing the work that He did and all that they do is in His name. He can trust them. They have earned that trust by their diligence and loyalty. They have done His work in His name; now they have the right to order supplies in His name, but the work must come first. **John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."** **John 20:21, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."** **Acts 1:1, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."**

I receive hundreds of pieces of mail a week. There are some questions that are asked over and over again. I may read a letter and find that it asks me for my position on divorce and what I think the Scripture teaches about the subject. Now so many hundreds of people have asked me this same question that I may say to my trusted secretary, Erma McKinney, "Erma, answer this in the usual way." I do not lightly give her this authority. For many years she has worked hard. She has helped carry my burden and my load. She has been faithful, diligent and loyal. When she first became my secretary, I did not give her this authority. There came a day when I felt through her diligence, work and loyalty that I could trust her. When a Christian has worked for the Lord until he can be a trusted servant, when he has carried the burden and has proven his trustworthiness and loyalty, God may say to him, "Now that you are doing My work and have proven yourself you may go to the Father in My name and make requests for My work." This is what it means in **John 15:7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** Notice that unless we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we may not claim His promise to ask what we will and receive it.

A woman gives herself to a man in marriage. She loves him. They are not only one legally and physically—they are one in heart, in spirit and in work. His work is her work; his burden is her burden; his care is her care. He arranges at the bank so she can sign his checks. She has proven herself.

Legally there is what is called the power of attorney. This is basically what asking in Jesus' name means. It means He can trust us with the checkbook and with the power to transact His business in His name.

I have many staff members who have been with me for years. Meredith Plopper has been with me for nearly 22 years. Elaine Colsten, Jennie Nischik and Maxine Jeffries have been with me approximately 20 years. Dr. Johnny Colsten and Erma McKinney have been with me for nearly 18 years. Rose O' Brien has been with me for over 15 years. Mabel Boardway has typed for me for nearly 13 years. Ann Shoaf and Nancy Bewley have been with me about 12 years. For almost 11 years Brother Ray Boardway has been Director of our Adult Choir. Judy Anderson has been with me almost 11 years.

These are people whose diligence, loyalty and integrity have been tested by time and dedication. They, as well as others on the staff, have earned my trust. Each in his own department is given liberty to spend his own budget as he or she sees fit. I believe that each carries a burden for his own work akin to mine. I trust him and in many areas give him freedom to go in my name, to do in my name, and to ask in my name.

Now suppose that while the boss is away, his assistant in charge abuses his privilege of going in the employer's name and suppose he uses this power for his personal use. The employer becomes aware of this abuse, and he will withdraw the privilege from his once trusted employee.

"Dear Lord, may I be so diligent in Your work, and may I enter into Your burden so that You can count me trustworthy, diligent and loyal so that I may have the authority to pray in Your name. I promise You that I will not abuse that authority. I will not go in Your name carelessly. I will try to ask for things for which You would ask if You were here. As I approach Your throne of grace, I will do so carefully and soberly realizing that I am Jesus' representative requisitioning supplies for the greatest work of the world. Oh, God, may I earn Your trust, and may I keep that trust. With the passing of the days, may my burden be more like Your burden and my work be more like Your work. I pledge myself to do all in Your name, and I thank You for the degree of authority given me to ask in Your name. May I never abuse or misuse this trust! Amen."

Chapter 38 – Praying for the Sick

James 5:13-16, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Is praying for the sick for this age? This is the question that has been asked again and again concerning God's healing of the sick. Some take our text passage and point to **James 1:1b**, "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Then they say the book of James was written to those twelve tribes, so they say that the promises of **James 5:13-16** are not for this age. Those who do so should examine **Romans 1:7a**, "To all that be in Rome." Does this mean that Romans is not for us? Of course not! Though the letter was written to those in Rome, the message of Romans is as real and valid today as it was the day it was penned by the Apostle. Those who would relegate the promises of **James 5:13-16** only to the twelve tribes should read **I Corinthians 1:2a**, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." He might continue reading the early verses of each of the epistles. **II Corinthians 1:1**, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." **Galatians 1:2**, "And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia." **Ephesians 1:1**, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." **Philippians 1:1**, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." **Colossians 1:2**, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." **I Thessalonians 1:1**, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Are all of these promises and epistles written just for the people to whom they are addressed? Of course not. Neither is the epistle of James! In fact, a careful reading of the epistle of James would find the mansion of our Lord's return. Read **James 5:3-9**, "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." Certainly our Lord did not return in the days of the writing of the book of James. I think he is telling us that the promises are for the entire church age and to all the people of God. Now I am not saying that there is no dispensational teaching in James. I AM saying that God is just as interested in healing one of His children who is a Gentile as He is in healing one of His children who is a Jew.

Perhaps some rules worth noting would be as follows:

1. *Salvation is always the same.*
2. *God's desire to help His people is always the same.* His compassion is always the same.
3. *Right and wrong are always the same.*

In considering healing the sick it must be mentioned that it is not always God's will to heal the sick. Paul spoke of a dear friend, Trophimus, who was ill. **II Timothy 4:20, "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."** Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul said in **Philippians 2:27,30, "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."**

II Corinthians 12:1-10, " It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Here we find the Apostle himself was afflicted with a thorn in the flesh. He had some physical malady. On three occasions he sought the Lord for healing, and God did not see fit to heal him. Instead of healing him, He promised grace that would be sufficient. Some of the dearest Christians in the world and some of the sweetest of God's saints suffer affliction. This is not because of their sin. It is because they have been chosen for the ministry of suffering. In any discussion of God's healing the sick, it must be carefully noted that it is not always God's will to do so.

Sometimes God uses medicine with which to heal the sick. **Colossians 4:14, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."** **I Timothy 5:23, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."** **Isaiah 38:1-5, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."** **Isaiah 38:21, "For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover."** **II Kings 20:7, "And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered."** These are a few of the passages in the Bible that remind us that God uses doctors and medicine.

Even Luke, Paul's companion on much of his missionary travels, was a physician. No doubt God gave Luke to Paul, not only as a Spirit-filled companion in travel, not only as a fellow servant of God, but as a guardian of his health. I thank God for those godly physicians to whom I minister week after week. Some of the dearest, most faithful soul-winning Christians in our church are doctors.

Just recently after the Sunday morning service a dear father brought his infant son by the office. He asked if I would anoint him with oil and pray for him. Of course, I did. He told me that he had taken him to one of the doctors who is a member of our church and that the doctor had suggested he come to the Preacher for prayer and anointing first. This is not unusual, for these godly men realize that sometimes God chooses to use the prayers of His man, and sometimes He wishes to supplement that with dedicated Spirit-filled physicians.

Now the question comes: How may we be healed, and what is the procedure that should be followed in the seeking of healing for our bodies?

1. *Realize that Satan is the author of sickness.* Job 2:4-7, "And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." It was Satan who afflicted Job. Luke 13:16, "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" Notice it was Satan who had caused this illness. II Corinthians 12:7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." It was a messenger of Satan that buffeted the Apostle Paul. I Corinthians 5:5, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Satan is the destroyer of the flesh. Sometimes God allows Satan to afflict us, but it is Satan himself who is the author of sickness.

2. *Confess your sins.* Sickness is often caused by sin. Such was the case of Miriam in Numbers 12:10, "And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous." It was sin that caused the illness of Uzziah in II Chronicles 26:19, "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar." It was sin that caused Gehazi's sickness in II Kings 5:27, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." Jeroboam was afflicted by sin. I Kings 13:4, "And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." Herod was made ill by sin. Acts 12:23, "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." The sin of unworthily sitting at the Lord's table and taking of His supper causes illness. I Corinthians 11:30-32, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Also note John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." After a person has realized that Satan is the author of sickness, then he should confess every sin of which he is aware in his life.

3. *Pray for yourself.* **James 5:13, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."** Remember that king Asa was not healed because he sought not the Lord but the physicians. His sin was not that he sought the help of the physicians; his sin was that he sought only the help of his physicians. After realizing that Satan is the author of sickness and after confessing our sins, we should come to God and pray for ourselves.

4. *Be anointed by the man of God.* **James 5:14, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."** Now I have never had a healing campaign nor a prayer line, but I do keep a little bottle of olive oil in my office. It is used every week as God's people who are ill come by the office and ask me to pray and anoint them with oil. Now this does not make me a fanatic; it simply reveals that I believe the Word of God. I put a little oil on my fingertip and place my finger upon the forehead of the one who is ill and pray a prayer in the name of Jesus that He will heal them. Both the person who is ill and I agree that we are going to love the Lord, whatever He does, and that we realize that sometimes God wants us to suffer for His name, but since He will often heal the sick in answer to the prayer and anointing of God's man, it is something that the child of God ought to seek when he is ill.

5. *Be sure that you are right in your heart with others.* **James 5:16a, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another."** Many people could have been healed but were not because of bitterness, hatred, malice, envy, jealousy and other sins harbored in the heart.

6. *Pray for others and ask them to pray for you.* Contact all of God's people in whom you have confidence and whose prayers you respect, and ask them to join you in prayer for your recovery.

7. *If necessary, and if you feel led, use the doctor and medicine.* God often uses them as agents for the healing of His children.

A few years ago 11 ladies in our church who had been told by the physicians that they could never bear children got together and came to me. We confessed our sins, I anointed each with oil and prayed for God to open their wombs and/or give life to the seed of their husbands. Within two years those 11 ladies gave birth to 12 babies. Each lady had one except one, and she had twins. praise the Lord!

A few paragraphs ago I made mention of a man coming by the office asking me to anoint his infant son who had a hole in his heart. I told of that little infant boy who was brought to my office for prayer and anointing who was immediately healed. The very next week the doctor declared him as well. How pitiful it is that as soon as one of God's men begins to believe God, he is then branded as some kind of a nut, off-brand or fanatic, when the truth is, there is a loving Father Who wants us to be well and has made provisions for our healing in most cases.

A few months ago a dear lady stood in our services to tell how that she had a tumor of the brain and that she had come by the office for prayer and anointing and God had marvelously healed her. Her doctors attested to the fact that she definitely had had a tumor and that it definitely had been removed without surgery.

I am thinking of that little lady in our church who was to have open heart surgery. She met the conditions as outlined in this chapter (which I teach my people), and the open heart surgery was avoided because of God's mercy and healing.

During Pastor's School of 1982 many of our people lined up on the platform to testify of God's healing powers in their lives.

Just a few days ago I was preaching in Raleigh, North Carolina. A couple came by after the service to talk with me. They showed me a precious little baby and said, "Here he is."

I said, "What do you mean?"

They said, "The doctors all said it was impossible for us to have children. Two years ago when you were here you anointed us with oil and prayed for God to give us a baby. Here he is. praise the Lord!"

I am not talking about a wild spectacular kind of an exhibitionism. I am talking about a quiet faith and trust in God that says, "There is a God in Heaven, and He loves me, and in most cases He wants me to be well, though it may be that He would want me to suffer for His name and that my illness may be a ministry. It also may be that He wants to use me to the praise of His glory by healing my body."

