

PRAYING WITH FIRE

PART 1 OF 2

STUDIES 1 - 13

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

Praying With Fire

Part 1 of 2

Studies 1 - 13

Teacher Manual

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

SEVEN STEPS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Part 1 of 2 - Four Steps

STUDY 1

Scripture Portions: James 1:6-8; Joshua 1:8; Matthew 7:7-8; Mark 11:23-24

STEP 1 - DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT FROM GOD.

James 1:6-8 - *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.*

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

The above scriptures show us the importance of decisiveness.

James said that if a man wavers, if he cannot make up his mind, he is unstable in *all* his ways and cannot expect to receive anything of the Lord.

So many times we are indefinite in our praying.

When I have asked people what they are praying for, they sometimes answer that they do not know! One person said he was praying just to be praying.

Of course, there is one kind of prayer in which we pray to worship and have fellowship with God.

But in this lesson we are dealing primarily with praying to get an answer to our prayers.

If we are not careful, this general type of praying will carry over when we need to be specific about a certain need.

If you went to a grocery store and pushed your cart up and down the aisles without buying anything, people would think something was wrong with you. But if you send a child to buy certain items and he buys just those things, then he is being definite.

The same is true with praying. It would be better to pray for two or three minutes and know what you are praying about than to pray aimlessly for two or three hours.

Decide what you want from God and be definite about it.

STEP 2 - READ SCRIPTURES THAT PROMISE THE ANSWER YOU NEED.

Joshua 1:8 - *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

In order to be successful in our prayer life, God's Word must be foremost. As we feed upon His Word, we build this into our inner consciousness. Then, in time of need, we are prepared and can use the appropriate scriptures against the devil when he tries to make us doubt God and rob us of what we want.

When, in the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread, Jesus answered with the Word.

Matthew 4:3-4 - *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Luke 4:3-4 - *And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Then Satan took Him upon an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. He told Jesus that if He would fall down and worship him, he would give all these kingdoms to Him.

Again Jesus answered with the Word.

Matthew 4:8-10 - *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Luke 4:5-8 - *And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Satan took Him to the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him - "Cast Thyself down."

Again Jesus answered with the Word.

Matthew 4:5-7 - *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Luke 4:9-12 - *And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:*

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Jesus did not use a single weapon to defeat the devil other than that which believers have today - the Word of God.

All we have to do in the face of temptation and doubt is to say, "It is written." If the scriptures are firmly implanted in our hearts, we are prepared for any attacks of the devil.

1. In matters of guidance, search the scriptures to see what God has to say about any situation. His Word plainly shows us His will.

If the scriptures do not promise us what we may be seeking, then we do not have any business praying for it. We should not want anything that the Word of God says we should not have.

On the other hand, when praying for things that are expressly promised in the Word, we can have complete confidence that God will give us what we need.

Years ago I wrote in red ink on the fly leaf of my Bible "The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it!"

b. Many people try to pray beyond their faith. It is the Word of God that gives faith.

Romans 10:17 - *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

The reason that people do not pray with confidence and faith is that they do not know the scriptures well enough to know if what they are praying for is God's will. They may hope it is, but they do not know it is.

As we read God's Word and learn His will, we can appropriate His promises for our every need.

STEP 3 - ASK GOD FOR THE THINGS YOU WANT.

Matthew 7:7-8 - *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Jesus said in -

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

Yet in the next chapter He tells us to ask Him for our needs as we see in the verses quoted above. Therefore, even though He knows our needs, He wants us to bring them to Him and to ask His help.

STEP 4 - BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE.

Mark 11:23-24 - *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

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

Verse 24 in the Amplified Bible says - *".....whatever you ask for in prayer, believe--trust and be confident--that it is granted to you, and you will [get it]."*

You have got to believe you have it before you get it.

To understand this better, we need to realize that there are two kinds of truth: sense-knowledge truth and revelation truth.

Some people think that truth pertains to things they can see with their physical eye.

But we cannot see the things of the Spirit. They are not flesh and they are not material. Everything that we need is provided for us in the spiritual realm.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

When “sense-knowledge truth” contradicts “revelation truth” or the Word of God, then I start walking by what God says. That which is in the spiritual realm is made real in the natural realm through truth.

Faith grasps it and creates the reality of it in our life.

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.*

This is beyond our natural thinking. The natural mind cannot grasp it.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

Once, in a small church, I got too warm while preaching. When I stepped outdoors after the service my body was wet with perspiration. When the cold outdoor air hit me in the face, my throat started hurting. By the time I reached the parking lot I could hardly speak. The next day my chest started hurting and I could not speak above a whisper. I started reading the scriptures on healing.

With my Bible open before me, I prayed silently and said, “Lord, Your Word tells me that I am healed. If I asked my body if I were healed, the answer would be no. If I asked my feelings if I were healed, the answer would be no. If I were to ask the people around me if I were healed, they would say that I was not.”

“Your Word says that God is truth and every man is a liar. So, if I say I am not healed, I am a liar. Your Word says that God cannot lie -

Romans 3:4 - *God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

When it came time for the evening service, I got up to preach. Stepping up to the microphone, I said that I wanted to thank God that I was healed.

The congregation looked at me as if I were crazy because I was barely whispering.

I began to tell them what the Word of God says is true and that if I said I was not healed, I would be lying. I told them that I wanted them to stand and praise God with me because I was healed.

As we stood and began praising God, I had not said, “Hallelujah” three times until my voice came back. Then I preached my sermon with a strong, clear voice. That night the congregation saw an illustration of faith in action.

All we have to do is ask God for the things we want, and believe that we have them.

Memory Text.

Matthew 7:7-8 - *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

SEVEN STEPS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Part 2 of 2 - Three Steps STUDY 2

Scripture Portions: Proverbs 4:20-22; Philippians 4:6

Last week's lesson covered four steps to be taken in order to see our prayers answered:

1. Decide what you want from God.

Be definite in laying your petitions before Him.

2. Read scriptures that promise the answer you need.

- a. Search the Bible for scriptures that apply to your particular need.
2. With God's Word firmly implanted in your heart, you can be prepared against Satan's attacks.

3. Ask God for the things you want.

Even though He knows what we have need of, it is His divine plan that we make known to Him our wants.

4. Believe that you receive.

A stubborn faith that refuses to look at circumstances produces results.

In this lesson, we will deal with three more steps which we can take to pray more effectively.

STEP 5 - REFUSE TO DOUBT.

Let every thought and desire affirm that you have what you ask. Never permit a mental picture of failure to remain in your mind. Never doubt for one minute that you have the answer.

If doubts persist, rebuke them. Keep your mind on the answer.

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

Doubts are of the devil. Resist them.

Eradicate every image, suggestion, feeling or thought which does not contribute to your faith that you will have what you ask.

Enjoy those things that do contribute to your faith.

Our thoughts are governed by observation, association and teachings. We must guard against every evil thought and every doubt that comes into the mind.

We must stay away from all places and things that do not support the affirmation that God has answered our prayer. Sometimes this means staying away from churches that teach more doubt than faith.

Philippians 4:8 - *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

STEP 6 - MEDITATE ON THE PROMISES.

Proverbs 4:20-22 - *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Meditate constantly on the promises upon which you based the answer to your prayer. See yourself in possession of what you have asked God for, and make plans accordingly as if it was already a reality.

God will make His Word good to you if you will act upon it. If God's Word says that He hears and answers prayer, and if that Word does not depart from before your eyes, then you are sure to see yourself with the things for which you asked.

1 John 5:14-15 - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

If you do not see yourself with them, then God's Word has departed from before your eyes. If you do not stand by the Word, then, even though God wants to stand by you, He cannot.

The only way God works is through His Word. He moves in line with His Word. He has magnified His Word above His Name.

Psalm 138:2 - *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*

If you stand by the Word, God will stand by you.

Many people pray and pray, but they do not pray by the Word.

John 15:7 - *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

With His words abiding in us, we have ground on which to stand.

STEP 7 - GIVE GOD THE PRAISE.

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.*

The words "be careful for nothing" mean "in nothing be anxious."

It means, "Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything."

As long as we fret and are anxious, praying and fasting will not do any good.

This verse says "with thanksgiving." This comes after praying about the matter. We thank God for the answer after we have prayed for it.

