

Prayer

101

A Biblical Outline for Prayer

A black silhouette of a person's head and hands in profile, facing right. The person's mouth is slightly open, and their hands are clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The background is white.

By Pastor Art Kohl



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Scripture verses in this booklet are
from the King James Holy Bible.



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Semantics of Prayer

A. The Word “Pray” Means...

In its purest form and definition, the word “*pray*” means to ask. In the New Testament the word “*pray*” has these variations:

pray – 68 times, *prayed* – 34 times, *prayer* – 31 times, *prayers* – 22 times, *prayest* – 2 times, *prayeth* – 3 times, *praying* – 14 times **for a total of 174 times.**

These seven variations are translated in the King James Bible from four Greek words:

- 1. Proseuchomai**, used most, and simply means “to pray.”
- 2. Erotao**, the second-most used and is usually translated “pray” in the English, but is also translated:
 - a. Ask, as in Matthew 21:24
 - b. Beseech, as in Luke 7:3
 - c. Desire, as in Acts 23:20
 - d. Intreat, as in Philippians 4:3
- 3. Euchomai**, used several times. Not only translated “pray” in the English, but also “to wish,” as in 2 Corinthians 13:9
- 4. Deomai**, sometimes used, it means “to beg or petition.” Also translated in the English:
 - a. Beseech, as in Luke 9:38
 - b. Make request, as in Romans 1:10

What do all of these variations of English and Greek words teach us? **PRAYER IS ASKING!**

We do not pray until we ask for something. Sometimes in its

context the word pray literally means “to ask”. Notice Acts 8:34, “*And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?*”

If someone said to you, “I pray thee, please take out the garbage,” you would know that they are asking you to take out the garbage.

B. The Word “Pray” Does Not Mean...

Worship, praise, exalt, glorify, give thanks, fast or adore. These words are all closely associated with prayer, are all important, and should be practiced often, but prayer is asking.

Illustration: If someone says, “Heavenly Father, I worship You and praise You today for Thou art God. Besides Thee there is none else. I come into Your courts with praise. I thank You for all of my material, spiritual and physical blessings. I adore You, exalt You, glorify You, and lift up Your Holy name. Amen.”

Did they pray? No! Was what they said worthwhile? Absolutely! But prayer is asking.

Principles of Prayer

A. What Are the Answers to Prayer?

The answer to prayer is receiving.

Matthew 21:22, *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."*

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

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

And yet there are times when we pray and do not receive. Why is this?

1. God may say "no" if we improperly pray.

James 4:3, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."*

Some things we ask of God may be bad for us. For example, a million dollars might turn our hearts away from God, so He does not give it to us. Other times He does not answer our prayers because He has already given the answer in His word. He will probably remain silent to prayers like, "Lord do you want me to forgive this person?" "Should I love this person?" "Can I marry this unsaved person?" "Do You want me to read Your Word? Pray? Give? Tithe? Go soulwinning? Go to church? Be a good father? Husband? Wife? Mother?" We do not have to pray about the commands of God. Our prayer may be met with silence because perhaps God has already answered that question in His Word.

Do not confuse His silence with His approval.

2. God may show us something better than what we are asking.

An example of this is in Paul's life. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 says, *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong."*

Experiencing God's grace and power was better for Paul than receiving physical healing through prayer.

3. God may make us wait.

a. Sometimes there is satanic opposition.

Notice Daniel 10:12-14, *"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia [Satan] withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."*

b. Sometimes we must be persistent.

Notice these illustrations:

Luke 11:5-9, *"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot*

rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Luke 18:1-7, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

4. God will give us exactly what we ask for, if we ask in His perfect will.

Luke 11:9-13, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

B. How Do We Pray?

1. Pray to the Father.

Follow the example of our Lord Jesus who always addressed **the Father** when praying:

*Matthew 6:6,8-9, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, **pray to thy Father** which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret*

shall reward thee openly. ...Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your **Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.** After this manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

Matthew 11:25-26, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, **O Father**, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, **Father**: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Matthew 26:39,42, "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father**, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. ...He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father**, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Mark 14:36, "And he said, **Abba, Father**, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

Luke 10:21, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, **O Father**, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, **Father**; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Luke 22:42, "Saying, **Father**, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Luke 23:34,46, "Then said Jesus, **Father**, forgive them; for they know not what they do. ...And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father**, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

John 11:41, "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, **Father**, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

John 12:27-28, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? **Father**, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. **Father**, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

John 17:1,5,11, *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, **Father**, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ...And now, **O Father**, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. ...And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. **Holy Father**, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”*

John 17:21,24-25, *“That they all may be one; as thou, **Father**, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ...**Father**, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. ...**O righteous Father**, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”*

2. Pray to the Father, through the Son.

Consider what Jesus said:

John 14:13-14, *“And whatsoever ye shall ask **in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing **in my name**, I will do it.”*

John 15:16, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father **in my name**, he may give it you.”*

