

## CHAPTER SEVEN - PART ONE

### PRAYER: OUR CONNECTION WITH GOD

The word “spirit” is the Greek translation for “*pneuma*” (G4151) meaning “wind, breath or a state of mind.” The word refers to three things in the New Testament: 1) the Holy Spirit, 2) man’s spirit, and 3) angels. Man was created and is born with a spirit, soul and body — created in the image and likeness of God. Due to the fall of Adam, man died spiritually. But thanks be to God that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and redeem our spirits once again. The moment one has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, his spirit is redeemed and is made “alive” by the Holy Spirit. He now has the ability to commune with God and to be spiritually discerned.

Unsaved individuals do not possess a redeemed spirit, but an unredeemed spirit, which remains “*dead in trespasses and sin.*” Therefore, their spirit is separated from God and is not spiritually discerned. Because they do not believe, their spirit was not made alive by the Holy Spirit, and therefore, cannot commune with God, nor do they have the ability to understand spiritual things. The spirit in unsaved man is dead.

But Christians have the ability to commune with God through prayer and are able to understand the spiritual lessons in God’s Word. Jesus Christ is the supreme model of One devoted to prayer. In just three years of His ministry on the earth, Jesus spent much time in prayer. He prayed before every difficult task in His ministry. He prayed fervently to God when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. He went into the garden and fell down with His face to the ground, praying,

*“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”* (Matthew 26:39)

Jesus prayed long and often (Luke 5:16). When He was in a crowd, He prayed. When He was with His disciples, He prayed. And when He was alone and in agony, He prayed more earnestly (Luke 22:44). Jesus prayed for Himself (John 17:1), He prayed for His disciples (John 17:6) and He prayed for all believers (John 17:20). We also are to “Pray

*without ceasing*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This should be the will and manner of every true follower of Jesus Christ. No matter how dim a situation may seem, never stop praying.

Prayer keeps our relationship with God strong. It enables us to share our circumstances with God and to ask for God’s help and strength. Prayer needs to be an integral part of our lives, not just during troublesome times. Jesus frequently prayed alone, separating Himself from every earthly distraction. As we make prayer a daily habit, we will have the strength and faith to pray that God’s will be done in our lives.

We must learn to pray far more for spiritual victory — that our spirit will have victory over our soul — than anything else. Whatever we ask of God, effective prayer must always be offered in faith. We see this in **James 1:5-8**:

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

Prayer is powerful; it is a voice of faith directed to God. Prayer should be a way of life, communicating our requests, our thanks, our praises, our confessions of sin, and our thoughts to God daily. As we face our trials and sufferings, we must not forget that our prayers are subject to His will. This takes the burden off of us and gives it to the Lord. His will is always best, even if it does not seem that way to us at the time.

*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6)*

Throughout Scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we find the record of God’s people whose prayers have been answered — always in correlation to God’s will. We see this with Daniel as he faithfully prayed for the people of Israel in **Daniel 9**; he was heard and immediately God answered him. We see this with Elijah as *he prayed*

*earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:17b, 18).*

Jesus Christ Himself prayed earnestly to God during His suffering on earth, yet God allowed Him to go through the suffering so that He would truly function as our High Priest and King.

*...in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest... (Hebrews 5:7-9)*

Jesus' suffering enabled Him to understand our weaknesses and be able to intercede before God for us in heaven as Mediator. Not only that, but also to fulfill God's plans and purposes for Him and us—for Him, to be awarded High Priest and King of kings; and for us, to cleanse us and offer us salvation, in order that we may partake in the inheritance with Him. So then Jesus' suffering and death was necessary in order to fulfill God's promises to His Son/sons.

In the same way, we will have to endure hardship and suffering so that we are perfected and prepared for Christ's kingdom. Our prayers of faith will be heard during our times of suffering, and will be answered according to God's will. We should pray that God will provide the strength to endure and lead us towards the path of victory.

*God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

The Holy Spirit in us assists in our weaknesses when we pray. Even though we do not always know what to pray for or how best to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for us. And Christ knows the mind of the Spirit and intercedes on our behalf before the throne of God. Ultimately, it is to accomplish God's will for us. All circumstances, therefore, work

together for the believer's good, so that the believer will be conformed to Christ now for the purpose of reigning with Him then.