Therefore, the final step to answered prayer is to lift your heart to God constantly in gratitude and increasing praise for what He has done and for what He is doing for you now.

Make every prayer concerning what you have asked for a statement of faith and praise instead of unbelief.

You can say that you do have faith as easily as you can think thoughts of doubt and unbelief.

It is thinking faith thoughts and speaking faith words that lead the heart out of defeat and into victory.

Do not accept defeat.

Do not be denied.

It is your family right, your redemption right, to have what God has promised. It is yours and it will come. So, accept it and it will become a reality.

Andrew Murray said, "It is not good taste to ask God for the same thing over and over again. If, when you do pray again, what you have prayed for has not materialized, do not pray for it in the same way because that would be unbelief."

Remind God that you asked for it and what his Word says. Tell Him that you are expecting it. Then, thank Him for it."

Many times people undo their prayers. They get into unbelief and stay there as if they are spinning their wheels.

The Christian who will practice these seven steps to answered prayer will discover great victory in his prayer.

Memory Text.

John 15:7 - *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

THE PRAYER THAT UNLOCKS HEAVEN

STUDY 3

Scripture Portions: John 16:23-24; Ephesians 5:20

When we go to our automobile, we have a key that unlocks the door. We may say that we unlock the door, but really it is the key that does it. We have a key that fits the ignition. We could not start the car without that key. The key is the important factor in driving that car. We could get nowhere without it.

There is a key to prayer without which we can get nowhere. This key will unlock the doors and windows of heaven and grant every need.

We read about this key in -

John 16:23-24 - *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.
24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

THE NAME OF JESUS.

Jesus is our Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate and Lord. He stands between us and the Father.

No place in the Bible is it recorded that Jesus told His disciples to pray to Him. They were always told to pray to the Father in His Name. Therefore, if we wish to be sure of our prayers reaching the throne, we must come according to the rules laid down in the Word of God.

In the scripture quoted above, notice that Jesus said -

John 16:23 - *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.....*

He said this before He went away and was talking about the mediatorial session at the right hand of the Father when He ascended and was seated.

Another translation reads, "In that day ye shall not pray to Me....."

Jesus said to ask the Father in His Name.

This is the key that will unlock heaven in our behalf.

We can tell Jesus how much we love Him, but when it comes to praying and asking, we must ask the Father through the Lord Jesus.

We read in -

Ephesians 3:14-15 - *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

It is not important which church to which we belong, but it is important to which family we belong.

OVERFLOWING JOY.

John 16:24 - *.....ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

There is real joy in knowing that the Father will answer our prayers.

The beloved preacher, Smith Wigglesworth, worked for many years as a plumber before he began his full time preaching ministry.

One time, while installing plumbing in a large house, he noticed that the lady of the house kept coming in, looking around and then leaving. Finally she came in, sat down beside where he was working and asked -

“What in the world is it that causes that wonderful expression on your face? You look as if you are full of joy.”

He told her that that morning at breakfast his wife had told him that two of their children were very ill. Before they ate, they went upstairs, laid hands on the children and prayed for them. They were instantly healed. They then came downstairs with their parents and joined them for breakfast.

Wigglesworth said, “Was it not so wonderful to have such a wonderful Jesus?” He told her that the scripture says -

John 16:24 - *.....ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

“Certainly our joy could not be full if our children were ill. But the Lord told us to ask Him for what we needed, that our joy may be full.”

The woman asked Wigglesworth if Jesus would save her also and give her this wonderful joy. Wigglesworth told her that she, too, could be saved and experience this peace and joy. While she was standing there, she accepted the Lord.

She was happy and rejoicing and asked him if she would keep this joy. He answered that the only way to keep it was to give it away. He told her that she should tell all the women in her club meeting about her salvation. She did and all of them were saved.

This is the way to keep it - tell about it.

If, when Wigglesworth went to work, he had had two sick children at home, his joy would not have been full. He would have been worried. He would have looked distressed.

Instead, he had a light on his face, a radiance that was obvious to all who saw him. Something seemed to be flowing out of him. What was it?

It was the joy that the Father has promised when we ask Him for our needs and receive in faith.

On another occasion, Wigglesworth was in dire financial circumstances. At the time, he was in London visiting in the home of a wealthy man. Wigglesworth simply committed his financial burden to the Lord and refused to worry about it. He knew the Lord would take care of it.

While he and his friend were out walking in the park, Wigglesworth was happy and was singing as they walked along. He did not mention his need to his friend for he had committed it to the Lord.

Instead, he was happy and rejoicing in his spirit.

His friend commented that he would give all he owned just to have the same spirit of joy that Wigglesworth had.

Wigglesworth told him that it would not cost him anything. All he had to do was to cast all his cares on Jesus. He explained that this was what he had done and, without a care in the world, he could now be free and happy.

He did not mention to his friend his financial need, but instead talked of victory and joy in Christ Jesus.

One man had material help but no joy.

The other lacked for material things but was filled with joy.

What was the secret?

Wigglesworth knew the truth of the scripture -

John 16:14 - *.....ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

Can your joy be full if you have great financial burdens pressing you? Can your joy be full if you have unpaid bills that are due?

If you have committed these needs to the Lord, if you have asked Him to supply your needs and believe that “ye shall receive,” then your joy can be full.

3. JOY THAT PRECEDES THE FACT.

Sometimes you have the joy before you will have what you are praying for. If you are worrying and trying to figure matters out alone, you hinder God from helping you, for then you are carrying the burden instead of letting Him carry it.

In fact, if you are worrying about them, it will do little good to pray for you will not be praying in faith.

Philippians 4:6-7 - *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

John 16:24 - *.....ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

We are full of joy even before the thing we have asked for materializes because we know He heard us. We have His Word.

Ephesians 5:20 - *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

Notice here that Paul tells us that we are to give thanks always for all things in the Name of Jesus “unto God and the Father.”

In all of our real praise and thanksgiving, the Name of Jesus is the access to the heart of the Father. When you wish to get an answer to your prayers, follow the teachings of the Word.

Someone has said that the way in which we pray does not make much difference.

If it made no difference, why would God have inspired Paul to write his epistles as he did?

To say that these verses are not important would make as much sense as it would to say that -

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

is not important. Then we must also believe that all scriptures are important and are for our instructions in our walk with God.

When you wish to get an answer to your prayers, follow the teachings of the Lord and pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus.

When many people pray, they conclude, “for Jesus’ sake.”

WE ARE TAUGHT TO PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

If you were to go to the bank and ask the cashier to cash a cheque for a friend, he would ask you if you had an account there with money enough to guarantee this cheque. If you had not, the cashier would not cash the cheque.

But, if you came with a cheque for a man who had an account in that bank, you would be able to cash the cheque.

The same is true when we go to God and tell Him to do something for Jesus’ sake. We are asking that it be done to help Jesus and on our credit.

If I had a stomach ache and I ask God to heal me for Jesus’ sake, that is foolish. It is my stomach that hurts. I do not want to be healed for Him. I am the one who needs the help.

Jesus has the standing or credit and we can come in His Name.

It makes a lot of difference what is our outlook and attitude.

The reason that we fail many times in our praying is that our approach is all wrong.

Sometimes we think that, because of our own merit or our own goodness, God should answer our prayers.

When Peter and John had ministered to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, as recorded in **Acts 3**, the people who gathered around were amazed and thought that it was through some special power of these men that the lame man was healed.

But, Peter said -

Acts 3:12 -*Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

It is not by our own power or holiness that we get an answer to prayer. We do not get our prayers answered because we are good. They are answered because of Jesus. He has the standing in heaven. He is the only approach to the Father.

We cannot get there any other way. It is in His Name that we can come.

Jesus gave us the right and the authority to use His Name.

The key to seeing answers to our prayers is through the mighty Name of Jesus.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS' NAME

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Mark 16:17-18

Mark 16:17-18 - *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

1. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS' NAME.

God hears and answers prayer.

We might as well settle that point. It works!

Too much of the time, people just make a stab in the dark at praying. They call it praying and let it go at that. They hope that something works out some way or somehow.

But we need to take our stand on God's Word and let heaven, hell and earth know that God's Word is true and that we believe it.

We need to be able to grow in prayer.

Many times God condescends to meet us on an elementary level, but it is better when we can grow spiritually and meet Him on His level.

The Bible teaches that there is a similarity between physical and spiritual growth.