John 16:23-24,26, *“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father **in my name**, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing **in my name**: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. ...At that day ye shall ask **in my name**: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:”*

The night before the Lord was crucified, He instituted this truth into the prayer lives of Christians: we could now ask the Father our requests in the name of His Son. As we have constant communication with the Lord Jesus, we begin to know Him and how He thinks. As a result of this moment-by-moment walk, we will be able to approach the

Father in prayer, having already talked it over with His Son. Then our prayers will be proper and we can ask our requests in Jesus name. Asking “*in Jesus name*” is like saying “*Father, I’ve already talked this over with your Son and He said it was okay for me to ask you for this.*”

Warning: Saying “*In Jesus name*” at the end of a prayer is lying if you have not been walking with Christ, and having communion with Him. If you do not know if something is the perfect will of God, approved by Jesus, end your prayer by saying, “*Not my will, but Thine*”. It is okay to ask Jesus to grant your wish, but do not throw around the phrase “*In Jesus name*” loosely. Ask in Jesus’ name only when something is shown you – through your consistent walk with Jesus and your knowledge of His word – as the perfect will of God.

► **Prayer tip:** Saturate your mind and heart with the Word of God. If you do you will know the mind and will of God and will most naturally start praying more properly.

3. Pray to the Father, through the Son, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26-27, “*Likewise **the Spirit** also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit** itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of **the Spirit**, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*”

Ephesians 6:18, “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in **the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*”

2 Corinthians 13:14, “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of **the Holy Ghost**, be with you all. Amen.*”

Jude 1:20, “*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying **in the Holy Ghost,***”

Keep in mind these facts about Him:

a. He is God.

2 Corinthians 3:17, *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

1 John 5:7, *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”*

b. He is a person.

John 16:13, *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”*

The Spirit is called “he,” “him,” or “himself” on twenty occasions in John 14-16.

c. He lives inside of you, the believer in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”*

It grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit when we ignore Him or give Him “the silent treatment:”

Ephesians 4:30, *“And **grieve not** the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:19, *“**Quench not** the Spirit.”*

Positionally, God the Father is on the throne in Heaven, God the Son is sitting at His right hand, but **God the Holy Spirit** is in you! He is the closest. Talk to Him and listen to Him. That is called communion. He will guide you into all truth (see John 16:13 above). That certainly will help you pray properly.

4. Pray with Partners

Romans 15:30, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord*

Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;"

2 Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

1 Thessalonians 5:25, "Brethren, pray for us."

2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:"

Hebrews 13:18, "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."

One of the last requests the Apostle Paul gave in most of his epistles was for people to pray for him. See Chapter V, Paul's Prayers.

So remember: we pray to the Father, but with the help of prayer partners – the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and others.

C. How Long Should We Pray?

In this section of study, we will see the difference between a prayer time and a prayer life. There seem to be three types of believers in regards to prayer:

First: There are believers who have neither a prayer time nor a prayer life.

Second: There are believers who have a prayer time, but not a prayer life.

Third: There are believers who have a prayer time *and* a prayer life. This is the ideal!

1. Prayer time.

"Prayer times" are times of our day as described by our Lord in Matthew 6:5-6, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in

*the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, **when** thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*

Notice the assumption that we will have a time of prayer each day. Let's look at the Scriptures and see various examples of prayer times.

a. Early each day.

Jacob's example: Genesis 28:18 *"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."*

Moses' example: Exodus 24:4 *"And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel."*

Samuel's parents' example: 1 Samuel 1:19, *"And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her."*

Hezekiah's example: 2 Chronicles 29:20, *"Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD."*

Job's example: Job 1:5, *"And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."*

David's example: Psalms 57:8, *"Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early."*

The Psalmist's example: Psalms 119:147, *"I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word."*

Christ's example: Mark 1:35, *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."*

b. One hour at a time.

Matthew 26:40-41 *"And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

c. Night and day.

Anna's example: Luke 2:37 *"And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."*

Paul's example: 1 Thessalonians 3:10, *"Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"*

The widow's examples: 1 Timothy 5:5, *"Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day."*

d. Three times a day.

David's example: Psalms 55:17, *"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."*

Daniel's example: Daniel 6:10 *"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."*

e. Seven times a day.

Psalms 119:164, *"Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments."*

f. At midnight.

The Psalmist's example: Psalms 119:62, *"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments."*

Paul & Silas' example: Acts 16:25, *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."*

g. All night.

Jacob's example: Genesis 32:24, *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."*

Samuel's example: 1 Samuel 15:11, *"It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night."*

Christ's example: Luke 6:12, *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."*

2. A prayer life.

Now let us look beyond prayer time, and see that we should have a prayer life.

