

**Daily God Walk  
Another Day in  
Your Journey of  
Faith**

**Prayer**

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International  
Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using  
these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version  
(NKJV) – New King James Version  
(TLB) – The Living Bible  
(TM) – The Message  
(AMP) – The Amplified Bible

# Daily God Walk Devotional

## Our theme for this devotional is “Prayer”

The Scripture is the record of God revealing his will to man and man seeking to find God and fulfill his purposes. The first record of mankind praying is in Genesis 4:26 which simply states, “At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord.”

In this devotional we will be looking at prayer throughout the Scripture. I encourage you to follow closely and our hope is that you will be moved to pray. My prayer is that Holy Spirit will give you a passion for prayer and that you pray often in the Spirit.

I thank Dr. J. Gregory Holmes for his contribution of seven of these devotions. We look forward to seeing more of his work.

## Have You Heard of the Take A Knee Challenge?

The idea was inspired by watching coaches of sports teams tell their players to "Take a Knee" when they have something important or inspirational to share with them. You will also notice that many of the professional sports teams will take a knee after a game to offer thanks.

This is a 30 day challenge for followers of Christ to do two things:

**First**, is the challenge simply to make a purpose to "Take A Knee" every day at least once a day. We are simply challenging believers to bend their knee before the Lord every day for a short time to give thanks, ask for guidance for the day, wisdom to act appropriately in every situation and the power of Holy Spirit to be an effective witness for Christ.

**Second** is the challenge to invite 5 of your friends to accept the challenge. We all have at least 5 friends who would be willing to accept this challenge.

Everyone who accepts the challenge gets a free book of devotions. You will get a book of 30 devotions on prayer when you join the challenge and each of your friends who join the challenge will also get the book.

For more information go to: <http://www.take-a-knee.org>

## *Men Begin To Call On the Lord*

Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord. - Genesis 4:25-26

It appears that the family of Adam and Eve were about 300 years outside the Garden of Eden when "men began to call on the name of the Lord." What happened during that time? We don't really know. All we are given in Scripture is that one lived so many years and had a son and the son lived so many years and had a son, etc., etc. all the way to the time of Noah.

During that time man was learning about how to raise food to eat, how to fashion clothes to cover themselves and how to function in relationship with others. Their life must have been pretty primitive because they were just cast into life without any experience of history to fall back upon.

It was during this time that mankind was just trying to find their way in life that they began to realize their need for God and at that time they began to call on the name of the Lord.

How did they know to call upon the name of the Lord? Adam and Eve must have told them stories around the evening fires of the times when they would walk with God in the cool of the day. Or it could be that while they were working in the fields one would turn to the other talking about how hard life was and in their conversation they began to remember the stories that Adam and Eve told.

However it happened there came a time when man began to realize his need for a power outside of himself to survive in the world. It has been a long time since then, we're not even sure how long it's been, but our need for God is just as real today as it was then among our fathers in their primitive world.

If we are to flourish in our time we must learn to call upon the name of the Lord. When we call he will answer.

**Prayer:** Lord, I need you just as much today as men did in the time of Enosh. Give me grace to endure in my faith. Amen.

## *God's House is to be a House of Prayer*

These I will bring to my Holy Mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. - Isaiah 56:6-7

You may remember when Jesus cleared the temple of money changers that he declared, "It is written, my house will be called a house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13). He was quoting this passage.

God's house is to be a house of prayer, but I am afraid some have lost that focus. Oh yes, prayers are recited in every place that is called a house of God, but many of those prayers are just a ritual recited for the purpose of fulfilling the duty of religion.

One of the best examples of prayer which should be in the house of God is the prayer of Hannah when she was petitioning God for a son. Read the account of her prayer:

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life."

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli [the priest] observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk" (1 Samuel 1).

When we are as committed to prayer as Hannah we will see the results Hannah saw. It was her intercession in the house of God which prompted God to give her a son, Samuel. Her son became a great prophet, judge and priest of Israel.

God is calling men and women today to devote themselves to prayer and to come into his house making supplication, offering up petitions and making intercessory prayers for others. It is time once again for God's house to be known as a house of prayer where men, women and children can connect with the great God who answers prayers joyfully.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the grace to hear you calling me to pray and the commitment to answer that call. In Jesus name. Amen

## *The Original Sinners Prayer*

Two men went up to the temple to pray, on a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, “God have mercy on me, a sinner.” – Luke 18:10-13

This is a parable of two men who were both sinners; one who didn't think he was and another who knew he was.

The first, a Pharisee, was thought to be righteous because of his position in the religious community, and thus he had a reputation to uphold. He felt that it was important to list his acts of righteousness in a loud voice so others would know what a holy man he was. At another time Jesus told the people, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees you will have no part in the kingdom of heaven.”

The second man, a tax collector, one despised by the rest of the community because of how he made his living, knew as everyone else in the community knew, he was a sinner. This man did not come tooting his own horn. He did not stand in the center of the house to gain the attention of all who were there, neither did he cry in a loud voice. No, he humbly stood back, perhaps in a corner, and quietly cried out to God, “Have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Jesus went on to say, “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

God is not too interested in prayers recited from memory but he is greatly impressed by the impassioned plea of the heart. When we cry out to him from a heart made humble by the realization of our need for his mercy, he will hear us.

**Prayer:** Lord, I am a sinner and like the tax collector I can only appeal to your mercy. May your grace ever rest on me. Amen.

