



Prayer Power

The thought of spending time in prayer makes some people afraid, as of some dark thing that will make life most unhappy. This fear is the work of the devil. Prayer is life's greatest blessing when one understands what it really is, and begins to do his own praying.

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Chapter One

YOU CAN HAVE A MINISTRY OF PRAYER

The thought of spending time in prayer makes some people afraid, as of some dark thing that will make life most unhappy. This fear is the work of the devil. Prayer is life's greatest blessing when one understands what it really is, and begins to do his own praying. If you have not yet given yourself to a life of prayer you can begin now. The Lord Jesus calls you to it. He says "...men ought always to pray." (**Luke 18:1**) He encourages us to enter a life of prayer.

Every Christian wants to be a blessing, sometimes showing his desire by much self-sacrifice and devotion to causes and organizations. These channels of Christian service are legitimate, but many of us defeat the very purpose of our existence by allowing ourselves to overlook the fact that God says we must become men and women of prayer if He is to use us.

Where do we see Moses doing his great work? In prayer before God. And Abraham? Walking with God in the communion of prayer. And Daniel the statesman? At prayer in spite of men, and devils, and lions. And what do we find our wonderful Lord Jesus doing? We find Him out in the wilderness praying - praying all night, constantly withdrawing Himself to pray. Do we think that great works can follow us without prayer? Never! Only wood, hay, and stubble can result from a prayerless life.

Your life may be very busy for God - filled with good deeds. You may preach and organize and defend the Gospel with time and money. You may pass out tracts and diligently buttonhole the passerby, but without prayer all this is just fleshly effort which will not stand the test of fire at the last day. If this sounds rather radical, a little thought will show its truth.

In your work for Christ, when things don't go just as you wish them to go, what do you do? How do you feel? When failure attends your best efforts, do you rejoice in the Lord, knowing that results are His and not yours, or do you pout, become discouraged, and decide to give up?

A little careful observation of yourself will disclose that all that is not born of prayer bears the marks of self, not the marks of the Holy Spirit. To try to work for Christ and not pray is folly. It is self-delusion. We must pray or attempt nothing for God.

Prayerlessness is the mark of spiritual disease. It shows that one is not interested in God, and why then should one try to serve Him in whom he is not interested? When one loves Jesus, he longs to pray. Prayer is his daily bread, the air he breathes. Prayerlessness points to broken fellowship - a fellowship that should first be restored before work is attempted.

When some great undertaking is planned demanding the sacrifice of men, at the risk of life perhaps, there is no lack of volunteers. The glory of it thrills those who long to share in the task. When we see that Jesus Christ wants to rule over the hearts of men, is there any one of us who would not rejoice to share in this accomplishment? This is exactly what Jesus wants. Prayer brings us into fellowship with Himself and His work and gives us a share in winning many souls to God.

Elijah - a man of prayer -

Elijah was a "man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (**James 5:17,18**).

Here is a sublime and magnificent statement. In its simplicity we find strong encouragement for a life of prayer. If a man, like us, could pray earnestly, then can not we pray earnestly? The Bible tells us of many great men of prayer and faith. Too frequently we put these men on pedestals high above us common mortals, and then try to excuse ourselves from following in their steps of faith and achievement by making them out to be "supermen" - men capable of doing what we could never do. But both James and the Holy Spirit want us to know that this great man of prayer, Elijah, was not a "superman," but a man just like us.

In the verse quoted above, which explains that Elijah was a "man subject to like passions as we are," we find the Greek word *homoipathes* which means, "of like feelings of affections." This same word is used by Paul in Acts 14 where he tells the barbarians not to sacrifice to them, for they too are just men. The natives of Lystra thought, because of the miracle, that these men were gods who had come down to earth. "No," says Paul, "we are the very same kind of men as you, and we are not worthy of the least bit of worship or sacrifice."

Now, let us hear the apostle James as he tells us about Elijah, the great Elijah, the strong Elijah, the Elijah who could stand against a whole nation and win it to God by one daring act of faith. He declares that this Elijah "was a man with a nature like ours" (NKJV), yet, he could pray an effectual prayer that rain would either be withheld or given.

Elijah told Ahab: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (**I Kings 17:1**).

What a powerful announcement for a man to utter! Yet he was just a man, a man who would later run from the threat of a heathen woman, Jezebel. (**I Kings 19:1**) But this man could really pray.

It should thrill our souls to think that Elijah, a great man of prayer, was just like us. God has a powerful life for each one of us. It is found in prayer. When we are all able to pray such prayers as Elijah's, the world will shake with them. That's what we need - prayers that will operate as mightily as Elijah's. This is how God rules the world - by the prayers of His people. Our tendency is to put off till tomorrow what can be done, and should be done, today. We can be mightily used of God only as we become men and women of prayer today!

In **I Kings 18**, we are told how the heathen prophets on Mount Carmel desperately called on their god, Baal, but he answered them not. On the other hand, we read that when Elijah prayed to his God, fire came down from heaven. This great victory on Mount Carmel defeated idolatry and brought the nation back to God.

Yes, Elijah was a powerful man of prayer. Prayer makes us powerful. Who wouldn't want to be able to stand against the enemies of God and defy them on some "Mount Carmel"? Who wouldn't want the joy of seeing some modern prophets of Baal defeated, or the fire from heaven vindicating God's prophet?

Well, these opportunities are still ours. Yes, Jesus still has conquest to win. In fact, we are now at the point where the greatest of all victories is to be manifested in the world. Shall we not enlist in Jesus' army so that the final victory shall be ours too? It is an army of praying men and women.

A powerful example of prayer -

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, Dwight L. Moody made a trip across the Atlantic to the British Isles. It was just after the Chicago fire had laid the city low. While waiting for his new tabernacle to be completed, he thought that he might take the time to learn something from the great preachers of Britain. He did not go to preach but to listen: at least that was his intention at the time.

At one meeting he felt led to give a short talk, and afterwards a minister asked him to preach in his church the next Sunday morning and evening. He agreed and found a church full of people, but cold as ice spiritually. In the evening it was the same, a church full of people, but such a hard atmosphere in which to preach.

Suddenly, halfway through his sermon, the meeting changed and a breath from heaven came down. After the message, people flocked to the inquiry room. It was filled to capacity, which amazed the pastor of the church who did not know what to do with those seeking the way of salvation. The interest in getting converted was tremendous.

Needless to say, Mr. Moody stayed and held more meetings. Hundreds were added to that congregation within a week or so. Mr. Moody knew that there was a cause for this tide of revival and succeeded in unearthing the reason.

Some time before Moody's coming a member of this congregation had become bedridden, and faced the rest of her life as an invalid. What could she do? At this point God showed her she could pray, and from then on she devoted herself to prayer as never before.

In a paper she read an article by Mr. Moody telling of his work in the United States. The Holy Spirit put it on her heart to pray that this man would hold meetings in her church in England. For months she prayed continually, on into a second year. Some would think it foolish to pray such a prayer when the man was so far away, but prayer sees no obstacles. So she prayed. She was not able to do much for God, but she could pray, and she did so faithfully.

One day after the morning service, her sister arrived home and told her of a man by the name of Moody who had preached that morning. The invalid's face turned pale with emotion as she asked what results had come of the service. On hearing that nothing special had happened, she set herself to most earnest prayer, refusing to have dinner as usual.

All day long she prayed. The results we know. Mr. Moody spoke with this woman, and told the story himself. Of course, Moody and his helpers were used of God in the remarkable meetings, but behind it all was a woman who was willing to pray, loosing the hands of God to work. Her name? I do not know, but heaven does.

There will be some surprises when the rewards are given out in heaven. We will find that some obscure persons settled great matters here on earth by their prayers. This field of endeavor is not crowded; there's room for many more. Why not enlist today? Most people like to be seen and known of men. To be known of God - vastly superior!

Chapter Two

LIVING THE LIFE OF PRAYER

In the previous chapter, we learned that the victory on Mount Carmel, the rejuvenation of a nation, and the defeat of idolatry, were all accomplished by one man who prayed. And that one who prayed was a man just like you and me, so far as human frailty is concerned. This thought should give us strong encouragement to seek and enter such a life of prayer-victory. It is the fact of his being subject to "like passions as we are" that gives us this hope. We must not, however, leave out one thought given us by the apostle James as he writes in the fifth chapter of his epistle. He says:

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (**vs.16**). The word "righteous" must not be left out of our calculations. Indeed it is the key word of the verse. It tells us that the kind of praying that one does is conditioned by the kind of person he is. O God, speak to our hearts about this! Beloved, let us seriously examine the victory of Calvary so that true prayer can issue from our hearts.

Look again at James' statement; here it is in a very literal rendering, "Much ability (force, strength, might) has the petition of a righteous one, working (that is, as it works)." Such a petition has energy in it. It accomplishes things. It has much ability to work out the purposes of God. As a righteous man petitions God, the working out of that petitioning is so powerful that it accomplishes much. But it takes a righteous heart to feel and frame such petitions, such asking as God Himself designs the heart to ask.

Prayer... an instrument of warfare -

This leads us to state emphatically, again, that the kind of praying you do depends on the kind of person you are, and the kind of life you live. If we look at prayer as an instrument by which God works out His plans in this world of sin and chaos, we see that a great deal depends on the channel through which the prayer passes.

For instance, in the time of war we understand that the quality of our aircraft determines what they can do. They must be designed for certain work, whether to fly high and be maneuverable, or to fly long distances and carry heavy loads. The nature of the work to be done determines the structure of the weapon. Is it not so with God and His warfare? He designs His instruments to fit the need. If one is to pray so that the power of sin and darkness is to be defeated, the instrument must be righteous, and must "walk in the light as He is in the light" (**I John 1:7**).

Sin in our lives will hamstring us. Worldliness will throttle us as we try to pray. Our fighting men very soon find out the defects in the weapons they are called upon to use. New types with defects corrected are built to meet the actual conditions of warfare.

And so it must be in this Christian "fight of faith." When we find that our hearts somehow do not get through to God, that our prayers are not answered, (although Jesus gives us strong assurance that whatsoever we ask in His name we receive), that we don't get into prayer as we ought, then we should find out what is wrong, and see that something is done to correct it.

Prayer ... a ministry for others -

Prayer may be looked at in two ways. First, as a means for getting to God for ourselves- as a means of getting our lives filled with the Spirit, filled with the victory of the blood of Jesus. In other words, prayer is the means by which the will of God comes to rule in our own hearts and makes us vessels; meet for the Master's use.

