

LESSON 3: INTERCESSORY PRAYER

REVIEW: The motivation for our life should be to glorify God.

PRAYING GOD'S WILL

Read *Ecclesiastes 5: 1-3*

- ▶ What are the instructions in these verses about how we should pray?

Prayer is the personal communication between man and God. We often think this means simply talking to God, but for suitable communication to occur there must be a balance between talking and listening. When addressing God, it is important to first listen. "Do not be hasty or impulsive in thought... but let your words be few." When you listen to God first, you will then have God's list on what you should pray about rather than your own list.

Read 1 John 5:13-15

- ▶ What are the two requirements we need to insure that God will answer our prayers?
 1. Be a Christian.
If I do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, then God will not listen to my prayers except when I ask Him to reveal Himself to me so that I can have a personal relationship with Him.
 2. Pray according to the will of God.
The basis of my prayer must be according to God's will and not my own.

If I will do these two things, then God says He will hear my prayers and He will answer them.

- ▶ How do I know God's will and His list?

Look at Scripture and listen to the Holy Spirit. These are vital components for us to know God's will.

Read *Matthew 16:13-19*

The Greek says that whatever you loose shall already have been loosed. Whatever you bind shall have already been bound. "Most versions translate it as "I bind what I want to bind". In this case, Jesus is telling Peter that he will be given the keys, and whatever Peter binds, God will also bind."

The Greek on the other hand, says that what I bind shall already have been bound. What I have to do is figure out what God has decided to loose, and what God has decided to bind. Then I respond by stepping in and allowing myself to become the instrument through prayer that accomplishes God's will.

POWER IN PRAYER

Read 1 John 5:13-15

The gates of Hell cannot prevail if I pray God's list. If I pray my list in the community we will lose, but if I pray God's list, He will prevail. He won't answer my list unless I accidentally have something on my list that is also on His list. This is why we pray and get an answer and think we have figured it out and then go back to praying and do not get an answer. This occurs because we are praying our list that may have something on His list. The Scripture says I have to find what is on God's list and pray accordingly.

Read James 5:16-18

- ▶ How do these verses compare us to Elijah?

He is a man just like us. Not better than us.

- ▶ What did Elijah control?

The weather- to rain or not

Read 1 Kings 18: 20-21; 27-29; 36-38

- ▶ Do we have this same power in our prayers? How did Elijah know that he had this power?

These verses talk about an amazing, incredible miracle. There is a contest between the priest of Baal and Elijah. The priests who pray to Baal have nothing happen even though they prayed all day and went to the extremes of cutting themselves to draw attention from their gods. Elijah prays a very short prayer, yet because he prayed in God's will, his prayer brought down fire from heaven and even consumed the water in the trench and burned up the sacrifice. He said 37-38" *let them know that You, O LORD, are God, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I **have done all these things at Your word.***

His prayer calls down fire from heaven not because of his own desire and design but because he did everything that God told him to do. He prayed God's list for Israel and God answered in a mighty way.

Read 1 Kings 18:41-46

This is the account referenced in James 5. The reason he controlled the weather is because he did everything according to God's word. Elijah prayed for rain and then expected and looked for God's answer. The reason Elijah controlled the weather is because God wanted King Ahab to see that Elijah's God was Master of the Universe and could control the weather.

Both the fire from heaven and the rain occurs because Elijah prays God's list. God told him what to pray, he prayed, and God answered. A miracle occurs when our prayer is not based on our list but when it is connected to His list.

HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAYS

Read Romans 8:26-28

- ▶ How does the Holy Spirit pray for us? Why does the Holy Spirit need to pray for us?

The Holy Spirit dwells within the hearts of every believer. In our weakness and when we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit will intercede with the Father on our behalf. When we are distanced from God by pain, weakness, or sin, we do not have the list within us. This list must come from the Holy Spirit and from the words of the Bible.

The Holy Spirit intercedes with unspeakable groaning. We do not hear His intercession. But the One who searches the heart (GOD the Father) knows the mind of the Spirit because He intercedes for the saints according to God. When the Holy Spirit in you prays, He prays according to God. Although He is equal to God, He still prays what God the Father directs Him to pray in response to the struggles in our life that are causing us to not know how to pray.

