

## ***Session 77: Prayer Principles***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 77).

Principles of Prayer:

1. Prayer changes us.
2. Prayer works to activate the doctrine in our spirit.

Okay, prayer changes us, but how does that happen?

***1 Thessalonians 5:23*** *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The change in us, which takes place by prayer, is a spirit-motivated change. We hear the word (or read it) and that word takes root in our spirit.

We normally say, body, soul, and spirit, but notice that Paul puts these in reverse order: spirit, soul, and body. He does that because this is the order in which we are changed. Change takes place in our spirit, then in our soul and lastly in our body.

Our spirit involves our mind: the way we think. When we think about things differently, we have a different attitude or emotion (which involves our soul), and then it affects our conduct and behavior (our body).

The change that God generates in us through prayer happens from the inside out beginning in our spirit.

3. Prayer follows the mechanics. God speaks to men through the person of his Spirit

This process of prayer (interaction with God) works how? It is going to happen in our spirit, for that is the part of us which was created to allow us to have fellowship with God.

***John 4:23*** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Men's relationship with God is spiritual in nature; therefore, worship takes place in our spirit. But how does God connect to our spirit?

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

In verse 16, is God communicating something to us or are we communicating something to him? He is communicating something to us. What is he communicating? The Spirit is bearing witness with our spirit (what we think: our mind) that we are the children of God.

In scripture, when God wants to communicate something to men, it comes through his Spirit. In addition, in this dispensation of Gentile grace, how does God communicate through his Spirit? What is the means by which he does that? It is through his word: the completed revelation of Scripture.

***2 Corinthians 3:3** Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

***2 Corinthians 3:2** Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:*

In other words, what does the scripture say? Paul used the expression over and over.

***Romans 4:3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

***Romans 11:2** God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

***Galatians 4:30** Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.*

***John 6:63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

The Spirit of God communicates using words: language. The whole reason God created language is so he could communicate with men. The spirit is the part of us which allows verbal communication. Ideas, thoughts, and abstract concepts are understood through verbal communication.

When communication is by us to God, it is only on the merits of Jesus Christ.

***1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

We approach God because of the merits of Jesus Christ and we have those merits because we are “in Christ.” We have unlimited and unrestricted access to God because of our being in Christ.

When God speaks to us, it is by the Spirit. When we speak to God, it is by his Son. When the Spirit speaks to us, it is by God's word. That is what happened when Jesus was praying in the garden; God spoke to him by the scriptures. Why else would Jesus say?

***Matthew 26:54** But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

Do you want to know what happened when Christ was praying? The Spirit communicated God's words (the scriptures) and he knew that his Father's words needed to be fulfilled; that was his Father's will, and thus it became the Son's will also.

***2 Peter 1:20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

So, let us go through it again. When God speaks to men, he does so by his Spirit. The Spirit communicates by means of God's word. And how did we get God's words? Peter said that 'holy men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost.' That means that they wrote down words which God revealed to them by his Spirit.

As we have said before, God communicates by his word which was communicated to men by his Spirit. Those words were written down and now they become God's communication to us.

Take for example, Romans 8:16.

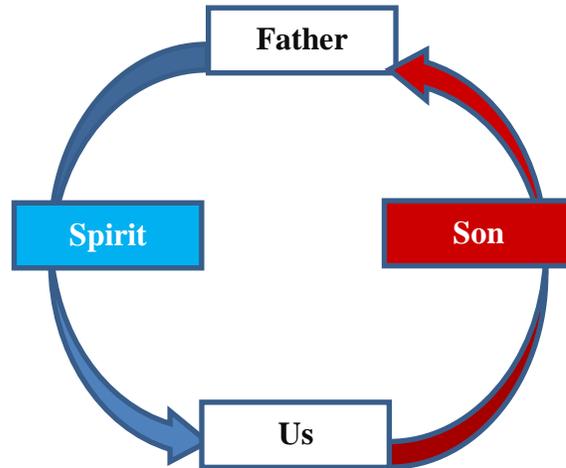
***Romans 8:16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

How does the Spirit bare witness that we are the children of God? He bears witness to that by the written word of God. We know we are God's children not because we feel it, but because he has told us we are his children.

Paul wrote about this same issue in Galatians 4.