Then, secondly, we find that prayer becomes more and more a means whereby we can pray for others with such power that the prayers are answered. Of course, the two can be carried along together; we are not to wait until we are perfect before we pray for our brother. Nevertheless, the

kind of praying we can do for our brother, the "effectual fervent" praying, depends upon the praying that lays hold of God for righteousness in our own lives.

We are to love our neighbors as our self. How can we desire holiness for him if we have no desire for it ourselves? The seeming selfishness of praying much for one's self is only "seeming" selfishness. It is this praying which enables us to fit into the classification of a "righteous man" whose prayers avail much.

In time of war, would it not be shortsightedness to send inferior material to our fighting men overseas, merely because we could not take the time, or did not want to take the time, to improve the equipment? The time we take with Jesus to get Him into our own lives in a greater way will be evidenced in the more powerful praying we can do for others. We must then look at prayer in these two aspects.

The life behind the prayers -

The "life" that prays is of fundamental importance, for the kind of "life" behind the prayers is greater than the prayers themselves. A weak life cannot be expected to know much of the strategy of heaven so as to pray effectually. A heart that does not love God intensely will find it hard to pray in love for others. The kind of life we live means everything, if we are to pray as Jesus prayed, as Elijah prayed, as Paul prayed. Here we must burst forth into praise to our great Savior, for He gives us His own life, His own righteousness, so that we may share with Him in His life of prayer that wins souls back to God.

Mourn not over your weakness, your prayerlessness, your lack of love for God. Jesus will make all this right as you get down at His feet and determine to spend much time there with Him. Yes, He will transform you as you sit there. He will do the work as your heart goes out to Him in longing desire to have this kind of life. He wills you to have a share in His own life.

Have faith in Jesus' ability to take you just as you are, and make you what you ought to be. To pray, then, will be all of life to you; it will be fellowship with Him, unceasing fellowship, and it will be partnership with Him in His ministry of intercession for others. As we pray with Jesus, is there anyone who can say these prayers will not be answered?

"Lord, teach us to pray...."

At the very beginning we should understand that by no effort of our own can we learn the art of praying. It is beyond us. Only Jesus can teach us to pray. The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (**Luke 11:1**). That showed their humble spirit. They realized their inability to learn of themselves. With the marvelous example of Jesus' life of prayer before us, who would not feel deeply the impossibility of ever approaching His kind of praying?

But we must not forget that even Jesus was a true man, touched with the feelings of our infirmities (the essential weakness of human nature). It is true Jesus was the Son of God and was eternal with the Father. Nevertheless, He took upon himself our nature and became the Son of Man.

Can we ever learn to pray as Jesus prayed? If we have His Spirit within, why can we not pray as He prayed? When we sing, "To Be Like Jesus," do we not include His prayer life?

Thank God, we have Jesus to teach us to pray. We should enter His school of prayer confident that He can teach us. Let this be our confidence. Provided we are willing to learn, and lay down all our preconceived notions at His feet, and willing to do what He says, there is no reason why we should not all be as ready in prayer as Elijah was - ready for God to pray a great liberating prayer through us. But let us start at the beginning and learn the fundamentals first. The "Mount Carmels" do not come at the start of such a life. On the highlands of Gilead, Elijah came to know His God in prayer. Then, later, the time came when God could tell him, "Now, Go!"

Shall we not, then, simply give ourselves to Jesus and tell Him that above all other knowledge we want the secret of prayer that will please Him and open a channel for His blessing to flow to the weary world? Tell Him you are willing to obey the rules, as He gives them, willing to pay the price

to learn, and willing to make the sacrifices. It is such a momentous decision, that all hell will fight your making this consecration. The world of men will be unconcerned, but the world of evil spirits will see in one soul, committed to prayer, a grave danger to their interest.

The consecration to pray will free God to do His mighty works. It is in the prayers of His people that God works. Has He ever done anything in this world of men but through the prayer of some faithful heart? When this vision reaches our inner consciousness, that God waits for our prayers to accomplish His will, then we shall cease our trifling and self-efforts and come to His feet to learn the lesson.

But again it should be emphasized that such a place of infinite power cannot be entered by any effort of our own; that is by unaided effort of our own wills. Here Jesus stands as the one great Teacher. **Lord, You teach us to pray!**

To begin with, then, we must acknowledge our great ignorance of what prayer really is, and then look to Him to show us. A childlike trust in Jesus will bring us to that glorious place of partnership with God in His running of the world. Is not this ruling with Him? In prayer, the saints have ruled and reigned throughout all ages. Surely such a privilege is worthy of all the diligence we must give to enter into it.

Chapter Three

LEARN TO PRAY.....BY PRAYING

On being asked how one could love God with all his heart, soul, and mind, a saintly minister replied that one could love God in that way by loving Him wholly and heartily.

On being pressed to explain how to do that, he answered, "...the only way of attaining that love is by loving. You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working, and just so you learn to love God and man by loving..... If you want to love God, go on loving Him more and more and never look back, press forward continually."

The same can be said about prayer; we learn to pray by praying. And in our praying, what better way to start than by considering how the men and women of the Bible prayed? How did Paul pray; what did he pray about? How did Jacob pray, and Elijah, and Daniel?

Desire fashions prayer -

Suppose we begin with Paul whose prayers "turned the world upside down," and changed the course of history. Let us look at him chained to a Roman soldier in his own hired house; Paul's heart is open to our gaze as probably no other character of ancient or modern days. He reveals his heart's desires, and thus, shows us the secret of his greatness.

Perhaps the deepest desires of this apostle's heart are found in the third chapter of Philippians. After all, to evaluate one's prayers, the motives of the heart must be first examined. What does one desire most earnestly? His desires will fashion the prayers he prays. You will not pray earnestly and perseveringly in a direction to which our heart is insensible.

In **Philippians 3:8-10**, we find the depths of Paul's life. **Above all things he wanted to know Jesus.** Is it so with you, with me? Is this my heart's strongest longing, driving out other longings by its intensity? Or am I taken up with many other things to the exclusion of this?

I am sure that this desire, impressed so forcibly on Paul, occupied a great deal of his prayer life. Of course, all of Paul's life was his prayer life; he prayed without ceasing. And in that unceasing communion of his heart with the living Savior, the underlying passion was - that I may know Him. Indeed, is not this "life eternal"? Jesus says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (**John 17:3**).

What is the greatest prayer?

At the outset of our study on prayer, it would be well to realize that there must be some unifying element in our prayer life, or it will lack direction. What is the greatest prayer anyone can pray? It is the prayer to know Jesus in all His fullness. Here is the beginning of prayer, and its end. Oh, the greatness of Jesus through whom the Father made the universe!

If men feverishly pursue knowledge, how much more should we seek to know Jesus! This may seem a strange thought if your ideas of prayer have been limited by the petitioning needs of life. We should be reminded of the Greek word *enteuxis*, (literally, "approaching") pointing to the simple, childlike meeting with God.

Let us look closely at this passage in **Philippians 3:8-10**, which tells of Paul's desire to "know Him." "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Barclay renders it powerfully in contemporary English: "I reckon everything to be a dead loss that I might get to know Jesus Christ, for that knowledge is something that is greater than everything in the world."

Note the intense passion. Our English phrase, "Yea doubtless," has but two words, whereas in the original text, Paul wrote five Greek words to express and emphasize his deep feeling about knowing Jesus.

All of this shows the extreme emotion of Paul's heart as he opens to the Philippians his inner shrine wherein burns this fire of divine love. Here in the deep recesses of his heart, as now opened to us, we find how he turned the world upside down for God.

The secret of praying with power -

Brother, Sister, do you want to be a blessing to those around you? Do you want to be powerful in the hands of God? Do you want your life to have power from on high?

Here is the secret. Paul wanted Jesus; he wanted Him more than all the universe. This cry was in his heart day and night. What did this mean to Paul? It brought Jesus to him. When one gets this cry in the soul, placed there by the Spirit of God, then all of life becomes unified in this cry. Life then has one aim - "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord."

This is the "peace" and "rest" which Jesus tells us He will give to those who come to Him. Until the heart is centered on Him, until the longings of the heart are all for Him, there is certain to be some unrest, the unrest of a heart not fully satisfied with God alone.

Here, then, is prayer's great beginning. Does this strike you as not being a large enough prayer, not utilitarian enough, not unselfish enough? Many of our so-called unselfish prayers for others may be but praying done under a sense of duty without "strong crying and tears." The only true praying comes out of hearts supplanted by Jesus. After all, why do we pray; what do we pray for? Is it not for the will of God to be done in earth as in heaven? And is it not His will that we should love Him with all our hearts?

If our praying issues from any other source than a pure and sincere love for the Lord Jesus, will it not be praying "amiss"? A great persevering, constant, loving prayer to love God for His own worth, to love Jesus because that will satisfy His great love, which led Him to die to win your love; this prayer will be the true foundation for all praying. How can we pray for others with love and compassion without the love of Jesus burning within?

This is very clearly brought out in another of Paul's prayers, in **Philippians 1:8**: "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels (heart) of Jesus Christ."

Here we see that it was not Paul's heart, but Jesus' (we use the word heart whereas the Greeks used bowels) that was beating for the Philippians. Every beat of Paul's heart was "in the heart of Jesus Christ." "I live no longer: Christ lives in me" (**Gal. 2:20**). Here is the only true ministry: Christ and His love replacing a purely natural love. And how can this be, without a great prayer in the hearts of God's people to know Jesus better and to love Him more? Shall we not give ourselves each day to be alone with Jesus just to love Him and adore Him?

We might take the Bible with us and pick out some verse that is meaningful to us and lift our hearts in worship to the great God, our savior, who gave Himself for us. Sometimes a devotional book with loving thoughts about Jesus will help. But the main thing is to get our hearts wound about His heart in affection and devotion. Trust Him to do this for you if you feel dead and dry.

Let the Holy Spirit Himself kindle this fire of love. He alone must do it. Real waiting on God will but show us the impossibility of ever getting our hearts to love Him, unless He comes in and does Himself.

Paul tells us in **Romans 5:5** that, "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." This is the very core of the Pentecostal experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The experience is to fill our hearts with love for the Lord Jesus. We must get our eyes off tongues and the thrill of having this experience, and open our hearts to receive this love - to be returned to the Giver. Self is lost sight of in the embrace of God. We must not rest until He draws us to Himself. The bride's words in Song of Solomon 1:4 says, "Draw me, we will run after thee," and tells us that there can be no real running after Jesus, unless He draws us. That is where prayer is necessary: to ask, seek, and knock, knowing that God rewards the diligent seeker.

