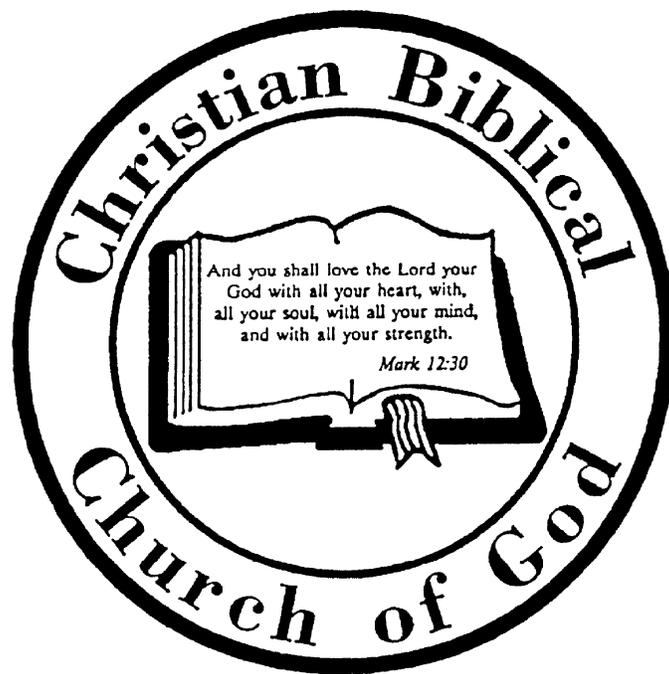


# Keys to Answered Prayers



**Transcript Book**

By Fred R. Coulter

One of the most powerful tools available to Christians is the use of believing prayers. Too many people profess Christ, do works in His name, pray in His name, but do not receive answers to their prayers. Why? What is wrong? Doesn't God hear, or even care?

This transcript book will give the Biblical answers to these questions and reveal the EIGHT KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYER.

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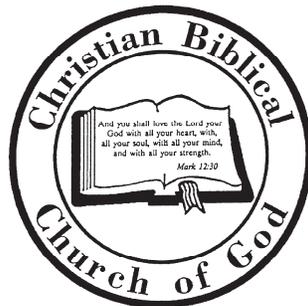
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## Keys to Answered Prayers

Series of 20 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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# Keys to Answered Prayer

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# Keys to Answered Prayer

## Foreword

Prayer is a most vital link between God and human beings. But there is much confusion on how to pray and how to have your prayers answered. Most religions, whether professing Christian or not, have some type of prayer. Many have forms of prayer where chants or continual repeating of the same words over and over are used. Also, rosary-type beads are used, with each bead supposed to symbolize or represent something. Other people pray before idols, crucifixes, icons and pictures, hoping that these will somehow make their prayers more effective. In rare cases, it has been known that people will physically torture themselves in weird ceremonies, convinced that the bloody suffering is especially appealing to God.

For example, the religion of Tibet, and other oriental religions, have for centuries used the prayer wheels. A prayer would be written on the wheel and every time the wheel was spun, it was supposed to send that prayer up to heaven. Catholics and Buddhists use burning candles to send prayers continually as long as the candle is burning.

In this modern, futuristic, computer society we live in today, we have a modern version of the prayer wheel. It is the computer prayers. Supposedly all one has to do is to select the prayer needed for the day, whether for health, prosperity or a specific need and call up this prayer out of the computer memory and just let it play all day for you. The reason given for this is that in our modern society we are just too busy to pray—so just let the computer do it for you. And just like any of the pagan methods of praying, these prayers go no further than the spinning of the prayer wheel, the smoke of the candles or the electronic repeatings inside a computer. God is not interested in those kinds of prayers. Those methods are mechanical and have nothing to do with the heart and the mind of God and salvation.

But the **BIBLICAL TRUTH** is that God does not want us to pray in any of these ways. The keys for answered prayer are contained in the Bible and not in the precepts, superstitions, traditions or the inventions of men.

### **HOW NOT TO PRAY**

Jesus Christ, in whose name all Christians are to pray, gave precise instructions on **HOW NOT TO PRAY**. After clearly enumerating to Christians that they are not to do

their “alms” or religious works before other human beings, to be seen of them, He continued saying, “And when you pray you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say to you, ‘They have their reward.’”

“But you, when you pray, enter into your closet [any quiet private place] and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly.”

“But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not you therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Matt. 6:5-8).

The encounter of Elijah and the prophets of Baal is a vivid example of what Christ instructed us. In this account, the same things applies to us today. Do we really love, believe and have faith in the True God, or do we “have a religion,” which is comfortable, allows us to do anything we please. In this case, the people of Israel were following Baal, the supposed sungod, but still clung to the thought of the True God.

Here is what Elijah told the people. “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, ‘How long halt you between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.’ And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, ‘I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men.’”

“ ‘Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under it: and you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘It is well spoken.’”

“And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, ‘Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for you are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear us,’ but there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the alter which was made.”

“And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, ‘Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleeps, and must be awakened.’

“And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded” (I Kings 18:21-29).

Next, Elijah called all the people near, and had the alter built, set the wood and dressed the bullock in order. Then he had four barrels of water poured over the sacrifice, three times, until it was drenched and the trench around the alter was full of water.

When Elijah prayed, it was not long, loud or bloody from self-flagellation, but it was short and believing. “Elijah the prophet came near, and said, ‘Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that 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 back their heart again.’ ” Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, “The Lord, He is the God; the Lord He is the God” (I Kings 18:39).

This account serves well to show us that God will hear and answer our prayers; and that we need not pray like the heathen.

### **WHY PRAYERS ARE NOT ANSWERED**

In Isaiah 59 we find a thorough summary for the reasons prayers are not answered. “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but YOUR INIQUITIES have separated between you and your God, and YOUR SINS have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity: your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness. None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies: they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity” (Isa. 59:1-4).

We claim to believe in God and peace, but produce war implements of mass destruction. Governmental leaders have prayer breakfasts, use the name of God as if He supports their efforts, while lying, corruption and stealing are the order of the day. Prayer is an issue in public schools, while drugs and immorality seem to be the major curriculum in all too many cases.

Religious leaders endorse idolatry, and legislate dogma and tradition as more important than God's Holy Word. All of these practices constitute sin. Sins and iniquities separate us from God and result in unanswered prayers.

Most people do not even know what sin is! **SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW** (I John 3:4).

### **YOU MUST WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH**

God is Spirit and there is no need to worship Him with the aid of physical things. God is interested in the attitude and intent of the heart of a person, not the idols, beads or hypnotic chants.

Here is what Jesus said about worshipping God. "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in **SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH**: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him **MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH**" (John 4:23-24).

Jesus said that God's Word was Truth (John 17:17). So if we are to worship Him in Spirit and Truth, we must worship Him and pray to Him according to God's Word. This is actually an extension of loving God with all our hearts and minds and being.

This transcript book of 20 messages is designed to help each of us develop the best prayer life relationship with God the Father that is possible, and to have a close, loving relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. Since prayer is our way of talking with God, this will help us know God and God to know us.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

## THE EIGHT KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYERS

Below are eight biblical keys to answered prayer. It is important that you look up and *study* each of the passages listed, proving the *truth* from the Word of God.

### 1) PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

Matt. 6:10	James 4:1-4	John 5:30
Dan. 3:16-18	I John 5:16-17	Luke 22:42

### 2) BELIEVE GOD AND WHAT HE SAYS IN HIS WORD

Heb. 3:12	Rom. 4:20-21	Mark 11:20-26
Matt. 8:5-13	James 1:5-7	Mark 9:14-29
James 2:5-26	Acts 17:11	

### 3) BE REPENTANT AND SEEK GOD FROM YOUR HEART

Isa. 1:15-20	Joel 2:12-14	II Chron. 15:2
Isa. 55:6-11	Acts 3:19	I John 1:6-10
Luke 18:9-14		

### 4) BE FERVENT AND ZEALOUS

James 5:16	Heb. 5:11-14	Luke 22:43-44
Hosea 7:14	Rev. 3:14-21	Eph. 6:18

### 5) HAVE GODLY FEAR AND HUMILITY

Psa. 111:10	Matt. 10:28	Heb. 4:1-16
Matt. 15:21-28	Luke 18:9-14	Isa. 66:1-2
I Pet. 5:5-10	James 4:6-10	

### 6) BE PERSISTENT AND NEVER GIVE UP

Luke 11:1-13	Luke 18:1-8	Eph. 6:18
Rom. 12:12	I Thess. 5:17	Col. 4:2-3
Col. 3:17	Phil. 4:6	

### 7) BE OBEDIENT TO GOD'S LAWS AND COMMANDMENTS

John 14:13-24	Rom. 6:16	John 15:1-17
I John 2:3-6	I John 3:4	I John 3:18-24
I John 5:1-3	Acts 5:32	I Pet. 1:14, 22
Prov. 15:8, 29	Prov. 28:9	I Pet. 2:1-2

### 8) PRAY TO GOD THE FATHER DIRECTLY IN CHRIST'S NAME

John 14:13-14	John 15:7, 16	John 16:23-27
Acts 4:12	Phil. 4:7-9	Rom. 8:9-39

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER—SHOULD YOU REPEAT IT?**

Most people are familiar with what is traditionally known as the Lord's prayer. It is found in Matthew 6:9-15 and Luke 11:1-4. It is assumed that in praying one should repeat this prayer. But that is a misunderstanding. It is meant to be an outline prayer, showing all the elements we should contain in our prayers, but not just those exact words. Notice in Luke 11 Jesus used this as an outline to teach the disciples how to pray, not to use those specific words only.

“And it came to pass, that as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’ ” (Luke 11:1). This was meant as a teaching outline, not ever that those were the exact words to be repeated over and over in a chant.

The Lord's prayer is the prayer that the Lord prayed. Of all the accounts in the New Testament of Jesus praying, most of His prayers were in private and not recorded for us. Nearly every one of His public prayers were extremely short and mostly for the blessing of food. Jesus did not make an open display of praying, He lived by what He taught.

However, the only prayer which could truly be called the Lord's Prayer, the one that the Lord prayed, is found in John the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter. The entire chapter is the prayer Jesus prayed just before His arrest and subsequent crucifixion. Study this chapter with the outline guide of Matt. 6:9-15 and Luke 11:1-4, and you will see that Jesus also followed the outline He taught His disciples.

If you will follow these **BIBLICAL GUIDELINES** your prayers will be answered and it can be said of you as you do these proverbs. “The sacrifices of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: **BUT THE PRAYER OF THE UPRIGHT IS HIS DELIGHT**...The Lord is far from the wicked: but **HE HEARS THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS**” (Prov. 15:8, 29).

# Keys to Answered Prayer I How Not to Pray

Fred R. Coulter

Recently we've been covering an awful lot on prophecy—and it's good to understand prophecy the best that we can. However, let's understand something that is very important concerning prophecy: ***Knowledge of prophecy will not save you.*** That should be evident when you read Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel because didn't they make known the prophecies of God as to what would happen?—and they heard it! They had another problem: *They didn't believe it!*

I saw this Protestant 'expert' on prophecy being interviewed on television. And, oh by the way, I think we need to understand something concerning the History Channel and all the religious things that they do there, which is important to understand: The History Channel is owned by *Disney*. That's how they have the actors and do so well with the renditions that they do. They already have the equipment, they have the people, they have the money and everything to do it. However, if you will notice what is happening when they do anything Biblical, you never get the Truth. And you get it all mixed in with all the interpretations of men and all the legendary things that men have come up with.

I've also discovered something else that is flabbergasting to me. Remember when (it was 1995) I got the *Inclusive New Testament* where they went in and they literally changed what the Bible meant. And the most blasphemous one was calling God the Father, 'Father-Mother.' That's when I said if we let that stand, God is going to judge us for not doing what we need to do. Even though I had a lot of the New Testament translated in study translations, that's when I knew that we had to do the New Testament.

You've heard me mention down through the years that the only commentary I use is the *Word Biblical Commentary*, and the reason is that the *Word Biblical Commentary* was exactly what the title said. It would examine the words in the Bible in Hebrew and Greek and so forth, and then they would give you commentary on that without too much of an interpretation. Well, what they are doing is gradually revising it. I might not be correct in my recall here, but I think Zondervan owns the copyright to the *Word Biblical Commentary*. What they are doing now is having it revised. I just got two commentaries on Psalms and one other commentary—*Word Biblical*—and they bring in other religions. So, now they are watering down and confusing the commentaries, making it more and

more impossible for people to really discover the Truth. You watch that when you have commentaries:

- how much they bring in other religions
- how much they bring in the Nag Hammadi Library
- how much they bring in the Dead Sea Scrolls
- how much they bring in the Apocrypha

The Apocrypha books can be good from an historical point-of-view; you can learn some lessons from it. But it is not Scripture, never recognized as Scripture until Jerome did his thing in translating from the Septuagint and the Hebrew into his Latin.

With all of this out there, what is the most important thing that we need to concentrate on? ***We need to concentrate on a relationship with God, because God is the only One Who's going to save us!*** And the most important thing that we need to realize in our relationship with God is ***how important prayer is!*** So, I'm going to do a series on the *Keys to Answered Prayer*. We're going to start out with some basic things and then we will get into more detail going into the series as we go along. So the first one is going to be: *How Not to Pray*—the things not to do. Therefore, that'll sort of 'clear the deck' so that when we get into it—*how to pray*—then we'll take it from there.

Let's see the whole basis for our relationship with God, and our relationship to God with prayer, etc. Here is the whole key in everything in our relationship with God, Hebrews 11:6: "Now, without faith *it is impossible to please God...*"

In mentioning this we have to understand this: ***The spirit of true faith comes from the Holy Spirit of God!*** One of the biggest problems that people have today in Christianity is they are developing a carnal-minded, religious, emotional approach to it, and they are calling that *faith*. If you feel good it is *faith*. Now, 'faith without works is dead.' We'll cover that a little bit more concerning answering prayer, but this is the key thing:

- Unless you love God, keep His commandments, and unless you believe God, it's impossible to please God.

*let's add a little bit more to it:*

- The faith that you need to have is the faith that is defined by God!

*Not personal opinion!*

Very important, because the first thing that a person does when they want to find out about God is come to God to find a way to justify their own behavior and justify what they already believe.

- If you have a belief-system, which rejects the Old Testament, you do not have true faith.
- If you have a belief-system, which rejects the New Testament, you do not have true faith.

You may have a faith. You may have a religion. But we're going to see that when you have your own ways and you try and mix that with what God wants you to do, then you don't have the faith necessary to please God.

"...For it is mandatory... [God is the One Who makes it mandatory] ...for the one who comes to God..." Jesus expects us to come to Him, because He said to '*seek and you shall find, ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened.*' But, it has to be on God's terms. The whole book of Job is a testimony that unless it's on God's terms it isn't going to be.

Another thing: If you've never read the book of Job, read it, and I think you will experience the same thing I did when I first read it. I thought God was unfair when I first read it. Then, with that thought in my mind, *no, God isn't unfair*, I just need to understand what it's saying. **God is the One Who sets the rules!** Why is that? *Because He's God!* If man comes to God and man sets the rules, and God has to obey what man has dictated, then man becomes God—and God becomes a servant. That's why it's mandatory.

"...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists..." (v 6) That you have to prove: Does God exist? You do that by studying the Bible. You do that by examining the laws of the creation that He has put out there and understand there can be no such thing as evolution. When you do that, then you start coming to God on *His* terms.

A lot of people like to say, 'Well, I believe God, but I also believe it's possible that God used evolution to create.' **Never happen!** You don't believe God; you have an opinion. We'll talk about opinions a little later on. But what we are doing here is we're analyzing exactly what it says, so that we get a bearing of why prayers are not answered. How many people literally do this in the way that we're describing here? *Very few!* He exists! If you believe He exists, then

- you have to *know* He's true
- you have to *know* that God does not lie

- you have to *know* that His Word is the Word of God
- you have to *believe* that God has the power to inspire the men He has chosen to write His words, to faithfully write it, faithfully record it, and that
- you have to *believe* that God has the power to preserve it

In today's world you may have to search out which is the right Bible, that's true. But God has still preserved it. He's left the *searching out* up to us. He's left the *proving* up to us. God has already proved Himself by the creation of heaven and earth and us.

"...and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (v 6) This has to be our attitude. Not just to prove an intellectual or philosophical argument. Not to just have God on our side like a rabbit's foot. But to *diligently seek Him*—which means what?

- It means you have to *seek Him* with the whole heart.
- It means you have to *repent to Him*.
- It means you have to *obey Him*, and all of those things are wrapped up into it.

So now, with that in mind—and *diligently seeking Him*—in this also you have to understand this: ***If you believe God, if you believe His Word, and you say you believe His commandments, then you better believe His commandments and you better keep His commandments!*** We're going to see the biggest problem in the world, in religion and people in prayers is that they don't believe God and they don't believe the first four commandments—though a lot of them profess that they do.

Let's come to Matthew, the sixth chapter. And again, Jesus tells us how *not* to pray. {see sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*} What I want you to do is think about the religions of the world as I read this. I want you to think about also the people who give great sums of money to churches, and especially those who have it reported on the news;

Matthew 6:1: "Beware... [Here's a warning from Christ] ...*that* you do not bestow your alms... [anything that you give toward helping people, helping ministers, helping priests, whatever that you do in the name of God] ...in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who *is* in heaven.... [every time you see the Dalai Lama or the pope or an imam of the Muslim religion and so forth do these things in the sight of men, they have no reward] ...Therefore, when you give *your* alms, do not sound

the trumpet before you...” (vs 1-2).

I'll tell you something that's more effective than a trumpet: television coverage—right? *Yes!* Go on Trinity Channel, or a religious channel, and what do you find? First of all you can't get on there unless you sign that you believe in the trinity, which is already a false doctrine; so, the whole basis of it, regardless of how many times they use the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ, is wrong. But you watch them, and when they come to the end of what they're doing or maybe right in the middle of it, they have some sort of sanctimonious prayer. Think about Praise the Lord Channel with Pat Robertson. They don't have a trumpet, but what do they have when they get a big donation? *They give the name out over the television!* They have the drum rolls for a \$10,000 donation. People give so that it will be noticed on television. What a thing! Your name mentioned for \$10,000 on Pat Robertson's or Gerald Falwell, whatever.

“...as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets... [Do you think God is going to listen to hypocrites? This also tells us how we are hypocritical, because we can look at other people and judge and say, 'Okay, they're hypocritical because they're doing this.' But how are we hypocritical? *Well, we're hypocritical when we come to God to pray to seek our will and have Him endorse our will!*] (The reason they do these things publicly is): ...so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly” (vs 2-4).

Here's another way not to pray, v 5: “And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues... [or in a church assembly; whatever] ...and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.... [because they have been seen] ...But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*...” (vs 5-7).

Now, the Tibetan Buddhists, even though they have a lot of prayers, they get tired of speaking, so they invented a new way to get prayers to heaven. They write them on round cylinders, and they have them all stacked along the sidewalks so as you go, you just reach over and wheel one of these cylinders that's on a pole and that prayer is wafting up to heaven. Well, that's kind of like a computer prayer today—you have a computer prayer and you send it out everywhere. That's the same thing—it's not

going to God. Then you also have the chants, where they just chant: 'Daaa, daaaa, daaaaa'—that's what it sounds like. That's not the way to pray. Or, as the Jews do at the 'wailing wall.'

Oh by the way, you can get a prayer sent to God if you pay enough and send it to Jerusalem where some helper or rabbi will take it up there and will stuff the prayer in one of the cracks on the 'wailing wall.' Where does that prayer go? *The wailing wall!* It doesn't go to God.

Or the Catholics: You can turn on the Catholic Hour, which is only 15-minutes long, and you can hear them pray; and it's all in monotone. They do 'hail Marys'—'Hail Mary, mother of God, blessed be the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Hail Mary, mother of God, blessed be the fruit of your womb, Jesus'—over and over and over again. Everybody says, 'Amen.' *Vain repetitions!* You may have it memorized, but it's not from your heart.

Think about the Muslims: they pray religiously five times a day, and they pray vigorously—don't they? They go into the mosques, and they have carpets on the floor and they go in with their shoes off, because you don't want to desecrate it with shoes. There's something with Muslims that there's something with the sole of the shoe is a great insult. So, if you bend down and pray with the soles of your shoes on and God can see the soles of your shoes, then you're insulting God I guess would be the thing. And they have their ready-made prayers and they bow down more rigorously than almost any other people, with their forehead on the ground and pray, but, they've got to face Mecca. If you don't know which way Mecca is, you better get out your compass.

“...for they think by multiplying their words they shall be heard. Now then, **do not be like them**...” (vs 7-8). That's what Jesus said. Accompanied with this, what also do they have? *They have prayer beads, prayer shawls, prayer tassels, whatever convenient thing that they have which is suppose to add to their prayers!*

Unless you come to God with a right heart, and unless you believe that He is, all these other devices isn't going to make God hear you!

Let's come to Matthew 23:13—let's see what else Jesus said about praying. (Actually in the *King James* it's v 14, because in the Greek v 13 comes first—it's reversed)

There are many religious things that people do. And somehow they can sacrifice this or sacrifice that and some of them believe in beating themselves on the back, even some go through mock crucifixions—because 'Jesus suffered, I suffer; Jesus

bled, I bled—then I have access to God.’ *No!* It doesn’t work that way. The Scribes and the Pharisees were religious leaders and we can see religious leaders today. Think of this if you’ve seen the report on Opus Dei, what they require them to do on Opus Dei. They dedicate themselves to God, but you have to dedicate what you make to the Opus Dei. The more that you get involved in it, the more that you get into corporal punishment and self-flagellation. Not much different than the Muslims.

There’s a Muslim holy day, which they will probably show, where great columns of men chanting and carrying some sort of back-flagellation and they give a chant and then they all sling it over their left shoulder and it inflicts wounds on their back. Then they bring it forward and they walk along and they give a chant and they sling it over their right shoulder. All self-flagellation and things like that.

Matthew 23:4: “For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men...” The opposite of that is this: You come to this Christian Church and you have grace and you have nothing that you need to do, all you need to do is believe and profess the name of Jesus. So, you’ve got the easy works; you have the heavy works.

“...but they will not move them with *one* of their own fingers. And they do all their works to be seen by men. They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments” (vs 4-5). Almost like when you see the generals in the various armies of the world—especially looking at the Iranian army and the North Korean army—the generals have got at least ten rows of medals. For what? Same way with the religious garment; if you’re a religious person, you have to wear this garment. How about the monks who give up everything and go live in a monastery.

I heard a report on soybeans. Soybeans are very high in estrogen and cause great problems with health. Especially if you take a soy powder to lose weight, you will for a while. But afterward you start gaining weight because you will be taking in too much estrogen. And they were discussing why soybeans were so popular among the Buddhist monks living in these monasteries—you can’t have any sex. God said, ‘Let a man have his own wife and women have her own husband.’ That’s what God said, but ‘No, we’re more righteous.’ In order to cut down on the lust and in order to cut down on the sex drive, they eat a lot of soybean because the estrogen takes away the sex drive. All right, now that’s not a phylactery, but it’s something else.

Verse 6: “And they love the first place at the suppers, and the chief seats in the synagogues... [oh yes, must be exalted, be recognized] ...and the

salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’” (vs 6-7)—or Reverend or Right Reverend or Cardinal or Pope—never found the ‘Left Reverend’ yet, or to be called Imam and everybody sort of bow down to them and give them deference. They must be recognized with their collars on backwards or the way that their hair is cut or the clothes that they wear, or something. And everyone is supposed to give way to that.

Verse 8: “But you are not to be called Rabbi; for one is your Master, the Christ, and all of you are brethren.” That’s what we need to understand concerning those who teach and those who are brethren. We’re all brethren together. And the whole goal of any minister ought to be: **Teach people to ‘love God with all their heart, mind, soul and being.’** And whatever knowledge that God imparts to anyone who’s teaching, He must impart that to all the brethren, because we’re all brethren so that we can all grow and grace and knowledge and fulfill what Jesus said, ‘That it’s sufficient that the disciple become like the teacher.’ Not to set up here some great exalted, religious position. And this all comes into answered prayer or why your prayers are not answered.

Verse 9—key verse: “Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father...” That is in a ‘religious’ sense. Now obviously, you have your father and mother—you can call your father ‘father.’ But you’re not calling him ‘father’ in the sense you would God the Father. This is what it’s talking about here.

“...for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven” (v 9). But you have how many supposed Christian religions you have to call the religious leaders ‘father’—father this, father that, father the other thing. And how can they be a father when they are supposed to be celibate? It reminds me of the joke:

Man was standing there and here came by a Catholic priest. “Good morning, father.”  
*Good morning.*

He went on down and he was waiting for some other of his religion come to him. And here came by Mother Superior. So he said, “Good morning, mother.” So, she went on down and was standing there by the priest, and here came a couple of nuns. And he said, “Good morning, sisters.”

And there’s someone standing there watching all of this go by. And then there came some of the Franciscan monks. And he said, “Good morning, brothers.”

*Good morning.* Now, all of them have taken vows of celibacy.

So, the man who was watching all of this, he turned to the man who was greeting them, and said, ‘My, that’s a lovely family, isn’t it?’

You have to think on that a little bit. I’m not very good with jokes, but that’s the way it goes.

Verse 10: “Neither be called Master... [which is *guru*. You go to one of the Eastern Oriental religions and you have a ‘guru’—he is master.] ...for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.... [that’s a key to answered prayers we’re going to see a little later] ...But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses...” (vs 10-13).

I found this: Whenever people reject God’s way of tithes and offerings, they have to have a substitute way of financing—right? *Yes!* So, what do they do? *They have pledges!* Mormons have inspection of your income tax; reconciliation with the local elder there to make sure that you have paid your ‘fair share.’

When I was on the plane going to Tulsa, here was a man on the plane and he’s reading *The DaVinci Code*. And I struck up a conversation with him and found out that he worked for Oral Roberts University. I thought to myself, well, that’s interesting, he’s reading *The DaVinci Code*. I didn’t talk to him much about that. But I said, ‘What do you do?’ He said, ‘My territory is Southern California.’ And I said, ‘Oh, what do you mean by that?’ He says, ‘I go out and contact those on the mailing list to make donations to Oral Roberts University and get them to commit so much to the University.’ I imagine the ones they love to get are the widows so that when they die they give it all to Oral Roberts University—when that should stay in the family or next-of-kin of the family. It should NEVER be donated to a church. If there’s no one to give it to and you want to do that, of your own free will, that’s one case.

“...they devour widows’ houses...” Oh, and another one. When Delores worked for—this was years ago when she worked for this investment company in Gilroy—all Catholics. They were in high-level real estate dealings where they dealt in millions and millions and millions of dollars every year. All the commercial ground around Gilroy, they owned the land-lease. All of these businesses pay into their firm every month. So, guess who comes down in his limousine, driven by a chauffeur? *The Arch-Bishop!* He has a private meeting in the office, and all three brothers cough-up a 100-thousand

dollars. “...devour widows’ houses...”—you can put in there whatever you want.

“...and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length...” (v 13). Any public prayer in the Bible is short, with the exception of the one that is recorded that Solomon gave at the dedication of the temple. Every single one is short.

“...**Because of this**, you shall receive *the* greater judgment. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter” (vs 13-14).

It’s exactly what they do. If someone comes to their Sunday-keeping minister and says, ‘Oh, I read my Bible, we should be keeping the Sabbath.’ *Oh, no, no, no, we keep Sunday. Don’t worry about that, that’s just Old Testament. What did they just do? Shut up the kingdom of heaven!* Or a Jew comes to a rabbi and says, ‘Rabbi, I’ve been reading the New Testament and I believe in Jesus.’ *Oh, no, no, no He’s a fraud. He’s born of fornication and all this sort of thing. No, no, you don’t need that.* Then they load other things on top of them.

Now let’s see some things concerning idols. We can basically say this: *outside of the Bible, if you need to use the Psalms to pray, you do not need any other physical thing.* If you have bad knees, you may need some knee-pads. But we’re going to talk about idols here in a minute.

(go to the next track)

Let’s come to Isaiah 44. Let’s remember the second commandment. You have it all memorized? ‘You shall not make any graven image of any likeness of anything that’s in heaven above, that’s on the earth beneath or that’s in the waters under the earth.’ You’re not even to make them.

Next, you are not to ‘bow yourselves down to them, for I the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting upon the children the iniquities of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.’ Beyond that we need to understand this: *If you have an idol of any form, regardless of the profession of your lips, you hate God to a certain degree, though you may profess you love Him.* The last part of it is because He’s a jealous God He does that: *‘and showing mercy to thousands of them who love Me and keep My commandments.’* That’s the whole second commandment.

Now, with that in mind, Isaiah 44:9: “Those who make a graven image *are* all of them vanity... [We’ll talk about vanity a little bit later on and prayer and so forth.] ...and the things in which they delight shall not help; and they *are* their own witnesses. They do not see nor know, that they may

be ashamed. Who has formed a god, or melted a graven image that is profitable for anything?" (vs 9-10).

There's one problem with idols that people really don't understand. If you think there's power in the idol, it is nothing. It is the demonic and satanic power behind it, because wherever there are idols, there is where Satan and his workers will be, because they want to get you into idolatry.

Verse 11: "Behold, all his companions shall be ashamed; and the craftsmen, they *are* of men. Let them all come together, let them stand up, they shall dread; they shall be ashamed together.... [when God begins to deal with them] ...The blacksmith fashions an axe. He works in the coals, and forms it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Then, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water, and is weak" (vs 11-12). In other words, he's just dedicating himself to the nth degree of the ability of his strength and body to do this. So they just got a helper.

Verse 13: "The carpenter fashions wood, and stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil; he shapes it with carving tools, and he marks it out with the compass, and makes it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to sit *in the house*."

What I want you to do, since we have in our minds, just give yourself a minds-eye of all of the pyramids of old, the burial places of the Pharaohs, all of their idols, all of their things, all of the gods of Greece, all of the statues and idols today in every cathedral or basilica—regardless of the religion—and think about how much work that men have put into making these things! ***And it profits absolutely nothing!***

Verse 14: "He cuts down cedars, and takes cypress and oak, which he makes of the trees of the forest strong for himself; he plants a tree, and the rain makes *it* grow. Then it shall be for a man to burn; for he will take some of it and warm himself. Yea, he kindles *it* and bakes bread; yea, he makes a god and worships *it*; he makes it a graven image and falls down to *worship* it. He burns part of it in the fire; with part of it he eats flesh; he roasts a roast and is satisfied; yea, he warms *himself*, and says, 'Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire.' And *with* the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image; he falls down to it and worships, and prays to it, and says, 'Deliver me! For you *are* my god!'.... [That's quite an amazing thing!] ...They know not nor understand; for He has shut their eyes..." (vs 14-18).

What happens is this—a true thing to remember: ***Whenever you do something contrary to God's will, it can lead to blinding—spiritual***

***blinding***, not physical blinding, ***spiritual blinding***. You can't see or understand the Truth of God.

If you have for yourself a beautiful statue of the virgin Mary and you have a little 'prayer place' in your house where you go pray, or in a cathedral and you go in there and you do your 'hail Marys' and 'our fathers' and you light candles and that's supposed to be your prayer going up to heaven, just realize this: *it hasn't gone any further than the words out of your mouth!* You are blinding yourself.

Here's what happens when God shuts your eyes spiritually "...they cannot see; *and* their hearts so that they cannot understand" (v 18).

Now let me tell you how I know you don't understand: If you're mad at me for saying what I just said, and if you're offended because of it, ***you do not understand and you are spiritually blind!*** I challenge you to find out what the Truth is and let God remove the spiritual scales from your eyes.

Verse 19: "And none thinks within his heart, nor *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say... [don't even think about it] ...'I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals of it; I have roasted flesh and eaten; and shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?' He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul. Neither does he say, '*Is this* not a falsehood in my right hand?'" (vs 19-20).

Let's see something else. This is why it's important to understand. When you change the nature of God you change everything. When you have idols you change everything, too—don't you? You cannot worship God and use idols of any form—the ***true*** God. You may worship a god, but then you better check out in the Bible and find out there is Satan the devil, who is called 'the god of this world.' ***If what you do is accepted by the world, you better be pretty sure that it's not of God.***

Isaiah 45:20: "Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you who have escaped of the nations; they have no knowledge who carry the wood of their graven image, and those who pray to a god *that* cannot save. Declare and bring near; yea, let them take counsel together... [All right, let's see what you have done.] ...Who has declared this of old? *Who* has told it from ancient times? Have not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me; a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me. Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I *am* God, and there *is* none else" (vs 20-22)

Now I give you another challenge if you don't believe it: Next time there's a fierce storm or flood coming, or hurricane or tornado, and you don't believe what I'm telling you, then you go out and

you shake your fist in the air at God and demand that He stop it. Won't happen, because you cannot serve Satan and God, you cannot serve idols and God. And that's evident all the way through. So, you cannot use any physical thing to help answer your prayers.

Verse 23—here's what God says: "I have sworn by Myself..." God doesn't need to swear at all. But just to make sure that every person understands it, He swears by Himself, which means He's swearing by His very existence. 'Since I've created heaven and earth and everything therein,' God says, 'I swear by Myself. Now, if you want to take Me on with your idols, have at it. If you don't believe in Jesus, have at it!'

Because, He says, v 23: "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not turn back... [He's not going to take a word back] ...that unto Me every knee shall bow..." It says in Phil. 2 that 'at the name of Jesus Christ every knee shall bow'—and bow on His terms. You need to understand this: If you come to God with any idol, prayer beads, any physical thing, or you have memorized, ritualized prayers, it's all in vain, because that's not how to pray to God.

Verse 24: "One shall say, 'Only in the LORD do I have righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come. And they are ashamed, all who are angry against Him.' In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (vs 23-25). Not in idols, not in men, not in methods, *but in God!*

Isaiah 46:1: "Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; their idols were upon the beasts and upon the cattle; the things you carried about have become a load, a burden for the weary. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but they themselves have gone into captivity" (vs 1-2). He's going to send them off into captivity. Look at all the lands that have idols and false religions. What do they have constantly? *War! Killing! Death! Jihads!* All of these things continually.

Muslims don't think they have an idol. Yes, they do! In Mecca they've a big black stone. That's their idol! They have another idol: Mohammad the prophet. His words do not agree with the words of the Bible, therefore he's a false prophet.

God says, v 3: "Hearken to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are borne *by Me* from the belly, who are lifted from the womb; *even* to your old age I *am* He; and to gray hairs I will carry *you*. I have made *you*, and I will bear *you up*; even I will carry *you*, and will deliver *you*." (vs 3-4). He's giving an option here:

- What do you want?
- Idols that are going to be carried away into

captivity and the people with them?

or

- Do you want the Truth of God?
- Do you want God and His way?

He gives a challenge, v 5: "To whom will you liken Me... [very important] ...and make *Me* equal, and compare Me, that we may be alike? They pour gold out of the bag, and weigh silver with the balance, *and* hire a goldsmith; and he makes it a god; they fall down, yea, they bow down *to it*. They carry it upon the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; it shall not move *itself* from its place...." (vs 5-7).

Think of this the next time you see any religious procession with idols. They carry Buddha; he's not a god—he can't walk, he can't hear, he can't talk. The virgin Mary: great processions of the virgin Mary; and everybody falls down and worships. Well, it's just an idol.

Verse 7: "They carry it upon the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; it shall not move *itself* from its place. Yea, *one* shall cry unto it, yet it cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble." Think of that every time you watch a documentary on ancient civilizations and look at their gods and look at all of their religious things. Did it save them? Did it change anything? *No! Because they rejected God!*

Verse 8: "Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O you transgressors.... [God is calling them to repentance here] ...Remember the former things of old; for I *am* God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning..." (vs 8-10).

Read in Rev. 1 and 21, where Jesus said: 'I am the First and the Last, I am the Beginning and the Ending, I am Alpha and Omega.' Same God! You want to know what God is doing, then you better come to God *His* way in repentance. You better *forsake your way*. You better *forsake your idols*. You better pray to Him with a repentant heart, have your sins forgiven, have Him give you understanding of what you need to do to come to Him. Then you will begin to understand.

But *you have to forsake your sins and your ways first*, because God is not going to answer your prayers as long as you live in your sins and live in your idols and hold your way and try to cleave to your Sunday, your Christmas, your Easter, your New Years and all of the pagan holidays of all the other religions—whatever it may be—because you're rejecting God!

Verse 10: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which were not *yet* done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

and I will do all My pleasure.” **God** is going to do it. **He** is going to take care of it. And this whole world is destined to see the return of Jesus Christ in the time that God has said. It’s going to be an awesome thing indeed when it happens.

Let’s see that personal opinion has nothing to do with the Truth of God. Anyone can have a personal opinion, and it wasn’t invented with Fox News—‘we report, you decide.’ What is your opinion? Well, if anyone’s opinion is not based upon Truth, *your* opinion is worthless, especially when dealing with things concerning God and the Bible.

The reason that you need to read the Old Testament...and you might take that underhand in case you’ve been told you don’t need to read the Old Testament. Read it from the beginning. The parts you don’t understand, just put off to the side, because there’s plenty you will understand.

Here’s what we can understand here, 1-Kings 18: This is in the days of Elijah. Ahab was the king of the ten northern tribes up in Samaria, and God said that there was going to be drought because of the sins of the children of Israel. Think about it today, right while I’m bringing this sermon today:

- we have forest fires
- we have floods
- we have drought
- we have heat
- we have cold

and now there’s another hurricane churning down in the Caribbean—heading for where? *Don’t know!* But all of these things God says He brings upon people because of their sins. You need to think about it! And because I mention that, people say, ‘Well, why do you say that?’ That’s exactly what they said of Elijah.

Now, I’m not claiming to be Elijah by any means or any stretch of the imagination, but I’m saying that those who tell the truth are accused of causing trouble. That’s exactly what happened to Elijah.

1-Kings 18:17: “And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, ‘Are you he that troubles Israel?’.... [You’re the cause of the problem; that’s why we have the drought.] ...And he [Elijah] answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed Baalim.’” (vs 17-18). Baalim is plural for other lords, other gods, statues, idols; Astorah is the goddess. Of course, what are they promoting today? *They’re promoting goddesses*—aren’t they?

Verse 19): “Now therefore, send *and* gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal, and four hundred

of the prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.’

And that’s about the number—I don’t think that’s the number of denominations today; there are thousands of denominations today. Remember this: Baal is a sun-god. What is his day of worship? *Sunday!* {see the book: *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days, Which?* where we clearly enumerate that}

If you’re worshipping the god of this world, the sun-god, you worship on Sun-day. They may call it Christian, but it is a false Christ, a false Christianity and God is not there regardless of how good you feel when you go to Church; or how good you feel when you go to Mass. That is a false security. Look at the comparison: 450 to 1. How’s that for odds? People think: the more people you have who believe like you, the better you are with God. *Not so!* It’s just the opposite. So, there’s Elijah and he said, ‘Gather them.’

“...and four hundred of the prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.’ Then Ahab sent to all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together to mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people and said... [here’s the message that he gave, which is true today]: ...‘**How long will you vacillate between two different opinions?....**’” (vs 19-21).

That’s important to understand. People like to have opinions that fall on both sides of the middle. So, if it goes one way they’ll be right, or if it goes the other way, they’ll be right. Like a lot of people today, they have just enough religion that the world accepts them, and just enough religion so if trouble comes, they think they can run to God and He’ll save them. The truth is, *if you don’t have the true God and you’re not right with Him, it doesn’t matter what your opinion is.* A lot of people will say, ‘Well, you know, maybe there’s something to this Buddha thing—karma and destiny. And people bow down in Catholicism and worship the virgin Mary—a statue of her, a statue of Christ. Or if you’re a Greek Orthodox, you have icons—even weeping icons. “...**How long halt you between two opinions?....**”

What’s going to happen is this: *the day is coming and God’s judgment is coming and people are going to have to choose*, and they’re going to find that if they have an opinion that is not a belief in God, that opinion is going to be worthless and is empty as a bag of wind in the day of trouble.

“...**if the LORD is God, follow Him...**” (v 21). That’s a challenge for today, too. If the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and God the Father is God, *follow Them!* Because God here is ‘Elohim’—

which means *the two*: God the Father and Jesus Christ.

“...But if Baal is God, *then* follow him.’... [Let’s have a contest!] ...And the people did not answer him a word.... [Elijah had to get in his complaint]: ...And Elijah said to the people, ‘I, I alone, remain a prophet of the LORD. But Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men’” (vs 21-22).

So, he said, ‘Let’s have a contest. You get all the prophets of Baal and you build an altar, you bring two bullocks, you choose one for yourself, you go ahead first, put a fire under it, you call on the name of your gods. When you’re all done, I’ll call on the name of the Lord’ (vs 23-25 *paraphrased*).

Notice what they did, v 26: “So, they took the bull which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear us.’...” If you listen to Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, it’s a very catchy tune for Baal: ‘Hear us oh Baal, hear us oh Baal, dadada’—you know, lovely song—doesn’t prove it’s from God. And that’s about all I remember of it. I didn’t want to hear the whole thing through, because I didn’t want that thing scattering through my head. So, they did it from morning until noon

“...But there was no voice, nor any who answered.... [They had to get in action—‘We’ve got to stir them up!’] ...Then they leaped upon the altar which was made.... [they were jumping up and down on the altar] ...Now it came to pass at noon Elijah mocked them and said, ‘Cry aloud with a great voice, for he *is* a god. Either he is meditating... [not paying any attention to you] ...or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened!’... [They took drastic action. ‘Let’s get his attention!’] ...And they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves with knives and lances until the blood gushed out upon them” (vs 26–28).

So, all these things of beating the flesh, suffering for Christ, all a bunch of pagan transfers and has nothing to do with suffering for Christ. If you suffer for keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days; if you suffer for not bowing down to idols, then you’re truly suffering for Christ. But if you cut yourself and bleed and make yourself suffer that way, you’re not suffering for Christ one bit anymore than suffering for Baal made him answer.

Verse 29: “So, it came to pass when midday was past, and when they prophesied until the offering of *Elijah’s* oblation...”—‘evening’ sacrifice (*KJV*) is not there. This has nothing to do with the time of the ‘evening sacrifice.’ But of the time

coming to when Elijah would bring his sacrifice, which was a little past mid-day.

“...there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor anyone who paid attention” (v 29). I imagine after the yelling and screaming and bloodletting and leaping and jumping and everything there was deadly silence. Only one man—just one man—whom everybody despised, and said: ‘You brought this drought upon us. You said there was going to be a drought. You brought it upon us!’

Verse 30: “And Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come near to me.’ And all the people came near him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. And Elijah took twelve stones... [after God said, for an altar that was not at the temple] ...according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the Word of the Lord came, saying, ‘Israel shall be your name.’ And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar big enough to contain two measures of seed” (vs 30-32). I don’t know what that is. But that’s probably like two 150-pound bags of wheat.

Verse 33: “And he arranged the wood, and cut the bull in pieces, and placed *it* on the wood, and said, ‘Fill four water jars with water.’” At the end of drought, where water is hard to come by, imagine what they thought.

“...and pour on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.’... [let’s make this an impossible situation] ...And he said, ‘Do *it* the second time.’ And they did *it* the second time. And he said, ‘Do *it* the third time.’ And they did *it* the third time. And the water ran all around the altar. And he filled the trench also with water” (vs 33-35). I want you to notice how long Elijah’s prayer was.

Verse 36: “Now it came to pass at the time of the offering of the oblation...”—or the offering of the oblation—referring to what Elijah as going to do. Remember ‘time of an evening’ (*KJV*) is not there in the Hebrew—not there at all.

“...Elijah the prophet came near... [I want you to time this prayer.] ...and said, ‘LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel, and that 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 heart back again” (vs 36–37). **Twenty seconds!** That’s why Jesus said long prayers, vain repetitions, that’s not it. It has to be based on belief in God and a repentant heart and praying directly to God. **Twenty-second prayer!** Notice what happened. Compare 20-seconds with almost the whole day with the prophets of Baal.

Verse 38: “Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.” If you think that’s quite a demonstration, I want you to think about when Christ returns. It’s going to be more than that:

- He’s going to shake the heavens.
- He’s going to shake the earth.
- He’s going to shake the sea and everything in it.
- The mountains will be leveled
- the valleys will be raised.

It’s going to be quite different. ***God is going to show and prove that He is God!*** This confrontation with Elijah is only just a miniscule little confrontation that’s going to happen between the world and the return of Jesus Christ, which is going to be a profound thing.

Verse 39: “And when all the people saw, they fell on their faces. And they said, ‘The LORD, He *is* the God! The LORD, He *is* the God.’” Notice, ***the*** God, not ***a*** God. So, an opinion about God is worthless! A religious supposition and philosophical belief or opinion about God is worthless, because God *is* God based on the very fact that He exists. And unless you come to Him with that attitude in your prayer:

- it doesn’t matter what you pray
- it doesn’t matter how many times you beat the flesh
- how many times you encircle the rosary beads
- it doesn’t matter how many times you bow down to an idol of the virgin Mary or an icon
- it doesn’t matter how many times you go to Mecca
- it doesn’t matter how many times you spin the Buddhist prayer wheel
- it doesn’t matter how many times you put a prayer on a piece of paper and stick it into the wailing wall

—***God is not going to hear!***

Notice what else Elijah did, and Christ is going to do this when He returns. If all of these false priests and prophets and ministers that survive through all the tribulation till Christ and His saints put their feet on the earth, if they do not repent they’re going to be slain! It’s that simple. ***No more opinions about God when Christ returns!*** No room for opinion, that’s when every knee is going to bow to Christ—right? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 40: “And Elijah said to them, ‘Take the prophets of Baal. Do not let one of them escape.’

And they took them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and killed them there. And Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go up, eat and drink because of the *sound of plenty of rain*’” (vs 40-41).

And you can read the rest of the story. Elijah got up there and prayed seven times and his servants said, ‘OOO, I see a cloud in the west.’ Elijah said, ‘Run!’ And out of that little cloud came a great fire, and then Elijah’s humanness showed up—after this great confrontation, after his simple 20-second prayer, after the destruction of all the prophets of Baal in the grove, Elijah got discouraged and feared Jezebel and ran for his life down to Mt. Horeb and hid himself in a cave. ***So even the servants of God have their weaknesses!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References

- 1) Hebrews 11:6
- 2) Matthew 6:1-8
- 3) Matthew 23:4-14
- 4) Isaiah 44:9-20
- 5) Isaiah 45:20-25
- 6) Isaiah 46:1-10
- 7) I Kings 18:17-22, 26-41

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Philippians 2
- Revelation 1 & 21
- 1 Kings 18: 23-25

#### Also referenced:

##### Books:

- *The Inclusive New Testament*
- *Word Biblical Commentary*
- *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown
- *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*

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## Keys to Answered Prayer II Why Prayers Are Not Answered

Fred R. Coulter

Let's look at it and see why prayers are not answered and what it is about human nature that somehow after God blesses you, you begin to fail. And it's right there in human nature—the whole thing. Think of this: a lot of people would say, 'Well, if I could see God then I would believe. If I could see some miracles then I would sure obey Him. And if I knew that He was present with me all the time I surely would pray to Him every day. I would have no problem praying.' Well, let's see, because there was a time in history when that occurred.

Let's come to Psalm 78; let's look at their behavior. This is when God was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and was there in the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. Moses was right there, and we're going to go through it in some detail—because what it does, it shows something very, very important about human nature. Human nature wants the blessings of God without obedience. People want God to recognize them, to answer their prayers, to do things for them in spite of their behavior. It's much like the criminal. Some of the most vicious murderers, when they're finally caught, what do they say when the police surround them? "*Don't shoot! Don't shoot!*" Yet, they wiped out a good number of people—snuffed out their lives.

We might go though a good part of this because this shows how human nature is; and even though today we're converted and have God's Holy Spirit, we're also going to see that there are problems that people who have the Holy Spirit have, because they're still too self-willed, and it causes lack of answer in their prayers.

Psalm 78:1: "Give ear, O My people, to My law; incline your ears to the words of My mouth. I will open My mouth in a parable; I will speak dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generations to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He has done, for He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children; so that the generation to come might know *them*, children which shall be born; and they shall arise and tell *them* to their children, so that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and might not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a

generation that did not set their heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful with God" (vs 1-8).

There are a lot of people that way. Just like I said last time, there are many, many people who have just enough religion so they can be accepted in the world—not too extreme, not too different—and just enough religion so when they get in trouble or when things go wrong they can cry out to God and God is supposed to rescue them. That's exactly what happened with 9/11—wasn't it? As soon as it hit, boy, the churches were full, the synagogues were full, God Bless America, and then as soon as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell the next day said, 'It came because of the sins of the people,' boy, they got lambasted and blackballed and kicked off the network until they became good submissive boys again.

Verse 9: "The children of Ephraim, armed shooters of bows, turned back in the day of battle." That's when they found out the news that when they wouldn't accept that God was ready to take them into the 'promised land' and the 12 spies came back after searching out the land for 40 days, and said, 'Oh, we can't do it, the cities are walled up and there are giants.' Only Caleb and Joshua said, 'No, God will fight for us.' So, they boo-hoed all night and said they wouldn't go—refused to go. God said, 'All right, you're not going in.' Then they said, 'We've sinned! We're going to go in.' Moses said, 'Don't go up.' They went up and they got beaten back.

Verse 10: "**They did not keep the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law.**" Think about that for a minute.

- Do you walk in the laws of God?
- Do you walk in the commandments of God?
- Do you accept?

*or*

- Do you believe what you are told that Jesus abolished the law?

*or*

- Do you believe what you are told: 'Well, it's all right worship on Sunday because Jesus rose on that day.'

*Both of those are not true!* So you're refusing to walk in the Law of God.

Verse 11: "And they forgot His works and His wonders which He had shown them." Go back and you read all the plagues, all the signs, all the wonders, the destruction of the firstborn, walking

through the Red Sea as on dry land and all the miracles that God did, the sending of manna, the sending of quail and everything like that. You'd think that would convince them—right? *No! No!*

Verse 12: “He did marvelous things in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through; and He made the waters to stand in a heap. And in the daytime He led them with a cloud and all the night with a light of fire. He split the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink, as from the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers.” (vs 12-16).

They all got on their knees along side that newly created river and drank and thanked God and raised their arms to heaven saying, ‘Oh God, thank You for the water. We know that You’re watching over us. We praise You for Your goodness.’ *No!*

Verse 17: “**Yet, they continued to sin still more against Him by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking food for their lust**” (vs 17-18). You can read that in Exo. 16, and the book of Numbers.

Instead of coming to Moses and saying, ‘Moses, we’re so grateful God has brought us out, we know this is a difficult journey, thank you for yielding to God, that He would use you to lead us and we’re really hungry, we really would like to have some flesh and we know that God can do everything, so would you pray for us and pray with us that God would send us some meat?’ No, they came and said, ‘Why did you drag us out here in this wilderness to kill us.’

Verse 19: “Yea, they spoke against God; they said, ‘Can God set a table in the wilderness?... [Remember this: there are two Scriptures which say, ‘Nothing is impossible for God.’] (What did he do?): ...Behold, He struck the rock so that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed! Can He also give bread? Can He provide flesh for His people?’ Therefore, the LORD heard and was furious; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel because they did not believe in God and did not trust in His salvation” (vs 19-22).

They wanted a ‘hip-pocket’ God, much like a rabbit’s foot. When they need help, they can reach back and they can pull God out of their pocket and kind of shake it like a rabbit’s foot and they’re going to have good luck, God would have to obey them. *Well, not so!* If you want your prayers answered you’ve got to trust God, you’ve got to believe God. Don’t accuse Him. Don’t be angry with Him. Maybe

you don’t understand the circumstances in your life. That’s fine, confess that you don’t understand the circumstances in your life. Lay it before God and ask Him to give you understanding. Don’t come with anger and hatefulness and bitterness and accusing God like they did to Moses and Aaron: ‘You drug us out here.’ And what did God say to them? ‘Well, they’re not complaining against you, they’re complaining against Me!’ They didn’t trust God, didn’t believe Him.

Here’s a principle that applies Old Testament/New Testament, Hebrews 11:6: “Now, without faith *it is impossible to please God...*”

- you’ve got to have faith
- you’ve got to believe
- you’ve got to trust

“...For it is mandatory... [*on God’s conditions*—not on man’s conditions; after all, Who’s Creator? *God is!*] ...for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (v 6). Not complain, not gripe, not accuse God as they did. Here’s a great lesson for us.

