

INTERCESSORY PRAYER - VIII

“Overcoming Our Difficulties in Praying”

(Some things we learn from Paul when he was in the Roman jail)

I. OUR WEAKNESS IN PRAYER.

A. *The spirit is willing...the flesh is weak.*

1. (Mat 26:41 KJV) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
2. (Mark 14:38 KJV) Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.
3. (Rom 7:18 KJV) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. (Rom 7:19 KJV) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Rom 7:20 KJV) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom 7:21 KJV) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (Rom 7:22 KJV) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (Rom 7:23 KJV) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom 7:24 KJV) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

B. *Asking for the spirit of supplications.* (Zec 12:10a KJV) And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:

1. The *spirit of supplications* is the operation of His Spirit that makes us want to pray.
2. There is a *grace* that comes upon our lives when we pray--especially when we pray for others.
 - a. Some feel that any kind of pressure or trouble is good to make us want to pray.
 - b. Better to have God's Spirit do the work--and bring His grace with it.
 - c. When we are weak in spirit, weary with the fight, God never fails to renew in us the desire--along with conviction and anointing--to pray and bring others before His throne. This is pure grace; the kind of grace that enables us and flows from us to touch others.

C. *Prayer: “Heavenly Father, You know my weakness in praying. Actually, I'm more inclined to worry and fret than I am to pray. I take release from this right now and yield to the work of Your Spirit. Bring within me a strong desire to pray, especially for these who are so heavy on my heart. Renew in me the discipline of intercession. Release in me the spirit of supplications.”*

II. FIVE PRINCIPLES OF INTERCESSION FOUND IN PHILIPPIANS 1:3-8.

A. *Thankfulness.*

B. *Importunity.*

- C. **Confidence.**
- D. **An enlarged heart.**
- E. **Compassion.**

III. ONE: THE PRINCIPLE OF THANKING GOD FOR THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY.

- A. **Scripture.** (Phil 1:3 KJV) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
- B. **Observation.**
 - 1. This calls for the development of a discipline that will turn every mention, or recollection, of someone into a thanksgiving.
 - 2. This might be difficult in some cases, but it can come, no matter what may be the attitude, response, or condition of those for whom the thanksgiving is made.
- C. **What being thankful does.**
 - 1. In being thankful for others, we can open them for the moving in of God's Spirit.
 - 2. Being thankful for them--no matter how obnoxious they may be--calls His presence upon them and releases them to conviction and healing.
 - 3. Thanking the Lord for persons does something wonderful for us.
 - a. It sanctifies our attitude regarding others.
 - b. It works to remove condemnation, hostility, fear, anger, resentment, disgust, worry, apprehension--or whatever other ugly attitude we may hold--even jealousy.
- D. **Paul was notorious in thanking God for people.** (1 Th 1:2 KJV) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;
- E. **Prayer:** "Father, give me the help of Your Spirit as I begin thanking You for every person who comes into my memory. I will refuse to do this for no one. I ask You to sanctify my relationship with each one whose recollection brings pain."

IV. TWO: THE PRINCIPLE OF IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER, AND THAT WITH JOY.

- A. **Scripture.** (Phil 1:4 KJV) Always in every **prayer** of mine for you all making **request** with joy,
- B. **Observation.** The word **prayer** and **request** in this verse are both from the same Greek word, *deesis*, which means "importunate prayer."
 - 1. This is prayer that must have an answer because the need is so great.
 - 2. It is strong supplication coming from someone who will not turn aside from making his or her request known, and who will not admit to any reason why the request should not be answered.
 - 3. It is prayer arising from utter necessity.
- C. **Meaning.** This kind of prayer means intercessors take on a concern for others that holds them before God's Throne until His power and authority is in control both in their persons and their circumstances.
 - 1. Luke 11:1-8 informs us regarding this kind of praying. The man who

came at midnight to his friend who had bread was asking not for himself, but for someone else in need.

2. Luke 11:8 says his request was granted because of his importunity, not because the man who had bread was his friend.
3. Importunity is from the Greek word *anaideian* which means “shamelessness.”
 - a. It is stubborn solicitation without regard to time, place, or person.
 - b. It forgets legality, propriety, worthiness, or even spiritual standing.

