A photograph of a church steeple with a cross on top, set against a dramatic sunset sky with pink and orange clouds. The steeple is white with a dark roof. In the foreground, there are dark evergreen trees and a tiled roof.

Intercession

Praying for others

1 Thes. 5:25
Brethren, pray for us.

Your gift

**brings help
to you**

Compiled by Dr. Harold Bollinger

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Forward

A Blessing Declaration

Children of God, I bless your life as I know you will become men and women of God.

I bless your mind to remain sound and for you to have wisdom and discernment in all decisions. I bless you with favor from God and man.

I bless your body to remain pure, and to be healthy and strong.

I bless your hands and feet to do the work that God has ordained for you to do. I bless your mouth where words of truth and encouragement will flow. I bless your heart to remain loyal to God's will for your life.

I bless your marriage with richness and unity. I bless our family and your friends in every way that you may become a living example of the gospel of Christ.

I bless your ministry that many will come to believe in Christ.

I bless you with safety, love and endurance until you stand before the Lord.

In all things and in every way, today and all future days, may you be blessed and remain a blessing.

Go forth with zeal and a knowledge of God's word. May your calling be fulfilled in every way.

I declare and proclaim that these shall come to pass in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

By Harold Bollinger

Chapter 1



Aaron speaks a blessing to his sons.

Numbers 6:23-27

"Instruct Aaron and his sons to bless the people of Israel with this special blessing:

'May the Lord bless you
And protect you.
May the Lord smile on you
And be gracious to you.
May the Lord show you his favor
And give you his peace.'

This is how Aaron and his sons will designate the Israelites as my people, and I myself will bless them."

x

My servant Job will pray for you

Job 42:8-10

"Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My

servant Job will pray for you For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job. The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

x

My prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

Romans 10:1-4

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved.

I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself.

Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way. For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.

x

Chapter 2



Abraham prays for Sodom

Genesis 18:23-33

Abraham approached him and said, "Will you destroy both innocent and guilty alike?"

Suppose you find fifty innocent people there within the city—will you still destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes? Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the innocent with the guilty. Why, you would be treating the innocent and the guilty exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

And the Lord replied, "If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake."

Then Abraham spoke again. "Since I have begun, let me go on and speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. Suppose there are only forty-five? Will you destroy the city for lack of five?"

And the Lord said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five." Then Abraham pressed his request further. "Suppose there are only forty?" And the Lord replied, "I will not destroy it if there are forty."

"Please don't be angry, my Lord," Abraham pleaded. "Let me speak—suppose only thirty are found?"

And the Lord replied, "I will not destroy it if there are thirty."

Then Abraham said, "Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?"

And the Lord said, "Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."

Finally, Abraham said, "Lord, please do not get angry; I will speak but once more! Suppose only ten are found there?"

And the Lord said, "Then, for the sake of the ten, I will not destroy it."

The Lord went on his way when he had finished his conversation with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his tent.

x

Abraham's servant prays for guidance.

Genesis 24:12-15

"O Lord, God of my master," he prayed. "Give me success and show kindness to my master, Abraham. Help me to accomplish the purpose of my journey. [13] See, here I am, standing beside this spring, and the young women of the village are coming out to draw water.

This is my request. I will ask one of them for a drink. If she says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will water your camels, too!'—let her be the one you have appointed as Isaac's wife. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

As he was still praying, a young woman named Rebekah arrived with a water jug on her shoulder. Her father was Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah.

x

Moses prays for Israel in battle

Exodus 17:9-12

Moses commanded Joshua, "Call the Israelites to arms, and fight the army of Amalek. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

So Joshua did what Moses had commanded. He led his men out to fight the army of Amalek. Meanwhile Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of a nearby hill.

As long as Moses held up the staff with his hands, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites gained the upper hand.

Moses' arms finally became too tired to hold up the staff any longer. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side, holding up his hands until sunset.

x

Moses prays for forgiveness for the people

Exodus 32:31-32

Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. "But now, if you will, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out from your book which you have written!"

Moses prays for God to send a leader.

