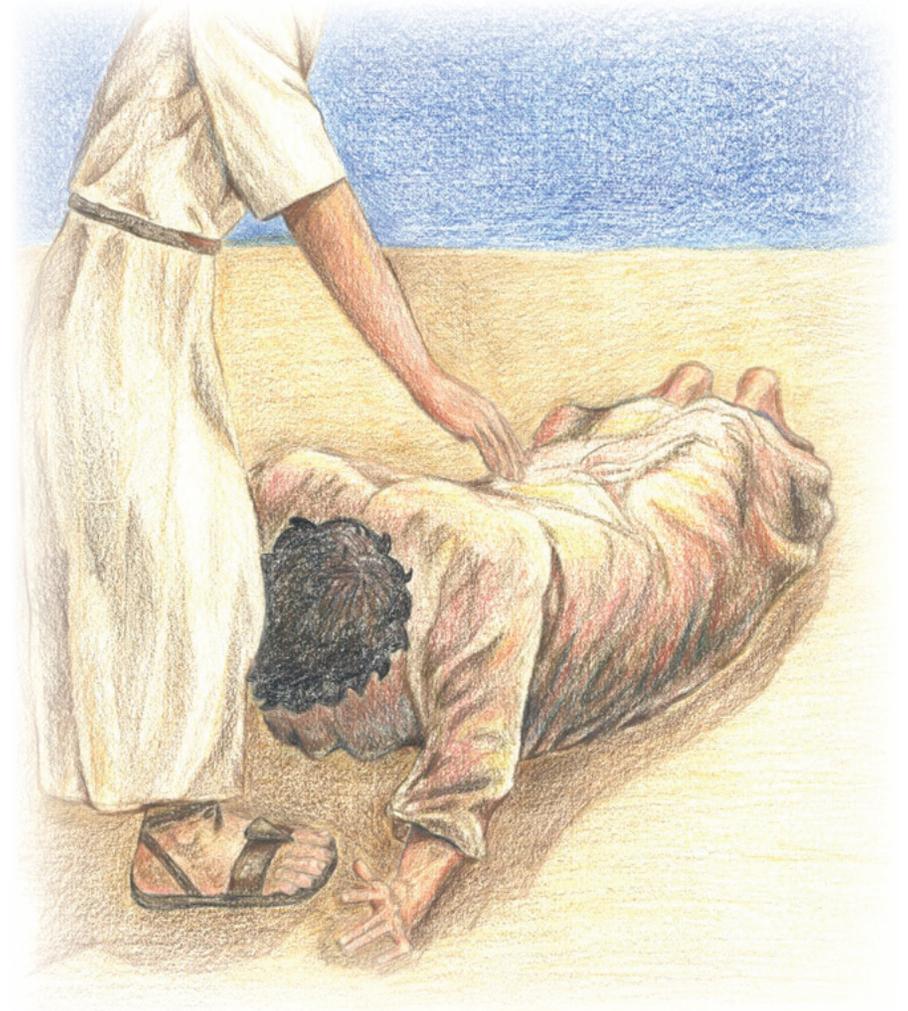


# LEARNING TO SPEAK WITH OUR FATHER!



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As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at  
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"sold" for any price (2 Corinthians 2:17, Matthew 10:8).

My assumption is that most, even many of the most God-fearing, loving  
Saints—have a difficult time praying. By "prayer" I mean meaningful, clearly  
focused dialogue with the Father of their spirits, and Maker of their bodies  
and souls. I mean times that God is pleased, and honored, and persuaded  
to lift His mighty Hand... as He would not have been willing to do, had we  
not bowed in His Presence and spoken to him.

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Jesus seemed surprised and  
disappointed that His closest  
disciples were not, at that time, able  
to pray even for "one hour" without  
falling asleep. Again, my reason for  
getting into this is that I think most  
Believers today, regardless of how  
much they know of God's Heart  
and Mind regarding the affairs of  
men and angels, still find it difficult  
to spend one hour (or more) purely

devoted to being in His Presence. Distractions, boredom, a sense of repetitive  
religious jargon, drowsiness and sleep, and many other symptoms are fairly  
descriptive of how most of the Elect would describe their times in prayer—  
more often than they would ever desire.

