Conversations

with Jehovah



Discipleship Studies

Vikki Tynan



Conversations with Jehovah

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to the women of *This Is Your Season Ministries* who have taught me most of what I know about prayer.

Dolores, you have encouraged me and thousands around the world to know the Love of God in an intimate way. You have taught me and pushed me to seek more and more of God. Thank you.

Bertha, you have taught me to persevere in spiritual warfare. In your quiet and authoritative way, you have exemplified a true warrior for the Lord.

Marlee, my dear friend and prayer partner, we have prayed about everything and seen mighty miracles day in and day out. I love how our prayers flow so beautifully in the Spirit.

Kristin, you always inspire us with the scriptures you pray. I love your boldness to speak forth the words the Lord gives for our encouragement.

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Lisa, our “drama queen”, in the most beautiful sense; you make every prayer you pray come alive with emotion and beauty. Thank you for encouraging me to get this book finished.

Conversations with Jehovah

*Prayer is our highest privilege, our gravest responsibility,*

*and the greatest power God has put in our hands.*

What is prayer? We know it is a part of being a Christian and it is something we all wish we did more of. We have all heard prayers in church: some we repeat every week, some are prayed by the pastor who uses many beautiful and long words, some are muttered by the person next to you in a language you don’t know. Often we are asked to pray for people who are very sick, or in serious trouble. These are examples of prayer, but they still do not tell us what prayer is.

Prayer is our way of communicating with God and Him with us. God longs to be our intimate friend. He sent His Son to earth in the form of a human baby to give His life for ours, to be the propitiation for our sins. God cannot fellowship with sinners, yet He desires to fellowship with us. He made a way to have our sins forgiven once and for all, so we could enter into His presence as friends. What an incredible love He has for us.

In order to have and maintain a friendship with someone, you must spend time with them, getting to know them. You get to know them by talking and sharing your lives with each other. This is done by discussing your dreams, your joys, your successes, your failures, your pains and triumphs. The same is true with God. He longs for meaningful conversations with us, rather than a to-do list for Him to fulfill. If you had a friend who came to you every so often and said, “I need you to do this, this, and this for me. Thanks, bye.” She would not be a friend for very long. True friendships are based and built on knowing and caring about each other.

The type of friendship that God longs for us to have with Him is something we must work at. It does not come naturally to us. We pack our lives so tightly with things to do; we must make our time with God a priority. We must talk with Him every day, and Him our undivided attention.

This friendship is developed over our entire lifetime. Our relationship with God just grows richer and deeper over the years spent intimately with Him.

There are so many wonderful examples of prayer in the Bible and we will take a closer look at a few of them. We are so fortunate to have these conversations with Jehovah recorded in the Bible to encourage and teach us.

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Conversations with Jehovah

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 911 Prayers 9

Chapter 2 Friend of God 14

Chapter 3 Impossible 19

Chapter 4 Jesus’ Bible Study on Prayer 24

Chapter 5 Eavesdropping on Jesus’ Prayer 40

Chapter 6 Prayers of Thanksgiving 51

Chapter 7 Appointment with the King 54

Chapter 8 When You Have No Words to Pray 61

Chapter 9 Building Plans 68

Chapter 10 Approaching the Throne of God 75

Chapter 11 Thy Will Be Done 86

Chapter 12 Praying God’s Heart 94

Chapter 13 Importance of Prayer in These Days 102

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Chapter 1

911 Prayers

Have you ever been in a group of people who are praying and one person has this really long and eloquent prayer to God, using beautiful words of praise and worship to God? You say to yourself, “There is no use in me praying, my words are few and not eloquent at all! My prayers are much too simple for this group, so I’ll just keep quiet and pray silently to God.” We have all thought this in our lives. However, I am here to tell you this is a lie of the enemy, to keep you from praying with other people. There is such power when we pray together aloud. I do not know why or how that is, but I know it is true.

I can assure you, the person who is praying the beautiful prayer did not start out praying that way. Prayer is a form of conversation that needs to be developed over time. We all start with simple heartfelt prayers such as “Thank you God”, “Help me God!”

When you have an emergency, do you pick up the phone, dial 911, and then go into a long and flowery conversation with the 911 operator?

“I am calling you this afternoon to tell you I appreciate the 911 service you provide for the citizens of this wonderful city. What you do is so important for so many people. The firefighters, paramedics and police officers are so brave and honorable. They sacrifice so much to be of assistance and help to us. I just want to thank all of them for what they do. In fact, may I talk to the Fire Chief, the head paramedic, and the Police Chief so I can personally express my thanks for their efforts to keep us safe?”

**“Ma’am, why did you call?”**

“Oh, I’m so glad you asked. I almost forgot. You see, I was cooking dinner for my family; my husband and my son (who the paramedics have taken twice to the hospital and saved his life, once when he was only a week old!), and my other son who is coming home for the weekend from college. I’m so proud of my family. Well, as I was cooking dinner, Titus (our 100-pound golden retriever who is so friendly and playful) was catching a ball my son was throwing to him. Even though he is a retriever, he doesn’t always catch the ball. Well, he missed the ball and went after the bouncing ball. The bouncing ball hit and knocked over a candle I had burning on the counter. It caught my cookbook on fire. In my haste to put it out, I knocked over a bottle of olive oil. That is when things got totally out of control! Now my house is engulfed in flames. Could you send the nice firemen over to my house and see if they can extinguish these flames. They are doing quite a bit of damage to my pretty house. I would appreciate if they could do this quickly, since my son should be home from college soon. He will be hungry. I wonder what we will eat for dinner now…”

NO, we call 911 and yell “HELP, MY HOUSE IN ON FIRE. PLEASE HELP ME AND HURRY!”

King David wrote many prayers, conversations he had with God, in the book of Psalms. Many are long and beautiful, but some are short and to the point. “Help me!” Psalms 70 is one of these.

***Psalm 70:1*** *“O God, hasten to deliver me; O LORD, hasten to my help!”*

In verse one we see David in great distress crying out to God, HELP ME QUICKLY, HELP ME! He knows he is in a situation that is impossible for him to get out of. He cries out to his God and gets right to the point.

***Psalm 70:2-3*** *“Let those be ashamed and humiliated who seek my life; let those be turned back and dishonored who delight in my hurt. Let those be turned back because of their shame who say, Aha, aha!"*

In verse two and three, David then quickly and clearly tells God the problem: “people are trying to kill me!” That’s an emergency if ever I heard one! He then asks God to deal with them, to turn them back from their intended goal and to frustrate their plans. Notice he doesn’t tell God to do to them what they want to do to him; no he leaves it up to God to figure out how to help him. His heart is not full of revengeful hatred, but trust in God.

Do we trust God to be God when we cry out for help, or do we give Him an agenda of how to deal with our emergencies or with our enemies? God wants our hearts to stay pure before Him when we are confronted with people like this, and not to take revenge on them ourselves, or to plead with God to destroy them. I grew up hearing of the “Golden Rule” in Sunday school, “do unto other as you would have them do unto you”. I don’t hear that too much anymore. Too much of the time we take matters into our own hands to get revenge on the person who wants to do us harm. We get a glimpse that they might be plotting to harm us, so we plot to harm them. Then they get a glimpse that we are plotting to harm them, so they plot to harm us. And on and on it goes. No wonder our lives are so messed up! If we had just cried out to God in the very beginning and trusted Him to properly handle the crisis, our lives would be full of blessed peace, instead of the ugly turmoil.



So how do we walk this out? Verse four has the answer.

***Psalm 70:4*** *“Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.”*

Immediately after saying HELP, and spelling out the problem, David praised God! His thoughts all turned to God and not his enemy. When we dwell on our enemies instead of God, our minds become dark and full of plotting and revenge. But when we worship and praise God for His deliverance, it shows our trust in God to handle the situation. Now our minds are full of God’s light and His salvation!

We see the human side of David in verse five.

***Psalm 70:5*** *" But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.”*

David knows that God is his help and his deliverer, but he asks God to hurry and not delay with His answer. He still is a little anxious, but he does the right thing. He tells God of his anxious thoughts. When you have a crisis, it is only natural to have anxious thoughts. When my mind gets anxious, I love to turn to God’s Word for encouragement.

***Psalm 94:19*** *“When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.”*

***Psalm 139:23*** *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts.”*

God knows our minds, He knows we get anxious, yet He reminds us over and over again to turn to Him. He is our help. He is our deliverer!

What enemies are coming against you, seeking to injure you? What anxieties do you have in your life? Cry out to God; ask Him to be your help and your deliverer. He loves to come to our rescue! Just like the paramedics, when God is called, He comes to our aid!

Does God like our flowery prayers of praise and thanksgiving? Sure He does. Everyone, including God, likes to hear this. But just like the 911 operator, God knows when there is a true emergency in our lives and He wants us to get right to the point!



Chapter 2

Friend of God

There was a man named Abram in the book of Genesis. He was a man who followed after God Most High. He lived in lands surrounded by people who worshipped many gods, yet he followed the One true God.

Abram is first mentioned in Genesis 11 in the genealogies of Shem, one of Noah’s sons. Abram’s father took his extended family and moved them from Ur in the Chaldeans (Iraq today) in order to go to Canaan (Israel today). But they only got as far as Haran (Northern Syria today), and settled there.

We see Abram’s relationship with God start in Genesis 12 with God telling him to get up and leave the land his relatives were living in and go to Canaan. This is where God wanted his family to go and settle. God then promised Abram many things for his obedience:

* I will make you a great nation
* I will bless you
* Your name will be great
* You shall be a blessing to others
* I will bless those who bless you
* I will curse those who curse you
* In you , all the families of the earth shall be blessed

So Abram, at the age of 75, took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and his family, and all their servants and possessions, and traveled south. When they got to Canaan the Lord appeared to Abram and repeated His promise to give this land to his descendants. Abram built an altar here as a memorial, a reminder of God’s promises. Shortly after that he ran into some trouble. There was a severe famine in Canaan so they went to live in Egypt for a time. Even though there is nothing recorded about God talking to Abram at this time, He did help him and Sara get out of some dangerous situations. When they returned to Canaan, Lot wanted the seemingly best part of the land (the Jordan River valley and the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah) and Abram let him settle in that land. Lot was taken as a prisoner in a local war; so Abram with 318 trained men went and rescued Lot, his family, and his servants and took back all of his possessions.

During this time in Canaan, God appeared to Abram and reminded him of His promises. He told him ALL this land would be for his descendants forever. Also his descendants would be too large to count.

It is interesting to note Abram’s relationship with God was evident to the rulers of the land that Abram came in contact with. They acknowledged that Abram followed God Most High. They saw that Abram was different in how he obeyed His God.

God Most High was pleased with Abram, and in **Genesis 15** we see a very interesting conversation between God and Abram. God appeared to Abram in a vision and said: “Do not fear, I am a shield to you, I am your very great reward” (Your reward shall be very great).

Now Abram was used to hearing from God, but he was frustrated. God had promised to make him the Father of a great nation, but he had NO children and he was OLD! So He talked back to God and said, “What will You give me, I have NO children.”

To his surprise, **God answered back**. “Behold, the Word of the Lord came to him saying…” Behold means expressing surprise. God then proceeds to carry on a conversation with Abram. God tells him that he and his wife will have a son, an heir. Then God took him outside and showed Abram the innumerable stars and said your descendants will be as numerous as these stars, too many to ever count.

When God spoke these words, Abram believed Him. God then reckoned it to him as righteousness. This means that God proclaimed that Abram was in proper relationship with Him, he was faithful to God’s expectations for him.

***Romans 4:3, 20-22*** *“For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

***James 2:23*** *“And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.”*

WOW, to be called a friend of God. That is what I call a great relationship! And it started with talking to God!

Going back to **Genesis 15:7**, we see the relationship between Abram and God deepening, as their conversation continues. God again promised Abram saying, “I am the Lord (Jehovah) who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” Abram asks God, “Lord, how may I know that I shall possess it?”

Where else have we seen something like this? In **Mark 9: 17-24**. A father brings his son to Jesus to heal him.

“*He said, if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us. Jesus said to him. If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”*

That is what Abram is doing now. Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief! We too so want to believe God and His promises for our lives, but sometimes we doubt. We see in Genesis 15, God understands our weaknesses. Isn’t that wonderful! God knows when there is unbelief in our hearts, and he does not condemn us for that. All He wants us to do is talk it over with Him, confess this to Him and ask Him to strengthen us. That is pleasing to God.

We see that we do not need to be full of perfect faith to have this kind of conversation with God, just an honest heart. God wants us to understand Him, and when we don’t understand, He wants us to continue the conversation. In Genesis 15:9-18, God immediately and without scolding makes a covenant with Abram and tells him in detail what the future unfolds for his descendants. He does this so Abram and his descendants will know for certain that what He spoke is true.