Chapter 39 – Priests and Intercessors

I Timothy 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." I Peter 2:5,9, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Isaiah 61:6, "But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." Revelation 1:6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Most of this study deals with praying for our own needs, or selfish praying. This is not bad. The Lord tells us to ask what we will. He tells us to bring our desires to Him, and certainly as His children we have a right to do so. However, there is another form of praying, and that is intercessory prayer, or praying for the needs of others.

So often we hear such statements as, "We Christians are priests; we can come to God for ourselves." The latter part of this statement is accurate. We CAN come to God for ourselves; however, that does not make us priests. The work of a priest is to mediate for others. Now as a child of God a Christian has a right to come to God for himself. There is, however, a priestly work that the child of God can enjoy, and that is when he intercedes for others at the throne of grace.

A priest received from the people their sacrifices and presented them to God. **Hebrews 5:1**, "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." **Deuteronomy 10:8**, "At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day." **Deuteronomy 21:5**, "And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto Him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried." **Deuteronomy 33:10**, "They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar."

Under the Levitical system, being a son of Aaron (the high priest) made the priesthood accessible. However, just being a son of Aaron was not enough. Even a son of Aaron could not do the work of a priest without a special ordinance. In other words, being Aaron's son gave one access to the priesthood, and no one could do the work of a priest unless he was a son of Aaron, but being a son of Aaron did not in itself allow one to enter into the work of the priesthood.

Every Christian has access to the priesthood simply because he is saved. As a Christian he is a child of God and only children of God can enter into the priestly work of praying for others, but one is not doing priestly work just because he is a child of God.

In **Leviticus 8** and **Exodus 29** we have instructions about the setting aside of the priesthood. Among other things, Aaron's sons had to be washed, clothed, anointed with oil, have sacrifices offered on their behalf, have the blood applied, and have their garments sprinkled with blood and oil mixed together. They had to be free from contact with death and defilement, and no inheritance of other tribes would be theirs.

There are some beautiful pictures here of our Saviour and our salvation. For example, the anointing with oil and the application of the blood was first done to the lobe of the right ear. Then it was applied to the thumb of the right hand and then to the big toe of the right foot. This is so beautiful in that it pictures so vividly our salvation. First, the application was on the ear. This is the way the Gospel comes to us. **Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** We *hear* the Word of God. Then the application was made to the hand because once we hear the Word of God we must receive Christ as our personal Saviour. This is followed by the application to the foot because when we hear, we are to receive; when we receive, we are to go and take the message to others.

After the ceremony, the sons of Aaron became priests. They were his sons before they became priests. Sonship gave them access, but there had to be a special ordinance before they could do the work. Sonship with Christ gives us access to the throne of grace in order that we may intercede for others as priests of God, but we ourselves must decide to do the work of the priesthood by taking advantage of our access to the throne of grace to plead and intercede for others.

At this writing my mother is 94 years of age. For years she has been a priest, interceding for her son as he travels and as he preaches.

First Baptist Church of Hammond has many dear shut-ins. Some of the sweetest saints in the family of God are those dear people who call me Pastor whose world is a room, whose sky is a ceiling, whose horizon is a wall, whose grass is carpet, and whose sunshine is a window; yet, I am constantly aware that these dear, sweet saints of God are my priests. They pray for me; they intercede for me as they do for others in the work of God.

Several years ago a lady came to Hammond to live. She had been a pastor's wife. God had taken her husband home to heaven. She had heard of our ministry and loved our work, and the Holy Spirit led her our way. Her name is Mrs. Bartel. She is a very important priest to me. We provide her with a little apartment in our church building, and she is my prayer warrior. My secretary gives her a list of my speaking engagements. She knows where I am speaking, what day I am speaking, what time of day I am speaking. This enables her to pray for me all the time I am preaching. I never stand anywhere in America to preach without the awareness that Mrs. Bartel is interceding for me, asking God to give me strength and power as I preach. She is a priest, not because she is a child of God. She has access to the priesthood for that reason. She is a priest because she had chosen to take advantage of the access that being a child of God gives her to the throne of grace.

So often when I am sitting on a platform somewhere across America or around the world ready to preach, I will find myself with moistened eyes and a glad heart simply because I am aware that it is bedtime back home. I think of all the little boys and girls who are bowing their heads saying, "Dear God, bless my Preacher. Give him power while he preaches and bring him back home safely." I think of all the men whose bodies are weary and tired from a day of toil who are bowing their heads before retiring asking God to bless their Preacher and watch over him while he is away. I think of all the ladies at the close of the day harried by a busy day of activity who pause to say a prayer to God for their Preacher, who is away. They are my priests interceding for me. Thank God for all of them! They are a part of the work and contribute a vital part to my ministry and all the victories that are won where I am serving God. They are my partners! They share with me in the victories now and will share in the rewards later.

Chapter 40 – Faith in Prayer

Faith is a growing process. In **Mark 9:24** the father of a demon-possessed boy said to the Saviour, **"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine belief."** God wants the unbelief to diminish and the belief to increase. That is the purpose of this chapter.

First, let us notice that faith is needed in prayer. **Mark 11:24**, **"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."** **Mark 9:23**, **"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."** **James 5:15**, **"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."**

Then we have to recognize that it is a sin not to have faith. **Hebrews 11:6**, **"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."** **Mark 4:40**, **"And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"** **Mark 16:14**, **"Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen."** There Lord Jesus asked in **Luke 18:8b**, **"When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"** He asked the disciples in **Luke 8:25**, **"Where is your faith?"**

Now notice **Hebrews 12:1**, **"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."** Especially look at the words, **"The sin that doth so easily beset us."** Now what was this besetting sin? It should not be difficult for us to know. In the previous chapter there was but one subject at hand, and that was the subject of faith. **Hebrews 11** is the great faith chapter. It lists the great hall of fame of those who have had faith. The word **"wherefore"** which begins **chapter 12** means that it connects **chapter 12** with what has gone before, that is, **chapter 11**. Immediately it mentions **"the sin that doth so easily beset us."** Could it be that our Lord is talking about the sin of not having faith? It is certainly true that not having faith is the besetting sin of most of us. Oh, to believe what God has done! Oh, to believe that God can do it again! Oh, to believe that God WILL do it again! Oh, to believe that God will use ME to do it again!

If it is a sin not to have faith, then we should examine the means of obtaining faith and of increasing our faith.

1. *Hear the Word of God preached.* **Romans 10:17**, **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** **Proverb 28:9**, **"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."** Notice that the faith cometh by HEARING the Word of God. There is something about hearing the Word of God that increases our faith. When I read the Bible, I often read aloud because when I hear it, my faith is increased.

Oh, the importance of preaching! I love to do it, and I love to hear it! I never hear a man of God proclaim the Word of God without my faith being increased.

2. *Read the Word of God.* By reading His Word, we learn of His nature and of His pattern of behavior. We find that He forgave others, such as He forgave the thief on the cross. That gives us faith to believe that He will forgive us. We read how He provided for Elijah and for the apostle

Paul, and that gives us faith to believe that He will provide for us. We read of His omnipotence, and that gives us faith to believe that His power will care for us. We read of His promises. That gives us faith to believe that He will keep those promises even as He kept them to those in the Bible. Oh, the tragic neglect on the part of God's people of the Word of God! I think sometimes we read too many other books. I think sometimes we listen to too many religious radio broadcasts. I think sometimes we trade our shields of gold for shields of brass. We read too many newspapers and too many magazines and listen to too many radio broadcasts and watch too much television. We are so busy buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, and eating and drinking that we do not have time or take time for the Word of God. No wonder our faith is so weak! No wonder our lack of faith is often our besetting sin!

3. *Read all of the Bible.* **Matthew 4:4, "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."** Notice the statement, **"EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."** This is why it is so vital to read the Bible through. We need to read all the Bible, the Chronicles as well as the Psalms, the genealogy of Christ as well as the life of Christ, the minor prophets as well as the major prophets.

Occasionally someone will ask me, "Preacher, what is your form of Bible study?"

I hastily reply, "Reading the Bible."

Another will ask, "What kind of helps do you use?"

I reply, "I use the Bible."

Read it all! Man lives by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

4. *Act on the faith that you have.* **Mark 9:22-24, "And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."**

Faith is an investment. Whatever faith you have, invest it. God will reward it, and you will reap dividends of more faith. **Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."** The saints of **Hebrews 11**, the faith of God's servants, led to answers that led to more faith that led to greater acts that led to more faith that led to greater answers that led to more faith that led to greater answers! So whatever the degree of faith one has, he should invest that faith, and act upon it, and his faith will increase!

John 20:27, "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." Luke 24:39, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

"But," you say, "my faith is too weak." All right, then use that weak faith. Go ahead and start. Notice **Matthew 17:20, "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."** Start with claiming **Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and**

all these things shall be added unto you." You could claim Malachi 3:10. Notice Malachi 3:8-10, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Let God reward your little faith with little results. The you take the increased faith that those results give you and invest those, and He will reward your more faith with more results which will increase your faith to great faith; then He can reward your great faith with great results!

As we hear the Word of God preached, hear it read, read it, read all of it and act upon the faith that we have, it increases our love for our Saviour. It is easier to trust someone more as you love him more. Trust is faith, and as we learn to love the Saviour more, we learn to trust Him more; and since without faith it is impossible to please Him, as we love Him more and trust Him more, we please Him more!

Chapter 41 – Praying for the Unsaved

This question was sent to me: "Pastor, why pray for the unsaved when God wants them saved more than we do?" The answer to this question certainly warrants space for a treatise of this sort. We know that it is Scriptural for God's people to pray for salvation of others. **Romans 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."** **Romans 9:1,2, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart."**

Yet if man can persuade God to save a soul, it would challenge the doctrine of the free will of man and would give ammunition to the heresy of hyper-Calvinism.

Yet we are to pray for sinners. Perhaps we should learn why.

1. *A person must DECIDE to get saved.* Heaven is for the whosoever wills, and Hell is for the whosoever won'ts. God made man for fellowship and voluntary love, He gave man both an alternative and a will so that man could choose to love Him.
2. *God wants all to choose Him.* **II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** Jesus died for all men. The blood of Christ was shed for all men. The grace of God is extended to all men. Salvation is offered to all men. It is completely against the nature of God and His Word to believe that God has predestined some to go to Heaven and predestined some to go to Hell. If a person misses Heaven and spends eternity in endless torment, it will not be of God's choosing; it will be of man's choosing because God wants all to choose Him.
3. *God will not force His will on man.* Of course, God wants fellowship with man. That was the purpose of man's creation. Oh, how sweet was the fellowship between God and Jesus! Jesus spoke of this fellowship in **John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."** Oh, how Jesus anticipated the restoration of that fellowship as He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane! Perhaps God enjoyed fellowship with Jesus so much that one day He decided to make a lot of little Jesuses in order that He might fellowship with many. The great, loving heart of God wants that love returned, and He wants it voluntarily returned, so God will not force His will upon man. That would defeat the purpose of His creation of man.
4. *Our prayers do not affect the sinner's will.* The will of the sinner is his rich heritage. Yes, we are to pray that sinners will be saved, but our prayer will not change the eternal plan of God whereby He requires sinners to receive Him willfully as Saviour in order to have eternal life.
5. *Our prayers CAN cause God to give the unsaved man more opportunities to be saved.* Though God will not nullify the sinner's will, He will, however, in response to our prayers, give that sinner more chances to exercise his will and more opportunities to receive Christ as Saviour. **Matthew 9:37,38, "Then saith He unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."** Notice, we are to pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send or thrust forth laborers into the harvest field. This means that we are to pray that God will send more soul winners. Of

course, the more soul winners that are sent, the more opportunities the sinner will have to receive Christ.