**What are the hindrances to being with Father and discussing things  
with Him in "prayer"?** I would credit several factors for this difficulty that  
we have in being on our knees—undistracted, enamored, enraptured, clear-  
minded, and productive in conversation and petition and worship with the  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

1. We may not take the time to See our need to be with Him by properly assessing our great impotence and His great love and power. An excerpt from a time together several years ago might help clarify what I mean. (Page 11).

Seeing God properly and OURSELVES properly supplies GREAT motivation to speak with Him urgently and often and clearly.

2. Another issue is this: Because prayer is REAL in the spiritual realm, as tangible and substantial as a house or an elephant or an automobile is in our realm... and because God the Father and the Spirit and the Lamb are incited to Holy Action in response to “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man”... because the Spirit AND the Bride (the Church) TOGETHER say “COME” to the conquering Revelation of Jesus Christ... rest assured that all of hell’s demons will try to confuse and fatigue and distract you from prayer. All the more incentive to shove it in the devil’s face by learning to pray, and pressing to Home on a daily basis, don’t you think?

3. Another reason that we may, even with the best intentions, not pray well or often or thoroughly enough to gain much notice in the Heavenly Courts is that most honestly don’t know HOW to pray. As much as they’d like to do so, many have only experienced times of fellowship with the Father (prayer) irregularly or seasonally, at best. Many, many times this is simply because they can respond to the ecstasy of Joy that the Father may grant in the form of blessing or emotional, uplifting events...or, they can respond in prayer to moments of great tragedy or misery and fall prostrate before their Father remembering their need for Him in crisis...but they find it next to impossible to pray or speak with Him clearly and in a productive way when there is no ecstasy or crisis to drive the moment.

It is for these times, the daily building of a relationship with Him in “prayer,” that we’ve started into this discussion together. It is SO important that our prayer be often driven by the DESIRE to be with Him and worship Him and gain His intervention in the world He has placed us in, rather than being primarily driven by ecstasy, crisis, or our “needs.” It is for every day “teach us to pray!” sorts of times that I address this topic at this time. After all, isn’t that the substance of any true relationship? It CAN’T be simply crisis or “need based” and be wholesome, fulfilling, or alive, can it?

The Father longs to be with us and interact with us in real ways just as we would in any other relationship. We wouldn’t for extended periods of time

*First of all, understand that God is not so much wanting to just give us a bunch of stuff as He is wanting to make us into the Image of His Firstborn, Jesus.*

just say, “hi—bye—goodnight, honey” to our spouses and expect any depth of relationship to be there. Or if we just turned to them when we wanted something from them, what kind of relationship would that be? How would you feel if someone treated you this way? Obviously this was not how Jesus and His trusted and beloved Father related to each other...NOR IS IT YOUR DESTINY! God the Spirit is Working at this very moment in you towards something very special with the Father and His Son Jesus...

Let’s consider a few verses before continuing.

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again... Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give us our food for today, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one’” (Matthew 6:7-13 NLT).

Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this illustration: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You would say to him, ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ He would call out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and we are all in bed. I can’t help you this time.’ But I tell you this—though he won’t do it as a friend, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you what you want so his reputation won’t be damaged. And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Luke 11:5-13 NLT).

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission” (Hebrews 5:7).

“But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, ‘David son of Jesse is a man after my own heart, for he will do everything I want him to’” (Acts 13:22).

I want to ask you to consider these Teachings of and about Jesus, along with others with which you are already familiar (James 4:3, 5:14-18, and many others) to remind you of a couple of important points before we go on. These short thoughts are not meant to repeat many thoughts you are already aware of. There are a multitude of good books written by the likes of EM Bounds, AW Tozer, Andrew Murray, W. Nee, “The Unknown Christian” and others that do a wonderful job of telling us WHY we should pray and teach us to glory in the fact that we CAN pray. I don’t want to try to duplicate their efforts here. I really only want to offer a very few thoughts along those lines, and then address HOW to pray in a way that might be helpful to those that already clearly know the need and have the desire. Before we go on though, let me remind you of some very important points.