Psalm 78:22: “Because they did not believe in God and did not trust in His salvation, though He had commanded the clouds from above...” (vs 22-23). Don’t you think they should have been thankful every day for clouds to cover them in the desert? Have you ever walked in the desert? Go out and take a leisurely stroll without any covering upon you at 110° and after you’ve gone about a mile or two you’re going to be saying, ‘Man, I wished I had some kind of covering.’ Well, God gave it. He gave the cloud every day. You need that. That was God’s protection.

“...and had opened the doors of heaven; and He had rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the grain of heaven. Man ate the food of angels; He sent them meat to the full” (vs 23-25). That’s something—*isn’t it?* What happened? After a while they said, ‘Oh, we’re so sick and tired of this manna. We boil it. We bake it. We deep-fry it. We beat it. We eat it raw. And all we have is this manna. Manna, manna, manna everywhere and no meat.

Verse 26: “He caused an east wind to blow in heaven, and by His power He brought in the south wind. And He also rained flesh upon them like dust, and winged birds like the sand of the sea; and He let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their tents. So they ate and were filled to the full, for He gave them that which they craved. They were not turned away from their lust... [it was all *lust*] ...but while their food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and killed the strongest of them, and struck down the chosen men of Israel” (vs 26-31).

Now, if you see all that happening around you, you'd think you'd fall down on your knees and repent, cry out to God. Think about it for a minute. What if it happened to your husband or your wife? *You lived and they died because of their rebellion against God.* What would you do? Would you still fall on your knees and say, 'Oh God, forgive us'?

Verse 32: "For all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works. Therefore, He ended their days in vanity and their years in terror. When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they turned back and sought after God earnestly" (vs 32-34). That's why there are disasters and things that come. People want it peaceful so that they can continue in their sins. When God corrects them because of their sins then they return to God for a *short* while.

Verse 35: "And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High God was their Redeemer. Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouths, and they lied to Him with their tongues, for their heart was not steadfast with Him; neither were they faithful in His covenant. But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; yea, many times He turned His anger away and did not stir up all His wrath, for He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away and does not come again. How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert? And still again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (vs 35-41).

Well, you can read all the rest of it there; it goes all the way through. That's quite a Psalm! When you read this and go through it, ask yourself:

- Does this describe me?
- Do I believe God?
- Do I trust God?

Always, in all circumstances, at all times, whether things are good or bad? And if you think you've had it bad, go read the book of Jeremiah and see what he went through. Then read the book of Ezekiel after that and see what he went through. That was something!

Job 35, where Elihu is talking to Job, and Elihu is speaking the words of God. Let's look at the other side of the coin: What if you're religious? What if you believe in Jesus? The New Testament shows that you have to believe in Jesus the way Jesus said to believe in Him—so you need to think about that. What if you go to a nice Sunday-keeping church? Well, Job was righteous in the letter of the law—probably much more righteous than most religious people today who confess Christianity. So much so that he couldn't see his own sins. If you're a Sunday-keeper, try this on for size and see how it

fits. Test your reaction. The Bible shows conclusively that Sunday-keeping is a sin and against God and if you worship Jesus on Sunday, as your official day of worship, you're worshipping Him in vain. Now, you think about that! Oh, you have your righteousness. You have a set of standards. You have a moral behavior that you ascribe to—don't you? *Yes, indeed!* So, listen to the words of Elihu to Job:

Job 35:1: "And Elihu answered and said [to Job], "Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, "My righteousness *is* more than God's?"'" (vs 1-2). Do you not do that when you reject the Holy Sabbath of God, which He said to 'remember it, to keep it Holy'? And do you not say, 'My righteousness of Sunday is greater than God's on the Sabbath'? What if you have an idol and you read the commandment where it says about not making idols, not bowing down to them. But you say, 'Well, God accepts this because my 'holy father' told me it's okay. Or my archbishop told me it was okay.

Verse 3: "For you say, "What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?" I will answer your words, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds; they are higher than you. If you sin, what do you do against Him? Or *if* your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him [God]?... [God has commanded His righteousness] ... Or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness *may hurt* a man like yourself; and your righteousness *may profit* the son of man" (vs 3-8).

Yes, in a physical world it's better than being a criminal. But does it profit you *spiritually* before God? Does it add to the answering of your prayers? Remember this: When the book of Job started, what was he doing? *He was praying to God for his children and he was offering sacrifices on their behalf just in case they might sin!*

Verse 9: "By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out; they cry out because of the *powerful* arm of the mighty. But none says, 'Where *is* God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night; Who teaches us more than the animals of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?' There they cry, but He gives no answer, because of the pride of evildoers" (vs 9-12). Here's the key, why prayers are not answered.

Jesus said, 'Don't do your alms in public.' Don't pray in public. Don't make a pretense of long prayers. And what do we see on television? *That very thing*—don't we? *Yes, indeed!* They have their reward.

God says, through Elihu, talking to Job, v

13: “**Surely God will not hear vanity**, neither will the Almighty regard it.... [that’s why God didn’t answer Job] ...How *much less* when you say you do not see Him! The cause *is* before Him; you must wait for Him. And now because it is not so, He has visited in anger yet he does not understand even his great extremity. Therefore, does Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplies *his* words without knowledge” (vs 13-16).

Now let’s look at some more ‘religious’ people. What if you have all kinds of ‘religious’ assemblies? If you belong to a church and you have jobs and assignments to do in your church and you have Wednesday night Bible study, you have Sunday morning services, you have Sunday afternoon services, you have Sunday School; or if you’re a Catholic you go to Mass; or if you’re a Muslim you go to the mosque on Friday; if you’re a Jew you go to the synagogue on Saturday—whatever it may be—if you’re a Hindu you can worship any day of the week, whatever.

What if you have all kinds of ‘religious’ things? Let’s go to Isaiah 66, then we’ll come back to Isaiah, the first chapter. What if you have a beautiful, beautiful brand new building? What if you have like one of the largest Sunday-keeping churches in Houston, Texas, where they have three services of 16,000 a piece on Sunday? You have it all decorated or as those who know what happened in building a house for God in Pasadena, and the lesson we need to learn from this is, when you read and study the Bible, since God really didn’t want a temple in the first place,. Everyone who built a temple to God got himself in trouble. Here’s why: when you look to the physical things and the physical things alone, you’re missing the whole point.

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Because *if you build it*, He says]: ... For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD....” (vs 1-2). Can man make a temple that is fitting for God, just by using the things that God has created? *Well, God let them go ahead and build the temple and you know what happened!* Here’s what God is interested in more, because the truth is, every human being was created to be a mini-temple of God for the Spirit of God.

This is why He says this: ...‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word” (v-2). That’s what God is interested in more than anything else. And that’s very important in relationship to answered prayer—that your heart is right with God.

Remember this: ***God is always right! God is always true!*** If you come to God with this kind of heart and this kind of mind, a repentant attitude, of course, He’s going to hear you. But on the other hand, even though God let them build the temple, even though He gave them all the sacrifices, even though He gave them all these things, if their hearts weren’t right, what did it matter? That’s what’s important.

That’s why prayers are not answered, because *people’s hearts are not right*. That’s why the first thing we need to do in any prayer—after we glorify God and His name—is repent of our sins and our vanity, our stupidity, our self-willedness and all this sort of thing that we have as human beings. If not, if you’re just doing it for the ritual, or if you’re just doing it for show—and I imagine rich people came in and they bought all kinds of sacrifices and had them done. Other people have said, ‘Oh, did you see so-and-so? Did you know that he brought in 200 bullocks? Come on over, let’s eat them, everybody come.’

But if you’re heart isn’t right, v 3: “He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog’s neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine’s blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol....” All those things God said to do—didn’t He?

But if your heart’s not right, look at what it is: “...Yea, **they have chosen their own ways...**” (v 3). That’s the key! You don’t come to God and say, ‘God, You accept my way.’ God’s answer may be, ‘It’s My way, or the highway’—just to use a little modern colloquialism here.

“...and their soul delights in their abominations... [idols, illicit sex behavior, etc.—sins] (Here’s what happens; here’s why prayers are not answered): ...I also will choose their delusions... [because you’re not willing to repent] ...and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, no one answered...” (vs 3-4). When did God call you? Or send a message to you? Maybe it was when you were in trouble. Maybe it was a warning when He rescued you from some disastrous situation. Maybe it was when you heard the Truth and you turned and went the other way.

“...when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight” (v 4).

Let’s come back to Isaiah, the first chapter, because here’s a whole religious thing going on. People delight in their religion. {see sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}. There are a lot of ‘religious’ people out there. Many different kinds of religions, but have they brought peace to the world? Have they brought peace to their countries? Have they brought peace to their people? *No, they haven’t!*

Isaiah 1—you read the first nine verses and understand that it's talking about our country today. And think about it and meditate on it a long time. And if you're a religious person, then think about what he has to say here.

Isaiah 1:10: "Hear the Word of the LORD..." That's the first place to begin. What is the Word of the Lord? *It's contained in the Holy Bible!* Those are His words. So, if you don't read it, how are you going to hear the Word of the Lord?

"...rulers of Sodom; give ear to the Law of our God, people of Gomorrah. 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?' says the LORD. 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats'" (vs 10-11). Yet, He commanded it. Why? *Because they came there to do it to try and force their way upon God—not in a repentant attitude.* They had all kinds of religious ceremonies going on.

Verse 12: "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?... [What did they do?] ...Bring no more vain sacrifices... [God won't hear vanity.] ...incense is an abomination unto Me—new moons and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies..." (vs 12-13). Let's think about this:

- Did God command those things to be kept? *Yes!*
- What if people didn't keep them the way that they should?
- What if they didn't keep them in the attitude they ought to?
- What if they were there for their own purposes, rather than serving God? *This is the way of Cain!*

"...I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly! **Your** new moons... [so they had their own pagan new moons that they did] ...and your appointed feasts **My soul hates**..." (vs 13-14).

Let me make it very clear and plain. If you come to God on Sunday, that's not the day that God chose. If you celebrate Christmas and Easter and New Years and Halloween and all the pagan holidays, those are the days God said *not* to keep. {Note book, *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?*} God hates those things. We're getting closer to Halloween—aren't we? And as a matter of fact, I think within about a week we're going to start seeing Halloween things in the store and about five days after that, you're going to see all the Christmas stuff coming out. Are you merchandised with that? Do you think that's 'religious'? The people who keep it, are they not 'religious'? Are they not devoted? *Yes!* But that's not what God said to keep.

What if you keep the Holy Days of God, but you keep them on the wrong day because you're so self-willed you have to have your own calendar that you go out and gaze at the moon? And let me assure you this: Whenever you think you see the new moon, you're always late—guaranteed!

God says, v 14: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them*. And when you spread forth your hands... [that is to pray] ...I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, **I will not hear; your hands are full of blood**" (vs 14-15).

I couldn't help but think of that as I was coming today, and I always turn on the news station to get the traffic report to see if there's a problem ahead on the way down. All they were talking about were murders, killings, finding dead bodies, and yet, look at how many 'religious' people there are. If you said the way to stop that is gather the whole city together, call a day of prayer and fasting, teach them the Ten Commandments of God, tell them this is how you ought to live: love God, love your neighbor, do no harm to him, and your crime problem will disappear.

- Oh, we've got to have a separation of church and state.
- Oh, we have to diversity with the homosexuals.
- Oh, we can't talk against the Muslims.
- Oh, we can't talk against this person.
- Oh, can't talk against that person.

They can point out all your mistakes, but if you dare show them one of their mistakes, hey, you're in deep trouble. This is why God puts this here. How many people are willing to listen to it? 'Oh, we want to pray. We want to be good people.' *No, you don't! You want your own way!* That's what God is saying here.

So, here's what God says, v 16: "Wash yourselves... [through the blood of Christ, through repentance] ...make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil... [What is evil? *Transgressing of the commandments of God—Ten Commandments of God—plus many of the other commandments of God.*] ...learn to do well... [Doing well does not come naturally; you have to learn from God's way.] ...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD..." (vs 16-18). God wants you to come.

- How do you reason before God?
- Like Job?

- ✓God, why don't you recognize my righteousness?
- ✓God, why don't you accept my Sunday?
- ✓God, why don't you accept my Christmas?

Verse 18: “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are as scarlet...’” *Sin is the transgression of the law.* Sin defined from the Greek is: *sin is lawlessness*, which means you reject the laws and commandments of God and replace it with your own!

“...they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **If** ... [So God gives a condition] ...you be **willing** and **obedient**, you shall eat the good of the land...” (vs 18-19). This war on terror is fighting the effects, and the more you fight the effects, the more dedicated that the terrorists become because they have been raised up by God as an instrument of correction. So, without going to the real cause—which is:

- sin
  - rejecting God
  - rejecting His Sabbaths
  - rejecting His Holy Days
  - rejecting the true sacrifice of Jesus Christ
- there will be no let-up.* Now, think about it today:
- What do we have today in the news?
    - ✓fires in the Northwest
    - ✓flood in the Southwest
    - ✓drought in the middle of Texas and Oklahoma
    - ✓tornadoes up through the Midwest
    - ✓flooding in Ohio and the Northeast
  - What else do we have?
    - ✓Another hurricane developing in the Caribbean!
  - Where is it going to land?
  - Will it hit New Orleans again?

If you read Deut. 28, God says that He does all these things *because of sin*. That's to say nothing of all the sickness and disease *because of sin*.

- Will you follow in the footsteps of ancient Israel?
- Continue to rebel?
- How are you going to have your prayers answered if you do?

God says, v 20: “‘But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword;’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*.” ***It's going to happen!*** All the things that we think are political problems are really theological problems.

Now let's see what happens with complacent people who have been blessed materially. God gave a warning for this.

(go to the next track)

Deuteronomy 8 was given to the Israelites just before they went into the ‘promised land’—because God wanted them to go in there. After wandering in the desert 40 years, everyone over 20 years died and was buried in the wilderness. Now their children were going in. The whole chapter here is really quite a tremendous warning against the laxity of human nature; and, a warning that you need to learn from your trials and difficulties that you have experienced.

Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to do* **that you may live**, and multiply and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness...” (vs 1-2). How were they to remember it? *It was written down! They were to read it! They were to study it!*

Isn't it interesting that many of the things in the Old Testament people don't read anymore? They're told, ‘We don't need the Old Testament.’ Even some Catholics are told, ‘We don't even need the Bible to preach the Gospel.’ Well the truth is what they preach is not from the Bible, so it's true, they don't need it. It's not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's not the teaching of God. You're to remember; that's why we're to read and study.

“...these forty years in the wilderness...” (v 2). What is the purpose of every trial and difficulty that comes along? No one likes trials. No one likes difficulties. No one likes these things coming, but they do come. And living in this world and living the way that the world is today, they're going to be all around us on every side things that we don't even have a contribution to or are responsible for.

Just like Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah. He was frustrated every day with their behavior. Only problem is he should have moved before God had to take him out of there. Now, why do you go through it? Just like with Job

“...in order **to** <sup>#{1}</sup>**humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart**... [That's what God wants to know in every case, what's in your heart] ...**whether you would keep His commandments or not**. And He <sup>#{2}</sup>**humbled** you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*... [In other words, they had no experience with it before it came.] ...so that He might make you know...” (vs 2-3). Here is the whole key thing that goes clear back to where we started in Heb. 11:6—got to believe God, rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. These are repeated by Jesus in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4.

“...so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone... [not by food, not by the physical things] ...**but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live**” (v 3). Now, that’s why we have the Bible and the Word of God, so we know what God says.

If there’s any change in what God has done from the Old Testament to the New Testament, or from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, He lets it be known—we know what it is. We cannot of ourselves arbitrarily take it to ourselves to eliminate the Word of God or change the Word of God or add to the Word of God. We have to live “...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God...” And Jesus was God manifested in the flesh so that includes what He said. That’s why He repeated it there in Matthew and in Luke.

Verse 4: “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. And you shall consider in your heart...” (vs 4-5). God wants a relationship with you in prayer based upon your heart *of loving God, believing God, humbling yourself before God*, and so forth.

“...that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you.... [that’s why these things come, that we can learn from them] ...And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him, for the LORD your God brings you into a good land...” (vs 5-7). He gave them the good life, and everyone today wants the good life—right? Every ad on television is to make you happy, to make you richer, to make you wiser, to make you more abundant, whatever it may be.

Verse 7: “For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness. You shall not lack any *thing* in it...” (vs 7-9).

I always think of that when I go to the supermarket. Everybody goes—if you go to one of these warehouse places like Costco or Sam’s Club—people come out with their baskets heaping with everything, overflowing with everything. Today people in poverty live in a house or an apartment. They have television, a refrigerator, a stove, a car in many cases—sometimes two cars, and they’re poverty ridden. No they’re not, it’s all just by comparison.

You need to realize the whole world is not like we are. You go to some places like South America and Africa, their street is a trail which you

walk on. And if you’re lucky you can ride a bike on it. They don’t have refrigerators, they don’t have electricity, they don’t have all of these things right at their fingertips. So, we’ve been blessed! We have more than any other people in the history of the world! And we’re getting more and more trouble. Why? ***Because we’ve forgotten God!*** And yet, people go to church on Sunday. People say they believe in God. But more and more are saying they really don’t believe the Bible is the Word of God. Here’s the warning.

- Have you eaten without scarceness of food? *Yes!*
- Does that apply to you? *Yes, indeed!*
- Do you really lack anything? You might desire a lot of things, but do you really lack anything.
- Are you spoiled?

One good measure of that is: Open up your closet filled with clothes and then say, ‘I have nothing to wear.’ Or you look on the floor of your closet and there are dozens of pairs of shoes. If you’re Imelda Marcos you have 3500 pairs of shoes and you say, ‘I don’t have a shoe to wear.’ Or you go to cupboard and it has so many things in it, you say, ‘Well, I’m hungry for something, I don’t know what it is. Not this, not that, not the other thing.’

“...You shall not lack any *thing* in it.... [in addition to that]: ...*It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper.... [God expects us to use the things out of the land that He created] ...**When you have eaten and are full...** [this is where a lot of people are today] ...**then you shall bless the LORD your God** for the good land, which He has given you” (vs 9-10).

Be thankful to God. But how many people are spoiled brats because they have so many things? How many kids growing up today are just absolutely, incredibly spoiled? How many tantrums do you see in the stores because the kids don’t get their candy or their sucker, or go down and shop at the North Pole at Macys for Christmas and they don’t get what they want so they have a temper tantrum there?

Verse 11: “Beware [warning] that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today.” Isn’t that the first thing that people do? *Yea, even Christians who are ‘rich and are full and rich and increased with goods’*—isn’t that what they do? (Rev. 3)—*they forget God and look to the physical things* and say, ‘Hey, everything’s kool. Everything’s good.’

You think God is going to answer those prayers when you forget God? You’ve got time to do

everything else in the world, but you don't have time to pray to God. You've got time to do everything else you need to do in your life, but you can't take a half-hour to study. You can't take a half-hour to pray. Oh, you can spend a lot of time on the phone talking to people. You can spend hours watching all kinds of sports. You can watch soap operas. You can watch News-Watch... ***but you don't pray!*** And then when you pray, you expect God to answer you because you pray? **"Lest you forget God!"**

Comment was made that shopping in a upscale grocery store in Monterey, the rich people from Carmel and Pebble Beach come in and they buy anything they want and they're just haughty and so forth in what they're doing from their appearance—which ties right in here:

Verse 12: "Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, so **that He might** <sup>[#3]</sup>**humble you...**" (vs 12-16). There it is the third time—right? God will look to this one 'who has a humble spirit and a contrite heart'—right? *Yes!*

"...and that He might prove you to do you good at your latter end" (v 16). God wants to give you even more, *if* your attitude and heart are right. So, don't ever accuse God of not wanting to do good for you, because He does. All of our trials and difficulties are to do us good in our latter end—right? *Yes!*

Verse 17: "Beware lest you say in your heart... [Doesn't this sound an awful lot like Job, that we discussed earlier?] ...'My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth.'"

When we come to the end of the year and talk about tithes and offerings, we're going to talk about this very situation again right here, because isn't that what we've done as people in the western civilization? We're industrious! We're inventive! 'We, by our power have done this. We, by our power have done that. Oh, God helped us, but *we* did it.'

Then to see the arrogance of some people, not only forgetting God, but rejecting God and see atheists on television bragging that they don't believe in God. Who are they worshipping?

*Themselves! Their minds!* God will deal with them. That's what happens; that holds back prayers from being answered because you're looking to the physical things—you're trusting in the physical things. If God blesses you that's fine, thank God for it. But don't trust in it; don't sit back and say, 'Well'—like the one man in the parable there in the book of Luke, after God blessed him.

Luke 12:13: "Then one from the multitude said to Him, 'Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'" I tell you what, you want to know when greed and lust and covetousness comes out? *When mom and dad die and the kids share the estate. Yes!*

Verse 14: "But He said to him, 'Man, who has appointed Me a judge or a divider over you?' And He said to them, 'Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness, for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses.'" (vs 14-15).

I don't know about your house, but I know about my house, it's filled with many, many things. But we need to understand they are only things, and they can come and go just as quickly, as with the snap of the fingers. Or you can, like all the Pharaohs—all the wealth they buried with them, thieves got it! Did they go to heaven? *No, they are still there and they are still dead and they didn't eat one bit of the food they put in there.* Today when you're buried, it's only you and the casket. None of your goods go in there. So, watch out for covetousness.

Verse 16: "Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly.... ['Yes, God blessed me. Oh, this is wonderful.'] ...And he was reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?'... ['I got all this surplus around me.'] ...And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater *ones*, and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I will say to my soul, [Re-tire!] "Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink *and* be merry'" (vs 16-19). That's exactly the image portrayed of people today.

Verse 20: "But God said to him, 'Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?' So *shall it be* to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (vs 20-21). That's the whole beef that Jesus has with the Laodicean church—rich and increased with goods, have need of nothing and don't pray and don't study and don't take the Word of God seriously, but want all the blessings of God! And then squawk and scream when trials and difficulties come because

they don't do it, and say: 'God, why are You doing this?' Well, read the book, *He tells you why*—read the book!

So Deut. 8 and Luke 12 has really quite a lesson for us in the way of physical goods. One of the reasons why prayers are not answered—the major reason—is *you look to the physical things and you think that God is blessing you because of it*. Let me give you one other thing that you need to consider. Let's come to Luke, the fourth chapter.

Satan cannot bless you the way that God blesses you, but Satan will reward you *abundantly* if you worship him.

Luke 4:4: "But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.'" Then the devil led Him up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world **in a moment of time**" (vs 4-5).

Today you could kind of think of this like one of these TV shows, that people come in and if they do the right thing they're going to win the prize. They're going to get the car, get the yacht, get the home, get the money. Or like with the lotto, you know, win \$56-million! Or you could hit the power-ball lotto: \$310-million!

Verse 6: "And the devil said to Him, 'I will give you all this authority, and the glory of them *all*; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I desire.... [Satan will reward you! Yes, if you serve him he'll reward you! But later God will punish you.] ...Therefore, if You will worship me in *my* presence... [that is worship him as God] ...all things shall be Yours'" (vs 6-7). So, in covetousness and physical things people look to those.

Now let's visit a Protestant church in Isaiah 30, or visit a false 'Christian' church. You don't dare want to 'rock the boat.' You don't dare want to cause problems. Just speak good things, smooth things, encouraging things. Now there are times for that.

Isaiah 30:8: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book... [It's here—isn't it? We're reading it!] ...so that it may be for the time to come forever and ever... [the latter days] ...That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children. They are children who will not hear the law of the LORD" (vs 8-9).

You try this: If you're a Sunday-keeping minister, stand up in your pulpit if you believe in the Sabbath and tell them all that you're going to have services not on Sunday anymore, but on the seventh-day Sabbath. Expect everyone to come. Then you're

going to find out how rebellious the people really are. Because here's what they say:

Verse 10: "Who say to the seers, 'See not' ... [‘Oh, don't read that Scripture.] ...and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things, **speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions.**'" Just tell us how good we are, how wonderful we are. 'Oh, we're God's people. If you attend this church you're surely going to be in the rapture and miss the Great Tribulation.' *No you're not!* Because what they do, when you bring in your own way.

Here's what you tell God, v 11: "go out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.'.... [God has a message for you]: ...Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel, 'Because you have despised this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely on them; therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. And He shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that *is* smashed in pieces. He shall not spare, so that there shall not be found in the fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water out of the pit'" (vs 11-14).

We're in a time in our history—in this nation, in the western civilization, and in the Churches of God and all professing Christian religions combined with it—we better hear the Word of the Lord. We better repent and yield to God.

Now let's see what happens when you become super-religious and really get involved in some of these things. Want to know why prayers are not heard, look at the society around us. Let's go back here to Isa. 58 for the super-religious. We'll compare this for the super-religious with the wicked society that they live in. Because we've created the false thing, you can have your religion, but have it in your home and have it in your church, don't dare bring it in this society. 'We want our murders. We want our crime. We want our homosexuality. We want our whoredoms.' They don't say it exactly that way, but that's what they're saying.

Isaiah 58:1: "Cry aloud, do not spare ... [that's what God says we're supposed to do] ...lift up your voice like a ram's horn, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.... [‘Oh, but we're religious, good people.'] ...Yet, they seek Me daily, and seem eager to know My ways... [they claim] ...as a nation that did righteousness, and one that did not forget the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they seem eager to draw near to God" (vs 1-2). So, they're very religious. Just tie that in where we covered earlier in Isa. 1.

Verse 3: “*They say, ‘Why have we fasted, and You do not see? Why have we afflicted our soul and You take no knowledge?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you pursue your business and exploit all your workers. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness; you cannot fast as you do this day, and expect to make your voice to be heard on high”* (vs 3-4).

You’re not going to make God hear just because you’re religious. If you’re not seeking God’s way and doing His will, why should He hear you? You parents: What if you have rebellious children that never listen to you? Are you willing to do things for them? Or does it turn you off, and after a while you say, ‘No, no more, no more!’ Yes! Well, how does God feel when you say, ‘Oh, God, I love my Sunday, but I hate Your Sabbath. Oh, Christmas is the greatest time of the year, and Halloween is such fun for children—not knowing that you’re drinking out of the cauldron of Satan’s way, which is all glitterous. And look at the society that we have created.

Isaiah 59:1—does this not describe our society and western civilization very, very well? *Yes, indeed!* “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that it cannot hear.” God doesn’t have a hearing problem. He doesn’t have a short arm. But what separates you from God?

Verse 2: “But your iniquities... [Which is sin, the ‘transgression of the law’] ...have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, **will not hear.**” That’s why prayers aren’t answered, *because*

- you want your own way
- you want your own sin
- you want to define *to God* what sin is

rather than let God define to you what He says sin is.

Verse 3: “For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness.” Sounds like channel-surfing on Direct TV with 450 channels and there’s nothing on but sin, wretchedness and debauchery. I know I sat down with someone who had Direct TV and I said, ‘Ok, let me test it out. I went through 278 channels—**278!**—it took me the better part of 45 minutes to do it, just to see what was on. There it is, right there. Look at any of the movies. Do they promote violence, hatred?

Verse 4: “None calls for justice... [they call for justice—their own kind, *but not God’s*] ...nor does anyone plead for Truth... [Only their *truth*—only what they want to accept and allow.] ... they trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive

mischief and bring forth iniquity.” It’s exactly what’s happening.

Verse 5: “They hatch adders’ eggs and weave the spider’s web; he who eats their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become clothing, nor shall they cover themselves with their works; their works *are* works of iniquity, and the acts of violence *are* in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood... [This sounds like the Middle East—doesn’t it?] ...their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. They have not known the way of peace, and *there is* no justice in their ways. They have made crooked paths for themselves; whoever goes therein shall not know peace” (vs 5-8).

The next few verses bring this out: I wonder what’s wrong with the society that we have all of these things going wrong. They get ‘experts’ in there: What do you think? *or* What’s your opinion? Not one of them says, ‘*You’re sinners against God!*’ They were trying to analyze this latest thing on Jonbenet Ramsey and the fellow who supposedly confessed of it. Those who are supposed to be talking about why people get into sex problems like so many people are today. They don’t dare condemn it! Prayers aren’t heard because God won’t answer!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 78:1-22
- 2) Hebrews 11:6
- 3) Psalm 78:22-41
- 4) Job 35:1-16
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 6) Isaiah 1:10-20
- 7) Deuteronomy 8:1-17
- 8) Luke 12:13-21
- 9) Luke 4:4-7
- 10) Isaiah 30:8-14
- 11) Isaiah 58:1-4
- 12) Isaiah 59:1-8

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 16
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy 28
- Matthew 4:4
- Revelation 3

#### Also referenced:

- Sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*
- Book: *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days, Which?* by Fred R. Coulter

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## Keys to Answered Prayer III Pray & Live By God's Will

Fred R. Coulter

Let's first do a little overview of a couple of things; let's come to Matthew 6—Jesus was telling them, 'Don't pray like the heathen...' (v 6). So, you look at all the other religions of the world and you look at everything that they do and that's a good clue on *how not to pray*—actually, a direct command by Christ.

Here's another important thing to understand as far as believing God and answer to your prayers. "...for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him." (v 8) God knows! But He wants us to ask and we're going to see how we begin asking, and what we need to do and how we need to do it.

### Key I. Pray and live according to God's will

We find this right here beginning in Matthew 6:9: "Therefore, you are to pray after this manner..." This does not mean, as is assumed by the world, that you just memorize the prayer and that's what you pray. This is an outline prayer, and we'll see a little later when we examine some of the Psalms, that it follows right along with this outline. So, this is an outline prayer.

Luke 11 is a parallel account of this and this is where the disciples came to Jesus asking Him about prayer. Luke 11:1: "Now, it came to pass *that* as He was praying in a certain place..." We find that Jesus would go and pray, He would leave the disciples and go pray in a private place. One account is He went up into a mountain to pray. Here He was "...praying in a certain place..." It doesn't tell us what this place is, so we don't know where it is.

"...when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples'" (v 1).

We're going to see that praying is one of the most vital things that we can do. As a matter of fact, it is the #1 vital thing in our spiritual lives that we do. ***Absolutely the #1!*** And you've heard it over and over again through the years, I'm sure: *prayer and study!* And that's like saying food and water—in a physical sense. So, you have to be taught how to pray. Prayer does not come just as a matter of recourse, just a matter of automatically doing it.

Verse 2: "And He said to them, 'When you pray, say, "Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your Kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth.'" We

will save the physical things until later, so we're going to concentrate on the spiritual things

Matthew 6:9: "Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: 'Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name.'" That means it is Holy! It is sanctified! That the name that God the Father revealed to us, through Jesus Christ, is the Father. This does not mean that we get all involved in sacred names, because the New Testament shows that there are two sacred names that we use: The Father—God the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ, and the third would be *Lord*, because He is our Lord.

Verse 10: "Your kingdom come..." This is the whole summation of the Bible, and it's the whole focus on what we are to be doing.

Verse 33—see how Jesus ends this chapter: "But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." That's a very interesting verse when you analyze it. ***We're always seeking first the Kingdom of God. That's the purpose and will of God; also, His righteousness!*** That means we are to come to have the very righteousness of God, and this comes through prayer and study and living. That's why the first key is ***pray and live according to God's will.***

Here again, this is paramount to understand, Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect... [that means you shall *become* perfect; perfection takes time] ...even as... [here's the goal—look at the perfection here] ...your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." So, we have seeking the Kingdom of God first; we have that overall goal—that is the vision—and the book of Proverbs tells us: 'Where there is no vision the people perish.' We have to keep that foremost in our minds—not all the other things—*foremost*, because God has called us to enter into His kingdom. "Therefore, you shall be perfect even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." That's a tremendous, high goal—*isn't it?* And so, when we pray the first thing we do is *acknowledge* God. We can:

- praise His name
- praise His greatness
- praise His righteousness
- praise His goodness
- praise His mercy
- praise His forgiveness

—and all of these things that come from the Father.

Then we focus on the kingdom; we will see this as we go through other aspects of this in this series. The whole goal is the Kingdom of God on

earth; not just when Christ returns, but the Kingdom of God reaches out into the Universe, as well. So, you have to include this, expand what you're thinking of this, and expand it out to Rev. 20 & 21, because that's when the full spiritual Kingdom of God, with all the sons of God now in the Kingdom of God as spirit beings, and we have the new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem. ***This is the goal!*** "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And we need to understand: God's will is always being done in both places. And God's will falls into two categories:

**1. To work with His saints and qualify them for eternal life**

It is the Father Who qualifies us. And I know in the book that I wrote, *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?*, someone asked me: "What do I mean that they have to qualify for salvation?" Well, what I mean by that is this: *They have to qualify through Jesus Christ and God the Father*, because, obviously, we cannot earn salvation, we cannot earn eternal life.

Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it... [that they were walking in the spirit and the love of God] ...[we] **do not cease to pray for you...**" Here we have another instruction in how to pray. You pray for the brethren.

- you pray for their growth
- you pray for their increase
- you pray for their love
- you pray for their healing

—all of those things according to the will of God.

"...and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will..." (v 9). We need to know the will of God. The will of God is contained *in the Bible!* Just make sure you have a Bible that sticks to the original Hebrew and Greek.]

"...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [this is how we are to learn to grow and everything] ...that you may walk worthily of the Lord... [we are to be walking in His way—that's all part of it—living, walking in the ways of God] ...unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy" (vs 9-11).

What this does, this also layers our attitude and our goal and our purpose of praying. So, you can see when we analyze Matt. 6 that there is a whole lot that comes from the rest of the Bible into it, showing again that Matt. 6 is only an outline.

Verse 12: "Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light." God is the One Who qualifies us. ***Prayer is one of the most important tools and spiritual growth mechanism***—that is really not a mechanism because you don't want to reduce it down to a machine—tools, spiritual tools. When we pray to the Father, and hallow His name, all of these things come into it. "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Number one: *To qualify the saints for eternal life for the resurrection.*

**2. God's will is still being done while evil is going on**

Not that He's the author of evil—*He is not!* Satan the devil is. Sinners out there are receiving the will of God with His punishment and with His judgment. Just take a look at all of the lives that reject God and what happens to them? Just think about it for a minute! Look at the world. If you don't love God—as we're going to see that's all part of it—and keep His commandments, that's living by God's will—is it God's will? As we saw in Matt. 6:33, we're to *seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*. His righteousness is defined

- by His commandments
- by the Word of God
- by His laws
- by His commandments
- by His statutes
- by His judgments

*All of that is the righteousness of God.*

Even the judgment of the wicked is a righteous judgment as we find in Rev. 16. The sinners out here think they reject God, go on their way, but lo and behold, how does the world turn out? Well, we already saw that: full of lies and cheating, wars, murders, drugs, illicit sex, homosexuality, hatefulness, deceitfulness. Cheating—all of *the works of the flesh*. And they have their god.

It's very interesting! We're going to see a little bit later, but it just came to mind, many of the richest men in the world do not believe in God. Why are they rich if they don't believe in God? They have a god whom they are serving. They think that they are serving themselves, but if you reject God and you're an atheist there is another spirit being who can reward you. Let's see it right here.

Matthew 4:8: "After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory... [This is what people strive after: money, power, fame, sex, all translated into politics and business and false religions.] ...And [he] said to Him, 'All

these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me” (vs 8-9). There are people who will openly worship Satan the devil, and they know that they do. They think that he is the real God and he has deceived them into believing that the REAL God is the evil god.

Let's see another way that God is working out His will. This becomes important. Let's look at the kingdoms of this world that are going to become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ when He returns. Daniel, the fourth chapter, tells us something very important: God's will is being done, even in the kingdoms of men, even in those that He raises up for instruments of punishment or instruments of war against His people. Now, we've already covered a lot of that with the WWII *war on terror*.

Daniel 4 is Nebuchadnezzar and he had a dream, and the dream came from God, though he was a pagan. God does deal with the leaders of the world regardless of their religion. He had the dream and in verse seven he called the magicians, astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers and they couldn't tell him what the dream was, nor the interpretation of it. So, when God gives them a dream, all the satanic forces cannot interpret it for them. You see that over and over again in the Bible. It was a prophecy of what was going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar himself, because he would get all lifted up in his vanity, and Daniel came and told him the dream.

Daniel 4:16: “Let his heart be changed from a man's and a beast's heart be given to him. And let seven times... [seven years] ...pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy ones...” (vs 16-17). Those are the angels and God the Father and Jesus Christ intervening in the kingdoms of this world. So, when we pray *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* what goes on on the earth is according to the will of God in heaven; because this originated where? *In heaven, at God's throne!* And He told the angels who rule over this world what was going to be.

Here's the purpose: “...so that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets up over it the basest of men” (vs 16-17).

How does that square with Matt. 4, where Satan says, ‘I have all of these and I give it to whomsoever I will’? It falls this way: ***Satan cannot do one thing without God's permission***—not a single thing! God uses Satan as a tool in His hands and Satan thinks that he is eventually going to get all power and the upper hand on God—***but it isn't going to be!*** What happened—just like that—Daniel gave the interpretation of the dream. Let's understand that in the end-time we have *Babylon the*

*Great, which rules the whole world*. This also is prophetic of the coming Beast who's going to rule the whole world.

So, Daniel gave the interpretation, v 24: “This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High... [That's carrying out the will of God—isn't it?] ...which has come upon my lord the king, that you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and you shall be made to eat grass like oxen. And you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you **until you know** that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He will” (vs 24-25).

You think about what's happening in the world. Men want to have a world government. They're going to get it sooner or later. They think that will solve their problems. But it's only going to compound them and make them worse. And they are going to be directly under the most evil, wicked man in the history of the world, and under the direct power and influence of Satan the devil. So, you have the two fulfillments of the will of God: in the lives of the saints and in the world; the kingdoms of this world.

Verse 26: “And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots, your kingdom *shall be* sure to you after you shall have known that the heavens do rule. Therefore, O king, let my advice be pleasing to you... [he was giving the will of God] ...and break off your sins by righteousness...” (vs 26-27)—called him to repentance.

We'll see how important repentance is for prayer as we progress through this series.

“...and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, so there may be lengthening of your prosperity.’.... [He got the message. But did he listen?] ... All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, ‘Is this not great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence by the might of **my** power and for the glory of **my** majesty?’” (vs 27-30).

People get all wrapped up in themselves, thinking how great they are; and what great things they can do. Listen, we only live because God created the earth, He made us and gave us food and water and air to breathe. We would all be dead in just seconds if we didn't breathe. So, if you do anything or accomplish anything, *thank God for it*, go on from there, don't get lifted up in it. If you do a good job, fine! If it works out good, fine! If it doesn't, then correct it and move on.

Verse 31: “While the word was *yet* in the

king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven, saying, 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken. The kingdom has departed from you. And you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over you **until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills.**' (vs 31-32). *God's will is being done everywhere, at all times, in all places on the earth and in heaven.* So, when we come to God and say, 'Your will be done' it means in the world, it means in our lives.

Verse 33: "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar..." I don't know what happened. Did he fall down and start foaming at the mouth and become just crazy? Sounds like it—doesn't it?

"...And he was driven from men..." (v 33). Imagine that! Just sent out to a pasture. Maybe lived in a little hut in a pasture. Here's the great king with all the glory, with all the power that God gave the whole civilized world in the Middle East into his hand. Even had him as the instrumentality to correct Judah and bring them into captivity.

"...and ate grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of the heavens until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers... [great stringing down masses of hair] ...and his nails like birds' claws" (v 33). Can you imagine not cutting your fingernails for seven years? I saw a picture of man in India who did not cut his fingernails and they grew around like a snail's shell. It was just absolutely awful, and he had the long hair. When I saw that I thought *there's Nebuchadnezzar!* I imagine he look just like it.

Now notice the effect that it had, v 34: "And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High..." Isn't that exactly what Jesus said, 'Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name'? *Yes!*

- bless God
- praise God
- thank God
- love God

"...and I praised and honored Him Who lives forever, for His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation" (v 34). This is all important for us to understand: When we come to pray that we have in our mind the understanding of God's power, the understanding of God's dominion, the understanding of the righteousness of God, the love of God, the mercy of God—all of these things come with it.

Verse 35: "And all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing... [note Isa. 40, because it says 'we're all like grasshoppers and the nations are like a drop in the bucket'] ... and He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And **none can stay His hand**, or say unto Him, 'What are You doing?'" This puts us in a proper perspective in relationship with God in our attitude when we begin praying.

It's the same as the reference to the potter and the clay. The potter is going to make what he's going to make. If the clay is cooperative and supple and can be worked, he can make it into a beautiful thing. If it's not, smashes it down, maybe puts some more water in it, works it around, kind of like a personal trial, you're rubbed. Working clay like that is kind of like kneading bread. If you knead it right, you get a good quality of bread. Same way with clay, you've got to knead it, you have to fold it, you have to water it—then it's ready, fine tuning.

It also says that's why 'He hardens whom He will harden and have mercy unto whom He will have mercy.' To execute His will. Let's just understand this: ***There's not one thing that's going to go against the will of God!*** Though He gives us free choice, He says: 'I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life that you and your seed may live. That you may love the Lord your God.' So we choose. When we choose to go God's way, His will is executed toward us for the perfection toward eternal life and the resurrection. When we reject God and go the way of the world and Satan, His will is executed according to that. And always remember that there is repentance because what we are going to read next is Nebuchadnezzar's repentance.

Verse 36: "At that time my reason returned to me.... [He probably looked down and said, 'Ghastly! Look at this: the fingernails, the hair, the dirt, the beard, the eyebrows.] ...And the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me...."

'Oh yes, king, we see you're well.' Oh bow and scrape and do obeisance. 'May I cut your fingernails?' *Oh yes, by all means.* 'May I cut your hair?' *Yes.* 'Would you like to take a bath?' *Yes.* 'Let's trim your beard down.' *Sounds like a good idea. Where is a tub of hot water?*

You can read all of that in there. And then he put on his royal garments again and everyone came around doing obeisance: 'Yes, lord, what would you like, my lord the king?' You can just hear it. They 'sought unto me' bowing and scraping and all of those who had ideas of taking over while he was insane were probably there just wishing that

they could have executed it. But God said his kingdom would be secure.

"...and I was established in my kingdom, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are Truth and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase" (vs 36-37).

***You're not going to go before God and have Him endorse your will.*** That's the most important thing to remember in answered prayer. If you do, God's answer is probably going to be *no*. Just like Job's experience, he had to be humbled and come to see the power and greatness of God, and to repent. How do you know what the will of God is? He expects you to go by His will. Well, we've said it is in the Bible—didn't we?

Psalm 143:10: "Teach me... [How does God teach us? *Through His Word, with His Spirit and through life-circumstances.*] ...to do Your will... [it is implied, *not my will*] ...for You *are* my God; may Your good Spirit... [it's God's Spirit doing the teaching] ...lead me on level ground of uprightness." See how that ties in with Matt. 6:33: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." {Note John 6:45; we are all taught by the Father.}

We'll look at this and examine that a little bit more. This is a prophecy of Jesus, we'll read this again a little bit later—Psalm 40:8: "I **delight** to do Your will..." Think about that!

- Is it God's will that we keep the Sabbath? *Yes!*
- Do you delight in it?
- Is it God's will that we keep His Passover and Holy Days? *Yes!*
- Do you delight in it?
- Is it God's will that we live by the Ten Commandments? *Yes!*
- Do you delight in it?
- Is it God's will that with His Spirit He puts in you, His love, His truth, His laws, His commandments written right in the very heart and table of your mind? *Yes!*

If that's so, ***you delight to do it.*** Doesn't He say in Isa. 56 that if we call the Sabbath honorable and delight in it then He will make the Sabbath a good thing for us.

If you don't want to keep the commandments of God, but you do it because God says so; or you do it because the preacher says so and you'd really rather be out there playing baseball or football or fishing or watching sports, *you're not*

*delighting* to do the will of God! ***You have to delight to do it!***

(go to the next track)

Now let's see Jesus Christ, our example, and come to Hebrews, the tenth chapter, and we'll pick up the quote of it there, what we read in Psa. 40. And again, we're focusing on the will of God. Let's see how Jesus followed the will of God. How did He live when He was in the flesh? Remember, He took upon Him human nature, subject to sin, subject to death. Let's see how He lived His life.

Hebrews 10:5: "For this reason, when He comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but You have prepared a body for Me.' Jesus did not offer one single sacrifice at the temple. Whenever He went to the temple He was teaching and witnessing to the people and against the religious leaders there.

Verse 6: "'You did not delight in burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin.... [We've already seen that, haven't we, in Isa. 66.] ...Then said I, 'Lo, I come (*as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book*) to do Your will, O God.'" (vs 6-7). {see sermon series: Hebrews, note #27 because that is a special one on the covenant that was between God the Father and Jesus Christ, while Jesus was in the flesh on the earth.}

Verse 8: "In the saying above, *he said*, 'Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin (which are offered according to the law) You did not desire nor delight in'; then He said, 'Lo, I come to do Your will, O God'...." (vs 8-9). That's all included:

- *Your will be done*—in my life
- *Your will be done* in the lives of your saints
- *Your will be done* in the world

'I delight to do Your will, O God.'

"...He takes away the first *covenant* in order that He may establish the second *covenant*. By **Whose will**... [again, the will of God, the will of Christ Who willingly died for us] ...**we are sanctified**... [set aside for a Holy purpose, Holy life and eternal life] ...through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**" (vs 9-10).

I just read a quote from Bishop Spong who says it's silly for us to believe that Jesus died for our sins. And he's supposed to be a high, mucky-muck Episcopalian bishop. Notice, v 11: "Now every high priest stands ministering day-by-day, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which are never able to remove sins; But He [Jesus], after offering one sacrifice for sins... [of Himself] ...forever... [that is all sin for all time] ...sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since that time, He is waiting until His

enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified” (vs 11-14). Very interesting—isn't it? That goes right back to what we started. We are to be 'perfect as our Father in heaven in perfect'—and that comes through Christ.

Let's see how Jesus continually did the will of the Father. He delighted to do it. All of these things become important because it shows us how when we ask God for His will to be done in heaven as well as on earth, that we understand how it's done. This is after He healed the man who had the infirmity for 38 years, and the scribes and Pharisees were all upset because He told him to 'pick up your bedroll and walk.' It's like picking up a sleeping bag.

John 5:17: "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I work.' So then, on account of this *saying*, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, not only because He had loosed the Sabbath, but also *because* He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.... [they understood exactly what He was saying] ...Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, **the Son has no power to do anything of Himself...** [it all came from the Father] ...but only what He sees the Father do, for whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner" (vs 17-19).

Verse 30: "I have no power to do anything of Myself..." This is the way we need to look at it in the things that we do.

- God gives us life
- God gives us breath
- He's given us our minds
- He's given us our bodies

Everything that we do is because God has given us the power to do it—likewise, spiritually. This is why it's so insane for ministers and teacher and preachers and evangelists to get all lifted up in vanity and to how great they are, *because they're not!*

Look at Jesus, Who was God before He became a human being. Look at His attitude. He didn't say, 'Well, you ought to recognize Me. I'm God in the flesh.' No!

He says. v 30: "I have no power to do anything of Myself... [and *of* comes from the Greek "ek" meaning *out from within*—just His own fleshly body.] ...but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me." He delighted to do the will of God. Everything He did was seeking the will of God. This is all included when we ask God that His will be done.

Let's see what Jesus said. Who does He look to? Who is important to Jesus? We're going to see, yes, you're important to Jesus. Mark 3:31: "Then *His* brothers..." He did have brothers. The Catholic Bible, because they have to uphold the false doctrine of the virginity of Mary, perpetual virginity, that she never had children, that they ignore the verses in Mark 6; let's see where it talks about the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Mark 6:1: "And He left there and came into His *own* country, and His disciples followed Him. Now when the Sabbath day came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and many *of those* who heard Him were astonished, saying, 'From where did this *man* get these things? And what *is* this wisdom that has been given to Him, that by His hands many miracles are done also? Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and **the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?** And are not **His sisters** here with us?' And they were offended in Him" (vs 1-3).

Since God is a family, it's obvious that Jesus also grew up in a family, having brothers and sisters. Mark 3:31: "Then *His* brothers and His mother came and were standing outside; *and* they sent to Him, calling Him.... [that is sent a message calling for Him] ...And the multitude sat around Him; and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers *are* outside; *and* they are seeking You.'" (vs 31-32). He immediately dropped everything that He did and ran out and talked to them. That would be the human way of doing it—right? *No, He didn't do that.*

Verse 33: "But He answered them, saying... [People could take this as an insult, but it isn't. It is a profound spiritual lesson.] ...'Who is My mother and *who are* My brothers?' And He looked around at those who were sitting in a circle around Him, *and* said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers... [all the people there] ..**for whosoever shall do the will of God...** [this tells you whether you are a brother or sister of Christ] ...**that one is My brother, and My sister, and mother**'" (vs 33-35). He wouldn't say that unless they were really His brothers and His sisters and His mother. And we know, of course, that Mary was there (Acts 1) when the 120 disciples all got together after Jesus was ascended to heaven.

Again, we're focusing on the will of God. How you know what the will of God is. How you determine the will of God. Well, it's all contained in the Scriptures. We also come to the point: once we know and understand that, we know that it is of God. As we are to grow in the will and knowledge and grace of God, then we learn to make the decisions and evaluate things according to God's way.

John 7:14: "But then, about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was

teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?' Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me' (vs 14-16).

He didn't even saying anything that the Father didn't want Him to say. He didn't do anything that the Father didn't want Him to do. Always sought the will of the Father. As we saw, 'I delight to do Your will, O God.' We need to translate that to our lives. Do we delight to do the will of God?

Verse 17: "If anyone desires to do His will... [You have to have the desire.] ...he shall know of the doctrine [teaching], **whether it is from God, or whether I speak from My own self.**" That's why we are to prove all things. That's why whatever we do must be based on the Truth of the Word of God. Notice that this verse (17) starts out with 'IF' you desire. So, it has to come from *within*. It's not a demand.

- God is not going to meet your demand.
- God is not going to do your will.
- God is not going to honor your thoughts.

Verse 18: "The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory... [to build his own kingdom, to build his own following, to have his own pet doctrine] ...but He Who seeks the glory of Him Who sent Him is true... [He's talking about Himself] ...and there is no unrighteousness in Him." So that's how Jesus lived His life, and He lived His life that way unto the end, didn't He?

Even in the most trying circumstances, and a lot of people misunderstand why Jesus said what He said here when He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane just before He was arrested.

Luke 22:40: "And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, 'Pray *that you* do not enter into temptation. And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, saying, 'Father, **if You are willing**... [if this was a last minute thing] ...to take away this cup from Me—; nevertheless... [regardless of the consequences that He faced] ...**not My will, but Your will be done.**'" (vs 40-42). And that's what we are to pray in the model prayer—right? 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' *Yes!* So Jesus was true to the end.

Let's begin translating this into things that we need to do; and how we incorporate this into our lives; and how led of the Holy Spirit of God—we'll get to that in just a minute—we will see now what is the will of God in our lives. We've seen it in the world with the sinful and the wicked. We've seen some admonitions for us. We've seen it in Jesus' life. Now let's look at it here in *our* lives.

Ephesians 5:17: "For this reason, do not be foolish... [of course, if you're seeking your own will you're being foolish] ...but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*." That's why we study so we know what the will of the Lord is. We're not to go around saying: 'Your will be done. Oh God, I wonder what Your will is?'

When we pray for God's blessings, we don't exactly know what God's will is, but for our good, *always!* Whether it is even a trial or it is a difficulty that we're confronted with, it is always for our own good. The way that God has made us is this: When we go through a trial, and after we get out to the other side of it what do we see? *We see the reason for it!* Many times going through it, the only thing we can do is in faith and trust God and ask God His will be done. That's perfect, spiritual, 20/20 hindsight. That's what God wants us, how He wants us, to understand. But He wants us to do this: Are we willing to continue in the will of God until we understand it? That's the whole point. And sometimes you will have some heavy things laid upon you. And when they are, you just have to go to God and say, 'Oh God, please give me understanding. Give me help. Give me strength. Please intervene and take care of these things for us.'

Now let's come over here to Ephesians 6:5<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>—and let's apply this spiritually to us. It is for servants and slaves in those days as to what they were to do. "Servants, obey *your* masters according to the flesh with reverence and trembling in singleness of heart, as unto Christ... [that's how we're to do everything that we do] ...Not *merely* with eye service, as *do* pleasers of men; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God **from the heart**. Do service with goodwill, *as* to the Lord, and not to men" (vs 5-7). This is how we need to run our lives, live our lives. Let's look at it this way: We are servants of Christ—right? Christ is our Master, therefore, we're not going to do things to show-off to men. But it's with singleness of heart to Christ. ***One thought, one mind, one purpose, one goal!*** Now let's see how this works.

- What is the most important foundation of the will of God for us?
- How does that work in our lives?
- How does that relate to prayer?
- Is it the will of God that you keep His commandments? *Yes!*

To delight to do His will. The Ten Commandments **express** the will of God for us, as a major trunk of the tree how we're to live.

