

Session 69: The Mechanics of Education Prayer

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 69).

What are the mechanics of education prayer? What role does prayer play in the process of our edification? Prayer's role is part of the process whereby we take the potential of the doctrine and turn it into a functional reality.

For example:

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

It is one thing to know that "all things" have the potential to work together for our good, but it is another thing for us to experience that in the mist of our tribulations. As David Busch said, "the doctrine must go from the written epistle to the living epistle." In other words, the words on the pages must take up residence in our hearts and find their outworking in our thoughts and actions.

As we become familiar with a particular form of doctrine, we employ a couple of different kinds of prayers. But, we do not pray to know the truth, no matter how sincerely we may ask. The truth has already been revealed in God's word. Our own study, pastors and teachers, and fellow saints may help direct us to what we need to know, but the truth is found in that portion of God's word which pertains to us. God will not magically inform our thinking. The Spirit will not give us a sign. God is not arranging circumstances.

The first form of prayer that follows our understanding of the doctrine is to begin talking with God about what we understand. This is very similar to the kind of praying in relationship prayer. One difference being that we are not praying about something we already possess but something God wants us to possess.

The assembly gathers together for the purpose of their pastor/teacher leading them in an understanding of the doctrine. It is our responsibility to make sure we have an understanding before we go home. Hopefully, what is happening at church is that doctrine is moving from the pages of scripture into our minds. At this point, it is only data; it is only information.

As we know, in order for this word to do its effectual work, we not only understand it, but we also believe it. That is the first step to changing the doctrine from our minds to our hearts. But belief alone is not enough for the effectual working of the doctrine in us, and that is where prayer comes in.

The first form of prayer that follows our understanding and belief is to begin talking with God about what we understand about the doctrine.

This is very similar to the way we prayed in relationship prayer. (One difference being that we are not praying about something we already possess but something God wants us to work in us.)

During this initial kind of praying several things are being done:

1. We are getting more familiar with what we have come to understand.
2. We are learning to put our understanding of the doctrine into words.
3. We are gaining an appreciation for what the doctrine is meant to accomplish in us.
4. We are furthering the relationship with our Father.

Also, during this time of prayer, if there is a deficiency in our understanding or application of the doctrine, this is the first place it will show up.

There are two kinds of understandings that should be taking place:

1. An understanding of what the doctrine is saying.
2. An understanding of what the doctrine is meant to accomplish.

Let us illustrate that last kind of understanding. For example, there is doctrine that is meant to affect how we treat other believers. There is another doctrine that is meant to produce peace in the midst of the sufferings of Christ. There is another doctrine that equips us to function together as members of the same body. But no matter what the particular form of doctrine may be, we should be able to identify what the doctrine is designed to do – its purpose.

This first form of prayer concerns getting the details worked out in our own minds. So, let us ask the question: what is this kind of prayer doing? What should we expect to take place from this first kind of praying? If we cannot identify those things, then it is time to go back and get a better understanding of the doctrine. If we do not understand the doctrine properly, there will be a breakdown in this first form of prayer. We will find ourselves halting and searching for the right words. We may be a little unsure and even say something that we almost immediately know is not right. This is all part of the process. It just means that we need to keep working on our understanding of the doctrine. Look at the verses and think about what you are reading. Read the notes for some help. Listen to the audio. Sometimes I say something different in the audio from the written notes that may help. Talk to a fellow-saint about what you are having trouble with. Bring it up in the next class. Do not be bashful.

After belief, prayer about our understanding of the doctrine is the next step in the process that moves the doctrine from our minds as information, to our hearts so that we begin to live out of it.

Let me take you back to something Paul wrote to Timothy and show you the same principle in Israel's program.

The book of 1st Timothy is a pastoral epistle like 2nd Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. After writing four chapters of instructions in 1st Timothy, Paul exhorts Timothy to:

1 Timothy 4:15 *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. ¹⁶ Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

What does it mean to “meditate?” We are not talking about the religious discipline whereby we empty our minds, fold our legs, close our eyes, and hum.