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

Luke 21:36, *"Watch ye therefore, and **pray always**, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."*

Acts 12:5, *"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made **without ceasing** of the church unto God for him."*

Romans 12:12, *"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; **continuing** instant in prayer;"*

Ephesians 6:18, *"Praying **always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"*

Colossians 4:2, "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*"

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "*Pray without ceasing.*"

These scriptures admonish us to have more than just a prayer time: Have a Prayer Life!

D. What Should We Pray For?

Let us take a trip through the New Testament and see what we are instructed to pray for.

1. For the Lord's kingdom to come.

Matthew 6:9-10a, "*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come ...*"

2 Peter 3:12a, "*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ...*"

Our first prayer should be about God's work not our wants. The work and will of God should be our first concern (Matthew 6:33).

2. For the Lord's will to be done on the earth, the same way it is done in heaven.

Matthew 6:10b, "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.*" All in Heaven are saved, serving, obeying, worshiping, praising, and doing the things that please God. It should be our prayer that all on earth be that way too.

Matthew 26:39, "*And he [Jesus] went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"

3. For our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" We should not take food for granted. We should pray for food and then thank Him before we partake of it.

1 Timothy 4:4-5 says, *“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”*

4. For forgiveness of our debts.

Matthew 6:12,14, *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* A **debt** is that which is legally due, the keeping of the law. When we do not keep the law we have committed a **sin of omission**. A **trespass** is when we break the law by committing an act expressly forbidden in the law. A trespass is a **sin of commission**.

We are to ask (pray) for forgiveness of both. I John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

5. For forgiveness for others.

Matthew 6:12, 14, *“... forgive our debtors ... forgive men their trespasses”*

Mark 11:25, *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”*

Jesus set the supreme example while hanging on the cross, *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”* (Luke 23:34a).

Stephen followed His example, when stoned to death by his adversaries, *“And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”* (Acts 7:60)

Simon asked Peter to pray for him to be forgiven. Acts 8:24, *“Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.”*

Paul prayed for others to be forgiven. 2 Timothy 4:16, *“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.”*

The sins that others commit against us can be forgiven by our prayers. Sins against God can only be forgiven by God.

6. To avoid temptation.

Matthew 6:13a, *"And lead us not into temptation... ."*

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

1 Thessalonians 5:22, *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."*

7. For deliverance from evil.

Matthew 6:13, *"... but deliver us from evil ..."*

2 Corinthians 13:7, *"Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates."*

John 17:15, *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."*

8. For laborers to go into the harvest of souls.

Matthew 9:38, *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."*

Hudson Taylor was the first missionary to China. He prayed for more laborers to join him. By the end of his life there were over a thousand missionaries in China.

9. For those possessed or oppressed by the devil.

Matthew 17:21, *"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."* (Read the entire story of the demon-possessed boy in Matthew 17:14-21 and Mark 9:14-29.)

10. For the things we desire.

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

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

Matthew 6:8, *“Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”*

Note: The closer we get to the Lord the more our desires will change (see Psalm 37:4).

11. For them which despitefully use us.

Luke 6:28, *“Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”*

Matthew 5:44, *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”*

The word “despitefully” means to be falsely accused or reviled. Prayer for those who despise us is proof that we understand we need to love our enemies.

12. That the faith of others would not fail.

Luke 22:32, *“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”* Our prayers can strengthen the faith of others (see 1 Thessalonians 3:10).

13. For our converts.

John 17:20, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”*

Jesus prayed for future converts. So should we (see Colossians 4:12).

14. For the ordination of God’s men.

Acts 13:3, *“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”*

Acts 14:23, *“And when they had ordained them elders in*

every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

15. For the healing of the sick.

Acts 28:8, "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him."

James 5:14-16, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

16. For others.

1 Timothy 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;"

The Apostle Paul constantly wrote that he was praying for others. We will study his prayers more in a future chapter.

► The majority of our prayer lives should be spent praying for others.

17. For the lost to be saved.

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

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

18. That our love might abound more and more.

Philippians 1:9, *“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;”*

1 Thessalonians 3:12, *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:”*

19. For deliverance.

When Paul was imprisoned, the church prayed for him (Philippians 1:12-18). He knew he would be delivered through their prayers. That is what “salvation” means in Philippians 1:19, *“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”*

Another example of this was in Acts 12:5, *“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”*

Paul had a friend named Philemon who prayed for him in like manner. Philemon 1:22, *“But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.”*

Many of our brothers and sisters in the Lord are being held in prisons or psychiatric wards today – especially in communist countries. We should pray for them.

20. To be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.

Colossians 1:9, *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”*

See Saul’s request in Acts 9:6.

21. That we might walk worthy of the Lord.

Colossians 1:10a, *“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing...”*

Poor testimonies and hypocrites are among the greatest detriments to the Lord's work today.

22. That we might increase in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:10b, "... being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

The Bible is revealed to a praying, searching, and obeying people.

23. That we might be strengthened with all might.

Colossians 1:11, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;" "Pray for Power!"