1 Peter 2:2 - *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

No one is born a fully grown adult. We are born as babies and grow up.

No one is born a fully grown Christian. Christians are as newborn babes and then grow up.

As we mature in the Word, we should be able to improve our prayer life.

When I was a child, I prayed, "Now I lay me down to sleep....." But I do not pray that way anymore. I have grown beyond that.

When we were spiritual babes, we might have prayed certain ways, but God wants us to grow spiritually. God will require more of us now than He did even a few years ago.

When light comes and teaching is given, God requires us to walk in the light of it.

2. BELIEVERS' RIGHTS IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

Mark 16:17-18 - *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

In our last lesson we studied Christ's teachings found in -

John 16:23-24 - *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.
24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

concerning the fact that prayer should be addressed to the Father in Jesus' Name. We saw that this is the key to having our prayers answered. In this lesson, we will look at the rights we have in Jesus' Name.

1. Jesus gave us the power of attorney.

This is the right to use His Name, not only in praying for our individual needs, but also in dealing with the devil.

He said, "In My Name shall they cast out devils....."

When Jesus appointed the seventy disciples and sent them forth -

Luke 10:17 - *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*

Paul cast an evil spirit out of a girl -

Acts 16:16-18 - *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:*

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

- b. Speaking with new tongues.**

Jesus also said in -

Mark 16:17 - *.....In my name.....they shall speak with new tongues;*

3. Take up serpents.

The next verse says that in Jesus' Name -

Mark 16:18 - *.....They shall take up serpents;.....*

This does not mean, of course, that we are to take up serpents and handle them just to try to prove something.

It means that, if we are accidentally bitten, as Paul was on the island of Malta, we can shake off the serpent and claim immunity in the Name of Jesus. We read of this in -

Acts 28:3-6 - *And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.*

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

Paul was shipwrecked and picked up some sticks to build a fire. A viper came out of the bundle and fastened onto his hand.

The people who saw this, expected him to fall dead at any moment. When he did not die, become sick or his hand even become swollen, the people knew they had witnessed a miracle.

I have heard of a similar experience in our day. A woman missionary in a foreign country was stung by a deadly scorpion.

There was no antidote for the bite in those days. Its sting was always fatal. No one had ever been known to live after being bitten.

The missionary was out on the street when the scorpion stung her. The people watching, expected her to swell up and die. But she just shook it off in Jesus' Name and did not even get sick to her stomach.

As a result, many of those people were saved.

4. If they drink any deadly thing.

The scripture further says, "and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

Again, this does not mean that we can drink something poisonous just to try to prove a point.

It means that, if we do so accidentally drink something deadly, we can claim immunity in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A number of years ago, a religious denomination was holding a convention in Corpus Christi, Texas. After the people began to gather at the grounds where they were having the convention, some of them began to fall ill.

Soon, about twenty or thirty people were desperately sick and they began praying for one another. As they prayed, someone had a revelation that the water in one of the hotels was poisoned.

This was in the days when they did not have running water, but had a pitcher and bowl on a washstand in each room. This person cautioned the rest of the people not to drink any more water.

The Lord answered prayer and everyone was healed. No one even had to have his stomach pumped.

A sample of water was taken to a nearby naval station. Laboratory tests showed there was enough poison in the water to kill a regiment of men.

Under such circumstances, we have a right to claim immunity in Jesus' Name.

e. Lay hands on the sick.

Jesus then said -

Mark 16:18 - *.....they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

Do not lay hands on someone and say, "If it be the Lord's will....." Lay your hands on them and claim their deliverance in the Name of Jesus. You have solid ground upon which to stand.

Let me point out that Jesus said, "In My Name....."

It is in His Name that we can cast out devils. It is in His Name that we can speak with new tongues. It is in His Name that we can claim immunity if we accidentally take up serpents or drink any deadly thing.

It is in His Name that gives us authority to claim these things.

Notice also, He said that *we* lay hands on the sick. *We* do the laying on of hands, not Jesus, not the Holy Ghost. *We* lay hands on the sick person in Jesus' Name.

6. Speaking in tongues.

By the same token, we are the ones who talk in tongues.

I have heard folks say, "But I am afraid that was just me." Certainly that was you. You have the right to speak in tongues in Jesus' Name. You do the talking just as much as you lay hands on the sick person.

The Holy Ghost gives you the utterance. You do the talking. This is our right in the Name of Jesus. It belongs to everyone, not just someone especially called.

The ordinary child of God has just as much right to use the Name of Jesus as anyone else.

Let me call your attention to something else here.

3. WE DO NOT HAVE TO STRUGGLE FOR FAITH.

Some people think that if they just had enough faith, they could do these things.

But notice that this passage of scripture does not say a word about faith. Jesus did not say, "if they have enough faith...."

He said -

Mark 16:17 - *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

"In My Name they shall...." and He went on to enumerate our rights through His Name.

We do not have to struggle for faith. It is simply a matter of claiming our rights and boldly using what we know belongs to us.

The Name of Jesus belongs to me as much as my hands and feet belong to me. When I awaken in the morning, I do not pray for God to give me faith to get up and walk. I just get up and walk because I know my feet are there and they are mine.

Certainly the Name of Jesus is just as much mine as my hands and feet are mine, and I can use His Name.

4. PRAYING WITH RESULTS.

1. Praying and getting no results

There are people who pray and pray, but the results do not prove that their prayers were of any value. If you do not get results when you pray, then you need to re-examine your methods.

If you are not praying for results and expecting results, then there is no need to pray.

Just as a business that was not getting results, if it was not making a profit, its management would immediately begin to reevaluate its methods and make the necessary changes.

Industry demands the best technical education. It demands people trained to do their jobs.

Christians, too, should make a business of prayer, the greatest business there is - God's business.

b. Prayer is of the utmost importance.

The basis of Christianity, from a practical side, is a living religion that is in touch with the living God Who hears and answers prayer.

Simply talking into the air is not prayer.

Taking up twenty minutes on Sunday morning giving God a homily on what His duties are toward the church is not prayer.

Giving the congregation a lecture over the shoulder of God is not prayer.

3. We should pray for results.

If we pray and there are no results, it shows that we simply have the form without the power.

All things that God has provided for us are offered to us through prayer. If we do not have them, it is because we have not made our prayer connection.

If we are praying without seeing any results, seek to find the trouble.

Is God untrue?

No! He is true!

Is the day of praying or of miracles over?

No!

Have we been depending upon the promises of a God Who has gone bankrupt?

No!

Then, there is something wrong somewhere, isn't there?

Is it that we are not known in the bank of heaven?

Let us seek to find the cause, uproot any doubt and unbelief, pray as Jesus taught us to pray, to the Father in Jesus' Name - for Jesus stands back of His Word.

When we come according to God's Word, it cannot fail.

Memory text.

John 14:14 - *If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it.*

THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

STUDY 5

Scripture Portions: Matthew 18:18-20; Deuteronomy 32:30; Romans 8:26

Of all the many prayer promises in the Bible, perhaps none is more significant than the one in -

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

Yet, many dedicated Christians go through life having knowledge of the Lord, having a knowledge of the Word, having read and even studied this promise, without really appropriating it into their own lives.

God did not put all these promises relative to prayer in the Bible just to fill up space. They are there for our benefit. They are there for us to use. They are there for us to act upon.

In order to get the full impact of what Jesus is saying in this verse of scripture, let us look at the verses preceding and following it.

Matthew 18:18-20 - *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Notice the phrase in **verse 19** - “.....it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

The strongest assertion one can make in the English language is to say, “I shall” or “I will.” We cannot make a stronger statement than that.

In this scripture, Jesus promised -

Matthew 18:19 - *.....it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

He also said -

John 14:14 - *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Dr. P. C. Nelson was a Greek scholar. He did all of his personal Bible reading and private devotions from the Greek New Testament.

He said that it was more beautiful than the English, and that there were a number of idioms that could not be translated into the English and still retain their fullest meaning.

They had no English counterpart.

Dr. Nelson said that the more literal rendering of Jesus' statement in the Greek is - "*If you shall ask anything in My Name and I do not have it, then I will make it for you.*"

AUTHORITY TO LOOSE AND TO BIND.

We usually apply -

Matthew 18:20 - *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

to a church service. Of course, it can refer to this but what Jesus was really saying here is that wherever there are two people who agree, He is right there to make it good.