Numbers 27:15-23

Then Moses said to the Lord, "O Lord, the God of the spirits of all living things, please appoint a new leader for the community. [17] Give them someone who will lead them into battle, so the people of the Lord will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

The Lord replied, "Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. Present him to Eleazar the priest before the whole community, and publicly commission him with the responsibility of leading the people.

Transfer your authority to him so the whole community of Israel will obey him. When direction from the Lord is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will determine the Lord's will by means of sacred lots. This is how Joshua and the rest of the community of Israel will discover what they should do."

So Moses did as the Lord commanded and presented Joshua to Eleazar the priest and the whole community. Moses laid his hands on him and commissioned him to his responsibilities, just as the Lord had commanded through Moses.

Moses asked God to appoint a leader who was capable of directing both external and internal affairs—one who could lead them in battle, but who would also care for their needs.

The Lord responded by appointing Joshua. Many people want to be known as leaders. Some are very capable of reaching their goals, while others care deeply for the people in their charge. The best leaders are both goal-oriented and people-oriented.

Moses did not want to leave his work without making sure a new leader was ready to replace him.

First he asked God to help him find a replacement.

Then, when Joshua was selected, Moses gave him a variety of tasks to ease the transition into his new position.

Moses also clearly told the people that Joshua had the authority and the ability to lead the nation. His display of confidence in Joshua was good for both Joshua and the people.

To minimize leadership gaps, anyone in a leadership position should train others to carry on the duties should he or she suddenly or eventually have to leave.

While you have the opportunity, follow Moses' pattern: pray, select, develop, and commission.

David prays for the stricken people.

2 Samuel 24:17

Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

David prays for Solomon

1 Chronicles 29:19

And give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep your commandments, your testimonies and your statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."

Wholehearted devotion" means to be entirely dedicated to God. This is what David wished for Solomon—that he would desire, above all else, to serve God. Do you find it hard to do what God wants, or even harder to want to do it?

God can give you wholehearted devotion. If you believe in Jesus Christ, this is already happening in you. Paul wrote that God works within us "to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:13).

Nehemiah prays for Israel

Nehemiah 1:4-11

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of

heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Nehemiah broke down and wept when he heard that Jerusalem's walls still had not been rebuilt. Why did this upset him? Walls mean little in most present-day cities, but in Nehemiah's day they were essential.

They offered safety from raids and symbolized strength and peace. Nehemiah also mourned for his people, the Jews, who had been stifled by a previous edict that kept them from rebuilding their walls (Ezra 4:6-23).

Nehemiah was deeply grieved about the condition of Jerusalem, but he didn't just brood about it. After his initial grief, he prayed, pouring his heart out to God (Neh. 1:5-11), and he looked for ways to improve the situation. Nehemiah put all his resources of knowledge, experience, and organization into determining what should be done.

When tragic news comes to you, first pray. Then seek ways to move beyond grief to specific action that helps those who need it.

God's "covenant of love" refers to God's promise to love the descendants of Abraham. It is also mentioned in Deut. 7:7-9.

Nehemiah fasted and prayed for several days, expressing his sorrow for Israel's sin and his desire that Jerusalem would again come alive with the worship of the one true God.

Nehemiah demonstrated the elements of effective prayer:

- (1) Praise,
- (2) Thanksgiving,
- (3) Repentance,
- (4) Specific request, and

(5) Commitment.

Heartfelt prayers like Nehemiah's can help clarify

- (1) Any problem you may be facing,
- (2) God's great power to help you, and
- (3) The job you have to do.

By the end of his prayer time, Nehemiah knew what action he had to take (Neh. 1:11). When God's people pray, difficult decisions fall into proper perspective, and appropriate actions follow.

Stephen prays for those who stoned him.