We are talking about:

Oxford English Dictionary

Meditate: 1) to reflect upon, consider, study, ...4) to exercise the mental faculties in thought or contemplation

Paul is exhorting Timothy to reflect upon the doctrine and how that doctrine is working in him. In other words, be thinking about the doctrine and give yourself wholly to it. Notice the meditation is on the doctrine, the word.

It was the same way in God’s program with Israel.

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.*

The meditation is constant.

Psalms 49:3 *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*

Here is the principle of understanding.

Psalms 63:6 *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*

David does this at night.

Psalms 77:12 *I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*

Psalms 119:97 *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

The point here is that spending time talking to God about that which we have come to understand, getting those thoughts into our minds to such a degree that they are what we talk about, and getting familiar with the doctrine is what needs to be happening with us just like

Joshua, David, and Timothy. Yes, the doctrine Joshua and David were meditating on was different from ours, but not Timothy's.

After we have engaged with that first kind of prayer which works to make us familiar with the doctrine, the next form of prayer serves to activate the doctrine. That is to say, this second kind of prayer takes what is in our heart and reminds us/impels us to put it to work in our life. This prayer is the catalyst for taking what we have learned and putting it into practical use in our everyday life.

As we employ the doctrine, this is where any insufficiencies and shortcomings will show up. For example, if we do not adequately understand the doctrine, this is another place where it will be made manifest. If we have some attitude that has not been dealt with by the doctrine properly, this is where the process will break down.

As we move the doctrine into our everyday experience, this is where “pray without ceasing,” and “continue instant in prayer” come into play. This is prayer which is always running in the background, scanning our thoughts, and evaluating our actions in light of the doctrine. This is the prayer that serves as a filter through which all of our decisions are supposed to pass.

This kind of prayer is the time in which we ask the following questions:

- In view of this situation, what has God said about it?
- Have we identified the real need here?
- In light of the doctrine, what are we to think about this situation?
- In light of the doctrine, what are we going to do about this situation?

What I had planned to do was give you a couple of examples so we could work our way through the process and get familiar with how this works. But instead of giving you the examples here, I am going to give you the examples in the next section on prayer: adversity prayer.

So for now, let us outline the process.

1. Hear and understand:
 - a. We hear the doctrine at church.
 - b. We hear the explanation.
 - c. We understand what the doctrine is designed to do.
 - d. We understand what the doctrine is saying.
2. Believe: the next step is believing the doctrine will work for us.
3. Pray: the next step is praying about our understanding of the doctrine.
 - a. We talk to God as much as we can about what we know about the doctrine; what it is designed to do.

- b. We learn to value the doctrine for what it is to God.
- c. We learn to love God for what this doctrine is meant to produce in us.
- d. We meditate on the doctrine.
- e. We pray some more.
- f. We meditate some more.
- g. We pray some more.
- h. We read the verses.
- i. We pray some more.
- j. We look over the notes or listen to the audio.
- k. We meditate some more.
- l. We talk to other saints about the doctrine.
- m. We talk to God about the doctrine.
- n. We read the verses again.
- o. We think about what we have read.

Get the picture? It is a process like this that moves the words on the page to become a living reality in our hearts.

- 4. Evaluate: the next step is to ask the questions:
 - a. What do we know God has said about this issue?
 - b. What is this doctrine designed to produce in us?
 - c. Is this doctrine beginning to change our thinking?
 - d. How will this doctrine impact our behavior?
- 5. Pray/Apply: Once this doctrine is getting itself established in our thinking, we begin to live out of it, accompanied by prayer without ceasing and continuing instant in prayer.
- 6. Evaluate/Pray: As this process takes place, we ask the questions:
 - a. Have we confused the *human version* of this with the godly version? In other words, are we doing what we are doing because of what the doctrine says, or are we putting this to work in the energy of our own flesh?
 - b. Are our thoughts in line with the doctrine?
 - c. Are our words/actions in line with the doctrine?
 - d. Talk to our Father about the process of living out of the doctrine.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 70: The Mechanics of Education Prayer, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 70).