Jesus was bringing out the fact that whatever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and, whatever we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Heaven will back us up in what we do on earth.

We have the authority to loose and to bind.

Instead of using this authority, however, too many folks just let the devil bind them. They think they cannot help it if they are defeated and depressed. They think there is nothing they can do about it.

But, they *can* do something about it by acting upon this scripture - by agreeing in prayer with just one other believer.

2. MULTIPLIED PRAYER POWER.

Deuteronomy 32:30 - *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?*

We may be mighty in prayer alone but we can be mightier with someone joining us. We read, in the above verse, that one can chase a thousand but two can put ten thousand to flight.

With someone agreeing with us in prayer, we can do ten times as much as we can do by ourselves.

There does not have to be a great number. Just a husband and wife will do. Just two.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION.

Romans 8:26 - *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.*

The Greek translation of the last phrase of this verse reads, “with groanings that cannot be uttered in articulate speech.” Therefore, this verse includes groanings and praying in tongues also.

In connection with this, Paul said -

1 Corinthians 14:14 - *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

The Amplified version of this verse reads, “.....my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays.....”

Romans 8:26 - *.....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.*

We cannot possibly know, in our natural mind, how to pray as we should, as there are so many things that are known only to God. But, “the Spirit also helps our infirmities.”

The Holy Spirit will help us and will make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered in articulate speech.

This does not mean that it is something the Holy Ghost does apart from you. That would make the Holy Spirit responsible for your prayer life, and He is not.

You are responsible for your prayer life.

Notice that verse says that He “helps.”

He is not sent to do your praying for you. He is sent to help you in every aspect of your life, especially in your prayer life.

There are some things that come out of your heart that cannot be expressed in words. It is the Holy Spirit helping you as these groanings come out of your spirit and escape your lips. It is the Holy Spirit in the ministry of intercession.

A prayer of intercession is praying for another, not for yourself. An intercessor takes the place of another.

I do most of my praying in tongues. Sometimes I may have a revelation or God will show me the answer just exactly. But whether there is a revelation or not, we can pray that way because we know it is biblical.

This kind of praying in the Spirit gets the job done when nothing else will. The Holy Spirit makes intercession through us to the throne of grace.

Memory text.

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

SIX MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN PRAYER

Part 1 of 2 - Three Things

STUDY 6

Scripture Portions: John 16:23-24; Mark 11:24-26

John 16:23-24 - *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.*

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

Mark 11:24-26 - *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

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.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Many times I have asked people, as they get up from praying, what they believe. Too often they have answered, "Well, I hope God heard me." I just tell them that He did not hear them.

The Lord Jesus said that "if you hope you *shall* receive" not "if you hope you *may* receive."

He did not say to keep on keeping on until you get the answer. He said that when you pray, you should believe that you receive.

When you believe that you receive, you do not have to pray all night long. You can go to bed and sleep peacefully, knowing that God has heard and will answer your prayer.

It is the most wonderful thing in the world to be able to pillow your head on the promises of God and go to sleep like a baby.

Everything around you might be in turmoil, but, right in the midst of it, you can have peace.

Today's lesson deals with the six most important things the Christian should know about prayer.

PRAY TO THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

John 16:23-24 - *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.
24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

When Jesus spoke these words, He was here on earth. He was talking about the day in which we now live. He had not, as yet, gone to Calvary. He had not died and been buried. He had not risen from the dead.

The New Testament covenant was not in force when He said this. His blood had not been carried into the Holy of Holies. His blood is the seal of the covenant.

Man had the promise of redemption, but had not yet received it.

Eternal life had been promised but had not yet been provided.

None had the new birth. They had only the promise of it. The new birth is available only under the new covenant.

In the old covenant, the new covenant man's heart was never changed. That is the reason they kept on sinning. They could not help but sin.

Some of the greatest saints of the Old Testament sinned. Even after they were forgiven for one thing, they would go and do something else. Their natures were all wrong. Their hearts were all wrong. They had only a covering for their sins.

But, in the New Testament, God said that He would take that old heart out of us and give us a new one. He said He would put a new spirit within us.

This became available under the new covenant, but it was not available while Jesus was on earth because the new covenant was not yet in force. He had not yet shed His blood.

In this passage of scripture, He was telling His disciples that, after He goes to Calvary is raised from the dead, the people are then to pray to His Father.

When it comes to prayer based on legal grounds, it should be addressed to the Father in the Name of Jesus. This is His instruction.

Even what we refer to as the Lord's prayer, is not New Testament praying.

While Jesus was here on earth, the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. He taught them to pray, "Our Father....." This prayer did not ask a thing in Jesus' Name. His Name was not even mentioned. This prayer was prayed under the old covenant. But, under the new covenant, which was sealed with the precious blood of Jesus, they were to pray to the Father in Jesus' Name.

Let us focus our attention on the word “whatsoever” in -

John 16:23 - *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.*

So many times we say that we believe for an answer to prayer, “if it is God’s will.” But notice, this verse makes no such condition. Read it again.

It must have been His will. Otherwise, He would not have said it.

Why did Jesus say, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you?”

The answer is found in -

John 16:24 - *.....that your joy may be full.*

Our joy certainly cannot be full if we are out of a job and our children are hungry. Our joy cannot be full if our body is racked with pain. Our joy cannot be full if there are problems in our home.

Jesus said that the Father would give us “whatsoever” we ask, in order that “our joy may be full.”

But there is a secret to success with this kind of praying. The key is in the words, “whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name.....”

We are to address our prayers to the Father in the Name of Jesus.

BELIEVE THAT YOU 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.*

Smith Wigglesworth once said that there is something about believing God that will cause Him to pass over a million people to get to you. God is a faith God and we are faith children of a faith God. He works on the principle of faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

It is the prayer of faith that God listens to. He said that you can have the desires of your heart if you will believe that you receive them. You have to believe first, though.

Most folks want to receive and then they will believe. But it is the other way around. The believing comes first.

I am convinced that, if folks would quit praying many of the things they pray about and begin thanking God for the answer, the answer would come right away. But they keep on in unbelief.

If a person prays again, asking the same thing again, then he does not believe that he received the first time he asked. If he believed that he had received, he would be thanking God for it. Then it would be made manifest.

The difference is that the faith Jesus was talking about in -

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

is a heart faith, a spiritual faith, not a head faith. We get so used to walking by head faith. But we are to believe in our heart that we receive what we are praying for, even though we do not see the answer with our physical eyes.

This is true also of physical healing. It seems more difficult to practice this faith for physical healing than for anything else because we have the body, with all its feelings and symptoms with which we have to contend.

Most people are going to believe that God has healed them when they can see the condition has grown better or when the symptoms are gone. They will then believe that they are healed.

But anyone can believe what he can see.

What Jesus was teaching us here is that we should believe when we pray and then we will receive.

For many years I have practiced this kind of faith. This verse of scripture has been my standby. I have experienced this in my own life as I have prayed for the desires of my heart, believing that I receive them.

Not only is it true for healing but also in every other aspect of life.

No matter what the need may be - material, spiritual or financial - this is the way that we receive.

Smith Wigglesworth said that with some people, if that for which they claim to be believing God does not come immediately, they are ready to give up. But, he says, this proves that they never believed God in the first place.

Many times God permits our faith to be tried and tested right up to the end. When you believe God, you can stand firm though you are tested.

I have been there and I know by experience. I learned many years ago just to laugh all the more when the going gets rough. I do not always feel like laughing, but I make myself laugh right in the face of the devil. I smile and say that I believe God.

When Paul was on board a ship headed for Rome, a great storm arose. All hope was gone that the ship and its passengers would be saved. In an attempt to save the ship, however, the crew threw all the cargo overboard.

Right in the midst of the storm's fury, Paul stood up and said that he believed God!

Read this account in **Acts 27:1-25**.

You and I might not have to face a storm-tossed sea, but we do have to face storms in life. We too can stand with the faith of Paul and announce that we believe God.

3. FORGIVE WHEN YOU PRAY.

Mark 11:25-26 - *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.*
26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Before we can expect an answer to our prayers, we must have a forgiving heart to any who may have wronged us. We cannot hold a grudge. We cannot keep an unforgiving spirit if we want our prayers to reach God's throne of grace.

Prayer will not work for an unforgiving heart. No one can have an effective prayer life and have anything in his heart toward another person.