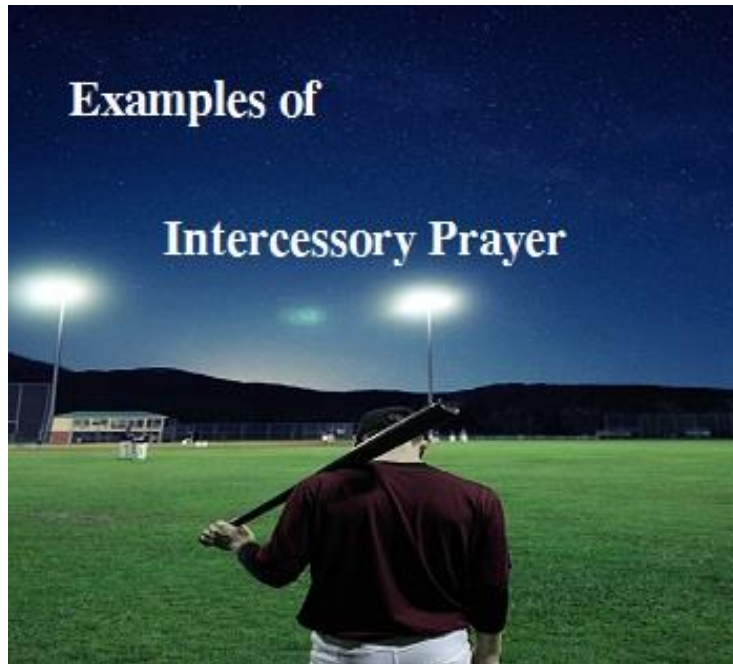
Acts 7:60

Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

As Stephen died, he spoke words very similar to Jesus' words on the cross (Luke 23:34). The early believers were glad to suffer as Jesus had suffered because that meant they were counted worthy (Acts 5:41).

Stephen was ready to suffer like Jesus, even to the point of asking forgiveness for his murderers. Such a forgiving response comes only from the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3



Examples of intercession

Daniel 9:3-5

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

This blazing furnace was not a small oven for cooking dinner or heating a house; it was a huge industrial furnace that could have been used for baking bricks or smelting metals.

The temperatures were hot enough to assure that no one could survive. The roaring flames could be seen leaping from its top opening, and a fiery blast killed the soldiers who went up to the large opening (Daniel 3:22).

Jesus prayed to be glorified

John 17:1-7

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you.

For you have given him authority over everyone in all the earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do, and now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

"I have told these men about you. They were in the world, but then you gave them to me. Actually, they were always yours, and you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you,

This entire chapter is Jesus' prayer. From it, we learn that the world is a tremendous battleground where the forces under Satan's power and those under God's authority are at war. Satan and his forces are

motivated by bitter hatred for Christ and his forces. Jesus prayed for his disciples, including those of us who follow him today. He prayed that God would keep his chosen believers safe from Satan's power, setting them apart and making them pure and holy, uniting them through his truth.

How do we get eternal life? Jesus tells us clearly here—by knowing God the Father himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. Eternal life requires entering into a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. When we admit our sin and turn away from it, Christ's love lives in us by the Holy Spirit

Before Jesus came to earth, he was one with God. At this point, when his mission on earth was almost finished, Jesus was asking his Father to restore him to his original place of honor and authority. Jesus' resurrection and ascension—and Stephen's dying exclamation (Acts 7:56)—attest that Jesus did return to his exalted position at the right hand of God.

Prayer for knowledge

Colossians 1:9-12

So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom.

Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better.

We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people, who live in the light.

Paul was exposing a heresy in the Colossian church that was similar to *Gnosticism* (see the note on Col. 2:4ff for more information). Gnostics valued the accumulation of knowledge, but Paul pointed out that knowledge in itself is empty.

To be worth anything, it must lead to a changed life and right living.

His prayer for the Colossians has two dimensions:

- (1) That they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding, and
- (2) That they would bear fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Knowledge is not merely to be accumulated; it should give us direction for living. Paul wanted the Colossians to be wise, but he also wanted them to *use* their knowledge. Knowledge of God is not a secret that only a few can discover; it is open to everyone. God wants us to learn more about him, and also to put belief into practice by helping others.

Sometimes we wonder how to pray for missionaries and other leaders we have never met. Paul had never met the Colossians, but he faithfully prayed for them. His prayers teach us how to pray for others, whether we know them or not.

