

Session 65: Edification Prayer, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 65).

Mikes notes do not follow exactly as he discusses on video. You may want to skip to end so you can take notes as he displays his information on the white board. Then study his notes later.

Hebrews 10:1 *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

Hebrews 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

Hebrews 10:3 *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

Hebrews 10:11 *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 66: Edification Prayer, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 66).

Mikes notes do not follow the recording for the first 16 minutes. You may want to just take notes and study his notes later.

We left off last time talking about the causes of stagnation in our prayer life. This week, we take up our session with:

The Solution for Stagnation:

Therefore, when we observe that we have become stagnant, we need to either re-engage in sonship prayer or we need to get moving in our sonship life. By get moving – I mean that we should be learning the next form of doctrine, responding properly to it, and praying accordingly.

Therefore, our *loveknowlitude* will be ever-increasing because our love for God will abound beyond the things which were given to us in Christ. Our knowledge of him and gratitude for him is meant to increase beyond the mercies of God. Of course, we will deepen all of those virtues with regard to the mercies of God, but we will also be adding to them at the same time.

In the last two weeks, we got more specific by learning about the mechanics of relationship prayer and how it works.

We learned that relationship prayer involves praying about the mercies of God which are the things given to us in Christ. We learned what those things are.

What does prayer about the mercies of God accomplish? What should we be expecting when we engage in relationship praying?

This kind of prayer is the means by which the mercies of God do their effectual work in us. This is different from edification prayer in that we already possess the mercies of God. They were given to us by grace when we trusted Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are not praying for forgiveness, righteousness or peace with God. We are praying *about* those things so that they will produce certain ‘virtues’ in us; virtues which must be in us before we begin the education proper in Romans 12.

If we do not know what those mercies are, we will not have those mercies working in us. If we do not have those mercies working in us, then we will not be able to pass the checkpoint of Romans 12:1. The inability to pass the checkpoint of Romans 12:1 means that the education will only be information in our heads but not edification in our hearts.

Praying “about” the mercies of God means we are talking to God out of our knowledge and understanding of those things; knowledge that comes from his word. Be sure and ground your prayers in the word of truth.

I want to give you an idea of what should be in our minds as we are praying about the mercies of God.

When we pray about the mercies of God, it means we are:

- Thinking about those mercies individually and what we understand about each one.
- Thinking about how they impact us (in our thinking and actions).
- Learning to value and esteem those things for what they are. (We recognize what each mercy does for us and what it would be like if we did not have it.)
- Understanding some things about God by the things he has done for us.

What does it tell us about God when we know that he has forgiven us of all iniquities? Just think about it. Go back in your bible to Romans 4 and refresh your thinking with what was told to you back there about this issue.

Post-doctrinal Exhortation:

One last exhortation on this: the more we do this, the more natural it feels, and the more skilled we become at it. This is praying in the will of God, and in accordance with the word of God, so get used to this kind of praying. Relationship prayer is meant to install the mercies of God in our inner man. So, spend time with this kind of praying. Do it everywhere you can, whenever you can.

This would be a great way to start family prayer, teaching one another about the proper way to pray and going over the different mercies of God. Have a discussion about each mercy before you pray.

Edification Prayer

Let us make sure we all understand what edification is. Edification is the ‘building up’ of our inner man. Edification is the word of truth effectually working in us to produce godly thinking and godly living.

There are many ways we could talk about this.

The results of edification:

- A joint-heir inheritance with Christ (Romans 8:17).
- Glory is revealed in us (Romans 8:18).
- A heavenly vocation in the creature (Romans 8:19-21).

- All things work together for good (Romans 8:28).
- We are conformed to the image of God's Son (Romans 8:29).
- We become more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).

And these are just the things in Romans 8!

The mercies of God are different from edification unto godliness.

- The mercies are automatic at salvation; edification is not.
- The mercies are instant and complete; edification is a process that takes place gradually over time.
- The mercies pertain to our status before God; edification pertains to our function.
- The mercies are the foundation; edification is the building built upon that foundation.