The Bible teaches that all men have an opportunity to be saved. **John 1:9, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork."**

Let's suppose that there are two people in a remote part of the earth who have never heard the story of Jesus. The Bible tells us that the moon and the stars and the heavens declare the glory of God. These two people ignorant of the Gospel, look to the heavens. The heavens say to each of these men, "There was Somebody Who made these stars and Who made this moon and Who made the sun" One heathen man hears the message and believes it. He says in his heart, "I believe Somebody greater than man made that."

The other heathen man says to himself, "I don't believe it." I don't believe that there is any great being behind the creation of the heavens." Because that man did not act upon the knowledge that he had, God is not bound to give him more light or more knowledge. However, the man who acted on the knowledge that he had received from God will be given more light." As long as he continues to act upon the light he is given, God will continue to give him more light until one day he will hear the glorious Gospel of Christ. The truth being emphasized here is that all men are lighted by the truth of God. It is also true that God will increase the number of opportunities that an unsaved man has to receive Christ in response to the prayers of God's people. We CANNOT and God WILL NOT take away from the unsaved person his will, but we can through prayer cause God to give those whom we love and for whom we pray more opportunities to receive the Saviour. Ah, this is a wonderful truth and gives us even added incentive to continue to pray for the salvation of our loved ones!

6. In answer to our prayer, God may even make salvation more enticing to the sinner. In the Bible, salvation is likened to eating. God will not, in answer to our prayer, force a sinner to eat, but He may make the food smell better! He may put some parsley around the edge of the plate to decorate it. He may adorn the Gospel so as to make salvation more appealing. He is not forcing salvation upon anyone in answer to the prayer of the believer; He is making it more attractive to the unsaved man because of the believer's prayers.

7. When we pray for sinners, God gives us more burden for them, which makes us more likely to be the laborers that God is going to send into the harvest field.

In 1957 I preached in the city of Chicago for the first time, Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., Dr. John R. Rice, Dr. G.B. Vick and I preached in a series of round-robin Bible conferences. One night I would preach at the First Baptist Church of Harvey, just South of Chicago; at the same time Dr. Rice would be preaching at the Northside Gospel Center; Dr. Jones would be preaching at the Belden Avenue Baptist Church and Dr. Vick would be preaching at the Oak Park Bible Church. The next night each of us would go to another church. We conducted central services in the mornings at the Belden Avenue Baptist Church. The night that I preached at the First Baptist Church of Harvey, I had to drive from the Northside of Chicago to Harvey. I found that Halsted Street went all the way from the north side of Chicago to Harvey, so I got on Halsted Street. Boy, was I in for a surprise! What a trip! I drove and I drove and I drove and I drove, and it seemed that I would never arrive in Harvey. The more I drove the more burdened I got for Chicago. The more I saw of the millions of people and of the conditions that prevailed, the more my heart broke. Soon tears were flowing down my cheeks. I drove and wept and wept and drove. Before I got to Harvey I was praying for God to send somebody to Chicago. I realized and remembered that this was the city of Dwight Moody, the city

of R.A. Torrey, the city of Paul Rader, and yet it seemed so desperate for the Gospel. I continued my praying when I returned to Texas. I pleaded with God to send somebody to Chicago. I begged Him to thrust laborers into the harvest. God answered that prayer, but not in the way I had planned. I was the laborer that He sent to Chicago! I was the answer to my own prayer, and now for nearly a quarter of a century I have spent most of my life trying to reach the greater-Chicago area; now 20,000 people a year from the Chicago area walk the aisle for salvation in the First Baptist Church of Hammond.

8. *The best way to pray for the unsaved, then, is to pray that God will send laborers.* This does not mean that we should not ask God to save souls. The terminology is not the important thing here. The important thing is the burden! When we pray for sinners, regardless of what terminology we use, God's answer to that prayer will be sending more laborers and making the Gospel more enticing to them so that the unsaved will have more and better opportunities of exercising their will.

9. *God will come nearer taking such action for His friends.* Isn't it natural for one to do favors for a friend? Hence, God will come nearer obeying the request of His friends.

This behooves us to find how we may become His friend. This is found in **John 15:14, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."** It is also worth note to see in **Matthew 9:37,38,** Jesus addressed His statement to His "disciples." **"Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."** God is simply saying, "I will send forth laborers into the harvest fields if My friends and disciples ask Me to." He is promising that He will give added opportunities for salvation to our friends and loved ones if we will be His friends, and we become His friends by obeying His commandments. Of course, the great commandment, or Great Commission, is **Matthew 28:19,20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

Hence, the best way to engage God into giving our unsaved loved ones and our unsaved dear ones more and better opportunities to exercise their wills for salvation is for us to enter into that labor of soul winning and obeying Christ's command. The one who wins souls where he is will have more influence on God that he may send laborers into the harvest fields of those dear to him.

The question then comes, "Why then does God often give peace to the Christian that his loved one will be saved." Every Christian who has been a soul winner and who has prayed for sinners can give testimony to the fact that there are times when a subtle peace and a confident assurance comes that God is going to save a loved one. Does this mean that God is going to save then in spite of their will? Absolutely not! It must be remembered that God has foreknowledge. Though He does not control the will of the unsaved man, He is aware beforehand whether or not this unsaved man is going to accept the Gospel. Because of this foreknowledge and because He knows that the will of the sinner is going to be favorably exercised for Jesus, God can, and sometimes does, give us peace that it is going to happen. Maybe the Lord is like us in that sometimes He has a hard time keeping from "spilling the beans." Maybe He gets so excited knowing that the sinner is going to receive Him that He wants to share the good news with us.

These blessed and Scriptural truths should entice us to pray more for sinners and rive us to our knees praying for the salvation of those who are dear to us!

Chapter 42 – United Prayer

Luke 11:1, "And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." II Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." Romans 15:30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." Matthew 18:19,20, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 6:8,9, "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name."

Now it is usually best for the Christian to pray alone. Sometimes the temptation is to pray a pretty prayer and not to dwell on the Saviour as we should when others are hearing us. So it is usually more effective if the child of God does his praying and agonizing alone. Most Bible praying was done this way, and most Bible teaching has to do with this type of praying. However, sometimes two people can share the same burden enabling them to pray effectively together. This, of course, should be when they have the same thing in common. A mother and a father could pray for a child. Partners could pray together for a business. Children could pray together for a parent. Pastors could pray together for a revival.

In **Luke 11:1** the disciples said, "**Teach US to pray.**" No one said, "Teach ME to pray," but rather, "**Teach US to pray.**" Then in the model prayer that follows this request we are told to pray, "**OUR Father.**" Notice, it is not "MY Father," but "**OUR Father.**" This at least, implies that our Lord realized the need for united prayer on some occasions.

In **Matthew 18:19**, notice especially the words, "**...it shall be done for THEM.**" Obviously there was united prayer, and God gave an answer to them collectively. When Peter was in prison the church met and prayed in united prayer. At Pentecost there was united prayer. **Acts 1:9**, "**And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**" **Acts 1:12-14**, "**Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.**" United prayer is also mentioned in II Thessalonians 3:1, "**Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.**" Colossians 4:3, "**Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.**" Philippians 1:19, "**For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.**" On occasions when people share the same burden, united prayer can be very effective. Perhaps this is the reason our Lord always prayed alone. No one shared His burden. No one understood His heartbeat.

I remember many time when Dr. John R. Rice and I prayer together. I would pray for the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, and he would pray for the SWORD OF THE LORD, and I would pray for Hammond Baptist Schools, and he would pray for the Voice of Revival Broadcast; then one

of us would pray for America! Ah, a chord was struck! We had reached a place in our prayers where we could agree in one accord, and what sweet fellowship we had with the Lord and with each other as we together poured out our hearts for our nation.

This is why it is always best in united prayer to have a small group. It is difficult to find a great number of people who have the same burden.

In summary, it is usually best to pray alone. Occasionally a group may pray together if they share the same burden, but it should usually be a small group. United prayer should be practiced only if the same burden is shared. By the way, it need not be in the same place. It could be at the same time. People separated by many miles from each other could have united prayer at the same time as they meet together at the throne of grace. This can be a tool of great blessing.

Chapter 43 – The By-Products of Prayer

Of course, the main reason to pray is that we might get things from God. **Matthew 7:7**, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." **John 16:24**, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." **John 14:14**, "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it." **Matthew 7:11**, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" **Matthew 7:8**, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." **James 4:2**, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." **Matthew 21:22**, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Let us remember now that we are talking about praying, which is asking.

Praise is good. **Psalm 50:23**, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." **Psalm 150:6**, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD." However, praise is not praying!

Meditation is good, for **Psalm 1:2** says, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night," but meditation is not praying!

Confession is good. **1 John 1:9**, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **Daniel 9:4**, "And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments." However, confession is not praying!

Thanksgiving is good! **Philippians 4:6**, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." However, thanksgiving is not praying!

Praying is asking. The main thing is getting things from God. However, there are blessed bonuses that come to the child of God when he prays. These are in addition to the answer itself.

1. *Prayer keeps the Christian from temptation.* **Matthew 26:41**, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." **Mark 14:38**, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." **Luke 22:40**, "And when He was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation." **Luke 22:46**, "And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Of course, we are to pray for God to deliver us from evil, for Him to "lead us not into temptation," but even prayer itself, when we are asking for something from God, comes wrapped with resistance to temptation.

Let us suppose that one of my church members who is easily tempted could talk with me several times a day. We may not mention his temptation. We may not discuss his weakness, but we just talk. He may ask me for help in other areas, but the very fact that we interact with each other and talk together would give him added strength to resist temptation. When the Christian comes to God in prayer, he may or may not mention his temptation. He may be asking for daily bread. He may be

asking for some special need, but just to fellowship with God builds a person's general spiritual health and his resistance to temptation. This is a blessed bonus of prayer.

2. *Prayer gives joy.* **John 16:24**, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." A child sits at the table. He asks his daddy to pass the meat. His daddy does pass the meat. It brings joy to the child. Now the child didn't ask the dad to pass joy; he asked the dad to pass the meat, but in his dad's provision, joy accompanied the meat. In receiving provisions from parents, joy is an accompanying by-product.

A young couple gets married. The husband is a good provider and supplies his wife's needs and wants. Her every request in his desire, and he gladly grants her wishes according to his ability. This security and love gives the wife more than her requests, her needs and her wants; it gives her a joy of being provided for, a joy of having security and a joy of being loved. When the child of God comes to his Heavenly Father and requisitions Him for a need, when that need is supplied, there is a blessed by-product called joy.