He tells Abram that his descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved for 400 years (Egypt). Then God will judge that nation for their harsh treatment of His people and they will come out of that land with many possessions (Moses bringing the people out of Egypt). Abram is told he will live in peace and die at a good old age. *Abraham was 175 when we died. Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and satisfied with life.[[1]](#footnote-1)* Then in the fourth generation they shall return to Canaan, the Promised Land.

On that day, at the end of this incredible conversation between Jehovah and Abram, God made a covenant with Abram. Covenants are solemn binding agreements that God takes very seriously. He will not break His covenant, even if we do. God has made a covenant with us too, through the sacrifice of Jesus.

***Matthew 26:28****“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

***Hebrews 9:15*** *“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*

And we too can know for certain, that God will keep His promise of forgiving our sins and life eternal with Him!

Take the time right now to talk to God, just like Abram did. He was an ordinary man, just like us. God longs to talk to all of us. Pray in faith.

***Hebrews 11: 1-2*** *“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. For by it men of old gained approval.”*

**

Chapter 3

Impossible

Have you ever been faced with a situation that was impossible? No matter how you looked at it, there was no way it was going to work out. A Jewish king in the Bible named Jehoshaphat faced an impossible situation also. He was a good king who followed after the Lord. He encouraged his people to walk in obedience to God. But one day, he got some very disturbing news. Three nations to the east of Israel decided to make war against him. As if one is not bad enough, he had three nations coming after him at the same time. He was exceedingly overwhelmed! When Jehoshaphat heard about this great multitude coming his way, he was afraid!

What did he do? We can read in what happened in *2 Chronicles 20*. He turned all his attention to seek the Lord. He then proclaimed a fast throughout his entire kingdom. All the people in his kingdom gathered to seek help from the Lord.

He realized the odds were impossible; there was nothing he or his army could do. But he knew that with God, all things were possible.

This same statement of faith is repeated three times in the New Testament. If you haven’t memorized one of these I strongly suggest you do, so when your faith is weak you can quote these to remind you of God’s sovereign power.

***Luke 18:27*** *“The things that are impossible with people are possible with God!”*

***Matthew 19:26 & Mark 10: 27*** *“With people this is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God!”*

Jehoshaphat called his entire nation to come together to fast and to pray. During this giant prayer meeting, Jehoshaphat stood before all the people of Judah and prayed. His prayer was recorded for us in 2 Chronicles 20:5-12. He begins by acknowledging God’s power over heaven and earth, and then reminds God of how He drove out past enemies, and of God’s promise of giving His people this land forever. He goes on to remind God of His promise to hear and deliver His people when they cry out in distress.

Does God need to be reminded of anything? No, but he loves to know that we remember what He has done for us in the past and the promises He has made to us. This is a powerful form of praising God! Do you spend time every day reading and studying God’s Word so you can know how He has worked in the past? Do you know what He has promised to all believers? Do you keep a journal of your prayers to God and all His answers? One of the best ways to be encouraged in impossible situations is to read back in your prayer journals and remember what God has done in your past.

After Jehoshaphat praises God, he then lays his request before God. He tells God that three nations are coming against them. He acknowledges he and his nation are powerless and he does not know what to do. He asks God to judge these enemies and to destroy them. They put their eyes on God and God alone, because they know only He can deliver them.

God immediately answered this prayer through a priest named Jahazel. Sometimes God talks directly to us in response to our prayers, and sometimes He talks through other people. Are we open to God answering us this way?

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahazel and he spoke to the king. “Don’t be afraid of an overwhelming enemy, the battle belongs to God.” He then relates detailed instructions from God as to what to do. First he tells them the location of the enemy; and then to go out tomorrow, not to fight but to watch for salvation to come from the Lord. He assures them again that the Lord is with them.

Verse 18 shows the people’s response. Our response is very important; God answers the prayers of His people who are humble and worshipful. The King humbled himself by bowing his face to the ground. By doing this he acknowledged God’s power. When all the people saw the King bow, they fell down before God and worshipped Him also. Then the priests stood up to praise the Lord with very loud voices.

The people arose early the next morning and did all that the Lord told them to do. It is very important to walk out in obedience what God tells us to do. The King reassures the people that God will be victorious. He is so sure of God that he appoints men to sing praises and worship to God all the way to the meeting place.

What does this show God? They trusted in Him. When you ask God to fight your battles, do you praise Him ahead of time, or do you say I hope you will deliver me? What does that show you about your trust? When we worship and praise God in the midst of our battles without doing a thing, we show our total reliance on God. This is very pleasing in His sight!

As God’s people watched, the impossible happened. Two of the countries fought against the third, and then these two turned on each other and destroyed each other. GOD FOUGHT THE BATTLE!

God further blessed His people for their obedience. There was great rejoicing when they all returned to Jerusalem. You can imagine all the stories the men were telling their families of how amazing God’s deliverance was. When God does the impossible in your life, do you greatly praise Him and do you tell everyone of God’s greatness?

***2 Chronicles 20:30*** *“So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God gave him rest on all sides.”*

PEACE was the result of the king’s cry to God and his trust in God’s deliverance in impossible odds. We too can have peace and rest in our hearts if we do the same thing.



When we are faced with overwhelming obstacles, we need to stop what we are doing and PRAY. We need to consider fasting and getting others to pray with us. There is great power when Christians come together to pray.

* Fast and pray
* Get others to pray with you
* In your prayers:
  + Acknowledge God’s power, mercy and love
  + Remind God of other times He has helped you or someone else you know
  + Remind God of His promises to help all who call upon His Name. When we remind God of His promises, it is not to remind God (He knows everything), but to show we know Him. That pleases Him.
  + Give your burden to God, ask Him to help you
  + Acknowledge you can’t do anything, but He can
* Listen for an answer
* Respond in humility and worship and praise, with eyes focused on God, not the enemy.
* Walk in obedience to God’s instructions
* Show trust in God by praising Him before He moves
* Greatly rejoice afterwards and tell many of God’s greatness
* Enjoy peace knowing that you have pleased God

Whenever you do all of these things, write them down in your prayer journal. This will be an eternal memorial of God’s miraculous dealings with you. These words will encourage you and others. We will face many “impossible” situations in our lives, but we can be of good cheer, knowing that our God has dealt with our impossible situations and we have been victorious. We can know that He will continue to rescue us again and again, if we but put our trust in Him.



Chapter 4

Jesus’ Bible Study on Prayer

Often as I read through the Gospels, reading the words Jesus taught, I wonder what it would have been like to be one of the people there. I don’t know about you, but I would have loved to be one of the thousands of people who sat on the Mount of Beatitudes along the Sea of Galilee listening all day to Jesus speak. To attend a Bible study led by Jesus Himself! Wow, what a privilege they had.

We can’t be there, but we have the next best thing. The Word of God is full of the teachings of Jesus. He gave a Bible study on prayer that is recorded in Luke 11 and Matthew 6. Jesus’ disciples had often seen and heard Jesus pray to God. They saw the wisdom, strength and encouragement Jesus received after He prayed. They wanted to be able to talk to God also, but they were not sure how to do that. So they came up to Jesus and said, “LORD, teach us to pray!”

***Luke 11:1-4*** *“It happened that while Jesus was praying*

*in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His*

*disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John*

*also taught his disciples.*

*And He said to them, When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”*

Jesus taught again on prayer to the thousands on the Mount of Beatitudes in Matthew 6. He used the same pattern for prayer, but added more to His teachings.

***Matthew 6: 9-13*** *“Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

Jesus gave His disciples and He has given us a teaching on how to pray to God. This prayer is an outline to follow when we pray. Jesus said to “*pray then in this way*”, not to use these exact words every time we pray. It is not a prayer to be repeated over and over, but a pattern for prayer. He knew us, and He knew we would take the easy way and just repeat the same words over and over unless we were told differently.

***Matthew 6:7*** *“When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.”*



So now let us look at this pattern for prayer in more detail.

***Matthew 6:9*** *“Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.”*

We begin by acknowledging God as Abba, our Father. He is our loving heavenly Father who loves us and wants us to come to Him to talk. That just amazes me that as important and holy and busy as God is; He still wants to be our daddy. He wants us to come to Him and sit on His lap in His loving arms and chat! Wow! That is so hard to comprehend. What a privilege we have. Do you see it that way?

Also in this verse, we see we are to “Hallow His Name”. Now *hallow* is not a word we use in our everyday conversation. Webster’s gives the definition of hallow as: *To reverence or to honor as holy and sacred.* When we hallow God’s name we acknowledge that God is worthy of our honor and praise, our love and respect. When we come to God in prayer, we need to start all our prayers with praise and honor and thanks to God. This helps to get our minds and hearts in a proper attitude of respect for our Heavenly Father.



***Matthew 6:10*** *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Our next verse starts out “*Your Kingdom come”*. God is the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the heavens and earth. We need to see that we are to be His loyal subjects. That is a hard concept for us in the United States, because we have never had a king. We don’t understand what our proper attitudes should be to a king. We also don’t understand the absolute power they have over their subjects. We are so used to doing what is right in our own eyes and not being subject to anyone. We have taken our “freedoms” too far in this country. But that is not what God wants for our lives. He wants us to be in submission to Him and to all whom He has put in authority over us.

***James 4:7*** *“Submit therefore to God.”*

***1 Peter 2:13-14, 18*** *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*

*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”*

***2 Peter 3: 1-2*** *“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.”*

The word “submission” means to yield to those who have authority over us. We hate the word submission, but we need to see God commands us to submit to those He has put in authority over us. We must submit to our governmental leaders, to our police forces, to our employers, wives to their husbands, and children to their parents. God is the One who has set up this structure and we need to submit to it for our own good. So, when we pray “*Your Kingdom come*”, we are acknowledging His plans for our lives and that we are in agreement with it.

The second part of our verse in Matthew 6:10 says, “Your will be done”. We need to tell God we will submit to His will, His plans for our life. Prayer is not coming to God with a to-do list of all WE want to accomplish for the day. I’m a “list” person. I always have a list of things I want to get accomplished in my life. I used to read over this list first thing each morning to see what I wanted to accomplish. Then I would pray and ask God to bless my efforts. Is that praying, “Your will be done”? NO! That is my will be done.

When I really look at the big picture, it is scary to think I was following my will, my agenda. I don’t know what is going to happen in the next moment in my life or in the lives of my family and friends. So why should I be making the agenda? God is omniscient! That means He sees all and knows all. And when I say all, I mean ALL! We see in part, but He sees in all.

In addition to God knowing everything; He also loves us so much, He always desires the best for us!

***Jeremiah 29: 11*** *“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”*

What a wonderful promise from God! When I finally understood His incredible love for me, I willing submitted to God’s will for my life! If we really think about it, it’s foolish not to. Don’t be like the Israelites in the book of Judges.

***Judges 21:25*** *“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*

Who is the king in your life? Is it yourself, or is it the Supreme God? Whose will is getting done? If you are not sure, ask yourself; do I have peace in my heart? If not, bow your knee right now and give Him total authority over your life. That act of reverence and obedience greatly pleases God and brings great peace and power into our lives.

Now that our attitude is right about God, now that we see Him as our Almighty God, the one who sees all and knows all and wants the best for our lives. Now that we have bowed our will to His will, we can come to God and talk to Him about our needs and the needs of those we know.



***Matthew 6:11*** *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

The word “daily” always stands out for me in this passage. We are to daily come to God and share our cares and concerns with Him. To daily ask Him for our needs. To daily bring Him our problems and cares.

***1 Peter 5:7*** *“casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”*

When we cast all our anxieties on Him, it shows our confident reliance on God’s goodness. When we humbly submit to God, He takes our anxieties. We have so many demands on our lives, so many cares and concerns. We need to lay them all before God each and every day. He does not want us carrying these burdens. That is His job, His responsibility.

***Philippians 4:6*** *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”*

God wants us to bring every concern before Him, every one. I used to only take the big, totally impossible things to God. The tiny problems I would keep and try to solve on my own. I didn’t want to bother God with my tiny little problems; I just saved Him for the really big things.

Well, I was totally wrong in my thinking. First of all, God wants us to cast ALL of our anxieties, ALL of our cares upon Him; not just the big ones, but all. He does not want us burdened down by anything. He loves us that much! Have you ever listened to a child pray? They pray for everything, big and small, and even the seemingly ridiculous. But they pray all that is on their heart; everything that is causing them anxiety. They have no trouble asking God for anything, because they know they can do nothing. God is the only one who can help them. He often said we are to come to Him as children. The next time you feel tension coming into your body, when you feel anxiety begin to creep into your life, become a child before God and cast all these cares and anxieties on Him!