John 14:21: "The one who has My commandments... [It's not just enough to have them. A lot of people can memorize them, but they don't keep them.] ...and **is keeping them**... [present

tense, ongoing way of living—that's the will of God] ...that is the one who loves Me..."

And we know there in 1-John 5:3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome."

- When you understand the purpose of the Sabbath, *it's not a burden.*
- When you understand the purpose of the Passover and the Holy Days, *it's not a burden.*
- When you understand living by every Word of God, *it's not a burden.*
- Now, there may be some difficulties in the world. But *it's not a burden.*

John 14:21: "...that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father..." What more could you have in your life? What greater assurance can you have than God the Father loving you? In all circumstances? At all times? Loving you so much that He will reveal even your sins to you that you can repent of them and He can forgive them. That He loves you.

"...and I [Jesus] will love him... [Jesus loves you, too. With that there is nothing greater in the world in your life than the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ for you—and you loving them, and then, of course, love the brethren.] ...and will manifest Myself to him."

How does God manifest Himself? How does Jesus manifest Himself to you? Did you one night, while you were sleeping, wake up and have a vision that said, 'I'm Jesus, I'm manifesting Myself to you'? *No! He manifests Himself to you through His Word.* What happened in your life one day that God began to deal with you? And what happened in your life that you began to really want to know the will of God and His Word? That's how God began to deal with you. That's how He manifests Himself to you.

Verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, Lord, what has happened that you are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" How can You do that? How can God/Christ, manifest Himself to you, individually, and nobody else around you may even understand it?

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word [commandments]... [that's how Jesus manifests Himself to you. It begins with the commandments and everything else from there.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'" We've covered that with receiving the Holy Spirit of God. You were made to

receive the Holy Spirit of God—this is how it comes.

Notice on the other hand, v 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My Words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me." That's why He said, 'If you reject Me and My words, you've rejected the One Who sent Me.'

You think about what an awesome thing that is to reject God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's why prayer is so important. And (as we're going to see) that's why prayer is necessary every day. If you think eating is necessary every day. Drinking water is necessary every day. How about breathing—necessary every minute, right? I dare say there would be very few among us who could hold our breath for one whole minute—60 seconds—I doubt that. That shows you how dependent you are on God—right? *Yes!* So, those who are so dependent on God, God in His mercy still sends the rain and the sunshine and food for the evil and the unthankful—doesn't He? *Yes!* That's how God even loves His enemies. That's how God loves the whole world. But He has special love for those that He has called, and it's expressed this way.

Verse 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name... [according to the will of God] ...this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Let's understand this: all prayers are not answered instantly. Some are. Some take a long time. Some take a lot of endurance and persevering in prayers.

Verse 14: "If you ask anything in My name, **I will do it.** If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: even the Spirit of the Truth..." (vs 14-17).

***Receiving the Holy Spirit of God by begetting from the Father is the greatest thing that can happen to you in this life!*** And that's why prayer becomes so important. Let's see how this is to be in our lives. And this is the most important thing that we need to do and understand and realize, and help us maintain our relationship from prayer, full relationship and attitude with God.

Mark 12:29: "Then Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" This is the first commandment'" (vs 29-30). That is the greatest expression of the will of God, because then you have a relationship with God,

and *prayer is the tool* of maintaining that relationship with God.

Human nature's funny, and we all have human nature. Human nature does this:

- I should pray
- I'll pray later
- I'll get around to it

Then you get a guilty conscience because you haven't prayed and you know you need to pray and you know you want to pray, but your human nature says, 'Well, not yet. Get yourself right with God before you go pray.' Tell me, how can you get yourself right with God before you pray?—**unless you pray and repent!**

It's kind of like the squirrel in the cage, keeps going around and around and around with carnal thinking. That's why Jesus rose early in the morning and prayed. That's why it has to become a habit in your life. We're going to see later on Paul said, 'Pray without ceasing'—and we'll understand what that means. That's surely not repeating 'Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...' You're not going around repeating that like a broken record.

Here's the attitude we need to come to, Psa. 119. This is one of the great goals of life, as well as the great goal of being in the Kingdom of God, as well as the great goal of eternal life. Here is the pathway to eternal life with God's Spirit. Notice David's attitude in this prayer:

Psalm 119:123: "Mine eyes fail for Your salvation..." In other words, there's nothing greater than the salvation of God. What is it going to be like to have a spirit body, a spirit mind, and be glorified and live for ever. There's nothing on this earth. "...Mine eyes fail for Your salvation..." In other words, it is so great that the eye cannot see the great salvation that God has.

"...and for the Word of Your righteousness. Deal with Your servant according unto Your mercy... [This also gives us an understanding of how to pray to God.] ...and teach me Your statutes. I *am* Your servant; give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies" (vs 123-125). All of this fits in with *to learn the will of God; to be taught the will of God.*

Verse 126: "It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your law. Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (vs 126-128). We come to the point in our lives concerning the will of God that we esteem

everything, all things of God, to be right in everything that there is—every precept.

You will notice as you go through each section there are 22 sections of 8 verses—and 8 is the number of perfection and new beginning. In other words, symbolically this is saying: *here are the steps to your new life*, that's what it's saying. When we come to the point that we do everything that way, then we are going to want to pray. We're going to have a desire to pray. We are not going to look at it as a duty. We're not going to look at it as putting in clock-time. People will say: 'I haven't been praying. I'll put a clock and pray for an hour.' So, you go in and pray five minutes and it seems like an eternity and you look at the clock and say, 'Five minutes!' *No!* If you have the right attitude, the right way.

We're going to see that God is there. He desires to answer our prayers. He wants to hear our prayers. He wants to hear our praise to Him. All the Proverbs are great because it's right and wrong, black and white, Truth and evil, righteousness and goodness vs evil and iniquity.

Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD..." I can't help but think of that when I was watching John Paul II's funeral, and everything that they did. Oh how righteous it was. You know what Jesus said, 'If you do your righteousness out in the open you've had your reward.' Hey, they had their reward! The whole world saw them!

**"...but the prayer of the upright is his delight."**

- Can God delight in you? *Yes!*
- Does He love you? *Yes!*
- Is prayer important for that relationship? *Yes!*

Verse 9: "The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD: but He loves him who pursues righteousness."

Verse 28: "The heart of the righteous studies to answer..." That gets into the realm of studying. It says in the New Testament: 'Give an answer to those who ask of the hope that lies within.' How are you going to do that unless you study?

"...but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.... [Enough said!] ...The LORD *is* far from the wicked: but He hears the prayer of the righteous" (vs 28-29). ***God hears you!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:8
- 2) Luke 11:1-2
- 3) Matthew 6:9-10, 33
- 4) Matthew 5:48
- 5) Colossians 1:9-12
- 6) Matthew 4:8-9
- 7) Daniel 4:16-17, 24-37
- 8) Psalm 143:10
- 9) Psalm 40:8
- 10) Hebrews 10:5-14
- 11) John 5:17-19, 30
- 12) Mark 3:31
- 13) Mark 6:1-3
- 14) Mark 3:31-35
- 15) John 7:14-18
- 16) Luke 22:40-42
- 17) Ephesians 5:17
- 18) Ephesians 6:5-7
- 19) John 14:21
- 20) John 5:3
- 21) John 14:21-24. 13-17
- 22) Mark 12:29-30
- 23) Psalm 119:123-128
- 24) Proverbs 15:8-9, 28-29

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6:7
- Revelation 20; 21; 16
- Isaiah 40
- John 6:45
- Isaiah 56; 66
- Acts 1

Also referenced:

Book: *Occult Holiday or God's Holy Days, Which?*  
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## Keys to Answered Prayer IV Believe God/Believe His Word #1

Fred R. Coulter

Let's just look at a couple of more Scriptures concerning the *will of God*—because the will of God may not necessarily be just showers of blessings from above. The will of God may be something where you're required to go through a trial, or you're required to do different things, and we may have to suffer some very severe consequences. But regardless of that, we need to do the will of God.

1-Peter 3:11: "Let him avoid evil, and let him *continually* practice good.... [under all circumstances] ...Let him seek peace, and let him *earnestly* pursue it, because the eyes of *the Lord are on the righteous*, and His ears *are open* to their **supplications**.... [an intense and earnest prayer, in pleading to God] ...But *the face of the Lord is against those who practice evil*. And *is there* anyone who will harm you if you be followers of that which *is good*?" (vs 11-13). The answer *is yes!* But in an ordinary society, where you don't have terrorists, where you don't have atheists, where you don't have haters of God—which is not our society today—they're looking after to those who do good.

Verse 14: "Now, on the other hand, if you do undergo suffering for the sake of righteousness, *you are blessed*.... [always remember this: **Jesus suffered to save us!**] ...But you should not be afraid of their terror, *and* you should not let yourselves be intimidated; but sanctify the Lord God in your own hearts, and always *be* prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope *that is* in you, with meekness and reverence; having a good conscience, that, whereas they may speak against you as evil doers, those who are reviling your good way of life in Christ may be ashamed" (vs 14-16). That shame may not come until later.

Verse 17: "For *it is* better, if *it is* the will of God... [remember part 3 was: *Pray and Live According to God's Will*] ...if *it is* the will of God *for you* to suffer while doing good than *to suffer for* doing evil... [then He reminds them]: ...because Christ indeed once suffered for sins, *the Just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God; on the one hand, He was put to death in *the flesh*; but on the other hand, He was made alive by the Spirit" (vs 17-18). This is what we need to always keep in mind. And always keep in mind the new situations that whether we live or whether we die we belong to God.

I think I just mentioned this a little bit last time, but let's read in Daniel, the third chapter—the

will of God—what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego told King Nebuchadnezzar. Now this is also kind of prophetic with the coming image of *the beast* and *mark of the beast*, where he made a great image.

Daniel 3:1: "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits... [105 feet tall] ...and its breadth six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon." He sent and gathered all the chief 'mucky-mucks' of the empire and brought them there—all of the governors and judges and so forth—and made a dedication to the image (v 2 *paraphrased*).

Verse 4: "Then a herald cried aloud, 'To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages... [this is why it's prophetic for the coming *beast*.] ...at the time you hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, zither, the lyre, harp, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you shall fall down... [bow down on your face] ...and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up'" (vs 4-5). When they heard it, they bowed down they worshiped the image. However, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't do it.

Verse 8: "Then at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews." They said, 'Look, they're not obeying you, they're not bowing down at the sound of the music.'

Verse 12: "There are certain Jews, whom you have set over the business of the province of Babylon..." They're saying: 'Look, you put them in charge. And of course, we want to be in charge, so we want to get rid of them, so we're turning them in.' There's nothing new in politics—right? Sounds like Washington D.C., or any government in the world today—right?

"...Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. These men, O king, do not heed you. They do not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up.' Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and fury commanded them to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said to them, '*Is it true*, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego that you do not serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up?'" (vs 12-14).

Think of all the time, all of the labor, all the effort, all the expense! Can you imagine overlaying that image with gold 105 feet high! The thought just occurred to me: Isn't that about the same height of

the obelisk in Washington D.C.—which, by the way, came from Egypt.

So, he gave them a chance, v 15: “Now, if you are ready, at the time you hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, zither, the lyre, harp, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music fall down and worship the image which I have made... [that’s good] ...But if you do not worship immediately, you shall be thrown into the middle of a burning fiery furnace. And who is that god who shall deliver you out of my hand?” ***It’s a direct challenge to God!***

Verse 16: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we *have* no need to answer a word to you on this matter. If that *is the case*, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. **But if not**, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up.’ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and the expression of his face was changed...” (vs 16-19). Just picture one of those hateful versions of Adolph Hitler ranting and raving, only just put a beard on him and kind of a Babylonian crown.

“...against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He spoke **and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated**” (v 19) They had plenty to do it; they had all the oil! It oozed out of the ground! They also had gas that came out of the ground, and I suspect where they had the worshiping of the fiery dragon in Babylon that that was set right over a gas vent and they lit it; so it constantly was burning and fire coming out of it. And, of course, superstitious people would look at it and say, ‘Ooooo, look it’s burning, burning, burning; no fuel! How’s it burning? Well, it must be burning with the Spirit of God coming out of the ground.’ You can almost hear it!

Verse 20: “And he commanded mighty men in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and to throw *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were tied up in their cloaks, their tunics, and their robes, and their *other* clothes, and were thrown into the middle of the burning fiery furnace. Then because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men... [burned them up] ... who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego *to throw them in*. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was amazed. And he rose up in haste and spoke and said to his advisers, ‘Did we not throw three men bound into the middle of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O

king.’ He answered and said, ‘Behold! I see four men loose, walking in the middle of the fire, and there is no harm done to them. And the form of the fourth is like a son of *the gods*’” (vs 20-25).

Now, there’s a good example: ***Regardless of the extremity of the circumstances, God is always with you!*** So, some of the will of God is that you may have to suffer. Some of the will of God may be, in your living, that you have to also give a witness and testimony as we find in Matt. 10—which says that God will give you what to say ‘in that same hour.’ In other words, regardless of your circumstances, wherever you are, ***God is with you!***

Verse 26: “Then Nebuchadnezzar came near the opening of the burning fiery furnace. He answered and said, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God... [Boy! He sure changed his tune—didn’t he?] ...come out and come here.’ Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came out of the middle of the fire” So, they came out—and everyone was astonished, they couldn’t believe it.

Verse 27: “And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s advisers gathered together and saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power—and the hair of their head was not singed, nor were their cloaks changed, nor had the smell of fire clung to them.” They were just enveloped in a spiritual cocoon.

Verse 28: “Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, ‘Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego Who has sent His angel and has delivered His servants who trusted in Him...’ If it’s the will of God that you suffer, that’s the way it has to be.

1-John 5:14—tie this in with Dan. 3—John is writing: “And this is the **confidence...**” [***a faith*** which we are going to cover in just a minute] ...that we... [always need to] ...have toward Him; that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” Now then, if we ask something that God is not going to grant, He still hears us but the answer will be ‘*no*.’ God does not always, with our prayers, answer ‘yes, yes, yes.’ Nor does He necessarily answer instantly. Sometimes the answers come over a period of time. It could be weeks or days or months or years. Some things need to be answered right away, such in the case of illness or an emergency that God will hear and answer you immediately then.

Verse 15: “And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.” ***This is the confidence that we need to have!***

Now let’s come to Romans 12 and we’ll finish off here with the *will of God*. One of the

greatest evils is the belief in a false Jesus that's in the world; a false god that is in the world; and that all you have to do is reject the laws of God and everything is wonderful. No, that's not the way it works. Notice how deeply involved we are to be with God, with our lives and how we are to live.

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service." There's an awful lot that we need to also understand in that. We are not to be dubbed 'Christians.' We are not to be lukewarm Christians. We are to be "...a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service."

Here's a key, v 2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world..." That's much more true than ever before. You stop and think about everything that's in the world:

- the pride of life
- lust of the eyes
- lust of the flesh

—all of those things. That's exactly what the world is run on. There has to be a conversion that takes place in our lives, which he says here:

"...but be transformed... [changed, converted, and that takes place over a period of time, that takes doing] ...**by the renewing of your mind...**" (v 2).

- you renew your mind with the Word of God
- you renew your mind with the Spirit of God
- you renew your mind **through prayer**,

—because you are praying to God, and **He does hear you, He will hear you!**

That's why daily prayer is so absolutely important! If you think it's important that you have a good meal to go to work—have a good meal for breakfast and then you go to work—**think about your spiritual life**. You need to have prayer before you go to work—every day. You need to have a time every day when you pray. Sometimes you can't do it before work. Sometimes you have to do it after work. Sometimes if you have a break you can pray during work and we'll talk about that a little bit later on about praying almost anywhere you are, because God is not restricted to a room. **God is not restricted!** Wherever we are God is with us wherever we are, so He will hear our prayers wherever we are.

"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove... [How do you 'prove' it? **By doing it!**] ...what is well pleasing and good, and **the perfect will of God**" (v 2).

A very good comment was made that with this that *Jesus was not God in the flesh* heresy that's going around in all the Churches of God—and more and more are believing in it—what you really need to understand is this: **How can you pray in Jesus' name if you don't believe who He was before He became human?**

Let me just be very blunt right here. ***If you do not believe that Jesus Christ was God before He became human and was God in the flesh while He was here, then you have joined the ranks of the Muslims and the Hindus and the Jews*** who say, 'Well, Jesus was a prophet.' You need to consider that in prayers if you do not believe in Jesus.

## **Key II—Believe What God Says, Believe God and What He says in His Word**

Believe God—God the Father and Jesus Christ—and what He says in His Word. Let's come here to John, the eighth chapter, and let's see what Jesus told the 'religious' leaders who thought they believed in God but were serving Satan the devil; who rejected Jesus Christ and were responsible for crucifying Him.

If you want to know who killed Jesus then go back and review the book, *The Day Jesus, the Christ, Died*. But here He is in John 8 *revealing* Who He was and *they knew* Who He was and *they understood* Who He was. This is important and He says this many times in the book of John. {note sermon *I AM*—because, 'I AM' is the name of God. That's what He told Moses to tell the children of Israel when Moses said, 'What do I tell them who sent me, when they ask me?' *You tell them 'I AM has sent me.'* That was the One Who became Jesus Christ. So, when Jesus talks about this you will see that in the *Faithful Version* translation that I capitalize 'I AM.'

John 8:42—read the whole chapter: "Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father...' Because if you don't accept Jesus Christ for what He is and what He says He is and where He came from, God the Father is not your Father.

"...you would love Me, because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why don't you understand My speech? Because you cannot *bear* to hear My words.... [that's why they wouldn't believe] ...You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice...." (vs 42-44). And every religion of the world is of Satan the devil, because every religion of the world is a counterfeit of God's way.

I thought it was rather ironic: the other day the pope got up and supposedly innocently quoted

that Islam was a bloody and a cruel religion. They have riots in the street and the Islamic religious leaders are saying, ‘Hypocrite! Hypocrite!’ Remember the Inquisition? ALL religions are bloody and cruel! All of them! **Because they are not of God**, they are of Satan the devil and God never sent them though they use His name. Just like they did here. {see sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}

He’s a jealous God and will have no other gods before Him. He hates ‘religion’ because they take the name of Jesus, they appropriate it, and they bring a false Jesus who couldn’t stand up to one lashing with ‘wet noodles’ let alone be beaten within an inch of His life to bear our sins! The Jesus Christ Who was on this earth was not half feminine.

- He was strong.
- He was tough.
- He was masculine.

He came to be

- the Overcomer
- the Champion
- the Hero
- the Savior

for His people. Not some little skinny thing who couldn’t hold up a balsam wood cross with a tiny little scar, with a drop of blood, with Mary His mother there looking at Him with fond eyes. *No!*

That’s why He chose fishermen. He didn’t choose monks from a monastery who are mentally incompetent. You need to know the truth about these things. You think I’m mean and nasty in saying that? Well then, you’d better go some place else and find the Truth. Now He says here that’s why they can’t bear His words.

Verse 44: “You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

And another thing that is very important in answered prayer is what He says here, because **if** you believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ, and you believe Their words, then you are going to believe that Their words are Truth! Isn’t that what Jesus said? *Yes!* You have to believe the Truth. If you go pray to God and you have your own lusts, your own desire, your own deception—*especially those of you who believe you don’t have to keep any commandments of God*—if you get answered prayer **know** that it’s not from God the Father and Jesus Christ. It may be the spirit behind the power of the false Jesus—yes, they will answer your prayers to keep you deceived. They will do signs and wonders and miracles to keep you following them!

Verse 45: “And because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me.... [What was the Truth they so hated? **That He was the Son of God!** And not just a Son, but He **was** God.] ...Which *one* of you can convict Me of sin?....” (vs 45-46). Let’s stop and think about this a minute. If you say that the commandments of God have been done away, you are convicting God of sin; Who is all righteous and has never sinned. Same way with Jesus.

“...But if I speak *the* Truth, why don’t you believe Me?... [it’s all recorded here] ...The one who is of God hears the words of God....” (vs 46-47). Do you hear the words of God? *or* Do you talk back to God, and say, ‘I don’t like this, I don’t like that, I don’t like the other thing. I won’t do this, I won’t do that, I won’t do the other thing.’ That’s what the atheists do. They create *their own* ten commandments and *reject* God. That falls into the realm of everything, not only talking and speaking in doctrine, but it falls into the realm of the Bible, changing that, changing the commentary.

Then He says: “...For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God.’ Then the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Are we not right in saying that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon. But I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. Yet I do not seek My own glory; there is One Who seeks and judges.... [God the Father] ...Truly, truly I say to you, **if anyone keeps My words...**” (vs 47-51). So, ‘believing’ also means **keeping**.

- Do you keep the words of Jesus Christ?
- Do you keep the words where Jesus said ‘the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath’? Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath Day.
- Do you keep that?
  - You don’t keep His words if you go to church on Sunday.
  - You don’t keep His words if you keep Halloween and Christmas and Easter and New Years and all the pagan holidays.

See book: *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days, Which?* You better get it and you better read it. We have a section in there: *What is a True Christian?* because anyone who believes God and keeps His commandments is labeled as a Judaizer, or seeking to have salvation by works; same attitude and things that they have here.

“...if anyone keeps My words he shall not see death forever” (v 51). That’s what the Greek means: *you will die in Adam*. It doesn’t mean *you shall never die*, as the *King James* and other translations have it.

Verse 52: “Then the Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham and the prophets died; yet, You say, “If anyone keeps My words, he shall not taste of death forever.” Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets, *who* died? Whom do You make Yourself *to be*?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father Who glorifies Me, *of Whom* you say that He is your God. Yet you have not know Him; but I know Him. And if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar, like you. But I know Him, and I keep His Word.... [now we come down to the nitty-gritty here] ...Abraham your father was overjoyed to see My day; and he saw *it*, and rejoiced’” (vs 52-56).

That tells you that he was taught a lot of things by the One Who became Jesus Christ that are not even recorded in the Old Testament. You get a glimpse of it there in Heb. 11 where it says that Abraham ‘was looking for a city whose foundation and builder was God.’

- Abraham **knew** about the coming new heavens and earth.
- he **knew** about the coming Kingdom of God on earth.
- he **knew** those things.

Verse 57: “Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not even fifty years *old*, and You have seen Abraham?’” They understood He saw Abraham. Now, how could He have seen Abraham if He didn’t exist until He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary—pray tell!

Notice Jesus’ answer, v 58: “Jesus said to the, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, **before Abraham was born, I AM.**” This is profoundly important in answered prayer. Now notice, did they understand what He said? *Absolutely!*

Verse 59: “Then they picked up stones to throw at Him.... [Why would they do that if they didn’t understand what is said? *You make Yourself to be God.*] ...But Jesus concealed Himself and went out of the temple, passing through the midst of them, and in this manner departed.” That’s quite a thing—isn’t it? If Jesus had long hair and a halo streaming over His head, He would have been easy to follow; He wouldn’t have gotten lost in the crowd.

What we’re seeing here is that the keys to answered prayer are to **live the way of God, because it is a way of life.** The world cannot understand that so they would classify us as being ‘religious.’ But if you are Christ’s and have His Spirit, then the begetting of God the Father is *in* you. You are to live God’s way! You belong to Him! *You’re not ‘religious.’*

Praying is not a ‘religious’ thing. *Praying to idols is a substitute for praying to God!* Is worshipping the demons behind the idols and not worshipping God. You cannot go into a house of idols, bow down before a statue of the virgin Mary or a crucifix of Christ and get out your little handy-dandy beads and make your laps around the beads and say that you’re worshipping God, because *you’re doing the very thing that God hates!* He’s not going to hear you. If you get an answer for it, another power answered—**not God!**

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how we are to believe God in relationship to prayers. In the Greek, *faith* is pronounced ‘pistos’; *believe* is the verb of the noun *faith*—that is pronounced ‘pisteu.’ What you’re doing in having faith is **faith is the description of the action of believing.** When you are believing, you are faithizing would be the best way to put it.

James 1 talks about faith and it talks about believing God. In believing God you have to believe:

- who He is
- what He is
- what He has done
- that He is Creator
- that He is Sovereign over everything in the entirety of the Universe

If you don’t believe that then you’re not going to have the kind of faith or belief that is necessary.

James 1:1: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which *are* in the dispersion...”

Just a little stop here. If you wrote a letter to someone, wouldn’t you know where to address it? So, if it’s to the 12 tribes in the dispersion, that means that *they knew where the supposed lost ten tribes really were*; they weren’t lost! He sent this epistle to them—right? The 12 tribes—not just to the Jews in the Diaspora, but to the 12 tribes.

He says: “...Greetings!.... [This is a challenge] ...Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials” (vs 1-2). I’m sure of this: *the joy comes after you get through it* and see what God has done. If you can count it all joy while you are going into it, then you have a better frame of mind and you can count it all joy when you’re going into a trial this way. Regardless of the circumstances, **God will work it out!** All the worry in the world is not necessarily going to solve it.

Verse 3: “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” Now let’s understand this: You want to prove God? Fine! God wants to prove you. He’s going to test your faith. ‘I believe in

Jesus. I believe that He can do anything.’ WHAMO!  
*You have a trial!* What do you believe?

Remember, Peter was the only one of the 12 apostles that had enough courage to say to Jesus when He saw Him walking on water, ‘Lord, bid me to come.’ So, He said, ‘Come!’ Peter started walking on the water; testing his faith. We’re going to talk about waves and things here in just a little bit. And what happened to Peter? *As soon as he saw the first big wave coming along he said, ‘OHHHHHHH,’ and he started to sink.* And he said, ‘Lord, save me!’

Jesus reached out His hand and got him and saved him. Peter had to *learn endurance*—didn’t he? Does God want us to endure? *Yes!* What did Jesus say? *‘The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved.’* There are two ends that are coming:

1. the end of your life before Jesus returns
2. when Jesus returns if you’re still alive

You have to endure. God is building in us ‘endurance’ through these things.

Verse 4: “But let endurance have *its* perfect work...” Don’t cut it short. Don’t get impatient, don’t run off in a huff because it didn’t work the way you wanted it to work the first time, or the second time, or the third time.

“...so that you may be perfect and complete... [that’s what God is wanting to do with you] ...not lacking in anything” (v 4). That doesn’t mean just physically, but He’s talking about spiritually and not lacking in the spiritual gifts—because he talks about wisdom.

Verse 5: “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. **But...**” (vs 5-6). That’s a 3-letter word. The other 2-letter word that causes a lot of trouble is *if*—so here’s the 3-letter word:

Verse 6: “**But** let him ask in faith, **not doubting at all...** [we’ll see how to handle doubts here in a little bit] ...because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the* sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to* and *fro*.” The bigger the storm, the more powerful the wind, the greater the waves, but it still tossed to and fro by the wind.

Verse 7: “Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.” Think of this: If you get on your knees and pray and you get up and you say to yourself, ‘Well, I don’t think God is going to answer this prayer.’ *He’s not!* or If you doubt, because God is not only proving you, but God is also looking to your faith, **and your faith must have endurance.**

Verse 7: “Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord... [What does this do?] ...*He* is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (vs 7-8). Which is a perfect description of most politicians. They go whichever way the wind is blowing, and they’re ‘double-minded and unstable in all their ways.’ So, you see why it’s important that we have faith:

- faith that is firm
- faith that is steadfast
- faith that really believes God

There are quite a few things that we can learn from this. James 2:5: “My beloved brethren, listen. Did not God Himself choose the poor of this world...” You need to understand that.

Why are you in the Church of God? If you warm a chair, are you really converted? You have to ask that question because that’s a very important thing. Especially when you look back and see how many chairs were warmed—and where are they today?

I never will forget when a man got up there and introduced the new doctrine that now it’s okay to eat unclean foods. He spoke to about 1200 people in this fantastic auditorium in Pasadena. And guess what 90% of the people did—maybe not quite 90%, but let’s say well over 50 or 60 percent of the people did? *They went out that night after Sabbath and they had shrimp and lobster and crab and ham and bacon*—just because one minister in one sermon said it’s okay to do.

- Were they converted?
- Did they believe God?
- Did they live by the words of God?
- *No! They believed a lie!*

God has chosen us personally and we need to respond to God.

“...poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom...” (v 5). Notice what James doing. He’s always pointing them toward the goal, which is the Kingdom of God on earth; and the Kingdom of God out to all the universe for all eternity.

“...**which He has promised to those who love Him?**” (v 5).

Now if you don’t love God you won’t believe Him. You can profess love. But love has to be exhibited in actions—not just in emotion. And living in a time when there’s mostly emotion today, and people just go by feelings—to have a living faith backed up by action is what’s necessary in believing God so you can have your prayers answered.

Verse 14<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?” Just thinking a good thought. So then, he gives an example:

Verse 16: “And one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it?” That’s why we need to help people who are in desperate conditions. Soon the whole world is going to be that way, and it’s going to be very tough to do.

Verse 17: “In the same way also, faith... [that is believing faith] ...**if it does not have works, is dead, by itself**”—or as the *King James* says, ‘being alone.’ The basic thrust of all Protestantism is *you believe and faith alone* is all that’s necessary.

- You don’t have to keep the commandments.
- You don’t have to keep the laws of God.
- You don’t have to keep the Sabbath.
- You don’t have to keep the Holy Days, etc., etc.

—a complete absolute lie!

Verse 18—this is the way it is in the original, here: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is*: You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through **my** works.”

- if you say you have faith in Jesus Christ then don’t pray and believe, *you don’t have faith*.
- if you say that you have faith in God and don’t keep His commandments, *you do no have faith*

*because*

- it takes faith to keep the commandments of God
- it takes believe that God said so

Verse 19: “Do you believe that God is one?....” How many people out there say, they believe in God, they believe in a Higher Power? If they truly believe there is a God—yet, fewer and fewer are really believing that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh; that He’s a the Savior of mankind, and that’s the result of beating down, beating down of the things concerning Christianity of any kind—with the full help of all of those who say the laws and commandments of God have been done away. Now there are 11%, maybe you could say that that poll was not reliable—okay, double it, only 20%. And 50 years ago they used to say this was a Christian nation.

“...you believe that God is one You do well to believe this. **Even the demons believe—and**

**tremble in fear**” (v 19). For all of those of you out there in atheist land, you don’t believe in any God, you’re not even as good as the demons—the evil, wicked spirits of this world of whom you are gladly following. They believe and tremble because they know their fate!

Verse 20—very key and important verse: “But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**?” You have to have the good works of faith. And those are keeping:

- the commandments of God
- the laws of God
- the Sabbath and Holy Days of God
- the tithing laws of God
- believing what Jesus has said
- believing that He is your Savior in the way that the Bible shows

Then he gives an example, v 21: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?” There are some things, as we will see here in just a minute, **you must back up your belief by works!** God came and said, ‘Abraham, take your only son, your only beloved son, and I want you to take him to one of the mountains of Moriah, and there I want you to offer him for a burnt offering.’ Abraham did what he was told to do. If he believed God, he was going to do what He said to do.

If you believe God that He created the Sabbath Day for man, **do you keep it?** If you don’t, you don’t believe God, and whatever Christian faith you may profess is in vain.

“...faith without works is dead! Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?” (vs 20-21). Remember what happened: right at the last minute when he was ready to take the knife and perform the sacrifice of Isaac for a burnt offering, that’s when God intervened and rescued. But he believed God all the way through! That’s what’s important to understand and realize.

Verse 22: “Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and **by works his faith was perfected**?.... [we’ll see how this comes in just a little bit] ...And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; and he was called a friend of God” (vs 22-23).

There are times when the ‘work’ that you’re required to do is to **believe God**—because He asks you to do something that is beyond your capacity to do. {note Gen. 15} also {see sermon series *Covenants of Abraham and God*, recounting the occasion when God took Abraham out at night and

showed him the stars of heaven.} He had just told Abraham, before they went outside: ‘You’re going to have son who’s going to come your own loins.’ Abraham was already 75 and his wife was, I think at that time, 65. And He waited another 25 years before He fulfilled it.

After God had promised that Abraham would have a son from his own body, and through his wife, Sarah, He took him out and said, ‘Abraham, I want you to look up here at the stars.’ So, he looked up at the stars and God said to him, ‘Are you able to number and count these stars?’ And of course, he couldn’t. And God said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ **And he believed God!** Nothing could even begin, in the fulfilling of that promise, until Isaac was born. So, there are times you believe when there is not a work to do, but when there are works to do, you do them, and that perfects your faith.

This is also a good example of *do not look at the impossible, physical circumstances about you, because God is always able to change physical circumstances.*

Romans 4:17: “(Exactly as it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’) before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are... [This is what he believed. He said, ‘If God said so, it will be!’] ...and who against hope believed in hope...” (vs 17-18). Sometimes we get right down to that. The only thing there is left is **believe** and **hope** because God said so. And in many cases, that exactly where God wants you to be **so you can believe in Him the way you ought to!**

“...in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, ‘So shall your seed be.’... [pointing to the stars of heaven] ...And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah’s womb” (vs 18-19). God did the impossible to show **by faith** and by **His action** that God will do what He has said! And this is what we need to carry with us when we come before God in prayer.

Verse 20: “And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God.” That’s how you strengthened in faith, *you give all the glory to God.* You pray for His will, you leave it in His hands, you let Him do it in His timing and His circumstance and His way. Even if things look like they’re way beyond anything that can be done.

Let’s look at it this way: God is not going to prolong the physical life of those saints who are

being perfected because His goal is to have them be faithful unto death and put them in the grave. Even though we may pray that God will raise up someone who’s on their deathbed, if God does that’s fine; but we pray according to His will. If it’s God’s will to take them and put them in the grave, in their place of safety, then that’s God’s will. They’re going to be resurrected, so the next thing they’re going to know is they’re going to hear their name called and come up out of the grave with a new body, a new mind and being spirit beings. We also need to understand that—‘giving glory to God’ is what we need to do concerning situations like that.

Verse 21: “For he was fully persuaded...” I think I gave a sermon on that long, long ago, called: *Are You Fully Persuaded?*

- Are you?
- Are you really persuaded?

or

- Is ‘religion’ convenient for you so that you can be a nicer person?

God doesn’t want us to be evil people, that’s for sure. But how many more good people in the world are there filling the Protestant pews every Sunday? **You have to be fully persuaded!**

“...that what He has promised, He is also able to do.... [has the power to do it] ...As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness” (vs 21-22).

After Isaac was born Abraham said, ‘Well, the promise of the child in the flesh is here.’ But God also promised that the physical seed would be as the sands of the seashore. Abraham lived to see Jacob born for two years. All he saw of the promise of physical seed was Isaac and Jacob as a baby—then he died.

What did God do? From Jacob came 12 sons, and from the 12 sons came the 12 tribes of Israel, and from the 12 tribes of Israel came a host of millions!—that in the end-time constitute the most powerful nations on earth. The greater promise was the promise of the stars in heaven, which then is the spiritual seed, which is what we are when we attain to the resurrection of the dead. So, I tell you, this is something!

Here’s a lesson, v 23: “But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the dead*” (vs 23-24). God imputes to His righteousness to us **IF we believe!**

Let’s see some other things *if we believe*, and then we’ll look at some other aspects of it. John 5:34: “Now, I do not receive witness from man, but I

say these things so that you may be saved.” He’s talking to the Pharisees—very important religious leaders of Judaism. He’s talking in relationship to John the Baptist. Oh yes, everyone wants to go out and be a part of something.

Speaking of John, 35: “He was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” Oh yes, this must be fulfilling of prophecy of God. So, they all went down there and what did John say? *‘You brood of vipers!. Who has warned you to flee the wrath to come?’* He called them to repentance. The political, double-minded people backed away.

Verse 36: “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time” ( vs 36-37).

And in John 3:13 it says, ‘No one has ascended to heaven.’ So, if you think that when you die your soul is going to go to heaven, you’ve got another surprise coming. It ain’t gonna go there! That’s why **prayer** is the first spiritual pillar of keys to answered prayer; belief and all the things with it. The second pillar is **study**, so you know the Word of God. You can’t know and believe the Word of God unless you study! How are you going to know unless you read what He says.

Verse 38: “And you... [all those religious leaders with all their long robes and phylacteries and all their ritual things and you] ...**do not** have His word dwelling in you...” The Word of God has got to live in you—it’s the **living** Word of God. And God says that He’s going to write His laws and commandments and statutes and judgments in our hearts and in our minds. He’s going to **inscribe** them upon our minds and hearts—a part of our very being. Isn’t it something, the religious leaders didn’t have the Word of God dwelling in them?

- How are they going to represent God if they don’t?
- How are they going to teach the way of God if they don’t?

That’s why they had their own traditions of Judaism.

“...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent” (v 38). You got to believe in Jesus. Not only believe Him, believe on Him, believe who He was and who He is.

He gives them a challenge, so you think this over, v 39: “You search the Scriptures...” Do you do that? Do you *search* the Scriptures? They undoubtedly took this as an insult because they said,

‘Well, we know the Scriptures and we know more than that. And we’ve got all these great traditions of ours which are better than the Word of God.’

“You search the Scriptures for in them you **think** that you have eternal life...” You can apply that to any so-called Christian religion of the world. You have the Bible:

- Do you read it?
- Do you search the Scriptures?

You **think** that you have eternal life and you **think** that your soul is going to heaven when you die. And the Bible everywhere teaches *the resurrection*. Why do you believe a false doctrine? *Because you don’t have the Word of God dwelling you*, just like those religious leaders. You may be religious, you may be devout, you may claim to be a Christian, **but you are not!**—anymore than these religious leaders were the followers of God.

“...you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life” (vs 39-40). You have to come to Christ. You don’t open your heart and He jumps in and you zip Him in and now you have Christ in your heart. You come to Christ *in repentance, in humility, acknowledgment of sin and ask for forgiveness.*]

Verse 41: “I do not receive glory from men.” You look at any of these religious leaders in the world—especially the top religious leaders of the world—they run around in their gowns and their hats and their capes and all of this sort of thing. Everyone is honoring them, bowing down to them, giving obedience to them. Jesus didn’t.

Verse 42: “But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.” [A lot of people say, ‘O, yes, I love the Lord. Praise the Lord, He did away with the law.’ **NO!** You don’t love Him. You don’t have a clue. You’re in spiritual ignorant land.

Verse 43: “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me...” Can you picture a little, skinny, feminine, long-haired—just weakling—saying these words: ‘Oh, I know that you don’t have the love of God in you. Oh please do.’ **NO!**

“...*but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.... [because you’re political] ...How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?” (vs 43-44). Huh! How are you?

After He got done saying all of this, He said, v 45: “Do not think that I will accuse you...” Present tense, because Moses is active and always ongoing.

If you don't believe it, look at the Ten Commandment and all the penalties that people automatically suffer because they break them.

"...to the Father. There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses, in whom you have hope. But if you believed Moses, **you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me.** And if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?" (vs 45-47).

When you come to God and have faith and belief—if you believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ—you have to believe in a substantive way, with power, with the strength of God's Holy Spirit, backed up by works, backed up by commandment-keeping. Let's talk about the Word of God, because I said, we need to *believe* in the Word of God

John 6:63: "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, *they* are spirit and *they* are life." That's why ***you have to believe what God has said and believe that God is.***

John 12:42—this is quite an interesting exchange here, between the religious leaders, the Pharisees. Remember, He called them *hypocrites*. He called them *snakes in the grass*. He called them *of their father, the devil*. You think of that in relationship to all the religions of the world. Where did they come from? Think about this for a minute, too: It's very important in prayer: Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father except through Me.' Any man who says there are many roads to God and we're all going to the same place is true only in the sense that they may all be going to the Lake of Fire to be burned up. But you're not coming to the **true** God.

Let's look at these sleazy politicians in religious garb—which many of them are. John 12:42: "But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue." 'Ohhh, you're going to put us out if we say we believe in Jesus. What'll I do? I won't have the recognition. I won't have my seat on the Sanhedrin. I won't be able to have anyone call me 'Rabbi' anymore.' But God will love you!

Verse 43: "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.... [That's why I said, you have to believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ and believe what They say—key to answered prayer!] ...And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who **believes in Me may not remain in darkness**" (vs 43-46).

Let's turn that around the other way. If you don't believe in the true Jesus, the way that the Bible says you ought to believe in Him—in faith and with God's Spirit—you are in varying degrees of darkness. If you're in the light, you're turned around and walking away from it, you're coming to the 'twilight zone.' And isn't that the music that they have—yes, you're right on your way.

Verse 47: "But if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world." At that time, He didn't come to judge the world, but He came to judge the Jews. He came to judge the Pharisees. He came to judge sinners.

Verse 48: "The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken... [When it says 'the word' that means *everything that He has ever spoken and said.*] ...that shall judge him in the last day." Whether you believe in God or not, you're going to answer to Him one day; and you're either going to repent or you're going into a lake of fire—and that's just the way that it is! And you shall be burned up, become ashes and shall never again exist. Here's the reason why:

Verse 49: "For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak.... [that's why you are to believe it] ...And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak **exactly** as the Father has told Me" (vs 49-50).

Think about this, you who don't believe in God. You reject these words! God the Father is going to judge you Himself with the very words that you reject, because you're perfectly capable of reading it.

Now let's come to Mark, the ninth chapter. This is a very interesting thing here, because what do you do when you find yourself weak in the faith? How do you solve that problem?—very key, important thing that you need to do. This is after He gave the vision of transfiguration to Peter, James and John and they were returning.

Mark 9:14: "And after returning to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and the scribes disputing with them. And all the people who saw Him ran to *Him* at once in great amazement and saluted Him. And He asked the scribes, 'What are you disputing with them?' Then one from the multitude said, 'Master, I brought my son who has a dumb spirit to You; for wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and gnashes his teeth, and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples, in order that they might cast it out, but

they did not have *the* power.’ And He [Jesus] answered him, saying, ‘O faithless generation!....’ (vs 14-19). He’s not only talking to the people there, but also to His disciples.

“...How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.’ Then they brought him to Him. But when the spirit saw Him, *it* immediately threw him into convulsions; and he fell down on the ground *and* began rolling about *and* foaming *at the mouth*. And He asked his father, ‘How long a time has this *demon* been with him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. For it often throws him both into the fire and into the water, that it might destroy him. But if You have the power *to do* anything, have compassion on us *and* help us.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘**If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes**’” (vs 19-23). Very important to understand.

Verse 24: “And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, ‘Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.’” That’s what you do if you’re lacking in faith. You ask God help you overcome your lack of faith. Help you overcome your lack of belief.

Verse 25: “Then Jesus, seeing that the multitude was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you *to* come out of him, and you are not allowed to go into him anymore!’ And after crying out and throwing him into severe convulsions, it came out; and he became as dead, so much so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand *and* lifted him up, and he arose. And when He came into a house, His disciples asked Him apart, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’ Then He said to them, ‘This kind cannot *be made to* go out by anything except **prayer and fasting**’” (vs 25-29).

We’ll talk about this a little bit more next time, because the key to overcoming, the lack of faith *is* ***prayer and fasting***.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Peter 3:11-18
- 2) Daniel 3:1, 4-5, 8, 12-28
- 3) 1 John 5:14-15
- 4) Romans 12:1-2
- 5) John 8:42-59
- 6) James 1:1-8
- 7) James 2:5, 14, 16-23
- 8) Romans 4:17-24
- 9) John 5:34-47
- 10) John 6:63

- 11) John 12:42-50
- 12) Mark 9:14-29

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Daniel 3:2
- Hebrews 11
- Matthew 10
- Genesis 15
- John 3:13

#### Also referenced:

#### Books:

- *The Day Jesus, the Christ, Died* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Occult Holiday or God’s Holy Days, Which?* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Sermons/Sermon Series:

- *I AM*
- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Covenants of Abraham and God*
- *Are You Fully Persuaded?*

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## Keys to Answered Prayer V Believe God/Believe His Word #2

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Let's come back here to Hebrews 11:6, and let's understand something concerning our relationship with God; because key #2 is *Believe God and Believe His Word*—and that's the key, important thing. Most religionists today don't stand up and say God is a liar and accuse God of being a liar, because they say He didn't mean this and He didn't mean that and He didn't mean the other thing. That Moses didn't write this, Isaiah didn't write it, Jeremiah didn't write it, the apostles didn't write the New Testament, someone else wrote it centuries later.' What they're doing, they're accusing God of being a liar; they don't believe God!

Let's read it here, Hebrews 11:6: "Now without faith... ['faith' could very well be translated *belief*, because faith is actually 'beliefizing'] ...Now, without faith *it is* impossible to please God...." The whole thing that we want to do is to be able to do the things that please God, understand His Word, ask God to intervene and help us. But what we need to realize here is the second sentence:

"...For **it is mandatory**... [in other words, God requires this for you to be heard.] ...*for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists... [When it is 'exists' that means that *everything that God is, everything that God has said.*] ...and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." In order to believe God, ***you must believe God!***

- You believe that He exists
- You believe Who He is
- You believe what He said about Himself—that is recorded here in the Bible

—because everywhere in the Bible:

- God *said*
- the Lord *said*
- God *told* Moses
- *say this* to the children of Israel, all of the prophets
- *the Word of the Lord came* to Isaiah, *came* to Jeremiah, *came* to Ezekiel and all the other prophets
- Daniel *wrote* that it was God Who revealed

You must believe that God is, that He exists, in everything about God that He is, is absolutely essential when you come to God and start praying.

We saw last time the key that when you don't have the belief that you need to, is admit your belief and ask God to help you overcome your

unbelief. When Jesus said, 'If you believe, all things are possible.' The man said, 'I believe but, Lord, help my unbelief.' He had a measure to go in having the kind of belief that he needed. Then He told His disciples that the only way that comes is by prayer and by fasting.

Let's see how far this belief carries. I'm sure you've read this verse before, but let's go to John 11; this is really quite an astounding verse. This is after Lazarus died and Martha came and said, 'I know that he will live in the resurrection,' after Jesus said, 'Your brother will rise again.'

John 11:25: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die...'" That's very important—isn't it? In the grave you have no thoughts—correct? In the day that you perish, your thoughts cease.

But if you believe and you die, notice what it says here: "...**shall live again**; and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall not die forever.... [we're talking about the resurrection; very important to understand here] ...Do you believe this?.... [that's very important in our relationship with God] ...'And everyone who lives and believes in Me shall not die forever. Do you believe this?' She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who was to come into the world'" (vs 25-27).

So, she believed part of it—this is almost like the man who said, 'Lord, I believe but help my unbelief.' And, of course, you know the way it was with Lazarus—people looked to the physical things. They said, 'Oh, if you would have been here, he wouldn't have died.' But Jesus deliberately didn't come knowing that he would die for this very purpose. And it's interesting, too, that he [Lazarus] was in the grave *four days*. That's to go past the three-day legal limit that the Jews had on whether a person was alive or dead. They would make sure that no one was in a coma, so He deliberately did that.

Not only are you to believe in God, and you are to believe in Jesus Christ, it's important to understand Who Jesus Christ was. I'm going to, after I get done with this series on keys to answered prayer, do a series through the *Harmony: Who Was the Man Jesus?* And what kind of man was He?—because too many people believe in a *false* Jesus. You have to believe

- Who Jesus was before He came
- Who He was when He was here

- Who He is after His resurrection

Because if you don't believe that—if you believe in a one-God or a three-God—you don't believe in God the way that God says. It's that simple! It gets down to the point today that we have lots of literature, we have lots of sermons on it so you can prove it. But the bottom line is, when you go off on these tangents, sooner or later you get to a point that you are *denying and rejecting* Jesus. When you do that, your prayers are not going to be answered. God is not going to change what He has done, or His nature to please the philosophies and theories of men. That's why it says 'it's mandatory' to believe God. That is the way that He said He is Who He is and what He has done.

John 12:44: "Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.'" You can't have one without the other. What did Jesus also say on the Passover night? *'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through Me.'* Think about that! If you believe that Jesus didn't exist until He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, you have joined the ranks of all the other *religions of the world*, especially the Jews and the Muslims who say He was a prophet. You need to think on that!

And I might as well add in here, too, while we're going along in what you believe: People come along and they try and bring in Hebrew names. Let me tell you something very clearly: ***The sacred names in the New Testament are just what Jesus said here: God the Father and Jesus Christ.*** Those are the sacred names for the New Covenant. The names that God had in the Old Testament were names for the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant has been set aside and the New Covenant has replaced it. Understand this as very important, too:

- Did the disciples know Hebrew? *Yes!*
- Did the apostles know Hebrew? *Yes!*
- Did the Apostle Paul know Hebrew? *Yes!*

You can read Acts 21 & 22 where he went to Jerusalem and spoke to the Jews at the temple ***in Hebrew.*** If sacred names are a requirement, as sacred-namers say today, then why didn't they write it in the Greek when they wrote the New Testament? ***Because today you're in a family relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ!*** That's why! And that's why Jesus said, as we read last time, 'If you don't believe that I AM'—Exo. 3 and the instructions that were given to Moses—'I have not appeared to the fathers, or revealed Myself by the name of Jehovah, but God Almighty or El Shaddai.' And then Moses said, 'Who will I say sent me?' He said, 'Tell them I AM has sent you.' It's very

essential to understand. Think about it this way: If you do not believe God the Father and Jesus Christ the way that They have said, will They answer your prayers? Think about it! Is God under obligation to man, because man *thinks* he's doing good? *NO!* We're all under obligation to God—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 44: "Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me'" (vs 44-45).

What is one of the theories of the nature of God? *The animate, transcendent God that is just a glob in the sky!* He has no face, no hands, no arms, no legs, He doesn't have any need for those things, and if anyone refers to it in the Bible that way it's only an amorphism—in other words a description to tell a story, because God doesn't have hands, He doesn't have legs, He doesn't have eyes.

Jesus said, 'If you've seen Me, you've seen Him.' Jesus had a *head*, He had *eyes*, He had *hands*, He had *arms*, He had *legs*. Didn't He tell Philip, when Philip said, 'Show us the Father,' *have I been with you so a long a time and you've known Me. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father?* God makes it very simple, but it's very straight forward. It is very demanding of human beings. But once you understand that, it becomes very simple.

Verse 46: "I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe..." (vs 46-47). That's what most people do today. You go into any 'Christian' church—the big mega churches, the little churches—all of the Protestant churches that meet on Sunday ***do not believe God's command for the Sabbath.*** What do they do? *Oh, we'll do it on Sunday.* That's not what God said. He did not change it.

Verse 48: "The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day." You want to know what God thinks of your actions? You want to know what Jesus thinks of your actions? ***Read the Gospels!*** And since He was the Lord God of the Old Testament before He became Jesus Christ, read the Old Testament. And since He's the Head of the Church and inspired all the apostles to write what they wrote, read all the writings of the apostles. In short, ***read the whole Bible!*** There you go.

Think of this for a minute—the one of Elohim Who became Jesus Christ, became a man on this earth and notice how obedient He was to God in doing what He did. How much more us! You think about it: As human beings, how much more is it

required of us because we're the ones that need saving. Jesus was the Savior that came—right? *Yes!* But notice how obedient He was to God. Notice how He believed the Father. He didn't come along and amend anything that the Father had told Him to do—did He? *No!* Think about it for a minute!

Verse 49: "For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak." Now then, just a little pause for all who are teachers and ministers and so forth.

- Do you follow that?
- Do you preach the Word?

or

- Do you have your own ideas that you're bringing along?

The key is, is the way you develop the character of God is with **truth!** The way you overcome a deceitful nature is a constant input of truth—through prayer, through study, through reading the Word of God, through living the way that God wants you to live.

Verse 50: "And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak **exactly** as the Father has told Me."

- Did Jesus have faith? *Yes!*
- Did He believe? *Yes!*
- Was He obedient? *Yes!*

That's the example we need to have to believe God and believe His Word.

Today, in this age, think how many billions of Bibles there are in the world. No one's going to have an excuse to say, 'Oh God, if you were just here on the earth I would hear You.' No you wouldn't. All the Israelites say, 'Oh God, get us out of this slavery.' He brought them out of slavery, brought them through all the trials that they had to get to Mt. Sinai, and He spoke the Ten Commandment—and they're easy to understand. There's not one word of the Ten Commandments that's hard to understand. What the problem is:

- It's hard for people to accept because they don't want to do it.
- It's hard for someone who believes in another god to give up his god.
- It's hard for those who are idolaters to give their idols.
- It's hard for those who take God's name in vain to stop it.
- It's hard for those who keep Sunday to quit.
- It's hard for those who disrespect their parents to become obedient.

- It's hard for those who are murderers to stop.

Especially you read some of these things on the serial killers. So, you tell them the next one—don't commit adultery. 'Oh, we can't have that.' They're clear! They're easy to understand. People don't want to do it. This is all a part of believing.