## *Holy Spirit Aids In Prayer*

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. – Romans 8:26

There are times when our need is so great that it cannot be adequately expressed in words. In those times Holy Spirit is ready to pray through us. That is often called deep intercessory prayer.

Paul writes in the next verse of Romans 8, “He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will” (v27). This passage seems to be saying that Holy Spirit searches our hearts and knows our needs. Knowing our needs he prays through us making intercession for us.

Over 100 years ago a man by the name of John Hyde went to the Punjab region of India to serve as a missionary. He was so moved with a burden for the people of India that he devoted his life to praying for the salvation of that people. He formed a prayer union with other ministry workers who committed to praying ½ hour per day for revival.

In one meeting he felt Holy Spirit had guided him to pray to win 1 soul a day to Christ for a whole year. At the end of the year he had won 400 people to Christ. The next year he felt to pray for 2 souls a day and won over 800 souls to Christ. The next year he prayed for 4 souls a day and any day he did not win 4 people to Christ he would spend the night in agonizing prayer until he felt Holy Spirit confirm that he would win 4 the next day.

We are in a desperate and difficult time. If we are to be effective as witness of the truth of Christ we must learn to pray that way. God seems to be calling us to pray until Holy Spirit is praying through us. We must pray until we no longer have words to express our desire and we must depend upon Holy Spirit praying through us to intercede for souls.

***Prayer:*** Come Holy Spirit. Give me a consciousness of the world condition around me and give me a burden to intercede for the souls of men and women in my community. Holy Spirit, pray through me making intercession for the lost. In Jesus name. Amen

## *Precious Prayers of the Saints*

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain... He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." - Revelation 5:6-10

As is the case of many places in the Revelation a beautiful picture is being painted. In the first verses of this chapter there is one sitting on the throne holding a scroll with seven seals and there is an angel crying with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" And no one came forward.

John, the revelator "wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.' "

When John looked for the Lion of Judah he saw a lamb that had been slain. The Lamb was worthy to take the scroll. Jesus the Christ, the Lamb of God, the one who was slain for the sins of all mankind was the only one worthy to take the scroll.

As the heavenly host bowed before the Lamb they were holding bowls of incense. What was this pleasant fragrance being held precious in heaven? It was the prayers of the saints. It was the prayers of those who had been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. O, how precious are the prayers of those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb!

Every prayer we pray is rising to heaven as a pleasant fragrance to God. Every tear shed in communion with God is precious to him. Keep sending a sweet incense to heaven.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for receiving my prayers as a pleasant fragrance. Amen.

## *Seek the Face of God and His Strength*

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. - 1 Chronicles 16:8-11

The theme of this passage is give thanks, rejoice and sing, and seek his face. The occasion was bringing the Ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, reestablishing it as the center piece of their worship.

David had tried once before to bring the Ark back, but he failed miserably when he did not follow the God's instructions on how the Ark was to be moved. He repented of his mistake and some time later he did return it and that was a great time of celebration.

The parade bringing the Ark to Jerusalem was a sight to behold. David had called all of Israel together at Jerusalem then formed a parade of thousands to go bring the Ark to Jerusalem. The marchers consisted of his generals, the Levites and priest, singers and instrument players, as well as the citizens who followed.

It was for this occasion David presented this psalm of praise and thanksgiving. We can almost hear the singers declaring, "Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done." What a day of celebration that was!

There are a couple of key phrases which show David's heart. The first is, "Call on his name," and the second is, "Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always." David had learned a valuable lesson in his first attempt, and failure, in bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.

This time David took time to inquire of the Lord to find out just how God would have them move the Ark. I find a great lesson here. Even when we are trying to do a good thing we must still seek the face of God to get his instruction, then we can rejoice.

**Prayer:** Lord, I tend to get a good idea and run with it without finding out if that is what you would have me to do . Grant me the grace to always seek your face that I might know your will. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Ask and Receive*

I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. - Luke 11:9-10

This promise that asking, seeking and knocking would produce results follows the giving of The Lord's Prayer and it is sandwiched between two illustrations of God answering prayer.

The first illustration is in verses 5-9 and gives the example of a man who had a friend come to him in the middle of the night asking a favor. The man first says, "Go away, you are disturbing my family." But the friend continued to pound on the door saying he needed a favor.

Jesus then told them that Friendship aside, it was his diligent and bold pursuit which influenced his friend to help him (v8). It is at this point he says, "Ask... seek... knock."

The message seems to be that persistence pays off. Many years ago I read something that left me troubled. It was a teaching on faith and the person was trying to say that once you ask, don't ask again because that is showing a lack of faith. However, that idea is not consistent with what Jesus is teaching here.

By using this trio of petition, ask, seek, knock, Jesus seems to be emphasizing that just reciting the Lords prayer is not going to get the job done. We certainly must ask, but seeking goes beyond asking. Seeking speaks of diligent pursuit. And knocking in the context of asking and seeking seems to imply standing at the door asking and knocking until something happens, as in the case of the example Jesus gave.

He follows the ask, seek, knock instruction with these words: "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (v11-13).

Ask, seek and knock; Holy Spirit awaits your diligence.

**Prayer:** Come Holy Spirit, I am asking, seeking and knocking. I seek your abiding presence. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

## *Always Pray and Don't Give Up*

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He Said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'grant me justice against my adversary.'

"For some time he refused, but finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming.'"

And the Lord said, "listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" - Luke 18:1-8

There are so many good thoughts and questions in this passage that it is hard to focus on just one. But we will just focus on the purpose for which Jesus told this parable: We should always pray and not give up.