First of all, understand that God is not so much wanting to just give us a bunch of stuff as He is wanting to make us into the Image of His Firstborn, Jesus. We’re not God. He is. He is not our servant. We are His. He does not exist to give us what WE want. We exist to give Him what HE wants, and He will enrich us with Himself as we lose ourselves into His Will. We ONLY find our lives as we lose them. There is no other way. Perseverance in prayer, listening rather than always talking, and having a heart of abandoned obedience to HIS Will is MANDATORY for finding His Heart, and, therefore, His Blessings. “He was heard because of His reverent submission.” “Not my will, but Yours be done Father.” Apart from cultivating this heart, in spite of our admitted weaknesses, it’s not really following Jesus, is it? He will help us, if we’ll be soft. Jesus wants us to have all that HE had, and we can—if we approach life and the Father like He did.

Obviously, Jesus did have something going on with the Father that the disciples knew was very special. There was no doubt in their minds that one of the most important questions they could ever ask of Rabboni, their friend and teacher and master was “Lord, teach us to pray!”

When Jesus answered the disciples’ question about how to go about dialoguing with the Father as He did, He said some very specific things in response to them. He answered “Here’s how you should pray.” It seems that the Son of God would not have said “Here’s HOW” if there wasn’t some relevance to what would follow. A formula or a rote pattern is fruitless and not likely to be honored by the Father beyond the first or second time (“Here’s HOW you should pray”—not, “Here’s WHAT you should pray!” There is a major difference!). Yet, knowing our human weakness, it seems Jesus has laid out some basic thoughts to guide our hearts and minds while we pursue the Heart and Mind of His Father as He did while He was here on our little planet in bodily form.

In the simplest terms possible, I’d like to offer you a “road to run on” as you offer yourself before the Throne of the Living God to participate in 1) Eating the Bread of Angels to sustain our Lives: to remove pride, fear, depression, fatigue, and aimless wandering, 2) Bringing Incense and Gifts to the Father, 3) Working in the Power of the Spirit, 4) Illuminating supernaturally the Good News for others, 5) Recovering what was lost at the fall of man, 6) Overthrowing satan and his counterfeit power of deceit and hatred, and 7) Sharing in Christ’s sufferings in the discipline of the Cross... all of this, and very much more, when you fellowship and discuss all matters with the Father (or, as we could say, “pray”). If we’d only stop merely thinking about it, wishing about it, and DO it!!

Also, PLEASE read the Scriptures during part of your time with Him? Let Him read you, correct you, and inspire you by His interaction with our forefathers in the Scriptures, and with you by His Spirit as you’re looking for Him.

This “road to run on” has its roots in the way Jesus chose to answer the request from our brothers almost 2000 years ago, in a world that was not much different from ours in most ways. “Lord, teach us to pray!” What follows, this “equipping for Works of service,” must not (please! oh, please!) be used as a gimmick or game or formula. But, for weak people like us, what follows can be helpful (it surely has been to me) to keep our minds from wandering and give us a tangible path to return to when our minds DO wander.

If you will be faithful with these “components” that are contained in the way Jesus taught us to pray, you WILL finally be able to pray “one hour.” You WILL be able to be productive in prayer, rather than wandering from random thought to emotion to reaction to distraction to slumber. You’ll

know from one day to the next what and whom you are praying for. Your Faith will increase as you can now see God responding to your requests in tangible ways because you are now SPEAKING with Him in tangible ways!

Can you imagine going before a mere earthly governor or “important” official with no particular thoughts, other than what comes to mind “off the cuff”? And then letting your mind wander when you are speaking to him, checking your watch, letting your eyes drift here and there, seldom finishing a cohesive thought or request, not listening to his answers, and then, of all things... FALLING ASLEEP while speaking to him??!! WHY would we ever let something like this happen when conversing with the Creator and King of the Galaxies, if not with mere men?