We can request that they:

- (1) Understand God's will,
- (2) Gain spiritual wisdom,
- (3) Please and honor God,
- (4) Bear good fruit,
- (5) Grow in the knowledge of God,
- (6) Be filled with God's strength,
- (7) Have great endurance and patience,
- (8) Stay full of Christ's joy, and
- (9) Give thanks always.

All believers have these same basic needs. When you don't know how to pray for someone, use Paul's prayer pattern for the Colossians.

Prayer to stop God's anger

Exodus 32:11-13

Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does your anger burn against your people whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'?

Turn from Your burning anger and change your mind about doing harm to your people. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom you swore by yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

Prayer for help in battle

Joshua 7:6-9

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what will you do unto your great name?

When Joshua first went against Ai (Joshua 7:3), he did not consult God but relied on the strength of his army to defeat the small city. Only after Israel was defeated did they turn to God and ask what happened.

Too often we rely on our own skills and strength, especially when the task before us seems easy. We go to God only when the obstacles seem too great.

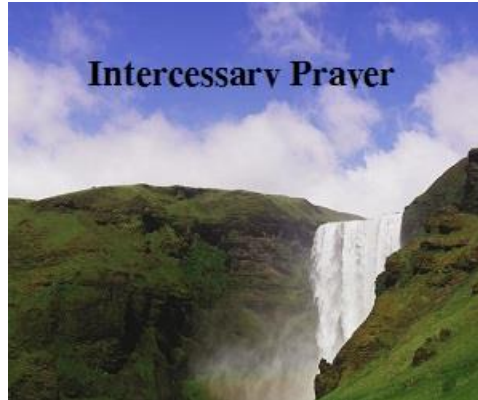
However, only God knows what lies ahead. Consulting him, even when we are on a winning streak, may save us from grave mistakes or misjudgments. God may want us to learn lessons, remove pride, or consult others before he will work through us.

Imagine praying this way to God. This is not a formal church prayer; it is the prayer of a man who is afraid and confused by what is happening around him. Joshua poured out his real thoughts to God.

Hiding your needs from God is ignoring the only one who can really help. God welcomes your honest prayers and wants you to express your true feelings to him.

Any believer can become more honest in prayer by remembering that God is all knowing and all-powerful and that his love is everlasting.

Chapter 4



Intercessory Prayer

Helping many through the disciples prayers

2 Corinthians 1:11

You also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.

Paul requested prayer for himself and his companions as they traveled to spread God's message. Pray for pastors, teachers, missionaries, and others who are spreading the gospel. Satan will challenge anyone making a real difference for God.

Prayer for deliverance

Philippians 1:19

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

This was not Paul's final imprisonment in Rome. But he didn't know that. Awaiting trial, he knew he could either be released or executed.

However, he trusted Christ to work it out for his deliverance. Paul's prayer was that when he stood trial, he would speak courageously for Christ and not be timid or ashamed.

Whether he lived or died, he wanted to exalt Christ. As it turned out, he was released from this imprisonment but arrested again two or three years later. Only faith in Christ could sustain Paul in such adversity.

Prayer for the peace of Jerusalem

Psalm 122:6

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.

The psalmist was not praying for his own peace and prosperity, but for that of his brothers and friends in Jerusalem. This is intercessory prayer, prayer on behalf of others. Too often we are quick to pray for our own needs and desires, and omit interceding for others. Will you intercede for someone in need today?

The peace sought in these verses is much more than the mere absence of conflict. It suggests completeness, health, justice, prosperity, and protection. The world cannot provide this peace. Real peace comes from faith in God because he alone embodies all the characteristics of peace. To find peace of mind and peace with others, you must find peace with God.

Prayer for protection

Isaiah 62:6-7

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent you who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Many commentators believe Isaiah is speaking in Isaiah 62:1. If so, Isaiah's zeal for his people and his desire to see the work of salvation completed caused him to pray without resting, hoping that Israel would be saved. We should have Isaiah's zeal to see God's will done. This is what we mean when we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is good to keep praying persistently for others.

A prayer for the saints

Ephesians 6:18

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

How can anyone pray on all occasions? One way is to make quick, brief prayers your habitual response to every situation you meet throughout the day. Another way is to order your life around God's desires and teachings so that your very life becomes a prayer.