24. For a door to be opened to preach the gospel.

Colossians 4:3, "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:"

25. For others to be perfected and completed.

Colossians 4:12, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

26. That our spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless until the Lord's coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

27. For those in authority over us.

1 Timothy 2:1-3, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;"

28. For any affliction we are going through.

James 5:13, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

29. For miracles.

James 5:17-18, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

30. For anything according to God's will.

1 John 5:14, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:"

Problems With Prayer

Prayer is not magic. It is conditional. Students of prayer will find in God's Word many hindrances and conditions that must be met. Let's look at problem areas and state the solutions:

A. Disobedience.

God had told the Israelites to go into the promised land, but 10 spies told them not to. They listened to the 10 men rather than God. Here is Moses recapping what happened after:

Deuteronomy 1:45, *"And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you."*

King Saul's disobedience is also well-documented. He started out right with God, but grew away from the Lord. The result of his disobedience:

1 Samuel 14:37, *"And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day."*

1 Samuel 28:6, *"And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."*

SOLUTION: Obedience in everything.

When the Lord tells you to do something, do it! Then you can claim the promise of 1 John 3:22, *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."*

B. Secret Sin.

Psalms 66:18, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"*

Secret sins and sins of the heart will hinder our prayers

from being answered. The word “regard” in this verse means “to approve of, enjoy, provide for.” This is the sin one has no intentions of even trying to give up. When we regard that sin in our hearts, it hinders our prayers.

Isaiah 59:2, *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that **he will not hear.**”*

SOLUTION:

1. Let God search your heart.

Psalms 139:23, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:”*

2. Diligently keep your heart right with God.

Proverbs 4:23, *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”*

3. Turn from your wicked ways.

No wicked way is worth hindering fellowship with our God.

2 Chronicles 7:14, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and **turn from their wicked ways;** then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

C. Indifference.

Proverbs 1:24-28, *“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall **they call upon me, but I will not answer;** they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:”*

Someone once asked, “If you haven’t listened to God in fifty years, why should He listen to you?” Out of His mercy, God might listen to you, but He does not have to.

SOLUTION:

1. Be wholehearted, not indifferent.

Jeremiah 29:13, *“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me **with all your heart.**”*

2. Seek God’s face, look for Him.

Again, 2 Chronicles 7:14, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and **seek my face,** and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

D. Neglect of Mercy.

Proverbs 21:13, *“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but **shall not be heard.**”*

Everyone of us needs and has received mercy. Our Lord taught us “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:48). Mercy is when we **do not** receive what we deserve in regards to judgment.

If we neglect to be merciful when we have received so much mercy, our prayers will be hindered. A good example of this is in Matthew 18:21-35, *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

“The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

“And his fellowseroant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

“So when his fellowseroants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked seroant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowseroant, even as I had pity on thee?

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

SOLUTION: Be merciful.

Matthew 5:7, *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”*

Luke 6:36, *“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”*

E. A Despising of the Law.

Proverbs 28:9, *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”*

The word “abomination” means “something that is disgusting.” God is disgusted to hear someone pray if that person refuses to hear what He asks them to do.

If you had a rebellious son who never did anything you asked, then he asked you for a thousand dollars, what emotion would you experience? Probably disgust! It is the same with God.

SOLUTION:

We are not under all 614 commandments of the Old Testament: the ceremonial, civil, dietary, sabbath and sacrificial laws of Israel. However, Jesus did give us this law

in the New Testament: John 15:12, *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”*

Jesus said again in John 14:15, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* And in John 15:10, *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”*

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:21, *“To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but **under the law to Christ**,) that I might gain them that are without law.”*

Do not despise the law, be like the Psalmist who loved the law: *“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”* (Psalms 119:97).

F. A Shedding of Innocent Blood (a National Sin).

Isaiah 1:15, *“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”*

Certainly any murderer can be saved, forgiven and enjoy fellowship and friendship with God. Moses, David, and Paul all shed innocent blood. And the truth is, all of us are guilty of the death of the Perfect One, Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins.

This verse, however, refers to a national sin, not an individual one. If a nation is guilty of shedding innocent blood, the Lord does not have to hear that nation’s collective prayer when hard times come.

Deuteronomy 19:10,13 *“That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee. ...Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.”*

2 Kings 21:16, *“Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.”*

2 Kings 24:2-4, *“And the LORD sent against him bands of the*

*Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem **with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.**"*

SOLUTION:

Sadly, I cannot find one example where the Lord ever forgave a nation that was filled with the shedding of innocent blood. There is no one more innocent than a baby in the womb. Approximately 1.5 million babies have been aborted in our nation each year since 1973.

Please pray specifically that the Lord would give us a pro-life President, Vice-president, Senators, Congressmen, Supreme Court Justices and other government officials. Pray also that the church would strongly condemn abortions as the shedding of innocent blood.

G. Stubbornness.

Zechariah 7:13-14, "Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate."