*If we'd only stop merely thinking about it, wishing about it, and DO it!!*

Care about the things you talk to Him about. There is a book entitled *God Tells the Man Who Cares*. Said another way, “God converses with, and acts on behalf of, the man or woman who gives watchful attention to...” What does it mean to give watchful attention, or care? You give watchful attention to the developments in a foreign country that has an epidemic or new war—when your spouse is visiting in that country. You care if your three-year-old is lying on a hospital bed needing a heart transplant. You give watchful attention if you hear of a brother or sister with serious needs. Give careful, watchful attention to the things you speak to Him about. CARE from the heart, and don't quit on them—any more than you would “forget” to visit your three-year-old in the hospital, just before or after a heart transplant!

Please don't trivialize, mock, or incorporate these thoughts that follow in a shallow, religious way! But if you have difficulty getting to business with our Father and Provider, and staying in His direct company for very long without losing your way—please DO try to take these thoughts to heart. And discipline your mind and time to put them into practice!! You'll come to long for the time with Him, rather than “seldom get around to it.” And you'll see mountains move now that had previously seemed so substantial and immovable that there was “no hope.” Out of your new Joy and meaningful relationship with the Father, you'll find yourself inspired to learn how to dance as David danced!

“Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.

Give us our food for today, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

The following “road to run on” has benefit, both for individual prayer and prayer in group settings. While the “sequence” or external expression or order is OBVIOUSLY not (please!) “sacred,” it is still true that the basic content is true to the teaching of our Master and Teacher. Every day will be different, if we're watching and listening in the Spirit. But if we are too sloppy or neglectful of the things Jesus taught us (about how to go about speaking with His Father), we will often drift and be unproductive, if not unfaithful. So, if you find it difficult to “pray one hour” or address our God and see Him MOVE in response to your time with Him... think carefully about all of this? Discipline your time and mind to put these things into DAILY practice?

JESUS SAID the following in His answer to the disciples' request for understanding of how to approach the Father:

Here's the “road” Jesus spoke of. In other words, DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS in your pursuit of the Father and His Will in prayer. “Here's how,” Rabboni said, “you should pray”:

1) As you set aside specific, isolated time with your Creator and Father and Master, consider beginning your Time with Him by offering Him the Gift of Worship... a “sacrifice of Praise.” WORSHIP the One in Heaven that has chosen to adopt you by the Blood of the Son into intimate relationship! “Our FATHER, who abides in Heaven...” Acknowledge that you are part of a Family that has been brought into His Glorious Presence and Warm paternal relationship! “OUR Father who abides in Heaven...” WORSHIP and express your heart to Him about His Greatness, His Mercy, His Faithfulness, His Love, His Power, His Holiness. “Our Father, who abides in Heaven, HOLY IS YOUR NAME!”

Spend yourself in Worship, early on in your Time with the Father perhaps. We “enter His Gates with Thanksgiving” and “His Courts with Praise.”

Perhaps read some of the Worship in the Psalms or Isaiah or Revelation, and Worship Father “between the lines” as you read. Stop as things strike you and let Him know that this is truly how YOU feel about Him. Ask

Him, as you read, to show you these qualities of His Character as David or Moses or Asaph or the Angels are boasting the Father's Glory. "The Father SEEKS worshipers." BE A WORSHIPER! Take the time to be a worshiper. Be like Anna, who though disadvantaged by the difficulties of age, even at 84 "never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying." Will you, for your Father, forget what you want to "get out of it" and see what you can give to HIM?

2) CONFESS to Him those things from your day and your interaction with others, your thought life and attitudes—those things that have fallen short of His GLORY. Confess to Him specific sin. If we confess our sin He's faithful and just to forgive us. "Forgive us our sins." His Blood will continually cleanse us. We can "ascend God's Holy Hill" to find His Face and present our requests, and seek His Counsel... if we have "clean hands and a pure heart." We can find abundant Mercy and Everlasting Kindness if we'll come to Him and offer ourselves in humility before Him. He will not despise a broken and contrite heart. He gives grace to the humble. He WANTS to free us from temptation, if we'll only ask Him. He CAME for the purpose of destroying the devil's work and overcoming the world and its hold on His People. He died and rose that sin would no longer be our master. "Don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." If we'll come to Him in humility, loving the Light, He will fellowship with us and give us fellowship with each other. Take the time to consider and speak to Him about those thoughts and actions and attitudes, as well as things we DIDN'T do that He called us to respond to Him in. Don't hold out on God! There's no reason to fear Him. He loves you and has the answers. Ask specifically for forgiveness for those particular, tangible things that come to mind as you ask Him to show you how you have been unlike His Beloved Son. Ask Him what you should do to make them Right. Ask Him for help to Overcome. Talk to Him, clearly and specifically... and LISTEN! And respond. He wants us to know Him and be Free! Take the time, you won't regret it.