- ▶ How do we know that everything always works for our good?

The Holy Spirit prays for us, and He prays God's list in our lives. So that even when I am knocked down and do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit takes over and prays on my behalf. The Holy Spirit does not pray my list or my heart. He prays God's list and God's heart in my life. So that whatever is coming will end up being a great rich blessing in my life because of His prayers on my behalf. Even the Holy Spirit prays exactly as the Bible commands me to pray as far as intercessory prayer.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT TO PRAY?

Read Acts 13:2-3

- ▶ Who is telling them what to pray?

Sometimes it is the Holy Spirit that tells us what to pray. This is the time when Barnabas and Saul were called out for service and the church has been fasting. Once the Holy Spirit said “these are my guys”, then the church prayed for them in response to the direction of the Holy Spirit. He gives the entire church a direction. They pray and their prayers then impact the lives of Barnabas and Saul.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2

- ▶ Who/What is telling them what to pray?

Sometimes it is the Bible that tells us what we need to pray.

Read Acts 13:2-3 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2

The Bible says we are to pray for leadership in the place we live. In Acts 13:2-3, the Holy Spirit tells us what to pray. In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, the Bible tells us what to pray.

Think back to the first lesson. We want to know God’s list is from the two authorities in our life: the Holy Spirit and the Bible. These two things are going to give me the list to pray.

God accomplishes His kingdom through His church. One of the major ways He does this is when the Church prays in a way that He answers their prayer. For the church to pray in the proper way, they must pray His list not their own list. When we begin to pray His list from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, then we start to get the “yes answers” and God begins to move.

If your prayer life is such that you guess what God’s list is and once in a while get an answered prayer for your intercession, then one main reason is you are praying your own list and not listening. We must learn to be still and quiet and listen to God.

Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3, Psalm 46:10, and 1 Kings 19: 11-13

- ▶ How must we approach God in order to be able to hear Him?

All these verses talk about having to be quiet when I step into God’s presence. For most people, one of the hardest things we face is not immorality, but noise.

Example: Many college students have numerous surrounding sounds and distractions. If I want to hear God’s voice, I need to turn off the noise and be quiet.

When Jesus picked the disciples, He prayed all night. He had no sin in His life and perfect fellowship with the Father and yet found it important and necessary to spend all night with the Father. We want a McDonald’s Christianity... our way and immediate gratification. That is not how God works. If you are going to get the list prayed, it may take all night.

Example: A lady with a brain aneurism was prayed for by the church. They planned to pray all night for her. At around 1:00 a.m. one church member said "God told me she is going to be okay and we can now go home". Others felt the same direction. They went home and sure enough she did well.

IF I DON'T PRAY, WHAT HAPPENS?

I can't really answer but firmly believe that there are people who don't survive an illness because we as a church or individuals did not pray. There are people who do not see fruit in their lives because we did not pray. We are so busy praying our list instead of His list. That is the genius of what the enemy does in our life. We think that just because we have our Bible open and we are praying that we are doing the right thing. But in reality, we must pray His list!

As we have discussed, the two sources for learning God's list are the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. We must pray what He desires (Rom 8:28). When we go in the prayer rooms we are praying more for what we want than what God wants. This is why we have prayer rooms in churches, but we still don't have an impact. If we are close to the issue, we can be too close and cannot hear the Holy Spirit and His guidance. We may need a brother or sister to come along side us that is not as close to the situation and can hear the Spirit and will pray in such a way to get us through the circumstance. Our prayers may be changed based on what the Holy Spirit tells us to pray for.

Example: A staff member at the church was praying for the lady who was sick. The Holy Spirit told her that the lady was not going to live, so she changed her prayers and prayed for the family instead. The normal desire of the staff would have been to ask God for healing for the lady. But as God already told her what He was going to do, the list was shifted to the husband and the kids to get through it.

We have an obligation to pray for each other. When we are so busy that we often do not hear what God's list is, and we damage our community and our brothers in Christ by praying our own desires rather than God's.