Without all the mercies given to us, it would be impossible for our edification to take place. They are all necessary. Therefore, there are no unimportant mercies or optional mercies.

- The mercies are about us "in Christ" while edification is about "Christ in us."

In view of these differences, it makes sense that our prayers would be somewhat different – yes?

But let us keep in mind that there are ways in which these two issues are alike:

1. The things given to us in Christ are not things we pray to get, but they are certainly things we pray about.
2. The things which pertain to our edification (Christ in us) are not things we pray to get either, but they also are things we pray about.

When I say this, I do not mean we cannot or should not tell God we want to be edified, of course we can. What I mean is that we cannot be edified unto godliness simply by asking God to edify us. Just as we will not be educated without an understanding of the word, we will not be edified apart from our proper response to the word.

So, there is our three components to edification: prayer, the word, and us. We will provide more detail about this later on.

As we turn our attention to edification prayer, there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

- Everything God intended to give us/do for us, without any prayer or participation on our part, he has already given to us/done for us when he put us in Christ.
- Godly edification never takes place apart from God's word.
- Godly edification only takes place in connection to the doctrine contained in God's word.
- Godly edifying requires our proper response to the doctrine.

I understand this will sound strange, but God does not do anything in response to prayer alone and we are not supposed to look at prayer in that way. Again, for example, prayer alone will not inform us of the things which are given to us in Christ.

We must be taught about them. How are we to be taught? We are taught in God's word. Here again, God is not doing anything in response to prayer alone.

We must stop thinking that prayer is how we get God to go do things for us or how we get God to give us things.

I can anticipate an objection about the prayer of salvation. Is not God saving us just because we prayed? He is not.

Why not? God does not save anyone in response to a prayer, because salvation is not obtained through any prayer; it is obtained through faith.

I know that when people talk about being saved, they use terminology like: ask God to save you, ask Jesus to come into your heart, or ask God to forgive your sins. But the truth is, in order to be saved, we do not ask God to do something; we put our trust in something he has already done. That is called faith. Therefore, Paul taught us that we are saved by grace (which means it is not earned or deserved, but given as a free gift) through (or in response to) faith.

What is our faith in? Our faith is in the provision that God himself made for our salvation: the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. God knew exactly what was needed to obtain salvation. In the person of his Son, God performed everything that was needed to provide for salvation. Our only part is to trust in what God provided for us. When we trust the provision that God made for us, that is *saving faith*.

Therefore, technically, salvation is not obtained by asking God to save us. We are not saved by asking God to come into our hearts. We are not saved by asking God to forgive our sins. We are not saved by asking God to do anything. We are saved by trusting what he has already done.

When we put our faith (trust) in the finished work of Jesus (which he performed in his death, burial, and resurrection), then in response to our faith (a non-meritorious action) in what Jesus did, God justifies us unto eternal life. He forgives our sins and imputes the righteousness of his Son to us and much more.

Salvation is not a prayer which asks God for anything. Salvation does not require a prayer at all. Salvation is hearing and understanding the gospel and responding to it by faith.

You have heard me talk about a positive and proper response to the doctrine many times. Let us apply this to salvation.

We respond positively to the gospel when:

- We understand it and
- Believe it is true.

We respond properly to the gospel when:

- We trust it and it alone to save us.

This is why we say, we trust Jesus as our all-sufficient Savior.

If all you are doing is asking God to save you, but you are not trusting what Christ did to satisfy God's justice against you, then you are not saved. God did not answer your prayer to save you because salvation is not a prayer issue; it is a trust issue – a faith issue.

Just like getting help to suffering people is not accomplished by prayer alone; it is accomplished by people getting involved. In the same way, salvation is not obtained by simply praying for it; salvation is given to us in response to our faith.

Saving faith demands trust in what God did for us and offers us as a free gift of grace.