3. *Peace of mind is another by-product of prayer.* **Philippians 4:6,7**, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The child who lives in a house provided by his father, eats food provided by his father, wears clothing provided by his father and lives neath the care, provision and protection offered by Dad has no need to fret. He knows his dad will care for his needs. The child of God who walks with his father and who has his prayers answered will soon find that he has no need to fret or worry, and as the Father answers his prayers, He places in His bag of blessings a sweet little item called peace of mind, contentment.

There are many other sweet little bonuses that God gives to His child who prays. To be sure, the main purpose of prayer is to receive our needs in answer to our petition, but isn't it nice to get home from the heavenly commissary to find that the Heavenly Grocery-man has placed a few little things in the bag of blessings that we did not order—such things as peace, joy and protection from temptation.

4. *When we pray for others, God often gives us some of the same thing that He gives to our friend in answer to our prayer.* In **Luke 11**, in the story of the man who went to his friend at midnight and asked for three loaves, it is interesting to see that the Bible does not say the friend gave him three loaves; it says he gave him, "as many as he needeth." He asked for three loaves for a friend, but he got AS MUSH AS HE NEEDED. It seems that God said, "Here take some for yourself too." At least, this is a Biblical principle.

When Jacob came to Jabbok and prayed for Esau, God gave to Jacob something special. He changed his name to Israel, which means "a prince," and He made him a prince with God.

When Moses came to God to pray for his people, God gave Moses a bonus and made him His friend, for **Exodus 33:11a** says, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend..."

In another chapter I tell the story of Cindy coming to ask me to buy a dress for a friend who was poor and needed a dress appropriate to wear to a Valentine banquet. Cindy prevailed and I agreed to purchase a dress. Cindy and I went down to pick out the dress. I was so proud of her for being concerned about her friend that I said, "Puddin', pick one out for yourself too." Often God is so pleased when we are concerned about others when we pray for a certain need for a friend, that

when God answers that prayer, He gives our friend the thing for which we asked, and God says, "Here, you can have one too." This is just another of His wonderful bonuses to those who pray!

Chapter 44 – Prayer, a Soul-Winning Method

"Pastor, the hardest people that I try to win are those that are the closest to me."

"Brother Hyles, I find it so hard to witness to my own loved ones."

"Preacher, why is it that I can win others, but I have a difficult time even trying to win those in my own family?"

These are just a few of many statements that I hear from even the best soul winners. There is certainly a valid reason for this. Those who are the closest to us know us best. They know our weaknesses as well as our strengths. They see our low days as well as our high days. They see the back room as well as the living room. Because of this, if a Christian is able to win his own loved ones, he must live a consistent Christian life. The Christian must convince his unsaved loved ones and those who know him best that Christ is real and that the Christian life is something to be desired. Mahatma Gandhi, the man who in his day probably influenced more people than any other man on earth, is quoted as having said, "I would be a Christian if it were not for Christians."

A Christian was witnessing to a waitress at a restaurant. The waitress said, "I don't want to be a Christian. I have seen too many of your church people come in here, and if what they have is Christianity, I don't want it!"

The soul winner livingly replied, "Ma'am, I know that Christian people aren't what they ought to be, but can you find anything wrong with Jesus?"

Through tears the waitress replied, "No, I can't, and if more of you people would live like Him, more people like me would want to be like you."

In presenting the proof of Christ and His claims on us, perhaps no other method would be more persuasive than for the unsaved who are the closest to us to observe our answers to prayer and to see God's working in our lives. If week after week, month after month and perhaps even year after year our loved ones could see God's answers to our prayers, they could be convinced that there is something to the Christian life.

Let us notice some examples in the Bible.

1. *The behavior of the returning exiles from Babylon convinced the heathen nations that God was with them.* **Psalm 126:1,2, "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them."** Notice the progression here. (1) The Lord turned again the captivity of Zion; that is, the people of God had been delivered. (2) It was like a dream to them. Notice the words, **"We were like them that dream."** They could hardly believe it was true. For years they had been slaves in Babylon; now they were returning home to their beloved land. As they journeyed on that trip of hundreds of miles they found it hard to believe that it could be so. (3) Their mouths were filled with laughter. (4) They began to sing. (5) The heathen said, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."** Especially notice in **verse 2** the word **"then."** When did the heathen say the Lord hath done great things for them? After they had seen evidence of their deliverance from captivity and had heard their laughter and their singing. It was obvious to the heathens that God had been with these people.

It is always easier to witness to people when God's workings are obvious in our lives. Especially is this true when they continue to see God answering our prayers. It will not be hard to win lost loved ones when Christian people convince them of the reality of Christ, and we will not convince them of the reality of Christ if we continue to hide the Gospel by our inconsistencies and powerlessness. **II Corinthians 4:3, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."** One of the most famous atheists in history said that he could explain away every argument concerning God and the Bible except the Christian life of his mother. In the First Baptist Church of Hammond we have a lady named Mrs. Mamie Brown. She had a grown son who was not right with God. One day he made it right and is now a fine pastor in Rock Island, Illinois. pastor Mel Brown has now served faithfully in that field for many years. He said, "The thing that Got me right with God was my mother's life. We had Jesus for breakfast, Jesus for lunch, Jesus for dinner. I saw Jesus in my mother's life, and that is what brought me to Himself." What the pastor could not do and the church could not do, what the theologians could not do, the sweet consistent Christian life of his dear mother prayed him to Jesus and prayed him into the ministry.

My first year of college was at a state university. The constant pounding of doubt into my mind by the professors began to take its toll. (This is why I recommend all young people to go to Christian colleges!) I went through a period of restlessness and doubt. I decided to find out who was right—my professors or my mother. During that year I read the entire Bible through on my knees. I became convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, and through all of my doubts one thing kept coming back to me—Mother's faith in the Book and in the Christ of the Book. I had seen her in adversity, in poverty, in loneliness, in disappointment, in the depression of the 1930's, and I was convinced that Mother's God was real!

Now let us look again at **Psalms 126**. In **verse 3** we have the people of Israel witnessing as they said, **"The Lord HATH done great things for us, whereof we are glad,"** or "That's why we are happy!" Now notice they did not witness to the heathen until the heathen had seen their lives. It was obvious that they had been delivered from captivity. The heathen had heard their laughter. They heard their singing. They saw their lives and said, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."**

It would not be hard for us to win those closest to us when they can say, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."** People at work will want to know our Saviour when they can say, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."** Husbands will want to receive the Christ that their wives have when they can say, **"The Lord hath done great things for her."** Children will want Mom and Dad's Saviour when they can say, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."** Young people will will their parents when Dad and Mom can say, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."** A church can will people in its neighborhood when it can be said, **"The Lord hath done great things for them."**

A number of years ago I was soul winning on the north side of Hammond. I knocked on a door and a tall man came to the door. I told him who I was and he began to laugh at me and turn to 13 people in his living room and say, "Hey, folks, guess who's here. Old Hyles from First Baptist Church! Hyles is the biggest fake in town!"

I said, "Sir, I wish you wouldn't say that. I'm not a fake. I'm not what I ought to be in every area, but, bless God, I'm sincere, and I'm not a fake. What I have in my heart is genuine, and my call to serve God is genuine."

He laughed and kept on calling me a fake, making fun of me and the church. Before I knew it I said something that shocked me as well as him.

I said, "Sir, if you say that one more time, you're going to be sorry."

He said, "Just what are you going to do?"

Again I shocked myself. I said, "I'm going to pray for God to kill you." Oh, my soul! I had never said anything like that before! I have never said anything like that since! I had not planned to say that, but said it I did and said it I had, and there was no backing out!

He laughed even the louder, looked at the 13 people in his living room and made fun of me again. Then he said, "Hyles, you are a fake."

I said, "That does it!" Before I knew it, I put my hand on his head and began to pray. I said, "Dear Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God that parted the Red Sea for Moses and the God that made the sun stand still for Joshua, I pray in Jesus' name that You would vindicate Your servant. This man has made fun of the Gospel and of me, Your servant." I said, "Dear Lord, vindicate Thyself now."

The man interrupted and said, "Reverend, hey, reverend . . ." I kept on praying. I said, "Lord, I pray that right now in the presence of these people You would . . ."

He interrupted me and said, "Hey, Reverend, you ain't no fake! You ain't no fake! You ain't no fake!"

To be quite frank, I am not sure what God would have done; I am sure I was a bit careless in making such a statement. The point is, however, that the man respected me. He did not like me, but he respected me. He ridiculed me, but he respected me. He felt that my Christianity was genuine. Oh, how this doubting world needs to see a Christianity that is real! Nothing will convince people more quickly than to see our prayers being answered by a living God.

It is interesting to note that this testimony of the Jews as they laughed and sang was on their return from Babylon. This testimony had not always been obvious. For example, when they got to Babylon they sat down and wept when they remembered their homeland. **Psalm 137:1, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."** Though they had been great harpists, they refused to play the harp in Babylon. Instead they hanged their harps upon the willow trees. **Psalm 137:2, "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."** The Babylonian people then told them they heard they were great singers and they wished they would sing for them. **Psalm 137:3, "For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion."** The people, however, had lost their song because they were in a strange land. How sad it is! It is the strange land that needs to hear the song!

Years ago I was pastoring a small country church in east Texas. We had a member of our church who always loved to testify at church, and yet on the job he was so inconsistent. All of his testimonies at church would start the same way, "I am always glad to say a good word for my Lord." It is strange, however, that he was never willing to say a good word for our Lord out when people needed to hear it. We need to say a good word for our Lord out where they are saying bad words about our Lord. We need to bless Him where they curse Him and to sing of Him where they sing the heathen songs. The people need to hear the message and the singing and see our changed lives in the market place, in the school room, at the shop, in the factory, in the office and wherever men congregate.

We have a fine lady in our church named Ruth Ramsey. She and her married daughter, Patti Frantz, had prayed for Mrs. Ramsey. For years they prayed. For years they would have times of fasting. They continued to believe God for his salvation. One day he was stricken with a heart attack, was rushed to the hospital, and he suddenly died! There in the hospital room these dear prayers warriors literally prayed him back to life. He was marvelously saved and is now a fine member of First Baptist Church. I have no doubt that the thing that won Mr. Ramsey to Christ was the consistent life of his wife. Day after day after day and week after week after week she lived Christ. There was obviously something real. He saw her pray. He heard her pray. He saw the answers, and now he knows her Christ!

2. *Daniel's consistent Christian life and answers to prayer convinced Nebuchadnezzar of the reality of Daniel's God.* **Daniel 2:46-48, "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon."** In **verse 46** we have that word **"then"** again just as we had in **Psalm 126:2**. When the heathen had seen the transformed lives of the Israelites, **THEN** they believed it as real. Now we have the story of Daniel living for God and having his prayers answered. It was **THEN** that king Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and believed in Daniel's God. Nebuchadnezzar had seen Daniel's life. He had seen Daniel's refusal to drink the king's wine. He had seen that God was with Daniel as He gave him the interpretation of the king's dream. The king had seen his own magicians fail, his own astrologers fail, his own sorcerers fail and the Chaldeans fail. Then he saw Daniel succeed. He saw that Daniel was different. He saw Daniel's prayers answered. He heard Daniel give the interpretation of the dream. **THEN** he believed in Daniel's God. Often people say to me, "Pastor, it's so hard to win those who are wealthy or educated." It will not be so when kings, governors, mayors, professors, the rich and the famous can be convinced by our lives and by our answered prayers that there is a God in Heaven.