John 20:24: "But Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.... [the first time related a few verses earlier] ...Then the other disciples said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger into the nail marks, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe at all.'.... [since he was one of the chosen apostles, Jesus had a little surprise for him] ...Now, after eight days, His disciples again were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus came after the doors were shut, and stood in the midst... [all of a sudden there He is] ...and said, 'Peace *be* to you.' Then He said to Thomas..." (vs 24-27). He knew what He had said—right? *Yes!* When you say those things, does God know it? *Yes!*

"... 'Put forth your finger, and see My hands; and reach *out* your hand, and put *it* into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing'" (v 27). I think the *King James* says 'be not faithless but believing.'

Mark 11—here's a promise. As we go through, **claim God's promises!** That also helps unbelief. **Claim God's promises!** We'll look at some of those and analyze them a little bit more. This is where He cursed the fig tree—when they came back and saw the fig tree, in the morning:

Mark 11:20: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 20-22). [The *King James* says: 'have faith in God,' but it really means *from* God—that's the best way to translate it into English, because you need **the faith of God, which comes from God.**

Notice what that faith can do, v 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say" (v 23).

Let me tell you something that is harder to do than move a mountain, moving a tree, or cursing a fig tree; it does not accomplish anything spiritual. But what is harder to change is **human nature.** What is harder to change is **people to be convicted in mind**

of what God says. That's harder than moving a mountain.

So likewise, He says here, v 24: "For this reason I say to you, **all**... [you might circle that] ...**all** the things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be given to you." Very important. Notice He does not tell you they will happen instantly. That's why we have to be earnest and consistent in prayer. There are some prayers that you pray that you don't have an answer until sometime later; sometime years down the road. What is the greatest goal that you're seeking? *Eternal life!* When is that going to happen? *That's going to happen when Christ returns at the resurrection!* You need to think long-term.

Note Gal. 5:22—fruits of the Spirit are: love, joy, faith, peace, etc. God's Spirit *gives* you faith. That's why He says to have the faith *of* God, or the faith *from* God.

Verse 25—He shows here something very important; we'll interject it here since it's in the context. "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive**..." You think about that! *Forgive!* Why? Even though you are right in your hatred and bitterness and grudge against them, because they have done wrong, *forgive them for what they have done to you and put them in God's hands.*

If your prayer for them is that you put them in God's hands, you clean your mind for everything that has happened, you cleaned your mind of all the bitterness and hatred and things that have been caused *because of it*—and everyone of us have gone through things where we have, what we might say, human cause to think that way. Put them in God's hands. God will take care of it. Think about this for just a minute. Let's use two examples:

- What did Jesus say just before He died?  
*Father forgive them for they know not what they do!*
- How many of them were forgiven on Pentecost when they repented and were baptized?

Those who were standing there when Jesus was being judged and they said, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'

- Has anyone done anything worse to you?
- Have you suffered any more than Jesus?
- What right then do we have to hold bitterness and grudges against people?

We can forgive them, but we can be very cautious and learn a lesson. That doesn't mean that we bring them into our bosom. That just means that we forgive them and put them in God's hands. And

in many cases say, 'God, keep them away from me, please.' God will do that. Is God able to take care of them more than us? *Yes!* We will see some of the prayers in the Psalms. Sometimes you have to pray for God to intervene and literally destroy them, because of what they are and who they are and what they are doing. There are some people, as it says in the book of Jude, who have been made to be taken and destroyed. Now, that's out in the carnal world. When we're dealing with brethren, we need to do what we are understanding here.

Here's the key, v 26: "**For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive you your offenses.**" Everyone wants to be forgiven. But how many people want to forgive? Sometimes there's forgiveness that has to come with a little discipline, like when children do wrong. You discipline them and then you give them instructions what they need to do—though you've forgiven them—so they don't do it again; likewise with adult behavior. If people do things that are wrong and they're forgiven, you say, okay, you are not ever to do this again. And you need to set yourself on a course and set yourself on a personal discipline and yield to God so you're not going to do it.

If that would have been done with a famous evangelist who had adulterous affairs with hundreds and hundreds of women, and really nipped in the bud when it first took place, it would not have continued. Forgiveness does not mean that you become stupid in your relationship with that person because they say, 'Oh, I'm sorry.' You say, 'Okay you're forgiven.' But they're not sorry to the point to change their behavior. Or they're not sorry to the point to stop what they are doing. But nevertheless, before God you've forgiven them. They're sorry they got caught. We'll talk about repentance when we get to that section of it. This is very important concerning what we're covering here.

John 14:14: "If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*... [it has to be according to God's will] ...If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments... [that is a literal translation from the Greek] ...And I will ask the Father... [so He intervenes for us] ...and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age" (vs 14-16). So, commandment-keeping is all important there.

If you believe God, ***will you obey*** God? If you believe God will you keep His commandments? *Yes, because you know that they came from God!* You can reverse that around the other way. ***If you don't keep the commandments of God, you don't believe Him!*** You may profess with the mouth, but your heart betrays you. *God looks upon the heart!*

Here's why we pray in Jesus' name. John 16:26 "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, for **the Father Himself loves you...** [this is why prayers are answered; remember where we started out, **you have to love God**] ...**because you have loved Me**, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father" (vs 26-28). So we pray directly to the Father—we'll expand on that a little bit later.

**Believing takes action!** What if you need a job. You get on your knees and you say, 'Oh God, give me a job.' And immediately get off of your knees, flop on the couch and hit the remote and turn on the television! Then the next day you pray for a job, you get up off your knees and flop down on the couch and turn on the remote and you sit there, 'Well, God, why didn't You give me a job, I've been waitin' by the phone all this time.' You know, God expects you to get out and pound the pavement, knock on the doors, go here, present your résumés, keep at it and **let God bless you and open the way to answer the prayer.**

Matthew 21:28: "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first one and said, 'Son, go work in my vineyard today.' And he answered *and* said, 'I will not'; but afterwards he repented *and* went. Then he came to the second *son and* said the same thing. And he answered *and* said, 'Sir, I will go'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?' .... [Remember, we're to do the will of God—right?] ...They said to Him, 'The first *one.*' Jesus said to them, 'I tell you truly, the tax collectors and *the* harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in *the* way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and *the* harlots believed him. Yet you, after seeing *this*, did not afterwards repent and believe him'" (vs 28-32).

What we're dealing with here is that *God gives you an opportunity to change.* If you find there's something a little too hard or too difficult for you, God gives you the opportunity to repent. So, in this you see three things:

1. you must **believe God**
2. you must **believe His Word**
3. you must **work**

As we saw last time, **'faith without works is dead.'**

Let's see that **believing** is a process. Here's another key that's all important you need to realize. Do you want to grow in grace and knowledge? **Yes!** All right, then you have to constantly believe God.

Let's see the operation of it here in Psalm 119:65: "You have dealt well with Your servant, O

LORD, according unto Your Word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed Your commandments" (vs 65-66).

This is very important—believing the commandments of God and obeying the commandments of God are not an end. They are a beginning and a process and the end thereof is *Godly character.* Remember the young man when he came to Jesus and said, 'Master, what should do that I may inherit eternal life?' And He says, 'Keep the commandments.' He [the young man] said, 'Oh, I've done these from my youth.' **Commandment-keeping is a beginning and process, not an end**—because God teaches us.

(go to the next track)

We will learn some lessons here, because one of the things that's important to understand is this: **God has called you to build character** and understand this: **it is not possible to build the true character of God unless you have trials.** Then give you an opportunity to use and express:

- the love of God
- the faith of God
- the belief in God
  - to look to the hope of God
  - to look to Him for salvation
  - to look to Him for deliverance
  - to look to Him to reconcile the problem within your life

We're all going to come to a point—probably many, many, many times—that there is a problem that is so huge that it is so big, that the only thing that you can say is, 'God I cannot handle it, please intervene and solve it.' Now whatever little part you can do, you can do. But let's see the process here:

Verse 66: "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed Your commandments." As I mentioned, that is the start: keeping them, obeying them, under all circumstances—the character of God. Because that's what Jesus did—didn't He? **Yes!**

Verse 67: "Before I was afflicted I went astray..." That's why you have trials. **Trials are adjustments necessary to keep you on course.** If you continue going astray then you are going off course. Know that the trial you're going through now, you're going to face a future trial which may be of a greater magnitude.

That's why he says this, v 67: "...Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Your Word.... [That's how to keep from going astray. You quit going astray *by repenting* and going back *and keeping God's Word.*] ...You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes.... [that's why

we go through these things] ...The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep Your precepts with all my heart. Their heart is gross like fat, but I delight in Your law. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, so that I might learn Your statutes....” (vs 67-71).

Can we say this with all of our trials? It’s difficult when you’re going through them, I know that. Especially if they’re protracted trials, which some of them are. When you get through to the other side and

- you have been faithful
- you have believed God
- you have kept His Word
- kept His commandments

is it not good that you went through that to build the character of God? Is not God going to add jewels to your crown (Mal. 3) that He’s going to make? That He’s going to give you? Because of your doing like it says here? So therefore, in the final analysis, at the resurrection, it is good that you have been afflicted, that you might ‘learn Your statutes.’

“The law of Your mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver” (v 72). Which ought to tell us what? *You don’t need to pray for money.* You need to pray that God will provide for us. And when He provides for us then we manage it in the way that is according to the character of God—and He will bless us.

Now for example: What if you’re addicted to gambling and you lose your job. And you say, ‘God, give me a job.’ And God doesn’t give you a job. It’s not the losing the job that’s the problem, it’s the gambling that you’re addicted to that you need to repent of and stop before God will give you a job; otherwise you will continue in your addiction—is that not correct? And you can add to that alcohol, drugs, whatever it may be. And if you get into a trial because of your addiction, the reason you get into a trial is so that you can quit your addiction. Now you can stop your addiction; that can happen.

Psalm 27:11: “Teach me Your way, O LORD...” The way God teaches you His way is *through study, through obedience, through prayer, through trials/circumstances, daily living.* And when you do that and you understand the magnitude and the importance of the Sabbath, then the Sabbath is going to mean that much more for you. When you come before God on the Sabbath, He’s going to teach you even more. And as you come out of these trials, you’re going to have experiences where you’ll be going along and all of a sudden DING! the light of understanding of the trial will strike you. And that’s when you will say, ‘Thank you, Lord.’ Now, think on that!

Verse 11: “Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a level path, because of my enemies. Deliver me not over to the will of my enemies, for false witnesses have risen up against me, and he that breathes out violence. I would have fainted... [given up/lost hope] ...unless I had **believed** that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.... [That’s talking about the resurrection in the final analysis—isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD” (vs 11-14). Jesus said the same thing in John 16—‘In the world you’ll have tribulation, but be of good courage, I’ve overcome the world.’ It’s almost the same thing.

I can say this: There is so much in the Old Testament that comes right into the New Testament that they are as inseparable as the two sides of your heart. You need both sides; you need both Testaments—Old *and* New Testaments.

Let’s see some examples of *unbelief*. Let’s come to Numbers 20; it can happen to anyone, even Moses. People look at that and say, ‘Well, maybe God was unfair.’ But think about what authority that God gave Moses—the *Word of God!* Whatever Moses said took place—right? *Yes!* All the plagues, all the signs, all the wonders, the death of the firstborn. God said, ‘I’m going to do it.’ Moses told Pharaoh, ‘It’s going to happen.’ And did it happen? *Yes! A*

One of the meanings of the Passover is that *God has judged all the gods of Egypt, meaning all the gods of the world!* What is a favorite thing that people like to do today? You watch the History channel, you watch the National Geographic channel, you watch news specials and documentaries, what are they fascinated with? *The religion of Egypt and the pyramids, and where the kings were buried and what they believed!* What are they doing? *That’s the living seeking to the dead to try an understand the purpose of life!* That goes against what God said. God said ‘To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, there is no light in them’ (Isa. 8). When they say ‘the living should seek unto the dead’—that’s what they’re doing. All the gods of this world have been destroyed, judged. That’s why every religion of this world is going to fail.

Numbers 20:7: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the rod, and gather the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes....” (vs 7-8). I don’t know what the size of the rock was, but out there in Sinai you could probably find a huge, great rock out there. God said, *‘speak* to it.’

“...And it shall give forth its water, and you shall bring forth to them water out of the rock....” (v 7). What do we have here? Who was the Rock? *Christ!* What is the Holy Spirit? *Out of your belly shall come rivers of living water!* Here is a symbology for them that out of the Rock, *Who is Christ*, would come forth the Holy Spirit, which is *the water*.

“... So you shall give the congregation and their animals *water to drink.*’ And Moses took the rod from before the presence of the LORD as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels....’” (vs 7-10). Moses was under a lot of stress. So don’t tell me you have a lot of stress.

- Try the desert!
- Try the heat!
- Try a million, 600-thousand carnal people complaining against you at every turn!
- Rebelling against you!
- Men tried to take over the priesthood!
- Men trying to take over the office of Moses!

“...Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ .... [So, Moses got mad!] ...And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he **struck the rock** twice.... [God said, *speak* to it.] ...And the water came out plentifully, and the congregation and their animals drank” (vs 10-11).

Now, every minister and every teacher and every elder *pay attention!* God holds us responsible. We are to do and preach the Word of God as He says, not as we like. We are to do it exactly as God says. Notice, because they didn’t believe:

Verse 12: “And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel...’”

Let’s understand something else here, too—all teachers, elders, ministers, pastors, evangelists, whatever mucky-muck you may think you are—***you must teach the Word of God and you represent God!*** If you’re preaching and if your behavior is sinful and reprehensible to God, think of what God is going to do to you. And realize this: He is going to set a trial upon you that you’re not even going to expect that is going to come. If you perchance give yourself over to Satan, he is going to try and smooth the way for you, to lead you into further deception. You see the results of this obedience here.

“...to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel...” That’s the only purpose for why we are here; the only purpose there are teachers. The only purpose there are elders is to sanctify God in the

congregation so that the people will have faith, so that the people will have hope.

- not to benefit us
- not to give us power
- not to give us prestige or anything like that

“...therefore, you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. These *are* the Waters of Strife because the children of Israel contended against the LORD, but He showed Himself Holy among them” (vs 12-13).

Let’s look at another one. Luke 1 is quite an example, because what we’re dealing with is a priest named Zacharias, who became the father of John the Baptist. He was old and his wife was old and God was going to perform a miracle by finally answering her prayer. What was the prayer of Zacharias and Elizabeth? *Oh God, give us a child!* If you read through Daniel, and especially here in Luke, it’s evident that the angel Gabriel is the one in charge of carrying out the circumstances and events on the earth to fulfill the promise of coming Messiah in the flesh who was one of Elohim.

God sent Gabriel to give them a message, Luke 1:12 “And when he saw *the angel*... [he was right there with the incense] ...Zacharias was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Fear not, Zacharias, because your supplication has been heard...’” (vs 12-13). We’ll talk about *supplications* later, because that’s a special kind of intense, beseeching prayer.

“...and your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son to you, and you shall call his name John. And he shall be a joy and exultations to you; and many shall rejoice at his birth, for he shall be great before the Lord. And he shall not drink wine and strong drink in any form, but he shall be filled with *the Holy Spirit* even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn **to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him**...” (vs 13-17). Isn’t that interesting? Who was Jesus? *The Lord God!* How plain could that be?

“...in *the spirit* and power of Elijah, to turn *the hearts* of the fathers to *the children*, and *the disobedient* to *the wisdom* of *the righteous*, to make ready a people prepared for *the Lord.*’ Then Zacharias said to the angel, ‘By what *means* shall I know this?.... [innocent question] ...For I am an old man, and my wife *is* advanced in years.’ And the angel answered *and* said to him, ‘I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God...’” (vs 17-19). Think about this in relationship to prayer, because your prayers go up to the presence of God—don’t they? Think about this in relationship to believing God, obeying God and so forth.

“...and I was sent to speak to you, and to announce this good news to you. But behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day in which these things shall take place, **because you did not believe my words**, which shall be fulfilled in their time” (vs 19-20). So, there are penalties that come for non-belief.

For all of you who have been upset and discouraged because of men and preachers whom you believe have deceived you—and if they have, you have allowed them to—who have brought in false doctrines and taught them to you, which you have allowed them to do, and you wonder what’s wrong with your spiritual life. **What’s wrong with your spiritual life is that you didn’t believe the Word of God, you didn’t believe the Bible**, but you believed a man who brought you falsehoods! So, maybe your spiritual life is kind of Zachariasized (if I could put it that way). It is deaf and it is dumb.

Now, when you repent and return to God, *He will give you life! He will restore you!* But you have to take the action to do it. Remember where we started. It is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists. And to exist means **believe everything that He is, everything that He has said**, in spite of 10-thousand people on your right hand and 30-thousand people on your left hand saying something else!

Now let’s talk about *the promises* of God. Let’s understand that first of all, we need to realize **God cannot lie!** Come to. If what you have requested of God in your prayers has not been fulfilled, perhaps you need to consider His answer may be *no*. Do you expect God to just be a *yes* machine for every request that you have? *Of course not!* Many times the answer is *no*.

And always remember this: **Whenever your prayers involve someone else, remember you cannot live their lives for them.** They have to make their own choices. So, you ask God to deal with them in *His way*, regardless of the circumstances. This is very evident in the letters that I get from the prisoners whom we send the New Testament to. And after you see some of the specials on the way that they’re treated and they’re just stuck in a cell and have nothing, and they won’t give them anything, and they have no money. But I think it’s interesting: those prisoners, who have not committed heinous crimes, begin to find Christ in prison. Very interesting because they begin to recognize something’s wrong. The first thing they need to do is *understand, God doesn’t lie!*

They are there—unless they are an innocent victim, which I just read in the paper this morning that one man who was convicted and put in jail and has been there since 1979; so you think of this if you

have a trial—for killing someone, was finally exonerated because of DNA testing. How did that happen? They inadvertently arrested the man who did the original crime in 1979 and every person whom they take in they do a DNA test. He himself was kind of an older man, but he was rearrested and put in prison and in a wheelchair and was several hours from being released when the word came down this is the one who did the crime.

The man who’s been in there all this time is innocent and he is released, and all the state would do is say is, ‘We’re sorry.’ You think about that! Think about what you go through. So, if you happen to be in prison or convicted of something, you start straightening out your mind by getting rid of self-deception, by putting in the Truth of God into your mind. There’s no other way you can do it.

Titus 1:1: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to *the* faith of God’s elect and *the* knowledge of *the* Truth that is according to Godliness; in *the* hope of eternal life, which God **Who cannot lie** promised before the ages of time” (vs 1-2)

- God cannot lie!
- All His promises are true!

Let’s see that—very important. **All His promises are true!** They may not be given all at once. Could you take every blessing of God, all the goodness of God poured out upon you, all at once? *No!* God will give you a measure, but all of His promises are true.

2-Corinthians 1:20: “For whatever promises of God *there are*, in Him *is* the yes, and in Him the Amen, with glory to God by us. But He Who establishes us with you in Christ, and Who has anointed us, *is* God. Who has also sealed us and has given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (vs 20-22). Which Eph. 1 says is a promise of God. So if you have the Spirit of God, you have: The fulfillment of the greatest promise that God can give you in this life: **His Holy Spirit!** Everything else is secondary to that, if we understand this, when we come before God to pray, and we understand that all of His promises are true; and we can claim them.

Let’s see how it affected Abraham. We can understand because all of us have our ups and down. All of us have our good and bad moments, and even we have some ugly moments. But as long as they are sins—not a ‘sin unto death’—they’re forgivable. So, *go repent!* And if someone sins against you that is not a ‘sin unto death’ *pray for them*, that God will forgive them, lead them to repentance and so forth. If it’s something you need to go discuss with them, then you do it in accordance with Matt. 18 and work the things out.

Hebrews 6:10: “For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work... [God knows what you’re doing] ...and the labor of love *by* which you have showed *honor* to His name, *in that* you have served the saints and are *continuing* to serve *them*. But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence...” (vs 10-11). Showing that we have to keep on, keep at it. **As long as there’s life, there’s hope!** And as long as we’re doing what God wants us to, *being diligent!*

“...unto the full assurance of the hope until the end. So that you do not become lazy, but *that you be* imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises. For God, after promising Abraham... [and He did—didn’t He? *Yes!*] ...**swore by Himself**, since He could swear by none greater” (vs 11-13).

Let’s understand this: Swearing is done by men in hopes that everyone will take the truth and give bona fide testimony—correct? *Yes!* God being true, God never lying, God does not need to swear. But if He swears by Himself, *He’s swearing by His very existence*, that what He said *He will fulfill*. Now, let’s also understand something else: What God promised Abraham, ***we are the results and recipients of that***—are we not? So, it’s still ongoing—isn’t it? *Yes!* And we’re a part of that—aren’t we? *Yes!*

Verse 14: “Saying, ‘Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.’ Now after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them. In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for God to lie...*” (vs 14-18).

Never, *never* listen to anyone who says God has abolished His Law. You know instantly he’s a liar, he’s a false prophet and he’s misrepresenting God. Anything in the New Testament that has been changed from the physical ritual to a spiritual aspect has been superseded by a greater requirement. Just one example: Circumcision of the flesh has now been superseded by circumcision of the mind and heart, ***which is a greater requirement***. A person can be circumcised in the flesh ***but not in his mind and in his heart!*** So, the requirement of circumcision does not do away with all law in the Old Testament, rather it amplifies it and makes it spiritual in the New Testament and of greater import and accountability. The important thing is this: When you understand that God cannot and will not lie, then you can come to God in complete confidence

and hope and understanding and you can claim the promises. And you can say, ‘God, my faith is weak, help me strengthen my faith. Help me in my unbelief.’

“...*it was impossible for God to lie*, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been set before us*; Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the **sanctuary within the veil...** [Holy of Holies in heaven above] ...where Jesus has entered for us *as* a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec” (vs 18-20). ***God cannot lie!*** That’s a tremendous thing for us to understand.

What is the greatest promise that God has given? ***Eternal life!*** What is the verse that all of the Protestants claim, but do not act upon? John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him... [that means everything about Him] ...may not perish, but may have everlasting life.” Oh they claim it, but they turn right around and say, ‘Oh, you don’t have to keep the Law.’ As minister Tardo, who wrote the book against the Sabbath—*Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction*—said, ‘All 613 commandments of the Old Testament have no forensic value for Christians today.’ ***A total preacher of lawlessness! He doesn’t believe God!*** God has given those things to us.

Let’s look at a couple of examples; notice: promise/blessing, promise/belief—and action; lack of action/curses—all right here in Psalm 1:1: “Blessed *is* the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked... [you don’t accept the ungodly statements that they pronounce; You don’t believe them] ...nor stand in the way of sinners... [*stand in their way of life*] ...nor sit in the seat of the scornful.” Who are the scornful?

- Oh well, God didn’t mean this.
- Oh well, it wasn’t written then.
- Oh well, the apostles didn’t write anything.
- Oh, God needs me.

This great pope, who is next to God, to tell the world what to do. Well, I’m very glad the imams proved that he was fallible.

Here is how you do it, v 2: “But his delight *is* in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law does he meditate day and night.” Tie that in with Heb. 10:16, ‘for he shall write and inscribe upon their hearts and minds His laws.’ That’s how you do it. Your minds were made to be programmed with the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, that gives you the Truth, that gives you the character so you can

develop the character of God and you can overcome an evil deceitful human nature by replacing it with Truth—step-by-step-by-step, thought-by-thought-by-thought, action-by-action-by-action.

Verse 3: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season... [there is a time for everything] ... and its leaf shall not wither, and all that he does shall prosper.” You may prosper with little, or you may prosper with much. But the most prosperity that you want and need is the spiritual prosperity of the character that comes from God. Which is what? What did David say that all of the commandments of God were greater than all silver—right? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 4: “The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.... [You can see that in all these public opinion polls. What do you think? Vacillates from one to the other—right?] ...Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous... [because He gave it to them; He has His Spirit in them] ...but the way of the wicked shall perish” (vs 4-6).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 11:6
- 2) John 11:25-27
- 3) John 12:44-46, 48-50
- 4) John 20:24-27
- 5) Mark 11:20-26
- 6) John 14:14-16
- 7) John 16:26-28
- 8) Matthew 21:28-32
- 9) Psalm 119:65-72
- 10) Psalm 27:11-14
- 11) Numbers 20:7-13
- 12) Luke 1:12-20
- 13) Titus 1:1-2
- 14) 2 Corinthians 1:20-22
- 15) Hebrews 6:10-20
- 16) John 3:16
- 17) Psalm 1:1-6

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 21 & 22
- Exodus 3
- Galatians 5:22
- Malachi 3
- Isaiah 8
- Ephesians 1
- Matthew 18

- Hebrews 10:16

#### Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Why God Hates Religion*
- Book: *Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction* by Dr. Russell Tardo

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## Keys to Answered Prayer VI Prayer of Solomon

Fred R. Coulter

Let's look at the life of Solomon—the first half of his life. 2-Chronicles 1 is very, very important to understand. And I want you to realize many similarities in what we are facing today, and how this will tie in the *keys to answered prayer*. Let's see how Solomon began, because what I want you to understand is this: ***We want to finish like Solomon began—not begin like Solomon began and finish like he ended***, because he was the greatest Laodicean in the history of the whole Bible.

2-Chronicles 1:1: “And Solomon the son of David was made strong in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him and magnified him exceedingly.” Then he gave them instructions. Told them all to come up so they could bring the Ark out of Kirjathjearim a little later. So, he went up there to offer burnt offerings.

Verse 6: “And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, ‘Ask what I shall give you.’ And Solomon said to God, ‘You have shown great mercy to David my father and have made me to reign in his stead. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now grant me wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people. For who can judge this Your people *that is so great?*’” (vs 6-10).

He had this attitude that we find in Psa. 119: that the commandments of God and His way and His knowledge and everything is greater than gold, fine gold and that all of His precepts are right altogether. (summarizing Psa. 119:125-127). Notice God's response. Can God be pleased with what a person can do? *Yes!* Can we, with our attitude and the things that we do, inspire God? *Yes!*

Verse 11 “And God said to Solomon, ‘Because this was in your heart... [God is a heart-knowing God] ...and you have not asked riches, wealth, nor honor, nor the life of your enemies, nor yet have asked for long life...’” His mind was on the proper goal of being king, to serve the people. Later you know what happened to him. What I want to show here is that this is part of how our prayers are answered by having the right heart and attitude toward God.

“...but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may judge My people, over whom I have made you king, Wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you...” (vs 11-12). Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. So, when God gives it, *He gives it!*—doesn't He? *Yes!*

“...And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before you; neither shall any after you have the like” (v 12). That's something!

So then, that gave him the inspiration to get everything ready. It talks about building the temple, how he's going to be building it, what he was going to do with it. And they had gold and silver and brass and iron and all of those things in great and fantastic abundance.

2-Chronicles 5—I'll just summarize down through v 11: When the house of the LORD was finished they brought the Ark and they brought from Gibeon where the tabernacle was; they brought it all down to the temple and they brought it in the temple, and they put the Ark of the Covenant in the temple.

2-Chronicles 5:10: “Nothing *was* in the Ark except the two tables, which Moses put *in it* at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt.... [this is a historically singular time in the whole record and history of Israel and Judah] ...And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the Holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course), and the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets...” (vs 10-12).

Just think of the great regal scenery of this: Here is the temple all finished. About six-and-a-half to seven stories high, with these great pillars in the front. The great sea, the huge basin, with the 12 oxen underneath which then the water came out into the lavers and these little pools. That's where they washed the sacrifices and the priests bathed themselves in that big, brass basin there that they had. It was huge; it was 36 cubits around. All of this is taking place, all of Israel is assembled out there before the temple.

Verse 13: “It came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, ‘For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,’ that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD... [everybody saw this] ...so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!” (vs 13-14). Very inspiring moment.

Notice Solomon’s prayer—because he starts out here in 2-Chronicles 6:1—quite a prayer. Some very important keys in praying, which also tells you how when you come before God that you can reason with God and that you can talk with God and hold His promises. We’ll see a little later on that he probably received from David, his father, the copy of the Law that David had written for himself out of the scrolls of the Law that were alongside the Ark of the Covenant.

Remember: Deut. 16—the king was to write himself a copy out of that which the priests, the Levites, had, so that he would not get lifted up above his brethren, but that he would always serve God and serve the people. We’ll see that when we read some of these other things later in this chapter six here, concerning the prayer of Solomon, you will see that he undoubtedly read that many times.

2-Chronicles. 6:1: “Then Solomon said, ‘The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. Now I have built a house for You to live in, and a place for Your dwelling forever.’ And the king turned around and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood” (vs 1-2).

Notice how he begins his prayer; notice how this is structured very similarly to Matt. 6 and Lk 11.

Verse 4: “And he said, ‘Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel Who has with His hands fulfilled that which He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, “From the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt I have not chosen any city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, so that My name might be there. Nor have I chosen any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem, so that My name might be there, and now I have chosen David to be over My people Israel”’” (vs 4-6).

We can also say this concerning the Church. God has appointed Christ as the Head of the Church—correct? He hasn’t chosen anyone else to be the head of the Church—has He? As we go through, take these spiritual lessons and apply to the

Church and the people of God, and to also the operation of prayer.

Verse 7: “And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father, “Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. But you shall not build the house. Now your son, who shall come forth out of your loins, shall build the house for My name.” And the LORD has performed His word that He has spoken, for I have risen up in place of David my father and am set on the throne of Israel as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And I have *caused* the ark to be placed in it, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel.’ And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands” (vs 7-12). Quite a prayer!

Verse 13: “Now, Solomon had made a bronze scaffold, five cubits long and five cubits broad and three cubits high. And he had set it in the midst of the court. And he stood on it, and kneeled down on his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven.”

Now, I want you to understand how he started:

- tenderhearted
- loving God
- believing God
- serving God
- serving the people of God

And that’s what we need to return to as people and as ministers; *return to God so that we can let God do with us as He desires!* We are not going to do anything unless God leads the way in our private lives or in our community lives as we are brethren together, or in our lives in reaching out to the world. So here’s what he said—very inspiring:

Verse 14: “And he said, “O LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like You in heaven or in earth. You keep Your covenant and show loving kindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. You have kept with Your servant David, my father, that which You have promised him. And You spoke with Your mouth and have fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with Your servant David, my father, that which You have promised him, saying, ‘There shall not fail you a man in My sight to sit upon the throne of Israel...’” (vs 14-16). That’s why understanding we’re the ten tribes of Israel today is very important, because that promise is still being fulfilled.

“...if only your sons take heed to their way to walk in My law, as you have walked before Me.” And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word be proven true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.” (vs 16-17).

Let’s understand that this is *how you claim the promises* of God. In your prayers you rehearse the promises of God and *claim them*. Not because you’re anything great or you deserve them, but *because God has promised*. And if God has promised; He can’t lie; He will fulfill His Word to you.

Verse 18: “But truly, will God in deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of the heavens cannot contain You! How much less this house which I have built? Yet, You have turned toward the prayer of Your servant and to his cry, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant prays before You. I pray that Your eyes may be open upon this house day and night...” (vs 18-20). Put in there *the Church of God* and all the brethren.

“...upon the place of which You have said that You would put Your name there.... [and all of us bear the name of Christ] ...to hearken to the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place. Harken therefore to the supplications of Your servant, and of Your people Israel, which they shall pray toward this place, and hear from Your dwelling place, from heaven, and hear and forgive” (vs 20-21).

Notice how he gives this conditions. And this shows that he understood the Law. This shows that he also read the curses in Deut., as we will see a little later.

Verse 22: “If a man sins against his neighbor, and if an oath is laid upon him to make him swear, and if the oath comes before Your altar in this house, then hear from heaven, and do, and judge Your servants by repaying the wicked, by bringing his way back upon his own head, and by justifying *the* righteous, by giving to him according to his righteousness” (vs 22–23).

This also show another very important principle, that our prayers to God, in accordance to His will, must be based around the Word of God. His whole prayer is based around the Word of God that they had at that time the Law of God.

Verse 24: “And if Your people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy because they have sinned against You, and if they shall return and confess Your name, and shall pray and cry before You in this house, then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them

again into the land which You give to them and to their fathers” (vs 24-25)

Let me just state very clearly in parallel: *the Church right now, because of its sins, is in exile*—scattered abroad for its own good to find God; very important to understand. So, our prayer toward God should be this. Not that God is going to bring us all together in one group; He’s not going to do that because it will present too much danger in the future. But that all of the different groups and Churches of God *repent and turn to God* in their prayers and their attitudes and in what they are doing to be able to do what God wants them to do. Very important!

Verse 26: “When the heavens shall be shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, *yet*, if they pray toward this place, and confess Your name, and turn from their sin when You afflict them, Then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants and of Your people Israel when You have taught them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain upon Your land which You have given to Your people for an inheritance” (vs 26-27). Likewise, let it be the Spirit of God upon His Church.

Verse 28: “If there is famine in the land, if there is a plague, if blasting or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, if their enemies besiege them in the gates of their land; or *there may be* whatever plague or sickness; *then* whatever prayer, whatever cry shall be made by any man, or by all Your people Israel, when everyone shall know his own plague and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house; then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and forgive, and render to every man according to all his ways, whose heart You know; for You only know the hearts of the sons of men. Do this so that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You gave to our fathers” (vs 28–31).

Where do we pray? *We pray directly to the temple of God in heaven above*—right? *And we come directly into the Holy of Holies through our prayers!* We can take this prayer and apply it to our lives, apply it to the brethren, and also this applies to modern Israel today. What’s one of the first things that modern Israel always does when there’s trouble? *They think about God!* Now the day is going to come when they’re going to think about Him more than just thinking about Him. They’re going to have to repent because they’ll be in captivity.

Solomon also talks about the stranger, that You may hear their prayer. Yet, the people go to war, that you send them out too, that You will hear their prayer (vs 32-34)

Verse 36: “If they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin), and if You are angry with them and deliver them over to their enemies, and they carry them away captives to a land far-off or near, yet, if they think within themselves in the land where they are carried captive, and turn and pray to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong and have dealt wickedly,’ If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity where they have carried them captives, and if they pray toward their land...” (vs 36-38)—which today is heaven above—correct? *Yes!* Where they have gone, and so forth.

Verse 39: Then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and **forgive Your people who have sinned against You.** Now, my God, I beseech You, let Your eyes be open and Your ears hear the prayer made in this place. And now arise, O LORD God, into Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let Your saints rejoice in goodness. O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your anointed. Remember the kindness of David Your servant” (vs 39–42).

Now notice how God responded to this prayer, 2-Chronicles 7:1: “And when Solomon had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. And the glory of the LORD filled the house.” What a response!

When we’re praying, let’s keep all of these things in mind. And what we need is the zeal and enthusiasm that was shown by Kassahun over there in Ethiopia and Peter in Kenya [Transcriber’s note: this is in regard to letters from the Feast which were deleted from this transcription] and we as those who are the descendants of the children of Israel today, living in modern-day Israel, need to repentant and get off our duffs and we need to quit complaining and messing around with stupidity and false doctrine, which is going after other gods and all of those things. We need to have a kind of repentance as we begin the rest of this year; and to have a zeal to do everything that God wants us to do. And so, combine all of these things together and I think this will really help us to understand how we need to pray.

Verse 2: “And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house.” God was inspired. God was pleased. God blessed them. And He can do the same to all of us individually and collectively.

Verse 3: “And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the

LORD upon the house, they bowed *their* faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying, ‘For *He is* good, for His mercy *endures forever*’” (vs 2-3).

All Scriptures from the *Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Chronicles 1:1, 6-12
- 2) 2-Chronicles 5:10-14
- 3) 2-Chronicles 6:1-31, 36-42
- 4) 2-Chronicles 7:1-3

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 119:125-127
- 2 Chronicles 5:1-9
- Deuteronomy 16
- Matthew 6
- Luke 11
- 2 Chronicles 6:32-34

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## Keys to Answered Prayer VII Give Us Our Daily Bread

Fred R. Coulter

Now let's come back to the model prayer and we'll be coming back here from time-to-time as we're going through the series. And as I mentioned, we are finished when we are finished. So whatever the number of messages are that we will have, that's how many we will have. And this way then we can cover an awful lot, but all of these things are designed to help spur you in your own studies in addition to what we cover here in the sermons.

So Matthew 6:11: "Give us this day our daily bread." Now that says an awful lot. And of course, it can also be: "Give us day-by-day our needed food"—that would be another way to say it. But God is the one Who has provided everything. And here's something we always need to remember in everything that we do, which is this: **You have nothing that you didn't receive** (1-Cor. 4).

- everything that you are
- everything that you own
- everything that you eat
- everything that you use

comes from what God has created. And, of course, as we have seen, this is why God does not want a physical temple. That's what He says in Isa. 66: 'What are you going to make for Me to honor Me?' No, the way you honor God is with a 'contrite heart and humble spirit' and be yielded to Him. And instead of having a physical building, God has chosen you for His dwelling place. As Paul said, 'No you not that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit.' And God is dwelling in us, and Christ is dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit. So in approaching this thing concerning the physical things can also include all the physical things necessary for life.

Now He covers this a little later here in Matthew 6:22—and He gives a lesson, the rest of the chapter which we will cover. "The light of the body is the eye...." Now that is literally true from the point of view of health. Doctors can tell an awful lot concerning health. As a matter of fact, there's even a science called iridology, where they look at the iris of the eye and they can tell many, many things that are going on inside the body by analyzing the iris of the eye. You also have what is called in the Bible 'an evil eye.' There are some people who have cruel eyes. There are other people who have lying eyes—because when you are a habitual liar you can't hide it. You may be able to pretend, but you can never hide it. And also the light of the body is the eye in reflecting God's Spirit through your attitude, your

behavior, your thoughts; so everything is tied up with that.

"...Therefore, if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be *full of light*" (22). And that's just a general principle. And it's very, very interesting, too.

Hold your place and let's come to John 1, and let's read this verse. And let's understand something about human beings, about how we live and function and so forth, and why, in praying for our daily food, we need to eat the right food. And that's why God said that we should not eat unclean foods. But that's more to that today than just whether it's clean or unclean. You have to stay away from all the processed foods, etc., etc., etc. Well, we won't get into a health situation here.

John 1:9: "The true light was that which enlightens everyone who comes into the world." Now that's quite a statement. Now what does that mean? Well, I've been reading a book talking about the bioelectrical magnetic makeup of the body. And it starts at conception. That when a new life is conceived, there is a flash of electricity bio-generated in the body that's 480-thousand volts! Now even though that sounds like a lot compared to a watt of electricity, it is small. However, what that 480-thousand volts of bio-electricity does is that it congeals the egg, and the power comes from the sperm, and congeals the egg so that no other sperm can penetrate it. So that everyone who comes into the world has been enlightened by the light of the power of creation that God put in the reproductive system.

So the thing is this: The Bible is not only *a way*, telling us about God, how to live, how to serve God, how to worship God, but it also has everything in it referring to scientific things is true and accurate. And I've got a book at home—I haven't read yet—it's the scientific things in the book of Job, and it's quite amazing. And you think about it: Even Solomon said that the circuits of the wind go around. Isaiah said that God sits on the circle of the earth. So all of those things are scientifically valid. Yet, what happened when Galileo said that the earth is round? The Pope made him say it's flat. And after he confessed that it is flat, he walked out and said nevertheless it's round, because you can't deny it, and it's in the Bible. But it just shows what human beings do.

Now let's come back here to Matthew 6:23: "But if your eye be evil..." Now if you want to see evil eyes, go down to the post-office and look at the FBI's most-wanted—and look at those eyes. And then look at the eyes of a young infant:

- that are bright
- that are innocent
- that their lives have not been polluted by sin
- their minds have not been flooded with wrong thoughts and wrong teachings

And you look at the two of them. So what He's talking about here is accurate. "...your whole body shall be *full of* darkness.... [And isn't it true that they have discovered that many of the sicknesses that people have come from what? *Mental attitudes*. Not all—sometimes a mental attitude comes from sickness within and affects the mind. So you can't say you can think your way to be well if you just think about it. No! If you're overcoming sickness, then you also have to have right thoughts, but you also have to put into the body the right things.] ...Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, **how great *is* that darkness.**" Now where does this evil eye come from but Satan the devil, correct?

Now let's look at something else. What is the symbol of Masonry? *A triangle with an all-seeing eye*. And it's also on the dollar bill. Now, God gives these things so we can easily identify what's going on. And this is why when you get around some people, you get very uneasy because not only is the eye evil. But their whole body, their whole system is negative.

Now here's the key, here's the whole key in this concerning 'give us this day our daily bread.' God is your God, not the physical things. Verse 24: "No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." And mammon is any physical thing that is necessary for life. It includes: food, water, money, power, prestige, all of those things—mostly money.

Now v 25: "Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?... [So then He gives an example here, and this all comes down to believing God and trusting in Him. Because if we believe God and we ask for it, He will provide. Now He'll provide in different ways and different means as we'll see here a little later—and we also have our part to do.] ...Observe the birds of heaven: they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into

granaries; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? But who among you, by taking careful thought... [So this has to do with all the plans of man—whatever your plan. And what is a plan? A plan is what? *Careful thought, counting the cost, all of that—careful thought.*] ...is able to add one cubit to his stature?" (vs 25-27). That's interesting isn't it? You can't do that.

And He says over here in Matthew 5:33: "Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in* ancient *times*. 'You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* [Holy] city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black" (vs 33-36). And these are considered the least things. Now if you can't do that by the power of thought—and of course, one of the big problems that you have on the other hand is that if you think it you can make it happen. That's not always true. Yes, you do have to have the understanding, you do have to apply yourself, as we'll see a little bit later. But you cannot make yourself different than you are aside from God's Spirit and aside from God's laws. And the whole thing is that we are to be perfected as the Father in heaven is perfect.

Now back here to Matthew 6:28: "And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe the lilies of the field... [And take a look at any flower.] ...how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these" (vs 28-29). So those are all object lessons for us to learn by. That's why when we see the creation of God and see the beautiful things that He has made. You know they're here. They're beautiful. They're gone!

Now Leon Ritchie lives down in the desert and he goes out after the rain especially because the flowers bloom in the desert. And he's taken some pictures and sent them to us, and they're beautiful. But by time they get to us the flower is already wilted out—by time the picture is there. So this is just showing the fleetingness of life. And how many great plans of men have gone astray because they didn't trust God? *Many, many, many!*

So then he says, v 30: "Now if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O *you* of little faith?... [So if you say, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' you have to have the faith. We're also going to see you have to have the work. You have to do things.] ...Therefore, [He says] do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we

eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we be clothed?’ For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things” (vs 30-32). So then He gives us the perspective in everything.

Now remember that v 33 summarizes all of Matthew 5 & 6. “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Now you’ll notice in the margin there that the force of the Greek means: *seek and keep on seeking*. So if it doesn’t happen right away, you continue in it. If God does not provide in the way that you need immediately, keep asking.

Let’s see that, because this is also important for us to understand concerning our relationship with God, Luke 18:1: “And He also spoke a parable to them to show that it is necessary to pray always, and **not to give up**.” That’s important! Sometimes before things work out before they ought to work out, that you are praying that they should work out, and you’re hoping that God would answer that prayer, it may even look like the exact opposite is going to happen. But then God intervenes!

Verse 2: “Saying, ‘There was in a certain city a certain judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city; and she kept coming to him, saying, “Avenge me of my adversary”’ (vs 2-3).

Let me just put in here something that’s important to understand. There are *necessary* repetitions. And there are *vain* repetitions. *Necessary* repetitions are those things that you need to pray about such as: give us daily our daily food. *Necessary* repetitions are those things we need to pray about until we have a clear answer from God. Those are *not vain* repetitions. If you pray for health and strength every day, that’s needed every day—correct? *Yes!* So this is the case here of this woman coming, **repeatedly**, to show that even if someone who doesn’t fear God or respect a man, keeps coming, sooner or later there’s going to be the answer. Now also we need to realize this: **Sometimes the answer will be ‘no.’** Don’t expect every answer from God to be ‘yes.’ But if we’re praying according to His will we will have more *yeses* than *no*.

Verse 5: “‘Yet, because this widow is causing me trouble, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by *her* continual coming.’ Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And shall not God execute vengeance for His elect...’” (vs 5-7). Yes, He will. Just put in your margin there, Psa. 149, because it shows that God is going to execute vengeance. When is the final vengeance going to be executed? *At the resurrection!* He’ll take

care of our enemies. God has intervened in all of our lives one way or the other in very difficult circumstances, and has intervened in very powerful ways.

“...**who cry out to Him day and night...** [through prayer.] ...and patiently watch over them? I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily.... [whatever is necessary] ...Nevertheless... [which reflects on our age here today] ...when the Son of man comes, shall He find the *true* faith on the earth?” (vs 7-8). Now that’s referring to those who are in His Church. Just put in your margin there, Rev. 3:15-21, which is the Laodiceans—there’s an awful lot to be said.

Let’s see how God provides in every circumstance. Elijah was one of most powerful prophets of God on earth. But you look at his life, and you compare that with how you live today. You compare that with what kind of faith that he had, and yet, weakness of faith a little later on after all the prophets of Baal were killed—he ran away from Jezebel because he was afraid. All of us have our weakness and all of us have our little doubts. And it’s also true, if you read about Abraham, that not only did Sarah laugh about having a child, but also Abraham laughed in himself.

How many men in the Church of God want to proclaim themselves to be Elijah or the power for whatever? All right, if you want to be Elijah, start out this way. Let’s see how you do. Let’s look at his life.

1-Kings 17:1: “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the sojourners of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD God of Israel lives, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except according to my word.’ And the Word of the Lord came to him, saying... [now he had to run for his life] ...‘Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, before Jordan. And it shall be, you shall drink of the brook. And I have commanded the ravens to feed you there’” (vs 1-4). Was God able to take care of it? *Yes!* He sent the ravens. What did they do? *They probably went and got the best of the fruit, the best of whatever*, because God commanded them to do it. I don’t know what kind of meat they may have brought him or not, I couldn’t tell you if they did.

Verse 5: “So, he went and did according unto the Word of the LORD...” Key thing! ***Whenever there’s a promise of God, you go do according to the Word of God.***

- You have trust
- You have faith
- You have belief
- And do according to the Word of God.

“...for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh... [they brought him fish, he did have food] ...in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. And the Word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘Arise, go to Zarephath which *belongs* to Sidon... [now, a Gentile woman!] ... and live there. Behold, I have commanded a widow to keep you there” (vs 5-9). She didn’t know that God had commanded her. But it was by the circumstances.

Verse 10: “Then he arose and went to Zarephath, and came in to the entrance of the city, and, behold, the widow was gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, ‘Please, bring me a little water in a vessel so that I may drink.’ And as she was going to bring *it*, he called to her and said, ‘Please, bring me a piece of bread in your hand.’ And she said, ‘As the LORD your God lives, I do not have a cake, but only a handful of meal in a pitcher and a little oil in a jar....’” (vs 10-12). Here’s the lesson: ***Don’t always look to the circumstances, because God can always change the circumstances.***

“...Now see, I *am* gathering two sticks, so that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, so that we may eat it and die” (v 12).

So she said, ‘Look, this is all I’ve got. I’ve got two little sticks of wood. I’m going to go fix this up, cook it on these two sticks of wood and we’re going to sit there and die.’

Verse 13: “And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear, go. Do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it, and bring *it* to me. And then make for you and for your son,’” At first thought, this would seem kind of selfish—wouldn’t it? But it wasn’t, because the Word of God said ‘*I will nourish you there.*’ God is going to take care of it.

He gives the explanation here, v 14: “For thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘The pitcher of meal shall not be emptied, nor shall the jar of oil fail until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” How’s God going to do that? *By a miracle!* Sometimes it takes a miracle to intervene for God to carry out His Word for you.

Verse 15: “And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah. And she and he and her house ate *many* days; the pitcher of meal was not consumed, and the jar of oil did not fail, according to the Word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah” (vs 15-16).

And I wonder how many times that the woman would go up there and she would open up the top wherever the flour was and behold there was

the same amount that was there yesterday, before she made the cakes. And she took the cruse of oil, and she picked it up her hand, she poured out the oil. And I wonder how many times she thought, ‘When I come here is the flour going to be gone and is the oil going to be gone?’ So when we tie that together with what Jesus said back in Matt. 6: ‘Don’t be anxious, don’t worry about it.’ There are going to be times and circumstances will look hopeless, but nevertheless, God will intervene! How He will intervene, you’ve got to trust Him in faith.

How about the children of Israel? Do you know what God did? We’ll just summarize it, what is there in the book of Exodus: They said, ‘We don’t have any food to eat.’ God said, ‘Okay, I’ll send you bread in the morning, and I’ll send you flesh at night.’ Actually, the flesh came first and then the bread. What was the bread? *It was manna! Bread from heaven!*

I’ve often thought about this: How impenetrable is the carnal mind? Think of this: 40 years you had manna—everyday you’d go out and pick it. You have to do your work; we’ll talk about doing your work. God is not going to back up a grocery truck into your house every day. He’s not going to give you the food, that all you have to do is put a funnel in your mouth and open it up. Many people might wish that would be so, but nevertheless, here’s manna every day for 40 years, and the miracle of the manna was that if you kept it over during the week it would breed worms and stink. But on the sixth day you keep it over for the Sabbath, it didn’t breed worms and stink and you were allowed to gather twice as much.

Also another miracle: there was an omer—or about a pint jar—of manna that God said, ‘You take that and you put inside the ark with Aaron’s stick that budded, and the manna and the law. So that lasted all that time until the temple was destroyed. Think of that! So that’s quite a miracle.

All right, so here’s what happened. Psalm 78:22: “Because they believed not in God, and did not trust in His salvation... [We’ll come back and talk about trusting in God in relationship to prayer.] ...though He had commanded the clouds from above, and had opened the doors of heaven; and He had rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the grain of heaven” (vs 22-24)

Makes you wonder: Whenever I read that I think of this: At the wedding feast on the Sea of Glass I wonder what the food is going to be like? And I wonder what the wine will be like? *Spiritual, heavenly wine and spiritual, heavenly food for spirit beings newly resurrected!* Can you believe that? That’s going to be awesome! And we’re going to be sitting there. I don’t know what the length of the

tables will be or how many tables will be there, but the angels are going to wait on us. They're going to provide the food. I wonder what the plates will look like? What the glasses will look like? I wonder how the angels will be dressed? We'll be dressed—we'll have on our new garments. We have to have them on—don't we? *Yes!* And we have a new name. We'll probably have a new name on a new stone—right? And we'll have crowns on our heads.

This is going to be a royal, regal thing! So, the next time you're eating your paltry little cereal, if that's all you have, think on that and what God is going to do for you! Now cereal's good, especially if you get natural whole grains and you cook it right and you eat it right, that's probably better. And I will have to say, a hundred times better than all the processed food, the dry cereal. Dry cereal is virtually worthless. It may taste good but it's virtually worthless.

Now manna—let's talk about this a little bit more. Verse 25: "Man ate the food of angels; He sent them meat to the full." Then sent them the east wind and they walked through on dry ground.

All right, let's learn a lesson, let's come back here to John, the sixth chapter. Again notice whenever we talk about the physical things, what does Christ point to? *He points to the spiritual things*, doesn't He? *Yes!* Now remember, there are three places where Christ fed the four thousand and the five thousand—it's mentioned there. But here we'll see this of the 5,000, and then we'll see the lesson that we have for us. John 6 is a perfect study in ***do not look at the circumstances because the circumstances can change, because God can change them.*** And all the way through the Gospels, you will see that there are many things that Jesus did to change the physical circumstances.

John 6:3: "Then Jesus went up into a mountain and sat there with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. And when Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and saw a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'How shall we buy enough loaves to feed *all* these?' But He said this to test him, because He knew what He was about to do" (vs 3-6). Sometimes circumstances come around to test us to see what we will do. And you can read circumstances in the Old Testament about that.

Verse 7: "Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred silver coins would not be sufficient to buy enough loaves for each of them to receive a little.' *Then* one of His disciples, Andrews, the brother of Simon Peter, said to Him, 'Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fish; but what are these for so many *people*?'" (vs 7-9). You try that at a baseball or football game and there's only

that much food and everybody is standing in line and you feed the first person and it's gone, you're going to have a riot.

Verse 10: "Man ate the food of angels; He sent them meat to the full ... Then Jesus said, 'Have the men sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place..."

Let me just interject here. The way that the climate was back during the days of Jesus and before into the time of the children of Israel when they first went into the land—totally different than what it is today, totally different. So, they sat down on the grass. It's probably a rocky knoll today.

"...therefore, the men sat down, about five thousand in number" (v 10). We have an impossible situation that Christ is going to make it work by changing the circumstances.

Verse 11: "And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting; and in like manner the small fish, as much as they desired."