3) Pray specifically for things that are LOCAL to your situation. The PEOPLE you know and are close to. One by one, by name, with SPECIFIC REQUESTS! Ask what He may want you to do in each situation, and LISTEN! Pray for the LOCAL ASSEMBLY that you are a part of (its corporate daily Life, its leadership, its Revelation of and Obedience to the Spirit and Call of Christ). In our situation, in the local assembly here, there are specific issues that we consider to be our Call. We each want, therefore, to be committed to daily prayer about each of these things. And, we desire to be listening

for specific things He would want us to DO today about these things! Our Call includes (among the other things we would come to understand in the dynamic of corporate Life): Loving one another in tangible, visible ways daily—not neglecting even one person that has been "given to us" (John 17). Commitment to prayer, individually and corporately. Expressiveness to the world around us of the Love and Liberty and Life that has been given to us as a free gift in Christ Jesus: the Light of the World and Salt of the Earth. We're to call one another Higher in faith, integrity, separation from love of the world, wholehearted devotion and purity, and in learning to live by the Spirit rather than the flesh or intellect or emotion. We're committed to training up the children entrusted to our temporary care by their true Father. We are desiring to be passionate about the Washing of His Word in each other's lives and each being personally responsive to receiving it in every form the Spirit would grant it. We want to be worshipers and to make His Praise Glorious. We want to feel what the Father feels and care for the poor and the helpless in our city or wherever God grants true Opportunity for us. The above are the things we in this church would speak to the Father about daily. Ask then, "What would You like me to do today about this, Father?" And LISTEN.

In addition to these areas, have discussion with Him, with specific requests of Him regarding particular people and situations that NEED HIS INTERVENTION, as mentioned earlier. If you don't know specifics, get involved daily in several people's inner lives, and you won't wonder what to pray about anymore! Also, you can ask other responsible saints what they would like help petitioning the Father about. The Spirit of God KNOWS what He wants you to be persistent with Him about—ask HIM what to pray about also! But be specific when you pray. Perhaps even write down some of the clear specifics you are asking Him to intervene in and carry them with you through the day. While in prayer in a group setting, whether massive or just a roomful, perhaps it will be appropriate and helpful to ASK out loud what sorts of specifics those present would like to ask the Father about. The opportunity with His Children gathered as they are before His Throne is unique and special and we should use it well. In asking out loud, and hearing together the requests that different ones have, we now have a beginning of a "road to run on" together as we approach our Provider and Protector. He has a WILL for your friends and family and assembly of Believers. He has a WILL for your city and for your future. Pray specifically, whether alone in your "closet" or together in groups, about areas of His Will that need to be manifest and obeyed "on earth, as in Heaven." Pray that His

Kingdom would be seen, the expression of His Reign would be manifest, in every area of life, in every situation and realm of relationship in your sphere of life. Make a difference in your world, in your lifetime, by seeking the Father's favor and persuading Him on every occasion in His Purposes, in the Spirit of Christ.

4) Please pray specifically, fervently, and with great endurance and frequency for churches and Believers and unbelievers in other cities and nations. Pray for specific congregations and their faithfulness and effectiveness in the cities they are in. Pray for Believers by name that you know in other cities and countries, as well as kings and rulers and governors and the masses of unsaved people in specific countries by name. Get a map, if necessary.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR PART! Bloody Mary, murderous Queen of England once said, "I fear nothing and no one—except the prayers of John Knox." You too, like Knox and Elijah and scores of others... are needed to move the mountains in this fallen world.