The first great prayer of every life must be to know Jesus. This prayer is never consummated; it goes on forever.

Now we must not think that this prayer is confined to certain times and places. In truth, no prayer is. We can pray at all times and in all places. It is so easy, during our working hours, to stop for a few seconds and tell Jesus that we love Him. Every time we tell Him of our love, He does something for us, making us love Him more. This is prayer in its deepest sense. Anyone can do this. Divine love is as vast as the universe and as available as air and sunshine.

Chapter Four

IN THE CLASSROOM OF PRAYER

In the Bible with all the evidence of our Father's love for us, and Jesus' love for us, and the Holy Spirit's solicitude over us, we have ample material to stir our hearts to pray. George Muller, that great man of faith in Bristol, England, found that to take the Bible and begin to read something about the love and grace of God would stimulate him to prayer.

We can not forget that we are to take Jesus as our teacher. **(Luke 11:1)** We must not think that we can do it all. No, continue to ask Him, "Lord, teach me to pray." Now, read it again and emphasize teach. Then once more and emphasize me. When things do not seem to go well, and your heart does not respond and glow with love, then look with confidence to Jesus that He will teach you to pray as you are doing your very best. After all, real prayer is to be the result of real teaching by the Master, so that it will not be our product at all, but His.

Our part is submission and faith. Our part is to give Him the time, to take time alone with Him; and determine to stay there until He dismisses the class. When tackling this greatest of all activities in life, we are not tackling it alone, but with Him! Remember that when you kneel to pray, Jesus is with you; yes, and in you, eager to teach you this divine art.

Prayer needs to be learned -

Perhaps at this point we could enlarge somewhat on this matter, for it will bring great peace into our hearts to realize fully that we are giving ourselves to be taught. When one presents himself to a teacher he need know nothing, perhaps the less the better. Very often, what hinders a teacher is not what the student does not know; but what he thinks he does know. If a violin player learns the wrong way, he has a difficult time unlearning and relearning.

Prayer is the greatest art in the world. It needs to be learned. Only Jesus can teach us, through the Holy Spirit. Prayer bends the arm of God and procures the things for which you ask. If you pray and don't receive what you ask for, it shows that you are not master of the art of prayer. We go at everything in our life with some definite plan, and likewise, we should have a plan for our prayer life - God's plan. Now, we may all become masters in the greatest art in the world. Surely, no amount of labor and time is misspent in learning to pray. How, then, shall I become a master?

Be an obedient pupil -

Music is an art. To become a master in music you will need to give much time, follow the prescribed rules in your textbooks, and have a good teacher. You cannot become a master by going at it in any haphazard way. Those who have gone before have learned the way. They have a special fitness to find out the best way, the way in which others could follow. We follow their way, their technique, because it is the best way, as proved in their musicianship. There is no need for us followers to pave our own way. They have done it for us better than we could do it ourselves. All we need to do is give ourselves to their instruction, and be obedient pupils.

So it is with prayer, we must give time. It is said of Paderewski, noted Polish pianist, that if he dropped practice for one day he noticed the difference in his playing; if he stopped for two days his friends noticed it; for three days and the public noticed. When one learns anything time must be given.

How eagerly people flock to night schools, and spend long evenings learning to do something! They think it is worthwhile, and no effort or sacrifice is too great. How much more worthwhile is prayer! What great accomplishments result from prayer! What could God not do with a hundred people who were masters in prayer? One finds that the nearer mastership he comes the more time must be given to his art, not less. This is so with prayer. The more we pray the more we need to pray, and the more we want to pray. And the less we pray, the less we want to pray. Those

early morning "setting-up" exercises must be done every morning, no matter how we feel. Drop one day or two, and the program collapses.

Follow the rules -

We pass to the next thought, the idea of rules and textbooks. This indicates that prayer is a science as well as an art. It must be done in an exact way. For instance, what we have just said about time is one of the rules. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (**Col. 4:2**).

The Greek word translated "continue" is very interesting. Getting its exact shade of meaning will enable us to obey this rule better. The Greek word is *proskartereo*, compounded of the preposition *pros* meaning "towards, in the direction of," and the verb meaning "strong, steadfast." It means to be strong or steadfast in the direction of something. Here, the thing is prayer. So God tells us in this verse to "give constant attention to prayer."

Josephus uses this word in connection with the siege of a city; they were "to persist in the siege." After Pentecost we find the people "continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46), not letting anything interrupt their new life of worship.

The apostles had to make a decision, a far-reaching one, at the beginning of their ministries. The press of duties began to claim more of their time than they felt was necessary. They made the decision to give time to prayer. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Again, we have the same word used, denoting the unremitting business of prayer. Prayer is not a sideline; it is the mainline along with the "ministry of the word." Significantly, prayer comes first.

When we get another look at the inner life of the churches of those days, this time not at Jerusalem but at Antioch (see **Acts 13:2**), we find the workers, apostles, and prophets fasting and praying. Christians in those days took time to pray. That was the reason for their phenomenal power. Well, can we not do the same with the help of God? Yes, but the church today must give time to prayer, if it is to duplicate the achievements of first century believers.

The secret of successful praying -

Note the words of E. M. Bounds in *Preacher and Prayer*, as he tells us of men of our own time; his facts are significant.

"Much time spent with God is the secret of all successful praying... time is a feature essential to its value... Much time with God alone is the secret of knowing Him and of influence with Him... The men who have most fully illustrated Christ in their character and have most powerfully affected the world for Him have been men who spent so much time with God as to make it a notable feature of their lives."

He then gives such facts as these:

Mr. Wesley began prayer at four in the morning; he thought that prayer was more his business than anything else. John Fletcher sometimes prayed all night. The towering Luther had to have three hours a day in prayer, two in the morning. Archbishop Leighton seemed to be in perpetual prayer. Bishop Ken was with God before the clock struck three each morning.

This was the case with Samuel Rutherford, the man of rich piety. Joseph Alleine was up at four and felt ashamed if he heard other tradesmen at work before him. John Welch, Scottish preacher, thought his day ill spent if he did not spend eight or ten hours in prayer. His wife would complain on hearing him up during the night, wrapped in a plaid shawl to keep himself warm, praying for his flock.

Payson wore grooves in the boards where he prayed; his continuing, great success is traced to this praying life. Bishop Andrews spent about five hours a day in prayer and devotion. Dr. Judson gave much time to prayer. He stresses the point that time must be given to be alone with God; beginning at midnight, then dawn and during the day half a dozen times. Judson impressed Burma

for Christ, and it was through prayer that he did it. These men, mighty through they may have been in many ways, needed to spend much time with God.

Jesus: our example -

Can we pass on without considering the Lord Jesus Christ, and something of His life of prayer? The Gospel of Luke, which presents Jesus as the Son of man, tells us over and over again that Jesus was away praying.

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (**Luke 5:16**). A literal rendering from the Greek text gives us this: "And He withdrew himself constantly into the deserts and was praying." The point of the Greek verb is that the "withdrawing" was habitual; He did it all the time, it was His habit.

Jesus began his ministry by praying. He was standing in the river with John when "Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened" (Luke 3:21). He continued His praying, as we have seen in the fifth chapter of Luke. In chapter six of the same gospel, we find Him in the mountains praying. He "continued all night in prayer to God" (vs. 12). The next day, He chose the apostles, but first a night of prayer was necessary. When Jesus did things, He prayed.

We blunder along doing the best we can. If we were to stop now and tell God we were going to enter His school of prayer, a new life would dawn for us. There is a great and grand life waiting for those who will pray.

In the ninth chapter of Luke, we find Jesus "alone praying" (vs.18). He did not seem to notice the many tasks to be done. How often one ceases to pray when success makes many duties. Not so with Jesus. He had to pray.

Luke 11:1 again notes that Jesus "was praying in a certain place." It was then that the disciples, amazed at the prayer life of their Master, asked Him to teach them. That's all Jesus is waiting for - an invitation to begin the lessons.

Prayer... it's your choice -

Isn't all of life taken up with choices? We must choose according to the value we place on certain things. I may choose something that to you seems worthless, but to me it has value and therefore I choose to spend my money for it. Do we think so little of prayer that it comes last in our list of choices? Are there so many more important things to do than pray? Does God demand our service to such an extent that we do not have time for prayer?

This is all of the "world, the flesh, and the devil;". (**I John 2:16**) God's command is, "continue in prayer." God's example is in His Son; we see Him always alone praying. God's servants who have accomplished results for eternity worked with "gold, silver, precious stones"; without prayer you are building only with "wood, hay, and stubble." (**I Cor. 3:12-15**)

At the start, we show what value we put on prayer by the time we spend in its exercise. You cannot hide from God or man what you think prayer means to you and the world. May God help us to see that time we should dedicate to "praying in the Holy Ghost" which will keep us "in the love of God" (**Jude 20**).

Chapter Five

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR PRAYER

Now we will look at some of the great prayers of the Bible to see what we can glean from them. God's Word will help us answer questions such as these:

What should we pray for?

How should we pray?

When should we pray?

Where should we pray?

Why should we pray?

As we study these prayers, let us not forget that they were motivated by the Holy Spirit, and that we will find the elements which God himself put in them. We must pray the kind of prayers God wants, in the way He wants them prayed, where He wants them prayed, and we should want to be the people who can pray such prayers.

How should we pray?

Look at Genesis 32:9-12: "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of all the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: For I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

And Thou hast said, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

This is the prayer of Jacob as he is faced with the prospect of disaster at the hands of Esau, his brother, whom he has not seen for years, but whose wrath he still fears. When we consider who is praying, we should all take heart. It was Jacob, the supplanter, the man who looked out for himself, planned for himself, schemed to get his brother's birthright, and entered into deception with his mother to gain what the promise of God had already given him.

We should not, however, fail to see his great spiritual achievements, his faith in God, the way in which God blessed him by appearing to him more than once. At the opening of Genesis 32, we find the angels of God meeting him; later he wrestled with the Son of God himself; (v.24) his name is changed. Jacob was a man of tremendous spiritual capacity, but he was still Jacob. Like Elijah, he "was a man subject to like passions as we are." (James 5:17) See how he fears his brother; see how he himself plans escape. Yet, he prays; and God hears.