You cannot have hatred in your heart. You cannot have that old "get even" spirit in your heart.

You are not responsible for the other person's life. You are responsible for your own life.

Another person's heart and what is in it cannot hinder you, but what you have in your heart against him can hinder you.

We must watch our inward man with all diligence. We cannot afford to allow a root of bitterness, a bit of envy, a spark of revenge to get in there.

Hebrews 12:15 - *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

It will wreck our spiritual life. It will stall our prayer life. It will mar our faith and eventually shipwreck us.

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

God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.

Psalms 23:5 - *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:.....*

Right in the presence of the devil, Jesus is there. Right in the presence of the enemies of doubt and despair, we can sit at the table of victory and deliverance with Jesus.

In the presence of adverse circumstances, we can believe that we receive.

Memory text.

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

SIX MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN PRAYER

Part 2 of 2 - Three Things

STUDY 7

Scripture Portions: Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:14-15
Jude 20; 1 Corinthians 14:4

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

Moffat's translation of this verse says, "*praying at all times with all manner of prayer.*"

Another modern translation says, "*praying with all kinds of prayer.*"

The King James Version, even though it does not say "all kinds of prayer," it says, "*praying always with all prayer,*" inferring that there is more than one kind of prayer. If there were not, it would merely have said, "praying always," and would have stopped there.

How desperately our nation needs prayer. How desperately we as individuals need prayer. Nothing can take the place of prayer for meeting the needs of our family.

In our last lesson, we discussed three points in our study of the six most important things the Christian should know about prayer.

Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus.

2. **Believe that you receive.**
3. Forgive when you pray.

Today's lesson will cover the last three points in this topic.

4. DEPEND UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE.

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.*

27 *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.*

1 Corinthians 14:14-15 - *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

15 *What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

Christians everywhere pray with the understanding, but not all pray with the Spirit as Paul speaks of in the verses quoted above. Many do not know that it is even possible to do so.

Some, in their haste and ignorance of the scripture, have said that tongues have been done away with. But, if that be the case, how are we going to “pray with the Spirit” today? Surely the Corinthian Christians did not have a means of praying that we cannot have. We have the same means available to us today.

Paul said that, when he prayed in an unknown tongue, his spirit prayed. When you pray in tongues, it is your spirit praying by the Holy Spirit within you. You are groaning by the Holy Spirit within you.

I have sometimes been so burdened in prayer that I did not have adequate words to express my burden, just feelings. All I could do was to groan from somewhere way down deep inside of me.

Paul says that these groaning which escape our lips come from our spirit, from the innermost being.

When this happens, it is the Holy Spirit helping us to pray as we see in -

Romans 8:26 - *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.*

The literal Greek translation of this verse says, “*The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered in articulate speech.*”

Articulate speech means your regular kind of speech. Speaking with tongues is not your regular kind of speech, so this verse includes speaking and praying with other tongues.

Paul said that the Holy Spirit would help us in our prayer life. Why?

Romans 8:26 - *....for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.....*

We do not always understand the entire situation surrounding the matter about which we are praying. But the Holy Spirit does. When we allow Him to pray through us, to help us in our prayer life, we will see amazing answers to our prayers.

If I know about things for which I ought to pray, then I can believe when I pray and I will receive them.

However, there are things about which we should pray, but do not know how to pray for them as we should. The Holy Spirit knows and He can help us.

It is easier to have faith for needs like paying the rent and buying groceries because we know what we are praying for. But there are some situations in life about which it is not quite as easy to pray.

Many have been the times in my own life when I have told the Lord that I did not know exactly how I should pray concerning my own children. When I know there is a problem, I begin praying in tongues. Most of the time, before I get through, I have the answer to the problem.

5. PRAY THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

This point ties in closely with the previous point.

Romans 8:26 - *.....the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

The prayer of intercession is not for yourself. An intercessor is one who takes the place of another. You are interceding for another. Every Spirit-filled believer can expect the Holy Spirit to help him in making intercession.

The intercession can be in the area of the Spirit where salvation is dealt with. It can deal with healing.

It also includes praying for things about which we do not even know about, but the Holy Spirit has knowledge of them.

After a time of praying in the Spirit, we will know whether we are praying in tongues as a means of building ourselves up spiritually and worshiping God, as we will discuss in point number six, or whether it is intercessory prayer.

On occasion, and sometimes over a period of time, I have had a burden of intercession before I even knew for whom I was praying. I can tell when I am in intercession or in travail for someone who is lost.

If you are taking the place of a lost one, you will have the same lost feeling in your own spirit.

As you pray in the Spirit, interceding for that one, the Holy Spirit will deal with his heart and bring him under conviction of sin.

6. EDIFY YOURSELF PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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

1 Corinthians 14:4 - *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;.....*

There is one phase of speaking with tongues in our prayer life that is not praying for someone else. It is not interceding for anyone else. It is purely a means of personal spiritual edification. It aids us spiritually and edifies us.

We all need this kind of praying.

We cannot help others, we cannot edify others unless we ourselves have been edified.

Praying in this manner has a threefold value.

It is a means of spiritual edification. It affects us individually.

b. It is a means of praying for things about which we do not know.

6. The Holy Spirit helps us make intercession.

Speaking in tongues is not only an initial evidence of the Holy Spirit indwelling us, but it is a continual experience for the rest of our life.

It is to assist us in the worship of God. It is a flowing stream that should never dry up. It will enrich your life spiritually. We will continue in our study of praying in tongues in our next lesson.

Memory text.

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

INTERPRETING OUR PRAYERS IN THE SPIRIT

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion - 1 Corinthians 14:13-17, 27-28

INTERPRETING OUR PRAYERS IN THE SPIRIT.

Praying in the Spirit is not something which belongs only to the minister. It belongs to every believer. It is for every single one of us.

Much has been accomplished through those who have yielded their prayer lives to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through them. How much greater results we would see if there were more Christians praying in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:13-17 - *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

God, speaking through the apostle Paul, said -

1 Corinthians 14:13 - *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

God certainly is not going to tell us to pray for something that we cannot have.

I am convinced that every believer should be able to pray and interpret his own prayers, even though he may never interpret a message in tongues publicly. It is my observation that one can interpret without being an interpreter.

We will explain this point more fully later in the lesson.

Everyone who speaks in tongues should pray that he interpret. (And God tells us to.)

What point would there be in His telling us to pray for something we could not have? Would the Spirit of God tell us, through the apostle Paul, to pray for something that we could not have?

That would, of course, be utter folly.

The fact that He has told us to pray that we may interpret means that He has made this available to every believer. Every believer should be able to pray in tongues, praying in the Spirit, because we are encouraged to do so.

In praying in the Spirit, we should pray that we would also interpret.

NOTICE WHY GOD WANTS US TO DO THIS.

1 Corinthians 14:13 - *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

Then the next verse begins with the conjunction “for.”

A conjunction is a connecting word. Therefore, Paul was going on with what he had said in the previous verse when he said -

1 Corinthians 14:14 - *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

If we could interpret our prayer, our understanding would no longer be unfruitful. It would then be fruitful. It would be helpful, many times, to know what you are praying about when you are praying in the Spirit.

There are some things about which we pray that we need to know the interpretation. We need to know because it would help us if our minds were enlightened.

However, I would never interpret those prayers whereby one edifies and builds himself up. These are prayers of worship and praise. As such, these prayers need not be interpreted.

3. PRAYING WITH THE SPIRIT AND WITH THE UNDERSTANDING.

1 Corinthians 14:15 - *What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

There is a further meaning to this verse than that which we have generally accepted.

It means that we can pray both ways - with the Spirit and with the understanding - but it also means that, if I will pray that I may interpret, then I can pray in the Spirit and pray to interpret it. Then I will have understanding of what I have prayed about and can pray with the understanding also.

TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION - FOR PUBLIC OR PRIVATE USE?

As mentioned earlier, the fact that one may interpret does not mean that he is an interpreter. The two are related but are not the same thing.

To illustrate, an automobile, a truck and a bus are totally different vehicles, yet they are all in the same family. Just because a person owns a car and can drive it, does not mean that he is a trucker. Even if he owned a truck that would not necessarily mean that he could drive it.

And because a man is a bus driver does not mean that he is a trucker.

They are all different yet related.