That is the critical part. The kind of faith that saves us is the kind that trusts what Jesus has done as sufficient to save us, as sufficient to satisfy God's justice against us, as sufficient to pay for our sins. If we are saved by grace through faith (and we are), then saving faith is not asking God to do anything. It trusts something he has already done.

Saving faith is trusting that 'the faith of Christ' (the faithful performance of Jesus Christ) has done everything necessary to save us. We are simply trusting him; trusting what he has already done for us. That is what it means to "believe."

***Romans 3:22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

***1 Corinthians 1:21** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

And what are we to believe? We believe that God, through his Son, provided everything necessary to save us from our unsaved condition.

And just to show you the verses for the issue of salvation and imputed righteousness:

***Galatians 2:16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be*

justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Notice it does not say, ‘by faith in Christ.’ It says, “by the faith of Christ” which means it is his faith. His “faith” is not referring to Jesus’ trusting in something; it is referring to his faithful performance with regard to providing redemption.

The bottom line is that we are justified by his faithful performance and not by anything else.

Notice also that “the faith of Christ” is set in contrast to “the works of the law.” Paul said the law cannot justify anyone. I believe that is true not only in this dispensation, but in any dispensation. Why? Because justification by the law demands perfection and the only one to live a perfect and sinless life was Jesus Christ. He did not need to be saved (by the law or by grace) because he was not born in sin. Jesus did not have a sin nature. So, Jesus did not have a sin status like we do. But even though he was “without sin,” in his status, he still needed to be perfect in the sense of his function.

***Philippians 3:9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

In response to our faith in “the faith of Christ,” we are given the righteousness which is of God. Or, to say it another way, in response to our trust in the faithful performance of Jesus Christ, God has given us his righteousness.

The point here is that, once again, this is a *faith issue*, and prayer is not how this gets done.

Now, let us take this back to the main point we are after. Prayer alone, by itself, is not all God is expecting from us. While prayer is a necessary part of the process, prayer alone will not edify us.

In our minds we should always think:

- God is not going to do things for us just because we ask him to, no matter what they are.

It is true that prayer is part of a process which can change things, but those things are spiritual in nature. Prayer is part of a process that includes the word of God and our response to the word. But, prayer alone is not enough to change our inner man and it was never intended to be.

Obviously, the purpose of edification prayer is to play its role in our edification unto godliness.

So, what are the mechanics of edification prayer? What role does prayer play in the process of our edification?

Edification Prayer serves in two ways.

1. It is the means by which the doctrine effectually works in us.
2. It brings the doctrine to our minds (activates the doctrine) throughout the day so that we live out of what we know.

Let us talk about the first one.

As we study “walk after the Spirit” (which means to follow his intercessory ministry through the word), he leads us to a particular form of doctrine. In the book of Romans, that would be a passage that contains the three components of godliness: thinking, living, and labor.

As we consider the godly thinking aspect of the doctrine, we must first understand what the verses are saying. Then we must believe them. Understanding and believing are our positive response to the doctrine.

It is at this point that we begin talking to our Father about our understanding of the doctrine. This is similar to what we did with the mercies. One difference being that we are not praying about what we already have (like with the mercies), but we are praying about what God wants to produce in us.

The more we think about it and contemplate it, the more we talk about it with our Father, the more work is done in our hearts and the more familiar we get with this new thinking. How else do you think effectual working is accomplished? It is not magic. It is a process that we engage in, first in prayer.

Then, we take that new thinking and integrate it into our everyday conduct and behavior. Let that thinking influence what you do. And this is where prayer comes in again. This time, it is prayer that reminds you of the doctrine. As you are going about your day, you should be developing the ability to “pray without ceasing” and “continue instant in prayer.”

(We have gone over this kind of praying before, so I will not reteach it again. But you can go back and review those lessons if you need to. (These would be sessions 39-44.)

This is the second way in which edification prayer works: by continually bringing the doctrine to our minds so that we can respond properly to all the circumstances of life.

Space for personal reflection and notes