Anyone with a need can pray. Do you fear your enemies; enemies of doubt and anxiety, sickness and financial worry, problems and the strain of life? Do you plan, and plan, and plan? You, like Jacob, can lay down all and pray. You do not need to be a secluded saint in some quiet place to pray. No! Like Jacob, you may be cumbered with a host of things to look after, but like him you can pray.

In this prayer, we learn a great deal about the how of prayer. Note first that Jacob speaks the name of God and looks back in retrospect on all that God had been to his father and grandfather. Hadn't Abraham and Isaac faced unknown futures with many perils, but their God had done great things for them?

How to begin -

This is a splendid way to begin your prayer: let God know that you are aware of what He has been to the saints all through the years. And you might consider what He has already done for you. Many, many times He has proved himself faithful to those who trust Him.

Encourage yourself in God. Say like Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1:46) Magnify means to make big; the devil wants us to make God small. How? By thinking small thoughts of Him, by fearing to trust, by not stepping out on His promise. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised." (Psalms 48:1) Time spent in praising God will bring one's soul into the right attitude for real prayer. Let us praise Him for His goodness, let us not forget "all His benefits." (Psa. 103:2) This will cause faith to rise up in the soul so that the petition can be made.

Pray the promises -

But Jacob did not feel that this was enough - to look back over the past and see what God had done for his father and grandfather. He had something nearer than that. What was it? He had God's promise: not only His promise, but a command as well. Jacob was in the process of obeying the command:

"And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." (Gen. 31:3)

What does Jacob do after appealing to the God of his fathers? He quotes a promise the Lord made to him, his own promise.

It is not enough to have godly parents, to have recollections of your father's life in God; you must have his God as your own. Jesus must be yours, your Savior. You must have the promises of God as your very own. You must have appropriated the blood of Jesus for yourself. It is not enough that your father and grandfather had salvation. Each one must have it for himself.

Have we all taken the promise of God as our very own? That is very important if we are to pray and get answers.

How shall we pray? Pray with the promises of God as our anchorage and ground. This also tells us what to pray for. We should pray for all that God has promised. The whole Bible is ours, affording unlimited opportunity to ask God for what He wants us to have. Get your feet on a promise, and then pray till the answer comes, and come it must.

Chapter Six

GOD'S DESIGN FOR PRAYER

When God promises, does He not intend to keep that promise? Prayer is merely the way by which He is enabled to do it. By prayer, we enable God to accomplish all that He tells us He wants to accomplish. We don't need to be in the dark about our praying do we? You will find a promise in the Bible to meet every need.

Jacob got his feet on the promise, and he put it right out where God could see it. He said, "Now, Lord, here's your promise. You said, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee."

We see here that the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, was also the "God which said unto me." Prayer will not mean much to you until you get into a real personal relationship with God, till you can say, "the Lord is my Shepherd." (Psa. 23:1) Then you are in a place of wealth: all that your Father in heaven has is yours.

When to pray -

When Jacob prayed, he was doing the will of God, carrying out His command. This tells us something about when to pray, and also where to pray. When we are doing the will of God, we can always pray, and in the place where we are doing His will we can pray. It doesn't matter how hard the circumstances are. Isn't it strange that in doing the will of God we frequently get into tight places? In such places God expects us to pray. Paul and Silas were praying in prison: their praying was singing.

Prayer brings a strengthening of faith and causes God to triumph. Whenever God sets about to do something; the devil will set about to stop it, or hinder it. It is in the prayer of faith that the victory for God is won. This is how we become co-laborers with God. He makes the plans, we obey and pray through to victory, and God gets the glory. Never let your praying, then, be on the level of what you could do or think; let your prayer reach out to what God wants and can do. That's what our prayers do; they take us to the throne of God where we reign with Christ.

When you know your life is being lived in obedience to the will of God, so far as you know it at the time, you are able to claim all of His promises.

What did Jacob do then? Is he not yet ready to present his petition? Not quite. One more step, and an important one, too.

Pleading the promises -

"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou has showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." (Gen. 32:10) Memory is quickened by the tenseness of the moment, and he remembers how years before, all alone, he trudged in the opposite direction to Haran. How different now with his "two bands"! This retrospect brought tears to his eyes as he realized how unworthy of all this he was.

This is a most important part of the prayer; in pleading the promises of God, we do it not because of any merit of our own. No, we realize that all the promises have been made to Jesus for His faithfulness in doing the Father's will. Gal. 3:16 - tells us that to Abraham and his seed were the promise made, not to seeds in the plural but in the singular, which the apostle by revelation is able to say is Christ..... "And to thy seed which is Christ."

Jesus had all the promises made to Him. They are all His. It is His merit that avails in making the promises ours. When we see what He did for us we feel like Jacob: we feel our meanness, our unworthiness. Is our unworthiness a reason for not asking God for His promises to be fulfilled in us? Not at all! It is the people who feel least worthy who get the most.

Look at the centurion in the Gospel of Matthew. He had a great need - his servant was very ill. He pressed his need to Jesus, but said, "I am not worthy that You should come under my roof." (Matt 8:8) Did his unworthiness keep him from getting the blessing? No!

All of the promises which were given to Jesus by His Father are ours for the asking. Jesus has given you the promises because He loves you so! Does He not say, "Ask"? Indeed it is this humility of the heart, the feeling of unworthiness that really prepares the way for the reception of the gift. "God gives grace unto the humble." (James 4:6) So Jacob comes down in his poverty of spirit, mellowed by the memory of all that God has done for him and has been to him.

Remember that Jesus is blessed by your asking and receiving. God is exalted. The devil is defeated. Satan would like to see you struggling along without all the rich things God has provided. But that would not be to God's glory. Like Jacob, then, we must plead our insufficiency.

Petition: the missing link -

When Jacob at last makes his petition, it is clean-cut and definite. It is, moreover, completely covered by the promise God gave him. He merely particularizes what God gave him as a general promise.

"Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." (Gen. 32:11)

Jacob prayed for nothing more than what God had said He was going to do. Doesn't this open up a great prayer-territory in which all of us can travel?

God, who knows all things, had already answered the prayer before it was made. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (Isa. 65:24)

It may be that many of the blessed victories that God has for us are never enjoyed because we do not pray. It must be so, for all that the Book says concerning God's will for us is really a victory already completed on the cross. Yet how much of it remains untapped! But we can begin to pray now, "O God, do what You say in Your Book!"

Shouldn't we start today to ask God to do the things He says He wants to do in our lives, and in the lives of others? Here, indeed, we become "laborers together with God." (Cor. 3:9)

The Lord said to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of our foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." (Joshua 1:3) We see that the Lord had already given it unto them: all they had to do was claim it, take it. So must we.

II Peter 1:4 tells us that God has "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." God gives the promises; we open our hearts in prayer telling God that we accept them, want them, unworthy though we be. He then uses His almightiness to do what He all the time wanted to do.

Blending God's promises with our petitions -

Our prayer is the missing link between the promise and its execution. For the glory of God, let us set about praying His promises into our own lives and into the lives of others. This is holy business and cannot be put into spare time. This is a life business. This is God's business. This is seeking first the kingdom of God. Isn't the kingdom of God the doing of God's will? (Luke 11:2) "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done...." And is not His will clearly expressed in His promises? Praise the Lord for such a calling!

Promise + petition = answer -

The finest stroke of all comes at the end of the prayer. After his petition, Jacob continues to quote and emphasize God's own promises: "And Thou hast said, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." (Gen. 32:12)

In the first part of his prayer, Jacob emphasizes the personal aspect of God's promise.... "I (God) will deal well with thee." But here in closing his prayer, he emphasizes God's portion in the

answering of the petition. He reasons with the Lord something like this: "Lord, if You do not deliver me now, how will You work out Your plan in my life - the plan of making my seed as the sand of the sea? How will the Messiah come, how will salvation come to earth if I and mine are destroyed?"

Hold God to His Word -

Jacob held the Lord to His Word, and how the Lord loves His children to do this! Jacob was a clever man. He won his case. How clever we are, too, in things of the earth, but how stupid in things of heaven!

Our cries should reach heaven's throne: "Lord, how are Your plans for the earth to be consummated if Your promises to us are not fulfilled day by day? Lord, I must have victory over sin and sickness and doubt and fear. With these things in my life, You are not getting the glory. Lord, I am not an efficient instrument of Yours with the flesh lording it over me. Did You not tell me in Your apostle's letter that sin shall not have dominion over me? (Rom. 6:14) Now, Lord, this must be my portion. Lord, hear me! Deliver me from this evil thing, from this secret sin, from this worldliness! Deliver me for Jesus' sake, for the sake of Your cause."

Oh, this is the kind of praying God wants. Stick to it till the answer comes. It will, it must! Yes, we must have God's glory as the ultimate of all our praying. Is it glorifying to God to have His children living far below their privileges - privileges that were bought by the blood of Jesus Christ? Is He pleased to see the tremendous work of the cross going for naught? Is it not making the cross of Jesus Christ "of none effect" to fail to petition God in all earnestness for the fullest enjoyment of His promises, for His own glory?

Perhaps the work of praying is too hard and we are too lazy. We think it is all right if we don't get all that God has for us. But isn't He displeased with anything short of full participation in His glorious salvation? Was He pleased with the Israelites when they failed to take all the land, but allowed the enemies to dwell in some hard to take places? Not only do we have the privilege of prayer, but the responsibility and glorious duty of nothing less than joining with God in the defeat of the enemy through prayer.

Jacob's prayer is magnificent, yet so simple. Dear Lord, help us to follow in the footsteps of our father Jacob!

Now from a wealthy nomad with his flocks and herds, we turn to look at a brilliant statesman. Daniel, far from Jerusalem and his homeland, prays to his God (Dan. 9:1-19). What was the reason for the prayer? The first few verses tell us. Daniel was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah written some seventy years before. He found in them the prediction that after seventy years God would again return to Jerusalem to do it good. It happened that at the very time Daniel was reading, the seventy years had almost expired. What then? Should not the Hebrew statesman, lover of his own people and his own city, Jerusalem, be glad that the time was almost up when the judgment of God on His people would terminate? Should he not begin to look for signs of the fulfillment of the prophecy? Should he not begin to preach sermons on prophecy to his people telling them what was about to take place? Instead of this we find him on his face before God, crying out to Him for mercy and forgiveness - forgiveness for his own sins and the sins of his people. We find pleading for the answer to the prophecy he had just been reading. What? Must we ask God to undertake what He says He is to do? That is it exactly. God was about to do what He had said, but it was necessary to have Daniel pray and intercede and claim His mercy and grace. Here we have a revelation of how God accomplishes His eternal plans through the ages. He tells what He is going to do, but it is necessary to have the co-operation of men in faith and prayer.