*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

*Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)*

Scripture is quite clear as to what we should pray for, first and foremost, and how we should pray. This is seen in **Matthew 6:5**. Scripture reveals that prayer should be done without deceit or pretense. Prayer is a time of intimacy with God; a form of worship revealing our sincerity and seriousness for Him:

*But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. (1 Peter 4:7)*

Scripture is also quite clear about not using *vain repetitions* as some do, reducing prayer to empty recitation. The Lord knows our heart. He also knows the things we currently need before we even ask Him. Rather, we should begin our prayers with thanksgiving, focusing on Him and the future kingdom.

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)*

We ought to be pray according to the following manner:

*In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation,*

*But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and The glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)*

The hallowing of the Father's name means the arrival of God's kingdom. We pray for His kingdom to come and for His will be done. His kingdom will be established on earth as it is in heaven — a dual kingdom. If we are to be a part in His heavenly kingdom, we are to pray that He gives us His daily bread, which is the understanding of His Word daily, so that we can know how to prepare ourselves to enter His kingdom. Our prayer must include a confession of our sins, asking forgiveness. We must forgive others so that at the Judgment seat of Christ, He will forgive us. God will never deliberately lead a person to commit sin, yet He does sometimes place His people in adverse circumstances for the purpose of testing their faith, in chastening and in building godly character. In this case, as we ask for forgiveness, we can also ask Him not to lead us into the temptations of the devil, but to deliver us from him. Then, we are to acknowledge with praise that He is in possession of the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

Scripture reveals that the prayer of faith for others is powerful, for God hears and He may perform miracles in them, especially when they are lacking faith, knowledge and strength in the Lord:

*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray...Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:13-16)*

In **Philippians 1:9**, Paul prays that his brethren may direct their love towards God by their desire for knowledge and discernment of His Word. And this we can pray for other Christians as well, that God may give them the desire of His Word and open their eyes of understanding. In **Philippians 1:19**, Paul furthermore reveals that the prayer of his brethren together with the work of the Holy Spirit is vitally important for his deliverance, referring to his daily empowering to endure the troubling

situation before him. Therefore, the prayer of believers on behalf of other believers may produce deliverance or rescue by God from blindness, spiritual warfare, trials and tribulations. An individual who remains in a state of blindness to God's word is one who is walking in darkness, and, if continued, will ultimately lead to death in the age to come.

In **Philippians 4:6, 7**, Paul exhorts believers to pray about their circumstances instead of worrying over them. We are to commit our problems to God in prayer, trusting that He will provide deliverance.

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

We should give thanks every day to our Lord, as our Creator, our Savior and our Deliverer. The prayer of thanksgiving and praise that we give to the Lord avails much. His love, promise, mercy and grace are reasons why we are to continually give thanks and praise. We are to leave our worries behind and put our trust in the Lord, as only He can provide true peace, a peace that will guard our hearts and minds (soul) through the Spirit of Christ Jesus, who is in us.

We see a comparison Scripture to **Philippians 4:6** in **Colossians 4:2**, with the addition that a door of opportunity be given to minister the Word of the kingdom to other believers:

*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2-4)*

We must be diligent and faithful in prayer every day, so that our communication and our relationship with God will grow. Moreover, we will move from faith to faith and from glory to glory.

*...continuing steadfastly in prayer... (Romans 12:12c)*

*...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints... (Ephesians 6:18)*

It is then imperative that we remain diligent in our prayers toward abiding in the Word, which is life, and remaining focused daily to its connection to the coming Kingdom, for this is our motivation which will prevent us from hardening our hearts. The context for our prayer here then is the urgency that we feel in being prepared for meeting our Lord at His Judgment Seat and the passion we have to be found worthy.

Talk to God every day through prayer. But remember, “*The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous*” (**Proverbs 15:29**). God hears the prayers of believers who are following in His righteousness, according to His Word. The prayers of the saints (righteous, faithful believers) do reach the throne of God in heaven and God will redeem them and make them kings and priests to Him; and they shall reign on the earth and over the earth.

A recommended prayer extracted from **Colossians 1:9-12**:

*Father God, I ask that I may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I may walk worthy of You, fully pleasing You, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in Your knowledge; strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to You, Father, who has qualified me to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in the light and has conveyed me into the kingdom of the Son of Your love, in whom I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