3. *The answered prayer of Elijah convinced the people that the Lord is THE God.* **I Kings 18:36-39, "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God."**

A famine had been in the land. Ahab the king blamed Elijah the prophet for the famine. Elijah the prophet knew that the famine was caused by the sins of the king and the people, and he told Ahab so! Elijah challenged the king to a contest. He suggested to the king that they take two bullocks. Ahab and his prophets should place one bullock on the altar and pray for fire to come from Heaven and consume it. Then Elijah would do likewise, and whichever bullock was consumed with fire from Heaven would prove who had the true and living God. The prophets of Baal chose a bullock, placed it upon the altar and called upon the name of Baal. They called all morning, **"Oh, Baal, hear us."** The Bible says, **"But there was no voice, nor any that answered."** Then they leaped upon the altar which they had made, begging for fire to come from Baal. Of course, there was no fire! At noontime Elijah began to mock them and tell them to cry louder. He said, "Maybe Baal is talking, or maybe he is hunting, or maybe he is on a journey, or maybe he is asleep and you have to wake him

up." I Kings 18:28 says, "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

Then Elijah told the people to come near to him. He took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob. "And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water." (I Kings 18:33b-35) Elijah then prayed for fire to come from Heaven. Fire did fall from Heaven and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, the wood, the stone and the dust, and it even licked up the water that was in the trench! In **verse 39** it says, "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." Notice the word "WHEN." When they saw the answer to Elijah's prayer, they believed that Jehovah was the true God. The world waits for us to show them the truth of the Gospel, and nothing will show them this truth quite as much as their seeing our answers to prayer.

4. *Pharaoh's magicians were convinced of God's workings by the answers to Moses' prayers.* Exodus 8:17-19, "And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said." These heathen educators saw the miracles of God in Moses' life and said in **verse 19**, "This is the finger of God."

The world will not be convinced of the reality of our profession until they see the reality of our lives and the reality of our prayers. No wonder this generation of synthetic Christianity has little effect on the heathen world. Christians sing the same rock music that the world sings. (We might add a few little frivolous Christian words.) We watch the same soap operas on television they watch. We smoke the same brand of cigarettes they smoke. We use the same bad words that they use. We don't tithe either. Christian men wear the same type long hair that they wear. I **Corinthians 11:14**, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" Christian ladies dress as immodestly as they do. No wonder they have so little confidence in us.

I received a call from a lady asking if I would go to the hospital and witness to her dying husband. I asked her what church she attended and she told me. I said, "Have you asked your pastor to go and try to win him to the Lord?"

She replied, "Oh, you see, Reverend Hyles, my pastor doesn't specialize in cases like that."

Well, what she was saying was that when it came to the deathbed, her pastor wouldn't do. He would do for a sermonette on Sunday morning. He would do for weddings and funerals and maybe even counseling, but when it came to preparing people for eternity, he didn't specialize in cases like that. That pastor could do a marvellous favor to the world by getting out of the pulpit.

5. *The deputy on the isle of Paphos believed because he saw Paul's answers to prayer.* Acts 13:6-12, "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word

of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." There is that word "THEN" again. In verse 12 the deputy believed. When did he believe? After he had seen God's power on Paul! Elymas the sorcerer had interfered with Paul's witnessing to the deputy. Paul looked on him and said, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." As soon as Paul had said that, blindness came upon Elymas the sorcerer. It was then that the deputy believed, "being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." This is just another of many examples in the Bible where people were saved because of the answered prayers of God's people.

There are many other similar cases such as that of the Philippian jailor. Acts 16:25-33, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." The jailor and his entire household received Christ and were baptized because of the prayer of God's men. When the jailor saw the answered prayer, he cried, "What must I do to be saved?"

Would you win those closest to you? Would you win your loved ones? Would you win the deputies, the kings, the false teachers, the one who shares your house with you, your parents, your children, your brothers, your sisters? They can be won, but it will be so only as they are convinced of the reality of your Christian life. Perhaps nothing can convince them, more quickly than for them to observe your prayers and God's answers.

Years ago when I enrolled in college in Marshall, Texas, I found a job at J.C. Penny Company. I pastored a church on the weekend and went to college and worked at J.C. penny during the week. Then, by the grace of God, I was called to pastor a country church several miles outside of Marshall, Texas. It was close enough for people in Marshall to attend. One by one I saw the people who worked at J.C. Penny Company receive Christ. I baptized the manager of the men's department, his wife, one of the secretaries up in the office area, her sister, her sister's husband, her father and her mother. The lady in the ladies hosiery department got saved; so did the assistant manager of the men's department and his wife!

One day I asked one of the people who had been saved what really was the thing that caused them to be saved. The answer was that I was the first college student who worked there at J.C. Penny Company who REALLY worked. It was because while I was there I led the store in sales. This convinced them that what I had was real.

A new convert as he was dressing after being baptized was approached by the pastor. The pastor asked him what it was in his preaching that caused the man to come to Christ. The convert said, " 'Tweren't your preachin', pastor, it was Grandma's practicin'." How true!

Chapter 45 – Praying for Each Other

Perhaps the greatest thing that one individual can do for another is to pray sincerely for him. The Apostle Paul felt the need of the prayers of God's people. He strongly hinted in his epistle to the Romans that when they prayed for him, they fought his battle with him and entered into his labors! **Romans 15:30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."** He wrote the Colossians asking the saints there to pray for him. **Colossians 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."** He also sought prayer support from the Corinthians people. **II Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."** Likewise, he sought prayer help from the Thessalonians. **II Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."** He showed his confidence in the prayers of his friend, Philemon, in **Philemon 22, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."**

He also reminded the people of God that he prayed for them, just as he requested them to pray for him. Such assurance was given to the Romans in **Romans 1:9, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."** He told the Ephesians that he constantly prayed for them. **Ephesians 1:16, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."** At another place he said, **"...Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." (II Timothy 1:3b)** Again he said, **"...We do not cease to pray for you." (Colossians 1:9b)** We owe it to others to pray for them.

1. Prayer is getting things done for others that you cannot do. II Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

Several years ago when Cindy was in college she came to me one day and asked if I could buy a dress for one of her friends. I replied that I barely could keep my own family clothed without clothing her friend also. She persisted and prevailed, and I agreed to buy a dress for her friend. We went to a nice ladies' shop and bought a beautiful dress. Now what Cindy could not do, she could ask me to do, and the only chance that her friend had to have a new dress for the Valentine's Banquet was for Cindy to pray to her dad for a new dress for her friend. There are things that I would like for my friends to have that I cannot give them, but I have a wealthy heavenly Daddy to Whom I can go and seek His help on my friend's behalf.

Linda had a very close friend who was getting married. Linda whispered in her ear and said, "Daddy, my friend doesn't have enough money for a honeymoon. She and her groom simply cannot afford a honeymoon. Is there anything you could do?" I happened to admire her friend very much, and so I slipped a sizeable sum of money into the couple's hands on their wedding day. Now I would not have done this if Linda had not asked, for I was not aware of their need. What Linda could not do for her friend, her dad could do, so she prayed her dad that he would.

When I find someone in need, I always ask, "Can I help?" If the need is beyond my ability to help, then I go to my heavenly Daddy and ask Him to help.

2. *Praying for others enables us to love people that we otherwise would not love.* **Romans 15:30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."** Of course, this would include praying for those that spitefully use us. **Matthew 5:44, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you."** Such praying will generate love for the enemy in the heart of the one who prays.

When I feel the slightest touch of ill will coming my way, I put on my prayer list the name of the one who possesses that ill will toward me. I don't pray for him to love me. I pray for his needs. If I feel the slightest negative feeling toward a brother or sister in Christ, I immediately put that name on my prayer list and pray for his needs. What a blessing to see God answer the prayer, even as He answered Cindy and Linda's prayers!

3. *Praying gives us an interest in others.* **Philemon 22, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."** For years I have prayed every day for the churches in my area; that is, the Bible-preaching churches, of course. Now I start with the Oak Forest Baptist Temple in Oak Forest, Illinois, pastored by my good friend, Dr. Bill Schroeder; then I pray across the Calumet region, all the way to Chesterton, Indiana, at the Fairhaven Baptist Church, pastored by my good friend Roger Voegtlin. In between I pray for churches in Sauk Village, Illinois; Dyer, Indiana; and Lowell, Indiana. I also pray for the Calvary Baptist Church of Highland, Indiana; for a church in Griffith, Indiana; for a church in Schererville, Indiana; and one in Merrillville, one in Lake Hills, and the churches in Whiting and Hessville. I pray for the Central Baptist Church of East Chicago, for the Hessville Baptist Church of Hammond and on and on for churches of like faith. Then is it any wonder that I love to hear of good reports of God's blessings upon these churches, and is it any wonder that I feel an obligation to help and a desire to help when a sister church has a need! This all begins at the throne of grace, when I pray for them.

Do you want to feel a closeness to your children? Pray for them. Do you want to feel a closeness to your friends? Pray for them. Do you have an enemy that you want to love? Pray for them.

4. *Praying gives you more victories.* The people for whom you pray receive the answer to your prayers. Their victory is your victory; their thrill is your thrill. Their achievement is your achievement, and you have become a part of their team and you are able to share in their victory. I am convinced that in Heaven we will share the reward of those for whom we diligently prayed. There are churches all across America that are on my prayer list. I almost feel as if I were a member of those churches. When I go to preach at one of them or visit there, I feel like one of the people, and their victories give me joy akin to the joy that I receive when victories come to the church that I pastor.

5. *Praying makes us grateful for each other.* **Ephesians 1:16, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."** One of the surest ways to feel loved is to feel that someone is praying for you. When I pray and when you pray, we meet at the throne of grace. Though miles separate us, we are actually together, for we are meeting at the same throne, talking to the same God, asking for the same thing. No wonder prayer partners are close partners!

Chapter 46 – Group Praying

Matthew 6:5, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Most praying should be done alone. Nearly all the praying Jesus did was alone. He admonished us that when we pray we should enter into our closet. There is usually enough room in a closet for only one person. No doubt the reason that our Saviour prayed alone was that He had no one with whom He could share His burden or no one who carried a burden similar to His.

Yet there are examples in the Bible of groups who prayed. When Peter was in prison, the church prayed for him. In the upper room, 120 prayed. Our Lord reminds us that two or more can pray together if they agree. **Matthew 18:19, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven."** In the model prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, **"OUR Father."** Note, He did not say, "My Father," but **"Our Father."** This would imply that at least sometimes we are to pray with someone."

When then is it best for a group to pray? The answer is obvious. When a special emergency arises and the burden is the same to all, group praying is in order. I can remember praying with Dr. John R. Rice. SO often we would kneel to pray. He would pray for the Sword of the Lord; I would pray for the First Baptist Church of Hammond. He would pray for the Voice of Revival Broadcast; I would pray for Hyles-Anderson. He would pray for the Sword book ministry; I would pray for Hammond Baptist Schools. I am sure that in such cases our praying would have been more effective had each of us prayed alone. Ah, but then came the time when Dr. Rice would pray for America! Tears came from my eyes, and my heart began to hurt as I joined him in that prayer for this great burden that both of us shared equally.