I have also found that those tiny little problems I try to take care of, tend to grow into really large problems when I don’t give them to God. We all have experienced that. When was the most recent time in your life when you did not want to bother God with a seemingly little problem, that got out of your control?

Often our problems are a result of the sin in our life, and the consequences that follow. We realize what we have done and repent, but instead of giving it to God, we think we have to clean it all up ourselves. We think God is too disgusted with us to take care of this problem. Oh, if only we really understood the love that God has for all of us! He loves us so much!

A good friend of mine, Laura Lorance, wrote a poem several years ago that I keep on the wall next to my desk to remind me of my flawed thinking.

*He pointed at His feet;*

*“Lay it here,” my Father said.*

*He didn’t take it from me.*

*He told me to put it there, instead.*

*But I just walked on by Him,*

*I’d grown accustomed to the load.*

*Didn’t I deserve to carry it?*

*It was from the seed I sowed!*

*But my back was getting weary;*

*Oh, how my muscles ached!*

*And now my heart was heavy, too.*

*How much more of this could I take?*

*The longer that I carried it-*

*Much to my surprise-*

*Why, I could hardly stand up with the weight of it now*

*It had almost doubled in size?*

*“You can put it here”, He whispered,*

*But I just couldn’t hear.*

*My groaning and complaining*

*Were ringing too loudly in my ears.*

*I stumbled and fell, but struggling, arose.*

*Now gasping with fear and pain,*

*It took all my strength, but I picked it up,*

*And started on my way again.*

*I limped along, bowed low ‘neath the weight,*

*Tired, bruised, bleeding, and sore;*

*Bitter tears mingled with the grime and blood.*

*I fell to my knees…I just couldn’t go…anymore…*

*“My foolish child…” He cleansed my wounds,*

*And He gently caressed my brow.*

*“I would have taken it miles ago,*

*If you had only laid it down.”*

***Psalm 55:22*** *“Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken*.”

Remember, God will supply all we need. If we call upon Him, we will not be moved from the secure position of His favor.

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**Matthew 6:12***“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

An essential part of any prayer is forgiveness. In order to come before God in prayer, in order for Him to carry on a conversation with us, we must not come to Him with any unconfessed sin in our lives. Sin separates us from His presence. God is holy and He cannot dwell where there is sin.

***1 John 1:6*** *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”*

***1 John 1:8*** *“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*

Have you felt God was not listening to your prayers; that there is a barrier between you on earth and God in heaven? I want to assure you, He is always listening. But He is not always answering us. We stop Him from doing that because of the unconfessed sin in our lives. He cannot meet us when we are filthy before Him.

***John 9:31*** *“We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.”*

But the good news is that the blood of Jesus Christ our Savior cleanses us from all our sins. All we need to do is confess our sins, and repent of them. When we do this we walk into His glorious light, and our fellowship with Him is restored. He is then free to open up communication with us again. He is just waiting for us to confess our sins so He can open up the floodgates and answer our prayers.

***1 John 1:9*** *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

The other part of forgiveness is us forgiving others. If we come to God with unforgiveness in our hearts towards anyone, He will not answer us. God is very clear and stern on this point.

***Matthew 5: 23-24*** *“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”*

If we have wrong attitudes and unforgiveness towards others, God wants us to get that cleared up first, before we approach Him with anything (praises, good deeds, and prayers). If we do not, it is sin. We are commanded to love one another. The longer we harbor unforgiveness in our hearts; it puts us in bondage, an emotional prison. When you have something against someone, or you know someone has something against you, quickly go to them and apologize. Get things right in your relationship.

***Ephesians 4:32*** *“Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you.”*

The key to forgiveness is focusing on what God wants, not focusing on what we want. We want revenge; we want to be proven right. But God wants obedience, obedience to love others even through the pain they are causing us. This is a real struggle in our lives.

How can we as sinners, accept God’s forgiveness, yet not forgive people who have offended us in our lives? Are you struggling with unforgiveness in your life? Stop what you are doing and go to them, telling them you are sorry for the break in your relationship, and ask for their forgiveness. You will then be free from the bondage. Oh, the blessed peace that comes to our hearts when we live in harmony with one another.

Daily come to God and ask Him for His forgiveness, and ask Him to help you forgive others. These two acts of obedience greatly please God; and then allow Him to draw close to you and answer your prayers.



***Matthew 6: 13*** *“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

We live in an evil world; we see it more and more as we watch the news. Our TV shows and movies are full of the wretched acts of evil against humanity. But we need to be aware, that there is a much more evil presence in this world that wants to destroy you. It is the devil.

***1 Peter 5: 8*** *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

***Ephesians 6:12*** *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

There is an excellent illustration of this struggle in the book of Daniel. Daniel was a man highly esteemed by God who knew the value of prayer. He was troubled with some things, so he went to the Lord in prayer and fasting. He did not get a ready answer, so he persevered for three weeks in his prayers and continued his fast.

***Daniel 10: 2-3*** *“In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.”*

At the end of those three weeks, an angel appeared to Daniel; and explained the delay in answering his prayers.

***Daniel 10:11-13*** *“He said to me, O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.*

*Then he said to me, Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.*

*But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”*

These princes mentioned here are spiritual beings, good and bad angels, who were caught up in spiritual warfare. They were delayed in coming to Daniel with the answers to his prayers. Frank Peretti wrote a novel entitled This Present Darkness, which illustrates the spiritual warfare that is raging all around us. In it, he powerfully demonstrated the power of our prayers in these spiritual battles. When the believers were praying, the demons were powerless. Yet when the believers were distracted or discouraged and did not pray, the demons were free to do all sorts of evil in people’s lives. This book really encouraged me to be consistent and persevere in my prayers.

What are we to do? We need to realize God is omnipotent – all powerful. He is much stronger that anything He created. The devil was created by God to be a heavenly being, but his pride and greed caused him to fall into the darkness.

***James 4:7*** *“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

***1 Peter 5:9*** *“But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”*

God is the one who fights against the enemy, not us. Our responsibility is to submit to God, to trust Him, and to pray. We are not to take matters into our own hands, but to give it to Him. Just like Daniel, he continued in prayer while the spiritual battle was going on. He didn’t join in the actual fighting. So many times, we join in the battle. We think we will fix things or we get into the battle and think we are too weak to win. We believe the devil can defeat us. But I have good news for you, he cannot! If we resist him, and submit to God and let God fight the battle; the victory is ours!

When you are in the midst of spiritual warfare, God instructs us to be properly prepared and armed for battle. We are to put on the full armor of God, so we can resist attacks of the evil one.

***Ephesians 6:11-17*** *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

*Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with TRUTH, and having put on the breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of FAITH with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the WORD OF GOD.”*

When we are fully armored and armed, the way God wants us to be, the enemy cannot get to us. We will be able to stand firm and secure knowing that God is for us, and no one can defeat us!

***Romans 8:31*** *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”*

So when we are in the midst of spiritual warfare, we must remember PRAYER is the key to standing firm against the schemes of the evil one!

***Ephesians 6:18*** *“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”*

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***Matthew 6: 13*** *“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”*

So we are now at the end of our prayer. We have acknowledged God for who He is; we have gotten right with Him and with others; we have brought our petitions to Him; and we have gotten protection from the schemes of the enemy. Now is the time to worship Him! To tell Him how thankful we are for His love, provision, and protection.

The book of Psalms is one of my favorite books, because it is full of praise and thanksgiving to God for His answered prayers. I love to pray these psalms back to God.

***Psalm 66:1-4*** *“Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. All the earth will worship You, and will sing praises to You; they will sing praises to Your name."*

***Psalm 66: 16-20*** *“Come and hear, all who fear God, and I will tell of what He has done for my soul. I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; but certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer nor His lovingkindness from me.”*

When we praise God with a sincere heart, when we can sing praises and truly mean what we sing, this shows our faith is in Him. It shows we have taken our eyes off our circumstances and put them on God! We have truly laid our burdens at His feet and left them there.

We are at the end of Jesus’ Bible study on prayer, but it does not end here. As with all Bible studies, we must practice what we learn. We must consciously pray with this outline in mind, so that it becomes a natural part of our daily prayers. Not to repeat these words over and over, but to use this as an outline, a guide for our prayers.

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Chapter 5

Eavesdropping on Jesus’ Prayer

One of my favorite prayers in the Bible is in John 17. This is an actual prayer that Jesus prayed. The very words He spoke to God! Wow! What a privilege we have to be able to read and study this prayer.

I will give you some context as to what was going on in Jesus’ life when He prayed this prayer. He had just shared the Passover meal with His disciples in the Upper Room. Judas had left them to get the soldiers to betray Jesus. Jesus took the remaining eleven disciples and walked out of the city of Jerusalem heading up to the Garden of Gethsemane, which was on a hillside just out of town. On the way, Jesus spoke to His disciples to prepare them for His death and to encourage them in what He wanted them to do when He was gone. Sensing that they were not understanding His words, He stopped and prayed. He prayed in front of His disciples so they might be encouraged and have their hearts full of joy, and not full of fear and sadness.

Jesus begins by praying for Himself.

***John 17: 1- 5*** *“Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

*I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*

*“The hour has come.”* Jesus’ mind is heavy with what He knows is about to transpire in His life, yet His focus is on glorifying God. The purpose for His life on Earth is about to reach its climax. Jesus knows He came to earth to be a sacrifice for all mankind, to take away the sins of mankind and to give us eternal life. He came so we could all have access to God, to have the opportunity to be intimate friends with God.

*“I glorified You on earth.”* To glorify God is to give a right estimate of who He is, to truly acknowledge and admire His excellencies, with all praise and honor. Not just to acknowledge Him with our words, but also with our lives. Our lives are to be lived in such a way that all we do is glorifying to God!

***Philippians 2: 5-11*** *“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

*For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the* ***GLORY*** *of God the Father.”*

We need to pray these words for ourselves every day: “Lord, I want to glorify You on Earth, having accomplished the work You have given me to do.” Are we willing to pray this every day? What is hindering us from doing this?



Jesus continues his prayer by praying for His disciples.

***John 17: 6- 19*** *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”*

Remember, Jesus is praying in front of His disciples. He is commending them before God. What an encouragement that must have been. Jesus thanked God for giving Him these men to be His disciples. He said they have kept God’s Word, they have received Jesus’ words and understood them, and they have come to know that Jesus truly is the Son of God.

When we are praying for others, we need to follow this pattern of lifting up one another before God. If we as Christians did this more, I believe we would not suffer with poor self-image as much as we do. Encouragement is such a powerful weapon to battle against the enemy’s mind tricks.

Jesus then asks God to keep His disciples safe from the evil one. Jesus knows His time is short here on earth, but it is not yet the time for His disciples to be with God. Jesus had looked after them while He was with them, now He wants God to do that; and again to let the disciples know God will do this. On top of this, Jesus asks God to sanctify them in the truth. To be sanctified means to be set apart for God, to be living in the world, but not being influenced by the world.

***Romans 12: 1-2*** *“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

The only way to be sanctified is to spend intimate time with God to know what is pleasing to Him. We do this by reading and studying God’s Word, and spending time with God in prayer; so we can get to know Him. Jesus prays for all believers to have this intimacy with God; to be in one accord with Him, just as Jesus was.



***John 17:20- 23*** *"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. “*

Here Jesus switches His attention not just to His eleven disciples, but to all believers. He wants us to see that we can all be one with God, just as Jesus is! He is saying we can have the same intimate relationship with God that He has. We can trust God to always be there for us; we can always go to Him and talk, and He will listen. Wow! The Supreme God of the Universe wants to be one with us! That’s incredible! That is hard to comprehend and to accept. But, once we do, oh how lovely that is. To be one with God! Oh, the peace and power and joy that fills our hearts. That is what God wants for all believers*.*

When we are walking in oneness with God, then we will be walking in unity with one another. No more divisions, no more strife, just blessed unity. This is Jesus’ prayer for all of us. When we put on love, there is peace.

***Psalms 133:1*** *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”*

***Colossians 3:14*** *“Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”*

God does not want our intimate relationship to be a secret either. He wants it to be obvious to the entire world. He wants His glory to shine brightly in all of us, so that the world may see and be drawn to Him. God desires that all will come to Him and be His intimate friend.



***John 17:24- 26*** *“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Can’t you just hear the excitement in Jesus’ words as He talks about His Father? Jesus is passionate about His relationship with God; He wants everyone to see it and to experience God’s love for themselves.

Take in the words of Jesus’ prayer for yourselves, and pray them back to God.