Consider first Daniel's intensity of purpose: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayers and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth, and ashes" In the mystery of God's plan, this is the Holy Spirit taking possession of a man to pave the way by prayer for the return of the Israelites to their homeland. Every advance step of God must be made in prayer. This is how we become co-laborers with God. This work may not be highly esteemed by man, but God looks on it

as divine. It was following this period of intense prayer that God revealed to Daniel the future history of His people to the very time of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Where is the Daniel-spirit of prayer? People will flock to special sermons on the antichrist but will not spend a night in prayer to God confessing the sins of the land, and of the churches, and of their own lives. Friends, when we get down on our knees with Daniel and pray as he did, then we are doing more to bring Jesus back again than by all our speculations of what is to take place in the future.

Where is the blood washed bride waiting for the appearing of the Bridegroom? Where is the chaste virgin with her lamp burning brightly? Where is holiness of life? If we knew the real condition among God's people and among His ministers we would shudder. The wolves have been busy among the flock. The world and its pleasure have slipped in. In many Christian homes, seasons of prayer and Bible reading have vanished. People easily turn to things of earth, to money making, to furthering their ambitions. A diligent seeking of God day by day is not even considered, in spite of the fact that the Word tells us to "seek those things which are above" (Col.3:1) "and "seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matt.6:33) Are there really not good grounds for such praying as Daniel did? Can Jesus come until such praying is done? Are we waiting fatalistically for something to come that we think must come? Perhaps Jesus' coming is waiting on our praying.

Read Daniel's prayer in your Bible. Note confession of sin, for disobedience, for refusal to listen to the Word of God. We need not blame the sinner for not coming to church; the fault is on our doorstep for not doing the will of God as presented in His holy Word. Has He not told us to love one another - to be kind one to another - to be anxious for nothing - to keep our selves unspotted from the world? Where is the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit? Where is the modesty God want of His people? We are to "put on" the Lord Jesus; can that be done while we set our affections on things of the world, and in every way allow ourselves to be robbed of our testimony? Saints of God, it is time to pray. We must pray for ourselves as Daniel did, asking God to forgive us; we must pray for others that the mercy of God might bring us back to the purity and power of the early churches.

Chapter Eight

HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY

"Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6)

This is as definite a command of God as "Thou shalt not kill." (Ex.20:13) Jesus says that if we love Him we will keep His commandments, and this is one of those divine commandments - "Be anxious for nothing." The Greek text is very emphatic. The words "for nothing" come first for emphasis. "Be anxious" is the present tense, meaning that they are to continue not being anxious, or in other words, to stop being anxious.

"But," you say, "how can I? I can't help it!"

Is God unjust then in asking you to stop something you can't stop? No! He doesn't mean you to do it in your own strength. He tells you how to get it done.

Why Pray? -

"Be anxious for nothing; but... let your requests be made known unto God." Why should we pray? To keep from being anxious! Why are we anxious? Because we do not let God know about the trouble. Oh, yes, we talked to our neighbor, or friend, or loved ones, or else we were afraid to tell them and just talked to ourselves. And that is a bad habit. God wants to know.

"But," you ask, "doesn't He already know?"

Yes, and yet He does not know your need in the sense that you confide in Him as a little child would confide in his mother. The mother knows the need but sees that the little one is afraid to come to her, or is unwilling that she should know. She wants the child to come, so that the solving of the difficult problem may bring them closer together. The problem will knit mother and child as nothing else could.

Confide in Him -

Why, then, should we ever be anxious when we have such a Heavenly Father? We must come to Him and make our needs known. And we must come in faith believing that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 1:6)

This passage tells us something about what to pray for. We should pray about the things which make us anxious. What makes you anxious? Well, that's the very thing to take to God in prayer. Generally, it is the little things that cause the anxieties; the securing of food and clothes and shelter, the paying of bills, the solving of the many daily problems. But Jesus takes care of all these when He teaches us not to be anxious (and it is the very same word Paul uses) about what to eat, or drink, or put on. Shortages need have no influence whatever on those who are looking to their Heavenly Father for supplies. You will make these things His responsibility by always committing them to Him in prayer, making sure in your own soul that you have so committed them.

The greatest anxiety is tomorrow. But Jesus said, "Be not anxious for the morrow." (Matt.6:21-34) Thank God, He takes care of every reason for anxiety. And the whole of it can be presented to Him in prayer **with joy** and **thanksgiving**.

We should also consider the command to "let your requests be made known unto God." Weymouth brings out the full force of the Greek, "be made known" by rendering it "be unreservedly made known." Jacob was not ashamed to tell God that he was afraid of his brother. We must make a full confession of everything to God, open our hearts, and talk to Him as to our Father in heaven.

Even the Greek word for "unto" has significance- "unto God." It points to familiarity and fellowship. The same word is used in John 1:1, in the clause "the Word [Christ] was with God." In the Greek "with" is the same as "unto". When we come to God with our request, we have the same intimacy

with God, and entry into His gracious presence, that Jesus (the Word) has. The closeness of Jesus to the Father, expressed in the phrase "with God", is also our glorious privilege when we come to pray. Oh, what condescension to call such sinners as we to such nearness! The sadness is that so few avail themselves of this intimacy in prayer.

Esther, the queen, had freedom of entry into the king's presence. We, too, can approach the King for "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." (Rom. 5:2)

Chapter Nine

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God". (Phil. 1:9-11)

The Philippians had been true to Paul, in sending offerings to take care of him in his great need, even while far away from them. A church doesn't generally take care of an evangelist while he is elsewhere. But the Philippians were not like that. They were full of love for their spiritual father.

What is Paul praying about? He is asking God for something which we might think they already had enough of. "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more." (vs. 9) This is a glorious prayer in the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus wants of His blood-bought ones - more love - "that your love may abound." There is not yet enough love. It must abound more and more.

Here is a prayer we can all pray for ourselves. We should pray it often, with fullest emphasis on the "abound" and the "yet more and more." This needs to be prayed.

Remember, by our prayers God gets what He wants. He expresses here one of His needs; He asks us to join with Paul in praying more love into our own hearts and into the hearts of others. These things don't come of themselves. They must be prayed through. These graces of the Spirit grow in the soil of prayer. It is because we do not pray for these things that they do not appear. Oh, for love to be seen in abundance! "Love never fails." (I Cor. 13:8, NKJV)

Begin with love -

See how this prayer begins with love - the foundation. A life filled with divine love is able to exercise the power of choice, choosing always those actions, those thoughts, those judgments which are excellent. So often we do the wrong thing, say the wrong thing, make the wrong decision, because the love of Jesus in us is not strong enough to displace self-decision and self-choice, which are always to our own damage. Abounding love will enable the right decisions to be made in everything that makes up our daily lives.

This love will motivate us and lead to our being made "sincere and without offense" (Phil.1:10), even till Jesus comes again. It must be the desire of our hearts to be "without offense" (meaning, not to be a stumbling stone to others). Only God's abounding love will accomplish this. This fills us with the fruits of righteousness and leads to God being glorified. Prayer should begin with love and finish with the glory of God. Certainly this is a prayer worth praying. And we can be sure it will be answered, for it is one of God's prayers. When we ask Jesus to teach us to pray, we can expect Him to take us as His pupils. Here He is giving us an invaluable lesson on love and prayer, through this great apostle.

Knowing God's will -

Do we have any other prayer examples from Paul, this great master of prayer, who changed the world by his praying? Yes, there are others. He prayed for another church, in Asia Minor, the church at Colossae. In Colossians 1:9-12, we have another masterpiece:

"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; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

The contents of this prayer are concentrated into one petition, as the prayer in the Philippian letter. Paul was facile in doing one thing rather than scattering himself over a wide field of activity. Here is another hint about the how of prayer; we should make one thing a major prayer, while carrying

on other secondary prayers, so that, one by one, we pray into our lives the separate items of God's will for us. It seems that this was what Paul did for these various churches. There are some things that are of major importance that should be our first concern - such as getting love into our lives.

Here again we also find out **what** to pray for, the things on which God wishes us to concentrate. After all, if prayer to us means only a way of getting what we want with no reference to God's will or desire, then prayer ceases to have any meaning, biblically. When we find what the Lord wants, then we set out to pray the thing through. Then we become co-laborers with God.

When, by prayer, we get the same longings in our hearts that God has in His, then we really work with Him. He wants to fill us with the great intensity of His own heart. In this way we become the pathway to His final victory. In prayer, God causes us to share with Him His great desires for man, and His own ultimate winning of souls to Himself. This Colossian prayer is rich in heavenly things.

Filled with the knowledge of His will -

"We....do not cease to pray for you, and to desire [to ask] that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will." (Col.1:9)

We need to be filled with the knowledge of His will; note, not filled with "knowledge," but the "knowledge of His will." There is too much curiosity about abstruse things in the Bible, too much getting to know the facts of the Bible merely for the sake of knowledge, and not enough desire to know His will so that it might be done. Barclay translates it as "complete insight into what God wants you to do." There is too much eagerness to know who the Antichrist is, who is to be in the Rapture, whether or not one can be saved and lost again; there is even a tremendous amount of research outside the Bible itself, trying to determine when Jesus will come again. And all the time the blessed holy will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is neglected. Here is man's real prayer: "to be filled with the knowledge of His will." Certainly we all know something of His will and obey it to some extent. But are our hearts filled with this sacred knowledge?

You have to ask -

Further, you can see that it is not a mere intellectual knowledge that is meant, for one would not need to pray for that; he could study and read books to get that kind of information. But we never rightly know anything about God until the Holy Spirit puts the knowledge into our hearts. This is exactly what I Cor. 2:12 states:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world [which goes at things by way of discovery, research, trial and error, etc.], but the spirit which is of God [right out of the very inmost nature and being of God]; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It is a living knowledge, communicated to the very bloodstream of our spiritual lives. It becomes a stream of life, partnership in the resurrection life of our risen Lord. It is deeper than thought, or mental activity. It enters our wills and controls our conduct.

We need to pray for this knowledge to be imparted. Of course, this does not exclude study, and careful seeking for the will of God on every page of the Book of books; it includes that, but puts the capstone on by having the head knowledge made part of our own will. Anyone can know that he should not worry; but only prayer will so cast things on God, that His will about not worrying becomes part of our being. We cannot very well say that we are "filled with the knowledge of His will," till that will operates in our lives.