This is why a mother and a father can pray together for a child; they share the burden. There is no mention in the Bible of regularly-scheduled praying except in the family unit.

It is so easy for regularly-scheduled prayer groups to become sessions of idle talk or even gossip. There is also the danger in our special prayer groups for us to pray for others to improve, which is simply a way for us to criticize someone to a friend and place it in the disguise of spirituality and prayer. If one is going to pray for the improvement of another and mention his faults, it is best for him to go into the closet and pray alone.

On occasion so-called prayer groups have deteriorated until they became a thorn in the flesh of the pastor and divisive to the church. It is probably best to have prayer warriors who can come together in an emergency. While I was in college I had a prayer warrior. We did not meet regularly, but we had an agreement that we would meet when either of us had a burden or a need. If I faced a difficult test, I would call my prayer warrior. We would meet at our appointed place and pray together. If he had a burden or a need, he could call me. Sometimes we met to pray, sometimes we prayed over the phone together, and sometimes we agree to pray for each other. It is usually best, however, for the Christian to do most of his praying alone. For example, most of my praying for the finances of the First Baptist Church of Hammond is done alone. Most of our people are concerned about the finances. A few of our people have much concern, but nobody stays awake at night and carries the load as much as the Pastor, for the "buck" stops at his desk!

When I am praying for the power of God on my life, I usually do it alone. There are many who no doubt would like for me to have the power of God, but since their desire is only a fraction of mine, I believe I can best seek the fulness of the Holy Spirit alone in prayer.

When the burden is equal, group praying is beneficial. When the burden is unequal, praying alone is probably best.

Many nights I have prayed all night concerning a financial need. My feet have paced many motel room floors. I have walked by the hour up and down the sidewalk alongside a freeway. Ah, how sweet has been the fellowship, how sure are the promises, and how definite are the answers!

Often and regularly through the years I have had long season of prayer for the power of God and the fulness of the Holy Spirit. These were times alone with God, times of pleading, begging and supplication.

Then there have been times during the years when I felt another shared a burden on a near-equal basis. We have gotten together without an effort to pray pretty prayers or to seem pious and have poured out our hearts to God together. In such cases, group prayer can be very effective. Since, however, it is usually impossible for another to share with me anywhere near the degree of the burden I carry for a matter, I find it more effective to pray alone most of the time.

Chapter 47 – Prayer Is Work

Colossians 4:12,13, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis." The word "laboring" in this passage means "pain." The word "fervently" comes from from a Greek word which means "to agonize." Sometimes it is translated "wrestling." At other times it is translated "struggling." Few Christians ever mature enough to discover that prayer is hard, physical work. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane until His perspiration became as great drops of blood. Jacob prayed at Jabbok until he was wrestling and his leg became out of socket. Many times I have gotten up from a session of prayer soaked with perspiration, and at other times after a season of prayer I have been physically sore.

Paul mentions this labouring in prayer in **Galatians 4:19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."** Notice the word "travail." His prayer was of such a nature that he labored as a woman giving birth to a baby.

Also notice the word "again." Paul is saying that he is praying so hard for them now that he is laboring again. This means that he had prayed so hard for their salvation that it was like travail or labor in birth. Now he labors again after they were saved. Notice how long he labors—"until Christ be formed in you." Ask any mother if the labor stops after birth. Ask a mother whose son is living in sin which travail hurts the most—the travail of giving birth or the travail of pleading with God for his life. Ask a mother whose daughter is pregnant before she marries. Ask a mother whose son is living in a communal. Ask a mother whose child is bound by the chains of narcotics. The labor never stops if a successful child is reared!

Prayer has not always been labor. In the garden of Eden, man and God fellowshiped. Ah, 'twas beautiful as man fulfilled the purpose of his existence in offering fellowship, adoration and praise to his Creator. However, this fellowship was broken by sin.

It is usually thought that Eve sinned first and then brought the forbidden fruit to Adam, and then he sinned; however, we are reminded in the Bible that it was man that brought sin into the world and not the woman (Eve). **Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** **I Corinthians 15:21,22, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**

It seems to be the teaching of the Bible that Satan came to Adam first. Perhaps he was alone, or perhaps Adam and Eve were together when Satan came. To say the least, Adam was tempted first, but he was not deceived. **I Timothy 2:13,14, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."** Then Satan came to Eve and offered her the same temptation. **Genesis 3:6, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."** **II Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."** The word "beguiled" here means "really beguiled." Eve really fell for the Devil's temptation! She yielded and then brought the temptation to Adam. Adam was not deceived. No doubt he took the fruit to please Eve. He entered into it with his eyes open. Eve was beguiled; Adam was not. Eve

was deceived; Adam was not. This is why we have Romans 5:12. Notice, "By one MAN sin entered into the world."

Why did Adam resist the first time and not the second? It was because of the influence of a woman. This shows the tremendous power that a woman has over a man. She can get him to do things that the Devil, without her help, can not get him to do. A man who would not normally go into debt will do so for a woman. A man who would not normally compromise will do so for a woman.

There is another teaching here. A woman should be very careful what she entices a man to do, especially if he is her man!

So the story goes this way. Satan came to Adam. He was not deceived. He came to Eve; she was deceived. What Satan could not seduce Adam to do, Eve could. Adam with his eyes open in order, no doubt, to please Eve. Because of this, the entire human race fell, the trees dropped their leaves, the serpent was filled with poisonous venom, the roses sprang thorns, the winter winds howl, the chilly blast of winter comes, woman gives birth in pain, man makes his living by the sweat of his brow, and man by nature is alienated from his God.

Through Christ that alienation can be cured and man can be restored to fellowship. Once he is restored to fellowship through the blood of Christ and the full payment and pardon for sin by our Saviour, man has access to the throne of God. He may plead with God for his needs, he may travail and travail and travail again and travail again. That travail is labor and work, but ah, the sweet results. When a woman holds her infant in her arms and feels the warmth of motherhood, and the travail fades into the background and makes it all worthwhile. When the child of God sees sinners converted to Christ, sees babes in Christ mature to spiritual adulthood and sees miraculous definite answers to his prayers, suddenly it is all worthwhile!

Chapter 48 – Prayer and the Unseen World

Daniel 10:12,13, "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

Daniel had prayed a prayer. God had granted his request and had given the answer to an angel. That angel started his journey toward Daniel with the answer to Daniel's prayer. He was intercepted by the prince of the kingdom of Persia who fought against the angel and attempted to prevent him from delivering God's answer to Daniel. Michael, the archangel, was summoned to the conflict. He prevailed over the prince of the kingdom of Persia and freed the angel to take God's answer to His servant, Daniel. The answer was 21 days late, however, for the conflict in the unseen world lasted for this amount of time. The cause for this delay was a spiritual battle in the unseen world.

There are many reasons for seeming delays in God answering our prayers. In some instances, God may be preparing the answer for us. For example, suppose a young man feels it is the will of God that he have a certain young lady to be his wife. He may pray and ask God to give him this young lady. God may be perfectly pleased for him to have her, but she may not be ready for marriage yet. There may be a work that God must do with her before He sends the answer to the young man.

Sometimes God delays an answer because the person praying is not ready for the answer. For example, it may be that the young man who desires the young lady is not ready for marriage yet. He may have to be prepared for the answer before it can come.

Sometimes the Christian asks, and God may put his name on the answer, but He may keep it for awhile because for some reason a delay is necessary. God, Who knows when the time is right for the answer, send it when He knows it is best. This is the reason that God can say that we can believe that we HAVE received them. **Mark 11:23,24, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."**

Now while I am waiting for the answer that God has set aside for me, I am to keep on praying. Elijah knew that rain would come, but he prayed seven times. So even while we are waiting for the answer, we keep on praying.

Now the question comes, "Who is this prince of the kingdom of Persia who interfered with the angel as he was taking the answer from God to Daniel?" In order to understand this, we must examine **Ezekiel 18:1-10, "The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and**

by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD." Notice especially that there is mentioned here the "PRINCE OF TYRUS." Notice in verse 2 that this Prince of Tyrus is a man. "**Yet thou art a man.**" It is important to remember that we have heard a Prince of Tyrus who is a man.

We now must look to **Ezekiel 28:11-19**, "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." In these verses we have mention of the king of Tyre, or Tyrus. We have already met the PRINCE of Tyrus; now we meet the KING of Tyrus. We have already found that the prince of Tyrus was a man. Now we must find who is the king of Tyrus. There are several things said about him:

1. *He is full of wisdom. Verse 12.*
2. *He is attractive, full of beauty. Verse 12.*
3. *He has been in the garden of Eden. Verse 13.*
4. *He has an anointed cherub (angel). Verse 14.*
5. *He was once perfect. Verse 15.*
6. *He sinned. Verse 15.*
7. *He was cast out of Heaven. Verse 16.*

Who is this king of Tyrus? It is Satan himself. Satan was once full of wisdom and beauty. He was also in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He was perfect until he sinned. He was once an anointed cherub. He was one of the three archangels, Michael and Gabriel being the other two. He had under his dominion one-third of the angels. Then there was war in Heaven as he tried to unseat God. Because of this, he was cast out of Heaven. So this king of Tyrus is the Devil!

The important thing to notice here is that there were two rulers of Tyrus—there was an earthly ruler who was a man and who could be seen; there was an unseen ruler who could not be seen who

was Satan. Here we find that a nation has a seen ruler who is the king, prime minister or president; then there is an unseen ruler also who rules the visible ruler.

This all came about because of man's in in the garden of Eden. Satan is the god of this world. **II Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."** It is noteworthy how this came about.

1. *God made the earth.* **Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."**
2. *The world then, is His.* **Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."**
3. *God gave Adam dominion over the earth.* **Genesis 1:26,27, "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created He them." Psalm 8:6, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."** Adam was then, in a sense, the god of this world.

Satan came to Adam in the garden and Adam, in a sense, sold his lease to Satan. Notice **Luke 4:5,6, "And the Devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."** Notice especially in **verse 6** the words of Satan, **"For that is delivered unto me."** The world was delivered to Satan. This is why he is the god of this world. It was delivered unto him by Adam, who had been given dominion over it by God. So Adam sold his lease.

Someday, praise God, Adam's lease will run out, and Jesus will become King and God of this world! **Revelation 21:3-6, "And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."** Until then, God's will is not done on earth. For example, God is not willing that any should perish, but men do perish. **II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."**

In what we call the Lord's prayer, we are admonished to pray, **"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."** This points to the kingdom when Jesus shall reign on earth for a thousand years and God's will will be done, even as it is done now in Heaven.

Since there are two rulers of a nation, the seen and the unseen, such as the prince of Tyrus and the king of Tyrus, the affairs of nations, then, are controlled by the unseen world. Our battle then is not against flesh and blood (the prince of Tyrus), but against rulers of darkness, principalities, etc. (king of Tyrus). **Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual**

wickedness in high places." We have two enemies—flesh and blood, and principalities and rulers of darkness.