5) After putting God first, and God's Work and others second, it is really okay to ask Him for your needs also. "Give us this day our daily bread." He knows our hurts. He knows about the need for peace physically and financially and emotionally and relationally—and every other way. One day at a time He desires to provide for our true needs. He does care deeply. While He wants us to define our needs by His Standard and His Will, as an act of our will and an expression of our love for Him, He also wants to show us that we are the apple of His eye by giving good gifts to His Children. If we'll seek His best, and the best of those around us, we can trust Him to care for us. We can tell Him how we feel and what we perceive our needs to be, and if we'll listen, we'll learn much about His love for us and see the marvels of His creative Ways. Things won't always be exactly as we envisioned them, but never less than the Best—if we let HIM call the shots. Tell Him your story... then Listen and Watch for His creative Love!

Just to summarize some of the above in one sentence or two? If you want to learn to pray as Jesus taught, set aside time OFTEN to be with Him in a devoted and isolated way. And make the time, take the creative effort to gather people in group settings in your neighborhoods as well. When you do, you could follow this pattern that Jesus offered us: Worship Him with all your strength... also open your heart in humble confession, being very clear with Him and yourself... also, make clear and specific petition for His

Kingdom and for others... and then speak to Him personally about what needs you may feel you have.

If you follow some semblance of this "road map" Jesus offered (offers) to His disciples, it will not be difficult to "pray one hour." You will see "mountains" move, first in your own heart and mind and emotions and relationships, both Above and below... and then "mountains" will move in the world around you. All of this is a foretaste of Eternity! This is BIG. Be a doer, and not a hearer only? Right now? For the saints, and the Lamb that was slain!!

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## Utterly Dependent

*Excerpt from a gathering of believers where a brother shared about his time with some saints in another country...*

I really am begging each of us to dramatically increase our commitment to being men and women of prayer. There is a whole lot of work that can only be done that way. Our recent trip to Africa convinced me of that more than I've ever in life been convinced of that. There are just some things that I can't do. Surprise! surprise! There are just some things that I can't accomplish with anything that I have to accomplish it with. I CAN'T DO IT. That did come as a shock to me, as much as I thought I knew better than that. That came as a great, appalling shock to me that I had no one to rely on but God and that was the only hope that there was. I want you all to realize that too. Nothing can stop God. There is no door that He has opened that can be shut. There is no door that He has shut that can be opened—though He has REPEATEDLY demonstrated throughout history that He will often change the very fabric of the universe for His beloved children who pray. We have to be serious about that. Not "Now I lay me down to sleep," "Bless us oh Lord these thy gifts..." I'm saying we MUST have a serious heart of passionate, zealous, fervent, God-directed, God-instructed, self-sacrificing prayer that is far more important to you than your own skills, your own meals, your own families, your own anything!!

There are a whole lot of things in this universe that only God can touch. Relationships are that way. You think you can make a relationship? You've been through enough Dale Carnegie courses and your Type A personality is going to carry you far enough to have a real relationship? No way! God brings peace. God brings joy. God brings communication. God brings warmth of heart. God brings clarity of vision and understanding. God is

the only one that can make even simple things like that work. YOU HAD BETTER BE PRAYING, BECAUSE NOTHING CAN “WORK” APART FROM GOD’S INTERACTION AND GOD’S INTERVENTION.

Remember that frailty of the mighty, wise Nebuchadnezzar and how quickly and THOROUGHLY God took him to the woodshed for his arrogance? From a pillar of strength and great wisdom, to a pathetic, foul, donkey-of-a-man, eating grass in a field—in a heartbeat. God remains God. Remember King Saul? The evil spirits came, and only God’s Man playing the harp could resolve his torment. And then the next thing you know Saul’s chucking a spear at David, and everything is all broken down again. All of these things have to do with God’s Sovereign interaction with our hearts and minds and emotions and our relationships and the Work that we are doing for Him. It’s all so tied up in Him it’s beyond belief.

If we are so foolish as to think we are going to waltz our way through life and be “successful” by doing things the “right” way, knowing the “right” things, acting the “right” way, saying the “right” things, hanging around the “right” people—if you are so foolish to think that all of these “right” things are going to accomplish anything, you WILL end up very miserable and fruitless, for the most part, for the rest of your life. Life must be built out of GOD HIMSELF, not things about God, or they are chaff to be blown away by the next little breeze that comes along. It won’t even take a big wind—just a little breeze and poof!! Everything you ever built for yourself, when you thought you were building for God, will be gone.