I wonder what it was like to be sitting there and see them continually breaking the bread and the bread not going away, and continually giving out a portion of the fish and the fish continually rejuvenating itself. The thing is this: *God is able to take care of what He has promised* (Matt. 6) because this is the important point to remember.

(go to the next track)

Now let's continue on here in John, the sixth chapter. You know the rest of the story: They fed all of them, as much as they wanted (v 11) and then the disciples went out and they 'gathered together the fragments that are left over' so there wasn't anything left and they filled twelve baskets (v 13) with the fragments of the barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.

Verse 14: "Now when the men saw the miracle that Jesus had done, they said, 'Of a truth, this is the Prophet Who was to come into the world.'" Then they were going to take Jesus and make Him king. What you're dealing with here is that people always look to the physical thing, and Jesus is teaching us that the spiritual comes first. You need to do the spiritual things and that's why prayer is so important. So, when we ask, 'Give us this day our daily bread' we also need to realize that every teaching of Jesus follows along with that prayer.

They found Him, they finally located Him because He walked across the sea and they didn't see Him go that way, v 25: "And after finding Him *on* the other side of the sea, they said to Him,

‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied.’ Here’s the lesson.

Remember what He says, Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God...”—correct? *Yes!*

It says virtually the same thing in John 6:27: “Do not labor *for* the food that perishes...” You’ve got to work. In this sense He’s saying: don’t make this the whole priority of your life and your work and your works endeavor, of food and physical things.

“...but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life...” (v 27). Everything in the whole Bible keys around Jesus Christ and the Passover, the Sabbath and Holy Days—***everything!*** Keep that in mind. This is what He’s emphasizing here.

“...which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed. Therefore, they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?’” (vs 27-28).

Everybody wants to do good things, good things. Here we are ready for Halloween this week and they already have all the Christmas things up and now we’re going to see all the *good* of Halloween and the *good* of Christmas and the giving of food. And we’ve got Thanksgiving thrown in there and they’re always some reporter going to go down to some soup-kitchen where they’re feeding 4,000/5,000, whatever, and they give them turkey and so forth, and all the fixings. You can see a lot of people in there that are well fed and well dressed and they’re just there for the meal, they’re not there because they’re poor. But nevertheless, it gets spread all out. They’re doing a good work, but unless you have the first priority, which is Jesus Christ, all your good works are going to come to nothing.

Verse 29: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.’.... [you’re to believe in Christ] ...Therefore, they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform, that we may see *it* and believe You?.... [let’s do a magic trick] ...What work will You do?.... [They said, ‘Now look, we’ve read the Bible.] ...Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, as it is written: “He gave them bread to eat *that came down* from heaven”’” (vs 29-31).

What they’re saying is, ‘Jesus, what are You going to do? If God did that, then You’re from God. Now what are You going to do?’

Verse 32: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread

from heaven; but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.... [then He’s talking about Himself]: ...For the bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world’.... [they said, ‘Oh boy, this sounds great]: ...Therefore they said to Him, ‘Lord, give this bread to us always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘***I am the bread of life...***’ (vs 32-35).

Unless Christ is the very focal point of everything in your life, with God the Father, all the other physical things:

- though you strive for them
- though you work for them
- though you plan for them
- though you make all kinds of things for them

Just like the man who had the crops—remember that? He had abundant crops. He says, ‘I don’t know what I’m going to do.’ He says, ‘I know what I’m going to do, I’m going to build greater barns, I’m going to pack it all in there, and I’m going to say, ‘Hey, have your ease.’ What was the message? ‘*You fool! Your life is required of you tonight!*’

So likewise, here’s another lesson. ***Always put Christ first. God the Father and Jesus Christ first.*** “... ‘***I am the bread of life;*** the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time” (v 35).

Let’s see this same principle apply in the Old Testament again. Here you see the consistency of the Bible together. Let’s see how similar this is to what we have been reading in the New Testament. The reason that it is, is because the mind of God has inspired both. Now granted, in the New Testament, there are a whole lot more spiritual lessons for us to learn. But let’s also understand this: *The book of Psalms is the most spiritual book of the Old Testament!* This is why in many versions of just the New Testament they include the Psalms. This becomes important to do because what is one of the things that people automatically begin to do? *Compare themselves with other people*—correct? Isn’t this the whole basis of socialism? Let’s have it equal: he has, I need. I don’t have, you take it from him and give it to me. When we compare ourselves among ourselves as it says in 2-Cor. 10, we’re not wise.

Let’s see how we solve the problem. Don’t look at what someone else has and then be jealous or be envious of that or get upset because you don’t have it. If you are Christ’s and you belong to God the Father, you are guaranteed eternal life. And everything else comes from that, because that’s the most important thing. And also remember this: ***Satan rewards those who follow him.*** So, not

everything that you see in the world that other people have are necessarily blessings. They may be rewards for following him.

Psalms 37:1: “Do not fret yourself because of evildoers... [don’t worry about it] ...and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity.” What happens? You look in the world and what do you see? *Exactly this: Those who are corrupt succeed!* When they’re caught, you’re a Democrat, it’s just natural; and if you’re a Republican you’re a no good nothing. If you’re just an average person in the world, hey, that’s life. If you’re a Christian you’re a total hypocrite. David says don’t worry about it; don’t be envious of them: of their cars, homes, limousines, butlers, maids, bank accounts, gold and silver, jewels, and all of this sort of thing.

Verse 2: “For they shall soon be cut down like the grass... [Always remember this: their day is coming, and they’re being rewarded for their evil by Satan.] ...and wither as the green herb.” Here’s the solution: Don’t compare yourself with others. Don’t look what other people have and think you need exactly that. If it’s something you need, God can provide it for you, provided you have your part to do.

And your part begins with v 3: “Trust in the LORD, and do good... [that’s loving God, keeping His commandments, practicing the Truth, etc.] ...dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD... [Rather than fretting and stewing and comparing and worrying about evil people who are successful in the world.] ...and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (vs 3-4).

Think about that! That’s important to understand. But your desires then, that if you delight yourself in the Lord, are going to be what? *According to the will of God!* We won’t turn there, but the last couple verses in Eph. 3 says that God is able to do exceedingly above everything that we ask or think. That doesn’t necessarily mean in this life, because we’re only living this life to get to the resurrection, because that is the true life. Always keep that in mind. So, if you ‘delight in the Lord’ and the desire of your heart is to be in the Kingdom of God, to be a spirit being, to live forever according to the way that God has laid out for us, **God will give you that desire**, then the other things that come along in this life that you need as well.

Verse 5: “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He will bring *it* to pass.” God will do it. Sometimes it will take a while to get there, but that’s okay, don’t worry about it, **God will do it!** He’s promised to do it.

Proverbs 16 ties right in with it. As we go through this, and as you study your Bible, see how

the Bible internally agrees with itself over and over again—which is a sign of the inspiration of the Word of God. Count the number of men who have written different books in the Bible, do you think for any one minute that they would all agree as precisely as the Bible does—Old and New Testaments—if they all wrote it just because they wrote it themselves. No, you would have a divergence of opinion like an encyclopedia that you couldn’t hardly believe or stand.

Proverbs 16:1: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.” God gives you the ability to think and pray. Here’s the thing that’s important that you always seek the Kingdom of God first.

Verse 2: “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes...” That’s why we commit ourselves to God, so that we are not doing our will. That’s why we pray, ‘Your will be done and not our will be done.’

Notice the contrast: “...but the LORD weighs the spirits” (v 2). He’s looking at the heart. He’s looking at the spirit. It says in another place, He ‘tries the reins.’ It’s interesting, a lot of people say, ‘Well, what does God mean by that, because the Hebrew means *kidneys*?’ Well, very simple: look at the human brain. There are two hemispheres and they look just like kidneys—don’t they? It’s scientifically accurate. But that’s the way people do.

Verse 3: “Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.” That’s how you overcome carnal thinking. There it is right there.

—You want to overcome sin? You want to overcome bad habits? Whatever it is! Verse 6 “By mercy... [through forgiveness and repentance of sin] ...and Truth... [the Word of God] ...iniquity is purged... [replaced with the laws and commandments of God written into your heart and your mind] ...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil.”

Psalms 37:6 shows the trust, the reliance on God and everything that we need to do: “And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light...” When will that happen? *Ultimately, at the resurrection!* But remember what Jesus said: ‘If the light of the eye in you is good,’ it’s what it’s talking about here.

“...and your judgment like the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...” (vs 6-7). Sometimes it’s very hard to be patient, especially in this society because we have 12-minute attention spans trained by television. You think about that! You sit down and see how you feel after about 12-minutes of study. Are you ready to get up

and do something? Is your mind starting to wander? Are you ready to go to the refrigerator and get a snack, like you do when there's TV because you don't want to watch the commercial? We're all trained with 12-minute attention spans. We need to get out of that. Things don't happen immediately.

"...wait patiently for Him... [and in the meantime] ... do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way; because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger..." (vs 7-8). 'God, You're not fair. Why does he have it and look at him sinning out there, and I don't have it. And I've been asking and praying for this all the time.' And if God could reach down and say, 'Listen, I've called you to eternal life. Hold on! Don't worry about it.'

"...and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself, it leads only to evil" (v 8). That's what some people do. What happened when people found out, well, you don't have to keep the Holy Days; or you don't have to eat unleavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? *Hello!* What does the Feast of Unleavened Bread mean? *Yes, have Easter cakes—right?* Total nonsense! How many people flocked out when it was told them—a complete lie—it's okay to eat unclean foods? They ran out and they get their ham, and they got their shrimp and lobster and all this sort of thing, because the evil prosper don't go out and do evil yourself.

Remember this: *God is judging you and God has called you so you can't go out and do the things that the evil in the world do and are rewarded by Satan the devil!* Your God is the true God and Christ is the Head of you, and not the god of this world. So, if you go out and try and do it, you're going to fall on your face and totally fail because you're sinning against God! Whereas the wicked, they're blinded, they're cut off, they're not called to eternal life.

But remember this: v 9: "For evildoers shall be cut off: **but those who wait...** [patiently] **...upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.**"

Verse 16—remember this, never forget this: **"Better is the little that a righteous man has than the riches of many wicked."** Never forget that! This can apply in many different things.

A lot of people are impressed with cars and all this sort of thing. If you have a new, expensive car that's the greatest thing in the world. However, remember this—and I'll never forget it: I've thought about buying a new car, but then I remembered as soon as I drive it off the lot it is used! And it has lost \$2,000. And with that advice, I always buy used cars—just a little example.

Verse 17: "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever" (vs 17-18). If you are always focused on what God wants and keep that in mind and purpose. That's why every prayer starts out: 'Our Father Who is heaven, Your name is Holy; Your will be done; Your Kingdom come.' That's the focus. That's why every prayer starts that way. God made us as human beings that we need focus, we need purpose, we need reinforcement of that, we need to continually put it in front of us.

Verse 19: "They shall not be ashamed in the time of evil ..." You can claim that promise. There are going to be times of evil and difficulties that are going to come upon us in this nation. How far down the road we don't know, but they are going to come. We need God's blessing and protection in that time.

"...and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Just like Elijah. Didn't have much—bread and oil. Enough to survive—right? *Yes!* So this all ties in with 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

Verse 23: "The steps of a good man are made firm by the LORD, and He delights in his way." If we do the things that are pleasing in God's sight, He delights in that—doesn't He? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 24: "Though he fall..." It says in another place, 'A righteous man falls seven times but God raises him up.' So, remember this: If you sin a sin not unto death, repent of it. If you have difficulties in doing things and they don't succeed right away, keep at it; learn from it.

"...he shall not be utterly cast down, for the LORD upholds him with His hand. I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging bread" (vs 24-25). All tied in with 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

We've got our part to do. Let's come to the book of Proverbs—we'll look at some things here concerning in the book of Proverbs. If you need a job and you say, 'Oh Lord, give me a job.' You get up off your knees, you run into the living room, you plop down in the TV chair, turn on the remote and watch TV all day long. And you're sitting there wondering, 'Well, I wonder when God is going to give me a job.' And nothing happens. So, the next day you pray and you get up off your knees and you don't go out looking for work. Maybe you may not watch television, but maybe you might sit around and just kind of fret and stew and be depressed and wondering 'when is God going help me.' What's going to happen here? And you're not doing anything.

God expects you do something. If you want a job, go out and look for one. Sometimes people get all upset when they start keeping the Sabbath, they're fired! And maybe they might have a little trouble right at first. But, I've seen so many, many, many times that God removed them from that job because there were other things involved in it, such as toxic chemicals and things like this and they got another job at a lesser pay; but it was a better job because it didn't destroy their health. Which would you rather have? A high paying job with toxic chemicals? *or* A lower paying job where you have peace of mind?

Let's see our part that we need to do, Proverbs 10:4: "He who deals *with* a lazy hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

- you need to get out and work
- you need to get out and do
- you need to get out and perform

And if you need a job, you need to make a job of getting a job.

- ask God for help
- ask God for guidance
- ask God for grace and favor

If you go in for an interview, ask God to help you and inspire you to say what is proper from your heart. If you're on the job, I can tell you this:

- if you know how to count
- if you know how to think
- if you know how to organize

once you get the job you're going to keep it. There are too many people today who don't know how to do those things. God will bless you in it. So keep that in mind.

Verse 5: "He that gathers in summer *is* a wise son... [Which is: 'make hay while the sun shines' kind of thing.] ...*but* he that sleeps in harvest *is* a son that causes shame." That's quite a thing! If you have a harvest out there and you don't get out and get it, you think God is going to give you your bread? *No, it's going to rot right on the vine!*

Proverbs 12:24: "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule..." If you work hard, you do good work, you have quality work, you will be promoted. You need to also, in your work and job, continue to increase your expertise in what you are doing—whatever that needs to be. Never be satisfied with what you have done that cannot be improved—that's a key thing. Never be satisfied with what you have done, because tomorrow's another day. So, don't come in tomorrow and say, 'Well, look what I did yesterday, I'm just gonna sit back and kind of relax a little bit.' Get out there and work hard.

Notice the other hand of this—this is why the Proverbs is so good. It's right and wrong/good and evil. "...but the lazy shall be under tribute."

Verse 27: "The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting... [brings it home, doesn't do anything with it] ...but **the substance of a diligent man is precious.**" So, whatever you have—much or little—don't worry about it.

Now come down here to Proverbs 13:4: "The soul of the sluggard desires and *has* nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be abundantly gratified." That's not an excuse for being overweight. In this case it means we'll have abundance.

The Proverbs have an awful lot of things that will teach us practical day-by-day things that we need to do. Here's another thing that happens when you're diligent.

- When you're diligent *you plan.*
- When you're diligent *you make a way.*
- When you're diligent *you figure out your way around obstacles.*

Proverbs 21:5: "The plans of the diligent *tend* only to plenty..." You will have plenty, that's a promise of God, but you have your part. This is the whole thing that we need to understand in everything we do. We all have our part.

Example: If someone says, 'Oh, God, help me to understand Your Word,' then you never study it, you'll never know. You have to apply yourselves. Or: 'Oh, God, give me a job. Oh, God, help me with this. Oh, God, help me with that.' Unless you get out and are diligently doing it, how can God answer the prayer? It gets back to this, the same old saying: 'Ninety percent of inspiration is perspiration.' When you're working, that's when you are inspired and come up with ideas and things that you need to do.]

Now notice the rest of this Proverb: "...but everyone *who is* hasty, only to poverty. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro by those who seek death" (vs 5-6). That's self-explanatory.

Proverbs 22:29—tie this in with Matt. 24:42—the end of the chapter: about the servant who is doing the will of his lord, always. "Do you see a man diligent in his work? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before obscure *men.*"

This applies to everything, not only your work, but study, prayer, everything that you do. And just put in your margin there: *Remember Joseph.* He was cast in prison to humble him, to prepare him for the job to save Israel and to save the ancient Near East. What happened? *He stood before the king and*

*the king said, 'Work.'* And he gave the interpretation of the dream, and Joseph said: 'Now, search out and find a man who's able and you can appoint over this business to do it.' And he said, 'I found him, you're the man.' Perfect example.

Let's see some more Psalms in the way of **trusting** God. Because not only to we need to do the things that we have to do, but in it we trust God. We ask God to bless us and prosper us in the way:

- if a trial comes along, we don't get thrown back for a loop and give up, *we go on*
- if it's something that we need to learn, *we learn*
- if it's something that we've done wrong, *we change*

—whatever it may need to be!

Psalms 40:4: "Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust... [that ties right in with Matt. 6 where we started] ...and does not respect the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies.... [notice how David thought]: ...O LORD my God, many things You have done, Your wonderful works and Your thoughts which are toward us; there is none to compare unto You; if I could declare and speak of them, they would be more than can be told" (vs 4-5). Think about that in relationship to God's blessing upon you.

Here's part of the way that we pray to God, Psalm 20:4: "May He grant you... [that is, to me] ...according to your own heart, and fulfill all your plans." Into whose hands could you better place yourself than in God? *Nobody!*

- not your own thoughts
- not your own ways
- not someone else
- not their schemes

*into God's hands*

Remember, there's always going to be human nature tugging there and pulling against that, so that's why you need to have the focus everyday on the goal.

Verse 5: "We will shout for joy in your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up banners; may the LORD fulfill all your prayers.... [He will answer you] ...Now know I that the LORD saves His anointed..." (vs 5-6).

We can say that applies to David the king, that's true. We can say that applies to Christ when He was here in the flesh, that is true. But do we have an anointing? *Yes, indeed! We have an anointing of the Holy Spirit*—don't we? Is God able to save you then? *Of course!* That's His whole purpose, able to save His anointed.

"...He will answer him from his Holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.... [God will intervene] ...Some **trust** in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, O LORD, let the king hear us when we call" (vs 6-9). All these very inspiring Psalms, what we need to do and follow.

Psalms 62 also helps give us perspective. In all of these things we have to have the right perspective, the right outlook, the right understanding, the right focus and trusting in God.

Psalms 62:5: "My soul, wait in silence for God alone; for from Him comes my hope." Very important! When there is a promise of God, He has put it there for you to claim. Not to appropriate it to yourself, but in this manner:

- Oh God, You have promised.
- Oh God, You cannot lie.
- Oh God, You are true.
- Please intervene and help and hear.
- Please intervene, I'm in trouble.
- Please intervene, I don't know what to do.

And **He will!** You're expecting Him to fulfill His will and His promise.

Verse 6 "He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved." Remember that if you build your house on the Rock, as Jesus said, the wind will come, the rain will come, the flood will come, but you won't fall. You may be beaten upon, you may have difficulties, but you're not going to fall.

Verse 8: "Trust in Him... [Whenever you're in trouble. Trust in Him in the good times. No, it says:] ...**at all times**; you people; **pour out your heart before Him**... [that is, in prayer] ...God is a refuge for us. Selah.... [*stop and think on this*] ...Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie..." (vs 8-9). You sure know that whenever they start running for political office, don't you—and the competition gets hot. It's amazing!

"...when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression... [don't try and work it out yourself] ... and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them. God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God.... [He'll be able to take care of you; He'll provide for you.] ...Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work" (vs 9-12).

Well, that shows what we need to do as far as 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:11, 22
- 2) John 1:9
- 3) Matthew 6:23-27
- 4) Matthew 5:33-36
- 5) Matthew 6:28-33
- 6) Luke 18:1-3, 5-8
- 7) 1-Kings 17:1-16
- 8) Psalm 78:22-25
- 9) John 6:3-11, 14,25
- 10) Matthew 6:33
- 11) John 6:27-35
- 12) Psalm 37:1-5
- 13) Proverbs 16:1-3, 6
- 14) Psalm 37:6-9, 16-19, 23-25
- 15) Proverbs 10:4-5
- 16) Proverbs 12:24, 27
- 17) Proverbs 13:4
- 18) Proverbs 21:5-6
- 19) Proverbs 22:29
- 20) Psalm 40:4-5
- 21) Psalm 20:4-9
- 22) Psalm 62:5-6, 8-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-Corinthians 4
- Isaiah 66
- Psalm 149
- Revelation 3:15-21
- John 6:11, 13
- 2-Corinthians 10
- Ephesians 3
- Matthew 24:42-51

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## Keys to Answered Prayer VIII Forgiveness—#1

Fred R. Coulter

Forgiveness entails an awful lot! It sounds very simple, so we will try and see what God teaches us about it:

- Why we need forgiveness
- Why we need to forgive
- When we are to forgive
- When we are to be ready to forgive
- When there can be no forgiveness

All of those things are involved in it. Let's come to Matthew 6:11 and again, look at the model prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" (vs 11-12). When I first read that, I thought: 'Hooray! Boy I won't owe any money.' Well, it doesn't mean that. It means this: **When you sin you have a debt!** You've incurred a debt. You owe something to someone. "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."

Now we're going to see that there are two sides to the coin *to forgiveness*. Let's see the parallel account, and it talks, in this case, about sins, rather than just debts. God wanted us to understand: Debts would be more in the way of faults, difficulties, quirks and problems.

Luke 11:4—concerning sin. "And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us... [who has sinned against us—and then the same thing with Matt. 6]: ...and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." Because we will see there is a connection here in forgiveness or lack of forgiveness.

Let's see that all forgiveness comes from God—see sermon series: *Judge Righteous Judgment*—God is going to judge everyone of us according to our works. In Psa. 130 we have something that helps us understand about forgiveness, and understanding about the forgiveness that comes from God. That ties in with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood and His broken body and everything like that.

Psalms 130:1: "Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O LORD...." We'll get into that a little bit later: how to pray when you're in deep trouble.

Here is deep trouble, v 2: "LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (vs 2-3). Because all have 'sinned and come short of the glory of God.' And this is why God gives the

command that we are to forgive because we want forgiveness.

Verse 4: "But *there* is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.... [You can put there that you may be loved, everything like that goes with it.] I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.... [forgiveness brings hope, because it cleans the slate; forgiveness brings hope] ...My soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (vs 4-8). That also shows God's overall plan that He's going to accomplish.

Now let's come to the New Testament, Acts, the third <sup>[corrected]</sup> chapter, and let's see something else concerning forgiveness. This is where the apostles were hauled before the Sanhedrin for healing the man who had been there begging at the Gate Beautiful; and they couldn't gainsay what was done. They brought him in there and when he was healed everyone came running to see it—they were greatly amazed (v 11).

Acts 3:12: "And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people. 'Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this? And why are you looking upon us so intently as if by *our* own power or godliness *we* have made him to walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, after he had judged to release *Him*. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you; and you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses. And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness [whole] to him in the presence of you all'" (vs 12-16).

This was quite a remarkable thing. So, they brought them before the Sanhedrin. And they couldn't deny it, Acts 4:8: "Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, If we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but*

Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole” (vs 8-10). Look at the witness that they gave. There’s going to come a time when we’ll have to give witnesses just like this.

Verse 11: “This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (vs 11-12). No other way! People today, they don’t like it. So they were amazed, they didn’t know what to do, they couldn’t denounce it. So they went ahead and they commanded them to not preach in this name any longer, and after beating them a little they let them go.

Acts 5—this is after Peter was put in prison. They were going to bring him in, in the morning. So the angel came and let him loose, and the message was, Acts 5:20: “Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught...” (vs 20-21). All the other apostles came with him, too, after Peter came and showed he was released.

“...Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, ‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’.... [they took Peter and John, locked them up and so forth] ...And when they heard these words...” (vs 21-24).

Now think about the impression coming upon the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and go carry that clear back to the whole ministry of Christ and bring it forward.

- bring it forward to the crucifixion
- bring it forward to the resurrection
- bring it forward to the receiving the Holy Spirit in the temple on Pentecost
- bring it forward to this time

and think in your mind: I wonder what these priests and these elders were thinking when the guards came in and said, ‘They aren’t there, but it was locked? We don’t know what happened to them.’

“...And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to.... [God has a way of timing it] ...But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the

prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’ Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people” (vs 24-26). So, God turned it around the other way.

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man’s blood upon us” (vs 27-28). So they understood what they had done.

Now, the reason I’m going through this is because Peter gives them an opportunity to repent. The key thing concerning forgiveness is that ***there must be first repentance***. God was doing this to bring a witness to them.

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, ‘We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus...’” (vs 29-30). He wanted them to know that it was the God they claim to worship Who had done this. Not by their own power or anything that they had done.

“...Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins... [or forgiveness of sins] ...to Israel” (vs 30-31). That ties right in with Psa. 130:4.

***Forgiveness and remission of sins comes through Jesus Christ!*** That’s why He was raised from the dead. That’s why it’s important for us to understand. ***All forgiveness must come through Christ***, because He bore the sins of the world.

Now let’s see what happened here, v 32: “And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.” That’s also important concerning forgiveness. Because if you ask for forgiveness, as we’ll see a little later on, and you don’t obey Him, your forgiveness that you ask is null and void. Forgiveness must be followed with the appropriate works.

Now instead of repenting, v 33: “Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death.” Why? ***Because they were afraid of losing their power!***

Let’s come back to the time of John the Baptist, and let’s see what John told them. This isn’t the first time; they had many, many witnesses to call them to repentance.

Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.” Let’s just rehearse a little bit here concerning John

the Baptist: He was the son of a priest, but he never performed a single priestly duty. As a matter of fact, he stayed in the wilderness until the time of 'His appearing'—correct? And he had a Nazarite vow, which means he didn't cut his hair, didn't trim his beard.

So, you can figure by the time he came on the scene—which was probably when he was 30-years-old, because that's when a priest is to start his priestly functions—the Levites can start at 20, but the priests start at 30. Where did he begin his work? *Not at the temple; down at the River Jordan!* This was the first sign that God gave to them, that God was going to **reject** the temple system. And He did it with one who was of the line of Aaron, a priest. I mention that in some of the commentary; it's very important to understand. They were cleansed from their sins—not by sacrifices at the temple and bathing in the pools that they had around the temple—but by coming to the Jordan.

Verse 2: "And saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*' Now John himself wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey" (vs 2-4).

Instead of coming to a priest all decked out in the garments of a priest, all bathed and cleaned and perfumed and incensed, you come to a man standing by the Jordan. I've often pictured him as having red hair. Here he is, this great mane of red hair and red beard and he's standing there preaching repentance and he's dressed in this uncouth garments compared to what a priest should wear—you know, white linen and the urim and thummim and the hat and everything like this.

So, he's down there and, v 5: "Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan." They understood this was the one who was born of Elizabeth and Zacharias—remember? *Yes!*

Verse 6: "And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." Not coming to the priest to offer an offering, and to make a payment to them so they can get forgiveness of sin. They had to send a committee down there. You can read that in John 1—an official committee.

Verse 7: "But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, '**You brood of vipers...**'" It's important to understand they didn't repent. ***If there's no repentance, there is no forgiveness!*** We need to understand that.

"...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, **produce fruits worthy of repentance**... [Then there can be forgiveness. Always remember, there must be repentance first.] ...And do not think to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham *for our* father"; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (vs 7-9). Then he gave them another lesson that they were in danger of committing the unpardonable sin.

When people hear that they are sinners, lots of times their first reaction is, 'Well, I'm not a sinner, I haven't committed murder; I haven't committed adultery; I'm not a liar—most of the time.' They don't realize that by our very nature we are sinners in everything that we do. And even the good that we do is tainted with our nature. So that's why there has to be repentance; then there is forgiveness.

Colossians 1:14: "In Whom we have redemption... [forgiveness] ...through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins." Now that's important for us to understand—'even remission of sins.'

Let's see what happens when we have our sins forgiven. How are we to behave? Very important to understand. How are we to behave? How are we to treat other people? Sometimes we are so loaded down with problems that it takes a long time to overcome. Even though people are trying and they keep making mistakes, that's the whole purpose with *Judge Righteous Judgment* and go to your brother and so forth.

This is given on the heels of how to handle problems between one another and so forth, this is always the question Matthew 18:21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" I imagine Peter thought he was being pretty generous—you know, seven times!

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'" So, he comes and he asks forgiveness. How often should I do it? Well, if his repentance toward you is sincere, or the mistake was something that was inadvertent and he asks for forgiveness, you forgive him how ever many times necessary until he's able to change and overcome. That's what it's talking about here. Then Jesus gives a very important parable. Before we go there:

Matthew 6:14: "For **if...** ***The condition is upon us.*** It is a choice, it is an attitude, and sometimes it's hard, sometimes it is difficult, especially in a repetitive situation, over and over again.

“...**if** you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you... [we’re going to see that’s an important key thing.] ...But **if** you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 14-15). ***There needs to be repentance!***

Now let’s come back to Matthew 18, and we have the whole thing here. Remember, Jesus made payment for all of our sins. When we sin we’re indebted to God because we’ve transgressed His laws, His commandments, and so forth.

Matthew 18:23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24). Today that would be in millions of dollars.

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all’” (vs 25-26). He wasn’t trying to ensconce and get away with it. Here’s forgiveness above and beyond. And after all, when that’s compared to when we understand that our sins crucified Christ, remember what Peter told the Israelites? He said, ‘YOU have crucified the Holy One.’ So, this brings that factor into it there.

Verse 27: “And being moved with compassion... [mercy, compassion, forgiveness] ...the lord of that servant released him, **and forgave** him the debt.” This has to do with our attitude when God forgives us. And we all want to be forgiven—don’t we? Because that’s in the prayer everyday: ‘forgive me, O Lord.’

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins...” A pitiful, little amount compared to what he owed. Instead of taking him and saying, ‘Look, I just had wonderful thing happen to me. I owed 10,000 talents and it was *all* forgiven. Now you only owe me a 100 silver coins. I forgive you.’ No, he didn’t do that!

“...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything’” (vs 28-29).

I remember a man telling me a story that he loaned this man a good sum of money—several thousand dollars. The man was in the attitude of this servant here who wouldn’t listen, v 30: “But he would not *listen*; instead he went and cast him into

prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed.”

This man was telling me he would come into the congregation every Sabbath and there was this man who owed him thousands of dollars; and he would talk to him about it. He said, ‘I’ll make payment.’ But he really never did. So, one day, because his attitude was fomenting: *why doesn’t this guy do it. I gave him the money and you know how it is. I gave it to him with good intent. He hasn’t paid it back. He said he would but he hasn’t.* And it was really getting his attitude down.

After praying about it, he came in one Sabbath and he saw the man and he said. ‘You don’t owe me anything. If there’s anytime in the future you can do anything, I’ll consider it, but you don’t owe me a thing.’ And he said that cleansed his attitude more than anything else. That’s important to understand. ***Lack of forgiveness puts you in a wrong, spiritual condition and can lead to bitterness, and can lead to vindictiveness, and lead to hatefulness—just like this here.***

“...he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed... [Hypocrisy at its best—right?] ...and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘You wicked servant, **I forgave you all that debt**, because you implored me. **Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?**’” (vs 30-33).

Sometimes forgiving someone really is hard because you’ve been affronted. You have been hurt. You’ve been taken advantage of. Especially in a marital situation when husbands and wives get real picky. Maybe you find something that is a real sin.

- What happens if you come in the house and you inadvertently find that your wife is hooked on online porn, or online gambling, or your husband?
- What do you do?

*Well, immediately you divorce him and kick him out because there’s no forgiveness!*

- Whatever the sin is, is it a sin unto death?
- or
- Is a forgivable sin?
  - How much better to work with your husband or your wife
    - ✓to repair the situation
    - ✓to help them
    - ✓to give forgiveness
    - ✓to forsake the sin

This is exactly what it's talking about. That's why God wants us to **forgive and go forward!** What did Jesus say? *Seventy times seven!* Otherwise, who would stand? And you're almost guaranteed this: ***If you don't forgive, you're going to end up with a horrible, terrible and self-righteous attitude that is going to sour your brain!*** Literally pickle your brain in hatred; in self-righteousness; self-centeredness; not considering that you yourself are a sinner.

Now let's see the lesson involved here, v 34: "And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart**" (vs 34-35). That's important to understand. That's profound to realize! And how we need to always exercise that.

Let's go another step further. Do not be so easily offended that you cannot help a brother or sister overcome a sin. Even though they may be overbearing or obnoxious or whatever the problem may be—quick of temper, thoughtless—be **forbearing**. We have to be forbearing one another, forgiving one another. God has called us because we're sinners. He hasn't called us because we're righteous. That's important to understand.

Now let's go one step further. Let's see non-repentance, pleading of forgiveness. An apology is a good start. But do apologies necessarily equate repentance? And since just recently we had this latest flap with John Kerry, where he stood up and said, 'I absolutely refuse to repent of any criticism concerning President Bush.' Well, after what he did, insulting the troops and accusing them of being dumb and unintelligent and everything like that, and you probably saw it all on television, various ones politically got after him and said, 'Don't come and speak for me. Don't come and help me with my campaign.' However, none of them returned any of the money he gave them. There's hypocrisy on both sides. I use this because it's a public thing. After three days he finally issues an apology over a website, which was really not repentance. There's a difference between an apology and repentance. Just like there's a difference in asking forgiveness of sin and having sins forgiven.

(go to the next track)

Exodus 10:16—this is after the second plague. There were all the other signs coming up to it, but the second plague of locust. Pharaoh had been beaten down; he was beginning to feel it; this is very instructive:

Exodus 10:16: "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste..." That's why I brought

up about John Kerry; because you know this is only a political expediency and it will last as long as people's remembrance.

"...and he said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore, I beg you, forgive my sin only this once...'" (vs 16-17). Just this once! Not all of his sins. Not all of the oppression. Here is what amounts to an apology without repentance! ***Seeking forgiveness without repentance!***

"...and pray to the LORD your God that He may take away from me this death only.' And he went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts and threw them into the Red Sea. There did not remain one locust in all the boundaries of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart..." (vs 17-20).

Why did He harden Pharaoh's heart? ***Because Pharaoh didn't repent!*** That's a key; that's what to learn here. ***If you don't truly repent, seeking forgiveness is going to lead you to have a hard heart.*** You don't want that! What's a hard heart going to do but make matters worse—right? ***Always does!***

"...and he did not let the children of Israel go" (v 20).

Let's look at another false repentance, Acts, the eighth chapter. Here again you have a situation where there is no repentance. Let's look at the attitude that takes place here in the case of Simon Magus; you know what he was. Let's see who he was and what he was, and then let's see his attitude when it was fully exposed to him what he should do.

Acts 8:9 "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city... [That is serving Satan, using witchcraft, sorcery and all the things that are with it.] ...and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one."

That's what Satan always does. He let's the men proclaim themselves how great they are—and he is the power behind them.

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed... [No repentance?] ...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip, and as he beheld

the signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the Holy Spirit*" (vs 10-15).

Verse 18: "Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on the hands of the apostles, he offered them money... [everyone who commercializes any work or Church of God, pay attention carefully] ...saying, 'give this authority to me also... [He wanted power; he wanted authority.] ...so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the Holy Spirit*'" (vs 18-19). Peter rebuked him tremendously.]

Verse 20: "But Peter said to him, 'May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God" (vs 20-21). Just like Pharaoh's. That's why God hardened Pharaoh's heart, because his heart was not right.

Verse 22: "Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness.*" (vs 22-23). Notice how similar that Simon's reaction was to Pharaoh's reaction. He could have repented. Forsaken all! Given up everything! But he didn't.

Verse 24: "But Simon answered *and* said, 'You beseech the Lord on my behalf...' *No!* No one can repent for anybody else! That's the key. To this very day, the priests that came from this false Christianity, started by Simon Magus, do the same thing. They have them go to a confessional booth and confess their sins to the priest and then the priest is supposed to pray for them, instead of them repenting to God directly.

So, he says: "...You beseech the Lord on my behalf so that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me'" (v 24).

When he said 'Your heart is not right,' v 23: "...for I perceive *that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness.*" That's just a summary of what was told him; he probably gave him a whole lot more words than that.

Simon didn't repent. What happens when you're confronted with a situation where someone comes to you with a plea for forgiveness and it's really not sincere. What you do is this, you say: 'I'm glad you came to me, but you better go repent to God' if you can tell it's not really repentance to God. The individual has to come and repent to God then come to you, not come to you and then repent to

God. It's important to understand that those things happen that way.

How should your attitude be so that you yourself don't get caught up in self-righteousness, bitterness, vindictiveness, and in judgmental condemnation of someone? Especially their heart, mind and attitude when you cannot know their heart, mind and attitude?—only God can! So, we have to take the same attitude that God has here. And this will always have you in a situation where you can forgive when there is real repentance, and that you will not be taken down by harsh and self-righteous thoughts if their repentance is shallow or if there is not repentance. That's important to understand.

Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long" (vs 1-3).

Notice the attitude here. This is real repentance toward God—is it not? *Yes!*

Verse 4: "Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive** ..." (vs 4-5). That's the key I want you to understand.

When there is no repentance or there is shallow repentance or there is a miserable, first-step apology, *you be ready to forgive, but you wait until there is the repentance necessary.* Because, as Jesus said: 'If your brother comes to you and repents you forgive him seventy times seventy.' But if they come to you and there is not the repentance that you know needs to be, or is very insincere, or is very shallow or it's just kind of 'to make things good for me because I know I'm in trouble' kind of attitude. You're ready to forgive, you give them benefit of doubt, but you also know that it has to go to the next step. You do that so you do not hold in your heart anger and hatred and bitterness toward someone for their faults—even as bad as they may be. Be ready to forgive. The Lord is always ready to forgive and we'll see how He does that even in severe cases here in just a little bit.

"...are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You" (v 5). That's what we need to do.

We're going to look at three severe cases of sin. We're going to see what genuine repentance will do. We also have to understand this. *If there is no repentance there is no forgiveness, and if they don't repent to God completely—and to you sufficiently—then there is no forgiveness extended by God; you are not required to give forgiveness, BUT you have to be ready forgive* because maybe

somewhere down the road—the sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, fourteenth, twentieth time there will be real repentance.

What happens when people get into a situation where they really fall into something terrible, like David did—like the situation with David and Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah the Hittite. Apparently Bathsheba was a Jewish woman married to Uriah the Hittite, one of the chief captains with David, so this really got into a terrible convoluted mess. David was not the only one at fault, because just picture this: here's the king's palace, and right over the edge was Uriah the Hittite's house, and guess where Bathsheba was bathing! *On the rooftop!* And she knew the king would be there. Why was she not modest? Why did she not put up some sort of screen? *She wanted to be seen!* She wanted to get next to the power of the king. She had many choices involved herself, didn't she? She could've never exposed herself publicly that way. When the king sent the messenger saying, 'Don't you want to come and visit the king and have a little wine and dinner with him?' She could have said, 'No!' But she didn't.

David being the king and initiating this, his sin was the greater because he was a man after God's heart, *and knew better!* Now let's examine this thing step-by-step, which will also help us in understanding our sins. This is why we need to pray daily and study daily. Think of all the Psalms and the wonderful praises that God inspired David to bring to Him. Now, do you suppose that during this whole incident that David was praying and studying? *No!* He pushed it out of his mind, which really in essence was a tremendous sin against God in itself. When you push God out of your mind and you push against the Holy Spirit, and you continue in your sin, God is going to let you take it to the degree that He desires and He's going drop it upon you. Bathsheba came, she got pregnant, found out she was pregnant—so David schemed. Do you think he was praying, 'Oh God, help me to make this right so I can bring in Uriah the Hittite, so I can kill him'? *Of course not!* So, he schemed. What happens when you're sinning and you don't want to repent?

- You avoid God!
- You get busy!
- You don't pray!
- You don't study!

What happens?

- your mind gets heavy and depressed
- you get hostile
- you get angry

Yes, all those things happen.

So finally, God stepped in. This is why we're told, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' How? *Daily!* Because if you don't *daily*—what happens? *You start leaving God and you start entertaining sin;* look where it can lead to.

This was a tremendous sin against God. Remember, David was so pleasing to God with his attitude, because remember, the Ark of the Covenant was taken to David's house, and in David's house he had a special little tabernacle tent made for the Ark of the Covenant. He had the priests—Nathan and so forth there, Asaph and Nathan who were there—to administer the things with the Ark. He would come and he would sing praises, he would sing songs and here he even came and he said: 'Lord, I want to build a house for you.' And God said, 'All right, David, I'll let a house be built. Not by you—you're a bloody man—but I'm going one step further and I am going to build a house for you to the end of time.'

David pushed God away, now he needs to come back to God. This is important for us to understand in dealing with people, especially in a husband and wife situation. If there is a situation where there is a great problem and it's a push-away kind of thing, you really need to pray and ask God to intervene and deal with the situation. There needs to be forgiveness so there is recovery, and that forgiveness may not come until there is a great explosion and great fight! Where carnal people will say, 'Well, I'm divorcing you, get out of the house.' And yet, you're bound in covenant before God; and it was not a total sin unto death. We need to keep that in mind, that's very, very important!

Now let's see what happened here to David. Nathan came in and he told them about the two men—the rich one/the poor one. The rich man came and he went ahead and instead of taking from his own flock he took from the poor man next to him.

2-Samuel 12:5: "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man... [a little self-righteous indignation to cover for sin] ... And he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'" (vs 5-6). Right at that point is exactly where God wanted David to be.

Notice when Nathan brought the rest of the words, v 7: "And Nathan said to David, '**You are the man.**' Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that was too little, I would have given to you such

and such *things* besides. Why have **you despised the commandment of the LORD...**” (vs 7–8).

Think about this: Not only despising the commandment of the Lord to sin, but also think about this in relationship to forgiveness with someone. If you don’t forgive, are you despising the commandment of Christ? *Yes, indeed!* That’s why in every situation you need to be ready to forgive. And if the person is not really repentant, give the benefit of doubt. Give them some encouragement. Because what’ll happen is, if God is dealing with them then God can lead them to understand their sin just like God led David to understand his sin here. Then the repair can begin.

So, He explained it to him, v 9: “‘Why have **you despised the Word of the LORD** to do evil in his sight? You have stricken Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house...’” (vs 9-10).

There are going to be times when there will always be ‘a thorn in the flesh’ to keep you from repeating the same thing. So, here there was with David.

Verse 10: “‘Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house...’” (vs 10-11). You read from here on through to the death of David, and that’s exactly what happened.

“‘...and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun, for you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun’” (v 12).

Now then, David repented, v 13: “And David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die’” (vs 13-14).

We can look at what has happened within the Church we know when there were great evangelists who went out and were profligates and committed adultery and all kind of sexual sins and monetary sins and so forth. Many people knew about those things and many people got bitter and turned off from God and left God and left the Church. Why? *Because they didn’t trust God the way that they should have!* If you understand something that is sin, and you have to leave because of sin, then do

so. But don’t let it become a bitterness and a stumbling block to you, because you may lose salvation because of what someone else did and your reaction to it. See!

Now, subsequently, the Church that this man was running was destroyed. That’s punishment—right? The other church he started was split in two, and finally the third church that he started was left with a pitiful few and he died. What good does it do to be bitter and angry and hateful because someone has done something of a great magnitude like this? *NONE!*

- We can learn the lesson: *don’t do it.*
- We can learn the lesson: *anything that is done in secret is going to be uncovered.*

Just like this past week, Ted Haggard, who’s supposed to be this great evangelical Christian preacher, got caught soliciting a male prostitute and buying methamphetamine. How he got caught was the man he was soliciting for these things saw him on television and reported it, and said, ‘This is the man!’ So, even if these things are done secretly, they’re going to come out. Rather than be mad and angry and bitter, you know what the sin is. You can identify what the sin is. If the person doesn’t repent, or takes a long time repenting, you still *give the benefit of doubt and be ready to forgive, but you don’t have to be associated with it!* That’s what’s important to understand.

So, you know what happened, the child died, and David bitterly, *bitterly, bitterly* repented—Psalm 51.

- Is David going be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!*
- Did God forgive him for this? *Yes!*
- Did he have penalties upon him, which remained because of the hard-heartedness and the conniving that David had done to perpetrate this? *Yes!*

That’s why we have to leave these things in God’s hands.

Let’s look at another case, 1-Kings 21—here’s another wicked man. But what we are looking at here is what happens when there is real repentance. This has to do with Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab took the property of Naboth; had him murdered, took his property. That’s the king’s imamate domain, without a court ruling. Well, in addition to all the other things that he did, which was evil, God sent His judgment.

1-Kings 21:17: “And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel in Samaria. Behold,

*he is* in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Have you killed and also taken possession?’” And you shall speak to him saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours’” (vs 17-19).

When Elijah came down, v 20: And Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’....” If sometimes someone brings out a sin to you, you count him as an enemy when you really know they’re telling the truth. But what it is, you’re not willing to repent, yet, and you want to go against them.

“...And he [Elijah] answered, ‘I have found *you* because **you have sold yourself to work evil** in the sight of the LORD.... [this is why repentance is important] ...Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall, both bond and free in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel to sin.’ And the LORD also spoke of Jezebel saying, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. He who dies of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And he who dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat.’ But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel” (vs 20-26). So, Elijah left! Knowing full well that these were

- the words of God
- the conviction of God
- the judgment of God

Here’s where free-choice comes in: You never know what the person is really going to do in the final analysis. Notice what Ahab did. The last one you would ever expect to repent. Especially when Elijah came and Ahab said, ‘Oh, my enemy!’

Notice what Ahab did, v 27: “Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly.” I don’t know how far that Elijah went, before God recognized that. But here’s the key: ***As long as there is life there is hope! And as long as there is repentance, there is hope.*** That’s why God is patient and long-suffering. That’s why Jesus said, ‘Forgive seventy times seven.’ We need to be patient and long-suffering, too. So here, after this condemnation,

what do you think that he did? ***He repented!*** In repentance can you change God’s judgment and God’s attitude? ***Yes!***

Notice what God told Elijah to do, v 28: “And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me? Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days. ***But*** in his son’s days I will bring the evil upon his house” (vs 28-29).

Now that’s why when we read: ‘The wages of sin is death’—we all have the death penalty on us because of sin. When we repent, God reverses it totally. Another lesson to learn here, which is this: If you think that God won’t forgive you because it’s a sin that, a plague of a sin that keeps repeating itself over and over again because of weakness of flesh or anger or whatever it may be, ***God hasn’t given up on you yet!*** So we should not give up on others yet. That’s why we are to be ready to forgive. And look what happened.

So we’ll continue on next time: ***Forgive that you may be forgiven***, which is a tremendous key in our relationship with God and each other.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:11-12
- 2) Luke 11:4
- 3) Psalm 130:1-8
- 4) Acts 3:12-16
- 5) Acts 4:8-12
- 6) Acts 5:20-33
- 7) Matthew 3:1-9
- 8) Colossians 1:14
- 9) Matthew 18:21-22
- 10) Matthew 6:14-15
- 11) Matthew 18:23-34
- 12) Exodus 10:16-20
- 13) Acts 8:9-15, 18-24, 23
- 14) Psalm 86:1-5
- 15) 2-Samuel 12:5-14
- 16) 1-Kings 21:17-29

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 3:11
- John 1
- Psalm 51

#### Also referenced:

Sermon/Booklet: *Judge Righteous Judgment*

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## Keys to Answered Prayer IX Forgiveness #2

Fred R. Coulter

The whole of the Gospel is based upon forgiveness. There are two ways that God will take care of His enemies:

1. if they don't repent *they'll be destroyed*
2. if they do repent, *to make him His friend*

Now think about that!

How did God do that with the Apostle Paul? *He took the number one dedicated enemy against the Church of God and brethren and converted him!* And then went one step further and made him the one to preach to the Gentiles.

Let's come to 1-Tim. 1 because this has an awful lot to do with forgiveness; and this will also tell us why we need to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us—use us despitely and persecute us. We will see that there's a reason why God wants us to do this—it's for our benefit and our relationship with God; and it's for the individual's benefit and God's dealing with them, because who knows when a person may repent? Who knows when a person may turn around? That's why God called the Apostle Paul in the way that He did. Let's understand something concerning forgiveness: ***It is the whole beginning point of the Gospel!***

After talking about the Gospel, 1-Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me... [obviously by His Holy Spirit] ...that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry." Here's another very important thing to understand concerning your past life: ***Always remember the lessons on how you conducted your past life before you were called!*** Don't dwell on it to the point of discouragement or depression or anxiety or helplessness, because of the weakness of human nature.

Verse 13: "Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person... [the Greek there means *wontedly violent*—that is, by deliberation and mind-set] ...but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 13-14). This is how we overcome sin. This is how everyone overcomes sin:

- through Christ
- through faith
- through love
- through repentance
- through forgiveness

Verse 15: "*This is* a faithful saying and worthy of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." We know God has a timetable and plan for saving sinners. Now is *not* the time to save all sinners. You understand that by keeping the Holy Days.

Verse 16: "But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in the first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all longsuffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life." That's quite a statement! Think of what Paul was forgiven:

- all the persecution
- all the hatred
- all the self-righteousness of Judaism
- all the destroying of the faithful

I wonder if what Stephen said, when he was being stoned to death as Paul stood by holding his garment, I wonder if this had an impression upon Paul and how many times he may have recalled this. Because many times I go back when God was first dealing with me. And as we're going to see, forgiveness is based upon repentance; and repentance comes in layers. First there's an initial repentance, then there are stages of deeper repentance. And just like with the Apostle Paul, he started out and he said he was 'least of all the apostles' (1 Cor. 15) and 'I am the least of all the saints' (Eph. 3).

What happens is this—and I'm sure you've experienced it—you go back and you re-examine your life as you go along: you have God's Spirit, you're growing, you're studying, you're overcoming and all these things. You have your trials, you have your ups, you have your downs, you have your difficult times; you have your times of blessing and all of this. You think about how great God's calling is in calling you, and there's a key point that God used to call you. I don't know what it is in your life or what it may have been, but you can look back and see there was that key moment, that key point—which you might say was the tipping point in your life—to cause you to go to Jesus Christ and leave your sinful life.

I wonder if this may have been with Paul? It doesn't say that Paul was there in the Sanhedrin. I wonder, since he belonged to it, if he may have been there. I don't know, maybe not; it doesn't say that he was.

After he gave a witness to those in the Sanhedrin, Acts 7:54: “And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts... [in other words, they didn’t repent.] ...and they gnashed their teeth at him.” Just sat there and ground their teeth, showing anger. You’ve probably seen that when people are angry; they just sit there and grind their jaw and the muscles stand out on their face and so forth. They couldn’t stand what he told them, that they were the ones who killed the Righteous One, the Christ.

Verse 55: “But he, being filled with *the Holy Spirit*, looked intently into heaven *and saw the glory of God*, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” What a powerful encouragement that God gave him just before he was stoned to death. And always remember this: ***We have the help of the Holy Spirit in every situation we go through.*** Never forget that. God will help you with it.

Verse 56: “And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand* of God.’” That was more than they could take. That just blew them away. Because when you understand that they understood the Scriptures in Dan. 7—‘One like the Son of man came to the Ancient of Days’—you know, this really was a witness to them.

Verse 57: “And they cried out with a loud voice...” I don’t know if you’ve seen television footage of the Knesset when it’s in session and all the Jews are arguing back and forth and against one another. Just picture this: A great riotous thing.

“...and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord. And cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*.... [apparently Paul wasn’t there, he was outside] ...and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ And he fell to his knees and cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.’....” (vs 57-60). Notice, he didn’t say forgive them.

He said, “...‘Lord, Do not lay this sin to their charge.’.... [probably the reason he didn’t say, ‘forgive them,’ is because there was no repentance] ...And after he had said this, he died!” (v 60).

Acts 8:1: “Now Saul had consented to killing him...” I wonder how many times he remembered this and realized what a great sinner he was?

Part of conversion involves this: ***The longer you have God’s Spirit to convict you of the sin within, the more you realize what a sinner you really are!*** That’s just the way it is with me, with

you, with everyone that God is dealing with. And the reason for that is that through our calling and growing and overcoming, *God is perfecting us.* Because the ultimate goal is:

Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, You shall be perfect, even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect.” I often wondered how many times Paul thought of that, and prayed to God for that.

Now let’s understand something about the nature of God. The nature of God is *love*—‘God is love.’ And the nature of God is also *forgiveness* in dealing with human beings. Even in dealing with the stiff-necked, carnal, rebellious Israelites, and you read in one account where God said that they were so pagan in Egypt that He even thought of coming there and destroying them in Egypt—but He remembered *His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

After they had sinned; after Moses went up and pleaded for their lives; and God said, ‘All right, I will spare them, except the ones directly involved,’ let’s see what happened when He revealed Himself in His glory to Moses.

Exodus 34:4: “And he [Moses] cut out two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone.” Isn’t that interesting? The first tables of stone God cut Himself and wrote on it. The second tables of stone, one step removed, Moses had to make the tables and take them up to God to be written upon.

Verse 5: “And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.” For all of those who are stuck on that grace only comes in the New Testament, I want you to read these words and understand that Jesus Christ is the ‘same yesterday, today and forever.’