Have you noticed how often Jesus speaks of effective praying in terms of persistent praying? In Matthew 7 he says, "Ask... Seek... Knock, which indicates persistence. In Luke 11 he tells of a neighbor who persistently knocks and calls out to his friend to open the door and give him food for a traveler. Then there is this example of this widow woman who was persistent in her plea.

I don't know the why, but I do know the how. Why do we need to passionately and persistently pray for something that is important to us? I don't know, but I do know that Jesus spent a lot of time teaching us to pray in that way. I also know it works. In my own life there have been many times when I cried out to God with great passion over many days, and even months, then the answer came in a glorious way.

Jesus ends this parable with the question: When the Son of Man comes will he find faith? In this parable and the question, Jesus was calling believers to passionate, persistent praying.

**Prayer:** Lord, Grant me a gift of faith and the heart to be persistently praying. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Pray in the Spirit*

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. – Ephesians 6:18-19

In this book Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus he is revealing his heart for the believer. In chapter one he says he keeps praying for them to understand their hope and the power God has vested in them. In chapter three he is praying that they will have strength and power through “his Spirit in your inner being” (v16).

In chapter six Paul winds up his teaching by reminding them that they are not on a Sunday picnic. They are in a war, a war of the worlds if you will. He tells them that they are at war with spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (v12).

Then he tells them to be sure they are well covered with armor. He calls it “the full armor of God.” This armor includes truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. The final tool in our arsenal of warfare is prayer.

Paul tells us to “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? There are different ideas of what that means but we all agree that it is praying which goes beyond the ordinary and reaches to the depth of the soul as the spirit of man reaches out to the Spirit of God in great travail.

If we are to be effective in this war of the worlds; the world of God’s Spirit and kingdom against the spirit of this world and its kingdoms, then we must pray in the Spirit. We must be moved by the needs around us that our compassion for others becomes the passion which fuels our prayer. When that happens we will pray in the Spirit.

**Prayer:** Father, lead me as I pray that I realize that we are at war and the eternal destination is being established for men and women. Grant me to pray in the Spirit. In Jesus name, amen.

## *Time to Pray*

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Lord, help me! There are wars and rumors of wars, disease is spreading, and there are more and more earthquakes (Or: my health, my job, my finances, my relationships.) I feel so helpless. Can you make it all go away . . . just make it o.k?

When should we pray? How should we pray? What should we pray about? For too many of us, we only get serious about prayer when our world is falling apart. Up to that point, we do everything we can in our own power to fix things, to 'make it all better,' to take our wobbly world and try to stabilize its orbit. And, most of the time, we succeed. Emergency measures [more time, more money, more effort] work, and we go on. Things are o.k. again. Until next time. We've lived long enough now to know that there is always a next time.

The Bible speaks of timeless wisdom, a wisdom that spans all of human experience, no matter what culture, no different for any social strata ("Neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female . . ." Galatians 3:28). We all face the same trials, and we all have a choice in our response to such trials. Scripture tells us that the time to pray is *continually*, the things to pray about are *all circumstances*, and that our response to our trials, all of them, is to *be joyful*.

Several centuries ago, there was a monk in Western Europe whose highest office in the brotherhood was the task of cleaning tables and washing and putting away the dishes. Day after day, week after week, year after year, Brother Lawrence did dishes. In later years, he was noted and respected for his obvious perfect peace in his circumstances. His legacy to us is a very small primer entitled "Practicing the Presence of God." He had learned the 'secret' of continual prayer – an ever-present conversation with God – as a way of life in the midst of all of life.

Practicing the presence of God in the ordinary is preparation for crying out to God during the extraordinary.

**Prayer:** Lord, I sometimes get so involved in the things that are today that I forget to pray. Grant me the grace of a daily living prayer so that my heart will always be fixed upon you. In Jesus name, amen.

## *Praying the Scriptures*

Nathan the prophet spoke a blessing over King David: "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." – 2 Sam 7:16

David's response reveals his intimate relationship with God: "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer" (2 Samuel 7:27).

The NIV translation gives clarity to the modern reader. But what would the people of David's time have heard regarding the word 'prayer' in his response to the revelation of blessing? They would have heard the king first praise and thank God because of this good thing, and from that basis dare to approach and ask Him to "open the ears of His heart." Amazing! The creature approaches the all-powerful Creator confidently, speaking to Him in intimate terms and asking for favor.

In a similar way, Jesus encourages his disciples: "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14). What a liberating and empowering promise! The Lord promises His followers that we may ask for anything in His name, and He will accomplish that for us. Yes, we know that this depends upon right relationship. Yes, we know that this is not about worldly prosperity (Though He knows our needs). Nevertheless, we have the ear of the King.

The Anabaptists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century well knew and needed the power of such prayer. In a world in which kings were at war and commoners were dying for their religious beliefs, Anabaptists were fervent in prayer. They would often "pray the scriptures," a form of the ancient practice of "lectio divina." This meant that they would humbly seek out in the Bible scripture that promised a response particular to their specific need, and then pray that scripture back to the Lord. They would plead with Him to hear and to bring to pass in their life this much-needed blessing.

What are your needs today? Are you 'right with God?' (See 1 John 1:9). Your need may be bigger than you are, but be assured . . . it is not bigger than God is. Meditate on Jer. 29:11.

**Prayer:** Lord, remind me to look to your word for strength and to pray your word so that it will become a part of who I am. Amen.