Under point E, we learned about those who would not hear the law. That is called despising. Here we see that some listen to God, then ignore Him. That is called stubbornness. Stubbornness is rooted in pride and rebellion. It flies in the very face of the Lordship of God and His authority over us. It is equivalent to idolatry in its wickedness. 1 Samuel 15:23 says, "*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and **stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."*

SOLUTION:

1. Submission to God.

James 4:7, "**Submit yourselves** therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

2. Submission to government.

1 Peter 2:13, "**Submit yourselves** to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;"

3. Submission to elders and one another.

1 Peter 5:5, "*Likewise, ye younger, **submit yourselves** unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*"

4. Submission to Church leaders.

Hebrews 13:17, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and **submit yourselves**: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*"

5. Wives: submission to husbands.

Colossians 3:18, "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*"

Ephesians 5:22, "*Wives, **submit yourselves** unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*"

A humble and submissive life to all authority is an open door to answered prayer.

H. Unbelief

James 1:5-7, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*"

Unbelief hinders the work of God.

Matthew 13:58, "*And he did not many mighty works there*

because of their unbelief."

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

Mark 6:6, "And He marvelled because of their unbelief..."

Mark 16:14, "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

Hebrews 3:12;19, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ...So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

We must get serious about our faith. Unbelief is a sin in which a tiny little human being doubts an Almighty God. To speak or act injuriously toward God or His character is blasphemy. Hence, unbelief borders on blasphemy.

SOLUTION:

1. Unbelief can be helped by the Lord.

Mark 9:23-24, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

2. Unbelief can be helped by preachers.

1 Thessalonians 3:10, "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"

I. Self-Indulgence

James 4:3-4, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Prayers are sometimes unanswered because of the wrong motive: self and its lusts. Some believers think God exists to give them everything their worldly hearts desire. They are not interested in God's work or in being spiritual people, but only in the here and now.

They do not receive answers to their prayers and wonder why. They are self-indulgent, and God does not answer the prayers of self-indulgent people.

SOLUTION:

1. Seek righteousness first.

Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

2. Set your affection on the things of God.

Colossians 3:2, "Set your affection [passions, desires, attachments] on things above, not on things on the earth."

3. Saturate your mind and heart with the Word of God so you will begin to think like God.

Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

When our motives, affections, and thoughts are right with God, they will guide our prayers away from self-indulgence to what is acceptable to God. Our concern will mainly be *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."* (Matthew 6:10).

J. Neglect of Marital Duties.

1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

The word "hindered" here is a metaphor referring to a road

that is broken up, hindering traffic from proceeding. When we repair our marriages, we repair the road back to fellowship and answered prayer. The condition of a husband to his wife is extremely important to God, so much so that He will not answer their prayers when this relationship is not right.

SOLUTION:

1. Dwell with your wife according to knowledge.

Study what the Bible says about being a good husband. Practice it by the grace of God and with the help of the Holy Spirit.

2. Give honor unto the wife.

The word honor means “to hold up in high esteem, to elevate, to look up to.” The husband must make sure he does not look down on his wife or treat her with disrespect. He should not use her.

3. Be heirs together of the grace of life.

The husband should strive toward togetherness with his wife, enjoying the goodness of God as a team.

K. Prayerlessness.

James 4:2, *“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”*

At times, Christians go about trying to fulfill ungodly desires in very ungodly ways. As a result, the fellowship of the believers is often marred by fighting. This can leave very bad taste in the mouth of some church members. These things are the marks of a church that is not praying. *“Ye have not, because ye ask not.”*

Prayerlessness is one of the greatest hindrances to answered prayer. It does not take a college education to figure out why: If you do not ask for something, you will not receive it!

SOLUTION:

1. Have the proper desires, wants and wishes.

Psalms 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

2. Pray about everything.

Take Philippians 4:6-7 literally when it says "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

God promised to provide all of your needs. You will not have to lust, kill, desire, fight, or war for what you need, if you pray for it instead. [Note that there is often a very big difference between our wants and our needs!]

L. Neglect of Salvation.

John 9:31, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."

A parent does not have to listen to or take care of the neighbor's children, and neither does the Lord have to hear or answer the prayers of the unsaved. He might, but He does not have to.

We become God's children when we are saved and put faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus, as our Savior. Galatians 3:26 says, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

Trust Christ as your Saviour right now. Ask Him to come into your heart and life and save you from your sins right now. He will always answer that prayer.

Possibilities of Prayer

It is not possible to discuss all the possibilities of prayer in this section. Each one reading this has a potential for prayer that cannot be imagined. Ephesians 3:20-21, *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

Let us see what the Lord did or can do through prayer, as we travel through the Bible. May these encourage and inspire us to explore the possibilities of prayer in our lives.

A. The Right Wife Can Be Found Through Prayer.

Genesis 24:12-21, *“And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.”*

“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

“And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

“And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again

unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

“And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.”