***Galatians 4:6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. <sup>7</sup> Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

When we speak to God, it is through the mediator Jesus Christ. The Spirit communicates to us on God's behalf, Jesus Christ communicates to God on our behalf.



**Space for personal reflection and notes**

## ***Session 78: Prayer Principles, Continued***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 78).

Comforts in the midst of the sufferings of this present time.

- We have the comfort of knowing this body will one day be redeemed.
- This doctrine has the power to produce a patient endurance until that time.

***Romans 8:23*** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

- In Romans 8:26-27, we have the comforting ministry of Spirit, so that we are not just waiting, but we know something that informs our prayers in the midst of our infirmities.

With these principles in place, let us go back to Romans 8:26 and see what we know.

***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.*

When Paul prayed for his “thorn in the flesh” to be removed, did Paul know what to pray for as he ought? He did not, at least not in the beginning.

When Paul said the Spirit makes intercession “for us,” which direction is the communication going? It is from God to us. When the Spirit intercedes...

***Romans 8:27*** *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.*

Who is searching the hearts? God the Father is searching.

***Acts 15:8*** *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;*

God knows our hearts. Now back to Romans 8:27.

***Romans 8:27*** *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.*

God searches the hearts. He knows our hearts.

***Romans 8:27*** *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.*

The same God who searches the hearts also knows the mind of the Spirit. What does it mean that God knows the mind of the Spirit? It means that God knows what the Spirit is telling us. And how does he know?

***Romans 8:27*** *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.*

Because, God knows the Spirit is speaking the Father's will.

***1 Corinthians 2:9*** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. <sup>10</sup> But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

The Spirit of God knows the mind of God. God knows the mind of the Spirit because the mind of the Spirit is the mind of God. They are one in the same.

***Romans 8:27*** *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.*

The Spirit is not making intercession randomly. The Spirit makes intercession based on the will of God. And the intercession the Spirit is making is in the form of God's words.

When Paul originally wanted God to take his problem away, the Spirit interceded in the sense that changed Paul's thinking about his problem. That intercession was in the form of "my grace is sufficient for thee." That changed Paul's attitude and then he began to pray about the problem the way he ought: "I will rather glory in my infirmities."

Paul changed. The Spirit's intercession changed Paul.

So, to sum up verses 26-27, the comfort we have right now is knowing that God is using his Spirit to intercede (by means of God's word) on our behalf in the midst of our infirmities to change us: that we might begin to pray in accordance with the will of God, that we might see our circumstances differently, and that we will respond to them differently.

I took longer on verses 26-27 than I thought I would, but remember what we are doing. We are talking about the comforting ministries that are available to us while we “with patience” wait for the redemption of our body as we endure the sufferings of this present time.

Adversity prayer, part 1 – sufferings of this present time is:

- The certainty of the doctrine of God’s counsel that stabilizes us – Romans 8:28-30

***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. <sup>29</sup> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

God’s counsel is that all of our sufferings have the potential to work together for our spiritual good. Through those sufferings, we are being conformed to the image of God’s Son. That is to say, sufferings are opportunities for Christ’s life to made manifest in us. This is the ultimate goal of our sanctification.

God is the one who put this whole process into motion and he has done everything necessary in order for it to succeed as long as we respond properly to the doctrine.

- The comforting doctrine of the five probing questions – Romans 8:31-39
- Sufferings of Christ
- Identify our greatest need

Education prayer

1. Hear and understand: we hear the doctrine at church, we hear the explanation, understand what the doctrine is designed to do, and understand what the doctrine is saying.
2. Believe: is to believe the doctrine will work for us.
3. Pray: praying is about our understanding of the doctrine. We talk to God as much as we can about what we know about the doctrine and what it is designed to do. We learn to value the doctrine for what it is to God. We learn to love God for what this doctrine is meant to produce in us. We meditate on the doctrine. We pray some more. We meditate some more. We pray some more. We read the verses. We pray some more. We look over the notes or listen to the audio. We meditate some more. We talk to other saints about the doctrine. We talk to God about the doctrine. We read the verses again. 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: is to ask some 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 some questions.
  - a. Have we confused the 'human' version of this with the godly version? In other words, are we doing what are we 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

Praying for others:

- Prayer for fellow sons
  - Prayer moves us to action
- Praying for everyone else
  - Prayer moves us to action

**Space for personal reflection and notes**