## *God Promises to Answer Prayer*

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.” – Psalm 91:14-16

I have a friend who knows very little comfort in life. His body is troubled with life threatening diseases and his soul seems empty. He has no faith to turn to, no god outside of himself to call upon. His challenge is that he became disillusioned with Christianity as a child and pursued alternative belief systems.

Now he has no hope in a power greater than himself and he lives in hopeless despair. Oh, he tries to encourage himself but in the end he knows that nothing can help him. I wish he could know the God I know.

Just look at these promises: “I will rescue him,” what a hope. “I will protect him;” a promise of comfort on the darkest night. “He will call upon me, and I will answer him.” Why does God promise these things? This passage begins by answering that question before it is asked; “Because he loves me.”

I have another friend who struggles with many physical issues. He is on Social Security and has to ride his motorized chair transport most places he goes. A difference is that this man has hope. He regularly gives testimony of prayers God answers. In fact, in his church they kind of keep record of his answered prayers because he keeps saying, “I’m batting a thousand.” This man knows and loves the Lord.

It really does seem to be a no-brainer. Given the choice between fighting the despair of making it through life on our own or submitting to the care of a loving God who promises to hear us when we pray, the wise will choose God every time.

For those who choose to love him God says, “With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.” I choose God – How about you?

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for the privilege of calling you Father. I do love you and thank you for hearing and answering prayer.

## *Gideon Prays For a Sign*

Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised – look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said," And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew – a bowlful of water.

– Judges 6:36-38

I have heard about "making a fleece" before the Lord since I was a child and that type of prayer comes from this passage. However, I think the concept is not always understood.

God had spoken to Gideon that he was to lead Israel into victory over the Midianites and Amalekites who were coming against them. It was only after Gideon had received instructions from the Lord that he made the fleece prayer to get confirmation that it was actually God speaking to him.

Some have used the fleece prayer to make a decision on what to do when they have not heard God speak. I have a friend who was asking God if it was his will to marry a certain girl. He was driving through a town with many signal lights and he prayed, "Lord, if you want me to marry her let all the lights be green as I drive through town."

The catch to his prayer was that the signals were set so that if you drove at 28 miles per hour you would hit all of them green. That's what he did and lo and behold, all of the lights were green. He never did marry that girl. That is not the kind of fleece prayer Gideon made.

If you want to find out God's will don't play games and try to manipulate him into answering on your terms. When he is ready for you to know he will speak to you and give you the assurance that he has spoken. When you have heard the Lord then you can ask him to confirm what you have heard with a sign, but don't ask for a sign without already hearing from him.

**Prayer:** Lord, it's me again! I want to know your will in every area of my life, but it isn't always easy to patiently wait for you to speak. Help me to be patient then to trust what you say. Amen.

## *Samuel Makes Intercession for Israel*

They said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.” Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel’s behalf, and the Lord answered him.” - 1 Samuel 7:8-9

Israel had a difficult time staying faithful to the Lord God. They were easily enticed to follow other gods, particularly the pantheon of gods which constituted Baal worship.

The Ark of the Covenant had been kept at Kiriath Jearim since the Philistines returned 20 years earlier and the people were starting to grieve for the Ark to be returned so they approached Samuel requesting him to bring the Ark home.

Samuel wanted the Ark to be returned, but even more than his desire for that he desired to see the people return to serving God with all their hearts, so he appealed to them to “get rid of your foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only... So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only” (1 Samuel 7:3-4).

I have noticed that there is a tendency for believers to want the blessing of God, but they still want to hold on to the world. That is very much the same issue that Samuel faced. Israel wanted the presence of God, but they had involved themselves in the ways of the world, and Samuel called them to repentance.

As a prophet/priest Samuel made intercession to God for Israel and when Israel repented and turned from following other gods the Lord God responded to their cry. We do not have priests today to make intercession for us because Christ opened the door for us to go before the throne of God ourselves.

We have the responsibility today to seek God concerning our spiritual condition and, as Paul wrote, we must “seek out our own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). It is true that the blood of Christ is ever before the throne of God making intercession for us, but we must make the commitment to turn away from the world and follow him wholeheartedly.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to continue crying out to you as I forsake all others and follow you. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *The Prayer of Jabez*

Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, “I gave birth to him in pain.” Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.

- 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

In the middle of a boring chronology there is inserted this interesting note, “Jabez was more honorable than his brothers.” No comments were made about anyone else in this portion of scripture. We don’t know any more about Jabez than what is mentioned in this passage, but there must have been something remarkable about him to receive such mention.

A Christian writer authored a small book a few years ago titled, “The Prayer of Jabez.” In that book he explored phrases of that prayer that we are given in this passage. Let’s take a quick look at this prayer.

“Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory.” Jabez was not afraid to ask God for blessing and he was not afraid of accepting responsibility for a larger territory. Remember this prayer was made in the context of the statement that Jabez was more honorable than his brothers.” That would lead us to believe that his prayer for blessing and enlarged territory came from a righteous cause.

“Let your hand be with me.” He realized his need for the hand of the Lord to be upon him. We must realize today that without the touch of God we will not be able to accomplish the purposes for which he has called us. To have the hand of the Lord upon we must be submitted to his will.

“Keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” The name “Jabez” simply means “pain.” His prayer was not only that he would be free from pain but that he would not cause pain to others.

**Prayer:** Lord, bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain. In Jesus name, amen.

## *David's Prayers of Longing for God*

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. – Psalm 63:1-8

The heading on this psalm reads, “A psalm of David. When he was in the desert of Judah.” Scholars believe that it was written when David had gone into exile during the time Absalom had usurped the throne.