God's will must be prayed into our lives. Get hold of something, such as this very prayer, and then pray it through for yourself. "God, help me to love my enemies. God, make me pure, as Jesus is pure. God, help me to bring every thought into captivity to Christ." These separate items in God's will can become ours only through prayer.

In Col.1:10, we see that this is the only way to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." We cannot have a life pleasing to Jesus in all things unless we pray for the fullness of the knowledge of His will.

This same sentiment is found in IChron.28:8, "Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God." We must seek for His commandments and we must pray "to be filled with the knowledge of His will."

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. 15:16) Here is the picture of one who wants God's Word, His revealed will, more than anything else. Of the "blessed man" it is said that "his delight is in the law of the Lord." (Psa.1:2) We should see to it that our praying is taken up with getting to know the will of God, so that our daily walk will be pleasing to him. He is not satisfied for us to know part of His will, but only that we shall be filled with it. This brings the Kingdom of God into this world. The Kingdom must come in individual human lives. This praying brings the Kingdom nearer its consummation. Oh, let us pray: "Thy Kingdom come" to me, and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, worldwide!

Pray the Word -

Before passing on, it would be well to suggest that we each take some of the very clear things about God's will and pray over them every day. You might start with, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3), praying that God will show you what that means, and bring it into your life. This will cause you to be filled with His will regarding humility.

With this you might take other similar verses such as: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God" (I Pet. 5:6); "follow after...meekness." (I Tim.6:11) Use your concordance to find other such passages. Then pray over them, asking God to bring them into your life. In this way the fullness of God's will gradually becomes yours.

You may be sure that God would not want to reveal His will to you unless, at the same time, He gave you grace to do it. Many are afraid of knowing more of God's will, feeling that what they do know is a burden imperfectly done, and hardly relished. Jesus will change all this as, in prayer, you find His Spirit of obedience and submission to His Father's will filling you more and more. It is only as we pray over the words in the Bible which teach us God's will, that the inward conviction of His will becomes ours, and the power to do it is imparted. Paul knew very well that this great transaction of bringing God's will to earth was possible only in prayer, the prayer of the saints the world over.

What did Jesus say? The disciples asked Him what to pray. He told them in a few short words. Among those few words are these. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10)

This is a matter of prayer, not organization. You cannot organize a movement to get God's will done in earth. You cannot even legislate it. No, not even the Mosaic law can bring it. It must come as God's saints pray and submit themselves in prayer to the revelation of what God's will is for them. Then His will comes. It comes through human lives. Does it not seem we should pray more about knowing God's will, and having it done here and now on earth?

Chapter Ten

STRIVING IN PRAYER

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me". (Rom. 15:30)

The word which attracts our attention first is the word strive. Weymouth translates it, "to help me by wrestling in prayer to God..." Look closely at this word in the Greek; it is the compounded of a preposition and a verb. The preposition means, "which, together with"; the verb means, "to contend for a prize, especially in the public games." This same word is found in I Cor. 9:25: "And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things." The word is also used without the idea of the contest in the arena, and then means, "to fight, to struggle, and to strive." In this latter sense it also means, to exert one's self, in any manner. Now we have the meaning of the word, and we see clearly what it means in the context in Romans.

There is a kind of praying that demands real exertion - spiritual exertion - and too often we shirk this. But the one who is to know anything about the reality of prayer comes sooner or later to the place of having to wrestle spiritually in prayer. Let us then consider this aspect of our prayer lives - wrestling in prayer.

Paul wanted the cooperation of the Romans in praying for the success of his journey to Jerusalem. He must have felt in the Spirit that hard things lay ahead. Indeed the Lord showed him that. But you see he realized the important place of real earnest prayer in the undertaking. It was not enough for him that he had a mission to the Christians in Jerusalem; the matter had to be prayed through. There was a fight on, and he needed the prayers of his faithful converts the world over. Who knows whether his life might have been forfeited had this victory in prayer not been accomplished? As it was, he escaped, barely escaped, with his life. The mighty power of prayer preserved the great apostle, enabling him later to write his greatest letters as a prisoner in Rome, chained to three Roman soldiers daily.

Spiritual warfare -

Look also at the passage in Eph. 6, the well known passage about putting on the whole armor of God. After the helmet, sword, and shield have been mentioned, and after the breastplate has been put on and the loins girt about, the reasonable thing to suppose is that the Christian warrior is now ready to do battle with the enemy. And indeed he is.

But what is the battle? At the very end of the description of the warrior, we find these words, not in a separate sentence, but as the conclusion of the whole: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints". (vs. 18) There it is; the warrior battles primarily in prayer. We must not forget that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". (vs.12)

Clothed with God's armor -

Since our conflict is with the "rulers of the darkness of this world," our armor must be suited to do battle with such supernatural foes. We must take the "whole armor of God"; not the armor of man, not the armor that man's wisdom would dictate, not the armor that would seem to be suitable as man sees the battle.

God knows what is behind all the happenings of earth. Earth's destinies are not dictated from earth. They are not the result of things happening on earth, no matter how much this might seem to be the case. The earth is moved from heavenly places, either from God's throne or from Satan and his forces. In such a battle, we can see that it would be suicide for us to try to fight the enemy with anything short of what God has provided. At the end of this list of armor which God has provided is the ultimate weapon - PRAYER! Without prayer the armor is useless - as useless as Saul's was to David in his contest with Goliath. (I Sam. 17:4-23)

Stand firm -

Do you doubt the power of prayer? Does it seem too simple a thing, so unsuited to meet the obstacles and material needs of earth? We can find victorious examples from some of the men and women who have accomplished things for God.

We must start first with the "second man, the Lord from heaven." (I Cor. 15:47) It is He who has moved the world. Of Him we learn from Hebrews 5:7:

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death...." That is how the Scriptures describe Jesus' praying. Certainly if the outcome of anyone's life was certain it was His, but prayer was the method God chose to accomplish His plans.

In Christ's own teaching, He tells of a woman who irritated an unjust judge, until he granted her plea; (Luke 18:2-6) and He tells of the man who went to his friend's house at midnight to secure loaves of bread. (Luke 11:15) It took perseverance for both of them to get what they wanted. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you". (Matt. 7:7) These words suggest sticking to it. Examples like these in Jesus' own life and teachings tell us that it is only by constant, importunate prayer that the plans of God are accomplished.

Persevering prayer -

His choice servants learned this lesson well. Daniel is another example. "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled... Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days". (Dan. 10:2,3,13,14)

This is very significant, isn't it? The prayer was heard the first day, but he had to pray all the three weeks while the heavenly messenger was contending with opposing powers. Here we get a view from behind the scenes. Daniel was faithful in wrestling in prayer until he felt the answer was assured. We, too, can be sure that as soon as the prayer is uttered it is heard by our Father in heaven; sometimes we must hold on, in faith, in thanksgiving, in reminding God that we are standing in faith, and love, and hope.

This standing, this wrestling, this striving, defeats the forces of the enemy as nothing else can. Says Dr. A. J. Gordon, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

When we wrestle, and cry out to God, and take nothing for an answer but the desire of our hearts, He must move on our behalf.

Use your weapons -

Such examples could be multiplied far beyond the scope of this book. Every forward move of God has been accomplished by prayer. And since the devil fights every forward move, he must be defeated; and this is the way to insure his defeat - by wrestling in prayer.

Again we must remind ourselves that this conflict with Satan must be fought and won with spiritual weapons. Spirit forces are our enemies. The devil would tempt us to do the fighting on the plane of the material - physical force is one of his chief weapons. In this plane he is more than a match for us.

If we try to destroy his kingdom by physical means, by legislation, by the exertion of our keen minds, and organizing genius, by oratory, or by anything that can be called natural, we are defeated before we start. When it comes to the spiritual realm, where the righteousness of Christ can become effective, where faith and prayer rule, there the devil is at a great disadvantage - there he is already defeated and brought low. Praise the Lord! The devil's strategy is to keep us out of that realm so that he may fight us where he is better equipped. But we can refuse to "come

down" to his level, and do our fighting where God gives us the weapons that are absolutely sure to defeat our foe.

Insure the devil's defeat -

This helps us to understand why we must wrestle in prayer. The devil, although defeated, although rendered powerless by the blood of the cross, nevertheless yields not without a struggle. But as a child of God, with God's promises in his hand and heart, prays and prays and stands and shouts the victory, the foe must yield.

This is what James 4:7 means: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Or again, "...the devil, as a roaring lion, walked about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith...." (1 Pet. 5:8,9)

It is in prayer, daily and persevering prayer, claiming God's promises for yourself and for others, that the devil is resisted and pushed back and vanquished. Here is a true ministry for God. All can enter this ministry and here the real victories are won. Every true victory of God manifested outwardly in some great revival, or in the salvation of some soul, or in the regeneration of a nation, every such victory had behind it first a victory of prayer. Someone or some group wrestled with God and triumphed.

Dr. A. J. Gordon explains:

It is a fiercely contested conflict. Satan is a trained strategist and an obstinate fighter. He refuses to acknowledge defeat until he must. It is the fight of his life.....

Prayer is insisting on Jesus' victory, and the retreat of the enemy on each particular spot, and heart, and problem concerned. The enemy yields only what he must. He yields only what is taken. Therefore the ground must be taken step by step.

Prayer must be definite. He yields only when he must. Therefore the prayer must be persistent. He continually renews his attacks, therefore the ground taken must be held against him in the Victor's name.

This helps to understand why prayer must be persisted in after we have full assurance of the result, and even after some immediate results have come, or, after the general results have commenced coming.

The understanding of this matter also shows us that we are not wrestling with God to get something from Him that He does not want to give. No! God wants to fulfill all His promises. We have been given the Holy Spirit that we might know the things that are freely given unto us of God. God is prodigal (wasteful), lavish in His giving. He gives exceedingly above all we could ask or think. He wants to give to each of us for our own needs, and to give as we ask for others.

We must begin our life of prayer and our intercession for others with the sure knowledge that God wants to give what we ask for. We are not wrestling with a stubborn God, with an obdurate (unfeeling) friend, but with a loving Father who will, much more than earthly fathers, give good things to them that ask Him.

The test of faith -

Even though we have indicated a few thoughts regarding the necessity of persevering prayer, the striving in prayer, some may still wonder, why should we have to pray so hard? Why not ask and then leave it with God?