*Oh Lord, I want to glorify You on the earth, having accomplished the work You have given me to do. Manifest Thy name to all believers in this area.*

*Oh Lord, may we Your people be one; may we all dwell together in unity and love. May Your joy be made full in all of us. Keep us safe from the evil one. Sanctify us, set us apart by Thy truth. May we know Your truth and let it change our hearts and actions. May we hunger for Your Word and for a closer relationship with You. May our hunger for You be more than our hunger for food or worldly things.*

*Oh Lord, manifest Your great presence in this country, so the world may see and believe in You. Oh Lord, may Your love dwell in the hearts of Your people, all the people who call themselves by Your name. Oh Lord, we need to receive and give out Your love. Your perfect love casts out all fear. No more fear of death, no more pull of death. Perfect love come down on us and cast out all fear!*

*Oh Lord, You came to bind up the brokenhearted, to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, to raise the dead, to bring hope and love and light to a dying world. You came to bring life, not death. Oh Lord, life! Life eternal, life that shines forth purity and Your love. We call upon Your name to bring forth life to all we are praying for. Bring life, abundant life, joyously hopeful life! No more despair, just joyous life!*



Chapter 6

Prayers of Thanksgiving

I love to read the Book of Psalms. It is a book of poetry written by King David, in an attempt to express his feelings about his relationship with God. David was called a “man after God’s own heart”. Wouldn’t you like to be considered by God to be “a man or a woman after God’s own heart”? That is the relationship we as Christians should all strive to have with our loving Heavenly Father.

One of the keys to this relationship is found throughout the Book of Psalms, giving lavish praise to God! He loves to hear us offer up praises to His name.

***Psalm 117*** *“Praise the Lord, all nations; laud Him, all peoples! For His lovingkindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord is everlasting. Praise the Lord! “*

We all love to hear praise, and we all love to be appreciated. It makes us feel wonderful. It is an acknowledgment by others that they notice the things we do. God is no different. He loves to hear the praises of His people. He loves for us to acknowledge the wonderful things He has done. He loves it when we appreciate Him, when we show that we noticed His gracious acts of lovingkindness towards us.

The word “praise*”* means a commendation bestowed on a person for his personal virtues or worthy actions; approval expressed in words or song; a glorifying or extolling because of perfections or excellent works.

The word “thanksgiving*”* means the act of rendering thanks or expressing gratitude for favors or mercies.

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving acknowledge that we have an understanding of who God is in our lives. He is the One who is at work in our lives to bring about His glorious purposes.

***Psalm 37:23*** *“The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and He delights in our way.”*

God is the one who has poured out His mercy on us with salvation from our sins; He is the One who answers our prayers; He is the One who showers us with His blessings of love and peace and joy! Our prayers offered up to God in thanksgiving and praise show God we have a grateful heart. These attitudes greatly please God.

***Psalm 118: 1-4*** *“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Oh let Israel say, His lovingkindness is everlasting. Oh let the house of Aaron say, His lovingkindness is everlasting. Oh let those who fear the LORD say, His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

I take these verses to mean, God’s lovingkindness is everlasting. That means forever and ever! But what is lovingkindness? This is one of the most important words in the Old Testament. Lovingkindness is an act of kindness, love, or mercy shown to someone. The quality of this kindness shown is usually reserved for friends and relatives. When no relationship like this exists, the person exercising lovingkindness chooses to treat the recipient as if such a relationship exists. Acts of lovingkindness are often reciprocated.

Lovingkindness is central to God’s character. It is closely tied to His covenant with us His chosen people. Even though we may prove unfaithful at times in this relationship, God’s lovingkindness is everlasting! Now, that is something to be thankful for! God wants to show us acts of kindness and love and mercy all the time, even when we mess up. That is a loving and merciful God!

Now that our relationship with God is acknowledged, and we have thanked Him for it; then we can call out to God in our distress and be assured He will hear us and answer us!

***Psalm 118:5-7*** *“From my distress I called upon the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a large place. The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me? The LORD is for me among those who help me; therefore I will look with satisfaction on those who hate me.”*

I love those words, “The Lord is for me!” Wow! He is for us. We have so much against us all the time, and to think that the Supreme Ruler of the Universe is for us and is going to help us when we call out to Him. That is such a comfort. We do not need to fear anything, nothing at all! Yet, fear has gripped a majority of Christians. We look at those who are against us and think they are more powerful than our God who has just told us His love for us is everlasting. Why do we do that? Why are we gripped with fear?

***Psalm 118:8-13*** *“It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. All nations surrounded me; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off. They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off. They surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished as a fire of thorns; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off. They pushed me violently so that I was falling, But the LORD helped me.”*

We are not running into God’s loving arms and letting Him protect us. We run to our friends, our family, or the government to help us; when we should take refuge in God. He is our loving Heavenly Father with His strong loving arms stretched wide for us to run into. When you need help, when you are fearful, who do you run to? Who do you trust to help you? Only the Lord can help us, only Him.

Why do we trust in those around us to protect us and to fight our battles, instead of God? I have been convicted lately that I really do not trust God as much as I thought I did. Once we acknowledge our lack of absolute trust in God, then we can start on the path to truly know God and trust Him. Once we do, we will be able to truly say with great thanksgiving:

***Psalm 118:14-16*** *“The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.”*

We should be constantly singing and shouting to God for He is the One who is our salvation. He is the One who answers our prayers, who sets us on a large place, who is for us, who is our place of refuge, who has the power to cut off our enemies, who helps us, who strengthens us, and who is our salvation. These are powerful promises.

So what should we be doing, what is our responsibility in this relationship? We need to give thanks to God at all times, to revere Him, to exalt Him, to call upon Him and run to Him when we are in distress. This shows God we trust Him to be who He says He is, our Savior! We say this with our words all the time; but when we are in trouble, do our actions show we trust God with all of our heart? Are we paralyzed with fear, are we running to others to save us, or are we running to our loving heavenly Father? That is the key. That is the true test of your faith.

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***Psalm 118:17-18*** *“I will not die, but live, and tell of the works of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death.”*

Sometimes, God answers our cries for help, but His answer is not what we thought it should be. How often do we cry out to God to fix a major or minor problem in our lives, and in our cries to God we tell Him how to fix the situation? Why do we think we have the solution? Often we are the ones who got us into this situation to begin with. But God wants to take every situation we are in and bring us life. Sometimes He will have to severely discipline us, sometimes He will have us die to our fleshly desires. But He promises us that all He takes us through will lead to life, glorious life and not death! He desires to make us righteous, as He is righteous. That is His goal.

***Psalm 118: 19-29*** *Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.*

When we have cried out to God and He has answered us, this should be our attitude. How often do we sing praises like this to God? David praised God continually. He offered up praise and thanksgiving to God first thing, even before he cried out to God. He continued his praises while he was telling God what was causing him distress, and even when God was disciplining him. David’s praises became even more lavish afterwards. I long to have this attitude towards God! I long to trust God the way David trusted God, I long to show God my gratitude by pouring out lavish praises continually. I long to show God I appreciate all He is doing in my life. Not just, “thanks for helping me. Here’s my next problem”. But heartfelt praise, continual thanksgiving to my Lord!



The Book of Psalms is full of prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God. They are the cries from the heart of David, a man after God’s own heart. They are full of all the emotions and distresses we go through; and even more important, they are full of God’s miraculous love and deliverance. I encourage you to read through the book of Psalms slowly. These are some of my favorite prayers in the Bible. Take a Psalm or a part of a Psalm each day, and pray it back to God.

Psalm 34: 1-8 can be prayed like this:

*I will bless You My Lord at all times. Your praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul boasts in You. The humble will hear my praise and rejoice. O let us magnify the Lord, let us exalt His name together.*

*O Lord, I sought You, and You answered me; You delivered me from all my fears. Lord, when I look to You I can be radiant, I will never be ashamed. I am but an ordinary woman, and I cried out to You, the Supreme God; and You heard me and saved me from all of my troubles. I thank You for the angels You have sent to surround me. O Lord I have tasted and seen that You are good! How blessed I am that I can take refuge in You!*



Chapter 7

An Appointment with the King

Our loving God wants to converse with us day and night. He is always available to us, always open to hear our cries for ourselves and others. But He takes great delight when we set aside specific times each day to come before Him in prayer.

***Psalm 5:3*** *“In the morning, O Lord, Thou will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.”*

***Psalm 88:1-2*** *“O Lord, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You. Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry!”*

My morning quiet time is when I hear best from God. My mind is still enough to hear Him and not my busy schedule; but I have to get up early. I have to come to God first, before anyone else in my household is up; before all the demands on my time start coming my way. I used to hate getting up early. I used to think it was not right to get up before the sun did, nighttime was for sleeping. But little by little, I started getting up earlier and earlier, to meet with my Lord; to have a private audience with Him. Can you imagine this in its proper perspective? Our quiet time in the morning is just that, a private conversation with the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe. We can come and sit at His feet and chat! Wow!

The more I did this, the more excited I became to get up early to meet my Lord. It became a habit, a normal part of my life. I found that over time, I wanted to spend more time with My Lord, so I extended our appointment time, I got up earlier! Me getting up earlier- that right there was a miracle! I cannot wait to get out of bed each morning to be with my God. He is so faithful and loving. He shows me wonderful things in His Word, each morning, just for that day. In the same way God fed His people manna every day in the wilderness, so God gives me His Word every morning to feed me, to nourish my soul.

God also uses this opportunity to talk to me, to encourage me for the day. He knows what I will face every day, what challenges I will have, and what opportunities. So He prepares me. He lovingly corrects my wrong thoughts, my wrong attitudes, and my wrong actions. I can be so turned around in my thinking I sometimes don’t know what I am doing. If I take the time to be with Him every morning, He gently leads me in the truth.

I want to encourage you to have a glorious morning quiet time with the Lord. I know this is something we all long to have in our Christian lives. For years I prayed for God to help me have a consistent quiet time. I found that when I made the effort to actually get out of bed 30 minutes earlier, God would meet me. I had to make that appointment with Him. God always keeps the appointment; we are the ones that usually do not show up. We miss out on God’s blessings each morning that we decide to sleep later, or start our busyness earlier. I want to encourage you to get up a little earlier each morning. Start with 15 minutes, if 30 sounds too hard. Just do it! If you get up 15-30 minutes early every day and devote this time to talk with God and to read His word with Him, it will become a glorious habit. Then you will long for more of this time and you will find yourselves, like me, getting up earlier and earlier. God has so much to show us for each day. This precious time with God is much more important and beneficial for our bodies that a little extra sleep.

***Lamentations 3: 22-23*** *“The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him."*

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***2 Timothy 1:3*** *“I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as* *I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.”*

As Christians, we are to be in prayer at all times. We have the privilege of having an open line of communication with God all day long. All throughout our day we run into challenges in our own life, we talk with people who are in great need, we hear about the struggles others are going through, we pass a bad wreck on the highway, or we listen to the news. These are all opportunities for prayer. God is pricking our heart every time we run across these things. He shows us the need, and wants our heart to soften towards them so we will take the time to either pray for them or pray with them. There is nothing more powerful than prayer. And there is nothing more encouraging for someone going through something than when we take the time out of our busy lives to stop and pray with them.

God wants us to intercede for the people we come across every day. We must stop what we are doing for a moment and intercede for them. A friend calls and shares their struggles, pray for them NOW. You see a person in line at a store visibly distracted and rattling on and on to no one in particular about a loved one in the hospital, pull them aside and ask if it is okay with them if you pray for them right now. I have found that almost all people I have asked if I could pray for them said “yes, I sure could use the prayer”.

There are many times when we cannot physically pray with the person we see is in distress, but they still need our prayers.

* As you are driving down the road and you see the driver of a car or the passenger crying. Pray for them.
* You see a mom struggling with a toddler who is throwing a tantrum in Wal-Mart, pray for them.
* You see a police officer or emergency person speeding down the highway. Pray for them and the people they are going to help.

We notice these people in our lives every day, and our first reaction is usually judgment or irritation; but God wants us to intercede for them instead. We must be OBSERVANT of the people around us every day and OPEN to their need for prayer and then to ACT on God’s promptings to pray for them.

God wants us to pray for our families, our friends, our pastors and churches, our cities, our nation, missionaries, people and nations from all around the world. Intercession means to solicit one party in favor of another; to plead on behalf of another. God commands us to pray for others. And not just for their good, but also for ours.

***1 Timothy 2: 1-2*** *“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”*

Four words are used here for prayers: entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings. Entreaties are prayers asking for specific benefits from God. Prayers are general requests directed to God. Petitions are an address to God for us or for others. When we petition we come to God with boldness knowing He is listening and He will answer our prayers. Thanksgiving is grateful acknowledgement of God’s grace and mercy, knowing we did not deserve the grace.