Moved out of the comfort of his palace, and away from the place where he was accustomed to worshipping God, he is crying out, “My soul thirsts for you.” David feels so out of place and in a desert of despair that he is hungry for home and thirsty for God.

Have you ever been there? Things aren't going right; it may be a financial loss, or a broken relationship, or maybe it is a physical condition. We're talking about whatever it is that affected your peace. Those situations can leave us feeling all alone and that God is a million miles away.

I can remember a time when we were under extreme attack from the enemy of our soul. My wife and I were both having life threatening physical issues, our son had been arrested on false charges and two or three other major issues were taking place at the same time. We felt that we were under severe attack from the enemy of our souls.

Every night we would lay in bed holding hands, weeping as we cried out to God, much in the same way David is crying out. Like David we could remember the good times with God. It was the memory of the good times which gave us strength for the tough times. Remember this: Every night is followed by a morning

**Prayer:** Lord, in the times of our darkest trial we have the comfort of knowing you will bring us through. Thank you. Amen.

## *David's Prayer of Repentance*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

- Psalm 51:1-4

David had made a terrible mistake. He had sinned with Bathsheba and to cover his sin he had her husband put in a place in battle where he would surely be killed. He carried the guilt of that sin until God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him.

Nathan told the story of a man who had plenty and was visited by a friend. Instead of killing one of his own lambs for a feast with his friend he took the only lamb of a neighbor. Upon hearing this story David said, "Who is this man? I'll have him put to death." Nathan replied, "David, you are the man."

Conviction fell heavy upon David and he repented sorely. Psalm 51 is a record of his repentance and the mercy of God in forgiving him.

This psalm is an example of repentance and restoration. David was not just sorry for his sin, he was broken before God because he realized how his sin had affected himself, his family, the kingdom and his relationship with God.

All of us have sinned. Our sin may not have been as horrible as having someone killed to cover up another sin, but our sin has affected our relationship with God just the same.

In verses 10-12 David cries out to God asking for a pure heart, a steadfast spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit and for the joy of salvation to be restored. When we have sinned our prayers should include those things.

For our prayer today let's make the same prayer as David:

**Prayer:** "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Solomon Prays for Wisdom*

That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” Solomon answered God... “Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

- 2 Chronicles 1:7-10

Israel had gone through some tough times as a nation. Early on they seemed to go through cycles of following God, then falling into idolatry, and then God would send oppressors to discipline them. They would repent and God deliver them.

After a while they wanted to be like other nations and have a king over them so God gave them a king. The first king of Israel was Saul. He started as a humble farm boy but soon became drunk with power and began to rebel against the prophet to do things his own way.

David was the man God called to succeed Saul. David was a good king. He was flawed, but he did have a heart after God. Solomon, David’s son would succeed him on the throne of Israel.

Soon after Solomon became king he went to the altar and to show his devotion to the Lord God he offered 1000 burnt offerings to the Lord on the bronze altar (v6). It was in response to this great offering that God spoke to Solomon promising to give him whatever he asked for.

Solomon did not ask for riches or power, he simply asked for wisdom to lead this great people. God granted his prayer for wisdom and because he didn’t ask for the other things God not only gave him great wisdom, but he gave him wealth as well.

There is a lesson in this story for all of us. God has given us an awesome responsibility toward this generation. We are called to lead this people to Christ. God has also promised prosperity to those who follow him. Our choice is this: Do we pursue the blessing of prosperity, or do we pursue the purposes of God?

God’s promise is that if we pursue his purposes he then will give us whatever prosperity we are wise enough to handle.

***Prayer:*** Father, give me the humility to seek your kingdom first so that your purposes will be fulfilled in me. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Jehoshaphat Was a Praying King*

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A vast army is coming against you”... Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. – 2 Chronicles 20

Four powerful kings had formed an alliance against Jehoshaphat and they were marching to Jerusalem to conquer that city. Most kings would respond to such news by marshalling their armies and prepare to defend their city, but that wasn't what Jehoshaphat did.

Jehoshaphat went to the temple. Read about it:

The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town I Judah to seek him.

Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard and said:

“O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of the land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, ‘If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or a plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.’” (v4-9).

That kind of praying produces results! God replied to that prayer: “The battle is not yours, but God's” (v15); “You will not have to fight this battle” (v17); “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (v18).

With that promise the people went out to the battle, but they didn't go out to fight. Jehoshaphat appointed singers to go before the army singing, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.” As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the armies that opposed them (v22).

What would happen if we handled our crisis in that way?

**Prayer:** Grant me the grace to trust you rather than my own abilities. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Hezekiah Returns to the Temple*

The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem...When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord. - 2 Kings 18:17, 19:1

Most of us will have at least one time in our life when we are facing an impossible situation and we don't know whether to give up, fight, or just run and hide. Hezekiah was facing just such a situation. The supreme commander of Assyria was just outside the gates of the city with 200,000 men calling for surrender.

What would Hezekiah do? What could he do? He did what he had learned to do as king of God's people; he went to the temple to seek the Lord.

Hezekiah had a reputation of trusting God. 2 Kings 18:5-6 reads, "Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him."

He had formed the habit of walking in faith and it was his times of making tough decisions as the leader of the people in calling them to faithfulness to their God which prepared him for facing these formidable odds.

Twice this godless Assyrian came against Hezekiah and twice the Word records that he went to the temple. Because he trusted God the result was, "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp... So Sennacherib broke camp and withdrew" (2 Kings 19:35-36).