You don't have to isolate yourself from other people and from daily work in order to pray constantly.

You can make prayer your life and your life a prayer while living in a world that needs God's powerful influence. "Praying for all the saints" means praying for all believers in Christ; so pray for the Christians you know and for the church around the world.

Petition and thanksgiving for all men

1 Timothy 2:1

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.

Although God is all-powerful and all knowing, he has chosen to let us help him change the world through our prayers. How this works is a mystery to us because of our limited understanding, but it is a reality. Paul urges us to pray for each other and for our leaders in government. Our earnest prayers will have powerful results (James 5:16).

Prayer for today's success

Genesis 24:12-14

He said, "O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show loving kindness to my master Abraham.

"Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'--may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown loving kindness to my master."

Abraham's servant asked God for guidance in this very important task. Obviously Eliezer had learned much about faith and about God from his master. What are your family members, friends, and associates learning about God from watching you? Be like Abraham, setting an example of dependent faith. And be like Eliezer, asking God for guidance before any venture.

Was it right for Abraham's servant to ask God for such a specific sign? The sign he requested was only slightly out of the ordinary. The hospitality of the day required women at the well to offer water to weary travelers, but not to their animals.

Eliezer was simply asking God to show him a woman with an attitude of service—someone who would go beyond the expected. An offer to water his camels would indicate that kind of attitude.

Eliezer did not ask for a woman with looks or wealth. He knew the importance of having the right heart, and he asked God to help him with his task.

Abraham's prayer for Ishmael

Genesis 17:18

And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"

How could Abraham doubt God? It seemed incredible that he and Sarah in their advanced years could have a child. Abraham, the man God considered righteous because of his faith, had trouble believing God's promise to him.

Despite his doubts, however, he followed God's commands (Genesis 17:22-27). Even people of great faith may have doubts. When God seems to want the impossible and you begin to doubt his leading, be like Abraham. Focus on God's commitment to fulfill his promises to you, and then continue to obey.

Chapter 5



Prayer for salvation

Romans 10:1

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

What will happen to the Jewish people who believe in God but not in Christ? Since they believe in the same God, won't they be saved? If that were true, Paul would not have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to teach them about Christ.

Because Jesus is the most complete revelation of God, we cannot fully know God apart from Christ; and because God appointed Jesus to bring God and man together, we cannot come to God by another path. The Jews, like everyone else, can find salvation only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Like Paul, we should wish that all Jews might be saved. We should pray for them and lovingly share the Good News with them.

Pray for those who persecute you

Matthew 5:44

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

To many Jews of Jesus’ day, these statements were offensive. Any Messiah who would turn the other cheek was not the military leader they wanted to lead a revolt against Rome. Since they were under Roman oppression, they wanted retaliation against their enemies, whom they hated. But Jesus suggested a new, radical response to injustice: instead of demanding rights, give them up freely!

According to Jesus, it is more important to *give* justice and mercy than to receive it.

By telling us not to retaliate, Jesus keeps us from taking the law into our own hands. By loving and praying for our enemies, we can overcome evil with good.

The Pharisees interpreted Leviticus 19:18 as teaching that they should love only those who love in return, and Psalm 139:19-22 and Psalm 140:9-11 as meaning that they should hate their enemies. But Jesus says we are to love our enemies.

If you love your enemies and treat them well, you will truly show that Jesus is Lord of your life. This is possible only for those who give themselves fully to God, because only he can deliver people from natural selfishness. We must trust the Holy Spirit to help us *show* love to those for whom we may not *feel* love.

Prayer for the welfare of the city

Jeremiah 29:7

'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.'

Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:4-23 is the letter) instructing them to move ahead with their lives and to pray for the pagan nation that enslaved them. Life cannot grind to a halt during troubled times. In an unpleasant or distressing situation, we must adjust and keep moving.

You may find it difficult to pray for those in authority if they are evil, but that is when your prayers are most needed (1 Tim. 2:1-2). When you enter times of trouble or sudden change, pray diligently and move ahead, doing whatever you can rather than giving up because of fear and uncertainty.

A cry for healing

Numbers 12:13

Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!"