The benefits of interceding for others are evident. We will lead tranquil and quiet lives. This means we will have stillness about our souls and be filled with peace. We will not be disturbed, or moved by the distractions and storms raging around us; but we will be at peace. Isn’t that what we all long for?

Another benefit of being an intercessor is having a life of godliness and dignity. That sounds so good. To live a life of godliness is to lead a morally good life out of devotion and worship to God. A life of dignity is endeavoring at all costs to be decent and true in all our relationships with people in this world. We so often think dignity is an air we can put on, or clothes we can wear to “look dignified”. But godliness and dignity are attitudes of our hearts. This kind of life is costly, it will cost us ourselves. Our selfish nature must go, as we look out for the interest of others ahead of ourselves. The more time we spend in God’s presence, letting Him fight our battles, having him work out all the messes we get into, the more we become like Him.

***Ephesians 6:18*** *“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”*

God wants us to pray for others at all times, to be watching for things that need prayer. We are to be as the watchmen in biblical times whose job it was to be stationed on the city walls, looking for dangers that might be coming, and then sounding the alarm for help. We are to be alert to the needs of those around us. We must see the importance of our praying for others, and how vital it is to persevere in our prayers. We must be persistent in our prayers, we must not give up hope, and we must endeavor to keep on praying for others.



For me, evening is a great time to intercede for others. As I think back over my day and the people I have encountered or heard about, I am moved to again pray for them. I must confess, however, I have the hardest time with this. I let all the busyness of my day spill over into this time. I often decide to finish one more thing before I collapse exhausted into bed, forgetting to intercede. In order to persevere in our intercessory prayers, we must discipline ourselves to make this an important part of our daily schedule.

When we are praying for others, we sometimes have specific requests. Other times we are not sure how to pray for others, but we want them to have a blessed life. **Colossians 1:9-12** is a great prayer that we can personalize and use to pray for them.

Since the day I heard of your need, I have not ceased to pray for \_\_\_\_\_\_and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

so that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

I pray that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be strengthened with all power, according to God’s glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience.

I joyously give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

In this prayer, we are asking God to fill the person with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. We are praying for that person to come to know God so intimately, to be so filled by the Spirit (totally controlled), that they know God’s perfect will for their lives. Then they will be able to walk in a manner worthy of God; their lives will be pleasing to Him in all they do and all they are. In order for this to happen in their lives, we need to pray that God will strengthen them with His power. We need Him to accomplish these things in our lives. We cannot do it on our own.

The result of this prayer is a changed life, characterized by steadfastness, patience, and joyous thanksgiving to God. Isn’t that what we all want for our lives?

Stop right now and pray this prayer for those God puts on your heart. Commit to pray this prayer on a regular basis, then watch and see what God does in their lives!



Chapter 8

When You Have No Words to Pray

Has there ever been a time in your life when you did not know what to pray? Has someone asked you to pray and you have no idea of what to pray? A teenage girl gets pregnant and her mom asks you to pray. A parent tragically loses her only child in a car accident. What do you pray? Your husband loses his job and is having difficulty finding another one. What do you pray? A couple who were finally pregnant after 10 years of fertility treatments, miscarry their child. What do you pray?

We have all been in situations like that. I have great news for you; one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is that He helps us in times like these. When we have no idea what to pray or even how to pray, He will pray for us.

***Romans 8: 26-28*** *“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

What a wonderful promise! I love God. He thinks of everything. He knows we will have times in our lives when we are at a loss for words, when we will not see a way around a situation. Instead of leaving us without words to say, He will pray through us.

***Matthew 10:20*** *“For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”*

Many times I have prayed for someone and when I was through praying, I was amazed at the words of comfort and wisdom that came out of my mouth. They certainly were not my words, but they were exactly what they needed to hear. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us His perfect words to speak life and hope and encouragement to the people who come to us in their distresses.



Another way the Holy Spirit helps us when we pray when we don’t know what to pray is through our prayer language. This is an unknown language that the Holy Spirit gives to all believers for the expressed purpose of intercession and worship. He will pray through us directly to God in our prayer language. This is especially helpful when we are emotionally involved in what we are praying. I take great comfort in praying in my prayer language because I know that I am not praying selfishly or even trying to tell God what to do when I pray this way, but I am leaving it all up to Him. I was praying in my prayer language one day and I told God, “I don’t understand what I am praying.” He answered me and said, “It is a prayer language. That is what it is for. It is a direct path to My heart and the issue at hand that needs My justice.”

Other times I have cried out to God while I am praying alone. Whether I am interceding for myself or for others, I will cry out to God in my distresses. I don’t know what to ask for, I just cry out. That is so refreshing to God! Most of the time we have everything figured out and our prayers are really a list of us telling God how to handle certain things in our lives. We give Him our problems and then tell Him how we want Him to solve them. Let’s be honest with ourselves, we all do this. I have found that God is much more creative than we could ever be and He sees the whole picture. He sees how all the puzzle pieces fit together when we are just looking at two pieces.



There are times when God prompts me to pray. I have no thought in my head about praying and then I feel a pressure in my chest. This is God alerting me that I need to pray. Sometimes He tells me what to pray and at other times He just says pray. One of these times I started to pray and then God gave me a vision of a little boy in the Philippines who was crying hysterically to God for help. God let me see him and his plight so I could pray for him.

*Juan is a little boy from the Philippines who is devastated because he cannot find his baby sister that he takes care of. There are flood waters all around the garbage dump where they have lived. He is sitting on a garbage pile sobbing and crying out for his sister. He is so afraid. I cried out that God would comfort him and reunite him with his sister. God revealed that He has a special call on Juan’s life and this is a major turning point in their relationship. God said He would shine forth in a mighty way for Juan and his sister.*

What an awesome privilege it was to pray for Juan and his sister. I was able to touch their lives without having to travel to the Philippines. We so often think we have to physically be somewhere to help someone, but we don’t. When we are willing to be a vessel of intercession for God, we can spiritually travel the globe with God seeing those in need, and lifting those needs up to the throne of Almighty God.

I have learned that when God prompts me in this way, I need to stop whatever I am doing and pray right then. There is always urgency in these kinds of prayer. They can’t wait for a regular corporate or personal prayer time, they must be prayed now.

Every time I pray these kinds of prayers I am encouraged. If God is alerting me to pray for others, then He will alert others to pray for me when I am in distress and too weak to pray. This passage in Romans 8 gives us a wonderful promise to encourage us when we are crying out to God.

***Romans 8:31-32*** *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us! He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”*

When we feel like everyone and everything is against us, we need to remember this promise. God is for us, and He is listening to our cries and answering our prayers.

***Romans 8:35, 37-39*** *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So, no matter what we are going through, God is always with us. Nothing can separate us from His love! He is always with us, always listening to us, and always working all things together for our good. Resting in God’s promises gives us great comfort and renewed strength.



The Holy Spirit is not the only one who intercedes for us when we cry out to Father God. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is seated next to God in heaven, is always praying for us.

***Hebrews 7:25*** *“Therefore Jesus is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*

***Romans 8:33-34*** *“Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”*

Jesus lives to make intercession for us! Wow! It amazes me that Jesus will take the time out in His busy day to talk to God about my prayers and my needs! He will lay them before God and They will decide what to do. It is amazing that They love us that much.



I encourage you to draw near to God, to bring Him your prayers and let Him figure out what is best. He is after all Almighty God, full of all power and all knowledge; and we are mere ordinary people. Keeping this proper perspective helps me to stop telling God how to fix my problems, and just submit to His will. Whatever He comes up with will be much grander that I could ever imagine, and definitely greater that I could ever accomplish!

What are you facing right now that you have no idea what to pray? Give it to the Holy Spirit. Give it to Jesus. Let Them bring it before God. Then wait for the goodness of God to shine forth in your life! Waiting is hard. But God wants us to wait on Him. Some things take time to work out, and sometimes the waiting is for our good.

***James 1: 2-4*** *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

A powerful tool when we are waiting is a prayer journal. I have a dedicated journal just for prayer requests. Each night I get out this journal and pray through these needs. The journal helps keep me on track and then when they are answered I check them off. These answered prayers are a great encouragement to me. They remind me that God is faithful and He answers our prayers. This gives me perseverance to wait for God’s answered prayers in His perfect timing.

Persevere in prayer and persevere in waiting for the prayers to be answered; all the time trusting in God’s promises. When we pray to God when we don’t know what to say and when we wait for Him to answer us not knowing how He will do that, we are growing in our trust in Almighty God.

When we pray without answers we are putting all our trust in Him. Trust God in His timing, His sovereignty, His love, and His promises.



Chapter 9

Building Plans

We have been talking about prayer being a conversation with God; us sharing our hearts with Him, and He sharing His heart with us. What kind of the things does God want to speak to us about?

I got some insight into this question from King Solomon and his conversations he had with the Lord concerning his desire to build a house for the Lord to dwell in.

***1 Kings 5:5*** *"Behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My name.'”*

King David was a man after God’s own heart and he wanted to build a permanent structure, a temple, to be God’s house. God had instructed Moses to build a tabernacle for worship and to be a place for the presence of God to reside. The tabernacle was designed to be portable, because God’s people were not yet settled in the Promised Land.

God gave Moses very detailed instructions for each part of His tabernacle; the design of each space and what would be in each area, and what materials these things would be made from. He gave very specific instructions for what was to be done in the tabernacle and who was to do it. He had very specific plans for the setting up, taking down, and moving of his tabernacle. It took Moses over 50 chapters in the Bible to record these plans.

For almost 500 years, the tabernacle served as a place for God to dwell among His people and a place where His people could commune with Him. The tabernacle served as a visual reminder to Israel that they served the true and living God (the cloud of His presence rested over the tabernacle); which helped keep them from idol worship.

Even though King David wanted to build Jehovah a temple, God said no. David was a man of war and as much as God loved him, He did not want a man of war to build His house. He told David that his son Solomon would build the temple when he was king.[[2]](#footnote-2) Not a monumental structure to show how religious and wealthy Solomon was, but a place to honor God out of a true worshipper’s heart.

Solomon was still very young when God said he would eventually build the temple, so King David made ample preparations before his death. He had plans drawn up for the temple. He gathered many craftsman, stonecutters, and carpenters to be ready to do the work when the time came. He had many stones precut and ready to go. He had large quantities of cedar brought in from other countries. He had very large amounts of gold and silver, bronze and iron set aside for the temple. King David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son. Even though King David would never see this temple, he wanted this house for the Lord to be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout the lands.

King David did not just make physical preparations for the building of the temple, but he also prepared his son spiritually. He instructed his son in God’s commandments for the tabernacle and prayed for the Lord to give him great discernment and understanding. He taught him the laws and statutes Jehovah gave to Moses and he taught him to how to have a personal relationship with the Lord.

***1 Chronicles 22:11-13, 19*** *"Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you. Only the LORD give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. "Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed.*

*"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."*

David again told Solomon that he had been chosen to build a house for the Lord. He told him to be courageous and act, for the Lord was with him. “*He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

After Solomon was named king, he went up before the Lord at the tabernacle and offered one thousand burnt offerings on the Bronze altar. That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “Ask what I should give to you.” Solomon humbled himself before the Lord and asked for wisdom and knowledge so he could rightly rule God’s people. This greatly pleased the Lord.

King Solomon dedicated himself to accomplishing the task God asked of him. Because of King Solomon’s great desire to build this house for God and because of his father’s preparations, a magnificent temple was built in only seven years. King Solomon held a great celebration to praise and worship God. He offered up prayers of dedication and then praised God some more. It was all about God, not about the accomplishments of man.

It was now time to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the temple, so it would have a permanent resting place. King Solomon, the priests, and all the people lifted up their voices to praise God saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting”. When they did, the temple filled with a cloud, the Glory of the Lord! [[4]](#footnote-4)

King Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven, knelt down and prayed. **2 Chronicles 6** records this prayer. Solomon started by praising the Lord for “*keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.”*

Solomon then asked for God to listen to his prayers, and to keep His eyes upon them at all times.*“Now, O my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and Your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place”.* He then asks the Lord to come and dwell in their midst.

As soon as Solomon had finished this prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the whole temple. The glory of the Lord was so thick, the priests could not enter the temple. All who were gathered bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD saying, "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."[[5]](#footnote-5)



When we see God for who He really is, when we understand His character, not just what He does for us; pure worship comes from our innermost being. God loves to be worshipped this way, because it shows we know Him. We know who He truly is; we know and trust His character. Out of this heart that knows God, gladness, thanksgiving and praises pour forth.