These things have to do with God and God alone. Read the book of Job, the last few chapters, if you doubt that. God and God alone. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. Humble yourselves, I’m begging you. Be men and women that pray desperately. Not because prayer is this cool “intercession” thing that everyone who is “anybody” does to accomplish things for God. “Prayer” is NOT one more little thing that you do, like your little trinkets that you line up—lucky rabbit’s foot of holiness, lucky rabbit’s foot of prayer, lucky rabbit’s foot of the right way to have church, lucky rabbit’s foot of being a good husband or wife, lucky rabbit’s foot of child-rearing principles—my, aren’t we good at all these wonderful things? So, THAT’S the “good Christian life” and all is well. I’m not talking about a lucky rabbit’s foot of prayer added on to all of our other things. I’m simply saying that everything you would ever think of in your wildest dreams, including the next time your heart beats, is totally wrapped up in God.

What you are feeling right now, your emotions, your health, the work of your hands—EVERYTHING belongs to God. God Himself brings judgment to your heart, or brings peace to your heart. God Himself brings joy to your heart, or He brings misery and anguish to your heart. He determines how many hours you sleep at night. He determines whether or not you can digest your food. He determines whether or not your arms and legs and eyes work from one minute to the next. He determines whether or not a person likes you or hates you. He determines whether or not you have a child, or it is stillborn, or whether your child lives to his or her tenth birthday. All of these things are from God. How can the pot say to the potter, “Well, what about this? Why did you make me this way? Well, what about this? Could you explain yourself on that one?” And, “Well, I think I’ll do it my way and you’ll just have to bless me because that’s the way it is.” Man, what fools we would be to approach life that way. God is God. God, I discovered recently, is a much bigger word than I had ever imagined. What is PRAYER? Just view God properly, view your life properly, and you’ll KNOW to speak with Him deeply, and from the heart, and OFTEN.

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## One Person’s Change Toward Reality

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name”* (John 15:16).

By the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit, I’ve been greatly encouraged to spend time with the Father in a way I never did before. In the past, at times, talking with God was done with trepidation and out of duty. But several months ago, when our brother shared thoughts in regard to God’s sovereignty and our impotence [see previous section], as he experienced God’s presence in Africa, I was staggered and supremely invigorated. The efficacy of that trip supernaturally blessed the believers there, and the overflow or afterglow of that visit will leave quite a number of us here unalterably and cataclysmically changed. The past few transcripts on “prayer” have been a tremendous blessing to me. In humility, I want to urge us to give Jesus and the Father no rest until we all understand the spiritual reality of “prayer.”

To quote from that time together, “God is very interested in our words, not only with one another, but our actual words spoken literally from our mouths, directly to Him, are of great, great, great importance to Him.”

When discussing the value of “prayer,” a brother reminded me that, “Though our words to the Father may disappear in the seen realm, in the unseen realm, those words are carefully taken by God’s mighty angels and presented to Him Who sits on the throne as a sweet, fragrant offering.” WOW!!! Revelation 5:8, 8:4.

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## **A Thought About “Group Prayer Times”**

Generally it is better to allow times of praying in group settings to be brought together by specific things. What do you need help from other Saints to ask the Father ABOUT? This is in stark contrast to “calling a regular prayer meeting” or “calling a prayer meeting” at all. “Isaac” says, “We have some specific Work to do, and I need some help this morning! Can anyone come help me? And I’ll help you with the things that you are Seeing as important to speak to God about also.” “Ishmael” says, “It’s good to have frequent prayer times. Prayer is good. Let’s set up a time to do it.” Just think about it, anyway. It could be likened to a man that needed help moving his pickup truck out of a muddy ditch. He needs several strong men to help push, not a “muddy ditch meeting” waiting for trucks to happen. Nor is it a time for personalities to psyche up the people gathered with rowdy words about trucks. And, once the truck is moved, there’s no reason to stand around in the ditch and meditate. We moved the truck we meant to move. Now let’s go home. There’s no traditional amount of time that ought to be devoted to muddy ditches. Let’s move the trucks, not “have meetings.” Not very religious, eh?