The same is true of tongues and interpretation.

1 Corinthians 14:27-28 - *If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.*

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

In **verse 28** we read “*But if there be no interpreter....*” In other words, if no interpreter is present, the inference is that there are those who are interpreters.

We make a great mistake by thinking that tongues and interpretation are just for public use.

There is a public side to them under certain circumstances, but, as we see from the above scripture, its main use is private.

As I said, I interpreted my own prayers long before I interpreted publicly.

When I began to interpret my prayers in private, it was like driving that car.

When I began to interpret publicly, it was like driving that truck. It was partly the same, but it was different. One stands in a different office, on a different plane, in a different area.

When I first interpreted my prayers, that was all I could interpret. I could not interpret a message in tongues. However, I have received the gift of interpretation.

5. NOTICE THAT THE SCRIPTURE DOES *NOT* SAY -

“Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may have the gift of interpretation.” It says -

1 Corinthians 14:13 - *.....let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

Interpret what?

Interpret his prayer.

Why?

In order that he can “pray with the spirit and with the understanding also.”

This would not make him an interpreter, it would make him one who prays in the Spirit.

When I received the gift of interpretation and became an interpreter, I could not interpret what people prayed. But I could interpret all public utterances. I still can although I do not always do it.

I have learned by experience that, when someone speaks in tongues, I can interpret if I respond to the Holy Spirit. In the passage of **1 Corinthians 14:27-28**, Paul infers that an interpreter can do so.

He said, “If there be no interpreter.....” inferring that some are interpreters, having the gift of interpretation while others do not.

If no interpreter is present, then the one giving the message should be silent. This implies that an interpreter could always interpret the messages.

I do not always interpret all the prayers I pray in tongues.

Only as the Lord wills and as it is necessary, do I interpret these prayers.

Romans 8:26 - *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.*

If you do not know what to pray for as you ought, you can pray in the Spirit and then interpret. Then you will know that you prayed for. Then you will be praying “with the Spirit, and with the understanding also.”

I am convinced that every believer should be praying in the Spirit and with the understanding - not just a prayer out of his understanding, but praying the interpretation so that he can understand his prayers in the Spirit.

Memory text.

1 Corinthians 14:13 - *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

TONGUES - A FLOWING STREAM OF PRAISE

STUDY 9

Scripture Portions: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 5:18-19; John 7:37-39

Having studied in the last two lessons the necessity and the value of praying in tongues, let us now take a closer look at this manifestation itself - the different kinds of tongues and their different uses.

TONGUES - ONE OF THE NINE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 - *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

In the verses above are listed the nine gifts, or nine manifestations of the Spirit - nine ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself.

Three of these gifts are gifts of inspiration or utterance. These vocal gifts are designed as an inspiration in public worship. Of these, the gift of tongues is the most prominent.

Tongues with interpretation is distinctive with this dispensation. All of the other gifts of the Spirit were manifested in the Old Testament.

Even in the life and ministry of Jesus all the other gifts of the Spirit were manifested, except tongues and interpretation which are distinctive with this dispensation. They would naturally be distributed and used more frequently in the church than the other gifts.

This is the reason that we have an abundance of this manifestation.

Divers kinds of tongues are supernatural utterances given by the Holy Spirit. These are languages never learned by the speaker nor understood by him. Usually they are not understood by the hearers.

There are exceptions to this, however, as there have been times when the words someone speaks in tongues have been understood by someone present.

TONGUES - THE INITIAL EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Speaking in tongues is always manifested when people are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:4 - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

I do not argue with those who claim to have the Holy Spirit even though they have never spoken in tongues. After all, the Holy Spirit does the work of regeneration when a person is born again.

The Bible tells us that -

Romans 8:16 - *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Many years ago, as a young pastor hungry for the deeper things of God, reading the New Testament, I came to the conclusion that if I received the same Holy Spirit that the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, I wanted the same accompanying sign.

If I did not have the same sign - speaking in tongues - then I had no scriptural evidence that I was filled with the same Holy Spirit and did speak with tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.

Smith Wigglesworth was one to argue that he was already filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit even though, at that time, he had not spoken in other tongues. When he heard that some folks in an Episcopal church were speaking in tongues, he went to see about it.

He found that the pastor and his wife had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit as well as many of their members. They asked him, "Do you have the Holy Ghost?"

He replied that he did.

"Well, have you spoken with tongues?" they asked.

"No, but I am just as much filled with the Holy Ghost as you are," he answered. After awhile, however, he began to see the necessity of speaking in tongues and went to the Episcopal rectory to ask the pastor to pray for him. But, he was not there. The pastor's wife said, "I will pray for you."

Smith said, “Lay your hands on my head and pray that I will get the tongues.”

“You do not want the tongues,” she said. “You want the Holy Ghost. The tongues will take care of itself.”

He argued, “But, I already have the Holy Ghost.”

“Never mind. Just kneel down there,” the pastor’s wife said. She was tired of arguing with him.

Smith knelt and, as hands were laid upon him, the power of God came over him and he began to speak in other tongues.

He later said, “The Holy Ghost settled all my arguments for me. I had been arguing and discussing the subject with them every day that I had the Holy Ghost just as much as they did.”

“In a moment’s time, I saw that I had never really been filled with the Holy Ghost until then. I had had some wonderful experiences as a minister as God had blessed me and anointed me to preach. We had seen many saved and even healed.”

“But, I had never really been filled with the Holy Ghost until then.”

“When you get an experience inside the Word of God, you have an experience outside the realm of argument. Before, I had only an argument, but now I have an experience with God.”

There is a difference in purpose and use of ministering tongues in public assembly and speaking with tongues as a Spirit-baptized individual.

On the other hand, the essence of tongues is the same and the source of the tongues is the same. It comes from the Holy Ghost.

If people are being filled with the Holy Ghost in our midst, then we are going to have people speaking in tongues.

TONGUES IN THE BELIEVER’S PRAYER LIFE.

The Spirit-baptized believer does not have to stop speaking in tongues after his initial experience.

He can continue to use tongues in his prayer and worship to God even though he may not be used to minister in tongues in public.

Howard Carter, founder of the oldest Pentecostal Bible School in the world, said, “We must not forget that the speaking with other tongues is not only an initial evidence or sign of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, but it is a continual experience for the rest of one’s life to assist in the worship of God.”

Speaking with tongues is a flowing stream that should never die out, but will enrich the life spiritually.

Sometimes we become satisfied, we feel that we have arrived spiritually, so to speak, because we have been baptized in the Holy Ghost and have spoken in tongues for awhile.

A pastor once told me about a young man in his church who had been seeking the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The man came every night to their revival services. Finally, one night, he received. After that he stopped coming to the services. When the pastor asked him about that, he said, "Why, I finally got through."

But, we do not get through. That is just the beginning.

Ephesians 5:18-19 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Paul wrote these verses to the born-again, Spirit-filled believers in the church at Ephesus. He told them to "be filled with the Spirit." He told them to be drunk on the Spirit and not on wine. The Greek says, "be being filled." In other words, maintain a constant experience. Keep drinking.

Then Paul give them the characteristics of the Spirit-filled life, **verse 19**.

A psalm is a spiritual poem in an ode. It may rhyme or it may not rhyme, but there is an element of poetry about it. It is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on the spur of the moment. It can come by tongues and interpretation or by prophecy.

John 7:37-39 - *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Water is a type of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus stood at the last day of the feast and said to drink of the Spirit.

He was encouraging the people to stay filled with the Spirit. By so doing, we can overcome the devil and the sins of this world, and can live a life that is pleasing to Christ.

Galatians 5:16 -*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Memory text.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

PRAYER ON A NEW DIMENSION

STUDY 10

Scripture Portions: 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 18

Some people ask, “What is the use of speaking with tongues?”

There are also those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have spoken with tongues but see no reason to continue to speak in tongues in their daily prayer life.

Evidently God thought that speaking in tongues was very important, for He inspired the apostle Paul to devote an entire chapter in the Bible - **1 Corinthians, chapter 14** - to this subject.

Although all will agree on the utmost importance of prayer, where in the Bible can we find an entire chapter on prayer?

The paying of tithes and offerings is also very important. We could not carry on the work of God without them. But where in the Word of God do we see a whole chapter given to these subjects?

Water baptism is also important. But, again, we do not find an entire chapter devoted to the subject.