Later that night the Lord appeared to Solomon and spoke these famous words on prayer:

***2 Chronicles 7: 14 – 15*** *“(If) My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.”*

God honored King Solomon and all the people who worked on the temple with His presence. This was not a celebration of all the hard work and sacrifices that went into building this temple, they were not asking God to bless them because they did this great thing for Him. No, they praised God for who He is and for what He has accomplished through them. It was all about God.



Has God ever asked you to build anything for Him?

* To start a Bible study for your friends or in your church?
* To train up your children to know the Lord?
* To mentor younger Christians in the things of the Lord?
* To come alongside someone who has crossed your path? Someone you wanted to ignore, but you stopped and went out of your way to help them with their needs and to encourage them in their struggles. You have continued with that relationship, not for yourself, for what you can get; but solely for loving and encouraging the other person.
* To be a part of a prayer ministry; to consistently, week in and week out, pray for your church, community, and nation.
* To be active in your church to help build up the body of Christ, to offer support and encouragement. Not so it can grow in numbers, but so people’s lives can be impacted for eternity.
* To build a strong family by making your spouse and children your main priority. To provide a loving and nurturing environment where your children feel safe and encouraged. A relaxing haven for your husband where he can come home from work. To honor and build him up so he can assume his rightful place in the family. To love and cherish your wife as Christ loved the church.
* To build a temple of the living God, a temple made of flesh and blood, in our hearts. God desires to dwell there. What are we doing to help bring that about? Do we live holy and consecrated lives pleasing to Him? Not perfect, but lives dedicated to pleasing God.

***1 Corinthians 6:19-20*** *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.*

What has God asked you to build for Him? Have you done it? Spend some time with God to specifically ask Him about this. He is your Father and just like David, He has the building plans and He has made all the preparations necessary for the building project. God will give you the wisdom and knowledge you need to complete the work He has asked you to do.



Chapter 10

Approaching the Throne of God

Jehovah longs to have a very personal relationship with us; one where we can converse one on one with Him about anything. This kind of intimacy takes time to develop, but our God is patient and faithful to bring us closer and closer to His heart day by day. Isaiah 6 recounts an encounter between Jehovah and Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet from the Old Testament that God called and used to encourage His people to repent and turn from their wicked ways. Isaiah had a very powerful encounter with the Lord of Hosts. He approached God and His throne in humility and reverence, and God was able to work through his life in a mighty way.

Let’s look at Isaiah’s encounter with the King of Glory, and learn how we should approach the throne of God.

***Isaiah 6:1-3*** *“In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory’”.*

What a magnificent sight Isaiah saw in this vision. He saw the Lord, Almighty God, seated on a throne, lofty and exalted. The train of His robe filled the entire temple! Ezekiel and the disciple John had similar experiences in the Throne Room of the Lord. God was described as a glowing fire yet in the form of a man. The radiance that surrounded Him was compared to the beautiful colors of a rainbow and to precious jewels. The beauty and majesty of the Lord is beyond anything we have ever seen.

Standing above the Lord were the magnificent Seraphim, exalted angelic beings, who were continually crying out praises to God. They cried out “Holy” three times. Holy is God Almighty, Holy is His Son Jesus Christ, and Holy is the Holy Spirit. They continued to give glory, honor, and thanksgiving to Him who sits on the throne.



***Isaiah 6:4*** *“And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.”*

As Isaiah watched, the foundations of the temple began to shake, a voice called out, and then the temple filled with smoke. What does the smoke signify? The first time we see smoke mentioned with God is in **Exodus 3:2-4**. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush that was not consumed. There was just fire and smoke. God was in the fire and the smoke.

Later in **Exodus 13:21-22**, the Lord led His people in the wilderness with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night. He stayed with them constantly. **In Exodus 40:34-38,** as Moses set up the Tabernacle, a cloud came and covered the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled the place. This cloud of smoke stayed over the tabernacle as long as they were to stay in a place. But when it was time to move on, the cloud of smoke would lift from the tabernacle and lead the people to the next resting place.

**1 Kings 8:10-13**, when King Solomon dedicated the house he built for the Lord, a cloud filled the temple. God spoke to Solomon and said He would dwell there in the thick cloud.

Just as God abided with His people in the form of smoke or a cloud in the Old Testament, He abides in us now in the form of the Holy Spirit. He is with us all the time to guide us and to give us light.

Did you notice that in God’s presence, when His voice was heard, everything trembled, the very foundations of the temple shook? We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Do we tremble when God speaks to us?

I feel we are often too casual with God when we enter His presence, whether it is in our quiet time, our prayer times, or when we gather for church. We do not give God our undivided attention. If we saw what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John saw we would have a much different and more reverent attitude when entering His presence. We would give Him all of our attention. But we need to know, without physically seeing Almighty God, the Creator and Sovereign God of the universe is on His throne. He is magnificent. He is surrounded by His angelic hosts, who are waiting to do the His bidding.



The Seraphim in **Isaiah 6:2** are huge angels of the highest order that stand above the throne of God. They are described as having six wings. With two they cover their face, with two they cover their feet, and with two they fly. These elite angels can give us a glimpse into what our attitudes need to be when we are in the presence of the Lord.

The two wings covering their faces show great humility. Remember Moses was told to cover his face before the Lord. No one is to see the face of God. Isaiah has this humble attitude in the next verse.

***Isaiah 6:5*** *“Then I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’”*

Isaiah was greatly humbled when he realized he was in the presence of Almighty God, the Lord of Hosts. Being in God’s presence made him realize as never before how sinful he was and how sinful were the lives of those around him. He confessed his sins before His sinless Lord.

***2 Chronicles 7:14-15*** *“If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. “*

We see here the importance God places on us humbling ourselves before God when we come into His presence to talk with Him. Humbling ourselves is acknowledging that God is Sovereign and that we need Him in all areas of our lives. Acknowledging that we are in need of His forgiveness and cleansing. Once we are right with God, then He will hear and answer our prayers.



The Seraphim also covered their feet with two wings, signifying their reverence to the Lord. It is vital that we have these same attitudes of humility and reverence before Almighty God. We must revere Him with the awe He deserves.

Have you ever gone before God in prayer with a bad attitude? Have you ever gone to a prayer meeting because you felt you should go but you didn’t really feel like praying? Have you been angry about a person or a situation and yelled at God to fix it? Have you ever thrown a prayer up to God while you were doing something that was taking your full attention and said, “O, by the way, do this for me”? I know we would never say that to God directly, but have our attitudes and actions portrayed that to Him?

***Hebrews 12:28-29*** *“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”*

When I read this verse and remember all that God has done for me, I am convicted that I do not show Him the proper attitude of gratitude, reverence and awe. The word the Bible uses most often for awe is FEAR.

***Proverbs 1:7*** *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”*

Fear is a word we don’t like. We don’t like to be afraid, yet we are told over and over in the Bible to fear God. What does “fear” mean?

Fear of the Lord means to regard God with reverence. This is shown by respecting the divine nature of God and having a high regard of His perfections. This high regard produces in us a desire to serve Him and an unwillingness to offend Him. This respect is intertwined with our love and affection for Him.

I was confused as a child when I first heard this phrase, fear the Lord. God loved me and that felt good; but fear felt bad. The Bible tells us to fear God, and yet it also says that fear is not of God. Obviously, we are dealing with two different things here. God desires for us to have reverence for Him, to show Him we trust Him, to not disappoint Him, and to not walk in disobedience. This fear, the fear of the Lord, brings us closer to Him. On the other hand, the enemy desires to paralyze us and distract us with fear and dread, which results in separating us from God and from others.



The Lord desires and requires us to fear Him. He promises that if we do, it will be for our good and the good of our families.

***Jeremiah 32:38-41*** *"They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.**I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.”*

***Psalm 25:14*** “*The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him and He will make them know His covenant.”*

The Hebrew word for “secret” and “know” signifies close intimacy. The word for fear is to morally reverence. So if we want to have an intimate relationship with the Lord, we must morally reverence Him.

Reverence is a forgotten word today. Respect is heading for extinction also. People use the word “respect” today, but it is not used properly. People try to get respect by how much money they spend on things, or how famous they are. But this is so shallow. How can you respect a person for something that is so fleeting, that can be taken away in the blink of an eye?

Respect has to do with the character of a person, what they have deep down inside of them. We need to change our thinking about respect first before we can even begin to understand how we are to revere and respect God.

Do you have a reverence for God that honors Him and His wishes, or do you have fear that brings uneasiness to your mind with an expectation of evil or impending danger? Only one can operate in our lives at a time. How can we learn reverence for God?

***Psalm 86:11-12*** *“Teach me Your way, O Lord. I will walk in Your truth. Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever.”*

With tired eyes, I first read this verse with “**Untie** my heart to fear Your name”. Our hearts are tied up with so many things that hinder us from fearing the Lord; the desires and cares of this world, fearing what man thinks of us instead of God, emotional baggage, compromise, complacency …

But the word used in this passage is **“Unite”**,which means to join together as ONE. We are to have one heart with God. Do we walk in such obedience and with such an attentive ear that we have one heart with God?

The word for “teach” means to rain down instructions. When we allow God to rain down instructions in how we are to walk out our days with Him, then we will be grounded in who He is and what He expects from us and what we can expect from Him. Then we will be one with Him, one heart with one purpose to glorify Him in all respects each and every moment of our lives.

Those who fear the Lord will trust in Him. Trust and fear go hand in hand.

***Psalm 40:3*** *“He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord.”*



Let’s go back to the throne room and Isaiah 6.

***Isaiah 6:6-7*** *Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.’"*

After we humble ourselves before the Lord, after we show Him the reverence and respect He deserves, then He cleanses us of our sins and we are forgiven.

***Psalm 19:9*** “*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.”*

The word “clean” means to be pure physically, chemically, ceremonially and morally. Isn’t it wonderful to know that God brings His purifying fire to all areas of our lives? Are we pure in everything in our lives? No, of course we are not, but we need to be striving towards that goal, as we allow our faithful God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God longs to send His seraphim to each one of us and cleanse us with His burning coal. He longs to cleanse every part of our mind, body, and soul to allow more of Him to dwell in us fully.

***Ephesians 3: 19*** *“Know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up with all the fullness of God.”*



***Isaiah 6: 8*** *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’"*

Isaiah has been silent up until this verse. He has humbled himself before the Lord of hosts, he has given God the reverence He deserves, and he has allowed himself to be cleansed from his sins. Now God can direct his path and send him to do the things He has for Isaiah to do in the Kingdom.

This is a pattern that we would be wise to follow. When we enter God’s presence with the right attitudes, and with quietness in our words, thoughts, and emotions, then He can clearly speak to us and give us instructions for our lives, for what He wants us to do.

The last two sets of wings on the seraphim signify this point. ‘With these two wings they fly”. Where do they fly? They fly to do the bidding of the Lord.

When we have an encounter with God, when we come into His presence with the right attitude of humbleness and repentance and awe, we are anxious to do whatever He tells us to do. He has done so much for us; we want to please Him and do what he asks.

You notice Isaiah did not tell God where he would prefer to be sent, or what he would prefer to do. He simply says, “Here I am, send me”. We must be open to go wherever and do whatever God leads us to do. We can have no personal agendas. This calls for us to lay aside our agendas, our ways and to totally surrender to God and His plans for our lives. This takes an incredible amount of trust in God; but God is faithful to lead us every step of the way.

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When Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and when they heard Him speak they humbled themselves. They knew who He was and they revered Him. They realized they were sinners in the presence of the Most Holy God.

Would we do that today? When God comes into our presence in our quiet time, or during worship or during a conference, do we fall on our faces in His presence to honor Him? Do we realize how awful our sins are, how awful our compromise is, how awful our complacency is? Maybe if the Lord of Hosts physically appeared before our eyes, we might bow; but do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Almighty God dwells inside of all believers in the form of the Holy Spirit. He is in us. That is even more incredible that seeing Him with our eyes and hearing Him with our ears. He is inside of us, wanting to talk to us and direct our steps every moment of every day.

Stop right now and properly acknowledge His presence in your heart. Do like these men of old and fall on your face in humility before Almighty God! Worship Him for who He is. Repent of you sins. Cry out before God with a humble and contrite heart as Isaiah did.

Only then can you cry out the words that bring great joy to God’s heart, **“Here I am, send me!”**



Chapter 11

Thy Will Be Done

One of the shortest prayers Jesus prayed, *“Thy will be done”*, is very hard for us to pray and to truly mean what we say. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing that His time on this earth is short and He pulls His closest disciples aside and asks them to keep watch while He prays.