Verse 6: “And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...’” (vs 6-7).

That’s the very nature of God. He’s proclaiming the whole meaning of His name. This becomes important in our relationship with each other, because, as you probably know and we’ve all done this ourselves—so I include myself in it—in too many of the Churches of God there’s a lack of love, and there’s a lack of forgiveness; which means there’s a lack of understanding and in kindness. In some cases, it gets so bad, that some people have

been so discouraged when people in the world treat them better than people in the Church. Makes it very difficult to say that ‘I belong to Christ.’ or ‘I belong to a Church that follows Christ.’ Well, if it is, then there’s got to be love and forgiveness in it. If you’re going to reflect the character of God then we need this. It’s not a blind, dumb forgiveness; please understand that.

Verse 7: “Keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [if there is no repentance the rest of the Bible tells us] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generation” (v 7).

Understand this: *In the physical life in the world, how we are as parents, grandparents and great grandparents affect our descendants to the third and the fourth generation!* And that is absolutely true when it gets down to the sexual conduct of the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

Verse 8: “And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. And he said, ‘If now I have found grace in Your sight, O LORD, I pray You, let my LORD go among us...” (vs 8-9).

God was so angry because of their sin and what they did that He said, ‘Moses, stand by and let Me destroy them all, and I’ll raise up a great nation through you.’ He started with Abraham, He could continue with Moses if necessary. But Moses was an intercessor, and he prayed for them—didn’t he? Were these people, at the time of this rebellion, enemies of God? Enemies of Moses? I don’t envy what Moses had to live through the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness with all the children of Israel.

“...let my LORD go among us, although it is a stiff-necked people. And pardon our iniquity... [he included himself] ... and our sin, and take us for Your inheritance.’ And He said, ‘Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people in whose midst you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you” (vs 9-10). Then He goes through and He re-gives concerning some of His laws and statutes and so forth.

Let’s carry this one step further and let’s see that ***forgiveness is part of the very nature of God.*** If we want to develop the nature of God then we have to develop *forgiveness*. And forgiveness is not an easy thing for human beings to come by. All you have to do is just look at the world today. Everybody

is out after everybody. It’s so confused and upside down, and we are seeing more and more how prosecutors, policemen, witnesses *lie*—just to put people in jail. How many have been shown to be innocent later on. It’s quite a thing! So, if we’re going to develop the character of God, then we need to look at what God is.

This was right after Daniel understood the 70-years; he didn’t understand the 70 years until it was just about over. Daniel 9:3 “And I set my face toward the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications...” Whenever we are praying:

- we are seeking the Lord
- we’re seeking His Spirit
- we’re seeking His Word
- we’re seeking His will
- we’re seeking His forgiveness
- we’re seeking His righteousness

“...with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (v 3). Notice what his prayer is. He didn’t come to God and say, ‘God, I thank you that I am the greatest prophet that You’ve ever raised up outside the land of Israel; that You have put me in charge of Babylon.’ No! He said:

Verse 4: “And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, ‘O LORD, the great and awesome God **keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him...**”

Romans 8:28: “...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” Remember that in any of the circumstances that you go through. And especially if they are very difficult, because we’ll be faced with very difficult circumstances and trying things that will come upon us. It’s going to work for good, and the ultimate is going to be eternal life.

Daniel 9:4: “...and to those who keep His commandments, we have sinned ...” (vs 4-5).

I want you to take this prayer that we’re going to go down through and compare that with the model prayer in Matt. 6. And you will see that it fits.

Verse 5: “We have sinned...” What is part of the model prayer? ‘*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us!*’

“...and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land” (vs 5-6). Read in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel how the people were toward God and the fall of Jerusalem. It was an ugly, terrible, just horrendous

thing. And you read the downfall of the northern ten tribes of Israel, too. It was really a terrible thing. God does not like to have to bring judgment like that. But because He's given us choice—it's *our* choice to choose:

- to choose God
- to choose love
- to choose forgiveness

And always remember this: ***Forgiveness is a choice!*** We just saw how God did that back there in the book of Exo. He *chose* to forgive the children of Israel.

Verse 7: "O LORD, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us confusion of face, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem, and to all Israel who are near and who are afar off, through all the countries where You have driven them because they dealt treacherously with You. O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You" (vs 7-8).

When you confess your sins and look at your own sins and you're desiring forgiveness and understanding, then this helps you to understand that you want this from God. Don't you think those that you're dealing with and those that you have trouble with also want forgiveness?

When you forgive someone their sins, it also inspires them. Are you not inspired when you pray and really repent; and you know spiritually, with conviction of God's Spirit that you have been forgiven. You get up off your knees, how do you feel? *Grateful, humble, thankful, praising God for His mercy and goodness!*

This is what God wants us to have between ourselves. And everything that we've gone through in the Church we can say—in recent history—has been very tumultuous, and very trying of the faith. It's all been over the love of God, the Truth of God, the right doctrines of God and the understanding of God. We've had to fight! We've had to be on guard! And all of this is necessary. But I think while that was going on—what happened?

- we forgot about *love*
- we forgot about *forgiveness*
- we forgot about *caring*

You have some of the most hateful behavior in the Churches of God. So bad that some ministers even say that if you belong to this Church you cannot talk to anyone in any other Church of God—not your father, your mother, even your own children. You can't visit them! You can't see them! You can't go into their houses! That is the exact opposite of what God wants us to do. I pray for mercy and forgiveness for those people who have

taught that; that they can recover themselves out of it before God's judgment comes down upon them. *Because that's the very opposite of what God is!*

Verse 8: "O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You." We could put it this way with the Church: *To us, O Lord, belongs confusion of face, to all our ministers, to all the elders and all the brethren, because we have sinned against You.*

Verse 9: "To the LORD our God belong mercies and forgivenesses even though we have rebelled against Him." The reason that I'm going through this is to understand that the nature of God is important. When we deal with each other we need to deal in an attitude of mercy and kindness and forgiveness; and we also need to deal in an attitude of repentance ourselves so that we can change, with God's help and Spirit. from our sins. And that, if you have something against someone, and you let them know, 'I forgive you,' the slate is clean.

We'll talk about the responsibilities on both sides of that when that happens. When there is the true forgiveness and God wants the true, deep spiritual forgiveness that comes as motivated with His Spirit.

Psalms 130:1: "Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD. LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (vs 1-3). 'The wages of sin is death'! No one can stand. All have 'come short of the glory of God.'

Verse 4: "But there *is* forgiveness with you... [because that's the very nature of God] ...that You may be feared"—*that you may be loved.* You can put in any word there that you want, that You may be worshipped and adored and so forth

Verse 5: "I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope." ***When there is forgiveness, there is hope!*** What does everybody need who's in trouble and difficulty?

- they need hope
- hope brings encouragement
- hope brings spiritual strengthening
- hope lifts the pall and depression that sin brings

—that's why there's forgiveness

Psalms 85:1: "O LORD, You have shown favor to Your land; You have brought back Jacob from exile. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sins. Selah." (vs 1-2). Isn't that something?

Verse 3: "You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your

anger. Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease” (vs 3-4). Let’s pray that for the Church of God. Let’s pray that everyday for the people of God. God is still trying and sifting His Church because, unfortunately, too many people have not gotten the point of what God wants them to learn: to love God, to understand about forgiveness. As the Apostle Paul said, *If you have anything against anyone, forbear and forgive*, “...cause Your anger toward us to cease”

Psalm 103 is something that only God can do. We can’t do it in the way that God does. I’m going to bring a whole sermon for the Days of Unleavened Bread, on how we are cleansed and unleavened in Christ. As we read this, *let’s understand that everything we have comes from God*: every breath, every particle of food, every bit of knowledge and understanding of God’s Word. *Everything that we have comes from God, and we live by the grace of God!* We live under the grace of God, and His blessings come upon us.

Psalm 103:1—this is New Testament doctrine as well as Old: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” That’s why God wants us to be wholehearted; *wholehearted toward God* in everything that we do.

Verse 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” The greatest benefit of all is:

- forgiveness of sin
- the love of God toward us
- the receiving of God’s Holy Spirit

—all the physical things are secondary to that. That’s why God doesn’t want us to get wrapped up in the physical things and chasing after things of this world and so forth. He wants us to remember all His great benefits.

Verse 3: “...Who forgives all Your iniquities...” When you repent, you ask God to forgive your sins, He does! Don’t get up off your knees and say, ‘I wonder if God forgave me.’ He promised that every sin—which is not a sin unto death—He will forgive. You need to understand that.

“...Who heals all your diseases” (v 3). We do need more healings in the churches—don’t we? *Yes, we do!* And we do need to have more understanding about the things we need with health at the same time, too. Both go hand-in-hand.

Verse 4—here’s one of the benefits: “Who redeems your life from destruction...”—because you look at the way we’re going when God called us. We were just going headlong into a pit; when you really understand it.

“...who crowns you with loving kindness

and tender mercies” (v 4). All of this flows from the grace of God. Lot’s of times these things come upon us and we don’t even know that they’ve come upon us until we have time to sit back and take notice and think about it.

Verse 5: “Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

If you want an extra Bible study get out your concordance and look up *merciful, gracious, grace, forgiveness, kindness, loving kindness*. Those are all the characters and qualities of God that He wants us to have. He’ll fight our battles for us; He’ll take care of our enemies for us; and He will watch over us. Always put in there Psa. 91: Do not worry what’s going to happen in this world. Be ‘wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove,’ follow God, do what He says.

Verse 8: “The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger... [Sounds like a repeat of Exo. 34—doesn’t it? *Yes!*] ...and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten...” (vs 8-9). That is to give you hope. Whatever trial you’re in will come to an end.

“...nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (vs 9-10). What reward can you give to humanity for killing Christ? Think of that!

Verse 11: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.” And you can put in there ‘that love Him, that worship Him and so forth.

Notice what God does with our transgressions. This is something that is hard for us, as human beings, to do with our finite minds and the memories that we have, v 12: “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”—through the whole operation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD... [this is how we get forgiveness] ...is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 13-18).

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how God—in the Psalm that we just read back there, Psa. 103—proposes to do this for the whole world, because the very essence of God is forgiveness.

John 1:29: “On the next day, John sees Jesus coming to him, and he says, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.’ Isn’t that interesting that it is called ‘the **sin** of the world’ and not the **sins** of the world? Why does he say that?”

We have the answer; talking about Christ Who is the Lamb to take away the ‘sin of the world.’ Note Rev. 13:8—‘the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.’ Before man was even created, when God was forming the foundation of the world, He had this plan all in mind—didn’t He?

Romans 6:9: “Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin... [singular] ...**once for all**; but in that He lives, He lives unto God” (vs 9-10).

Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly.... [And we know that was on the Passover Day, 30<sub>A.D.</sub>] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love... [love and forgiveness go hand-in-hand] ...to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 6-8).

**God prepared the way first**, then we have to repent. Where there is no repentance there is no forgiveness—we need to understand that. We’re not dealing with blanket forgiveness because Christ came.

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies... [This is why Christ says ‘pray for your enemies and those who spitefully use you.’] ...we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son... [The reconciliation does not take place without repentance. You have to keep that in mind.] ...much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation” (vs 9-11).

Verse 12 ties into what we’ve been talking about: sin: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death, and in this way, death passed into all mankind, *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned” (vs 9-12). So, when He takes away the sin of the world, where did the sin of the world, with mankind, originate? *With Adam!* And we bear ‘*the law of sin and death*’ because of Adam. ‘As in Adam, we all die.’

God made preparations for that. Maybe we can understand this verse in Luke 23 a little more, a little better. Now many times when we read it, we

think of the application to those who were involved in the crucifixion of Christ: Pilate, the high priest, the people, the soldiers that did the nailing and so forth.

Luke 23:34: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’....” Let’s take a broader view of that in relationship to the sin of the world. This is not only God letting it be known that forgiveness was available to those, of course, if they repented.

But this is also a prophecy of all mankind—is it not? Forgiveness will not be brought to them until God grants them repentance. But you read about the forgiveness given to Israel when God brings them out of their final captivity. What is He going to do? He’s going to grant them repentance, give them a new heart, give them a new spirit—as we’re going to see in a minute here concerning repentance, they’re going to loathe themselves. This is not only just for the immediacy of the people that gathered there for the crucifixion and all of those who were involved in it. But it’s also for all human beings that have gone the way of Adam; and have lived their lives in societies and everything that there is down through the whole scope of history. Here’s a prophecy that they will be forgiven; obviously, upon repentance.

Now let’s see something else: how this applies and how the apostles understood it. Let’s come to Acts, the fifth chapter. We won’t get involved in all of the things that took place leading up to that—you can read that.

Acts 5:29: “But Peter and the apostles answered... [After they were told to quit teaching these things in Jerusalem] ...*and* said, ‘**We are obligated to obey God rather than men.**’ *Always remember that!*

For those that I mentioned that have been told by their leading minister that they cannot associate even with their own family if they do not belong to that particular church, apply this verse please! You’re obligated to obey God Who says, ‘Honor your father and your mother, love your children.’ That comes before any edict of man to the contrary. ***You are obligated to obey God rather than men!***

Verse 30: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, **to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel**” (vs 30-31). *Remission of sins is the result of forgiveness!* You are forgiven and then they are ‘wiped away,’ as we said, ‘as far as the east is from the west and has removed them from us.’ That is remission. “...remission of sins to

Israel.” Notice: *it has to be given*. It’s God Who leads us to repentance. We’ll talk a little bit more about repentance. But it’s *through Christ!*

Now let’s see how that is given through Christ. You can never earn forgiveness, you can never work for forgiveness; it has to come from God. We know that God is going to grant repentance and forgiveness during the Millennium. The Great White Throne Judgment period is going to be a fantastic time. Imagine how many billions of people will come into the Kingdom of God. Includes all their sins because of Adam.

Romans 3:9: “What then? Are we of ourselves better? Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin.” Isn’t it interesting how many times it’s singular.

Verse 10: “Exactly as it is written: ‘For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God’” (vs 10-11). What He’s talking about is *on their own*. Why? *Because Satan deceives the whole world, and he’s got control of them through sin!* God has done that to let them be blinded so that He may have mercy on them in the final analysis in His plan; and how marvelous that is! Even Paul said, ‘Oh the debts of the riches of the wisdom of God.’

Verse 12: “They have all gone out of the way... [*the way of God*] ...together they have all become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the venom of asps is* under their lips, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness” (vs 12-14). Just take these words and apply them anywhere in the world. I suppose one place to start is Washington, D.C., and your local government, your state government, any of the governments of the world.

Verse 15: “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; and *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (vs 15-18).

Isn’t that something! Yet, God is going to forgive, because the very character of God is *forgiveness*. What I want you to do is think about what we have covered there in Luke 23:34: ‘Father, forgiven them for they no not what they are doing.’ If you want to know about *works of law* and so forth, so that “...all the world may become guilty before God” (v 19).

Verse 20: “Therefore, by works of law...” I want you to study that in the appendix that we have at the end of the New Testament. Remember this: ***No law can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus***

***Christ for the forgiveness and remission of sin!*** ***Law defines sin***, tells us what sin is. Therefore, by keeping the law you cannot receive justification for past sin by law-keeping alone. So, you read that and study that.

“...there shall no flesh be justified before Him...” (v 20). And ‘justification’ is *forgiveness of sin and the removal of sin through the forbearance of God*.

“...for through *the law is the knowledge of sin*. But now, *the righteousness of God*” (v 20). Let’s understand *the righteousness of God*; in this case: ***your state of relationship with God when you have been forgiven and your sins have been removed***.

Verse 21: “But now, the justification of God *that* is separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; Even *the righteousness of God that is* through *the faith of Jesus Christ...*” (vs 21-22). It all has to come through Christ, there is no other way. Jesus said, ‘I am ***the Way, the Life and the Truth*** and none can come to the Father except through Me.’ Jesus was raised to sit at the right hand of God the Father to bring repentance and forgiveness of sin—right? *Yes!*

“...through *the faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe...*” (v 22). That gets right back to where we started in *The Keys to Answered Prayer—you must believe God!* You must believe His Word. You must believe that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all forgiveness of all sin, for all time.

“...for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... [Why? *Because we have the ‘law of sin and death’ within us.*] ...*but* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus” (vs 22-24).

***There must be repentance first!*** That’s why God is dealing with the firstfruits now. That’s why God has not forgiven the sin of the world, yet; that will all be accomplished in God’s plan in the way that He’s going to do it.

“...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus... [Who said *Father, forgive them for they no not what they do.*] ...Whom God has openly manifested...” (vs 24-25). That’s why it had to be at a time in history that it could not be forgotten in the ages past. And it had to be done publicly, and it had to be done notoriously so that there would be no doubt that even the centurion said, when he saw all things that took place, he said, ‘Surely, this is the Son of God!’

“...*to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness* [or

justification]...” (v 25). *Righteousness* in the sense that God is righteous and merciful and forgiving to do this; *justification* in that you have your sins forgiven.

“...in respect to the remission of sins that are past.... [‘remission’ means *the removal*; they are gone] ...Through the forbearance of God... [Sounds a little bit like Exo. 34—doesn’t it? *Yes!*] ...yes, to publicly declare His righteousness... [or justification] ...in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of the faith of Jesus. Therefore, where *is* boasting?....” (vs 25-27).

I mean, what could a man do? Compared to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Compared to Who He was before He became a human being? Put that all together. That’s why it’s so fantastic and magnificent in what God has done.

“...It’s excluded....” (v 27). Think about it. Just think about some of these athletes today, when they do something that is expected of them to do. They get up and they do all these gyrations and pound their chest like they’re gorillas out swinging. I don’t mean that in a deprecating way, but just in a comparative way, lest someone think there is racism involved here. People are so sensitive to racism, but they swear and curse at God! But the boasting; just think: ‘I made it! I did it! I can live forever!’ Study the book of Job; Job couldn’t do it.

“...It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a **law of faith**” (v 27). What do you mean ‘a law of faith’? You take two terms that appear contradictory, but they’re not.

Verse 28: “Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith... [forgiven, reconciled, state of justification by faith] ...separate from works of law. *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles?....” (vs 28-29). Yes, He made all of mankind. And God has a plan for all mankind.

“...YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles, Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith?... [all Protestants, listen, pay attention] ...**MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law” (vs 29–31).

How is that done? *By writing the laws and commandments of God in our hearts and our minds, so that you keep the commandments of God as part of your very nature!* That establishes law—doesn’t it? Isn’t that far better than having them on just tables of stone that you can read them, or on a plaque before a courthouse? Now, it’s good to have

them hanging on the wall, to remind you of it. But the true establishment of the Law is *within*, and that comes *through forgiveness and repentance*.

Romans 4:7: “Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin” (vs 7-8). The only way that can be is through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

You can’t cover the forgiveness of sin unless you go to 1-John 1 and see how the whole operation works. Even John, in talking about how it applies to us today in our relationship with God and why that’s tied in with the model prayer in Matt. 6 and Luke 11—‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive others.’ We have to understand the nature of God and His forgiveness.

1-John 1:6—and again, attention all Protestants, listen up: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness...”—in every way contrary to the Word of God; and remember, Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.’

“...God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves... [just living in deceitfulness] ...and we are not practicing the Truth” (vs 5-6). What is the Truth? ‘*Your Word is the Truth, Your commandments are true, Your law is Truth, all Your precepts from the beginning are true.*’ And Truth doesn’t change from Old Testament to New Testament.

Here’s the key: ***Living in a state of grace!*** Being able to repent of our sins daily! We need it daily because of the ‘law of sin and death’ within us and because of the weakness of our human nature, and the struggle we all have in overcoming sin—I do, you do, every human being does, so let’s not get spiritually hoity-toity.

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the light... [walking in the way of Christ] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another...” That’s important to understand because our fellowship with one another also is dependent upon

- forgiveness
- grace
- changing, growing and overcoming

on a continuous basis.

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us **from all sin...**” (v 7). Whatever you have sinned.

In relationship to other people and brethren, we all begin from the point we want our sins forgiven—correct? *Yes!* But all too often we rise up

off our knees—instead of praying for forgiveness for the brethren, for other people, we point the ugly finger and become very self-righteous—don't we? We've all done it. I mean for us to say, 'Oh, I've never done that.' Well, you haven't grown in grace and knowledge then. You achieved perfection from the first instant of receiving God's Holy Spirit.

"...cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins..." (vs 7-9). That is to God, because that's what it says in the model prayer—right? 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

"...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... [there is the operation that takes place: forgiveness and then cleansing] ...If we say that we have not sinned..." (vs 9-10). That is, 'Oh, we're good people. Human nature is just good, and all we need is knowledge and we can overcome all of our problems and live happily under the U.N. the rest of our lives.'

Verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [when you're keeping the commandments you're not sinning] ...And yet, if anyone does sin..." We still have a sinful nature to overcome, we go to God in repentance. Why?

"...we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; And He is *the* **propitiation** for our sins..." (vs 1-2)—*the continual source of forgiveness and atoning through the blood of Jesus Christ!* That's why we have in the model prayer: 'Forgive us our sins.'

"...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). And that is hard to understand unless you know the plan of God, and when He's going to apply this to those in the world.

Let's come to Ephesians, the first chapter, and this you can put in the category of 'behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.' This is referring to Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 1:7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Think about that for a minute. God's grace is going to be so overwhelming and so absolutely fulfilled in great perfection, when all the plan of God is finished and all those who have been raised in the second resurrection and repent and then are brought into the Kingdom of God—*think of that!* Isn't that going to

be something? "...through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

You can look at it this way—another way to look at it: The sacrifice of Christ applies to all sin of all mankind, through all ages at the time that God's plan determines that He's going to give it. Think of it this way: The life of Jesus Christ—Who created all human beings, made the heavens and the earth, created you, called you, forgiven you—*His life for your life*. Now that's the 'riches of the grace of God.' Think of that!

- His life for your life!
- His life for my life!
- His life for the life of all human beings in the world!

When God deals with them to bring them to repentance. We know there will be those who won't repent. And we're not talking about those who commit the unpardonable sin.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (vs 8-9).

Colossian 1:4: "Since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that *you have* toward all the saints; because of the hope that *is* laid up for you in heaven... [going to be brought by Christ] ...which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel; which has come to you, even as *it* also *has* in all the world..." (vs 4-6). That's a statement of fact at that time and a prophecy down to our time and the return of Christ.

"...and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth; even as you also learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you; who has also informed us of your love in *the* Spirit. For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you..." (vs 6-9).

I think that's very interesting how almost every prayer, everywhere I go, that the one who opens and closes in prayers, prays for all the brethren wherever they are. And do that! And particularly pray for those that you don't even know who are having trials and troubles and difficulties and problems that they have to go through; that you are praying that God will deal with them. That's all a part of loving the brethren. That's all a part of forgiving them because you want them to have the forgiveness of God and to come out of the difficulties that they are in.

“...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light” (vs 9-12).

Verse 13 will lead us into another part of the model prayer (Mat. 6): “Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness...” His life for your life. The sacrifice of Christ is applied personally to every individual, and God is great enough to do that. It’s not life for life. It’s *His* life for the life of the world. But as it’s applied personally to us.

**“...has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [Satan the devil] ...and has transferred us unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, even the remission of sins” (vs 13-14).**

What I want you to do is this:

- I want you to think about how much God has forgiven you.
- I want you think about how much you desire God to forgive you whenever you do sin.
- I want you to think about how much you desire God to blot them out and remove them from you ‘as far as the east is from the west.’
- I want you to begin thinking about your personal relationship: husband/wife and brethren.

And we’ll see next time what we need to do and how we forgive, and ***how forgiveness comes and what we need to be ready to do when the opportunity comes!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- 2) Acts 7:54-60
- 3) Acts 8:1
- 4) Matthew 5:48
- 5) Exodus 34:4-10
- 6) Daniel 9:3-4
- 7) Romans 8:28
- 8) Daniel 9:5-9
- 9) Psalm 130:1-5

- 10) Psalm 85:1-4
- 11) Psalm 103:1-5, 8-18
- 12) John 1:29
- 13) Romans 6:9-10
- 14) Romans 5:6-12
- 15) Luke 23:34
- 16) Acts 5:29-31
- 17) Romans 3:9-31
- 18) Romans 4:7-8
- 19) 1 John 1:6, 5-10
- 20) 1 John 2:1-2
- 21) Ephesians 1:7-9
- 22) Colossian 1:4-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 15
- Ephesians 3
- Daniel 7
- Matthew 6
- Luke 11
- Psalm 91
- Revelation 13:8

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## Keys to Answered Prayer X Repentance

Fred R. Coulter

Let's look at the epitome of human nature, inspired of Satan the devil, which is where human beings have to come from in order to establish a relationship with God, and it cannot be done by human beings themselves. It must be God Who does it.

2-Thess. 2—this is the way human beings are; and it struck me; I was watching the news, and if you watch the 'fair and balanced' it gets to be a shouting match and everything gets contentious. They were talking about different things, and obviously, those who have the more satanic, political agenda are the ones who resist anything. For example: Everything that George W. Bush does is wrong; everything the Republicans do is wrong; everything that Christians try and do is wrong. And they even interviewed an atheist and he was targeting teenagers to have them renounce Jesus and embrace Satan—that was his goal.

What this does, it shows the epitome of human nature under the influence of Satan the devil. And, of course, we've all been out there in the world. Let's see what we are in the world; because we need to begin with where we were and then understand where we need to go, because this is all a part of answered prayer and our relationship with God and our attitude toward God.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins." The thing is this: carnal human beings are nothing but walking dead people. Do they not have 'the law of sin and death' in them? *Yes, indeed!* God is merciful in that He gives them breath and life. And if you don't keep breathing, you're dead—just as simple as that, a few seconds.

Verse 2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [there we are out in the world] ...according to the prince of the power of the air..."—Satan the devil 'who's deceiving the whole world' (Rev. 12:9); and, of course, they're being deceived more and more. Even those who are deceived are being deceived by other deceptions; so it compounds itself.

"...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (v 2). There are two categories of people:

1. those who love God and keep His commandments, and are obedient to God and Jesus Christ

2. those who do not love God, including even those who hate God, and are disobedient

You have various Christian-professing religions, which have varying degrees of Truth, but which in itself is deceptive, because if you have good counterfeit, it's got to look real. That's all part of it.

"...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*" (vs 2-3).

To most of the world, who are what you might say are upstanding people, it's awfully hard for them to comprehend that they're sinners. They might say, 'I don't do this, I don't do that, I don't do the other thing. Why am I a sinner?' Well, you're a sinner *by nature*, as it says here, and sinner because of the whole environment that has been created by men and Satan the devil.

Let's read *the epitome of human nature*. It's going to be personified in the one who is called *the beast* who exalts himself above all that is called God, blasphemes God and so forth (Rev. 13).

2-Thessalonians 2:3: "Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first..." This means the whole world rejecting God, not just an apostasy within the Church—that's a start; not the beginnings of people leaving God—that's a start, but *this is the finishing*. This is the apostasy in the full, where they worship the one, the man who is called here *the man of sin*.

"...and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition" (v 3). He epitomizes the whole of human nature under the influence of Satan the devil, in the most exalted form, and there are varying degrees of it. But most people don't realize the potential to which they can go.

Verse 4: "The one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God..." That's something—isn't it? Satan is inspiring him; and Satan is '*the prince of the power of the air*.' (Eph. 2), and he's got a lot of helpers out there. A lot of people, a lot of technology: media, printed word, television, Internet, musicians, and so forth; combine all of that together.

“...who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God” (v 4). What was it that Satan said to Adam and Eve? *To eat of this fruit you'll become like God!* So, here we have the epitome of it.

Let's see some other things concerning what we need to do. One of the things that the Spirit of God does to us bit-by-bit is to reveal to us our nature. Because we can look at what we just read and we can say, 'Oh yes, that's right, I can look out in the world and I can see that.' And then what happens? *We do the human thing!* We begin comparing ourselves with ourselves and others in the world, and that leads to problems—doesn't it? Here's another description of the world and

- why we need the help of God
- why we need to pray
- why we need answered prayers
- why we need to yield our hearts and minds and everything to God

Psalm 12:1 “Help, O LORD...” That's one thing you may say many times during the day. Because it says in another place, 'pray without ceasing.' You need God's help. What do you do? Even in the daytime, you say, 'O Lord, help me.'

“...for the Godly man ceases; for the faithful disappear from among the children of men.”

As I'm reading the rest of this, I want you think about the current, two-year long, hideous presidential campaign that's going on in America. And I want you to think about the big money-men behind them. Especially ones like the billionaire, George Soros. What do they say? *Follow the money!* We don't know what's going to happen, but this presidential campaign is going to be vicious, nasty, terrible—and right now, the money from Soros and Hollywood is going to Barack Obama.

Verse 2: “They speak falsehood each one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.” Basically, human nature is *double-minded*, a mixture of good and evil. That's what it says in James: 'purify your heart you double-minded' So, they're really not telling you what they want to do.

Verse 3: “The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaks proud things.” That's in the final judgment.

Just like God raised up Pharaoh and let Pharaoh become great and powerful. So, God is going to let them prevail as part of the judgment against His people, because they don't seek God. I

think of this when I watch the news and all the things that they want to do and lamenting that things are not getting better, and lamenting that the Islamic radical element are getting more resolute and more adamant in what they are doing. I think about all the abortions that go on. I think about the sermon that I gave: *The Biblical Truth About The Immigration Problem*, because we're killing the most innocent to serve sin. And what is the final agenda of those on the radical left in the American political scheme of things? *Socialism, abortion and taxing the rich and businesses so they can run the nation!*

The religion of relativism: The thing is, all people are 'religious,' meaning that whatever their personal beliefs are *is their 'religion.'* That's why **God's way is different.** We believe what God says; we follow what God says. So, here's the world we live in.

I think this speaks eloquently as to what is happening today, v 4: “Who have said, ‘With our tongue we shall prevail... [Lie, *lie*, **lie**: media, newspapers, television, political parties, schools, educational system, the colleges.] ...our lips *are* our own: who *is* lord over us?’” ‘I'm free to choose.’

I saw someone sitting there, being interviewed and being confronted with some basic truths, and they held the opposite position. It showed this woman in one case, and a man in another case, you could see an iron curtain come across their face, and their necks would be stiffened up. I said to myself, *stiff-necked!* I saw that, and it just got me because they have this attitude: 'Who is lord over us? Who is going to tell us what to do?' I'm bringing this out because God has to bring us, when He calls us, from that point to a whole other attitude.

Verse 5: “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, I will now arise,” says the LORD. ‘I will set him in safety from *him who puffs at him.*” That's God reaching down and calling us.

Let's look and see what has to happen. We have to come from this point to where God begins to deal with us. Here's what has to happen, this is a beginning point of God beginning to change that. Let's put it into the equation here, because it's important for us to understand.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...” That's the key. You can have all the 'religious' beliefs in the world you want. You can belong to whatever church or religion you want. And you're not going to find God or come to God unless the Father draws you. And you're not going to come to the Father unless you go through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Keep that in mind when you analyze any of the churches or their beliefs.

“...and I will raise him up at the last day” (v 44). Here’s how we progress from hostility and vanity and anger against God to desiring God. God has to give it to us. God has to deal in our lives. And everyone who’s a truly converted Christian can look back and there was a day when something changed in your life. I can look back. I know the very day. I know the very place. I know what was said. Same way with everyone.

Verse 45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God’....” This is important! Let’s understand something about God’s Word in relationship to that—that’s why it’s called the Word of God.

I’ve been accused by some people—since I translated the New Testament and we published *The New Testament in Its Original Order*—and one minister complained against me and said, ‘Well, Fred thinks he’s speaking for God.’ *No! God speaks for Himself*—in the Bible! And the truth is anyone who reads the words of the Bible and teaches from it—whether correctly or incorrectly—whenever they read the words of God, *God is the One Who’s doing the speaking*—is He not? So, I don’t consider myself to be anything. I don’t consider myself some great mucky-muck or whatever.

I’ll tell you one thing, that if we, individually and collectively, do not stand for the Truth—who is? I’m not trying to speak for God. God is perfectly able to speak for Himself. And He has in His Word.

“...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [You have to open your mind; God begins to open it; God begins to deal with you. Why is it that one day you wanted to know about God? *God is dealing with you!* It’s a spiritual operation.] ...and has learned, comes to Me.”

Let’s see the next part of the operation that God does for us—which then is important in understanding about the *keys to answered prayer*. This key is *repentance*, and repentance comes about when God leads you to see yourself and your nature as it really is. God is merciful! He doesn’t reveal it all at once. {note sermon series: *The Washing of the Water By the Word*. That’s how God changes us over time, and we become more converted and then we understand what human nature really is. Because if God revealed the complete evilness of our human nature all at once, we couldn’t stand it. So, He does it a bit at a time. There’s an initial part of God leading us to repentance.

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness...” That is if you’re self-righteous and judging and condemning other people.

Listen, everyone has varying degrees of human nature of good and evil. Unless God calls

them and deals with them, don’t set yourself up in a self-righteous position to condemn them and put them down. You can point out the evil. You can say that that is wrong—and we do that—but who knows, in doing so, if it’s done in the way that God desires, perhaps maybe a person would repent.

“...Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?”

Sometimes that has to be rather dramatic, doesn’t it? Like in the case of the Apostle Paul, who was Saul. God dealt with him, knocked him down—BANG! He knew God was dealing with him. God doesn’t deal with all of us that way. But what I want to bring out is the graciousness of God. What did God do to the worst enemy in the Church? *He called him, converted him, made him a friend!* So, you can get rid of your enemies by making them your friend—in *God*. God, essentially, is the only One Who can do that.

On the other hand, v 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works” (vs 5-6).

So then, just like it says in Deut. 30:15 about ‘setting before you life and death’ we have the same thing here in the New Testament; only now on a spiritual level. Dealing with us individually.

Verse 7: “On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—... [He’s going to give] ...eternal life... [That’s what God sets before us—*His way*.] ...On the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the Jew* first, and of *the Greek* [Gentile]; but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the Jew* first, and to *the Greek*, because there is no respect of persons with God” (vs 7-11).

God is the One Who has to start it. God is the One Who has to initiate it. And that’s why He does it through His Word, through His Spirit, through the drawing, and then, when we are converted, He begins to change us.

Now let’s look at some *false* repentance, because there’s a sorrow of the world—you know, like the killer who was finally cornered by the police and they have their guns out, they’ve got him trapped. What does he say? *Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot!* There’s no sorrow there. Let’s look at the

kind of repentance that leads to life—but we have to compare that with the kind of repentance that does not lead to life. Now, there are a lot of people who, when the trouble gets to them, they feign God. Remember 9/11? Now look at it; that's way past and forgotten!

Jeremiah 15:5 “‘For who shall have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who shall weep over you? Or who shall turn aside to ask about your welfare? You have forsaken Me,’ says the LORD; ‘you have gone backward; therefore I will stretch out My hand against you, and destroy you; I am weary with repenting’” (vs 5-6). Every time something comes along: ‘Oh, I’m sorry.’ Then you run back and just do the same thing that you always do. And that’s exactly what the children of Israel did.

The reason I’m bringing out repentance is because we come from carnality to God dealing with us; and then we come to the place where God brings us to repentance and baptism and receiving of His Holy Spirit. And yet, we still have human nature to overcome—don’t we? So, what we have to do is ask God to give us the repentance that is from the heart—and it’s amazing what’ll happen when you do. After all that *God did*. You go back and read all the things that God had to do to them in the wilderness.

It’s always amazed me that here they were in the wilderness and accused God, accused Moses, and yet, they saw all the miracles that God did to release them out of Egypt, and they could have had it a whole lot different if they would have said, ‘Look we have a great God who can do anything. It doesn’t matter if we’re out here in the wilderness, God can provide for us. He can give us food; He can give us drink. Our clothes are not wearing out, this is tremendous.’ They wouldn’t have to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness. They would have gone into the ‘promised land’ within two years.

Psalms 78:32: “For all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works.... [where did we start with this series? **We must believe God!**] ...Therefore, He ended their days in vanity and their years in terror. When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they turned back and sought after God earnestly” (vs 32-34). And that’s what people do.

I don’t know what they’re saying with current disasters, but they turn to God, and when it’s all done—what happens? They go back.... They have drugs, they have so many things going on it is just really filled with sin. And remember this: when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah there were four other cities that were destroyed, too. Why were they destroyed? *Because they went along with it!* So why do these things happen on so-called ‘innocent’

people? *Because they go along with all the things that are happening!* And they like it the way that it is.

So, when something comes, they “...they turned back and sought after God earnestly. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High God was their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they flattered Him with their mouths, and they lied to Him with their tongues, for their heart was not steadfast with Him; neither were they faithful in His covenant” (vs 34-37). This is the hardness of human nature. But even in spite of that, you think about this in relationship to our country and the world.

Verse 38: “But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; yea, many times He turned His anger away and did not stir up all His wrath, for He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away and does not come again” (vs 33-39).

So, after He gave them relief then they went right back and did the same thing again, v 41<sub>[transcriber’s correction]</sub>: “And still again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy” (vs 41-42). This happened over and over again. ***This is the cycle of human nature, and this is the cycle of Israel and God.***

Now let’s see what God says in Joel 2. This is the kind of repentance that God wants. And if we come to this point, God will truly lead us into true repentance. Of course, this is necessary for answered prayer? What is it there in the model prayer? ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.’ And in order to have forgiveness, you need to have repentance—correct? *Yes!* Here’s the kind of repentance that God wants.

Joel 2:12: “‘Therefore, even now,’ says the LORD, ‘turn to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. Yes, rend your heart and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God: for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil. Who knows *if* He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him...’” (vs 12-14). This is the kind of repentance that God wants.

Notice, this ties right in with loving God with all your heart That’s what God wants from us. That’s essential in prayer, ***very essential in prayer.***

When God finally deals with you, you will come to this point; this is the epitome of deep repentance; this is what God is going to do to Israel when He finally gathers them when Christ returns:

Ezekiel 20:43 “And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings in which

you have been defiled. And you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils which you have committed.” That’s New Testament doctrine. Part of repentance is coming to really see how evil human nature is, though you may not have committed horrible sins such as: murder and robbing banks. But now we’re dealing with a society and people coming who have been involved in drugs, fornication, adultery, addictions of various kinds. {note sermon series: *Addicted Society*} But there’s another place that’s important with this.

This is what we have to do in our relationship with God, in everything that we do. Let’s see what we need to do. We’ve mentioned this before, but what we’re talking about in *The Keys to Answered Prayer* is:

- What is your attitude when you’re on your knees and you’re praying to God and you’re asking Him for this or for that?
- What is your heart?
- What is your mind?
- What is your attitude?

Let’s see what God is interested in, and let’s see how God will look to us when we have those kinds of attitudes. He talks about going after the one lost sheep and leaving the 99.

Luke 15:7: “I tell you that likewise, *there* shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents...” Really, truly repents! God is looking for those who repent, and that’s the key. If you want to establish a relationship with God, you have to yield to the repentance that God is graciously leading you to, because you can resist it if you desire, but you have to *choose* to yield to God

Verse 8: “Or what woman who has ten coins, if she should lose one, does not light a lamp and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds *it*? And after finding *it*, she calls together *her* friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I lost.’ I tell you *that* in like manner, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (vs 8-10). That’s why it’s so precious. Now you see why God will honor those who are His with these kinds of attitudes. And how that we can look and see because of that, that God is holding back the heavy-hand of correction that we know is going to come.

Then He gives the parable of the prodigal son and how that he asked for his inheritance. He took it; he left; he went into a far country; he squandered it in high living; ended up feeding swine—which would be absolutely the worst job that any Jew could do, if you think about it—out there in the manure and all of the muck and mud and

everything. And he was starving, didn’t have anything to eat.

This is where every person has to come, not only once, but all the time in repentance. Because, repentance is a daily thing and repentance is something that deepens day-by-day; week-by-week; month-by-month; year-by-year; not only in your relationship with God but through all the experiences that you’re experiencing in your life, so that we can draw closer to God.

And this is a key, v 17: “**And when he came to himself...**” When you really understand the magnitude of what God is doing—what you are, what I am, just as a human being without God—we come to ourselves and we ask God to forgive us. Now, lots of times Satan will like to come along as the ‘prince of the power of the air’ and put in something in your mind that seems so good. Well, that’s hard to repent of. We’ll talk about this a little later as we get into the prayers here. This is important. “And when he came to himself...” then he began to think correctly. What did he say?

“... ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; And I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants’...” (vs 17-19). You come to God and accept whatever God gives. Then you begin to understand how your sins have crucified Christ.

So then, here comes the grace, v 22: “But the father said to his servant, ‘Bring out a robe, the best robe, and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet; And bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead... [Isn’t that where we started? *You are dead in your sins and trespasses*—correct? *Yes!*] ...but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found.’... [or *is found again*. We could say in other New Testament terminology: *saved*.] ...And they began to be merry” (vs 22-24).

The son who didn’t sin said, ‘Well, what are you doing with this one who has squandered everything?’ We’ll talk about that attitude a little bit later, but let’s concentrate on the attitude that God wants. Note sermon: *The Holy Spirit of God, the Seven Spirits of God*—that will help you to understand that God is doing lots in this world, way beyond what we may know. Have to be because our perspective is very small and narrow—*isn’t it?*

(go to the next track)

We’re going to see the operation of repentance and what God does in bringing people back to Him, and this will help you understand the

operation of what God does with us. Hosea 5 is talking about when Israel *finally* repents, but this can also apply to anyone at any time who returns to God. Now this sounds an awful lot like the prodigal son—doesn't it?

Hosea 5:15—God says: “I will go; I will return... [Isn't that what the prodigal son said, 'I'll go and return to my father'?] ...to My place until they confess their guilt... [God abandons them for a while] ...**and seek My face**... [that's exactly what happens] ...in their affliction...” We're all going to have trials, and they're going to come. We don't know the degree of what they're going to be, we don't know what they will be. And I've gone through them, you've gone through them, and in every case it is so that God can do us good in the end-run. That's what they're all for.

“...in their affliction they will seek Me earnestly” (v 15). After God went and returned to His place, notice what they do

Hosea 6:1—Israel says: “Come and let us return unto the LORD...” We know this applies to the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude. And I truly believe that's going to be the greatest work of God in the shortest period of time.

“...let us return unto the LORD, for He has torn... [gone through afflictions; they're in bondage; they're in captivity] ...and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up” (v 1). God only does it until we come to the point of repentance, and God wants us to repent with a true heart

Verse 2: “After two days will **He revive us**...” If a day is a year in prophecy, then this is after two years. They were to the point of physical death, but also realize that we are dead in our sins and our trespasses (Eph. 2). When God begins to deal with us, what does He do? *He revives us from our sins*—right? *Yes!* ...in the third day He will raise us up...” The Hebrew can also mean *to make us stand up*—stand up before God.

And what is that we do every Holy Day? God says you are to come before the Lord. In other words you are to come and *stand before* the Lord. Same way with the Sabbath, you come before the Lord. One of the things you'll come to understand is this: ***the Sabbath becomes the most important day of the week***, especially during the coming Feast of Unleavened Bread. God is dealing with us and molding us, and He is using this time to increase His work ***in us***. That's why it's important. That's why when the Sabbath Day comes along—what does it do? *We stand before God and He revives us!* That's why the Sabbath and Holy Days become so important, because not only is it the physical

observing of it—which we need to do—but it is the spiritual aspect

- of reviving us
- of lifting us up
- of teaching us
- of helping us
- of working with us

All of this is connected to prayer.

You don't have a religious life over here on the one hand, and a civil life over here on the other hand: you come every Sunday or Sabbath to your religious life, and you're one kind of person. And then you go to your civil life and you're another kind of person six days of the week. That's what we called earlier 'double-minded.' ***God wants all of you all the time!***

“...He will raise us up, and **we shall live in His sight**... [instead of being punished and on the verge of death] ...Then we shall understand... [everything that God wants us to understand] ...***if we follow on to know the LORD***...” (vs 2-3). That's important to understand. You must follow on to ***know the Lord***.

God desires a spiritual relationship with us, through His Holy Spirit. It's something that the world cannot see, the world does not understand; but you understand because you have experienced it. You understand because you have the Spirit of God. It's like it says: 'We will come to know IF we follow on.'

Isaiah 57:15—here's what God says: “For so says the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity...” God is near, He's not far off, though He inhabits eternity. That is His level of living. Our level of living is we inhabit the flesh—correct? *Yes!* And God has given us the *spirit in man* so we can have intelligence. Then He's given us His Holy Spirit so we can have a relationship with Him. And the key to that relationship is prayer.

Notice what God delights in: “...I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit... [Compared to *the epitome of human nature as brought out by the 'man of sin, the son of perdition,'* who exalts himself.] ...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” That ties right in with what we read in Hos. 6.

As far as following on to know—and you could say, what we read there in Hos, 6, following on to know is:

- growing in grace and knowledge
- growing in the Spirit of God
- growing in the understanding of God

- growing in our relationship with God.

to where then prayer become the vital aspect of your life, that you come to God every day because you love Him, because you *desire* to pray to God. You *desire* to have that relationship with God.

Now carnal praying is this: mumbling like the Catholics do; ‘hail Mary,’ ‘our father,’ etc. or some people ask: How long do I pray? *Well, you must pray an hour a day!* You get a clock! You put the clock up, and you get there and you’re praying and praying and praying; you think: this must be a long time. So, you open your eyes and you look at the clock and it’s 15 minutes! Key important thing: *It’s not the length of prayer, it’s the quality and attitude* that’s important to God. What did Jesus say of the scribes and Pharisees? *They liked to give long prayers!* And the heathen repeat *vain repetitions!*

Isaiah 55:6—this is what we are to do to know the Lord even more: “Seek you the LORD while He may be found... [That’s today—‘today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart’ (Psa. 95).] ...call upon Him while He is near.... [God is not a God afar off; He’s near] ...Let the wicked forsake his way... [repentance] ...and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [there needs to be a change of heart and mind and thought and attitude] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for **He will abundantly pardon**” (vs 6-7).

That’s why repentance is so important, and forgiving others is so important—they go hand-in-hand. Repentance and forgiveness—let’s put it this way: *the nature of God is forgiveness*. What has to be is this: *The nature of the children of God is repentance* so they can grow and change and overcome, because *God is doing something great in us*—which is very humbling, indeed! This is why we still ‘look through a glass darkly,’ even though we understand what we understand. After we’ve gone through all of this, what are we: *we are looking through a glass darkly, because there’s still so much more that God has for us in His Word and His Truth and what He’s doing for us!*

Verse 8: “**For My thoughts are not Your thoughts...**” That’s why if we have the Law of God, the Spirit of God, the commandments of God, everything that God says, make that a part of our being, then we begin to have more and more of the thoughts of God, because the Bible contains the thoughts of God—does it not? *Yes!*

And I might mention something else here concerning those who exalt themselves: Any minister or elder who exalts himself, to put himself between God and the people—because God wants a direct connection between each one that He calls, not being filtered through a man—what the elder or

minister is to do is to *teach the Word of God!* These are the words of God and that’s what God wants them to know, not the vain thoughts of some man who exalts himself and says: ‘I am Elijah.’ or ‘I am Elisha.’ or ‘I am the prophet.’ And ‘I tell you, you can’t talk to anyone in your family unless they belong to this church.’ That’s exalting yourself above God!

- you’re to follow *no man*
- you’re to trust *no man*

Find one who is trustworthy in the Word of God, one who teaches the Word of God.

I’m sure there are many who do preach the Word of God. A lot of the Protestants don’t preach the Word of God, they *use* the Word of God *to their own advantage*, which is a spirit of antichrist, when you understand it.

Bring them to God—let them have the thoughts of God, v 8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 8-9).

So, that’s what I’m going to bring out instead of a conclusion in the book *God’s Plan For Mankind Revealed by the Sabbath and Holy Days*, I’m calling it an *epilogue*, because, instead of an introduction, I’m calling it the Prologue and the reason I’m doing that is because I have one sermon that I entitled *The Introduction—The Beginning and the End*. I didn’t want to get that confused so I have it in the epilogue. The whole purpose of everything is so that you can come to God in a personal relationship, through prayer, through study, through fellowship with the brethren. That there is:

- the love of God
- the joy of God
- the help of God
- the encouragement of God
- the comfort of the Holy Spirit in spite of all circumstances

Now notice how God does this, it’s quite a thing, v 10: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth...” What is the Holy Spirit likened to? *Water!* What is the thing that is going to help us overcome? *The washing of the water by the Word in our minds!*

“...and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater” (v 10). What does it say about the Parable of the Sower? *When he sows it in the good ground, some bring forth 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold!* {Note: 2-Tim.

4:1-4 where he said, ‘preach the Word’ that’s what it is to be preached.}

Verse 11: “So shall My Word be. which goes out of My mouth...” Where do you find it? *In the Bible!* How many times does it say:

- the mouth of the Lord has spoken it
- the Lord said to Moses
- the Word of God came to Isaiah
- the Word of God came to Jeremiah, Ezekiel and all the prophets

“...it shall not return unto Me void...” (v 11). It’s going to accomplish two things:

1. nourish and help and cause to grow all of those who have the Spirit of God
2. judge and bring punishment upon all of the wicked.

“...but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do. For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace...” (vs 11-12).

What I want you to think about is this: ***Regardless of the trial or difficulty God is with you in it all; and God will lift you up!*** And so, if you have great difficulties, take it to God.

- ask Him to help you *understand it*
- ask Him to help you *cope with it*
- ask God to help you *see the result of it*, the end of it

And remember, let’s see what the end of it will be: “...the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.... [that’s at the beginning of the Millennium when they return] ...Instead of the thorn, the fir tree shall come up; and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree shall come up...” (vs 12-13).

Let’s take it this way in a personal application to us, because a lot of our trials feel like thorns and briars and all of that sort of thing. ***God will turn that around!*** I know in our lifetime, within the Church, what we have gone through has been just like that, because everyone is going to come to a trial that he or she will go through, where you’ll feel like you’re ***totally, absolutely alone!*** Why does God want you to come to this point? *So that you turn to Him and realize that in Him is your help!* That’s why prayer and study.

Notice the end of it: “...and it shall be to the LORD for a **memorial**, for an **everlasting sign** ... [God is going to give you eternal life] ...*which* shall not be cut off” (v 13).

Let’s look at the model prayer again. Let’s read a Scripture that for some people it’s difficult to

understand, and even for those who have the Spirit of God it may be difficult to understand. So, let’s see if we can make some sense out of it this time.

Matthew 6:12: “And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors... [through forgiveness and repentance] ...and lead us not into temptation... [What does that mean? Does God lead people into temptation?] ...but rescue us from the evil one....” (vs 12-13).

It means this in reality: it could also be trials. Even though trials are good for us, it is better if you yield to God so that you don’t have to go through a trial. That’s easier—isn’t it? Of course, that’s easier said than done! Oh isn’t it? Does that mean you don’t have to go through a trial or that we brought it upon ourselves? Probably both, because we’ll have trials and tribulations and things like this—we’re promised that. But it can also mean this—which is probably a better interpretation of it, because it has to be interpreted rather than find it in the language: ***‘Do not give us over to our own temptations.’*** And then it says:

“...but rescue [deliver] us from the evil one...” That gives us a little better interpretation of it. Do not give us over to our own temptations; in other words, when you come to God and you say, ‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,’ you’re asking God to perform ***His will, not yours.***

Too many people go to God and pray in an attempt to get their will or their way, rather than asking God to work out ***His will in His way.*** And if you do that, you’re giving yourself over to your own temptations, to your own covetousness because that’s what you want. Give me this, give me that, give me the other thing.’ It should be this:

- O Lord, help me to know You
  - help me to yield to You
  - grant me an attitude of repentance
  - help me to see myself
  - help me to love You with all my heart and mind and soul and being
- that’s how our prayers need to be.

Let’s see how that fits in with being given over to our own temptations, or our own way. James 1:1 tells us an awful lot and this ties right in with the attitude of prayer and *The Keys to Answered Prayer*, and as you can see, I’m talking about prayer in the long-haul. I’m talking about prayer day-by-day, many times daily; even while you’re up doing the things that you normally do. Or, and especially the time when you pray on your knees before God—which should be every day. And then the times you think about God while you’re going to sleep, because that’ll happen many times. James 1:1:

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!”

If you write a letter to someone, which an epistle is, and you send it to them, you know where they are so you can send it to them—right? *Yes!* So, this is like an address. What does this tell us? *The ten tribes were never lost; they knew where they were!* And this was sent to them—right? *Yes!* And where did the apostles go? *They went to the ‘lost ten tribes.’* So, it shows the height of presumptuousness of Judaism today, which claims that they are wholly the 12 tribes of Israel. But they are not!

Verse 2: “Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials.” As it says in another place, it’s not joyous when you’re going through it, but ‘afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.’

