

Intercessory Prayer

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Intercessory Prayer

A family member faces a deadly disease. Your neighbor desperately needs Jesus, but turns away every time you try to share Christ. A nation begins to crumble because its people follow their own evil ways. But what can you do?

Often, the problems we face seem too big for us. No matter how much we try, we cannot solve them on our own. It's times like these when we need to turn to the Lord in intercessory prayer.

What is intercession?

Intercession is prayer that pleads with God for your needs and the needs of others. But it is also much more than that. Intercession involves taking hold of God's will and refusing to let go until His will comes to pass.

Intercession is warfare -- the key to God's battle plan for our lives. But the battleground is not of this earth. The Bible says, "We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and spiritual powers in the heavens above" (Eph. 6:12).

Ephes. 6:12

For 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.

Intercessory prayer takes place in this spiritual world where the battles for our own lives, our families, our friends and our nation are won or lost.

Intercession involves a battle

If you are born again, you are God's son or daughter (John 1:12).

John 1:12

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

As a child of God, you have a direct "hotline" to God

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.

The Royal Telephone

Frederick Lehman

1. Central's never "busy," always on the line;
You may hear from heaven almost any time;
'Tis a royal service, free for one and all;
When you get in trouble, give this royal line a call.

○ *Refrain:*

Telephone to glory, oh, what joy divine!
I can feel the current moving on the line,
Built by God the Father for His loved and own,
We may talk to Jesus through this royal telephone.

2. There will be no charges, telephone is free,
It was built for service, just for you and me;
There will be no waiting on this royal line,
Telephone to glory always answers just in time.

3. Fail to get the answer, Satan's crossed your wire,
By some strong delusion, or some base desire;
Take away obstructions, God is on the throne,
And you'll get your answer through this royal telephone.

4. If your line is "grounded," and connection true
Has been lost with Jesus, tell you what to do:
Prayer and faith and promise mend the broken wire,
Till your soul is burning with the Pentecostal fire.

5. Carnal combinations cannot get control
Of this line to glory, anchored in the soul;
Storm and trial cannot disconnect the line,
Held in constant keeping by the Father's hand divine.

At any time, you can boldly come into God's presence (Heb. 4:16)

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer is our approach to God, and we are to come "boldly."

Some Christians approach God meekly with heads hung low, afraid to ask him to meet their needs.

Others pray flippantly, giving little thought to what they say. Come with reverence because he is your King.

But also come with bold assurance because he is your Friend and Counselor.

This incredible access to God is the basis for intercession. Once you are in God's presence, you can now discover His battle plan for the situation you are facing. Because prayer alone is not enough -- you need a target for your prayers!

To discover God's plan, all you have to do is ask. The Bible says that "if any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). When we ask God for wisdom, His desires will become the focus of our prayers. "Let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him" (Romans 12:2).

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Illustration

There was once a godless seaman who was in a boat fishing with his companions when a storm came up which threatened to sink the ship.

His companions begged him to offer a prayer; but he demurred, saying it was years since he had prayed or entered a church. But finally, upon their insistence, he made this prayer: "O Lord, I have not asked you for anything for fifteen years, and if you deliver us out of this storm and bring us safe to land again, I promise that I will not bother you again in another fifteen years!"

There is no doubt that many of those who pray earnestly in time of great distress, afterward, when the storm is over and the danger is past, forget God.

But that in no way invalidates the fact that in their distress and danger they realized that there was a higher power than themselves and turned to that power in earnest supplication.

ARMED FOR BATTLE

Intercessory prayer is a serious matter. And just like soldiers who are preparing for battle, we cannot take on the enemy if we leave our weapons behind. That's why we must go into "battle" armed for spiritual conflict (see 2 Cor. 10:3, 4).

2 Cor. 10:3-4

**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: [4]
(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through
God to the pulling down of strong holds ;)**

Jesus is in control of every situation.

First, recognize that Jesus is in control of the situation. Jesus "rules over forces, authorities, powers, and rulers ... over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well" (Eph. 1:21).

Ephes. 1:21

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Put on the whole armor of God.

He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Then, put on "all the armor God gives" (see Eph. 6) so that you will be ready to fight with God's weapons.

These are the "weapons of our warfare" that can pull down strongholds in the spirit world (see 2 Cor. 10:3, 4). They will also protect you from the attacks that are sure to come once you begin the spiritual battle.

Next, bind the work of Satan, knowing that Jesus has given you authority "to defeat the power of your enemy" (Luke 10:19). If God shows you the identity of specific spiritual strongholds that are at work, take authority over these strongholds in the name of Jesus.

And always remember that "God's Spirit is in you and is more powerful than the one that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Finally, as you begin the spiritual battle, take comfort knowing that you are not alone: Jesus also is interceding on your behalf!

Illustration.

“What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer.”—E.M. Bounds

PERSISTING IN BATTLE

Intercessory prayer is also prayer that doesn't give up. It's the kind of prayer that endures all setbacks and overcomes every obstacle. It's prayer that "presses on" until we "apprehend" God's will in whatever situation we are facing (see Phil. 3:12, KJV).

This kind of prayer is the key to seeing breakthroughs in your life and in the lives of those around you. Jesus gave a great model for intercession in the story of the persistent friend.

Here we see a friend who knocks on his neighbor's door at midnight to ask for three loaves of bread. The neighbor does not want to get up, but Jesus said, "because of his friend's persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs" (Luke 11:8, NASB).

Luke 11:8

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Everyone who asks will receive.

Then Jesus said, "Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks" (Luke 11:10). Those words mean keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. In God's time, your persistence in intercessory prayer will reap a spiritual harvest in your life and the lives of those around you!

BATTLING FOR OUR NATION

Throughout the Bible, God searched for those willing to fight the spiritual battle for their land.

In Ezekiel, God says, "And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found no one" (Ezek. 22:30, NASB).

Through intercession, you can take the offensive in the spiritual battle, building up your community, your nation and your world. As you follow God's call to rise up and take your place in the spiritual battle, God promises to "heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14, NASB).

JOINING THE BATTLE

God is calling Christians to join His battle plan for this world -- to join in intercessory prayer. He is not looking for perfect prayer warriors, just willing hearts who want to see His will come to pass on the earth. All you have to do is turn to the Lord in prayer:

"Father, I come into your presence and ask you to give me the heart of the intercessor. Help me to be persistent in prayer until the breakthrough comes. Thank You for this powerful weapon of spiritual warfare -- and for your faithfulness in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Illustration:

I once heard of a young boy who climbed on the roof of the family barn.

He suddenly begin to slide down. He cried out. Lord help me. His trousers suddenly caught on a nail. He then said. "Never mind God. My trousers just caught on a nail.

Are our prayers sometime selfish?

An old saying was the man of prayer who prayed: Lord bless me and my wife and my son John and his wife. Us four and no more. Amen.

GOD'S WORD ON INTERCESSION

"We live in this world, but we don't act like its people or fight our battles with the weapons of this world.

Instead, we use God's power that can destroy fortresses. We destroy arguments and every bit of pride that keeps anyone from knowing God. We capture our thoughts and make them obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

6. New American Standard Bible

7.

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print