***Matthew 26:38*** *“My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death, remain here and keep watch with Me.”*

Jesus knows what is about to happen, yet His human nature is having a hard time going along with it. In fact, He prayed three times to His Heavenly Father, asking if there could be another way to bring salvation to all mankind than what God had planned.

***Matthew 26:39*** *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”*

The gospel of Luke records the agony Jesus was in when He fervently prayed these prayers. His sweat became like drops of blood, falling to the ground. Yet at the end of each of these three prayers for God to stop what was about to happen, Jesus prayed, *“Thy will be done”.[[6]](#footnote-6)*

How could Jesus pray this and really mean it? We see often in the Word that Jesus knew that God was in charge and God had incredible plans for His life on earth.

***John 6:38*** *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*

***Galatians 1: 4*** *“Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father.”*

***1 Corinthians 11:3*** *“I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”*

Even though Jesus and the Father are one with the Holy Spirit, Jesus knows that God the Father is the head and He is in charge. Jesus always submits to the Father’s perfect will, because He truly knows the love His Father has for Him. He trusts God’s character, knowing that God will work all things together for good.



Our flesh is always battling against God’s will, because we want “our way”. We want to be in charge. Shortly after we are born, we begin to demand our own way, and learn to exercise our will. How many of us threw temper tantrums when we were little because we wanted candy or a toy from the store? We did not know it would not be good for us or that it would be a waste of money, we just wanted what our eyes saw and we let our moms know that we must have it! Our moms know what is best for us, so they say, “no”. This escalates our temper tantrum and now the entire store knows what we want! There are two end results to our temper tantrums. We either end up getting punished or she lets us have our way.

God has the same two answers when we want to go our own way. Even though He always knows what is best for us, He has given us a free will to choose what we want. He is terribly grieved when we do this, but He lets us decide.

***Jeremiah 16:16*** *“Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is and walk in it and you shall find rest for your souls’. But they said, ‘we will not walk in it!’’’*

These ancient paths are the ways to salvation that lead to our well-being, to bring us peace, a future and a hope. But just like the men and women in Jeremiah’s time, we know what would be the right thing to do, and we decide to not do it.

Even though God will let us have our way, He loves us so much and He wants us to choose His way, His will for our lives. He lets us go our way, but know this beloved, He will punish our disobedience and He will do what is necessary to bring us back to Him.

***Ephesians 5: 6*** *“Let no one deceive you…the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”*

***Galatians 6:7*** *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”*

We, as sons and daughters of Almighty God, will be disciplined, because He loves us so much. Just as our earthly parents discipline us to teach us right from wrong, so our heavenly Father disciplines us to lead us into righteousness.

***Hebrews 12:5-11*** *"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the lord, nor faint when you are reproved by him; for those whom the lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”*

We must know that when we sin, when we seek our own way, God will discipline us. He does this not to punish, but to show His love for us as sons and daughters. Discipline does not feel good, but discipline does wake us up to our disobedience and cause us to repent and come back into the loving arms of our Father.

When we were disciplined by our parents when we threw a temper tantrum, usually that punishment had a lot to do with the mood of our parents. I have good news for you; God does not discipline us that way. I have learned that how gently or severely He disciplines us is totally dependent on my response to His discipline. At first it is gentle, but if I ignore His discipline, it gets more intense.

God always starts with a **rebuke**. This is a verbal warning about a poor choice we have made. It is meant to spare us further pain and separation. This can be a prick of our conscience from the Holy Spirit, a timely word from another person, a scripture that speaks to our disobedience, or a sermon we hear at church.We must always have our ears open to hear rebukes.

If we do not heed a rebuke God sends our way, He will then bring **chastening**. When our hearts become hardened with our continued disobedience, God will send us emotional anguish, anxiety, frustration, and distress. We will notice that pressures increase at home, work, in our health or finances… What used to bring us joy, no longer does. Unfortunately we often fail to see this as discipline. We feel unfulfilled at church, we are critical of our friends and family, and we feel on the outs with God. When we feel this way we need to look to our own hearts and see this discipline for what it is and repent of our sins.

If we continue to turn a deaf ear to our loving father, He will bring **scourging**. Yes, this is as painful as it sounds.Scourging isto physically whip, to inflict punishment, to cause excruciating pain. When we live in open sin with a flagrant disregard for what we know is right, and we have not heeded God’s previous attempts to rescue us from rebellion; He must resort to intense pain to bring us back to our senses. God takes long-term sin very seriously. He must get our attention. God does not allow His children to sin successfully.

So what should our attitude be when we are being disciplined by our heavenly Father? We must not despise His discipline, but see that it is for our good, to bring us back to Him. We must also not be discouraged in His discipline. The enemy comes to do that, but our Father comes to restore us to Himself. We must endure the discipline and allow it to train us to change our rebellious ways, so that we can know that God’s will for our lives is best. God knows how long we must go through the discipline, and He will release the pain at just the right time. No matter how much we whine that the pain is too much, His timing is perfect.

This idea of enduring God’s painful discipline long after I thought it should be done was brought home to me when I had a bout with kidney stones. I suffered greatly with pain for many months trying to let the stone pass on its own. Finally the doctors decided to blast it into tiny pieces so it could be easily removed from my body. Or so I thought. Yes, the huge stone was no longer there, but the pain did not go away for a few more weeks until every tiny piece left my body. The same is true for discipline from the Lord. When we repent of our sin, it is removed; but the discipline from the Lord will not end until He deals with every tiny bit of rebellion and sin that is hindering our trust in Him.

No matter what type of discipline we are under, we always have the opportunity to repent and turn wholeheartedly back to the Lord. Since we will continue to sin until we meet Him in heaven, we must know that repentance is a lifestyle, not a one-time act. Our willingness to humble ourselves before our heavenly Father shows our ongoing love and trust in Him.

Responding in repentance to God’s discipline brings immediate benefits. He picks us up, cleanses us from our sins, and He puts us back on the path He has for us where we will again be fruitful and healthy. We escape the sin and its hold on us, and we also grow in maturity.

***Jeremiah 29: 11-14*** *“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”*

When we repent of our own way and call upon God, He will listen. When we seek God and His will for our lives He will put us back on the perfect path that He has designed for us.



As Jesus shows us with His words from the Garden of Gethsemane, following God’s will is sometimes very difficult. It sometimes requires a death. Usually the death is not physical, but a death to all our fleshly desires. As believers who love God and want to grow closer and closer to Him, we must lay aside our agendas, our plans, and our way of thinking to ask God for His perfect will for our lives.

Before we can even come to this point we must come to the knowledge of who God is. We must know Him and His incredible love He has for us. Until we do, we cannot trust Him and His plans for our lives. We are too wrapped up in ourselves and trying to protect ourselves, thinking we know what is best.

As our heavenly Father reveals more and more of Himself to us and we come to know Him more intimately, and the more we are filled with the knowledge of His will for our lives, we are constantly faced with more choices. Do we follow His perfect will or do we follow our own plans? Our plans are always short-sighted because we do not know the future. Our plans are also self-centered because they are “our plans”. Our flesh wants to look at how things affect us and usually not how they affect others. Our flesh calls out, “What will make me happy? What do I think is best for me?”

What would happen if Jesus had sought His own way? That is a horrible thought and none of us would be here if He had. We should thank Him every day that He followed the perfect will of God and not His flesh. He was able to go through with God’s plans because He knew His Father and He trusted Him. He loved all mankind enough to die for us.

Do you trust God enough to pray, “Thy will be done”?

Do you love others more than yourself that you are willing to pray, “Thy will be done”?

**Let this be our prayer each day:**

***Psalm 40:8*** *“I delight to do Thy will, O my God. Thy Word is within my heart.”*



Chapter 12

Praying God’s Heart

A few years ago while we were gathered to pray, I heard God speak someone’s name, a name I had never heard before. I thought that was odd. He has brought people I know to my mind to pray before, but never someone I did not know. I wondered how I would pray for them when I didn’t know their situation. As if God heard my musings, and of course he did, He showed me what this person looked like. I started feeling the emotions that they were going through. I was now really focused on what God was doing in my mind. He proceeded to tell me what this person was going through to cause the emotions I was feeling. He then asked me to pray for them, which of course I did!

He repeated this three more times that day. I was amazed. All four were pastors in different denominations and in different cities around the country.

*EMILY – May her open repentance lead her whole congregation to open repentance. Then God can bring a cleansing rain to sweep through her whole church, so all may be cleansed. Turn this large congregation totally around, to focus on God and minister to the Lord. They have been “in-focused”, may they now focus on the needs of the lost, the hurt, and the dying. May they 100 percent dedicate their lives to Justice in their city.*

*It must start with Emily; help her to take that first step. May she lay aside all pride and humble herself to publically repent of leaving her first love. Cleanse the church she leads, cleanse the church. May she repent so cleansing can come. If she does not repent, judgment will come upon her entire congregation. Their lives are in her humbling herself before God and man. Take away her fears, let her speak into your plans so she may be encouraged and strengthened.*

*PETER -The same must happen in his church. He must repent and confess his sins before his congregation. He has sinned grievously against his wife and he has confessed to her. But he must openly confess and repent before the body of Christ before healing and cleansing can happen in his marriage.*

*If he does not, strict judgment will come to the whole body. His sins have poisoned the church. But if he openly repents, he and his congregation will be saved!*

*His church is like a glass bottle with the contents under great pressure, threatening to explode. When he repents, the cork will be out of the bottle. All will repent of their wicked ways and the Holy Spirit will flow and flow throughout their lives, and into their entire community.*

*ELIZABETH -She is a young pastor, but she was called to lead. She must lead her congregation. She has let her insecurities and fears stop her from leading her congregation. She has allowed mixture and false teaching in because she is trying to please man and not God. She must arise and make a stand for truth. She must. If she does not, she and her congregation will perish.*

*TOBIAS - This man of God is so weary. He wants to resign and give up. He is so discouraged. Lord, strengthen him out of your love for him. His discouragement has formed a thick dark cloud around him, so that You are hidden from him, and he is so alone. Lord, beak through the darkness that is threatening to overcome him. If he is overcome, his congregation will fall into darkness and destruction. He is the only light in his neighborhood, yet his light is barely flickering. O Lord, please bring two men alongside him to stoke the flames. May they build up his strength and assurance in You. Rescue him Lord so the darkness can be cast out of this neighborhood, and then the entire community. This is not about one man or even his small congregation. God has far-reaching plans for Tobias that will affect millions.*

I asked the Lord what He wanted me to do with this information. Do you want me to *Google* these pastors and write or call them to encourage them that You put them on my mind to pray for them? I knew that would really encourage me if I got a call from someone I did not know telling me that God gave them my name and told them what I was struggling with and that they were praying for me. But no, God said you have done what needed to be done. You have lifted up these precious pastors before the throne of God and I have heard. Write down what I asked you to pray as a memorial of what I have done.

Over the next few months God would randomly put someone in my mind to pray for, even in other nations. I was really wowed one day when He had me pray for a young boy in the Philippines (chapter 8). I do not know why that impressed me, like God had a mileage limit to His ability to put a prayer request in my mind. I have to keep reminding myself that the limitations of my mind and body are not the limitations of God. He has no limitations, He can do anything; nothing holds Him back.

These types of prayers continued occasionally for a few years. I was always amazed at God’s heart for His people. He cares so much for all mankind. I have read that in the Bible over and over, but experiencing God’s compassion and love reaching down to touch these in distress, has given me a richer understanding of His amazing love.

I am amazed that He had to go to this length to find someone to intercede for these pastors. Did not someone in their congregation or family see what was going on and pray for them? Did they not have someone to share their heart with and ask for prayer? Why did God have to call on someone 500 miles away (again the distance thing) to pray? Why didn’t someone close by see and pray?

God tells us in Isaiah 59:16 that He was looking for someone to pray for a situation and He *“was astonished that there was no one to intercede”.*  I have always found it puzzling that prayer is the easiest thing to do, it is just talking to God, but it is so rarely done. Prayer meetings are always sparsely attended, while worship services and fellowships are bursting at the seams. Now do not get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with these things, they are necessary for our Christian walk, but prayer is just as vital.

So, why did God put these dear people in my mind, fill me with their emotions and plight, and then ask me pray for them? Why does He not bypass us and do what needs to be done on our lives? I have found the answer to this is that even though God is all-powerful, even though He is moved with compassion for all we are going through; He has set in place a protocol for helping us; and that is called prayer. ***James 4:2-3*** tells us that we do not have help, answers, healing, deliverance… because we do not pray, we do not ask Him. And sometimes when we do ask Him we ask with wrong motives.