Because our battle is not against flesh and blood, God has given us weapons of war with which to fight our real enemy which is the king of Tyrus, or the unseen ruler. For those weapons notice **Ephesians 6:11-18, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."**

Our weapons are listed in the above verses. There are several of them, such as truth, the Word of God, prayer, soul winning (our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace), salvation, etc. One of the tragedies of our day is that preachers and churches are often spending too much time fighting the prince of Tyrus (the seen ruler) by political involvement, the ballot box, political clout, etc. Now this is not wrong, for we ought to fight the battle for that which is seen, but many times more important than that is fighting the unseen power with the spiritual weapons aforementioned. The church of Jesus Christ needs to get back to the old-fashioned methods of fighting the unseen world. The Devil is after our nation. We must fight the seen powers, but with much more vigor and time and effort, we must fight the unseen powers. If America is ever saved, she will be saved by the praying minority as we launch the weapons of prayer, Bible study, faith, soul winning, etc. against the king of Tyrus.

Satan is after your child. How tragic it is that most of us spend so much time fighting off the visible powers from our children and not enough time on our knees using spiritual weapons against the unseen powers that are dedicated to their ruin! There was a day when old-fashioned moms and dads fed their children on the Word of God, prayed them to Jesus in the prayer closet, and the unseen powers were defeated!

All across America several years ago churches began to grow. Soul winning, prayer, Bible study and Bible reading were weapons launched against the unseen powers. A great movement was begun. Great churches were built. The greatest soul-winning churches in the history of Christianity covered this country. Because of this, multiplied thousands came to Christ, which gave us more church members, which gave us more votes, which gave us more clout. Bear in mind, however, that we got this clout and these votes by soul winning and by using spiritual weapons. Because of this, conservative men were elected to office. We became amazed at our power and, no doubt, got impressed with it. Therefore, because of our attack on the unseen rulers, we saw some of the seen rulers change. So we erroneously started spending more time fighting the seen and less time fighting the unseen. The battles were won because of soul winning, Bible study and prayer. Now we have substituted excessive political endeavor at the expense of the spiritual weapons. It is not surprising then that the next election found us seeing a great wave of liberals coming back into office. What we did with the spiritual weapons fighting the unseen world, we undid with the carnal weapons fighting the seen world. What America needs is to get back to building great churches! America needs to get back to the prayer closet, back to soul winning, back to old-fashioned Bible

preaching! Our nation will not be saved in the halls of Congress; our nation will be saved in the halls of prayer. Our nation will not be saved because of power with men; it will be saved because of power with God! We are more than conquerors through Him, that loved us, but we have to fight with spiritual weapons!

This author is not advocating political isolation. I think it is splendid for Christians to be involved in the election process, but not at the expense of the old-fashioned use of old-fashioned methods that strike at the foundation of the battlements of Hell and against which the unseen powers cannot stand.

Several years ago a group of young people moved in a building near the First Baptist Church of Hammond and started living a communal type of life, which included various kinds of immorality. It was a reproach to the entire neighborhood. Naturally, the neighbors, including the First Baptist Church, were infuriated. Members of this group would pass out literature which included dirty four-letter words. They would do this right across the street from our church. We, along with merchants in the area, resolved to have this institution closed. The mistake we made, however, was launching our main attack against the prince instead of the king. We gave most of our effort in fighting the visible power instead of the invisible power. We contacted the mayor, and though he sincerely wanted to close down the place, he was unable to do so. Then we contacted the city council, then the health commission, and then other visible leaders. All of our efforts failed. The efforts of downtown businessmen ended likewise in failure. The place continued in operation. It seemed that our only hope was prayer, soul winning and other spiritual weapons.

One day during a church staff meeting I looked through the window of a door leading to the hallway of our educational building and saw the operator of the organization motion for me to come to him. I went out in the hallway. He was weeping. His hippie-like appearance was clothed in repentance. He told me that he wanted to be saved. He had watched us and had observed what the First Baptist Church did for others and began to realize the harm that he and his group were doing. He told me that he was about to die and that he had to get saved! In just a few minutes he was a child of God. The next Sunday morning with a neat haircut, a clean shirt, a fresh shave, shined shoes, neatly pressed trousers and an attractive tie, he walked down the aisle of First Baptist Church of Hammond professing his faith in Christ. The next week the institution across the street was closed! The methods by which it was closed were those that were used against unseen powers, rulers of darkness and principalities. All efforts to have it closed by the use of carnal methods against the visible prince failed, while the use of spiritual weapons against the invisible king succeeded, for the king was in control of the prince!

Chapter 49 – “This Kind” of Answers to Prayer

Mark 9:29, "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Mark 9:23, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

This chapter deals with God's provisions for the big needs of our lives. There are times when our needs rise far above the normal ones of daily provisions such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. There is a need for healing from a serious illness. There is a need for a wayward son or daughter to be brought back to God. In such cases and in other cases where the need is a great one, the conditions for God answering our prayer may be somewhat different as follows:

1. *God is a God Who answers big requests.* Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Notice especially the words, "great and mighty things." Matthew 13:58, "And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Notice in this passage that there is a reason why God does not do great and mighty things. Notice especially the words, "He did NOT many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Psalms 81:10, "I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." There are times when God wants us to open our mouths wide! There is something big He wants to give us.

Jeremiah 32:17,26,27, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee: Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?" Our God is a God of limitless power and there is nothing that He cannot do.

Matthew 17:20,21, "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Especially take note of the words, "this kind." This teaches us that there is a certain kind of need that requires a certain kind of action. This is talking about the big prayers which require big answers for big needs. Such was the case of the boy who was possessed by the demon. While Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James and John, talking to Moses and Elijah, a man brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples. The disciples tried to heal him, but they could not. When Jesus returned from the transfiguration, the man brought his son to our Lord. Our Lord healed his son. Then the disciples asked Jesus why they were unable to do so while He was gone, whereupon Jesus reminded them that "THIS KIND goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Ephesians 3:20,21, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Notice especially the words, "exceedingly abundantly." Again God is talking about big answers to big prayers.

James 4:2, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." If we have not because we ask not, then it could be said we have little because we ask little or we have much because we ask much.

Isaiah 59:1, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Notice again the limitless power of God which reminds us that God can and wants to answer our big requests.

2. *For big answers to big requests, God usually requires prayer and fasting.* Mark 9:28,29, "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." Moses needed something big from God when he fasted forty days on Mount Sinai. Jesus needed something big from the Father when He fasted forty days in the wilderness of temptation. Daniel, Ezra, Jeremiah, Paul, Joshua, David, Anna, Barnabas and other great Bible Christians were asking big things from God because we find them fasting.

A big thing was being asked in Jonah 3:5-7, "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water."

A big thing was being asked by the Jews in Esther 4:16, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

A big thing was asked by Joshua after the battle of Ai when he called a fast. It was also a big thing that was being asked by Ezra when he called a fast in Ezra 8:21-23, "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us."

A big thing was being asked in Cornelius in Acts 10:30, "And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing."

Hence, if a child of God learns to get his big needs from his Father, he must learn how to fast. Sometimes this means hours of fasting. Sometimes it means days of fasting. Sometimes it may even mean weeks of fasting. One can have conversions without fasting, but if he has THIS KIND of conversions, he will have to pray and fast. There are some kinds of revival that we can have without fasting, but if we want THIS KIND of revival, we will have to learn to fast. There are some miracles that may be obtained without fasting, but if we want THIS KIND of miracles, we will have to learn to pray and fast.

3. *There are several types of fasting.* We normally associate fasting with being deprived of food, but actually it includes more than just the appetite for food. It includes at least the following:

(1) *food*. God wants us to enjoy food. That is why He made it so tasty. It is so wonderful that God provided for us the means of enjoying that which is our fuel. **Psalm 103:2,5, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."** No doubt when God made the apple He said, "I'm going to make it tasty so My people can enjoy their refueling." When He made the strawberry, He thought likewise. Yet, sometimes for a big request to be answered, God requires us to go without food for a season. In most cases it could be one day a week. Often I have prayed and fasted for one day a week when seeking God's help concerning a big need. There have been times when I have seen fit to fast three days per week or maybe just for three days in begging God for a certain thing that would require a miracle. Then there have been times when the fasting should last for longer seasons. If a person is to fast for the first time, it would be wise for him to counsel with someone who has had experience at fasting before he enters into a fast.

(2) *Sleep*. The Lord was good to us when He gave us that "R and R" time of the day when our bodies are refreshed through sleep. **Psalm 127:2, "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep."** Yet there are times when our needs are great and when to have them met would require a miracle when a person should pray and fast without sleep. Our Lord often spent the night in prayer, and we are admonished that if we would have the mighty power of God upon our lives we will have to forfeit our sleep on some occasions in order to have our big requests answered.

(3) *Beauty*. Be that, I am referring to the beauty of nature. This chapter is being written while driving through the beautiful mountains of northern California. God certainly must have been loving us when He made this part of the world. I think He said, "My people will enjoy these beautiful evergreens. They will feel secure when they see these mountains. They will love the shade of these beautiful valleys. God must have loved us a lot when He carved the Puget Sound. He must have loved us a lot what He made those pyramidal mountains that we call the Rockies. He must have had us in mind when He raised the redwoods as the Samson of all the trees, when He dropped lakes in Minnesota like teardrops of piety, when He raised the pines of the Carolinas like steeples on the horizon, when He painted the deserts of Arizona and when He mingled all of those colors to form the rainbow. Yet, there are times when we are to deprive ourselves of such satisfaction to our senses. These are times when we need great answers to great prayers from a great God. This is why we are admonished, **"Enter into thy closet."** There are times when all of our beauty should be found in Him and He should become our bread, our food and our rest. We enter into a closet without sleep and without food, and we plead with God for the miracles!

(4) *sex*. God was merciful and kind when He made the reproductive process a pleasure, and certainly He reminds us that marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. **Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."** Yet, just as is the case of eating, in sleeping and in seeing the beauty of nature, there are times when couples should forego the pleasures of love-making in order to seek the mighty power of God or to receive a miracle from our Heavenly Father. Notice **Exodus 19:14,15, "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives."** Here is an example when husbands and wives were told to withdraw themselves from each other in an effort to seek a miracle.

Fasting could be applied to other things such as sports, music, pleasure, hobbies, etc. There are times when an answer to prayer is going to be one of miraculous proportions and we are going to have to have THIS KIND of answer. **"THIS KIND cometh forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."** Oh,

may God teach us to open our mouths wide to seek THIS KIND of answers by THIS KIND of praying and fasting!

Chapter 50 – Tomorrow's Guarantee of God's Provision

Psalm 78:20, "Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can He give bread also? can He provide flesh for His people?"

In that great song, perhaps the most popular of them all, "Amazing Grace," there is a stanza that says, "Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come. 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

Psalm 78 tells of the Israelites recounting what God had done in the past and yet doubting what God could do in the future. In **verse 12** they said, "**Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers.**" In **verse 13** they said, "**He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and He made the waters to stand as an heap.**" In **verse 14**, they said, "**In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.**" In **verse 15** they said, "**He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.**" In **verse 16** they said, "**He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers,**" and yet in **verse 19** they doubted that God could care for their needs. In **verse 20** they looked to the past and said, "**Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed,**" but now they doubt when they say, "**Can He give us bread also?**" How sad! The miracles of the past stood by themselves. They offered no encouragement to the people of God concerning the future. They did not affect their faith. This is so often the case with God's people.