What I am saying is that God does not put unnecessary things into His Word. He has not filled the Bible with unimportant statements.

The teachings on the subject of speaking in tongues are vital and necessary to every successful Christian.

SPEAKING SECRETS TO GOD.

1 Corinthians 14:2 - *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

1 Corinthians 14:4 - *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;.....*

1 Corinthians 14:18 - *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:*

In **verse 2** above, Paul was not talking at this time about ministering tongues in public assembly. He was talking about the individual Spirit-filled believer talking in tongues in his private prayer life.

This also includes praying in tongues during prayer services at the altar in church because we come here to talk to God.

Paul continued, in this verse -

1 Corinthians 14:2 -*howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

Weymouth's translation of this verse says, "in the Spirit he speaks divine secrets."

God has devised a way whereby we may speak to Him supernaturally. Howbeit, in the Spirit, he speaks divine secrets. He talks secrets with God.

While I was holding a certain meeting, the pastor there told me the story of a young Jewish boy who attended his church. It seemed that he did not have too many friends so one of the boys in the church befriended him. He invited the Jewish boy to come to church with him.

At first the Jewish boy refused, saying that he did not believe in Christ. However, he got to thinking that he should not be so obstinate for, after all, this boy was the only one who had been kind to him. So, he agreed to go with him.

SPIRITUAL EDIFICATION.

1 Corinthians 14:4 - *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;.....*

This means that he builds himself up spiritually.

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

This does not say that praying in the Holy Ghost will give you faith. It says that it builds you up "on your most holy faith." It is a means of spiritual edification.

3. NEW DIMENSIONS IN PRAISE.

Speaking with tongues is a way that we can magnify God.

Concerning Cornelius and his household, we read -

Acts 10:46 - *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.....*

I was a young minister for several years before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I had some wonderful times in prayer. God loves His children, no matter who they are, or how deeply they may have gone into the things of the Spirit.

But, many times I went away from my place of prayer disappointed even though I was blessed. I felt as if something was missing. I would try to tell God how much I loved Him.

I would use all the descriptive adjectives I had at my disposal to tell God how wonderful He was. I would exhaust my vocabulary. Yet, in my spirit, I felt that I had not said what I wanted to say. This was because my spirit wanted to pray, too, apart from my understanding.

1 Corinthians 14:14 - *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

Since I have received the Holy Spirit and now pray in tongues, all this has changed. I can communicate with God on a new dimension. My spirit need not be bound by earthly vocabularies. It can soar beyond the limitations of human speech. My spirit is enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to say what it wants to say.

I cannot begin to estimate the worth of praying in the Spirit in my life.

As I have traveled on the evangelistic field for many years, having to spend much time away from home, again and again, the Holy Spirit has alerted me to needs in my family.

I have been awakened in the night by the Spirit's urging me to pray concerning a problem that had risen at home. Immediately I go to prayer saying, "I do not know what is wrong. I do not know the source of the trouble, but You know everything."

I ask the Holy Spirit within me, Who is my Helper, to help me pray about this situation, whatever it might be, in the way it should be prayed about. Then I begin to pray in tongues.

I have prayed as much as six hours in tongues. Many times He has let me know what I am praying about and the answer to it. Whether He does or not, I know it is right and, in a few days, I see how it works out.

Praying in the Spirit has been such a blessing to my life that I want to encourage Christians everywhere to make this a part of their prayer life, too. I want you to know the joy of fellowship with the Lord in the Spirit.

I want you to allow the Holy Spirit to help you with praying. I want to invite you to come on in and communicate with God supernaturally.

God wants to do so much more for you. He wants to communicate with you in a better way.

Memory text.

1 Corinthians 14:14 - *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

KINDS OF PRAYER

STUDY 11

Scripture Portions: Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; Luke 22:42; Ephesians 6:18

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

Moffat's translation of this verse reads "praying with all manner of prayer....."

Another translation says, "praying with all kinds of prayer."

In today's lesson we will look at some of the different kinds of prayer in the New Testament.

Just as there are numerous different games which come under the general classification of sports, so there are many different kinds of prayer that we often lump together under one general category of prayer.

We need to realize that, as certain rules govern certain games in the arena of sports, so there are certain principles or rules, spiritual laws so to speak, that govern certain kinds of prayer. The ones that might apply to one type of prayer will not apply to others.

In sports, the rules which apply to baseball would not apply to football. If one tried to use the same rules for both games, he would get terribly confused.

A visitor from Europe was taken by his host to see a baseball game in New York City. He did not know much about the game as it was not played in his country. He could not understand the various expressions used, so asked a number of questions.

We are this way, sometimes, spiritually. Thus, though there are all kinds of prayer, the same rules do not apply in each case. If you try to apply them, you will become very confused.

THE PRAYER OF PETITION.

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.*

By far, the most frequent prayer is the prayer of petition.

We are always petitioning, or asking, God to do something for us.

This is scriptural, of course, for He has told us to “.....ask in prayer, believing.....”

The prayer of petition must be a prayer of faith. This is primarily an individual situation. It concerns your desires. It concerns your needs and problems.

It is you praying, not someone else praying with you or for you. It is not someone else agreeing with you in prayer.

When you pray, you believe that you receive and, if you will do that, you will have your request.

God is concerned about our needs and wants to meet them for us.

In the Old Testament, God promised His people more than just spiritual blessings.

He promised them that they would prosper financially and materially. He told them that He would take sickness away from their midst and would give them long life.

Exodus 23:26 -*the number of thy days I will fulfil.*

He told them that, if they would keep His commandments, they would eat the good of the land.

God is just as interested in His people today as He was then. He is concerned about everything that touches our lives. He has made provision for us.

Third John 2 - *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

Jesus said -

Matthew 7:11 - *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

We must realize that it is God's will that our needs - spiritual, physical and material - be met.

2. SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THEY SHOULD CONCLUDE EVERY PRAYER WITH THE WORDS “If it be Thy will.”

They claim that this was the way Jesus prayed. However, Jesus prayed this way on only one occasion. That was in Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:39 -*if it be possible*,.....

Mark 14:35 -*if it were possible*,.....

Luke 22:42 -*if thou be willing*,.....

When He stood at Lazarus’ tomb, He did not say “.....if it be Thy will.....”

He said -

John 11:41 -*I thank thee that thou hast heard me*.

Then He commanded -

John 11:43 -*Lazarus, come forth*.

This prayer was to change something.

Anytime we are praying to do something or change something, we need not put an “if” in our prayer. If we do, we are using the wrong rule and it will not work. We need to claim God’s promise for our petition and -

Mark 11:24 -*believe that ye receive them*,.....

What kind of prayer was it that Jesus put in an “if?”

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION.

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

In the garden of Gethsemane, Christ prayed the prayer of submission, of consecration and dedication - “.....if Thou be willing.....nevertheless not My will.....” He wanted to do what the Father wanted Him to do.

It was not a prayer of petition.

It was not a prayer to get something or to change something.

It was a prayer of consecration.

When we consecrate our lives for God's use, to go anywhere and do anything He wants us to do, we pray this kind of prayer.

In a prayer of consecration and dedication, we pray "if it be Thy will."

When it comes to changing things or getting something from God, however, we do not pray, "if it be Thy will" for we already have God's Word concerning it.

We know it is His will that our needs be met.

Memory text.

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

THE PRAYER OF WORSHIP

Part 1 of 2

STUDY 12

Scripture Portion: Acts 13:1-4

As we mentioned in the last lesson, most of our prayers are the petition type of prayer. Too many of us are like the little boy who prayed, "Lord, my name is Jimmy and I will take everything You will give me."

This seems to be the only kind of prayer we know anything about.

If that is all we are doing, I wonder if sometimes the Lord does not get a bit tired of it - just "give me."

We need to take time to wait upon God and to minister to the Lord - time when we are not asking Him for anything, when we are not petitioning, but are ministering to Him.

Not only do we need this as individuals in our private prayer lives, but we also need this kind of prayer service as a group.

We read of a group in the New Testament church who had such a service.

Acts 13:1-4 - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Today, when Christians gather for a church service, we mostly minister to one another. Our services are designed that way. We sing songs, but in most of them we minister to one another.

We sing special solo numbers, but still we are not ministering to the Lord. We are ministering to one another.

When we pray in church, our praying is primarily a petition.