Verse 3: “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” There is the temptation, which is testing. When you go back to Gen. 22 and it says that God tempted Abraham, it means He *tested* or *proved* Abraham. The testing or the proving of your faith produces endurance. Note: Mark 4 about the Sower of the Seed. Some people, they give up earlier, give up easily.

Verse 4: “But let endurance have *its* perfect work...” In other words, there’s going to be a time when you come out the other end of the trial and you will understand. And, as we’ve said many times, when you understand and you have perfect 20/20 hindsight, then you know.

I remember one trial that Delores and I went through—our whole family went through—was when we were absolutely left alone, just Delores and I and four children in our home. No money, no nothing, no retirement, no severance, *nothing! Absolutely nothing!* And *we could not see the end!* However, God saw us through it, day-by-day. And *only after* we went through what I call ‘my valley of the shadow of death’ at that time—I know some of you here knew me at that time when I went through it. I remember that I was so low.

Everyone is going to come to that, the lowest point in your life. All I could do was—I was doing loans at that time, loan brokering—I was out driving around looking for places where I might see a house for sale or something like this and see if I could find someone who needs a loan. So, I was out doing that and I was driving on a back road in Hollister and there were these hills, because the valley floor in Hollister comes and rises a little bit and all of sudden there’s this hill. I was so despondent that time I didn’t know what to do, where to go or anything like that.

I just got out of the car and walked up the hill and got to the top of it and the only thing I could do is just fall on my knees and ask God to heal my soul. And with tears streaming down my face and everything, not knowing what God wanted me to do, where to go, what He wanted with what we had with our small group—and you will remember that we had eight or ten at that time. I just finally had to say, ‘God, if that’s what you want me to do, just serve these people until you come, so be it. Let everything else just go. Let me heal my soul, let me serve You in a way that is right and serve the brethren that you have given that we can obtain to Your Kingdom.’ That was it! I was so discouraged; I quit writing; I didn’t write for eight years. I just said, ‘I’m not going to write.’ God wants me to write, I’ll write. If He doesn’t want me to write, I won’t write. I’m not going to go out and say, ‘I’m doing a Work of God’ when I’m only doing it for myself.

So, you have to “...let endurance have *its* perfect work...” (v 4). It wasn’t until about five years later that I understood why I went through that. And I can look back and see that’s what God wanted. He wanted to cut me off from any other minister, to see whether I would study His Word, know His Word, be faithful to Him, serve the brethren—whether small or great. When we started out we had three on a cassette mailing list, and we had our small little group. We didn’t go out and advertise or do anything like that. We just let God add to it and make it become evident, as He opened the door. And I didn’t begin writing until about—I quit in ’83 and I didn’t start writing again until ’89 or ’90. And what I started writing then became what is *The Christian Passover* book today.

Verse 4: “But let endurance... [the trial you’re going through] ...have its perfect work...” God is involved in it, and it’s our choices that are necessary and our yieldedness to God and our prayers and everything, and the repentance that we need to have on a continual basis.

Here’s why: “...so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything” (v 4). That is *spiritually*. Doesn’t matter what you have physically. Whether you have much or you have little.

Verse 5: “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...” What is wisdom? *Wisdom is understanding your circumstances!* And that’s what God does after the trial. He let’s you understand.

“...Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him” (v 5).

Now, here's the key; let's follow this on in relationship to prayer; relationship to how we're living before God, v 6: "But let him ask in faith..." **You come to the point you believe God!** You believe what He says—and that's where we started—isn't it? When you come to God you must believe that He exists. You must believe that He is, and a 'rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'

"...not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the* sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*" (v 6). Always remember this: If you pray and get up off your knees and say, 'I wonder if God is going to answer this.' Or if you say, 'Well, I don't think God is going to answer.' Just cancel out everything that you've said.

Rather, what you need to do is like the man who needed his son healed from being possessed of the demon that threw him in the fire and the water and the disciples couldn't cast him out. And Jesus came and the father said to Jesus, 'Help me if you can.' He said, 'If you **believe** all things are possible.' And the man said, 'Lord, help my unbelief.' So that's the key in what is necessary in prayer, because we have to **ask** and **believe**. Ask God to help you in your unbelief so you are not "tossed to and fro."

Verse 7: "Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (vs 7-8). And that's what happens—vacillate back and forth, you're up and down, you're faithful one day, unfaithful another day, etc. Then he talks about how God deals with those who are humble and we're all just like flower and grass and we perish.

Verse 12—here's the trying of your faith: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved..." That's what God is doing. He wants to know: 'Do you love Me. Will you obey Me. Do you believe Me. Do you have a relationship with God.' and so forth.

"...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (v 12).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- 3) Psalm 12:1-5
- 4) John 6:44-45
- 5) Romans 2:4-11
- 6) Jeremiah 15:5-6
- 7) Psalm 78:32-39, 41-42

- 8) Joel 2:12-14
- 9) Ezekiel 20:43
- 10) Luke 15:7-10, 17-19, 22-24
- 11) Hosea 5:15
- 12) Hosea 6:1-3
- 13) Isaiah 57:15
- 14) Isaiah 55:6-13
- 15) Matthew 6:12-13
- 16) James 1:1-8, 12

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12:9; 13
- John 14:6
- Deuteronomy 30:15
- Psalm 95
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- Genesis 22
- Mark 4

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##### Sermons:

- *The Biblical Truth about the Immigration Problem*

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- *The Washing of the Water By the Word*
- *Addicted Society*
- *The Holy Spirit of God, the Seven Spirits of God*

Books: *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred R. Coulter

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## Keys to Answered Prayer XI “Lead Us Not Into Temptation”

Fred R. Coulter

Prayer is the great relationship—*spiritual relationship*—between you and God, and is the dynamics through which God’s Spirit works with us:

- to help us
- to teach us
- to mold us

What you’re going to find is that the series that we have been doing on prayer will actually carry right on over into the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Let’s come to Matt. 6, where we’ve started on all of these and come back to the model prayer, and let’s look at that section again. Let’s go over what Jesus said, again. Prayer becomes the great blessing and communication that God uses in your life, and that you use in your life to communicate with God. Let’s review a little bit why this is the model prayer. This is like the foundation—much like when Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and being; and your neighbor as yourself. On these two hang all the law and the prophets.’ The model prayer—Matt. 6 and Luke 11—is the *foundation* on which everything concerning prayer hangs. There are many, many subdivisions and aspects that hang upon this, to give us the keys to answered prayer.

Matthew 6:9: “...Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name... [First of all you acknowledge God; know that He is Holy.] ...Your kingdom come...” (vs 9-10). That gives us focus always on what we are to do. We are always to be looking to God and the coming Kingdom, but also realize something else that’s important with this:

When we say, ‘Your Kingdom come,’ we’re not just necessarily referring to the second return of Christ. There is something else that’s involved with our prayers, which we find in Col. 1. Some people, and the Catholic Church says this tells you the Kingdom of God is on earth in the form of the Catholic Church, and the Kingdom of Heaven is where the souls go. That’s how they split the Word of God.

Colossians 1:11: “Being strengthened with all power...” The spiritual strength that we receive begins in prayer, and it is built as we study, because the words that Jesus said, ‘that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.’

Verse 11: “Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all

endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness, and **has transferred us...** [this is the point I want to make] ...**unto the kingdom of the Son of His love...**” (vs 11-13). We are obviously not in the Kingdom of God now. The *King James* says ‘*into the kingdom.*’ No, we’re not *into the Kingdom*, but we have been brought *under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God.*

That’s why it says in Philip. 3<sup>[transcriber correction]</sup> that our allegiance, our citizenship is to God first of all; because:

- God has called us out of the world
- He’s revealed to us His Son
- He’s forgiven our sins
- He’s revealed to us
  - ✓His Word
  - ✓His plan
  - ✓His Sabbath
  - ✓His Holy Days

Philippians 3:20: “But for us, the commonwealth *of God* exists in *the heavens...*” That’s very interesting—‘commonwealth’ is really a better translation than conversation, citizenship, the origin of our conduct. The Greek there is ‘*politeia*,’ which you can extrapolate *our politics*. That’s why we are not to get involved in the politics of this world. Where has it led? The whole lesson of being *called out of the world* and being under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God is that we affirm to God that every single government of man **fails!** God will never fail! So, when we say, “Your Kingdom come” we are also placing ourselves *under the jurisdiction of God the Father and Jesus Christ*—that’s what it is.

“...[for the] the commonwealth [or the ‘*politeia*’ or the conduct—all of those can apply. So, if you want to expand and amplify that word, they will all apply.] ...*of God* exists in *the heavens*, from where also we are waiting for *the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*” (v 20).

Here we see that since we are under the jurisdiction of Kingdom of God now, we’re also looking for Christ to bring the kingdom. It all applies there. That’s why back here in Matt. 6 it is an outline, because you take from that and you hang on those words in Matt. 6, **all** of these various things of the *keys to answered prayer*.

We can add this in, v 21: “Who will transform our vile bodies... [we’re looking to the resurrection] ...that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself.”

This is why we have the series: *Why God Hates Religion*. I mean, if you can’t see that in Islam today, then I can’t help you understand. All religions set up a *man’s* organization and men and buildings and things *between* you and God. They add their traditions; they add their beliefs to it, which then becomes the ‘way of Cain.’ Let me just give you a brief summary of ‘the way of Cain,’ because we’ll see this a little later as we go along, and won’t have to mention that it’s the ‘way of Cain.’ The briefest summary of the way of Cain is this: ***Man tells God what he will do for Him, rather than God telling man what He will do for him.*** That’s the simplest explanation of the “way of Cain” (Gen. 4).

Matthew 6:10: “Your kingdom come...” It has a whole lot more to do than just the second coming of Christ, because all the Christians from the time of Jesus, down to the return of Christ—with the exception of those in the very last generation—did not live in the flesh to see the coming of the Kingdom of God. So, it has to have a far greater application.

“...Your will be done on earth...” (v 10). God’s will is done on earth; He rules in the kingdoms of men; He sets up over the basest of men. And if you don’t believe that, just look at the governments in the world and focus in on the ruling power in Congress in the United States today. And if you don’t understand that, well then, I can’t help you. Why? *Because the people are sinning!* The people elected them. The people deserve them, and they are getting exactly what they want.

Just a political aside here: Those people who believe in at least a substantial amount of the morality of God—let’s say the last six of the Ten Commandments—they’re getting older, they’re dying, and all the ‘mush-headed’ generations that they have been training in public school are now coming to the fore. They think in the capricious ways that the democrats think today.

So, what I see is this: God is telling His people—the Church—*don’t place any hope in the government because it’s all going to be given over to those people who hate God!* The greatest funder for those people and those political positions is a billionaire named is George Soros; and he brags that he is an atheist. He wants to get rid of God in America. And since those who knew somewhat about God were never really serious in doing what God wanted them to do, rather they were serious in

taking part of what God says and then ***tell God what we will do***, God is bringing that judgment back upon them.

So, we are going to end up with a terrible government. It is coming! All of those who have any semblance of morality at all are getting older and are dying. And just think how many people in that category are going to die between now and then, and you’re going to have this hippy-yippy, yappy drug liberal culture—God haters, Christian haters—run the government. They are going to be aligned with all the riff-raff from South America and around the world.

That’s why it says, “Your kingdom come... [put no stock whatsoever in what men are going to do] ...as *it is* in heaven... [it’s God’s *will* that the government change that way because of the morals of the people] ...give us this day our daily bread...” (vs 10-11). We’re going to understand that more when it comes down to the time when you won’t be able to run out and buy everything you need at the local store, because *that day is coming!* Every time I walk in a big supermarket, or I go to a place like Costco, or I go to a place like Home Depot or Lowe’s or Wal-Mart, and I see all of these things; I think when that’s cut off it’s going to be a disaster. Excuse me for diverging in my thoughts here, but sometimes you have to live with some of the things that I’ve read.

They are now working on an ‘e-bomb.’ An ‘e-bomb’ is an electromagnetic bomb. When they explode that in the air over a city it fries everything that’s electrical! POOF! Everything is gone! Everything electrical: all computers; if you’re working in one of these high-rise buildings elevators won’t work, air-conditioning doesn’t work, computers don’t work, refrigerators don’t work, lights don’t go on. You can absolutely ***waste*** a whole city without having one single, bloody casualty. What they worry about is if they develop this technology, it will become easier and easier to do, and guess whose hands they’re worried it’s going to fall into when they get the technology easier and easier to do; it only costs \$400 to do it.

Now, I’m not saying this to scare you, but the thought of it ought to make you run to God real quickly. I think we need to look at and remember a little more closely what Jesus said, because He said that the time is coming that if God did not intervene ‘there would be no flesh saved alive.’ That’s not a atomic and hydrogen bombs, that’s through *everything* that’s going to take place. All you have to do is a half-dozen of these in America—Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, St. Louis—you’ve conquered the nation! And then with all of these patsy, surrender people, they will just give up instantly—won’t they?

- While we still have the good times, **work!**
- While we still have the peace to do things we need to do, **do it!**
- While you have time to pray and develop a relationship with God, **do it!**
  - ✓ Don't put it off till tomorrow.
  - ✓ Don't put it off till next week.

Verse 12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors and **lead us not into temptation...**" (vs 12-13). That's what we want to cover today. What does He mean by this? You could also put it this way: 'lead us not into trials'—because sometimes we bring trials on ourselves because we won't listen to God, because *we're trying to do our own will!*

It's just like this: I've tried to put things together that we've purchased and I look at the picture of it and in my own mind I can do that; supposed to take only 20 minutes. So, I get it all together and it's not the way it's supposed to be. Delores comes down after about 45 minutes to an hour, she says, 'Well, how's it coming?' I said, 'I don't know, I didn't do this thing right.' She said, 'Well, did you read the instructions?' And I said, 'No, I didn't!'

This is an example to show you that many times the trials that we go through are of our own doing because we don't listen to God; or in the case of doing something like this, you don't read the instructions!

Same way with prayer: You've got to know how to pray, and prayer is something that you work at and that you develop and that you grow in. Read some of the Psalms; that *every trial that you go through is to help you draw closer to God* so that you won't do *your* will, but that ***you'll do the will of God in your life.*** That's what it's all for. So, when they come along, learn to take it in that way. Don't be mad at So-and-So, don't be mad at the other, they may have been an instrumentality in it; but it's been our own stupidity too many times. Here's another way you could express that: ***Do not give us over to our own temptations.***

There are a lot of lessons that we can learn which will help us in prayer. The thing that is important to understand is that in prayer you're developing a relationship with God so that God can work in your life even more. So that, in daily living, God will help you and strengthen you in what you do so that we don't go on repeating the same mistakes over and over again.

James 1:1 "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes..." Just as an aside: do you think that James would write a

letter to the 12 tribes if he didn't know where they were? *Of course he knew where they were!*

"...which *are* in the dispersion... [scattered all over the Mediterranean into Parthia, into England, into Babylon] ...Greetings! Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials" (vs 1-2).

The only way we're ever going to come to that kind of view of trials that we experience is if we *let the trial teach us the will of God.* The joy doesn't come when you're going through it. The joy comes afterward when you have been exercised by it and you have the righteousness develop because of that. You don't have joy when you're going through it, but you do when you come out the other end of it.

Verse 2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance..." (vs 2-3). It's what God wants. What did Jesus say? *The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved!* Note Matt. 13 and Mark 4 about the 'sower of the seed'—didn't have endurance.

Verse 4: "But **let endurance have its perfect work...** [The *King James* says 'patience.' You need patience *and endurance* and the word is interchangeable, but endurance is more applicable.] ...**so that you may be perfect and complete...** [*the goal of every trial and difficulty that you go through*] ...**not lacking in anything.**"

Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." This is what God is doing with us.

What's important is for us to understand that even though we go through the trials and difficulties that we go through it's much easier to be perfected with our cooperation than with our resistance. All of you who have children, or have had to deal with children, you get some brat that doesn't want to be dressed. 'No! I don't want that! No! I don't want that! No! I don't want that!' Finally, when you persuade them and get them dressed—and especially if it's a girl and she looks really good in the outfit—she says, 'Oh, that's nice.' But, look at all the agony going through it.

Let's look at it this way: Though God has infinite patience, what does He delight in more than anything else? *Those who are willing!* And the truth is this that the more you agree with God, the more you yield to God, the more character you develop and you become more perfected. You don't have to be totally beaten up all the time; keep that in mind.

James 1:5: "However, if anyone lacks wisdom... [when you're going through a trial you

need wisdom; you need understanding, and so forth] ...let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith..." (vs 5-6). If you pray to God and ask something and get up off your knees and say, 'Well, I don't know if God's going answer this or not'; all the time spent on your knees praying is just like we were talking earlier about these computer chips, *you inadvertently erase it*. everything is gone, it's blank. Likewise with your prayer. What you may do is say, 'God, I know You're going to answer this prayer, however at this time, I don't know how you're going to do it, but I'm going to trust You that You will.' That's what you do.

Verse 6: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*.... [water is just that way] ...Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord" (vs 6-7). What are we trying to receive from the Lord?

- His Spirit
- His mind
- His character
- His understanding
- being perfected

Verse 8: "*He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." These are some of the things that we go through. I'm sure you've all gone through your 'double-mindedness'—and you have had to pay the penalty for it.

Verse 9: "But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation, and *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition..." (vs 8-10).

I know there have been some very successful people, who the first time they ever came to a Church of God said to themselves, as they looked around and saw the motley crew of who the brethren of God really are: Are these really God's people? They expected them to be more like themselves. It works both ways, especially if someone comes up and shakes his hand and lives out back of his farm. I tell you, you've really got to love and appreciate God's people.

In Boise we had one man who lived back up in the mountains and pretty well all alone and he'd come down to services I'll never forget his face and what he did. He tried to dress the best that he could, but every time you'd meet him, he'd have this big smile on his face and shake your hand and say, 'Praise God.' You'd think, 'Hmmm, I wonder what kind of guy this is.' But he really meant it. When I shook his hand the first time I kind of was taken

back by when he said, 'Praise God.' Well, he was just happy to be there in church. He was just happy to come be there with the brethren. When I shook his hand I could hear his elbow rattle. I thought to myself, '*You know, Fred, you've got to change your attitude.*' God loves this man. He has called all of us; so, we just need to remember that.

Verse 10: "...as *the flower of the field*, he himself will pass away." I think another reason why he was so joyful and saying, 'Praise God' was this: He knew his days on earth were limited. And I think the older we get and we come to the point that we know that that is a reality, the more that we appreciate it. So, James is making the point here.

Verse 11: "For the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass..." Here in California we've had some rain. All the hills are nice and green, the flowers are blooming. I suppose in Texas they have their little blue bells out. Yes, sun rises with it's burning heat and dries up the grass and everything's going to turn to straw.

"...and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits" (v 11). What does it say? Seek what? *Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you.* Not necessarily just in this life. But what is God going to add to us at the resurrection? *A new body, a new mind, a new name, a new existence!* Fantastic!

Verse 12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials..." There's *endurance* again. He gets into defining the difference between a trial—which is the testing of your faith—and correction for your own mistakes. It can also be a combination of the both. I've done that. I've been corrected for my mistakes and also it's been a trial of faith. And sometimes it's a trial of faith with no mistakes, but God is leading you in a way that He wants you to go. And sometimes to get your attention He virtually has to pick you up and set you some place else to get your attention. But remember, there's a blessing in it.

Verse 12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, **after** he has been proved... [Not **before**—after] ...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." That's what Paul said after he lived his life—and there's a tremendous example of what Paul went through. When God told Ananias 'there's Saul down there and he's the one I've called.' He says, 'Lord, isn't he the one that has hauled out the brethren and killed them?' God says, 'He's a chosen vessel for Me, because I'm going to show him what things he must suffer for Me and the way of God. And Paul did! You read what he had to go through. And finally Paul, he went through so many he learned to say, 'I rejoice in every one.' So, there's a great

reward for Paul because of that. But look at what he wrote that God preserved to inspire us, so that when we go through the things we won't be giving up!

Verse 13—come to the temptation here: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God’...”

- you may be tempted by circumstances
- you may be tempted by Satan
- you may be tempted by your own lusts
- you may be tempted by someone else
- there are many different forms of temptation

“...because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*” (v 13). Well, how does God do it then? *He sets it before you with choices!* That's how God does it! ‘I've set before you life and death, good and evil, blessing and cursing—choose life that you may love the Lord your God’ (Deut. 30). He sets before us choices, and our choice then should always be: **choose God regardless of the circumstances!** That's what God wants.

Verse 14: “But **each one is tempted when he is drawn away...** [that is from God and His way] **...and is enticed by his own lust**” (vs 13-14). There's a process in the temptation. This is why we pray”

- don't let us be led into temptation
- don't lead us into temptation because of our stupid self-will

“...drawn away and is enticed by his own lusts.”

- How's Satan going to come along and tempt you?  
✓ *Well, he's going to appeal to your lust!*
- Is he going to come along and try and tempt you with something that is evil?  
✓ *Grossly evil!*
- Right at first?  
✓ *No! He's going to come along and tempt you with something that really sounds good!*  
✓ *Something which may appear to be a very good cause—and get you hooked!*  
✓ *He appeals to the lust!*

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived...” Here we see the steps of choices that are made which then lead to sin. You don't have to yield to that temptation. That's why we covered earlier that ‘You bring every thought into captivity and cast down vain imaginations and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.’

“...after lust has conceived...” It's got to

sound interesting. It's got to sound good. You can take anything that you would like to take as an example. You could bring in illicit sex. You could bring in stealing. You could bring in lying. You could bring in other things about breaking the Sabbath, taking God's name in vain, having idols, having other gods, all of those things would come along. Who would think in the Church of God brethren would fall victim to all of those things, but they have!

Notice the process: “...after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin...” (v 15). Remember this: at any point in the process you can stop! At any point in the process you can choose to stop and turn and go the right way! I'm so sick and tired of Anna Nicole Smith, but a perfect example of what we're talking about here. All of these people are involved in lust and trying to *get*. They're being entrapped. They could've, at any point, said ‘NO!’ So could she. No to drugs! No to sex! No to notoriety!

“...and sin, when it is completely finished, **brings forth death**” (v 15). She died! Her son died! I mean, look at all the things associated with it. Surely there's got to be something more important in the world than all the things of Anna Nicole Smith!

Verse 16: “**Do not deceive yourselves...** [that's when we get ourselves in trouble; when we deceive ourselves] ...my beloved brethren. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will, He begat us by *the* Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings” (vs 16-18).

Notice where he started out and where he ended up here in v 18. Regardless of what you go through, **keep your mind on God!**

(go to the next track)

Let's see what Jesus told Satan in a misuse of the Scriptures, in declaring an action to be done from a misquoting of Scripture, and how that tempts God.

Luke 4:9: “Then he [Satan] led Him [Jesus] to Jerusalem and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here.’”

- Could he do that? *Yes he could!*
- Would it be right to do so?
- Why would it not be right?
- Who's doing the requesting? *Satan is!*

If Jesus, in any of these things, did what Satan said to do, He would forsake the true God—the Father—and He would have another god before Him—

correct? *Yes!*

Verse 10: “For it is written... [quoting Scripture]: ...‘He shall give His angels charge concerning You to keep You; And in *their* hands they shall bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’ But Jesus answered *and* said to him, ‘It is *clearly* stated... [I’ve inserted the word ‘clearly’ because it’s emphatic] ...“You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God”’” (vs 10-12).

So, you can tempt God by doing things that appear to you to be right, and yet, what you’re really doing, *you’re telling God what to do*. If there’s an accident that comes along, yes, God’s angels will protect you. But if you say, ‘Oh God, send your angels to protect me and stand right out on the railroad tracks with one of these bullet trains—like they have in France—coming at you 200-mph and ask God to protect you, it isn’t going to happen. *You’re tempting God!*

Now let’s see the difference between that and the ‘trying of our faith.’ Whenever we go through and study the Word of God, I want you to notice something that’s very, very important—not only in the model prayer of Matt. 6 and Luke 11, but also in all the prayers in the Psalms: *There is always hope that is given*, regardless of the circumstances or how bad it may be, *there is always hope that God gives*. Never forget that! So, whatever trial you’re going through, keep your mind on *the hope that God gives!*

1-Peter 1:1: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the* elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *Who have been chosen* according to *the* predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father, by sanctification through *the* Spirit...” (vs 1-2). That’s why we are called ‘saints.’ Saints means *one who has been sanctified by God having been called and chosen and received the Holy Spirit—you are a saint*. Not in the terms that the Catholics refer to as those ‘souls in heaven’ who supposedly were righteous.

“...through *the* Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.... [**declaration, promise, hope**]: ...Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again **unto a living hope** through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us” (vs 2-4)—which Christ is going to bring.

- No man can take it!
- No man can steal it!
- No man can deprive you of it!

—unless you give up on God and walk away. Verse 5: “Who *are* being safeguarded by *the* power of God **through faith...**”

Another thing in our relationship with God and the Spirit of God and the Word of God is this: *We need to understand the close, interaction that God is having with us with His Spirit!* He’s leading us with His Spirit in many ways. Many times we don’t realize that God is really doing it. Many times we can look back later and see after the fact, yes, God was leading us in it.

So, we’re “...safeguarded by *the* power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time. In this you yourselves greatly rejoice...” (vs 5-6). Look at all that He has given here:

- to give hope
- to give inspiration
- to uplift you

—before He starts talking about the difficulties and trials that they’re going through. And you’ll find this same pattern throughout the whole Bible. Look, even at the most disastrous thing that happened during the days of Noah. There was hope for physical life through Noah and his sons and their wives, and all the animals that God brought to the Ark. So likewise, whenever we go through a trial, look to it for the hope, because here’s what it is doing.

Verse 6: ...though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials... [what for?]: ...in order that the proving of your faith...” (vs 6-7). Because if God is going to give us eternal life, He wants to prove our faith.

- Do we love God?
- Do we believe God?
- Do we live by His Word?
- Do we act upon it?
- What is it?

Verse 7: “In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.” That’s when Jesus returns.

Here’s the key; this is why you have to love God, believe His Word and so forth, v 8: “Whom, not having seen, you love... [Peter saw Him; the apostle saw Him] ...in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe...” What did Jesus say to Thomas after Thomas said, ‘Well, I won’t believe until I can put my finger in His hands

and my hand in His side'? *Jesus said, 'Thomas, come here!'* And Thomas said, 'Oh, my Lord, my God.' And Jesus said, 'Blessed are you because you believe. But blessed are those who believe and have not seen.' So, *there's an additional blessing that comes in believing and loving though you haven't seen!*

Verse 8: "Whom not having seen, you love and rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; and are receiving the end of your faith—even the salvation of your souls" (vs 8-9).

The whole point in everything that we go through is to give us the strength to prove our faith and everything like that. Note Gen. 22—about Abraham and Isaac and offering Isaac and so forth. Where God said after Abraham proved that he was going to follow God in everything, even to the offering of his son, whom he counted God worthy to resurrect him if it went through. When it was all done the angel said, 'Don't raise your hand against the son. For *now I know* that you fear Me, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son.' These things are necessary because of what God is giving us and how great it is.

Here are the things that trials and faith are intended to do. Coupled with prayer, all of this has to do with constant praying, yielding to God and so forth. They are to *give us further belief* in God:

1. *believe* God
2. *obey* God
3. *love* God
4. *trust* God—not yourself
5. show the *deliverance* and *salvation* of God

Let's look a little bit more concerning tempting God. So, we're going to look at some things that they didn't learn to believe.

Exodus 17:1: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim. And *there was* no water for the people to drink." Think about how many times they had seen the power of God:

- all the plagues
- all the signs
- all the things that He did in Egypt
- all the killing of the firstborn
- bringing them out
- crossing the Red Sea
- making the waters sweet where they were bitter
- sending them manna

Verse 2: "And the people argued... [or contended or were complaining] ...with Moses and said, 'Give us water that we may drink.' And Moses said to them, 'Why do you argue with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?'"

Rather than going to Moses and saying, 'Moses, we know God is with you. We know God is leading us. We know that God can do all things. We're all out of water, we need water, will you pray to God that He'll provide water for us?' Rather, coming to God with an accusative attitude, and tempting God. Whenever you come to God with an accusative attitude, you're tempting God. Think of it that way.

Verse 3: "And the people thirsted there for water. And the people murmured against Moses and said, 'Why *is* this, *that* you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?'" Then you know the rest of the story: God gave them water out of the rock, whatever they needed.

But when you come to God with a terrible and wrong attitude, *you're tempting God*. Let's see this again in Malachi 3. Almost the same and we have seen this in our day—haven't we? With ministers in the Church of God who betrayed God, betrayed the brethren, betrayed the Church, and went out and brought in the world. And went lock, stock and barrel with the evangelical, Protestantism of this world. And here's how they did it—just like in Exo. 17.

Malachi 3:13: "'Your words have been all too strong against Me,' says the LORD...."

I never will forget how that—in analyzing this down through the years—we would watch and see what was happening. And when they're about ready to do something of a drastic nature, they don't start out with a drastic thing right at first. They save that for last. And the minister who succeeded and took over the Worldwide Church of God—it was his son that took over—and before they made the announcement that they said it was okay to eat unclean foods, some brethren went into the Red Lobster down in Pasadena and lo and behold guess who was sitting there? *The son, 'T. Jr.', eating unclean fish!* and someone came over to him and said, 'We aren't supposed to eat this are we? Why are you eating this?' And he says, 'Oh, I'm a Gentile.' And then after that came all the things of 'stout words' and hatefulness toward God, the Sabbath, everything that the Church stood for. So, here it is:

Verse 13: "'Your words have been all too strong against Me,' says the LORD. 'Yet, you say, "What have we spoken *so strongly* against You?'"

You have said, “It *is* vain to serve God; and, **what profit is it** that we have kept His charge... [kept His commandments, kept His Holy Days, have done the things of God] ...and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we *are* calling the arrogant blessed... [completely turned the tables] ...Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered”” (vs 13-15).

And isn't that the message that came along? *Yes!* You don't have to do this, you don't have to do that, and now they have just ordained their first woman preacher. So, you see what happens there. This is tempting God. When you go against what you know and complain against God, against the things that are right, then you're tempting God.

Let's see another example of this; let's come to Psalm 73, very instructive. Right now at the present time, I'm going through my second pass through the Psalms and I tell you, it is really something going through the Psalms verse-by-verse, word-by-word, examining everything, make sure that it's right and so forth. Asaph was one of the Levites who helped administer the Ark of the Covenant in the tent that David put in his house. So, he had Asaph and other Levites to attend it. They were all Levites who were priests. And this Psalm, though we've covered it in the past, is really instructive for our day.

Psalm 73:1: “Truly God is good to Israel, even to those who are pure of heart.... [he starts out with a good statement] ...But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped, for I was envious at the arrogant...” (vs 1-3). Instead of comparing yourself with God, as we should, he was comparing himself with others in the world. And what does God say about comparing yourself with others. Those who compare themselves among themselves are what? *Not wise!*

Verse 3: “For I was envious at the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no pangs in their death, and their strength is firm. They are not in trouble like other men...” (vs 3-5). They're not going through trials like me. Just wait, their trial is coming.

“...neither are they plagued like *other* men” (v 5). When he's saying ‘other men’ he's referring to his own personal circumstances is what he's doing here.

Verse 6: “Therefore, pride is as a chain about their neck. Violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness... [in other words they have everything that they need] ...they have more than the heart could wish for” (vs 6-7).

I remember watching one of these programs—I think it was Discovery. I came to this one which was showing about the great yachts of the world, of the excessively, filthy rich and some of their play-toys. The biggest one that they showed, cost over \$500-million, just for a yacht. It's got everything in it, four or five stories, huge suites, huge lounges and rooms and spas and everything that you could want. All automatic, just almost flick a finger and something happens. You have a crew there always and they provide for you the best of food, they bring in flowers on the day that you leave on the trip and they take you out on a cruise on the Mediterranean and you are wined and you are dined and I thought of this Psalm. I thought to myself, what is going to happen when their day comes, so absolutely just overflowing with abundance—filthy rich. The greatest of every pleasure and leisure you would ever want and people waiting on you hand and foot.

Verse 8: “They scoff and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth” (vs 8-9). Many of those who own those and have all the billions of dollars, there's a good number of atheists and those who don't believe in God. They have everything that they want.

Verse 10: “Therefore, waters of abundance are drunk by them. And they say, ‘How does God know?....’” (vs 10-11). I wonder how many of them really make money off of drugs? Off of interests that they earn in banks? And mortgages? And things like this.

“...And is there knowledge in the Most High?” Behold, these are the wicked, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches” (vs 11-12).

Then we have a little pity-party. Have you ever had a pity-party? You know what a pity-party is? *Boo-hoo, woe is me!* God is not fair! Yes, get out the violin and sort of play the sad song. When you have a pity-party God is going to hold you accountable for it, sooner or later.

Verse 13: “Surely I have made my heart pure in vain and washed my hands in innocence, for all the day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning.... [I just can't seem to get away from it] ...If I say, ‘I will speak thus’; behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. When I thought to understand this, it was too painful for me” (vs 13-16).

You look at the iniquities of the world and everything like that. That's why God has us, in our prayers, start out, ‘Our Father Who is in heaven.’ We look up; we don't look down. We don't compare

ourselves with other people. Now, there is a way out of a pity-party. Here Asaph, who took care of the Ark in David's house where he had that little tent. He was complaining, but God led him to his senses.

Verse 17: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God..." [That's right into where the Ark of the Covenant was. Likewise with us. You can get over your pity-party by really praying to God in a right way because you have access to God the Father in heaven above and into the sanctuary in heaven above, don't you? Then God gives understanding.] ...then I understood their end."

Now let's do a little scenario with this great, huge, \$500-million yacht. And here you have all of your corrupt friends with you. All of your drinking and sex parties and everything that you will have out there on this—actually, it's more like a ship than a yacht. What are you going to do if you get in a storm and it sinks? *Everything's gone!* What are you going to do if you are the victim of an assassination because someone wants your money and they've planted a bomb on that, and when you get out into a certain location in the depths of the ocean? *Ka-Pooey! It's gone!* Just think of it that way. Understand their end! Understand your end! Your end is *the resurrection and eternal life*—compared to their end when you tie that in with Luke 15 and Lazarus and the rich man. What happened to the rich man? *He rejected God because of his wealth*—and he was facing the Lake of Fire—correct? *Yes!* So, look at the end. Never consider what the beginning may be or the present state may be.

Verse 18: "Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down into destruction. How have they been brought into desolation, as in a moment!!...." (vs 18-19). I want you to think about this.

How is it going to feel when you are resurrected and you're on your way up to the Sea of Glass; and you get there on the Sea of Glass; all the events that take place and God says, 'All right, now is the time for My vengeance; now is the time for the destruction of Babylon the Great'—and we're all going to witness it before we come back to the earth. Think of all the wealth, all the riches. You go back and read that in Rev. 18 and Jer. 50 & 51—everything that they had is going to be gone!

- God is going to give us the true riches
- God is going to give us eternal life
- God is going to give us a new name
- God is going to give us a crown of righteousness

"...they are utterly consumed with terrors" (vs 19). Note Rev. 16.

Here's where he came to his senses, v 20: "Like a dream when one awakens; so, O LORD, when You awake, You shall despise their image, for thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins" (vs 20-21). God led him to repentance—right? What do you do when you have a bad attitude? *Go to God and say, 'God, I have a bad attitude, help me to overcome it.'* **Take it to God in prayer.** Don't wait till you get over your bad attitude. What guarantee are you going to have that you're going to get over your bad attitude on your own. You got into a bad attitude on your own, what makes you think you're going to overcome it on your own. Well, you may in degree, but this is what happened to Asaph.

Verse 22: "So foolish was I, and ignorant... [because of thinking like this]: ...I was like a beast before You" (vs 20-22). He came to his senses.

And one of the very important things in prayer that we need to understand is that we understand how great God is—not only what He's going to do for us, but also the more that we understand the vileness of our own nature and our own motives and our own thoughts without the Spirit of God to lead us, then we understand how terrible we really are as human beings. Now, some people get discouraged in that. **Don't!** It's God helping you overcome it.

Verse 23: "Nevertheless, I am always with You... [He understood] ...You have held me by my right hand. You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.... [always consider the end] ...Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You...." (vs 23-25). So, you see what happens when repentance comes. You see how the whole heart and mind and attitude is changed. That's what we need to accomplish in prayer, brethren. That's the thing!

Verse 26: "My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever, for lo, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all who go a whoring from You. And me, it is good ... [here's the final analysis: any trial, any difficulty, any bad attitude, anything that comes along that brings you back to God] ... to **draw near to God**; I have made the LORD God my refuge, that I may declare all Your works. (vs 26-28). That's quite a thing—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Now let's look at something else that's important for us to realize. Let's come to Psalm 66, since we're here in the Psalms—and this is one, when I was doing the editing and also having in mind the sermon, that just jumped out at me and helped me to understand even more. Let's tie that in with what we just covered there in Psa. 73.

Psalm 66:16: “Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue” (vs 16-17). Keeping his mind on God.

Verse 18 is the key thing: “**If I regard iniquity in my heart...**” In other words, if you’re seeking your own will rather than the will of God; or if you have iniquity in your heart and you are paying attention to that and then are yielding to lust, it’s going to bring forth and conceive sin, and so forth.

“...**the Lord will not hear me...**” (v 18). Isn’t that something?

We’ll see how this came about with Job. We won’t have time to get into that today. But isn’t that very meaningful? A perfect example of that is Cain—right? You’re going to see that we refer a lot to Cain because if you regard iniquity in your heart—and really what you want is your own way—and you’re asking God to give His stamp of approval to you in what you’re doing and thinking, God isn’t going to hear you. He’ll let you fall to your own devices for a while. I thought that that was really something.

Verse 18: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me; surely God has heard; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His steadfast love from me” (vs 18-20). If you love God and do the things the way that God wants them done, **He will hear your prayers.**

Let’s see how we can overcome this by having confidence and the power of God’s Spirit to do so. Here’s how we are to come before God:

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful...” That’s really a fantastic thing to understand. There is no other book in the world that you can read and study, which will convict you of sin.

“...and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart” (v 12). This is why prayer is very important; why we come to God on His terms, not ours. Why we repent to Him and He not to us.

Verse 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having therefore a great High Priest...” (vs 13-14). This is not to scare you away; this is not to turn you from God, but this is to **draw you to God.**

“...*Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin. Therefore... [here’s the conclusion of it] ...we should **come with boldness** to the throne of grace... [confidence, understanding, faith, love, hope, boldness] ...**so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need**” (vs 14-16). So, if you have a pity-party, go to God and He’ll take care of it for you.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural references:

- 1) Matthew 6:9-10
- 2) Colossians 1:11-13
- 3) Philippians 3:20-21
- 4) Matthew 6:10-13
- 5) James 1:1-4
- 6) Matthew 5:48
- 7) James 1:5-18
- 8) Luke 4:9-12
- 9) 1 Peter 1:1-9
- 10) Exodus 17:1-3
- 11) Malachi 3:13-15
- 12) Psalm 73:1-28
- 13) Psalm 66:16-20
- 14) Hebrews 4:12-16

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 11
- Genesis 4
- Matthew 13
- Mark 4
- Deuteronomy 30
- Genesis 22
- Revelation 18
- Jeremiah 50, 51
- Revelation 16

Also referenced: Sermon Series:  
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## Keys to Answered Prayer XII Rescue Us from the Evil One

Fred R. Coulter

We will finish up with a comparison between Matthew six and some of the prayers in the Psalms—and you will see that they follow right along with the outline that Jesus gave concerning *how to pray*. Let's come to Matthew 6 again, as that is the base. What this also does is it also helps us to understand how we can take parts of the Bible and expand it with putting 'line upon line; here a little, there a little; precept upon precept,' so that we get the full picture. And obviously it's going to have to be: What is your initiative? What is your relationship with God? It has to get down to that. How do you apply yourself? This is very important for us to consider. I want you to just look at the news. Look at all the problems that are happening in different places in the world, and ask yourself: How much of an opportunity do these people have to pray and to study? If you're hit by a hurricane everything is gone. The most you can pray is 'God, save me.' And if you're hit by a tornado and your house is torn up, everything you have is gone!

If we don't really use the time that God has given us—with the peace that we have—and really grow in grace and knowledge and develop our relationship with God through prayer and study, what's going to happen when difficulties come upon *us*, and we don't have the opportunity? I think about that all the time when I'm waking up, getting up in the morning, and I'm thankful that everything is fine. Our house is here, nothing has happened, no thieves, no robbers, no riots in the street, no soldiers marching up and down the streets. And I think, boy! I need to take every day and make it the maximum possible that we can do. And I think likewise with prayer.

We can give all the keys to answered prayer, but unless it becomes a part of your Christian walk and relationship with God and fellowship with God, on a regular and increasingly deeper basis, then what are we going to do when the tough times really get here? A tough time for us is like the electricity goes off; or we're stuck for two hours in a traffic jam.

I remember one time we were going home and the whole freeway is stopped because there's been a bank robbery. What the robbers did was take the money and throw it out the car, scatter it all over the freeway. So here the highway patrol comes and they shut down the freeway—thousands of cars go on this freeway, 680 South down near San Jose. And it's shut down and you get into this stall on the freeway. I'm sitting there thinking, what would

happen if there was a real disaster and everybody's trying to escape. Well, no one's going to escape because you're all going to be parked on the freeway. After a while it gets real irritating. Well, how long is this going to take? Others ahead of us are stopped in the cars, so they get out of their cars and they look up and try to see where the end of it is. You get some idea of how it is; and we were stuck for two hours! Look upon that and say, 'Man, that was a tough deal!' Well, no, that wasn't a tough deal. Compare that with how some brethren, such as those over in Ethiopia and some of those in other parts of Africa, who are assaulted by hateful people that come in to kill them while they're having Sabbath services.

Then I think about what do we need to do? How do we need to use the time? God is harvesting a lot of brethren, and like one man said, wherever he goes he sees a lot of senior citizens—and he's one of them and I'm one of them. We have seen God call a lot to the end. He will be calling a lot more to the end. We don't know how long we have. We don't know any of these things. We can look and see the things that are happening and to us it looks really, really bad, but we really have no comparison as to how bad is *bad*—especially when you look at the fly-over of the ruins of the cities of Germany when WWII ended. There was hardly a building that you could even live in. The roofs were gone; there were parts where all the bricks were down. The street was full of debris and everything like that. And they had to start from scratch.

I was thinking on this, especially in relationship to this. We need to conclude thoroughly, that we've all been Laodiceans from day one! And what we need to do is be repenting every day and be zealous every day because that's what God requires of us. And you can think about things that come along suddenly. When I was having breakfast there at the motel I saw this report where there was this little college and they had a baseball team—it was down in Georgia and I think it was a little town of 4200—and here the bus is going along. They don't know what happened, there are no skid marks, but what happened, the bus went right off the freeway, off an overpass, smashed down on the street below and killed four of the ball players. And you look at that and you think: Whew!

- how quick things can go
- how fragile that we really are
- how much we need God

- How much all the things that we need to fight and work against in this world

Matthew 6:13: “And lead us not into temptation, but **rescue us from the evil one**...” We are living in a time now where we need *deliverance from the evil one!* ‘Rescue’ part of the whole mission of Christ.

Let’s come here to Luke 4—here’s the statement Christ gave on preaching the Gospel after He was tempted by Satan the devil. And you can just put in your notes there: Luke 4 and Matt. 4—temptation of Christ by Satan and go ahead and study that.

Let’s understand something that’s important: One of the most important days in our relationship with God is the weekly Sabbath—and you add to that the Passover and the Holy Days. Because God has designed it this way: the Sabbath Day **God will respond to you how you respond to Him!** If you, through prayer and study, and really keeping the Sabbath day, draw close to God and use it as a day for being instructed in the University of Eternal Life. Because that’s what it is. Then the Sabbath Day will become much more full, much more meaningful, because **God is doing a spiritual work**, which He does on the Sabbath Day with each one of us. So the Sabbath day becomes a very important day in drawing close to God; a very important day of stepping out of the world.

Luke 4:16: “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. And there was given Him *the book of the prophet Isaiah*; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written... [here’s the whole mission statement of Christ and the Church]: ...‘*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me...*’ (vs 16-18).

God puts His spiritual presence in every Sabbath—doesn’t He? We are to be led by the Holy Spirit of God. Praying becomes an exercise of the Spirit of God in you, going back to God and the Spirit of God coming to us. That’s why it says in Rom. 1:1 that ‘the just shall live by faith’—**from faith to faith**—our faith to God, God’s faith to us. And we need to live that way. So the Sabbath Day becomes very, very important.

“...for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to *the poor*...” (v 18). Everyone who has the Spirit of God has been anointed with the Spirit of God and the begetting of the Spirit of God and we all have a part in doing this in preaching the Gospel to the poor. That doesn’t mean just the ones who are physically poor. It does include those, but those who are poor spiritually, as well, because He

names them.

“...He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted... [that’s in every generation] ...to proclaim pardon to *the captives* and recovery of sight to *the blind*... [more spiritually than it is physically] ...to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed” (v 18).

We need to be delivered and rescued from Satan the devil. Who is the one who does the crushing? *Human beings who are instrumentalities of Satan the devil and Satan himself!* We are living in an age now that is so fraught with lies and deceit and people deceiving and being deceived even more and more and more.

A lot of people don’t understand that when things like sensational things on television—whenever the news is concentrating on some sensational thing of some great sinner in this world who’s notorious for their behavior—*Satan is working behind the scene on other things*, because he’s always there.

We are going to see an increase in satanic activity that is going to lead to absolutely terrible and horrific times. Like one minister just recently read: ‘prophecies are speeding up.’ No, they don’t speed up, they’re right on time. He says they’re speeding up so he can receive more money from the brethren. I think for ten years we experienced it being said that ‘we’re in the gun lap.’ We’re 30 years removed from that. So I tell you, if that’s the gun-lap, I’d be exhausted!

“...to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed... [and especially in this generation] ...to proclaim *the acceptable year of the Lord*” (vs 18-19). The acceptable year or time of the Lord is anytime that God makes known His will to you.

Colossian 1:9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

When you have a good prayerful relationship with God and you’re studying and praying and you use the Sabbath to the benefit of spiritual growth, then God will fill you with the knowledge of His will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This is exactly the desire that God wants us to have and will do for us, especially in a time when there’s relative peace as we have it now.

Verse 10: “That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” Even though we still look through a glass darkly, we

see it more clearly than they did 30 years ago, 40 years ago, 100 years ago, 200, 500 years ago, because God promised He would reveal and give understanding of these things in the end-time.

Here's what prayer is going to do, v 11: "Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory..." He's given you of His Holy Spirit and in that sense you share in the glory of God—that little bit, whatever the Holy Spirit of God that is in you.

...unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (vs 11-12). That's why the prayer starts out and it ends up: 'Your kingdom come'—it begins; and it ends up: 'Yours is the power and the kingdom and glory.'

If we keep focused on what the inheritance really is, that we don't belong to a church corporation, we belong to the body of Christ; and that we have not been called to be good citizens, necessarily, in this world—of course, we are. But if you're just a good citizen in the world, you can be carnal as the day is long and know nothing about God. But *we've been called to the greatest inheritance that there is: Eternal life in power and glory in the first resurrection and we'll be in that special firstfruits category for all eternity!* That's why when you look and see if there's anything you need to give up or leave behind, don't worry about it, walk away from it.

Verse 13: "Who has **personally** rescued us... [*personally* is there because that's a middle voice verb; that God Himself] ...has personally rescued us from the power of darkness..." Remember what Jesus said, 'to open the eyes of the blind.' Well, if you're blinded by darkness you can't see.

"...and has transferred *us* unto..." (v 13). We're not 'into' the Kingdom of God, because 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' *Translated* gives the impression—as it is in the *King James*: 'into'—that somehow you've been swooped up and brought to heaven. But it doesn't mean that.

...transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love" (v 13). *God has full authority in your life* always—and it's still true, whether people believe it or not—every life, everywhere in the world, whether for blessing or whether for cursing; whether for life or whether for death. No one can get away from God! No one is free from God!

- *If you're living in sin*, you're under curses.
- *If you're living according to the laws of God in the letter of the law*, you have

certain physical blessings because God promised that; not because of any good thing on your part.

- *If you have the Spirit of God, and you're under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God*, you have been called to grow in grace and knowledge and to let God qualify you for eternal life. And there can't be anything greater than that.

But the **great enemy** is—and there are enemies out there—Satan the devil! The great enemy wants to derail God's plan.

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." When you're watching the news I want you to think about that.

2-Timothy 3:13: "But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, deceiving *others* and being deceived *themselves*."

Take those two Scriptures and just watch the news, and you will see it in action. This world is being set up for the greatest deception the world has ever known. It sounds like watching the daily affairs in Congress—doesn't it? *Deceiving others and being deceived themselves!* When you give yourself over to lies and you believe lies and you live lies—just exactly like this whole global warming thing is. That's a lie to enslave the whole world under the authority of a world government.

Sidebar: The same equivalent rate that the temperature has gone up on the earth, it has gone the same way on Mars and there is no human life, there's no CO<sub>2</sub>. The Mars rovers are the only vehicles that are up there. And how could those two little things cause the temperature of Mars go up the equivalent that it is on the earth? I've got the material at home that I need to study up on, but the sun is doing it because there is an increase in sun activity and sunspots. When the sun gets hotter, the earth gets warmer.

Only stands to reason—right? And there are also things coming from outer space. And what the scientists are pretending to do is be God! How can you predict the temperature a hundred years ahead of time when you can't even be accurate from day-to-day on the weather in the local area?

So, don't believe one thing about this global warming. That's one of the great deceptions coming! Satan is deceiving the whole world, and this is one of the devices that he uses.

One of the things you need to do is **know the**

**enemy.** You need to understand that. Just like Patton, one of his favorite sayings was when he entrapped Rommel, he said: ‘You blank-blank, I read your book!’ So, the way you know the enemy is read God’s book, because He describes him more accurately than anything else in the world.

One of the devices that Satan uses, which you hear on the news every day is this: *every problem is a crisis!* And crisis strikes fear into the hearts of people, which means that they’re willing to give up more liberty and freedom, and they’re willing to let someone rescue them—when actually they’re running into the grasp of Satan the devil.

Now, there are some things that are crises. If you have a hurricane go through your town, *that is a crisis!* But these are politically devised things to get more and more control of people. I also need to give another sermon on immigration and the combining of Canada, United States and Mexico. What they need to do is lie about the border patrolmen and put them in jail, letting the crooks sue from Mexico and confiscate American property. One rancher lost an \$800,000 ranch to a drug dealer who sued in Mexico. What you see with Satan’s way is everything upside down.

Please understand: *the only One Who can solve it is Christ!* You can try and straighten things out politically all you want, but what is the most important thing that the Day of Atonement teaches us? *The Day of Atonement teaches us that as long as Satan is around and not removed there will be continually sin*—which means this: any political or movement that people will do, will, at best, have a temporary affect, because unless you remove the author of sin you’re never going to get rid of sin. That’s why we need to be rescued from Satan the devil. That’s why the Sabbath is so important.

Take the Sabbath, and use the Sabbath like this day has a great canopy over it that the world can’t see, and that canopy covers your life, and it puts you in a special relationship with God. Or you can say that the Sabbath Day is a day like you are invited into the tabernacle of God, where He will teach you *His ways*. And with that canopy of protection, then you also ask God to protect you during the week, so that Satan doesn’t come along, deceive you, manipulate you, stir up your life, stir up emotions, and stir up other people against you and things like that, because that’s what he is there for—and Satan uses his ways, plus people, to do what he wants to do.

We need to let God identify the enemy and how he works, 2-Corinthians 4:1. “Therefore, having this ministry...”—which is what all the elders in the Church of God are to do. And if the ministry of God does not teach the people of God, but allows them to

be captured by Satan the devil, deceived through false doctrines and things like this, God’s judgment is going to be upon them very severely!

“...according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain...” (vs 1-2). That’s what the Sabbath and prayer and relationship with God is: to denounce the hidden things of dishonesty, deceit, carnal nature, pride, vanity, and all of those things. Here it is ‘dishonest gain, physical gain, to try and get things from people.

“...not walking in *cunning* craftiness...” (v 2). You don’t have a political agenda, you don’t have something secretly hid in the depths of your understanding that you’re going to spring on everybody.