Moses prays for the people

Numbers 11:1-2

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died out.

The Israelites complained, and then Moses complained. But God responded positively to Moses and negatively to the rest of the people. Why? The people complained *to one another*, and nothing was accomplished. Moses took his complaint *to God*, who could solve any problem.

Many of us are good at complaining to each other. We need to learn to take our problems to the One who can do something about them.

Moses continues to pray for Israel's sin

Numbers 14:13-19

"But what will the Egyptians think when they hear about it?" Moses pleaded with the Lord. "They know full well the power you displayed in rescuing these people from Egypt.

They will tell this to the inhabitants of this land, who are well aware that you are with this people. They know, Lord, that you have appeared in full view of your people in the pillar of cloud that hovers over them. They know that you go before them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Now if you slaughter all these people, the nations that have heard of your fame will say, 'The Lord was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give them, so he killed them in the wilderness.'

"Please, Lord, prove that your power is as great as you have claimed it to be. For you said, [18] 'The Lord is slow to anger and rich in unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. Even so he does not leave sin unpunished, but he punishes the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations.'

Please pardon the sins of this people because of your magnificent, unfailing love, just as you have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt."

Chapter 6



Prayer that faith will not fail

Luke 22:32

But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Satan wanted to crush Simon Peter and the other disciples like grains of wheat. He hoped to find only chaff and blow it away. But Jesus assured Peter that his faith, although it would falter, would not be destroyed. It would be renewed, and Peter would become a powerful leader.

Jesus prays for those who crucify him.

Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing " And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

Jesus asked God to forgive the people who were putting him to death— Jewish leaders, Roman politicians and soldiers, bystanders—and God answered that prayer by opening up the way of salvation even to Jesus' murderers.

The Roman centurion and soldiers who witnessed the crucifixion said, "Surely he was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). Soon many priests were converted to the Christian faith (Acts 6:7).

Because we are all sinners, we all played a part in putting Jesus to death. The gospel—the Good News—is that God is gracious. He will forgive us and give us new life through his Son.

Roman soldiers customarily divided up the clothing of executed criminals among themselves. When they cast lots for Jesus' clothes, they fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

Prayer of agreement

Matthew 18:19-20

"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in

heaven. "For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst."

Jesus looked ahead to a new day when he would be present with his followers not in body, but through his Holy Spirit. In the body of believers (the church), the sincere agreement of two people is more powerful than the superficial agreement of thousands, because Christ's Holy Spirit is with them. Two or more believers, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, will pray according to God's will, not their own; thus their requests will be granted.

The elders pray for the sick

James 5:14-16

Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

James is referring to someone who is incapacitated physically. In Scripture, oil was both a medicine (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37) and a symbol of the Spirit of God (as used in anointing kings, see 1 Samuel 16:1-13). Thus oil can represent both the medical and the spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not

separate the physical and the spiritual—Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

People in the church are not alone. Members of Christ's body should be able to count on others for support and prayer, especially when they are sick or suffering. The elders should be on call to respond to the illness of any member, and the church should stay alert to pray for the needs of all its members.

“The prayer offered in faith” does not refer to the faith of the sick person, but to the faith of the people praying. God heals, faith doesn't, and all prayers are subject to God's will. But our prayers are part of God's healing process. That is why God often waits for our prayers of faith before intervening to heal a person.

Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness. But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church.

- (1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us.
- (2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly.
- (3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support.
- (4) If, after confessing a private sin to God, we still don't feel his forgiveness, we may wish to confess that sin to a fellow believer and hear him or her assure us of God's pardon. In Christ's kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers (1 Peter 2:9).

Samuel prays for Israel

1 Samuel 7:5-9

Then Samuel told them, "Come to Mizpah, all of you. I will pray to the Lord for you." So they gathered there and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the Lord. They also went without food all-day and confessed that they had sinned against the Lord. So it was at Mizpah that Samuel became Israel's judge.

When the Philistine rulers heard that all Israel had gathered at Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were approaching.

"Plead with the Lord our God to save us from the Philistines!" they begged Samuel. So Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the Lord as a whole burnt offering. He pleaded with the Lord to help Israel, and the Lord answered.