Abraham wanted a good wife for his son Isaac. He sends his oldest, most trustworthy servant to look for one. He instructed him to find a believer, not one from a heathen nation. The servant goes, prays, and God speedily leads him to Rebekah. Rebekah marries Isaac and fifty years later we see them still getting along.

Genesis 26:8, *“And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.”*

It is startling to see how many people enter marriage or courting without even uttering one prayer. Is it any wonder the divorce rate is over 50% in America? Young people should let parents, elders, and prayer be involved in the process of picking a lifelong mate.

B. The Heart of Esau is Changed Through Prayer.

Genesis 32:6-12, *“And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.*

“Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”

Jacob had stolen Esau's birthright and blessing. Esau vowed to kill him (see Genesis 27:41). Esau stalked Jacob for 20 years. Now Jacob can't hide anymore. God makes him face his fears. God tests his mettle, character, spirituality and prayer life.

God answers his prayer, and delivers Jacob from the mess he had put himself into.

Genesis 33:4-5, "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant."

These are hardly the actions of a person who hated Jacob. How did Esau change? Through prayer. Yes, through prayer God can change the way an unsaved person acts toward us.

Remember what type of person Esau was: Hebrews 12:16-17, *"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."*

Esau was never God's child. Yet God changed his actions through fervent, importunate prayer.

C. The Earth is Stopped Through Prayer.

Joshua 10:12-14, "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

Joshua is doing the will of the Lord. He is fighting the

battles of the Lord. He needs more time. He asks. The earth stops for a whole day. That is a miracle – that is prayer answered!

D. Weather Elements Changed Through Prayer.

1 Samuel 12:17-18, *“Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.”*

The people had greatly sinned against the Lord in choosing humanism (a king) over Theism (the Lord) as their form of government.

Samuel taught the people a lesson by nature. He pronounced that he would call the Lord to send thunder and rain that day. The Lord did it. Result: The people feared God and Samuel.

Prayer can strengthen our testimony in the sight of others. Certainly our children will be helped by moms and dads who get specific answers to prayer. Pray for miracles so others will learn to fear the Lord.

E. Elijah Stops the Rain Through Prayer.

James 5:16-18, *“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”*

The history of this is found in 1 Kings 17:1-18:46. Please read it sometime.

Elijah was not a superman. He was a man of “like passions” as we are, but he prayed!

F. The Dead are Raised Through Prayer.

1. Elijah raises the widow's son through prayer.

1 Kings 17:17-24, *“And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.*

“And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

“And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

*“And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and **the soul of the child came into him again**, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.*

“And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.”

The boy was dead. His soul had left him. Elijah prayed specifically for the boy's soul to come back into him. It did. This changed the widow from a bitter woman to a believing woman. Pray for miracles so that others may change.

2. Peter raises Dorcas through prayer.

Acts 9:36-42, *“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.*

“And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them.

“When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

“But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

“And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.”

The words of Peter’s prayers are not known, only that he prayed and Dorcas, who had died, came back to life. Many were saved through this miracle. Pray for miracles that others may come to know the Lord.

G. Hezekiah’s Life Extended Through Prayer.

Isaiah 38:1-5, “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.”

Hezekiah is on his death bed. He has already been told that he will die. He makes specific prayer for his life. The Lord hears his prayers and sees his tears. The Lord’s mind is changed through prayer, and He adds fifteen more years to Hezekiah’s life.

H. The Earth Goes Backward Through Prayer

2 Kings 20:8-11, "And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz."

After Hezekiah was healed, he asked the Lord for a sign. Knowing the sundial always goes forward, Hezekiah asks that the sundial go backwards. The Lord answered. The earth stopped rotating and went backwards ten degrees. All through prayer.

I. Forgiveness and Healing of a Nation Brought Through Prayer.

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Prayer is mandatory. But believers must also humble themselves. We must seek God's face in the Word of God and meditation. We must turn from our wicked ways.

J. A Gentile Girl is Delivered From the Devil Through Prayer.

Matthew 15:22-28, "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Mothers can receive great things through prayer. There are many troubled children in our world today who can be helped through the fervent prayers of a mom or caring Christian.

K. Prisoners Released Through Prayer.

1. The Church prays for Peter's release from jail.

Acts 12:1-11, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread.

"And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

"And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

"When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

“And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.”

The church’s prayer was not perfect in faith, but they prayed! The Good Lord honored their faith and released Peter.

2. Paul and Silas pray for their own deliverance.

Acts 16:25-32, “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.

“And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

“Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

The Lord answered their prayer miraculously. An earthquake released them. The result: A man and his family heard the gospel and were saved.

L. Publius’ Father Healed Through Prayer.

Acts 28:7-10, “In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island,

came, and were healed: Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary."

One man's healing led to others seeking the same. Prayer can prompt others to seek God's wonders in their lives also.

We are directly told to pray for healing in the Bible. James 5:14-16, *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

To not call on God for health needs is to shun the Creator and Designer of the body. Let us not be like Asa who make this wrong choice.