Even in the darkest hour we must still trust God. When life throws everything bad at us that we can imagine and we can see no way out, it isn't time to give up, neither is it time to run and hide. It is time to return to the temple; it is time to go to prayer. God will answer our need, but we must be consistent in trusting him. It just may be time to pray.

**Prayer:** Lord, I have faced tough times, and I probably will again. In those times help me to return to the temple. Amen.

## *Habakkuk's Prayer*

Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord.  
Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath  
remember mercy. – Habakkuk 3:2

This prayer of Habakkuk reflects the times in which he lived and the longing of his heart to see the glory of God among the people once again.

He begins his prayer with, “I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord.” The way he begins the prayer seems to indicate that he hasn’t actually seen the awesome deeds of God but that he has only heard of them. This was probably because of the times in which he lived and the spiritual condition of the people.

The overwhelming majority of the people had fallen away from serving the one true God and had been enticed by the licentious worship of Baal and Molech. It was a time when war was all around them and God was about to bring Babylon against them to carry them off into captivity because of their waywardness.

Habakkuk was one among the few who still hungered after God. He cried out to God for him to renew his work among the people. He cries, “O Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy” (NKJV). His cry was for revival. I hear that same cry coming from the faithful today.

My heart is made heavy today, along with many faithful men and women of God, because of the coldness of people toward God, the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit among us. We see dwindling congregations, the growth of alternative religions, the prevalence of sin and the general moral decay of America, and unfortunately, it is also invading the church. Many today wonder how long God will wait to discipline the church and judge the world.

Join with us in crying out to God, “Revive your work, O Lord: In wrath remember mercy.” I can hear the Holy Spirit calling us to repentance, commitment and consecration – are you willing to listen to his call? Will you join us in praying for revival?

***Prayer:*** Lord, we have become to comfortable in this world. We have become at ease in Zion and we need to be awakened to the pending discipline and judgment. Holy Spirit come to the church and convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment – then renew your works. Amen.

## *Elijah's Prayer at Mt Carmel*

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Hear me, o Lord, hear me, that this people may know that you are the Lord God, and that you have turned their hearts back to you again. - 1 Kings 18:36-37

It was showdown time at Mt Carmel. Ahab, the wicked king and Jezebel his even more wicked wife, had led the people of Israel into idolatry and Baal worship. God had called Elijah to confront this sin and call the people back to God.

God had sent Elijah to Ahab declaring that the heavens would be closed and there would be no rain. Then, three years later God sent him back to Ahab to tell him that God was about to send rain again, but the rain wouldn't come until there was a showdown between the prophets of Baal and the prophet of God.

Elijah called for all Israel to gather on Mt Carmel along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah. When they had gathered Elijah challenged them, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him" (v21 NKJV).

After challenging the people to choose between Jehovah and Baal Elijah turned to the 450 prophets of Baal and challenged them, "Call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, he is God."

We need men and women of God today who will, like Elijah, hear the voice of the Lord and then challenge the devil with God's promises. We need men and women of faith who will enter the devil's territory and challenge him to a duel.

The result of Elijah's challenge and prayer was that "The fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice... when all the people saw it they fell on their faces and they said, "The Lord, he is God!"

Holy Spirit seems to be issuing a challenge to the church today and it is this: How long will you waver in your faith?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the faith of Elijah and the confidence to stand against the evil one and declare, "Jesus is Lord," then show him who God is. In Jesus name, amen.

## *Praying Beyond Personal Issues*

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." - 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

The Bible records examples of both national sin and national repentance in the Book of Judges during a 400-year period of both highs and lows. During the lows "Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25). There was no national political, legal, or cultural agreement about morals and ethics, right and wrong. Not only anything, indeed everything was possible. Any person could decide for themselves what was right or wrong. Was this freedom, or chaos?

Fast forward to 21<sup>st</sup> century America. America, a country founded on the ideal of religious freedom, specifically as a Christian nation. America, where prayer is no longer allowed in schools, where the 10 commandments cannot legally be displayed in the public square, where the monetary motto "In God We Trust" is under legal challenge, and where filth speech is free speech while quoting scripture is hate speech. America; where Biblical good is now legally called evil, while that which scripture condemns is called good.

Notice the following about this America: We are awash in sexually transmitted diseases. Decade after decade, major hurricanes have devastated the gulf states while tornado alley strengthens. Serious earthquakes increase, with the latest being the Loma Prieta of '89. There has even been volcanic eruption. Mid-west, southern, and even the northeast states have had repetitive massive storms and subsequent flooding. Wildfires rage year after year in the west. At the same time, breadbasket states suffer drought. Random acts of violence, especially school shootings, are at epidemic levels. Government cannot govern. Our financial institutions teeter at the edge of collapse.

It is time for 'the church' to wake up, and to undertake a great responsibility: Pray for our nation. You and I have this individual responsibility - we live here, our families live and work here, our children go to school here. Pray for our nation.

**Prayer:** God, awaken the church to intercession. Lord, awaken a spirit of intercession in me for church and country. In Jesus name.

## *A Friend in High Places*

"Father ... I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word ... They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours ... I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name..." - John 17:5-11

Jesus comforted his disciples with these words during His last night on this earth. He then endured the agony of the cross, shared in mankind's universal death, and became the first-born from the dead. The Apostle Paul tells us that that God the Father raised Him and "seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 1:20). Paul also tells us that "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms..." (Ephesians 2:6).