Further reason for the necessity of persevering prayer may be found in the constitution of our own hearts. This is seen in the things of the material realm; when something comes easily and costs nothing, it is less appreciated. In fact, it can be less enjoyed. If someone were surrounded with all that the heart could wish for without asking for any expenditure of energy, or toil, or tears, would this be the best condition for happiness? Not at all.

It is so in the spiritual realm; what comes easily, means but little to us. The things which require persevering prayer are much more appreciated.

Consider the Syrophenecian woman who was first met by the silence of Jesus when she came with her plea for help for her demon ridden daughter. Then she was met by His seeming rebuke. Did Jesus not love this woman? Yes, He loved her a great deal and did not want her to lose any of the full blessing He had for her. Did she not know a great deal more about Jesus through this seeming coldness than if He had given her the request at the first call? Did not the words, "O woman, great is thy faith," (Matt.15:28) mean something to her? Was not her life the richer by the test of faith? Of course, she was the richer and so was God, though this deepening and strengthening of faith.

God needs people today who will spend their time with Him, working with Him on the task of getting the world out of the clutches of the devil. He does not need more machinery or better methods, but more praying saints. Are you one of them? Do you want to wrestle with God that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven? Why not start now?

Chapter Eleven

WAITING ON GOD

Now we see that God, in His great love for us, and in His great desire that we share in His own life, sets before us this task of working with Him in conquering the enemy of men. This enemy must be conquered in our own lives, as well as in those of others around us. The work was done completely on Calvary. There the devil was put out of the way, there his destructive work was ended... for all who are willing to have it so according to the Word of God. But it must be worked out in each life, and prayer is one channel God can work through.

In prayer, then, we place ourselves in the hands of God to do in us all that was done for us on the cross. Without a definite decision to give one's self to prayer, and still more prayer, we can at the outset understand that only a partial enjoyment of the blood of Jesus can be ours. The battle was won once for all, but it must be won in each life by faith and prayer. This is why we must set ourselves to make prayer our chief occupation. It will work wonders in our own lives and will make us instruments of power in the hands of God.

It is in prayer that we patiently endure. Consider Abraham. "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise". (Heb. 6:15) The same is true for all of us. It is in regular, daily, hourly, persevering prayer that we grow in faith to lay hold of the promises and receive them for ourselves. And thus the kingdom of God on earth extends its borders.

Our fighting is not with flesh and blood, not with earth's tyrants. Our foe is in heavenly places and must be defeated by heavenly weapons. A praying Christian is a terror to the powers of darkness - a warrior conquering those powers - bringing life and light to the weary world. Then, why do we not give ourselves to prayer? It's the strategy of the devil to keep us too busy, to make us think it is only for a few souls to pray like this. In this he lies, and in believing his lie we allow him to retain his hold on men.

You have need of patience -

Finally, we must treat one other topic of the utmost importance. In fact, it is the very core of prayer, the foundation. Without it, one will fail to become a master in this greatest of all arts. It is the matter of "waiting on God."

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation... My soul, wait thou only upon God". (Psa. 62:1,5)

"...But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint". (Isa. 40:31)

In II Kings 6:33, we find a servant of the king asking Elisha, "... should I wait for the Lord any longer?" The psalmist David prays, "Let none that wait on Thee be ashamed... for thou are the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day." (Psa. 25:3,5)

Again we find it in Psa. 27:14 - "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

This same thought runs throughout the Psalms and the other books of the Bible. But what does it mean? That should be easy to determine since the word wait is intelligible to all. Webster's dictionary tells us that it comes from the Old French, meaning "to watch, attend." In our speech, we use it with the idea of "staying or resting in expectation; to stop or remain stationary until the arrival of some person or event; to rest in patience."

Rest before Him -

In that sacred place of prayer, where man meets God, we must at all cost learn to be still before Him, the great Creator and Savior. We must learn to rest before Him that He may act for us.

Again, we have the matter of time as an essential element in prayer. One cannot wait properly unless he is determined to be there till the person he waits for arrives, or the event he waits for takes place. Waiting depends entirely upon the other person. His movements and good pleasure determine the period of waiting. But for the one waiting nothing need be done but wait. Waiting is thus both passive and active. It is doing nothing and yet it is doing everything, that is everything necessary in the waiting process. A great deal of our praying does not bear the stamp - "waiting."

We need not stop with the meaning of the English word wait, but consider what the Hebrew words mean. (More than one Hebrew word is translated by our one English word wait.)

In Psalm 62:1, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God," the Hebrew word for waiteth means "still waiting, silence, repose." Another of the Hebrew words is found in Psalm 46:10, "Be still (wait), and know that I am God, and means, "to sink, or relax, let alone, do nothing, be quiet." All of these word definitions are found in the verses where the words are used.

One interesting and illuminating verse is found in I Samuel 15, where Saul, the king, is explaining at great length to Samuel why they did not obey God and kill all the animals. On and on he goes recounting his reasons. "Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night" (vs.16). Here the Hebrew word for "stay" is the last word we discussed, meaning, "be quiet." Quiet down, Saul, you're doing too much talking. Let us hear what God has to say!"

Don't you think that this is our position too often in our prayer life, in our times of communion with our Lord? We do all the talking, our natures are eagerly forming words and expressing thoughts, so that for God to speak to us is impossible.

We read a story in the Book of Judges, of Gideon and the men of Ephraim. The latter were incensed because Gideon had fought the Midianites without calling them to help, and thus get part of the glory of the victory. Gideon returns a just answer, a clever answer, which pacifies the Ephraimites. "Then their anger was abated toward him". Judges 8:3) Here we have the same Hebrew word as in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God." Their natural feelings subsided, abated, became still.

The silent prayer -

But, you ask, what has all this to do with prayer? Prayer between man and his God is consummated, is brought to its highest possible level, only when the heart of man - his soul-life, the movements and activities of his being, his personality - is brought to the place of rest.

We note that the first Hebrew word discussed had the idea of silence, still waiting. Essentially, then, this prayer of waiting on God is a silent prayer that is, silent outwardly, though the soul is occupied in the fullest way with God inwardly. But do you find so often when the door is shut for the time of prayer, your heart is in such turmoil that it just will not quiet down? As we live in turmoil month in and month out we find it impossible to get close to Jesus as we should. We need to learn to wait. How shall we come to know God in whom is life eternal? The psalmist says, "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psa.46:10). But how hard it is for the flesh to be still! How hard it is to calm the troubled waters of our soul. Only Jesus can do it. To be introduced into this quiet waiting on God needs His mighty hand.

The world girdling Christian and Missionary Alliance had its origin in the life and ministry of A. B. Simpson. His tremendous personal ministry and missionary successes go back to the experience he narrates in the following account:

A score of years ago, a friend placed in my hands a little book which became one of the turning points of my life. It was called "True Peace," and was an old medieval message. It had but one thought, and it was this - that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if I would only get still enough to hear His voice.

I thought this would be a very easy matter, and so I began to get still. But I had no sooner commenced than a pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from

without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own questions, some of them my own cares, and some were the suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world's turmoil. Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought. In every direction I was pushed and pulled and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer; but God said, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Then came the conflict of thoughts for the morrow with its duties and cares. But God said: "Be still." And as I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that when the other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear and heed them, there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power, and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard. That "still, small voice" of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul, was God's answer to all my questions, was God's life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge and all prayer and all blessing; it was the living GOD Himself as my life and my all."

We cannot go through life strong and fresh on constant express trains, with ten minutes for lunch; but we must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord when we renew our strength and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint. (Isa.40:31)

The best thing about this stillness is that it gives God a chance to work. "He that is entered into his rest hath ceased from his own works, even as God did from His." (Heb. 4:10) When we cease from our works, God works in us; when we cease from our thoughts, God's thoughts come into us; when we get still from our restless activities, "God worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure," (Phil.2:13) and we have but to work it out.

Beloved! Let us take His stillness; let us dwell in the "the secret place of the Most High;" (Psa.91:1) let us enter into God and His eternal rest; let us silence the other sounds, and then we can hear "the still, small voice."

Then there is another kind of stillness; the stillness that lets God work for us, and we hold our peace; the stillness that ceases from controversy, and self-vindication, and expedients of wisdom and forethought and lets God provide and answer the unkind word and the cruel blow, in His own unfailing, faithful love. How often we lose God's interposition by taking up our own cause and striking for our own defense.

There is no spectacle in the entire Bible so sublime as the silent Savior answering not a word to the men that were maligning Him, and whom He could have laid prostrate at His feet by one look of Divine power, or one word of fiery rebuke. But He let them do their worst, and He stood in the power of stillness - God' Holy Lamb.

God, give to us this silent power, this mighty self-surrender, this conquered spirit, which will make us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Rom.8:37) Let our voice and our life speak like "the still, small voice" of Horeb, and as "the sound of a gentle stillness". Then after the heat and strife of earth are over, men will remember the morning dew, the mellow light and sunshine, the evening breeze, the Lamb of Calvary, and the gentle, Holy, Heavenly Dove

Chapter Twelve

INTIMACY WITH GOD

Since prayer is the very breath of our Christian life, its sustaining principle, how necessary to have a clear conception of what prayer is basically. It is "waiting on God." This puts God where He belongs - the Initiator of all spiritual activity - and the worshipper where he belongs, an empty vessel to receive of God's fullness, and respond in whatever way God disposes.

When you get alone, tell Jesus that you are waiting on Him. Set yourself in faith in His presence and then let your heart rest. Cease your own activity, ask for nothing, express nothing with your lips, but let your heart sink its weariness and confusion into Him. Just rest, wait quietly. Trust Him to come to you. Into your heart He will come with a healing balm and heavenly rest, the rest of God. This will not be the result of your own effort to get quiet, but will be His work of quieting you. This is true intimacy with God.

Waiting on God -

Practice makes perfect. If at first you find that you just can't get quiet, don't give up. Let every time of prayer be a time to wait on Him. You might read some verses in the Bible to get your mind on the things of God, you might even express some petitions to Him, you might sing something softly to Him to tell Him of your love, but finally, your whole soul will want to sit at His feet in adoration. This is worship "in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Andrew Murray once said of waiting on God, "If the question be asked whether this be anything different from what we do when we pray, the answer is that there may be much praying with but very little waiting on God. In praying, we are often occupied with ourselves, with our own needs, and our own efforts in the presentation of them. In waiting upon God, the first thought is of the God upon whom we wait. We enter His presence and feel we just need to be quiet so that He, as God, can overshadow us with Himself. God longs to reveal Himself, to fill us with Himself. Waiting on God gives Him time in His own way and divine power to come to us."