2 Chronicles 16:12, *"And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians."*

M. Mountains Moved Through Prayer.

Mountains are big things. They are obstacles in our way.

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

"Mountains" can be put in our way by God to prove us; by the Devil to hinder us; or by ourselves because of our wrong choices, ignorance, or stupidity. Nevertheless, God is in the mountain-moving business through prayer.

N. Small Things Moved Through Prayer.

Luke 17:6, *"And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of*

mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

The Sycamine tree grows only to twenty, sometimes thirty feet in height. An axe or a chain saw can easily bring this tree down. The point is: God so often wants to do even the small things for us if we will just ask Him. We are told in scripture to pray about **everything**:

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

Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

O. Opportunities to Preach the Gospel Come Through Prayer.

Colossians 4:3-4, "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."

Note: We should pray for the Lord to open doors to preach the gospel, but we should also **make** opportunities to preach by going out and doing it on purpose. Both are taught in the Word.

P. Fruit From Our Preaching Will Remain Through Prayer.

John 15:2,5,8 "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ...I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ...Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

And He wants our fruit to remain:

John 15:16, *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."*

Enduring fruit is accomplished by gospel preaching, and much prayer. May the Lord use your efforts and prayers to bring people to Christ and into his glorious church. That will be a joy to you in Heaven.

1 Thessalonians 2:19;20, *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."*

Q. We Can Be Filled With the Holy Spirit Through Prayer

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

There are some examples of this in the scriptures:

Acts 1:14; 2:1-4, *"These all continued with one accord **in prayer** and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all **filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Acts 4:31, *"And when they had **prayed**, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all **filled with the Holy Ghost**, and they spake the word of God with boldness."*

Acts 8:15, *"Who, when they were come down, **prayed** for them, that they might **receive the Holy Ghost**:"*

The greatest need in the church today is for more men, women, and children who are filled with the Holy Spirit instead of self.

There are so many other stories or promises that could be mentioned here. Like the writer of Hebrews, we must admit that the possibilities of faith and prayer are endless: Hebrews 11:32-34, *“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”*

In a nutshell, it could be said about prayer’s possibilities: Matthew 21:22, *“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”*

Now spend the rest of your life seeing what God will do for you through your prayers! Don’t miss out by not asking.

Paul's Prayers

Besides the Lord Jesus, the greatest prayer warrior in the New Testament was the Apostle Paul. The Holy Spirit produced a man of prayer, then recorded his prayers in writing. His prayers were not just surface prayers, but some of the deepest, most spiritual requests recorded in the Bible. Let us examine them closer:

A. Paul's Greetings and Benedictions of Grace and Peace.

Every epistle (letter) written by the Apostle Paul begins and ends with grace and peace. Grace was so important to Paul that he wished it would be with and on all those he wrote to. We should also wish and pray for the grace of God to be on all that we are ministering to. Take time to read:

Romans 1:7; 16:20; 16:24

1 Corinthians 1:3; 16:23

2 Corinthians 1:2; 13:14

Galatians 1:3; 6:18

Ephesians 1:2; 6:24

Philippians 1:2; 4:23

Colossians 1:2; 4:18

1 Thessalonians 1:1; 5:28

2 Thessalonians 1:2; 3:18

1 Timothy 1:2; 6:21*

2 Timothy 1:2; 4:22*

Titus 1:4; 3:15*

Philemon 1:3; 1:25

(*It should be noted that in these three Pastoral Epistles [letters to the Pastors] the writer Paul adds to his greeting the word "mercy." As a fellow preacher he knew of the perils and misunderstandings of the ministry. 2 Timothy 4:16, *"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."*

A preacher's message is sometimes hated and he is considered an enemy just for preaching it – Galatians 4:16, *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”*

He is sometimes killed for preaching the truth. 2 Timothy 4:6, *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”*

Preachers need mercy. The late Evangelist Lester Roloff lamented, *“The preacher is the first one to forgive, but the last to be forgiven.”*)

B. Paul Prays in Prison.

We have already covered the story of Acts 16:19-34 under *“Possibilities of Prayer”*. Let us take note, however, that where others may have sulked after being thrown into jail for doing the work of the Lord, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises. God gave a miracle and an entire family was saved and baptized.

C. Paul's Farewell Prayer With the Church at Ephesus

Acts 20:36-38, *“And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”*

After spending three years in Ephesus the apostle Paul recapped his tremendous ministry in Acts 20:17-35. Perhaps no man will ever make the same claims as he did. Take time to read this incredible passage.

Paul prayed with this church family before he left Ephesus. Prayer meetings are important meetings.

D. Paul's Farewell Prayer With the Disciples at Tyre.

Acts 21:2-5, *“And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre:*

for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

Very similar to what we just read in Ephesus, Paul likewise prays with the disciples at Tyre before he leaves them. All types of ages and people were there. This is a good model.