The words of Jesus have continued to comfort his disciples across the ages. Consider how devastated His disciples of that time were upon seeing the tragedy of the cross, where their hopes were seemingly destroyed.

His words would have held only hollow hope, just 'nice-sounding words,' if there had been no resurrection. Certainly Friday was the darkest of days, and the fact of His death must have destroyed any optimism and all expectations of this professed "Kingdom of Heaven."

But then Sunday came, and the empty tomb spoke into being the most incredible aspect of Christ and the Christian faith: not just resurrection, but *eternal life*. The earlier words of Jesus now brought comfort, the very comfort He promised, and which He knew would be so necessary to launch the 'Kingdom' through the continuing efforts of mere humans.

We have the benefit of two millennia of Christian faith, thought, and practice to give us the advantage of a faith perspective tried and found sufficient in all circumstances of human life. Far more importantly, we have the assurance of sitting with Christ *now*, favored with Him at the right hand side of the Father.

His prayer today is the same, "Father, protect them..."

**Prayer:** Father, we still need those comforting words, "Fear not little flock." We see men of renown falling down around us and we need your protection and your grace. In Jesus name, amen.

## *The Eternal Ear of God*

"Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand."

– Revelation 8:3-4

How many times have we sent prayers heavenward? How many times have those prayers been accompanied by fervency, tears, and broken-hearted need only to linger there, somewhere far above us, in heaven's dead-letter file? Hard, isn't it? We want an answer, and God doesn't seem to be answering.

The last time the Bible mentions prayer, we see an angel offering up 'the prayers of all the saints' with incense pleasing to God. Those prayers are going up 'before God.' We get the very distinct impression that not only is God pleased with the prayers, but that He is intently considering each and every one.

A prayer goes by the Lord with the phrase 'prodigal child' clearly visible to Him. Another is streaked with tears, and only the words 'why did you...' are seen. He grasps one and unfolds it; a shriek, 'holocaust,' rings out. 'Avenge my faith in You' is common to many. Less often, some say 'thank you Lord' or 'thank you Jesus.' Surely, He sees each one.

We know that God's timing is different than ours. We also believe that He dwells in eternity, but can enter our space and time. Some Greek theological words for these concepts are "*chairoi*" (connected to the concept of eternity), and "*chronos*," which we recognize as the 'tic-toc' of the clock, it is linear time. We understand *chronos*; it measures the days of our lives. *Chairoi* is more mysterious. We think we'll live that way one day, but it's a little fuzzy to us now. Consider, however, that scripture says we are born eternal and must make a choice about where we will spend that eternity.

Do you think that God is able to answer all prayers at their proper time? Maybe He is looking at everything that's been prayed, and some of those have to wait out events in linear time because this one and that one have some conflicts that have to be resolved.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to patiently wait your answer to my prayers, then grant me the grace to accept your answer. Amen.

## *Ezra's Prayer of National Repentance*

O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. - Ezra 9:6

This is but a short excerpt from a rather long prayer recorded in which Ezra recites the many failings of the Jews. They had been unfaithful for generations and now, at the end of the Babylonian exile, Ezra was called to restore the people to serving Jehovah.

When Babylon invaded Jerusalem the temple was destroyed, the walls of the city were torn down and the people who were left lived apostate to the faith. They had intermarried with idolatrous inhabitants of the land and they had been worshipping those gods. The temple had been desecrated and the people no longer offered sacrifices to the Lord God.

The depth of Ezra's feeling of repentance for the sin of the people is expressed in chapter 10. Verse one begins, "While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites - men, women and children - gathered around him. They too wept bitterly." Ezra and the people were truly repentant before God.

I have been in quite a few meetings where corporate repentance was being called for. There would be various ministers called on to recite prayers and the people would affirm what was prayed. But I have never been a part of a prayer of national repentance where the leader was weeping and throwing himself down before the house. I have never seen that depth of repentance, and that might be a reason our nation hasn't repented.

Our nation is in the throws of moral revolution. We have a generation which has lost its moral compass and doesn't seem to know how to find it. The most disturbing point to that is the church is so apathetic to the condition of the world around them. We need spiritual leaders who will call for repentance and who will lead the way with weeping and wailing before the Lord.

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, convict me to true repentance for my nation, and for the church. Call me to my face that I may seek your face.

## *Praying Like Jesus*

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." - Matthew 26:40-42

Most of us have been around long enough to understand the ever-present tension between the willing spirit and the weak body. We've proven time and time again that this insight into the human condition is a universal and absolute truth. That proof has been most explicit in our times of failure. Poor Peter, this is going to be a bad night for him, and the next few days will make it much worse. It's interesting, isn't it, that Peter is named here, but that the rest of the disciples are lumped into an anonymous group? We know why; the rest of the story singles out Peter because of his brash, bold statement: "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will" (Matthew 26:33). We find it easy to sympathize with Peter. We'd have said the same thing, maybe even have said the same thing, in principle. "O yes, Lord, it's me - I'm the one you can really count on." And, like Peter, we would really mean it.

As we faithfully read the gospels, we cannot help but conclude that Jesus never lost sight of His mission. He was never confused about His number one priority. He always knew that He was headed to the cross. And as we come to this understanding, we recognize that few of us ever have such a clear grasp of our mission in life.

Peter finally got it right. And if he did, we can. He ultimately 'succeeded' because he developed a full and deep understanding of Jesus. But that understanding of Jesus included seeing that he, like Jesus, had a 'call' on his life. In other words, he finally understood his life mission and accepted it.