As we cease from our own works (and nowhere can this be better done than in the place of prayer), the Holy Spirit is able to move upon us and stir our souls with His heavenly operation. We must learn that only God can produce a spiritual action. The soul of man is capable only of being an empty vessel in which God can work.

Our own operations, motivated by self, by our own wills, by any impulse of nature whatsoever, are carnal and not spiritual. Only what God does is spiritual. When we begin to see this, we more and more learn to wait on God that He Himself may motivate us, using us as channels through which something spiritual may be accomplished.

Some people may think that praying like this will make the soul inactive, stupid, and unfruitful; but on the contrary, it acts in a higher and more noble way, for God becomes its mover, and whatever He does is most efficient. In the process of quieting the heart and getting rid of its impetuosity of self-motivation, it may seem that nothing is being accomplished, but when God Himself takes the place of these wasted motions of our souls, He fills us with divine love and we are led by the Spirit of God.

This waiting on God encourages a total dependence upon the Spirit of God. "We know not what to pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:26), says the apostle, the master in prayer. This ignorance properly understood will lead a soul to set itself before God in silence and rest of heart, that the Spirit may enter with His divine wisdom and carry on the work of intercession, or worship, or petition. What a glorious day it is for us when we see that only the Spirit of God within can pray the way praying should be done. Then our whole life becomes a constant waiting on Him.

This is the "rest" of God in which His mightiest works are done. It takes away the care, and wear, and confusion. It brings us to the place that we can say with Paul, "It is no longer I that lives, but Christ who lives in me. (Gal. 2:20) For one who longs for this kind of life, waiting on God is absolutely indispensable.

Let God speak to you -

Make preparation for times of such waiting on God during your regular times of prayer. When you seem to have nothing more to say to God in the way of thanksgiving, or praise, or worship, or petition; rest before Him that He might talk to you. Believe that He will come to you in a special way. When one first tastes of the inward delight and peace of this humble abandonment to God, he finds that life begins to be lived on a new and higher plane. He gradually comes to love the workings of God and to hate his own workings. This is what Jesus means by "hating our own lives." We learn, by waiting on God, to have such a high regard for all that He does, that what we can do seems naught.

We must be ever leaning on Him. This is what is meant by Paul's admonition found in I Thes.5:17 - "Pray without ceasing." It is the very breath of a soul to pray when once it has seen how utterly dependent it is on Jesus. Then prayer becomes more than something to be stuck into some unneeded corner of the day. Prayer becomes the way for eternal life to be nourished within us. Waiting on God becomes our very life.

Have you tried to be so quiet inside, saying nothing, trying to think of nothing, but just to let your heart go out in love to Jesus? Have you waited until the still small voice begins to tell of the love of God for you, of His care for you? Strange and wonderful it is that without words of any kind God can speak to us. Some people make much of dreams and visions, but surer than anything of that nature, which is presented to the senses, is the inward voice of our Divine Lover telling of Himself. Away down deep, deeper than any deception could penetrate, is this peace and warmth.

Have you waited on God till He communicates Himself to you like this? Or have you been so hurried in your devotions, so much occupied with your own efforts in them, that there was no place for the Lord Himself? How often have people knelt to pray and then, after preaching to God telling Him all that was happening in the world and what He should do about it, have arisen and been off, their speech finished? Some have no time to let the lowly Jesus talk to them, no time to hear His voice. That surely is not prayer, but self-love and the desire to hear one's own voice.

There is a price to pay -

The great lack in our Christian experience is that we do not know God as we should; we do not know Jesus in a sweet personal way. We know Him as a Master to be served, and we serve Him with all the vigor of which we are capable. We may know Him as the true God to be defended by pen or tongue, so that our life becomes one long series of disputes over doctrine in our endeavor to keep the faith pure. But do we know Him as our very life, as our very soul, as our Friend and Companion?

Why don't we know Jesus better? It is because we are too much occupied with ourselves. To learn to wait on God will revolutionize our lives. But you must pay the price of giving the time and perseverance, for it does not come all at once. You must pay the price of laying down all the efforts of your own soul in which you so delight. Either by our indifference or by our self effort we block God's efforts to give Himself fully to us.

If we were to know our true relationship to God - a relation of absolute poverty and helplessness - then we should sense our need of absolute and unceasing dependence. This would lead to unceasing waiting on God, and therefore, prayer without ceasing. We should then begin to see that each moment we must receive from God what God works each moment and would work in us. This would make us humble, yielded, acknowledging our inability to get along for even a minute without Him. Our greatest joy should then be to lean on our strong Lord, not wanting to have any feelings of self-confidence or self-dependence. It is this that the devil brought into the world. It is the opposite that Jesus came to bring.

And was not our blessed Lord One who was ever praying and thus receiving strength for Himself? Does not Jesus' life breathe out absolute dependence on His Father in Heaven? "I can of mine own self do nothing....The Son can do nothing of himself....The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 5:30,19;14:24) In these simple statements we see the inward life of Jesus. He worked out for you and me such a life of blessed dependence on God.

Isn't any self-dependent life a manifestation of the pride of Satan transported to earth? Isn't the self-dependent life exactly what that enemy of God and man brought to our beautiful Eden and by it brought ruin and sorrow? It is the waiting life, the humble life, that brings back to earth the kingdom of God.

Our reward - the abundant life -

Here, then, we find prayer at its highest. This is the more abundant life Jesus brought. The devil imported a life of self, a life not supported by God but by pride, self-will, self-choice, and self-strength. Jesus brought in a life supported by childlike trust in the Father; a life in which His own will was never used, His own choice never manifested. His words in the garden are the keynote to His whole life: "Not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)

Jesus can give you this beautiful life of heaven, if you will ask Him. In waiting on Him, this life is poured into us by the Spirit. This waiting life is the Spirit-filled life. Out of it flow blessings like rivers. Out of it the power of God flows to transform those around you. You do not need strength - just weakness placed at His feet as an offering. Mourn not that talents seem to have escaped you. Wait on Him for His life and fullness and He will flow through you in ministry to others. Alas, it is not human talent the churches need, but the life of God. Were we to dispense with some of our machinery and do more waiting on God, there would be a revival such as we cannot conceive.

Jesus stands at the door and knocks, but in our busyness we hear Him not. O God, restore this lost art! Wait quietly on Him!

The following article from Bread of Life gives a suggested prayer list with which the preceding chapters fittingly close.

1. TO GET BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH JESUS -

"That I may know Him...." Phil.3:10) Oh, that I might know You, Jesus...I need you. I must have You! Increase my desire to find You. Give me a seeking spirit. You are all I want: all I need! Oh, come to me, Jesus. Reveal and manifest Yourself to me. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:6)

2. CONSECRATION -

I long to belong altogether to You, Lord. Take me, just as I am, and make me what you would have me to be. I give myself to You, this day, just to be kept for You under the precious blood, separated from sin and self. Set (place or put) me in Your Presence, and if I should slip out, for some reason, please draw me back to the sweet consciousness of Your dear Presence. Let me feel Your nearness, continually. Get Your perfect will done in my life, today. Let every word, thought and action be pleasing to You. Give me "the mind of Christ." Make me think the thoughts You want me to think. Live out Thy life within me, In all things have Thy way.

3. TO BE CLEANSED FROM NATURE FAULTS -

"Make me and keep me pure,
White with thy light within.
Guard my heart from itself,
And cleanse me from all its sin."
"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psa. 51:7)

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." (Psa.19:12; 51:2,10)
Purge my heart from all faults, nature sins, and weaknesses. Show me myself as You see me, and

cleanse me from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Give me a heart like Thine, perfect, true, and empty of self.

"Wash me now, without, within,
Or purge with fire, if that must be.
No matter how, if only sin
Die out in me...."

Make me pure as You are pure, even in my spiritual life aims. (Matt.5:8) Give me purity in thoughts, words, actions, contacts, motives and dealings.

4. FOR LOVE -

"To know the love of Christ.... That I may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19) Fill me more and more with Your Love. I want to love YOU with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:37,20; Mark 12:30,31) My love always falls short. I want the love of God to fill my heart and the life of everyone I meet. By Your grace I'll never stop praying until this is made real in my life. (Pray daily over each verse of I Cor. 13:4-8). Make me see, dear Lord, where I am lacking in love in all the different phases of my life, that I may become perfected in the love of God.

5. FOR HUMILITY -

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." (James 4:10) "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." (I Pet. 5:5,6) Bring me down low at Your feet, every moment of every day, until "it is no more I, but Christ." (Gal.2:20)

"Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted.
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard.
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action.
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word."

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing.
Only to lie at His feet.
A broken and empty vessel,
For the Master's use made meet."

Clothe me with Your humility, Jesus. Let the old, worn garments of pride and self-love fall off that I may receive the garment of meekness and lowliness from Your hand. Give me the meek and humble spirit You showed, Jesus, when You washed the disciples' feet even though You knew Peter would deny You, Thomas would doubt You, and Judas would betray You. Give me the meekness You had when You went to the cross for me and prayed for Your enemies, who had nailed You there, to be forgiven. Make me see my own helplessness, my worthlessness, and complete lack of ability to do anything perfectly, in my own strength. Help me to see I am good for nothing, apart from You. (John 15:5; 5:30) Show me my pride, and make me hate it, despise it and flee from it. Make my heart a living flame of love for Thee!

6. TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT -

(This is not to be confused with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the beginning. We must go on becoming more and more filled with the Holy Spirit of God until we are always led, possessed, and controlled completely by the Holy Spirit. This does not happen all at once.)

Fill me now, with the Holy Spirit. Come, O come and fill me now! (It is a good thing to stop and praise the Lord a while here, or at different times during your prayer.) Empty my heart of all the world, the flesh, and self-life, and the natural, that I may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Teach me to

be open and led by the Holy Spirit. Let faith spring up in my heart to receive, by Thy power, the mighty inner workings and changes that need to be made in my life. Make my heart in tune with what You desire to show me, that I may follow Thy leadings. Teach me true obedience to the Word of God, that I may not fail or fall short of all Your plans for my life.

There are people who have some "gift of the Spirit" who are not cleansed of inbred sin and do not live a holy life, so are a stumbling block to others. Therefore we should not seek gifts, but rather pray to be fully cleansed of all faults, made humble, like Christ, and filled with His Spirit, bearing the "fruit of the Spirit." The real, true evidence of a completely Spirit-filled life is not the gifts, but the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal.5:22,23; 14-26)