

## ***Session 7: Sonship Prayer – The Superstitious Nature of Gentiles***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 7)*

Homework Assignment: I want you to continue reading those 2 prayers (Ephesians 1:15-23 and Ephesians 3:14-21) and compare them to the prayer in Colossians 1.

### **Prayer #3:**

*Colossians 1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, <sup>5</sup> For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; <sup>6</sup> Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:<sup>7</sup> As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, ...*

*Epaphras' Prayer:* Epaphras is one of the Colossians assembly who was with Paul in Rome when Paul wrote his epistle to the Colossians. He was instrumental in helping form the church at Colosse and he had a great love for the people who formed it.

*Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*



*Colossians 1:7 ... who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; <sup>8</sup> Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; <sup>12</sup> Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: <sup>13</sup> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Use the following as a guide to compare and contrast Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1 and his prayer in Colossians 1.

What is the main focus of Paul's Ephesians 1 prayer?

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What is the main focus of Paul's Colossians 1 prayer?

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What kind of terminology does Paul use in his Ephesians 1 prayer? Give some examples:

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What kind of terminology does Paul use in his Colossians 1 prayer? Give some examples:

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From these two prayers, what are some lessons we learn about prayer in this dispensation of grace?

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I want us to see the superstitious nature of the Gentiles so turn with me to Acts 17 and 14. Acts 17 first.

Why do we need to be taught how to pray?

1. Because, according to our apostle, we do not know what to pray for as we ought.
2. Because, as Gentiles, we will never figure prayer out on our own.

*Acts 17:16* Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

*Acts 17:22* Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

That was Paul's assessment to them. Now turn to Acts 14 and watch the superstitious thinking of the Gentiles at work.

*Acts 14:8* And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: <sup>9</sup> The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, <sup>10</sup> Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. <sup>11</sup> And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. <sup>12</sup> And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

When they saw the miracle, they immediately thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods: Jupiter and Mercury. Now look what happens when the priest of Jupiter shows up.

*Acts 14:13* Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. <sup>14</sup> Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, <sup>15</sup> And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: ... <sup>18</sup> And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Look what happens next.

*Acts 14:19* And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

One day Paul and Barnabas were gods; the next day they were bad guys and had to be put to death.

This is how Gentiles think. Although, what we are after is not the only reason we have this passage in the Bible. It is a perfect example of Gentile thinking. A situation takes place and Gentiles immediately interpret it one way. Someone comes along with a message and now they interpret it another way. Someone else can come along with another message and they will change again.

Why are Gentiles so superstitious? It is because they have no truth: no standard of truth. Christians today are just like those people at Iconium. Some circumstance happens and they say: 'oh, God did this.' Something else happens and they say: 'oh, no, God did not do this.' Something else happens and they say: 'well, we just do not know, God works in mysterious ways...'

That is nothing more than pagan superstition. That is our nature. I am telling you, that all across this country, people are reading God into changing some circumstance and all they are doing is perpetuating superstitious lies about God.

### **Space for personal reflection and notes**

## ***Session 8: Sonship Prayer – The Superstitious Nature of Gentiles, Continued***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 8)*

One more example: at the end of Acts 27, the ship Paul is on breaks apart in the sea. Everyone goes overboard and swims for land.

*Acts 28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. <sup>2</sup> And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.*

“No doubt,” evidently to them, Paul was being repaid for something terrible that he must have done. See that wrong thinking? They thought God must have been punishing Paul; something we know is not happening in the dispensation of Gentile grace.

The point here is that their superstitious thinking demanded that they interpret what happened. There must have been a meaning! After all, it could not have been that there just happened to be a viper in the bundle of sticks. You see this is the way people are today. God must be telling us something.

*Acts 28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

We laugh at this, but this is exactly how people still think today. That is what comes from following the course of this world.

Notice three things:

1. Being Gentiles has influenced our minds: our thinking.
2. We are that way ‘by nature’ which means we naturally or automatically are influenced that way.
3. Satan’s course of this world has darkened our understanding.

Is this the first time you have heard these kinds of things? Of course, it is not. Why do we need to hear them again? Once we have read a chapter in the Bible, why would we ever read it again?

Well, there are several reasons but one of the main reasons is that we need to renew our minds with the truth.

When I say that we hear things more than once in order to renew our minds, please understand that here are two kinds of renewing.

*Oxford English Dictionary*

*Renew*: 1) to do over again, revise, 6) to replace by some new or fresh thing, to change, make a change in

An example of this would be:

***Romans 12:2*** *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

This “renewing of your minds” is the issue of replacing the old erroneous thinking with new thinking from our heavenly Father.

The second definition for renew is the one I am talking about when I say that we need to hear things more than once.

*Oxford English Dictionary*

*Renew*: 3) to restore, set up again, 5) to go over again, to repeat, relate afresh

An example of this would be:

***2 Corinthians 4:16*** *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

The inward man is refreshed day by day. We do not replace our inward man each day with a totally new one. The repetition of the doctrine serves to reinforce it within us and that refreshes our inward man.

What do we have so far? Our apostle says that we do not know what to pray for. That is true because we are Gentiles and our thinking has been influenced by the course of this world; our understanding of the truth has been darkened.

Now, let us look at the next reason why we need to be taught how to pray.

3. Because of the influence of religious traditions, erroneous thinking about prayer gets established in a tradition, and that is handed down through the generations and accepted as truth.

Here are some examples:

***Matthew 15:1** Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup> Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. <sup>3</sup> But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?*

***Matthew 15:6** And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*

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

***1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

***Romans 16:25** Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, <sup>26</sup> But now is made manifest, ...*

***2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

The reason the disciples came to the Lord asking him to teach them to pray was because all they had up to that point was the tradition of the elders. Thus, the Lord had to re-educate the remnant to the truth.

Here is the question. Are there any religious traditions around today?

**Space for personal reflection and notes**

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## ***Session 9: Sonship Prayer – The Influence of our Flesh***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 9)*

Religious tradition is so powerful that people will believe the tradition before they believe the word of God. Even when we can show them scripture, they will still say: ‘I know that is what it says, but this is what we have been taught.’

Why do we need to be taught how to pray?

4. Because of the influence of our flesh, our flesh makes us think about ourselves in a particular way. The flesh makes our prayers focus on temporal, material things instead of eternal things, visible things instead of invisible things, the outward man and not the inward man.

***Leviticus 26:3*** *If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; <sup>4</sup> Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. <sup>5</sup> And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. <sup>6</sup> And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. <sup>7</sup> And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. ... <sup>14</sup> But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; <sup>15</sup> And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: <sup>16</sup> I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. <sup>17</sup> And I will set my face against you, ... <sup>18</sup> And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. <sup>19</sup> And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: <sup>20</sup> And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. <sup>21</sup> And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. <sup>22</sup> I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, ...*

**James 5:15** *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

**James 1:1** *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

Next time I am going to address 2 questions:

1. Why did God put us into Christ?
2. Why is Christ in us?