Mizpah held special significance for the Israelite nation. It was there that the Israelites had gathered to mobilize against the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20:1). Samuel was appointed to be leader (1 Samuel 7:6), and Saul, Israel's first king, was identified and presented to the people (1 Samuel 10:17ff).

Samuel became the last in the long line of Israel's judges (leaders), a line that began when Israel first conquered the Promised Land. For a list

of these judges, see the chart in Judges 3:11. A judge was both a political and a religious leader.

God was Israel's true leader, while the judge was to be God's spokesman to the people and administrator of justice throughout the land. While some of Israel's judges relied more on their own judgment than on God's, Samuel's obedience and dedication to God made him one of the greatest judges in Israel's history. (For more on Samuel as a judge, see the note on ■1 Samuel 4:18.)

The Lord restored the treasures of Job

Job 42:8-10

"Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.

The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

God made it clear that Job's friends were wrong. The fact that God did not mention any specific sins shows that God confirmed Job's claim to have led a devout and obedient life. Job's friends had made the error of assuming that Job's suffering was caused by some great sin. They were judging Job

without knowing what God was doing. We must be careful to avoid making judgments about a person because God may be working in ways we know nothing about.

After receiving much criticism, Job was still able to pray for his three friends. It is difficult to forgive someone who has accused us of wrongdoing, but Job did. Are you praying for those who have hurt you? Can you forgive them? Follow the actions of Job, whom God called a good man, and pray for those who have wronged you.

Would the message of the book of Job change if God had not restored to Job his former blessings? No. God is still sovereign. Jesus said that anyone who gives up something for the kingdom of God will be repaid (Luke 18:29-30). Our restoration may or may not be the same kind as Job's, which was both spiritual and material. Our complete restoration may not be in this life—but it *will* happen. God loves us, and he is just. He not only will restore whatever we have lost unjustly, but he also will give us more than we can imagine as we live with him in eternity. Cling tightly to your faith through all your trials, and you too will be rewarded by God—if not now, in the life to come.

Chapter 7



Continued prayer for salvation

A Prayer for salvation

Dear Lord Jesus,
I believe you are the Christ,
The son of the Living God
I ask you to come into my heart
Forgive me of my sins, and save me now.
I pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Romans 10:1-4

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved.

I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal.

For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way.

For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.

What will happen to the Jewish people who believe in God but not in Christ? Since they believe in the same God, won't they be saved? If that were true, Paul would not have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to teach them about Christ.

Because Jesus is the most complete revelation of God, we cannot fully know God apart from Christ; and because God appointed Jesus to bring God and man together, we cannot come to God by another path.

The Jews, like everyone else, can find salvation only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Like Paul, we should wish that all Jews might be saved. We should pray for them and lovingly share the Good News with them.

Rather than living by faith in God, the Jews established customs and traditions (in addition to God's law) to try to make themselves acceptable in God's sight. But human effort, no matter how sincere, can never substitute for the righteousness God offers us by faith.

The only way to *earn* salvation is to be perfect—and that is impossible. We can only hold out our empty hands and receive salvation as a gift.

Christ is the “end of the law” in two ways. He fulfills the purpose and goal of the law (Matthew 5:17) in that he perfectly exemplified God’s desires on earth. But he is also the termination of the law because in comparison to Christ, the law is powerless to save.

Prayer for God to forgive Israel

Exodus 32:31-32

Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. "But now, if you will, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out from your book which you have written!"

Chapter 8



Jesus is pleading for us

Romans 8:34

Who then will condemn us? Will Christ Jesus? No, for he is the one who died for us and was raised to life for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us.

Do you ever think that because you aren't good enough for God, he will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you? Then these verses are especially for you.

If God gave his Son for you, he isn't going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave his life for you, he isn't going to turn around and condemn you! He will not withhold anything you need to live for him.

The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God's redeeming grace—it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

Paul says that Jesus is interceding for us in heaven. God has acquitted us and has removed our sin and guilt, so it is Satan, not God, who accuses us. When he does, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God's right hand to present our case

Ephes. 6:18

Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.