Here are two people who enjoy the same blessings. One rejoices about the blessing and frets for tomorrow. The other says, "He did it yesterday; He will do it again tomorrow!"

Here are two people. One says, "He did it once; I wonder if He will do it again?" The other says, "He did it once; I have learned what He is like, and I know He will do it again."

Here are two people. One gets a blessing. The other learns a principle.

Here are two pastors who look to the past and recount the great miracles of God upon their churches. One says, "He provided in the past; He will in the future." The other says, "He provided in the past; I wonder if He will in the future?"

The believer must always realize that God does not change; He always responds the same way under the same conditions. Not only can we say, "'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far," but thank God we can say, "And grace will lead me home."

Here is a young person who has just graduated from high school. He looks back and says, "God has been so good"; then he frets about college. Here is another young person who says, "God has been so good while I was in high school, and I know He can see me through college."

When I enrolled at East Texas Bible College I did not have one dime in my pocket, but I knew I was going through college. How did I know? God had seen me through high school! When the day for my high school graduation came, my mother asked to speak to me. She said, "Son, I'm sorry, but there is no way you can go to your graduation tonight because you must wear a suit to graduation." (In those days high school graduates did not wear caps and gowns). Young men wore suits and young ladies wore formal dresses.) She proceeded, "We just don't have any money. I have tried to find some. I have tried to borrow it; I have tried to earn it, but in a few hours the commencement

service begins and there is no way that Mother can see that it will be possible for you to go to your graduation." I went to the back room and knelt beside my little bed and pleaded with God to provide a suit for me so I could go to my own high school graduation. I got off my knees and in just a few moments I heard a voice on the front porch. It was the postman. I went to the mailbox, and there was a letter from my uncle Harvey. I opened it and read something like this, "Dear Jack. I just found out that you are graduating. I didn't have time to buy you a present; I hope this \$50 check will be satisfactory." (It was!) In those days \$50 could buy a suit, a tie, a pair of shoes, a new shirt, new socks and the whole works. With tears of joy dropping from my 17-year old eyes, I went down to a men's store and bought a pair of shoes, a pair of socks, a new shirt, a tie and a suit. In a few hours I walked across the platform of the McFarland Auditorium at Southern Methodist University (an auditorium rented by the high school for our graduation exercises) dressed as nicely as anybody, but with a heart full of confidence that God cares for His own. I knew God would see me through college because He saw me through high school!

Here is a person who is graduating from college. He says, "Praise the Lord. He saw me through college, but I am worried about the future." Another graduates from college and says, "Praise the Lord, He saw me through college and I know He will take care of me in the future." When I graduated from college, I knew that God would care for me. Do you know why? He cared for me while I was in college, and I knew He would care for me in my ministry to follow.

I had arrived on the college campus without a dime. I had to find a job quickly. I took my Bible, went down to the courthouse square and knelt there on the square in Marshall, Texas, and opened my Bible to **Jeremiah 33:3**, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." I claimed this promise. I said, "Dear God, I beg You for a job." I looked up and saw the J.C. Penny store down the street, and I said, "Dear God, I ask You for a job at J.C. Penny store." With my Bible open to **Jeremiah 33:3**, I went down to the store and asked if I could see the manager. A heavy, white haired man named Mr. Croft came to me. He said, "May I help you, sir."

I said, "Yes, sir, I think I'm going to work here."

He said, "How do you know? Why do you think that?"

I showed him **Jeremiah 33:3** and told him that I had just prayed on the courthouse square and asked God for a job. He looked at me and said, "Young man, I just fired four men from the men's department, but you are hired!" He later told me why. He said he knew that I would either be the best salesman that J.C. Penny store had ever had or the biggest flop in the history of the country, and he had to find out which one it would be! The next day I went to work at J.C. Penny Company.

This is just one of many instances where God provided for this preacher during college years. At the end of my college training as I looked back to see how God had provided, would not I be able to know that God would provide in the future? Grace has led me safe thus far, could not grace lead me home?

Here is a person that says, "God has been good to me in my young adulthood, but I'm worried sick about middle age." Another person says, "God has been good to me in my young adulthood, and that proves He will provide in my middle age." I love the story about the little boy who went with his mother to the grocery store. There was a big container of candy right beside the cash register. The little boy looked longingly at the candy. The groceryman saw him and kindly said, "Son, go ahead and get a handful. It's free to you." The little boy kept looking, but didn't move a hand. The groceryman said again, "Go ahead, son, get a handful. I won't charge you a penny for it. You are a

good boy. I want you to have it free." The boy did not move his hand; he just kept looking longingly at the candy. The mother said, "Go ahead, son! The groceryman has told you it's all right, and it's all right with mother too. Get a handful." The boy didn't move a hand, but kept looking longingly at the candy. Finally the groceryman looked at him and said, "well, son, if you are too timid, I'll get it for you. So the groceryman got a handful of candy and placed it in the lad's pocket. A big smile came across the boy's face. As they walked home, the mother looked at the boy and said, "Son, why didn't you get the candy yourself when the groceryman told you you could?"

A smile came across the boy's face and he said, "Mama, 'cause his hand is bigger than mine!" Yes, and God's hand is bigger than mine, too. His grace has led me safe thus far, and His grace will lead me home.

Here is a person whose family is grown and middle aged, and he is coming to the closing years of his life. He looks back and says, "God has been good to me in helping me rear my family, but I am so worried about old age." Here is a person who looks back at middle age years and says, "God has been good to me in helping me rear my family, and I have learned a great truth that God will care for me in my old age." One says only, " 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far." The other says, "And grace will lead me home!"

Here is a person facing the sunset of life. He looks back over his life and he says, "I have had a wonderful life and God has provided, but I am afraid to die." Another looks back over life and says, "I had a wonderful life, and God has been so good to provide, but now that death is coming, He must have something so wonderful and so much better for me after death."

Listen, beloved, His mighty arms can hold the infant like a mother, build a wall around one in life's noonday, and lay a bridge of sunset over which the old man's feet may walk serenely into eternal day.

One of the main reasons we Christians should not fear death is that it will give us a chance to see our Heavenly Father in action. A boy whose dad is a sailor would love to see his dad at sea. A child whose dad is a statesman would love to see his dad in the Senate. A child whose dad is a judge would love to see his dad on the bench doing his works. A child whose dad is a doctor would love to see him in his office as he is used as an instrument of healing. A child whose dad is an athlete would love to see his dad perform on the athletic field A child whose dad is a lawyer would love to see his dad perform in court. How much more would a child whose Dad is God anticipate going to work with God and getting to see Him at work in the glory place!

Oh, yes, I sometimes wander into worry. I sometimes ask myself, "How will I live when I get older?" I have laid nothing away for a rainy day, and then I look up to God and say, "Shall not He Who sent angels to our door, shall not He Who kept the cruse from going empty, shall not He Who dropped manna from the sky, shall not He Who fed Mother and me when I was a boy, shall not He Who sent me a graduation suit six hours before I was to walk across the platform, shall not He Who sent me through college, shall not He Who gave me a job at J.C. Penny Company, shall not He Who provided for our needs when my salary was \$7.50, shall not He Who has provided for me thus far also provide for me in my old age? Oh, yes, He will! I know He will! He will! He will! He will! Praise God, I know He will!

Oh, yes, I sometimes wander into worry about the church. How will the church keep going? The burden is getting heavier all the time, the responsibility is greater, but I stop and say, "Shall not He Who has seen us through these years see us in the years to come? Shall not He Who has taken an annual budget of \$60,000 and made it in 23 years an annual budget over \$12 million care for us in

the future too? Shall not He Who has led in building two grade schools, a junior high school, two high schools and a college lead us in the future also?

A little girl was in the hospital. The nurse came in one morning to visit the little girl who was very ill. The nurse was in an unusually crabby mood that morning. The little girl said, "Good morning, nurse."

The nurse very abruptly said, "Good morning."

The little girl said, "Nurse, you don't seem very happy. You must not have heard the good news."

The nurse said, "What good news?"

The girl said, "Didn't you hear the good news that Jesus got born?"

May this simple servant of God ask you the question, "Did you hear the good news?" Did you hear the good news in **Matthew 6:33? "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** Did you hear the good news in **Philippians 4:19? "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."** Did you hear the good news in **Romans 8:28? "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 37:4? "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 37:19? "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied."** Did you hear the good news in **John 15:7? "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 91:1? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 23:1? "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."**

Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 37:25? "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread."** Did you hear the good news in **Hebrews 13:5? "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 37:3? "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."** Did you hear the good news in **Jeremiah 33:3? "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."** Did you hear the good news in **Malachi 3:10? "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 34:22? "The LORD redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."** Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 37:9? "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth."**

Did you hear the good news in **Psalm 34:7? "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."** Did you hear the good news? Did you hear the good news? Did you hear the good news?

I believe that God has all of your suits ordered for the rest of your life. I believe that God has all of your food ordered for the rest of your life. His banks do not fail; His cargo bearing ships do not sink. He feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies of the field. **Psalm 50:10** still says, **"For every**

beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." Did you hear the good news that He fed three million Jews for 40 years? Did you hear the good news that He gave water from the rock? Did you hear the good news that the Jew's shoes never wore out? Did you hear the good news that He sent ravens to feed Elijah in **I Kings 17:4? "And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."**

Did you hear the good news in **Matthew 6:30? "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"** Did you hear the good news that He fed the quail to His people for thirty days? Did you hear the good news? Did you hear the good news? Did you hear the good news?

Did you hear the good news that God answers prayer? Hope for answered prayer is midnight's noontime; it is sunset's sunrise; it is the song of the dumb; it is the parent of faith; it is the rainbow of the storm; it is the shadow of a dream; it is the sister of charity; it is the cemetery of doubt; it is the discouragement's pallbearer; it is the dying man's tomorrow. Did you hear the good news?

When you cannot trace God, you can reach Him through prayer. When your wooded walk leads you to the place you began, and you are walking in circles, you can find Him through prayer. When the last helper has fainted, the last cure has failed, faith's last leaf has withered and your last friend has faltered, there is a God in Heaven Who answers prayer Who will care for you and provide for your needs.

Oh, yes, I sometimes wander into worry when I ask myself, "How can I carry the load with over 65,000 members, with over \$12 million a year to raise, with over three sermons a day to preach, with over 150 counseling sessions a week, with over 200,000 miles a year to travel, with a college to keep going, with two high schools to oversee, with a junior high to help operate, with two grade schools to finance and care for, and with over tens of thousands of people across America who seek my counsel, how can I carry the load? Then I am reminded, "Shall not He Who has given wisdom to a little Texas introvert continue to give strength to bear the load? Shall not He Who has led me safe thus far lead me Home?" I simply look to the past and say, "'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far," and look to the future and say, "And grace will lead me Home!"