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## **Excerpt from a Brother in China (Nee)**

A servant of the Lord has well said, “Prayer is the rail for God’s work. Indeed, prayer is to God’s will as rails are to a train. The locomotive is full of power: it is capable of running a thousand miles a day. But if there are no rails, it cannot move forward a single inch. If it dares to move without them, it will soon sink into the earth. It may be able to travel great distances, yet it cannot go any place where no rails have been laid. And such is the relation between prayer and God’s work. I do not think it is necessary to explain in detail; for I trust everyone can recognize the meaning of this parable. Without any doubt God is mighty and works mightily, but He will not and cannot work if you and I do not labor together with Him in prayer, prepare the way for his will, and pray, “with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:18) to grant him the maneuverability to so work. Many are the things God wills to do and would like to do, but his hands are bound because His

children do not sympathize with Him and have not prayed so as to prepare ways for Him.

Let me say to all who have wholly given themselves to God: Do examine yourselves and see if in this respect you have limited Him day after day. Hence our most important work is to prepare the way of the Lord. There is no other work which can be compared with this work. With God there are many “possibilities”; but these will turn into “impossibilities” if believers do not open up ways for Him. In view of this, our prayers in one mind with God must be greatly increased. May we pray exhaustively—that is to say, may we pray through in all directions—so that God’s will may prosper at all points. Though our activities among men are important, our working together with the Lord by prayers offered up before Him is much, much more important.

We should not just pray for our needs. In heaven and on earth there is only one prayer that is legitimate and acceptable to God—which is asking Him to fulfill His will. OUR NEEDS SHOULD BE LOST IN GOD’S WILL. To ask the Lord directly to supply our needs, whatever such needs may be, can not be considered prayer of the highest level. Prayer for personal need should be touched indirectly by first asking the Lord’s will to be done. This is the secret of prayer, the key to victory in prayer.

True prayer is real work. Praying according to God’s will and praying only for His will is indeed a self-denying work. Unless we are completely weaned from ourselves, having not the slightest interest of our own but living absolutely for the Lord and seeking only His glory, we will not like what He likes, nor seek what He seeks, nor pray what he wants us to pray. Without doubt, to work for God with no self-interest is very difficult; BUT TO PRAY FOR HIM WITHOUT ANY SELF-INTEREST IS EVEN HARDER! Even so, all who live for God must do this.

A serious error concerning prayer prevails in our common understanding, which is to say, that we often think of prayer as an outlet for expressing what we need—as our cry to God for help. We do not see that prayer is the asking of God to fulfill His needs. This is not meant to imply that Christians should never ask the Lord to supply their needs. It is only meant to indicate how we need first to understand the meaning of prayer. If our prayer is only for the purpose of our accomplishing our plan and expectations it does not have much value in the spiritual realm. Prayer must originate from God

and be responded to by us. It is of God, and it is initiated by God. And such prayer is most valuable. In order to have such prayer, the one who prays must not only personally often appear before God but also he must allow his will to enter into God's will, his thought must be allowed to enter into God's thought. Since he habitually lives in the Lord's presence, such a person is given to know His will and thoughts. And these divine wills and thoughts quite naturally become his own desires, which he then expresses in prayer.

Oh how we must learn this kind of prayer. Although we are weak and immature, we may nevertheless approach God and let His Spirit bring our will into God's will and our thought into God's thought. As we touch a little of His will and thought we come to understand a little more of how He works and what He requires of us, so that gradually the will and thought of God which we have known and entered into becomes in us our prayer. And such prayer is of great value. Finally, it is the determinate will of God that we should have more intelligent and intimate communion with Him. He wants us—His many sons—to come to Him in His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He desires many priests to accompany the one great High Priest (He who “ever lives to make intercession for them” Hebrews 7:25) in the work of intercession. “He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father” (Revelation 1:6). “But you are... a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9).

May Jesus continue to reveal the Father's name and love to us. In teaching the disciples how to pray, let's keep in mind that he began with “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” By revelation, may the Holy Spirit progressively show us in our day to day experience the meaning of these words.