If we can also understand our life mission and accept it, then we also can pray, "Father, help me - I'm unsure I can do what you ask, but let your will be done."

**Prayer:** Father, I can in no way understand what Jesus was feeling when he cried, "May your will be done," but I do know that I must pray the same prayer. Give me the strength to do that.

## *Jesus Gives A Prayer Directive*

This then is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]”

- Matthew 6:9-13

Commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer” this is the most often repeated prayer in Christianity. It is quoted in church services, prayer groups, and it is usually the closing prayer of many recovery group meetings. I wonder though if its intent and meaning are that well understood.

In Luke’s rendering of this event he gives it as a response to the request of the disciples for Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:11) . They did not ask to be taught a prayer, they asked to be taught to pray. Jesus gave this prayer as a directive on how to pray.

It is a beautiful prayer to be recited, and we should recite it often, but we should also learn the meaning of the prayer. It speaks of the Fatherhood of God, and the sacredness of his name. God has chosen to reveal himself to man through a series of names by which men have come to know him. Each name is significant of a characteristic of God and we get to know him by getting to know his name.

The prayer also addresses a commitment to the will of God and his kingdom on earth. We are called to submit ourselves to his will as he reveals it in his word and in our hearts as we pray.

Then the prayer addresses the issues of life. Our daily needs and being in proper relationship with those around us. And finally, it addresses the evil we face daily and asks for protection from those things which would harm our relationship with him.

Yes, we should recite this prayer often, but we should also, and maybe even more often, address the issues the prayer addresses in a more personal way.

***Prayer:*** Heavenly Father, help me to submit to your will and trust you to keep me from the evil of this age. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Paul's Prayer for Enlightenment*

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

- Ephesians 1:19

Paul is asking four things for the church at Ephesus. First he prays for wisdom and revelation so that they might know the Father better. That is the prayer of many of us today. It seems that far too few believers are fully committed to knowing God. I don't mean learning the doctrines, though that is important, but actually knowing him like you would know a beloved friend.

Then he asks that the eyes of their heart would be lighted to three things. First, that they would be enlightened to the hope of their calling. It is so easy living in the world to forget that our hope is not in this world. We often hear disturbing news about this world and we should not forget that just as the old hymn says, "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through, my treasure is laid up somewhere beyond the blue."

The second part of this enlightenment prayer is that they would realize their glorious inheritance. I know people who have scrimped and saved all of their lives so they could pass on an inheritance to their children, but they have not instilled in their children a hope for their eternal inheritance.

The third part of this enlightenment prayer is that they would realize the great power God has vested in believers. We are given the power to overcome the world, the devil, and yes, even our own sinful nature.

Our prayer today is the same as Paul's.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me wisdom, revelation and enlightenment that I may know you better, and that I will know the hope of my calling, the riches of my inheritance and the great power you have vested in me as a believer. In Jesus name. Amen.

## *Prayer to Understand God's Love*

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

– Ephesians 3:17-19

Paul makes an interesting connection between love, power and the fullness of God in this passage. He speaks of being rooted and established in love so that they, or we as the church, may have power. Could it really be true that he is saying spiritual power is directly linked to our *agape* [God-love]? And, consequently, our fullness of God [Holy Spirit] also hinges on our *agape*?

Paul seems to be expressing a great concern for the body of Christ in understanding just what it is to love as God would have us to love. This prayer begins in verse 14, “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.” What was “this reason?”

He had just finished writing about the great mystery of the gospel and the unsearchable riches of Christ made available to all of mankind. Then he speaks of the intent of God for revealing Christ: “His intent was that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (v10-11). He was giving the church a mandate to proclaim Christ to the world and in so doing to let the powers (presumably evil powers) of the heavenly realms know that Christ rules supreme.

It was for that reason he prayed for the church to understand God's love. With God's love we can conquer evil, without his love we can never overcome evil. I see people today who fight evil using the tactics of the world system. They are demonstrating and protesting and all they seem to accomplish is getting a bad name for the church. What would happen if we offered acts of kindness, compassion and love instead of responding to their evil with anger and outrage?

The only way evil powers in the spirit realm will know the love of God is if we show it to them.

***Prayer:*** Lord, I am often moved to anger over the evil I see in the world. Grant me grace to return loving acts for evil. In Jesus name, amen.

## *Prayer for Knowledge of God's Will*

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. – Colossians 1:9

Again Paul is using the phrase, “For this reason” as his motivation for the prayer he makes for the church at Colosse. What was the reason? In verse 6 he writes, “All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.” Then he says, “You learned it from Epaphras.”

With that being said he begins, “For this reason.” The gospel is bearing fruit all over the world and they heard the gospel truth from Epaphras; could he be calling them to be fruitful in the gospel as well?

After giving the reason for his prayer he then gives the purpose for his prayer: “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

Now, the prayer itself. Paul is praying that God will fill them with the knowledge of his will through spiritual wisdom and understanding. There are several ways that we are exposed to the will of God. The primary is his word, which is the revelation of his will. Another is through anointed preaching which moves our heart. However we receive the knowledge of God’s will it always comes through the spirit. It is the spirit which speaks wisdom to us giving us understanding of God’s will for us.

Let us not fail to continue praying for God to reveal his will through spiritual wisdom and understanding that we may be fruitful in his kingdom.

***Prayer:*** Father, I desire to know your will. Grant me spiritual wisdom and understanding that I might serve you well. Amen.