How can anyone pray on all occasions? One way is to make quick, brief prayers your habitual response to every situation you meet throughout the day. Another way is to order your life around God's desires and teachings so that your very life becomes a prayer.

You don't have to isolate yourself from other people and from daily work in order to pray constantly. You can make prayer your life and your life a prayer while living in a world that needs God's powerful influence. "Praying for all the saints" means praying for all believers in Christ; so pray for the Christians you know and for the church around the world.

We have an advocate with the father

1 John 2:1

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely.

John uses the address “dear children” in a warm, fatherly way. He is not talking down to his readers but is showing affection for them. At this writing, John was a very old man. He had spent almost all his life in ministry, and many of his readers were indeed his spiritual children.

To people who are feeling guilty and condemned, John offers reassurance. They know they have sinned, and Satan (called “the accuser” in Rev. 12:10) is demanding the death penalty. When you feel this way, don’t give up hope—the best defense attorney in the universe is pleading your case. Jesus Christ, your advocate, your defender, is the Judge’s Son. He has already suffered your penalty in your place. You can’t be tried for a case that is no longer on the docket. United with Christ, you are as safe as he is. Don’t be afraid to ask Christ to plead your case—he has already won it (see Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 7:24-25)

Pray for your enemies

Matthew 5:44

But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

To many Jews of Jesus’ day, these statements were offensive. Any Messiah who would turn the other cheek was not the military leader they wanted to lead a revolt against Rome.

Since they were under Roman oppression, they wanted retaliation against their enemies, whom they hated. But Jesus suggested a new, radical response to injustice: instead of demanding rights, give them up freely! According to Jesus, it is more important to *give* justice and mercy than to receive it.

By telling us not to retaliate, Jesus keeps us from taking the law into our own hands. By loving and praying for our enemies, we can overcome evil with good.

The Pharisees interpreted Leviticus 19:18 as teaching that they should love only those who love in return, and Psalm 139:19-22 and Psalm 140:9-11 as meaning that they should hate their enemies. But Jesus says we are to love our enemies.

If you love your enemies and treat them well, you will truly show that Jesus is Lord of your life. This is possible only for those who give themselves fully to God, because only he can deliver people from natural selfishness.

We must trust the Holy Spirit to help us *show* love to those for whom we may not *feel* love.

Pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 6:28

Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.

Love means action. One way to put love to work is to take the initiative in meeting specific needs. This is easy to do with people who love us, people whom we trust; but love means doing this even to those who dislike us or plan to hurt us. The money we give others should be considered a gift, not a high-interest loan that will help us more than them. Give as though you are giving to

Pray in the spirit

Ephes. 6:16

In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.

In the Christian life we battle against rulers and authorities (the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by Satan, who is a vicious fighter, see 1 Peter 5:8).

To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use every piece of his armor. Paul is not only giving this counsel to the church, the body of Christ, but to all individuals within the church. The whole body needs to be armed.

As you do battle against "the powers of this dark world," fight in the strength of the church, whose power comes from the Holy Spirit.

Pray for the sick

James 5:14-16

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well. And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.

James is referring to someone who is incapacitated physically. In Scripture, oil was both a medicine (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37) and a symbol of the Spirit of God (as used in anointing kings, see 1 Samuel 16:1-13). Thus oil can represent both the medical and the spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not separate the physical and the spiritual—Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

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The Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails.

This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

He will grant your petition according his glory

Ephes. 3:14-21

When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.

And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. [19] May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.

May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Blessed Lord!

You have given us wondrous lessons to learn. We humbly ask that you let us see these spiritual realities.

There is a large harvest that is perishing as it waits for believing disciples to give the signal for laborers to come. Lord, teach us to view it with a heart full of compassion and pity.

We are the disciples to whom the commission to work and to pray has been given. Lord, show us how you can breathe Your Spirit into us, so that your compassion and the faith in your promises will rouse us to unceasing, prevailing prayer.

May the anointing of the Holy Spirit rest upon us with signs following.

We submit ourselves to you for your service. We determine to love, even as you loved us.

Thank you Lord for allowing us to be a part of this last great revival.

You are now and forever our God.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer by Pastor Harold Bollinger

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