E. Paul's Prayer for the Believers in Rome.

Romans 1:9-12, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

Paul's request for the Roman believers was threefold:

1. That God would impart unto them some spiritual gift

Sadly, most believers go through life never knowing what their spiritual gift is and what they are to do with it to benefit others. Paul taught them about spiritual gifts later (Romans 12:4-8).

2. That they would be established.

Spiritual gifts are to be used to establish others, not to edify ourselves.

3. That they would attain a mutual faith with Paul.

We can read about this faith in Ephesians 4:3-16. Spiritual gifts practiced should produce mutual faith.

1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Let us pray that God would impart to others a spiritual

gift and that they will use that gift to establish others, till we all come to a mutual faith in our church.

F. Paul's Prayer for Israel's Salvation.

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

Jews can be saved. Romans 10:12-13, *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

We need to pray for the salvation of Israel and all Jews. Psalms 122:6, *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."* It is not wrong to be patriotic and desire for your nation to be saved.

G. Paul's Prayer for the Believers at Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:15-19, *"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,"*

Paul's request for the Ephesian believers was threefold:

1. That God would give the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

The more we learn about God the more of the seven attributes (called spirits) of God we will enjoy. They are listed in Isaiah 11:2, *"And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;"*

Whether we understand these attributes or not, God can

give them to us. Do you need wisdom today? Does someone you know need revelation from God? Then pray to God and increase your knowledge of Him.

2. That they would know the hope of His calling.

The word “hope” in old English means, “anticipation, expectation, confidence.”

This statement is about Heaven. It is followed by the phrase *“and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...”*

Paul said it this way to the church at Colosse: Colossians 1:5, *“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;”*

We should pray that believers are Heavenly minded. Colossians 3:2, *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

3. That they would know God’s power.

This is the working of His mighty power in us. This same power raised Christ from the dead, set Him at God’s right hand and gave Him victory over every principality, power, might, and dominion, not only in this world but in the one that is to come. That is the same exact power that can work in us. Pray for power! (See Colossians 1:29.)

H. Paul’s Prayers for the Believer’s at Philippi.

Philippians 1:4,9-11, *“Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”*

This prayer was five fold:

1. That their love would abound more and more in knowledge.

Love is learned. God gives us some love to start with, but

we are to increase in its knowledge so we can love better. For example: “Charity” has eighteen definitions in the New Testament. Certainly the person who knows these will be able to love better than one who has no working definition of love.

2. That their love would abound more and more in judgment.

Judgment of someone else is usually predicated on pride – we tear down the other person to build ourselves up. That pride needs to be repented of, and with humility and love we need to make judgments. Jesus said, “*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement.*” (John 7:24).

3. That they would prove things that are excellent.

Good is often the enemy of the best. The master deceiver, Satan, in all his ungodly subtlety, loves to bog believers down in doing good things. These good things then keep us from the best things – excellent things. (1 Thessalonians 5:21; Ephesians 5:11).

Example: A man may coach in the Little League and help a lot of boys grow to be good men, but he never tells them about Christ and eternity. How has he helped them? In this life only? Is that what God wants?

Example: A woman may work with the Girl Scouts. She may teach a lot of girls some wonderful things that will help them all of this life, but what about eternity? Where will their souls be?

Pray, like Paul, that you will approve things that are excellent in your life.

4. That they would be sincere and without offence until the day of Christ.

To be sincere means to be without any hypocrisy. To be without offence means to be blameless in the sight of God and man. The testimony of the believer is of utmost importance. The world is watching us. Souls hang in the balance. Pray for Christians to be blameless testimonies.

5. That they would be filled with the fruits of righteousness

These “fruits of righteousness” are mentioned in two other New Testament Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 9:10, “Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;”

James 3:17-18, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

If a believer is living a truly righteous life, his life will be fruitful. True righteousness always bears fruit.

I. Paul’s Prayers for the Believers at Colosee.

Colossians 1:9-12, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

This prayer was five-fold:

1. That they might be filled with the knowledge of His will.

God’s will is not supposed to be a mystery. We are supposed to have clear wisdom and spiritual understanding. His revealed will is the instructions in the Bible. His concealed will is the gifts and callings He gives to those who are faithful.

2. That they may walk worthy of the Lord.

The believer is often told to walk worthy of being a child of God. What a task. What a high calling. This can be done only through prayer.

Ephesians 4:1, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech

you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,"

1 Thessalonians 2:12, *"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."*

Revelation 3:4, *"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."*

3. That they be fruitful in every good work.

Pray that every good work you do would bear fruit for our Lord. The goal, vision, and end of everything we do should be to bring forth fruit for God.

4. That they increase in the knowledge of God.

Pray for more knowledge of God. This is a lifelong pursuit and therefore a lifelong prayer – "Lord, show me more of you."

5. That they be strengthened with all might.

This is accomplished by His glorious power. Pray for power! Believers should not be weak and defeated. We should be a mighty army, living in the victory – always triumphing. Pray for yourself, others and your church to have power.

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