We are petitioning the Lord to move in our midst, to manifest Himself among us and to meet our individual needs.

Then, when the minister stands to speak, he is not ministering to the Lord, he is ministering to the congregation.

When the service is over, if we do have a time of waiting upon God in prayer, this usually consists of petitioning prayer again. We come, not necessarily to minister to the Lord, but to pray and seek God on our own behalf.

However, the Christians we read about in the above account, came together and -

Acts 13:2 - *.....ministered to the Lord, and fasted,.....*

More than one person was involved in this account for it says “as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted.....” This is the true prayer of worship.

GOD’S DESIRE FOR MAN’S PRAISE.

God made man so He would have someone with whom to have fellowship. He made man for His own pleasure.

It is true that God is concerned about us and wants to meet our every need.

7. But, even more than that, He wants our love, our worship and our fellowship with Him.

He is our Father for we are born of God.

No earthly parent ever enjoyed the fellowship of his children more than God enjoys the fellowship of His sons and daughters.

I do not want us to come and wait for just ten minutes. I want us to come with the thought in mind that we will wait at least an hour in prayer, perhaps longer.

8. We will minister to the Lord, Praise Him and tell Him how much we love Him and thank Him for His goodness and mercy.

One might expect the crowd to have fallen off on those nights. It did not. Just as many people came out and praised the Lord. I found that they wanted to wait upon God.

In that kind of an atmosphere, God did minister to us in unusual ways.

Although that was many years ago, I still see results today of things the Lord said to me which convinces me that we miss out on many blessings because we do not take time to get into the right attitude of worship and to minister to the Lord.

2. THE POWER OF PRAISE.

Let me call your attention to the fact that this is the kind of atmosphere in which God can move.

Acts 13:2 - *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said,.....*

With hearts yielded to the Lord, full of love and praise, the Holy Spirit can manifest Himself and make known God's will and leading for the lives of His children.

A minister told me of an experience he had once which illustrates the power of praise.

Once, very early in his ministry while he was a young evangelist, he was staying at the pastor's home during one of his revival meetings. During the night, a call came for the pastor to come and pray for a baby who was having convulsions.

The pastor had been called out of town to preach a funeral, but the pastor's wife asked this young evangelist to go with her and a few other faithful Christians to pray for the sick child.

Relating the experience to me, he said, "We rebuked the devil. We prayed at the top of our voices and went through all the motions that we sometimes feel are necessary in order to get God to hear our prayers."

"After about forty minutes of such rigorous praying, the child was no better but continued having convulsions."

"I had done about all I knew to do. I had done everything I had seen anybody else do. But nothing happened. Then, as I got quiet, it seemed that the group who was gathered there to pray also grew quiet."

"Then the pastor's wife began to say softly 'Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.'"

"Praises began rolling from her lips. She continued in this spirit of praise for about ten minutes. Finally, one by one, all of us picked it up until we were all praising God. In the midst of that atmosphere, the child's convulsions ceased and he fell asleep."

"We stood around for a while rejoicing in the Lord. Then, while we were talking, the child awakened and went back into convulsions."

"We became alarmed and started to pray and rebuke the devil again. We anointed the child with oil and laid hands on him. We went through all the usual maneuvers again, but nothing seemed to help."

“Then, when we settled down again, the pastor’s wife began to praise the Lord, ministering to the Lord and telling Him how much she loved Him. We all joined in and, shortly, the child’s convulsions stopped. He went to sleep, permanently healed.”

“That night, I witnessed the power of praise.”

This is an instance in which the prayer of worship worked when nothing else did. As these Christians, like those in the early church, “ministered to the Lord,” the Holy Ghost moved and made manifest the mighty power of God.

Memory text.

Luke 24:52-53 - *And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

THE PRAYER OF WORSHIP

Part 2 of 2

STUDY 13

Scripture Portions: Acts 16:22-25; 2 Chronicles 20:15, 17-19, 21-22; Luke 24:50-53

In **Acts, chapter 16**, we have the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi. We read of their arrest, how they were beaten with many stripes and cast into prison.

Acts 16:22-25 - *And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.*

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

A SONG AT MIDNIGHT.

I want to call special attention to **verse 25**.

What did they have to be so happy about that they felt like singing? Surely nothing was going right for them. They had been out preaching the good news of the gospel and what did they get for it?

They were brought before the rulers, were charged and beaten, then cast into prison with their feet placed into stocks. Their backs were sore and bleeding. Every part of their bodies ached.

But, did they sit there moaning, complaining, and crying “Why did this have to happen to us?”

NO!

The Bible says that they “sang praises unto God.”

If they had been like some of us today, the scripture might have read, “And at midnight Paul and Silas griped and complained, whined and whimpered, wondering why God had allowed this to come upon them.”

Their conversation might have followed this line:

“Paul, you still there?”

“Where else could I be?”

“I tell you, my poor back is really hurting me. I just do not understand why God ever sent this on us. He knows that we have tried to serve Him and have done our best.”

That kind of attitude would have just gotten them further into trouble instead of out of it.

We can learn something here from Paul and Silas. After all, they were in trouble. They were in pain. They were in jail.

All in all, it was a very dark picture. One could hardly blame them for being discouraged. However, as someone has said, Paul and Silas got into jail but they did not let the jail get into them.

This is the reason many people are defeated.

Trouble comes to everyone, but our attitude toward it is what makes the difference between victory and defeat. How we look at the situation makes the difference in how we come out of it or whether we get out of it at all.

In the example of Paul and Silas, we can find help for our midnight hour, for our time of testing, in an hour when the storms of life threaten to sweep us overboard.

Paul and Silas were not in Philippi on a vacation. They were there to do the Lord's work. They were not out of the will of God.

The first thing that some people think when adversity strikes is that they must surely be out of the Lord's will or such a thing would not have happened.

But, Paul and Silas were right in the centre of God's will.

If we were to measure whether or not we are in God's will by whether everything runs smoothly with no hard places and no sacrifice, then Paul never did get in the will of God in his entire ministry. He missed it from beginning to end.

Let us notice something else in -

Acts 16:25 - *.....and the prisoners heard them.*

They were not quiet about it. They were praising God out loud right there in jail. Not only did the prisoners hear them, but God heard them!

Acts 16:26 - *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.*

DELIVERANCE CAME WHILE THEY WERE PRAISING GOD. A SONG IN BATTLE.

Let us look at the Old Testament counterpart to this story.

During the reign of King Jehoshaphat, the Ammonites and Moabites came against the Israelites. Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord in prayer and He answered him.

2 Chronicles 20:15 - *And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

2 Chronicles 20:17-19 - *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you. 18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. 19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.*

2 Chronicles 20:21-22 - *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. 22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.*

Jehoshaphat knew that his army was no match for those of the countries banded against him. But he also knew his God was more than a match for them. He called a prayer meeting and they fasted and prayed.

The Spirit of God moved upon a young man in the congregation. He stood up and prophesied. The Lord told them not to fear for the battle was the Lord's.

The next morning when they went out against the enemy's powerful armies, they did not go against them with swords and spears but with songs of praise, **verse 21**.

They marched along and chanted, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever." They sang and praised the Lord just as Paul and Silas did in jail.

In their hour of trial, instead of cowering in fear, the children of Israel sang praises to God, just as Paul and Silas did.

And what was the outcome of this battle?

Read again **verse 22**.

When they began to sing praises unto God, He did something. They witnessed a manifestation of God's power.

3. PRAISE, A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

A spirit of praise and rejoicing was a characteristic of the early church.

Luke 24:50-53 - *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.*

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

After the disciples watched Jesus return to heaven, they went back to Jerusalem with hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Then we read -

Acts 2:46-47 - *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Notice the expression, "they, continuing daily with one accord.....did eat their meat with gladness.....praising God....."

With these early Christians, this was not a spasmodic occurrence. It was not just something that happened once in a great while.

THE BIBLE USES THE WORDS 'CONTINUALLY' AND 'DAILY'.

Too many times some Christians today will get prayed through about once every six months and will have a time of praising and blessing God.

If we were writing about them, we would have to use the words “occasionally” or perhaps even “semiannually” but of the early Christians, the Bible records that they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

If we want to see the same manifestations of power that the early church had, we are going to have to see the same manifestations of praise that they had.

Memory text.

Luke 24:52-53 - *And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:
53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*