D. **Prayer:** *“Lord, I’ve brought these souls before You so many times that I wonder if You grow weary of my coming. But here I am again. They are needy. They are in darkness. There is no hope for them unless Your Spirit comes on them. I am holding them before You, knocking at Your door like the man who came to his friend’s house at midnight for bread. Grant the help of Your Spirit in bringing these people through to healing and deliverance.”*

V. THREE: THE PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENCE REGARDING THOSE FOR WHOM ONE PRAYS.

- A. **Scripture.** (Phil 1:6 KJV) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:
- B. **Observations.**
 1. The Lord works something into the spirits of intercessors to convince them others can be salvaged for the Kingdom of Christ--even brought over into the service of the Kingdom.
 2. This confidence is a firm persuasion, a kind of faith born of the Holy Spirit.
- C. **Meanings.**
 1. The words *being confident* mean “having been persuaded, or convinced.” A process had gone on in Paul convincing him of God’s power and faithfulness to bring something to pass. His words meant, “What I’ve gone through with God has persuaded me regarding His ability to bring a work to completion. This persuasion is so deep in me that when I look on you, a confidence arises in me regarding you.”
 2. The word *perform* means “to carry out to completion; to bring to a perfect end.”
 - a. Paul’s persuasion regarding those for whom he prayed was that the work begun in them would see its perfection.
 - b. Having begun, it would not wind up in frustration.
- D. **Prayer:** *“Dear Lord, too often I’ve grown weary in believing for these I’m holding before You today. For too long I’ve looked at the weakness and defeat in them. Forgive me. Now, I call forth--and believe for--Your work in them. I confess this is more powerful than all their weakness, and all their determination to withstand You. Oh, thank You, Faithful Lord!”*

VI. FOUR: THE PRINCIPLE OF AN ENLARGED HEART.

- A. **Scripture.** (Phil 1:7 KJV) Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
- B. **Observation.** This is the principle that allows our hearts to become large enough to take on a concern for others even though we have problems of our own.
- C. **Meanings.**
1. This means we find the strength of spirit, mind, emotion, and will to leave our own circle of conflict and enter the conflict of someone else. Then, our own problems grow smaller as we see God taking concern for us while we are taking concern for others.
 2. *It is meet* means “it is an equitable and fair thing.”
 - a. Paul was in jail. There was no equity or fairness in what he was going through. He could have been sending out distress signals for himself.
 - b. He did not. Instead, he called it a fair thing for him to bear the burden and distress of others.
- D. **A powerful exchange.** Paul had stepped from his own circle of concern and need into the circles of others with their concerns and needs. In doing this, Christ had come into his circle. This was a powerful exchange.
- E. **Prayer:** *“Heavenly Father, right now I step from my own circle into the circle of these others. I turn my worry, fear, and trouble over to You. I lay aside my “busyness” and take this time right now to hold these who are in my heart up to Your grace. Oh, I believe You are working on their behalf!”*

VII. FIVE: THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARING IN THE COMPASSION THE LORD HAS FOR OTHER.

- A. **Scripture.** (Phil 1:8 KJV) For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
- B. **Observations.**
1. This is the principle of caring for souls with the same tender affection as the Lord Jesus.
 2. This comes on as intercessors spend time with the Lord and begin feeling what He wants for the souls under their care.
- C. **Meaning.**
1. The word *bowels* means “the chief intestines; the entrails.” It means “the tender affections of the heart.”
 2. Instead of feelings of frustration, disappointment, anger, guilt, and sometimes sympathy--all of which eat at the inward parts of us--the compassion of Jesus Christ can come over us.
 3. Then the feelings and affections--along with the ability to hold others before the Throne of God's grace--become pure and peaceable.
 4. Intercession becomes a joyful thing; faith can see its work accomplished

because we're set free to pray from God's perspective, not our own.

- D. **Prayer:** *“Father, my ability to give up my deep feelings regarding others is weak. I'm prone to hold on to soulish love toward some, and bitterness toward others. All of this I yield up to You. Please release in me Your feelings toward all these I now hold before You. Let Your work come forth in them. In Jesus Name, Amen.”*