Once a prayer is prayed with pure motives, then God dispatches His heavenly host to come and bring justice…

***Psalm 91:11*** *“For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways.”*

***Psalm 34:6-7*** *“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.”*

When you read these verses you can just imagine God’s angels poised and ready to be dispatched all over the world. If I were God, I would just dispatch the angels myself and not count on humans to get something important done; but God loves to use the weak, the ordinary to do extraordinary things. God likes to use ordinary vessels to be a conduit of His greatness and miracles.

***1 Corinthians 1:27*** *“… but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.”*



Recently God asked me to change my evening prayers. I had been keeping a rather long list of prayer requests that I had gathered over time of those I knew who needed prayer; and prayed over them most nights. I would check off the answered prayers and was amazed that God seemed to be answering prayers at a faster rate than before. But now God asked me to get a new journal and each evening He would give me a page worth of people and their situations to pray. I was to write down these prayer requests, and pray them that night. The next day I would get another page to pray. As I am faithful to stop every night to get before God and ask who is on His heart, He is faithful to share it with me and tell me who to pray for.

Now I cannot wait to hear from God each night, to see the lives of those He wants to help. With my evening prayers before, I sometimes would lose interest in my stale prayer list; but not now, this is living. Each night I meet five to six new people and am given the privilege of praying for them; and then the next night five or six more.

I come to God each night asking Him to show me who is on His heart. If my mind is still racing from my day, I must calm it first; only then I can clearly hear His voice. I have learned that I must not wait until I am ready to go to sleep to pray, because then I am too sleepy and sometimes nod off. This happened one time and I was so mad at myself. It has not happened since. This is too much of a privilege to take lightly.

God always gives me their name first. Very often the names are not American names, but I just write them how they sound.

*Vlad, Ti’beth, Shibiqui, Lin Lin, Shis Ma, Polie, Paing Hu, Kire Kuibe, Svendelyn, Siboleilden, To Bi Ne, Crimpbarti, Maok, Fured, Stavonovitch, Somi Paeu, Sau Chi, Gribo, Mombiah, Spei, Spensurian, Strovenkott, Bumbian, Bookatoo, Gebant, Bin Chen, Viatrine*…

Sometimes God pauses between the name and what I am to pray for them. I wonder if He has many people by that name on His heart that need prayer and He is deciding which one to give me. That really makes me sad to think that He has so few intercessors on this earth.

He then shows me what is going on in their lives that need prayer. One night I asked, “God is this really you or is this my imagination?” Immediately my mind went blank. When I say blank, I mean scary blank, wiped clean, nothing would come up. I laughed and said, “Ok I get it, this is You!” And really, some of the situations God puts in my mind, there is no way I could ever come up with these things? One night I heard Philip, Joe, and Hot Air Balloon. I thought God was just playing with me to see if I was awake, but no, this was a real request.

*Philip was in a hot air balloon and his guide Joe just collapsed and is unconscious.* *Philip is frantic and very afraid. Lord, calm him down so he can pray for Joe. Lord, give him wisdom and discernment in how to help Joe and to get them on the ground. Lord, may he have an encounter with an angel and know that You are real. He has doubted recently. May this bring him back to You permanently. May Joe recover and finally accept the Lord as His God.*

Sometimes when I pray, I sense the timing is extremely critical and I must intercede for the situation until God says it is done.

*Penelope was a young girl who broke her leg while jumping rope. The doctors are operating on her leg now to put it back together. But God wants them to see that she has the beginning of bone cancer. If they see it, it will not get a chance to spread. Pray and keep praying. They saw it and removed all the cancer. She will have a longer recovery than originally thought, but she will totally recover. Afterwards the doctors were talking and were amazed that they both saw a light that displayed the cancer. They know without a doubt that was God and their faith is now stronger in Him!*

So many times when I pray these prayers, in the midst of praying about a situation, God shifts it to salvation or returning to Him. Through the miracle of answered prayer, and seeing how much God loves them and cares about them, hearts are soft to receive the Lord.

***Isaiah 52:10*** *“The LORD has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.”*

God makes it very clear that these prayers are to bring all to the full knowledge and love of God, and to be filled with the joy of His presence.

I have learned in my journey with the Lord that there are many kinds of prayers; all are important, all are powerful, and all are needed. Ephesians 6:18 encourages us in our journey with the Lord to *pray with all kinds of prayers at all times in the Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is the most incredible tour guide on the journey of faith and prayer that the Lord has lain out for all who call upon His Name.

Rest in the promise of **Mark 11:24**, which assures us that when we pray God’s heart, and ask Him for help, He will hear and He will answer!



Chapter 13

The Importance of Prayer

in These Days

There is one word that you hear a lot from *This Is Your Season Ministries* and that is PRAYER. God has been urging us to pray and to pray with passionate intensity for the last five years. He would call us to pray and we would for that event or for a time, and then we would let the busyness of our lives and the ministry stop us from what God asked us to do. Finally three years ago, after many promptings of the Holy Spirit, He got our undivided attention. ***This Is Your Season Ministries* is called to pray!** Not for an event, but to have a lifestyle of prayer. He has been instructing us and urging us into more and more prayer, focused on what is on His heart, not on what we think we need to pray.

God wants us as believers, as His bride who are prepared for His return, to arise and see that we have a very active role to fulfill in these days; the role of an intercessor. There will be great power and glory released through our prayers. WHY now? Jesus is returning and He wants to provoke unbelievers to come to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Most believers are waiting for the rapture, just sitting back and waiting, holding their ticket into heaven in their hand. But beloved, that is not God’s plan for His bride.

A few years ago God shared His heart with me at a ministry retreat and it broke my heart.

*“I am waiting for My bride. I long for her to be ready for our wedding. Why does she tarry? Can’t she see I am waiting for her? Doesn’t she long to live with Me? Doesn’t she see that I am all she is crying for? Her tarrying has grieved Me! She accepted My proposal and allowed Me to call her My beloved; but she will not prepare for our wedding.”*

We must prepare for the wedding! When a bride is preparing for her wedding, is she just idly sitting by waiting for that day? No, she is very active in the preparations for that day. As the bride of Christ, we are not to idly sit back and wait.

God tells us in **Joel 2:28-32** that in the end times, the Spirit of God will be poured out on His people as never before; so that unbelievers will all come to call upon the Lord and they shall be saved.

*"It will come about after this, that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions…"I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke… Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be saved…”*



What preparations do we need to make for His return? One way to prepare is to come into the fullness of who God created us to be.

***Ephesians 3:14-20*** *“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,”*

As God empowers us with miraculous strength through the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, we will be able to comprehend the fullness of the love God has for us, a knowledge that we do not have yet, but towards which we are to strive. The more of His love we accept and understand the more we will be rooted and grounded in this love. God so desires that we will trust Him and His love so much that whatever comes our way, we will not be moved.

God desires to do far greater things in our lives that we can ever imagine. God has gifted us with many spiritual gifts, and some of us use them some of the time; but He gave these gifts to us to use and to use with great power for His glory. The Greek word for power in this passage is *dunamis*, which is the root word for dynamite. It means miraculous power with great strength. Are the lives of believers on this earth overflowing with miraculous power and great strength? NO! We must change that. We must come to walk in the fullness of the giftings and power of the Holy Spirit; not for ourselves, but for others.

In order to walk in dunamis power**,** we must lay aside all hindrances to God’s plan for our lives. In **Deuteronomy 7**, God tells His people as they are entering the Promised Land that there are seven nations greater and stronger than they are, and they must be destroyed completely. These seven nations represent seven crippling emotional enemies in our lives that we too must utterly destroy; fear, rejection, worthlessness, shame, insecurity, defilement, and hopelessness. A good study on this is *Healing the Wounded Heart* by Thom Gardner.

We must develop our relationship with God so that we can hear His voice and then respond in obedience to it. These are two disciplines we must embrace, because when we hear God, we can ask Him what is on His heart and then pray it. At *This Is Your Season* our most powerful prayers are when we ask God what is on His heart and then we pray them. Our minds are so finite, yet His is infinite. He knows all.



God longs for us to cry out for justice for those in need. Bob Sorge, one of my favorite authors on prayer wrote: “When justice does not reside at the seat of judgment, the land will inevitably fall into social anarchy.” [[7]](#footnote-7)

***Psalm 11:3*** *“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”*

God loves justice, and it is very important to Him. He desires for it to be recognized, honored, implemented and maintained among the people of the earth. To uphold justice is one of God’s core values. It is especially important to God that justice be given to widows and orphans. When we cry out to God for justice, He responds not only because he loves us, but because He loves justice.

***Psalm 33:5*** *“He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord.”*

Justice is the righteous answer to every wrong.

***2 Chronicles 16:9*** *“For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”*

God longs to act on the behalf of those in need, but it takes someone to cry out to God for the help to come. And we are that people.

***James 4:2*** *“…My people do not have because they do not ask.”*

I think we have a mindset that we don’t need to pray about something because God knows all and He will take care of the needs of all people, but we need to understand how God works. He needs us to lift up these petitions to God, so help can come down to earth.

***Psalm 34:15*** *“The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry.”*



Another part of our preparation is to understand that God longs for all to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and we as believers have a part in making this happen. We must live a life that stands out from the world, so that all around us can see the glory of God on our lives. We must be a light in the midst of this dark world.

***Acts 13:47*** *"For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"*

God wants all to see and believe in Him. We as the church have done a horrible disservice to the world. No one wants to come to Christ when they see us living defeated lives, no different than theirs. We look just like the world and consequently we have no power, no peace, no joy, and no love. We must be a witness to our families, our communities, and the world. We are witnesses to those around us in the words we speak at all times and in our actions, especially our actions.

***Acts 1:8*** *“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

Part of being a witness is praying for the hearts of unbelievers to be softened to the Good News of Jesus Christ. We must be prepared to break up the hard soil in their hearts with our prayers, to plant the seed by sharing the gospel, to water the seed by being a living testimony of God’s love, to harvest the crop by leading them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We don’t know what season God wants us to have an impact on an unbeliever’s life, so we must be ready in every season to partner with God to bring the world to Him.

***John 4:36-38*** *"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."*



We must be very aware that we as believers are in a fierce spiritual battle. We as intercessors have “become dangerous end time weapons in the hand of our God, and the enemy is furious. Nothing threatens hell more than a praying saint”.[[8]](#footnote-8)

“The enemy knows that if we stand before God and ask Him for His heart to pray for justice for the people of the earth, and never be moved, and lift our voices unrelentingly to God Almighty, eventually something is going to happen. That is why every device of darkness against our lives is focused upon one single issue, to move us from standing before God. As long as we are standing before God and continuing in prayer, nothing can stop our spiritual destiny. But if we can be moved from the place of prayer, then everything God has planned for our life is at risk.” [[9]](#footnote-9)

We must purpose to pray and to keep on praying. In **Isaiah 59:16** God is wondering if He will find His people living lives so full of faith that they will cry out to Him unceasingly knowing that He is hearing our prayers and answering them. Or will the enemy’s scheme keep God’s people off the wall of prayer?

I leave you with a prayer:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance as saints of the Most High God, and what is the surpassing greatness of the Holy Spirit’s power residing in all who believe*.* [[10]](#footnote-10) May you pray at all times with all kinds of prayers and petitions, being on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. [[11]](#footnote-11)

I pray that now you truly see that prayer is our highest privilege, our gravest responsibility, and the greatest power God has put in our hands. It is not some mysterious work for the few called to be ministers to the Lord and to His people. Prayer is a wonderful conversation with our Father, our Friend, our Savior, and it is for all believers to partake in.

I pray that the ears of your heart are opened and will continue to be opened to the voice of the Lord, and that your conversations will continue to increase as you become one with Him. The incredible blessing that comes out of this increased conversation is a closeness that draws us closer and closer to our Heavenly Father with every conversation. This is God’s heart for His children. He desires for us all to come to know Him intimately so that we will be rooted and grounded in His incredible love.

I encourage you to set aside times each day, every day to pray to the Lord; to open up your heart to Him and to allow Him to open up His heart to you. I also encourage you to gather with other believers on a regular basis to pray for the things on God’s heart. There is incredible power when two or more come together to pray.

***Matthew 18:20*** *"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."*





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***Come and Celebrate*** ***with Me***

A study on God’s Chosen Celebrations

1. Genesis 25:7-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 1 Chronicles 22:6-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 1 Chronicles 28:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2 Chronicles 7:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Luke 22:42 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Bob Sorge, *Unrelenting Prayer* (Greenwood, MO: Oasis House, 2008), page 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bob Sorge, *Unrelenting Prayer* (Greenwood, MO: Oasis House, 2008), page 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bob Sorge, *Unrelenting Prayer* (Greenwood, MO: Oasis House, 2008), page 20, 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ephesians 1:18-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ephesians 6:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)