Let us stop here and recap what we have so far. The first kind of prayer is about the doctrine we have learned. We are getting familiar with it to the extent we can talk to our Father about it. We understand what the doctrine is designed to do. This kind of prayer establishes the doctrine in our heart.

The second kind of prayer activates the doctrine in our everyday life.

Education prayer serves in several ways.

- Prayer moves the doctrine from our minds to our hearts.
- Then, prayer brings the doctrine to our attention (activates the doctrine) throughout the day so that we live out of what we know.
- Prayer is the way we continually evaluate our thoughts and actions in light of the doctrine.

(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 in sessions 39-44.)

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 we do. This is where prayer comes in again. This time, it is prayer that reminds us of the doctrine. As we are going about our day, we should be developing the ability to “pray without ceasing” and “continue instant in prayer.”

This is the second way in which education prayer works; to continually bring the doctrine to our minds so that we can respond properly to all the circumstances of life.

Adversity Prayer

So far we have covered the mechanics of what I am calling relationship prayer and education prayer. Now we will begin looking at what I am calling adversity prayer. There are two kinds of adversities that we face in our lives and the kind will dictate the prayer.

One kind of suffering is because of our sonship life: our adherence to Paul’s doctrines. These are called *the sufferings of Christ*. These are the attacks which are directed against us to make us quit

our sonship life. If we do, these attacks will cease. If we start up again, so may the attacks. These kinds of attacks warrant a particular kind of praying and the effectual working of particular doctrines.

First, let us talk about the sufferings of Christ. These attacks are progressive in that they come in degrees or stages of intensity. These attacks are always in accordance with where we are spiritually as saints. There is a reason for this which you will see shortly. But it is important to know that we are not attacked in a way which exceeds our function as sons.

The attacks of Satan's policy of evil (PoE) come in three phases:

1. Attack the Message – purpose: teach the counterfeit.
2. Attack the Messenger – purpose: stop teaching the truth.
3. Discredit the Messenger – purpose: keep others from listening.

For everyone who is in the world, Satan has put something into the world which would influence people, especially unsaved people; it is called "*the course of this world.*" Paul says that we Gentiles lived our lives in accordance with the course of this world.

Ephesians 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Those who are walking according to the "course of this world" are living their lives in accordance with Satan's plan. The course of this world influences more about us than we might imagine.

- It dictates what is normal behavior and impels us to shun those who are *out of step* with the course of this world.
- The course of this world (CoTW) tells us such things as how we should spend our time or what things are important.
- It is multi-faceted which is to say it presents itself in many forms. Therefore, it does not matter if: you are rich or poor, well-educated or not, athletic or not, where you live, the type of music you enjoy, religious or not, male or female, sick or well, kind or cruel, young or old, generous or greedy, extrovert or introvert, single or married, organized or disorganized, genuine or shallow, political or not, popular or not, well known or not; none of that matters because the course of this world is designed to offer something for everyone. There is an aspect which will appeal to you.

Why did Satan put the course of this world into motion?

The goal of the course of this world is the complete rejection of the true and living God by the entire world.

- It seeks to produce a godless world.
- It works to produce a godless world by means of all kinds of works which it promotes, but especially by three major categories which Paul calls “the works of darkness.”

Even if we are saved, we are still influenced by the course of this world in more ways than we can imagine.

- We have been under it our entire life, so its effects feel as natural as breathing.
- Only the effectual working of God’s word will expose all the tentacles which have wrapped around us and held us hostage to obey it.

But, once we are justified unto eternal life, once we have heard and believed the gospel of Christ, something has happened to us which can change everything. If we ever come to an understanding of Paul’s unique apostleship and doctrine, which pertains to us as members of the body of Christ, then Satan must now begin his first phase of attack against us.

Phase 1 of the policy of evil is to attack the message of grace and its accompanying doctrines as set forth in Paul’s epistles.

Space for personal reflection and notes

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