...nor handling the Word of God deceitfully...” (v 2). That’s an interesting statement—isn’t it? Because you can take the Word of God, which is the Truth, and if you handle it deceitfully and wrongly put it together—guess what? *You’re not using the Truth properly.*

Just like a combination to a safe, if you don’t have the right combination it isn’t going to open. So, if you have the wrong one—you can take even the Bible—just like the Protestants and the Catholics: the Protestants say, ‘Well, the law is done away.’ Then they narrow it down to ‘just believe’—and they read a Scripture here, read a Scripture there, and hey, that’s the whole thing they have with their religion. Or the Catholics say, ‘Well, we have a greater revelation, which was given to us, so therefore, we can do all the things that we do; we can worship idols, pray to saints. We can have the Eucharist, we can believe all these myths and lies because God’s given it to us to do so.’

*They handled the Word of God deceitfully!* Next time you see something that is put out by the Catholics or the Protestants, examine it and you will see that many times, just like Satan did, they quote the Scripture correctly and come to a wrong conclusion. I will have to say this: one caveat: there are some Protestant organizations which specialize in helping people Biblically overcome problems in life—and they do an excellent job in that. They’re able to help a lot of people. However, that’s only straightening out their lives in the world, because if you can help straighten out your life in the world, that’s better than having a messed up life in the world. But, they can only go so far because they don’t keep the Sabbath, they don’t keep the Holy Days, and so forth.

“...but by manifestation of the Truth...” (v 2). That’s the thing we need to use all the time.

- the Word of God
- Truth
- the Spirit of Truth

“...we are commending ourselves to every man’s conscience before God” (v 2). In other words, every single thing that a minister or elder or teacher does must be based on the Truth of God. And *woe* be to the one who twists and turns the Word of God.

Verse 3: “But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe...” (vs 3-4). Belief is not just a one-time belief. Belief is an on-going, growing belief through faith. Because if you believe part of the Truth and the rest error, what do you have? *You have non-truth!* It appears good because there’s part Truth. It would be like eating organic bread that has been prepared with arsenic in it. All the organic material in there doesn’t do you any good, because the arsenic is going to get you. So, it has to be the whole Truth, the Truth and nothing but the Truth.

If it’s hidden, “...it is hidden to those who are perishing; In whom the god of this world... [Satan the devil] ...has blinded the minds of those who do not believe lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them” (vs 3-4).

- God is the One Who has to illuminate you
- God is the One Who has to open your mind
- God is the One Who has to give you light

And what is light? *You can do a study in the Bible on light—light and lamp. ‘You’re Word is a lamp to my feet’—etc. Christ is ‘the Light of the world,’* and so forth.

Verse 5: “For we do not preach our own selves...” Very interesting. For you in the Church all you did was hear about a single man who was the big, exalted mucky-muck, the only one in the world. And how different was he from the pope? *Virtually not!* You don’t preach yourselves, because if you preach yourself, you’re preaching vanity, lust and greed; that’s what human nature is—right? If we do anything it’s because God has given us the ability, opened the door, made it possible to do it. Why should we take any credit about it?

It’s just like Paul. Paul didn’t say, ‘I’m going to be humble.’ God made him humble in his life, which has to happen in our lives. And being humble is something that is an expression of your relationship with God. You don’t have to think: ‘Well, I need to be humble.’ And then, if you put it on, and act humble, then you become what is called in the world, *a sycophant*. God doesn’t want that. He wants true

humility, which is not centering on self.

Verse 5: “For we do not preach our own selves, but Christ Jesus *the* Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake because *it is* God Who commanded *the* light to shine out of darkness, Who shined into our hearts *the* light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the* face of Jesus Christ” (vs 5-6). That’s how it’s done.

Let’s notice a little something else here, because I think it shows what Paul went through. And I’m convinced of this: God put all the apostles through very trying and difficult lives so that they would totally rely on the power of Christ. And that’s what they were destined to write, like Paul has written—and all the other apostles—entirely the words of God, because God knew that 2,000 years down the road these words, combined with the Spirit of God, have to have an impact upon us today. So, they went through things that none of us have gone through—and for a very special purpose.

Verse 7: “Now we have this treasure in earthen vessels...” That is our bodies. And the treasure is *the Spirit of God, the knowledge of God, the Truth of God, etc.*

“...in order that the supremacy of the power may be of God, and not from us. On every *side we are* hard pressed, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in *our* bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (vs 7-10)—the whole purpose. Notice the dedication that Paul had, because God gave him that resolve. God gave him His Spirit to do this.

Verse 11: “For those of us who are living are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

Now let’s carry this a little further and see how these things work. Let’s see where Satan the devil is called ‘the prince of the power of the air.’ We know this and we’ve heard this, and these Scriptures we have used over and over again, but let’s also remember today we are facing the greatest onslaught of the power that Satan has as ‘the prince of the power of the air’ than ever before.

A hundred years ago, of you wanted to get away from everyone, you could go find some place and go get away, and no one would bother you. Today you can’t. It’s in the air everywhere; it doesn’t matter where you are. You’re driving in your car, and you even have the radio off, all the radio waves are coming in to you—television waves, micro-telephone waves, all of those things are

coming, plus the thoughts that Satan sends in addition to it. But you just think about all of the electronic means that Satan has to keep people captured. Especially with radio and music and now they have the iPod plug-in.

You get on the freeway at four in the afternoon and you're going slow because right here on Hwy 80 the traffic all bunches up. So, I'm driving along and here comes this car up alongside me and I hear this noise: BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! You've had that in your neighborhood. Some car goes through and the whole house is vibrating because he has the extra base. Well, think what that is doing to the individual.

That's exactly what Satan wants. Satan wants everything that he has out there, including all of his thoughts to penetrate every cell of your being. And that's why rock music is so awful and rap music and MTV and M-radio and everything. Anyway, I'm driving along and I hear the BOOM! BOOM! and here this guy's in the car next to me and he's driving and he's sitting there and his head looks like a screwy top that is spinning and wobbling back and forth and ready to fall down. He's driving along like this and I'm thinking: man, does he not concentrate on the highway? Indeed, he doesn't have a thought as to what he's doing. BOOM! BOOM! and I thought: what an empty-headed thing for people to get into. But that's the way that people are.

Ask yourself: How much of the time does Satan occupy your mind? Look at the people in the world; they can't go without music. They have it in their cars, they have it at home; you go to the department stores, they've got it in the halls as you walk down the mall; they've got it in every department store. You go to certain sections and it's for young people so they've got rap music and rock music so that people can get in there and through this they know that they can market them and get them to sell more. Satan is occupying their minds, and they don't know it!

Here it aptly describes 'the prince of the power of the air,' Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins... [We've been called out of that.] ...in which you walked in times past..." (vs 1-2). We're not to walk that way.

The problem with Laodiceans is this: they have one foot in the world and one foot in the Church and they think they're close enough to God, so in time of trouble they can go to Him. Yet, they're close enough to the world so they can get along with the world. Yes, we're to get along in the world that we don't cause offense, that is true. But, 'he who is a friend of the world is an enemy of

God,' as James wrote.

"...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air... [who is *the god of this world*] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (v 2).

I wonder what would have happened if that fellow, driving past me.... and we went side-by-side for quite a while because the traffic was really slow; and so he was really into it with the music; and he was moving his head back and forth at least a foot, and his shoulders were moving and his whole body was going. And I thought, I wondered if there was a highway patrol that would come along unmarked, whether he would be pulled over for reckless driving or not. Because how could you have your mind on what you're doing? I mean, if you're in close traffic like that you've really got to watch what's going on, you can't be distracted.

"...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (v 2). That's what you see.

What would happen if you took someone like that, for example, and said: 'What's occupying your mind?' *Man, this music is great!*

- Is he blinded?
- Is he given over to it?
- Is his life the way it is, captured by Satan the devil?

*Yes, indeed!*

(go to the next track)

**Prayer** is so fundamentally important, because it is the essence of our spiritual lives. That is the power and key of our spiritual lives—**then comes study**. Study without a prayer relationship with God on a daily basis, and what you do all the time, study then can become where people get *vain in their knowledge*, rather than humbled with the knowledge of God. **So, prayer is the key!**

- What occupies your mind?  
you'll have to sit down and think:
  - ✓radio
  - ✓television
  - ✓worry
  - ✓problems
  - ✓difficulties
- What occupies your mind?

You have to take all your problems and all your difficulties and take them to God. Now, there is a proper kind of concern, which you might say that you're worried. There is an *obsessive* concern where you try and carry the burden yourself, rather than put it on God. And what happens then, you become obsessed with whatever the problem is; and that modulates or downgrades your relationship with

God because you're not putting the burden upon Christ. Jesus said, 'Come to Me. Cast your cares upon Me, for My burden is easy and My yoke is light.' Cast it all on God!

Don't become occupied in an emotional thing in your life so much—now, I know that there are those who lose husbands and wives and there are those who lose their sons and daughters—and you love them very much and you're very attached to them. If they've died in the faith, *rejoice!* Be thankful! Yes, you're going to be lonely. Yes, there's a vacuum that needs to be filled. Let that be filled with the Spirit of God. But don't let the emotions of anything drag you down and keep you away from God. You need to go to God to have the strength to be able to carry through with your particular situations.

And lots of times you enter into a thing in your life that it's like walking 'through the valley of the shadow of death.' And remember, there's light at the other end if you're following God. So, always keep that in mind, but don't let things occupy your mind.

Ephesians 2:2: "...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct... [here is how Satan appeals]: ...in the lusts of our flesh... [We all have lust of the flesh—don't we? Various kinds of lusts.] ...doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*" (vs 2-3).

Let's analyze this a little bit and let's see how Satan appeals to lust. He never comes along and says, 'Hey guy or hey gal, this is evil.' He comes along and says, 'This is good. Try it, you'll like it. You'll benefit from it.' Now remember this: ***yielding to sin and a temptation of the devil is a message from the devil that you will get a benefit from sinning when he knows you'll get a curse***—because you're deceived.

Since the world is obsessed with sex and is perhaps one of the greatest lust things that takes place in the human mind and human flesh—male and female—let's just state this: the ecstasy of sex is the same mechanically, whether legitimate or illegitimate. And once people get hooked on illicit sex they think it's great, and it's of a benefit to them. Then they get hooked. And look at the world today, it's given over to all kinds of illicit sex everywhere. Adultery is commonplace.

You see this on television all the time, they're after these sexual predators. How on earth can they go after sexual predators when, beginning in kindergarten, they start preparing the kids for

sexual activity as soon as they are able? How can you go against pedophiles when that's taught in schools? Satan knows that if your mind is preoccupied with sex, and it's everywhere. You can't even watch an innocent ad anymore without some kind of sexual overtone. You can't even watch what is supposedly the best news channel by their own proclamation—Fox News Network—without seeing some kind of pornography on there in just reporting the daily events. Everything is so influenced with sex, because Satan knows if he has your mind fixed on sex *he's got you!* And that's how he destroys every empire.

And remember, as we have studied before in Lev. 19, it says, 'do not prostitute your daughters lest the land be filled with violence,' and how that women are the key to morality in any society. Just look what we have today: women are the sexual aggressors, more than men. Things willed by the flesh, willed by the mind. Then it talks about being saved from that. Satan always starts out with:

- it looks good
- it's a benefit
- it's pleasurable

I mean, you can go clear back and plug all of this in to Gen. 3—can't you?

Another way that he enters in is it's funny, humorous, and that's the whole stuff on which cartoons are built for kids. Or it's thrilling, daredevil, excitement—or when you get to a certain point, some people get to a certain point, they are captivated and captured by evil. And they *must* be evil to the worst degree possible. Whence comes serial killers, serial sexual predators, and then they give themselves over to evil. Who is this man up in Washington, in order to save his own life—now think on this! He didn't want to die. He was called the 'Green River killer,' I think it was. He said, 'Ok, if you let me live I'll confess to every one and show you where I did every one.' So, he did. They become obsessed and give themselves over to it. And he could not go through life any longer without experiencing killing someone. So, he said, 'If you release me, I'll do it again'; because something happens to the mind. They're so captivated by Satan the devil.

Let's also understand that Satan uses other people. Or you could put it this way, 'partners in sin'—how many ever are involved—and here's what he appeals to. Now it says, 'the things willed...by the mind.' And what is the driving will of a carnal mind? *Deceit!* The human heart 'is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked' (Jer. 17:9)—right? So, it's very easy.

- bring something funny

- bring something where there's gain
- bring something where it's an advantage to you
- bring something where you can get rich without working

—just buy these lotto tickets; or go to the horse races; or go to the casino; or go online. Satan knows he's going to give you some winnings so you think, 'Oh boy, this is great!' But it's all rigged to take it from you. So, *he appeals to the deceitfulness of the heart!*

The reason we're going through all of these things is so that you can be on guard, because *keys to answered prayer* are not just certain little things that you do. What you find it is, *it's a whole program of living God's way and overcoming human nature and overcoming Satan.* You need to overcome:

1. sin
2. self
3. society
4. Satan

You can look at it as the double Gestapo. Instead of the SS this is the SS-SS—double skull and crossbones and the end is death! And you can also add to it—we could probably develop more Ds, but let's just start with two of them: *deceit* and *death*.

Psalm 120:1: "In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and He answered me." ***We need to be rescued from Satan!*** That's the whole thing that in play.

Verse 2: "**Deliver my soul...**" We ask God to deliver us or **rescue us from Satan the devil** and he's not the only enemy. All of those that serve Satan are also the enemy though they may not be after you at this particular time. "Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue." Why? *Because that's the first step into sinning!* And Satan wants you to believe lies.

Verse 3: "What shall be given to you? Or what shall be done to you, O deceitful tongue?" You can tie that in with James 2—"with our tongue we bless God!"—get up off our knees, turn around and curse those who are made in the image of God. Because you can't have, coming out of the same fountain, blessing and cursing. You can't have sweet water and salt water. But that's what you would say is the schizophrenia of human nature: trying to be deceitful and expect the blessings of God. So, here he's learned the lesson.

Verse 4: Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of the broom tree! Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech ..." (vs 4-5). So then, it gets to other places there.

Part of our daily prayer has to be, and maybe many times during the day:

- deliver us
- help us
- be with us
- guide us
- God, lift us out of the troubles and difficulties
- give us understanding, give us discernment
- give me Your Spirit

Proverbs 27:5: "Open rebuke *is* better than secret love." This is why people don't like what they would consider the nasty parts of the Bible, because it corrects them. They don't want to be corrected, because after all, 'I'm a good person.' Let's look at what happened with Judas Iscariot, and to prove the point God knew what was going to happen with Judas Iscariot. And what did Jesus say to him and he was really an enemy when he came and kissed him. He said, 'Friend, are you betraying me with a kiss?' "**Open rebuke is better than secret love.**" Let God's Word have its correction with you and in you. And when you're praying, ask God to open your mind so you can be corrected with God's Spirit; be corrected with God's Word. Because who is your greatest friend? *Christ!*

Verse 6: "Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend... [Who's going to tell you the truth even though it hurts?] ...but... [here's the way Satan works]: ...the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful." ***Don't believe all the flatteries.*** If someone comes along with a flattering tongue, ***beware!***

Now let's look at some other Scriptures here. Let's come to Psalm 50, and let's see how the workings of Satan and evil men, see how they work, because Satan has his servants. Satan has people dedicated to his causes. And remember: the causes look good, there's a benefit, it's pleasurable, or it's funny, or it's thrilling, or you get captivated by evil.

Psalm 50:15: "And call upon Me in the day of trouble... [call upon God] ...and I will deliver you... [that's what we're talking about: *being delivered and rescued from Satan*] ...and you shall honor Me.' But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to declare My statutes, and to take up My covenant in your mouth? Yea, you hate to be taught, and you cast My words behind you'" (vs 15-17).

Every Protestant ought to read that and think about that very deeply. And everyone who judges God and casts away most of the Bible, ought to read that. Why do you even mention God's name? Now, they may appear righteous, just like it says there in 2-Cor. 10: that Satan 'appears as an angel of light'—

and so do his ministers. He's got ministers, people working for him, not just his ministers in theology. Wherever there's an official carrying out Satan's will; they're a minister of Satan the devil.

Verse 18: "When you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him..." That's why they have to run news stories when anyone is honest enough—like there was one man several years ago who found a bag of \$30 or \$40-thousand that fell out of an armored car and no one was there and he picked it up—and no one would be able to trace it—and he turned it in. And he got scathed by how many people for being honest!

"When you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him, and you have taken part with adulterers" (v 18).

Let's just stop here for a minute and compare the Sabbath of the righteous and the sabbath of the wicked. The Sabbath of the righteous begins *at sundown Friday!* What do you do?

- that's Holy time
- you begin observing the Sabbath
- maybe you study, maybe have a special meal
- maybe you have a special prayer

But what are the wicked doing? I thought of that when I gassed up my car yesterday Here's a guy out there, vacuuming his car, getting it all ready, and the music is going—the whole gas station was vibrating because he had to hear his music. They want it to go through them. They don't want to hear it. They want to *feel* it. And what was his mind on? *Fixing up his car for a Friday night date!*

Satan's sabbath of sin equates with the **true Sabbath of God**—doesn't it? All the Friday night activities: dances, parties, drugs, sex activity. Then what do you have on Saturday: sports, sports, sports, sports, and more sports and sports, movies, and you have games and you have all of these things. You have 'sales' so that people can go out and get their sales on Saturday.

Satan's sabbath is *to destroy the knowledge of the true Sabbath*. 'Well, we'll take Sunday off,' at least for 20 minutes for the drive-in golfers. Anyone who proclaims that they keep Sunday is an absolute liar because you cannot keep Sunday as the Sabbath, because Sunday is not the Sabbath and Sunday is used as a day for their own activities, their own thoughts, their own interpretation of the Bible—if they are religious—or consumed with sports.

You do this the next time you watch a little basketball or whatever college activity, and you

watch all of these students. I don't know how they do it. All through the whole game they go *whoooooo, whoooa, woooooe*. Or if you watch a famous team like Duke, they go: duke, duke, duke, duke all during it. And students there are all razzed up with the music, with the energy, with everything that is there; their team is winning, and they're all painted in this blue and white for Duke. I'm just using that because I saw part of that the other night. And the students are *absorbed* in this. That's also part of Satan's sabbath—isn't it? Friday nights? That's when it's on!

Now think about this for a minute: Could you, in your wildest imaginations, think that you could even reach these people by saying, 'Don't you know you're breaking the Sabbath and you are sinning?' And they would say, 'How could that be when I'm having so much fun!' captive by Satan the devil.

Verse 19: "You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit; you speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I have kept silence... [God hasn't corrected them, yet] ...you thought that I was like yourself, but I will rebuke you... [the day of correction is coming] ...and set them in order before your eyes. Now, consider this, you who forget God... [think long and hard on this] ...lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver..." (vs 19-22).

And the ultimate of that is going to be *the Great Tribulation!*—right? *Yes!* So, because it doesn't look like God is judging yet, **do not be deceived**. The 'day of judgment' is coming. And yes, the 'day of judgment' is now, because their very activities that they are doing in defiance against God is their judgment against them—whether they know God or not, because no one is free from God at any time. You either have the blessing of God or the cursings of God. No one can get rid of God. Even the atheists. They say, 'Well, I don't believe in God.' You're suffering from the penalty of it because your mind is stupid, though you think you're—you have no understanding at all—just because there's no correction.

Verse 22: "Now, consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

It's good to study the Psalms, because David was a man after God's heart. This gives you, and with the Spirit of God, helps you understand the heart that we need to have as converted people; the attitude that we need to have as converted people. Sometimes you'll feel like this in the trouble that you're in:

Psalm 10:1 “Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?... [and sometimes it seems like God does; but He’s always there] ...The wicked in his pride pursues the poor; let them be taken in the schemes that they have imagined” (vs 1-2). In other words, this is always true: every evil person is caught in his own trap. Never fails! You can apply that to anything. From the top corporate businessmen in the world down to the lowest—what you might say—beggar on the street. They’re always caught in their own judgment.

Verse 3: “For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire, and blesses the covetous but despises the LORD.” I tell you, that sounds much like the Grammy Awards. I didn’t watch any of it, but if you go through it, that’s what they’re doing, they’re blessing each other in their sins. ‘Oh, how good you are.’ And one commentator said, ‘They are so narcissistic that they are only concerned with what they buy and what they wear and where they got it, and they don’t care about anyone except themselves and their own notoriety.

“... boasts of his heart’s desire, and blesses the covetous but despises the LORD. Through the pride of his countenance the wicked will not seek God; in all his thoughts there is no place for God...” (vs 3-4). Going in the way of the ‘prince of the power of the air,’ this is how life is! That’s why it’s important every day when we are praying, ask God:

- to bless you
- to keep you from the power of the wicked one
- to deliver you from Satan the devil
- to deliver you from your own sins which you repent of in prayer
- to let you not deceive yourself and be deceived by others of the workers of Satan

Verse 5: “His ways prosper at all times. He is haughty, and Your judgments are far from him. As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.” In other words, all God has to do to get rid of the enemy is just puff at them: *whooooo!*—if it’s God’s desire to get rid of them.

Verse 6: “He has said in his heart, ‘I shall not be moved...’” Note Luke 12, about the farmer who had all this crop and said, ‘What am I going to do? I’m going to tear down my barns and build bigger ones. And I’m going say to my soul, *Soul, sit back, retire and enjoy goods for years.*’ And what was the message? ‘You fool! Your life is demanded tonight.’ You’ve seen that.

“...from generation to generation *I shall never be* in adversity.’ .... [just turn off the electricity

and see] ...His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity” (vs 6–7). If this does not describe the coming *beast* absolutely to a ‘T’—as well as all of his helpers and so forth. You can take these Psalms and you can plug them into anything and it fits. You can plug it into religion; you can plug it into government; you can plug it into organizations and so forth.

Verse 8: “He sits... [he’s planning evil] ... in the hiding places of the villages...” Just like Satan hiding—isn’t it? Remember, Satan uses other people.

“...in the secret places he murders the innocent. His eyes are on the watch for the helpless.... [Waiting! Waiting! Waiting!] ...He lies in wait secretly like a lion in his den...” (vs 8-9)—licking his chops and analyzing what is happening. Waiting just like a lion for the weakest one that he can take down.

“...He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags him off in his net. He crouches and bows down, and the hapless fall into his mighty grasp. He has said in his heart, ‘God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see!’ Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the humble. Why do the wicked spurn God? He has said in his heart, ‘You will not call into account.’” (vs 8-13) **But yes, God will!**

This is all in being delivered from Satan. Why is it so important and, why am I spending so much time on this? Simple! Think about, in the past, when the largest Church of God, that has been known in modern history, had a 120,000 people attending Sabbath services and the Feast, and had an income of \$200 million. What has happened to them? *They fell victim to Satan because they were looking at things carnally!* That’s why it’s important! That’s a daily thing! Just as we ask, ‘Give us this day, our daily bread. ‘Today, Lord, deliver me! Rescue me from the evil one.’ **And He will!**

Now these are the dedicated wicked, and yet, think about it, how many people—thousands—have given up on the Sabbath; given up on the Holy Days; because a man said it was okay to do. Now, since God hasn’t swooped down and judged them with a harsh judgment at this particular time, they probably think it’s all right. But just because God hasn’t brought the judgment, don’t think that the judgment is not coming. Satan has his angels of light that come along, but here’s what’s in their heart:

Psalm 36:1: “The wicked utters transgression in his heart. There is no fear of God before his eyes.” Plug this in to the final *beast* who

is coming who calls himself ‘God.’ Or whoever is the exalted so-and-so that is the current media darling.

Verse 2: “For he flatters himself in his own eyes until his iniquity is found to be hateful.” Sounds like a President that was retired—doesn’t it? After he served eight years. Now his wife is doing the same thing—seeking the Presidency {Clintons}.

Verse 3: “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he has stopped acting wise and doing good” These are the ones who try and come after us, too. Remember, that’s why you look out there and you go online and look at all the different websites of the Churches of God,

- you’re going to see good; you’re going to see not so good
- you’re going to see a mixture of good and evil
- you’re going to see bad
- you’re going to see ugly.

Not only just the Churches of God, but think of what’s on the internet there. Just lying! You can look at the evil of the Internet, because you can take anything and use it for good or evil; it’s just like a lion crouching, waiting, wanting to capture whoever will turn into whatever website is there.

Verse 4: “He plots iniquity upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not hate evil.” I tell you that is something! These are some of the people we’re up against in the world. And we’re going to see that come about even more so in the future.

What is tragic, some of the things that we are reading here has actually happened to those who have been in the Church of God, too, because they’ve given up on God. Well, let’s remember this: ***As long as there’s life, there’s hope!*** So, pray for those who have done this. That if there’s ***any hope of repentance***, that they’ll be brought to repentance.

Psalms 52:1: “Why do you boast yourself in evil, O mighty man? The mercy of God endures forever.... [God is greater than any man, so why get to thinking you’re so good?] ...Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully” (vs 1-2).

You can think about this in many areas: religion, politics. And I think one of the most deceitful things to come along upon the United States—which is punishment from God—is that the political leaders have already agreed to give up the sovereignty and constitution of the United States by amalgamating Canada, United States and Mexico—***deceitfully!*** It was never on the news that they had

that meeting, except President Bush, and Fox of Mexico, and Prime Minister Martin from Canada were there and they had nice little meeting. What they did was agree to give up the sovereignty of the countries. Now you know the secret as to why they don’t want border control.

Verse 3: “You love evil more than good, and lying more than to speak righteousness. Selah. You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue” (vs 3-4). I wonder what it’s going to be like when they announce the Amero?

A tragic lying tongue, which has destroyed millions of lives through water: I’ve got an article right here: fluoride! rat poison! ‘Oh, it’s good! It’s give you strong teeth.’ Forget about the fact that it’ll help cause Alzheimer’s because it has aluminum in it, as well. Forget about the fact that it can accumulate in your body. Forget about the fact that it can cause other diseases. ‘Don’t you want strong teeth? Don’t you want your children to have strong teeth?’ *Oh yes*, when you take them to the dentist, if you’re a good parent, after you’ve given them all the shots and everything, you take them to the dentist and what do they do? They clean their teeth and they give a fluoride coating. Oh good, their teeth won’t rot. But the rest of their body may. That’s how deceitful things are.

Verse 5: “God will likewise destroy you forever... [Christ *is* going to return!] ...He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your tent, and root you out of the land of the living. Selah.” All liars are going to be gone. And what is the ultimate fate of all liars who don’t repent? *Lake of fire*—right? If you ever expect to be in the Kingdom of God you can’t lie and be a lover of lies.

I don’t want you to walk around in fear and trepidation. I want you to have faith and confidence in God. I want you to remember that ***God will deliver you and rescue you, personally will do so***—please understand that. And the only reason in bringing these things out is for us to understand and see the magnitude of the things that we are up against—but, we can overcome every one of them through Christ. Please understand that! ***Don’t be overwhelmed because the world is overwhelmed by evil.***

Psalms 140:1: “Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man; keep me from the violent man, those who devise evil things in their hearts; together they always stir up wars” (vs 1-2). Of course, what is going to happen when Satan’s finally cast out? *He’s going to make war against the saints*—right? *Yes!*

Verse 3: “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; the poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.” Then wherever you see ‘Selah’—that

means *stop and think and meditate on this—let it sink in!*

Verse 4: “O LORD, keep me from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man who purposed to overthrow my steps. The proud have hidden a snare and a trap for me; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set traps for me. Selah” (vs 4-5).

Much like you see in some of the movies, they have traps where in the pathway they make it look just like the pathway—and they did this in Vietnam. The troops come running down there and they fall into a pit where there are spikes of bamboo—to impale the one who falls in. That’s vivid! Or they have it where there is the tripwire and then out-swings from a tree a device made with sharp things—from limbs and bamboo—which impale you. So think of it that way. *Satan wants to do that to the people of God!*

This is one of the reasons why God has scattered the Church into many small congregations and fellowship groups: **to protect them** and to give us an opportunity to recover from the things that have happened in the Church; and to give us a weekly opportunity to be fortified with the Spirit of God so that our prayers are affective. That’s why this is a vital key in our prayers: ‘Deliver us or rescue us from the evil one.’ And we can add on to that *all the workers of iniquity!*

- James 2
- 2 Corinthians 10
- Luke 12

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All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural references:

- 1) Matthew 6:13
- 2) Luke 4:16-19
- 3) Colossians 1:9-13
- 4) Revelation 12:9
- 5) 2 Timothy 3:13
- 6) 2 Corinthians 4:1-11
- 7) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 8) Psalm 120:1-5
- 9) Proverbs 27:5-6
- 10) Psalm 50:15-22
- 11) Psalm 10:1-13
- 12) Psalm 36:1-4
- 13) Psalm 52:1-5
- 14) Psalm 140: 1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 4
- Romans 1:1
- Leviticus 19
- Genesis 3
- Jeremiah 17:9

## Keys to Answered Prayer XIII How Satan Works

Fred R. Coulter

It's kind of fitting as we're turning to Matthew, the sixth chapter, for number thirteen—#13 is considered unlucky; #13 has bad things happen on it; the world is all concerned about Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> when it comes along—people get very superstitious. You even go into high buildings and they don't have a 13<sup>th</sup> floor. It goes from 12 to 14; that's how superstitious that people are.

So, we won't be superstitious here with this, because what we're going to do is find out how God rescues us from the evil one; and it says in the *King James* to 'deliver us.' Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one...." God has to intervene to rescue us:

- He does it with His Spirit
- He does it with His Word
- He does it with His calling

The Scriptures we already know, Revelation. 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is **deceiving the whole world...**" And he's got all the world's systems that he is using that men have devised to carry out his work.

We also need to understand, since we're right here, let's come to Matthew, the fourth chapter. Let's see who has the power. You've heard the old story: *follow the money*—right? So, we will follow the money, because remember, the principle parts of the world are *economics, religion and nations*. Those are the three principle parts and he deceives the whole world.

Let's see how much of the world that he has, Matthew 4:8: "After that, the devil took Him..." This is part of the temptation. We need to understand that in the world there are those who worship Satan the devil and know who he is. And these are not just low-level witches and voodoo practitioners or shamans out in the middle of some jungle or desert or high mountain in Tibet or something.

"...to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" (v 8). Luke 4 says: 'in a moment of time.'

Verse 9: "And said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.'" It also says in Luke 4: 'for it has been delivered to me.'

It's been delivered to Satan the devil because men do not worship God. There are various

devices that he uses, but the key that I want to cover here is this: Who controls all the kingdoms of the world? *Satan the devil!* What nation in the world is God's Kingdom today? *There is none!* The only nations that have any form of Godliness are the nations of Israel—the end-time 10 tribes—and right now it is mostly centered in the United States of America. You have a situation that is very, very interesting in that, which is this: **God's Word always works!** So, when you have people who follow much of God's Word you find that they have honesty; you find that they have character; you find all of these good qualities, which when you look at how America was founded, that's how it started.

But the truth is the Achilles heel in all of that early Christianity of the United States, and even Britain, was Sunday-worship. That was the Achilles heel, rather than keep the Sabbath. There was a time in England that Oliver Cromwell led a rebellion against the crown and took over most of England. At that time they were keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days; Christmas and Easter were outlawed. That's the closest in modern time that any nation has come to being a nation of God. That didn't last long. At the end he compromised and made a league with the king—I forget the king so don't hold me to the great details of history, here (someone said it was King Charles)—and he compromised with him, for the king, to declare that he was not an absolute monarch appointed by God. So, that's where you have the constitutional monarchy in the United Kingdom.

Nowhere in the world is there a nation that is God's nation. There are people who are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that receive the blessings that was promised to Abraham because of Abraham's obedience—not because of the righteousness of the people. However, they did have God's Law, and as much as anyone will keep the laws and commandments of God, God will bless them. Now, there's the blessing from Abraham that He must honor, regardless of the righteousness of the descendants. There is another blessing that comes, and Satan also knows this, which becomes an important part for us to understand some of the devices of Satan the devil.

Jeremiah 23:19: "Behold, the tempest of the LORD has gone forth in fury, a whirling tempest. It shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not return, until He has executed and until He has performed the purposes of His heart; in the latter days you shall understand it

perfectly” (vs 19-20). In other words, God gives a promise and in the latter days we will understand what is happening in the way of religion. Remember, Satan is there and he always wants to infiltrate and take down the people of God.

Did Satan grab hold of the priesthood of Israel? *Yes*, with the alliance of *the king!* Whenever you had a wicked king, you had Baal worship even right at the temple—right? You can read the history of it, we don’t have to go through it in detail. Always remember that *Satan knows* who he needs to get. That’s why it says, ‘Rescue us from the evil one.’ And we also have the prayer of Jesus where He said, in John 14, ‘deliver them from the evil one.’ Not take them out of the world, but in the world, ‘deliver them from the evil one.’

Let’s see what God says concerning the false prophets, v 21: “I have not sent these prophets, yet, they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet, they prophesied. **But if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My words...**” (vs 21-22). God honors His Word in every case where it is preached. So, if they preach obedience to the last six of the commandments, they will have all the blessings that go with that, plus the blessing that God promised to Abraham. If they don’t have idols, they have the blessing that comes from not having idols.

However, Israel has always had, instead of a direct relationship with God, most times they’ve had an oblique relationship with God. What do I mean by that? *They come to God, yet, they want to keep their own ways!* Remember when they wanted a kingship. What did God tell Samuel? ‘*Samuel, they haven’t rejected you, they have rejected Me.*’ Even with wanting a kingship, what did God say? ‘*All right, I’ll give you a king but you know you’re going to be in trouble!*’

Were they in trouble? *Yes!* Not one of the kings of the ten northern tribes was ever righteous. **Not one!** He told them, ‘I’ll let you have a king and if he will help you keep My commandments, I will bless you, but know that you have taken one step away from Me.’ But even in spite of that, for the sake of the fathers—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (wherever you see the phrase *the fathers*)—God has bound himself for certain blessings to the descendants of Abraham. But He hasn’t bound Himself to the rest of the world. This is a two-edged sword.

Verse 22: “But if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings” So, you have that in the mix to consider. With that said, let’s understand that in the world there is good, there is evil, and Satan gets permission from God whenever

something major comes down—like he did with Job. The world is controlled by Satan through various secret—unknown and known—organizations. Those who are known openly in the public have a public message that makes them look like an innocent fraternity—such as the Masons, the Knights of Columbus, and there is also what is called a ‘Committee of Three Hundred.’ Many people think that *IF* they can expose the conspiratorial things done by men in high places, that they can correct the problem. You can’t do it! There are so many of these organizations and so many of these people in so many high places, that it’s an impossibility to do it.

Let me present to you, as far as the world is concerned—and we need to understand this—why we don’t preach a lot on the conspiracy theories—howbeit they’re all true and they’re out there. You need to be careful and understand what’s going on. Here’s what would have to happen:

One man or group of men would have to have access to know where every one of these secret members is in all of these societies: whether they’re business societies, religious societies, governmental societies; because you have all three. You’d have to know where all the main leaders are, and you would have to have sufficient power to within one instant of time in the whole world, whether it’s day or night, to have the forces come in and execute everyone of them at the same time so there would be no successors to take over. You would also have to have the power to implement a new form of government.

Now, what have I just described? *The return of Christ!* That’s why all efforts to reform government in the world will only succeed to a degree of the willingness of the government officials to do what is right. But that’s about it. You need to understand that. That’s why it’s important that ***we are rescued from Satan the devil.***

Now, let’s look at some other Scriptures here so we understand about how Satan works and how Satan operates. Let’s see our calling. We are called to save the world, but ***not now!*** I’ve just described to you the problems and difficulties of what you would have to do and where you would have to start in order to save the world.

This is the calling of Paul after he was knocked to the ground—he and his party—Acts 26:15: “And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting.’” Very interesting statement— isn’t it? If anyone of the brethren is persecuted, who are they persecuting? *Jesus!* Why? *Because with the Spirit of God, Jesus is dwelling in them!*

Verse 16: “Now arise, and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to

appoint you *as* a minister and a witness both of what you have seen and what I shall reveal to you. I am personally selecting you from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you” (vs 16-17).

Notice the spiritual operation, which comes through conversion, v 18: “**To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light...**” So, it has to be a spiritual operation. {Note: John 6:44-45; 14:6}

“...and *from the authority of Satan to God...*” (v 18). Let’s understand something very important: there are two great authorities in the world: Satan and God! In between there may be some groups of people who are leaning more toward God than they are leaning to Satan. But the ultimate authority is reduced to two: God and Satan.

“...so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified through faith in Me” (v 18).

This is how God operates. He gives a mission statement—right? This is a mission statement. How is it going to be performed? ‘*Paul, you get up and go out and do it, and I’ll inspire you and back you up!*’. And you preach and teach and I will be the Power behind you.’ So, ***we have to be delivered from Satan the devil.***

All right let’s look at a couple of other things here of how Satan is also described by Paul. One of the greatest ploys of Satan the devil—and the way that you can tell that these people are really under the power of Satan the devil is the *they deny that Satan exists!* Totally deceived! And generally those who deny that Satan exists, a good number of them deny that God exists! As I have said earlier, ***no one is ever free from God, period!*** God has control of everything:

- through Himself and through Satan the devil
- through Himself for eternal life and blessings
- through Satan the devil for the way of the world and sin

So, regardless of what people may think or claim, ***you’re never free from God!*** You may not like the preacher if you’re going to church. You may not like whatever it may be, but you’re never free from God. We’ve seen how God works in other sermons and so forth; let’s see how Satan works.

2-Corinthians 4:1: “Therefore, having this ministry...” [which I just read to you about turning them from the power of darkness to light and from the authority of Satan unto God] ...according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced...” (vs 1-2). This all part

of conversion, because these are the ways of Satan the devil.

“...personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain... [before the institution of national banks] ...not walking in *cunning* craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully...” (v 2). What is he describing here? *He is describing the tactics of Satan the devil!* Satan loves to get people hooked on dishonest gain—doesn’t he. Look at the whole gambling industry in America now; addiction to gambling. Whatever it may be. There’s so much of it you can hardly name it. “...dishonest gain...”

- in high interest rates
- in cheating and lying

Those are some of the things that are some of the devices of Satan the devil

“...not walking in *cunning* craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully” (v 2). Satan ***loves*** to do that!

What is the Word of God? *The Word of God is Truth*—correct? If you have the Word of God, which is Truth, you can stand up and say to people, ‘The Word of God is Truth. Now let me tell you about the trinity.’ or ‘Let me tell you that you no longer have to keep the laws of God and go to certain Scriptures.’ {see sermon series: Galatians, Romans and Hebrews} And if you do not have *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin, you do not have one single clue as to what Paul is writing about concerning *works of law* in Romans or in Galatians.

One of the favorite tricks of Satan the devil in *deceitfully handling the Word of God* is this: Paul writes that we have been ‘delivered from the curse of the Law’—slight of hand; the Law is a curse—basic doctrine of Protestantism. *No*, the curse of the Law is *the penalty for breaking the law*—you are saved from your sins. Satan likes to save you ***in*** your sins, rather than ***from*** your sins. That’s very important.

“...but by manifestation of the Truth...” (v 2). So, you need to have the whole Truth, all of the Word of God. You need to understand how to study it. That’s why we have *The Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*. That’s why you need to understand Isa. 28: ‘line upon line; here a little, there a little; precept upon precept’—put it together. That’s why you have to ‘prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.’ Now, if that sounds complicated, it’s complicated not because God made it that way, but because of the deviousness of Satan and his servants—and he does have servants. Just like God has true servants who serve Him and preach the Word of God and serve the brethren, Satan has His servants who are true to him and his doctrines and appear very

righteous, as we'll see here in just a minute.

And he says, "...we are commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God" (v 2). So, what he's doing is saying, the only true motivation in this ministry of mercy that he has received is the Spirit of Truth, the Word of God—which is Truth—and from the heart in serving the brethren with a clean conscience—no hidden agenda, no politics.

That's why when you get into a hierarchical church you set yourself up for a big fall. Always happens! We've been discussing some traps that some of the current Churches of God are falling into, with mishandling and deceitfully using the Word of God and wrong structure. You see right here in what Paul is doing, he's not exalting himself above the brethren. And you read in Eph. 3 that he considers himself 'less than the least of all the saints.'

Verse 3: "But if our Gospel is hidden..." Isn't it interesting how God has done it. Like I brought out in the book, *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days*, he hides it in plain sight in the Bible. It's there all the time. And the only way to discover it is proper Bible study and being led by the Spirit of God to come to the Truth. Now, that's God's secret plan so while it's there in plain view, they don't understand it.

- you **must have God's Spirit**
- you **must love and obey God**
- you **must keep His Sabbath and His Holy Days**

—then God will grant understanding. Not all at once! Bit-by-bit, by-bit, because we grow in grace and knowledge.

Here's another way that it's hidden: ...it is hidden to those who are perishing" (v 3).

Come to 2-Thess. 2 because we will see something very interesting on how this Scripture ties in with the devices of Satan the devil. This is the *beast power* coming at the end is going to say he's 'God.' He's going to come in power. Once you have people deceived to a certain degree, then what Satan's going to do is bring on all his power and it's going to look like the real thing.

2-Thessalonians 2:9 "Even the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness **in those who are perishing** because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved. And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the lie*" (vs 9-11). Think how the world is being setup now. If we're going to be rescued from Satan the devil, we

have to:

1. know who he is
2. know how he operates
3. understand where we get the power to resist and overcome
4. which comes from God

2-Corinthians 4:3: "But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing."

Verse 4 is how it takes place because either you are under the authority of God, through Jesus Christ; or you're under the authority of Satan and his demons, through the power of this world. And we know he's called the 'prince of the power of the air.' And we'll see the other things that he uses to entice people.

Verse 4: "In whom the **god of this world...**" That's very interesting, because you look it up in the Greek and it is 'theos'—same word that is used for the true God. This indicates and tells us the reason that he used this word was to show us the power that Satan has, and how the only One Who is going to bring us out from under that power from Satan the devil is Jesus Christ and God the Father. It's not going to be any other way. That's why Paul was sent. That's why we have his writings. That's why we have the Bible.

Notice what happens, v 4: "In whom the **god of this world** has blinded the minds of those who do not believe..."

Think of this for a minute: How simple it is to come under the clutches of Satan the devil? *Do not believe God! Gotcha!* That simple! That's why it's in our daily prayer: 'Don't lead us into temptation,' especially those who come from Satan the devil and our own lusts—and "**rescue us from the evil one.**"

Today with all of the modern electronics that Satan is able to also use to magnify his power and control human minds. And I think about this: just this last week I traveled up to Seattle and Spokane. I'm sitting on my seat on the plane and different ones are coming in and I see them walking up and down in the terminal as well, and they're hooked in, they're wired in to their iPod—and they're in their own separate world. And remember this: **what goes into your mind, controls your mind.**

This is why you have to have the Holy Spirit **in** you, have to have the laws of God written in your heart and your mind. Whatever occupies your mind controls you. Satan has so many things he can do now; so many avenues. That's in addition to television; in addition to radio and all the other things. But hey, there it is. When you go to a movie,

you don't go to a movie anymore to really see good acting. You go to be blasted with the sound through every cell of your body. Today, as far as the gross, satanic music is concerned—rock music, rap music, gangster rap, all of that—it is so loud because people don't want to hear it, they want to *feel* it. If you're so wrapped up in this kind of thing, you're automatically blinded and you think you're enlightened.

“...blinded the minds...” (v 4). That's why I've given several sermons in the past on guarding the door of your mind. That's very important in being delivered from Satan is: **What do you think on?** Because we'll see one of the devices of Satan the devil is to come along and inspire you to want to do something that looks really good! A good cause!

Here's what happens: “...blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them” (v 4). Think about it!

Here we have all of these means of preaching the Gospel: electronically, visually, printed word, and so forth. What do you think Satan's mission and goal is in this? *Get in there and control it.*

- Who controls the music?
- Who controls the movies?
- Who controls the television?
- Who controls the government?
- Who controls the printed word?

In America you still have some freedom to get some things printed, but think about it, our project that we are doing now, we could never get done in many of the countries of the world. Ask yourself: How many devices are there in the world that Satan uses to close off the Truth? *Economics, religion, education, government!* Try getting the knowledge of God in the school. What's in the school today? *All twisted satanic version of history, of the origin of life,* and you can't even get Intelligent Design into the schools today. In a nation that was supposedly founded on Christian principles. And you say, ‘How could that be?’ *Because Satan has his agents working in all of these organizations—that's why!*

I think it's more apparent than ever before. The only solution to save the world is the return of Jesus Christ. The only solution to get rid of all of these satanic things is nearly destroy everything in the world. That's what's going to happen when Christ returns. So, we need to understand that, too.

How do you tell who's a true preacher of God or not? *Listen to what he says!* Verse 5: “For we do not preach our own selves, but Christ Jesus *the* Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake...”

Very interesting.

I remember when I was in a huge, large, rich corporate Church of God. I was observing all of these sycophant ministers in a hierarchical system—high up in the hierarchy and well paid. I went to the great temple that they had built in Pasadena—which God took away from them now, as well as other things—and I sat there and listened to a sermon by a man who was bringing the main message of the day. And I noticed, as most of those who would get up there would have to extol the apostle of that church—Herbert W. Armstrong. I sat there and listened to it and I put down five letters: JC—Jesus Christ; HWA—the man.

I kept tabs all through that hour and twenty-minute sermon, how many times did he mention Jesus Christ? toot, toot, toot—then every fifth one you do the little slash mark across it—how many times did he mention the name of the apostle? Now give a guess as to how this political sycophant did. How many times he mentioned the man? How many times he mentioned Christ? Seven times=Jesus Christ; 111 times=HWA. And then people say, ‘I wonder what happened to that church?’ Well, it's very obvious, and the man who did it? Guess what he now believes? *No law, Sunday, the whole thing! Deceived!*

You never ever preach yourself. That doesn't mean you don't mention yourself. But when that man stood in the pulpit and said, ‘I am God's only apostle on earth’—what did he do? *He signed the death warrant for the whole organization.* And everyone who believed it and followed along with it—when things started going wrong then they all rallied around the man and ra, ra, ra for the man, rather than saying, ‘Where is God? Where is Christ?’ No, his name was mentioned in some sentences, two or three or four times, and it was all I could do is mark it down, and then other times he'd go on and then come up again two or three or four times. I almost fainted! So who were they preaching? Christ? or themselves? *Themselves and the organization!* Amazing! I mean it blew me away.

Here's the whole thing concerning what preaching needs to be, v 6: “Because *it is* God Who commanded *the* light to shine out of darkness, Who shined into our hearts *the* light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the* face of Jesus Christ.”

That's quite a thing. Then notice everything that Paul went through here in 2-Cor. 4 and chapter 11. Think of this: when it was boasted, we—now please understand this: ***no corporate Church of God or no corporation in the world can be the only Church of God.*** Can never be! When those boasts were made, ‘the only apostle of God on earth today,’ and the ‘only true Church of God on earth today,’ those were lies of Satan the devil because they were

blinding their minds to Jesus Christ and God 'gave them over to their own devices.'

Some people who are going to hear this are not going to like those words. And some people are going to get very upset at me. Well, I suggest you read your Bible and you look at past history. Did it come to nothing? *Yes!* Why then are there so many ministers who have come out of that system who want to resurrect exactly the same thing and put themselves in the same position that the ministers did then, and take to themselves authority that only belongs to Jesus Christ? *They haven't learned the lesson!* They need to understand, ***Christ needs to be taught and glorified*** and all the ministers need to ***teach the brethren to have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

Now you know why I've emphasized it many, many times through the years.

(go to the next track)

We've been discussing some of the economic things, which is for another topic, another sermon, but there are parallels between money and religion. As religion is deceitful, so are the economics. As religion will fall so will the economics. There is always *a judgment day for deceitfulness*; it will come!

2-Corinthians 11 becomes very important when we understand it, because we're going to look, first of all, *to be rescued from Satan*. We'll talk about the world a little later. First of all, we have to let God lead us in the way that it needs to be within His Church, because God does have His true Church, which are scattered true, faithful brethren wherever they are in the world. They may be in many different organizations and some of them may not be in what we could consider any organization at all. Because understand this: ***organization is only good for the collective preaching of the Gospel beyond the ability of individuals.***

In that then, it has to be handled in such a way, which we try and do, so that we use the maximum amount of money that God sends in to serve the brethren and preach the Truth.

Know this, all those who get carried away with great buildings and great projects and great things like this, it's going to fail because now is not the day of those things. We need to learn the lesson: God took away the colleges and the property, all of those things, because ***they weren't preaching the Gospel the way it should be, and they became idols.*** And in doing that then, they had the influence of Satan the devil.

I'm not saying that they were possessed—please do not misunderstand me—but what I'm

saying is: ***Satan likes to be there to disturb and to cause problems for the people of God and the Churches of God.*** Therefore, that's why it's there in a daily prayer: *rescue us from Satan the devil*. And your personal responsibility is your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and letting the Truth of the Word of God be the predominating thing that guides and directs everything that you do. Not the things in the world. Not the lusts in the world. We'll talk about that a little later. But what I want to focus on right now, is how Satan loves to get into the Churches of God to destroy them and pull them down. And we're going to see here now, with false doctrine, false teaching, false assumptions, while everything is looking really, really good to the carnal mind.

Paul always had to be rescued from the power of Satan—didn't he? *Yes!* 2-Corinthians 12:7: "But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations..." The truth is we're not to be exalted about anything. Why? Because of this—remember, never forget: ***You have nothing you didn't receive!***

- Your *physical life*, everything that keeps you going, ***everything comes from God!***
- Your *spiritual life*, God's Spirit, all comes from God.

Why should ministers and people try an exalt themselves above other people. What on earth is that going to accomplish but vanity, selfishness and destruction?

"... *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me..." (v 7)—to make him draw close to God. So, when it says, 'rescue us from the evil one' on a daily basis, Paul understood that.

"...so that I might not be exalted. I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (vs 7-9).

As I read the next part of this, I want you to think about the opulence of the great apostle of the Worldwide Church of God, v 10: "For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

God looks at those who are weak physically. And let's just understand this: Those who are old and weak and coming toward the end of their lives, and are faithful and die in the faith, how does God look upon them? ***With far greater blessing and***

*grace and understanding knowing that they're going to be in the resurrection*, than for some exalted, high, mucky-muck minister to be some great thing that God never intended the ministers or elders to be. It's just that simple.

2-Corinthians 11:1: "I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me. For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ" (vs 1-2). That is *spiritually* speaking.

We could get into other things with that, but suffice to say, if you get taken down by Satan over and over again—though God forgives you, though you will be in the Kingdom of God—you no longer fit the spiritual classification of being a spiritual virgin, just like in the physical sense. Once a man or woman are no longer a virgin or chaste, they're no longer a virgin or chaste. That doesn't mean their life has come to an end, it's just a fact. So, what he's saying here is this: 'Why not be faithful to God instead of being taken down by all of these devices and things, which sound so alluring, etc.

Verse 3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness..." One of the things that Satan always tempts with is *he holds out to you the prospect of a benefit* that you can get by circumventing God's laws. That goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. What did he say? 'Oh, in dying you shall not surely die. Go ahead and eat of it. You can become like gods, now. You get a benefit! I am going to bring you a benefit.'

"...so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus..." (vs 3-4).

- Are there other Jesuses preached in the Churches of God? *Yes!*
- Has it happened? *Yes!*

*Think about it!*

- Was another Jesus preached when this apostle went to the so-called leaders of the nations and said he's bringing the Gospel of the give and get?
- Was another Jesus preached when he said,
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of the Egyptians
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of the Jordanians
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of the Jews
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of the Ethiopians
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of Malaysia
  - ✓ I come in the name of the god of Hong Kong

*or wherever it may be*

- Is that not another Jesus?
- Didn't it sound good? *Yes!*
- What do we have today in Protestantism? *All you have to do is believe!* You don't even have to be baptized.

So, if you believe and you don't repent, and if you're not baptized, *you have a false conversion!* You may have a great emotional feeling; you may be resolved to change your life; but that doesn't mean you're converted.

"...whom we did not preach..."

- What did Paul write?
- What did the apostles write?
- What did God give in the Old Testament?

"...or you receive a different spirit..." (v 4). Satan is able to have spiritual power, which comes from him and his demons—correct? As counterfeits for Christ. And if someone has a spiritual experience they're what? *Totally convinced that it's right!*

Like one man has set himself up; he said he had a vision from God that he has been appointed to be the apostle's successor to HWA and that all churches and all ministers need to come to him and submit to him—and even made the statement that he would be over the two witnesses, because an apostle is greater than prophets as listed in Eph. 4. People fall for it hook, line and sinker. Look, it's a trap to test whether you believe Christ or not, that's what it is.

All of these things people don't see as defining another Christ. All you have to do is just pick up the *Journal*, and you can see some true messages there, but you can see all the subtle, satanic messages that are there. Some of them not so subtle, for example: Jesus was not God before He became human. How many people fall for these things hook, line and sinker? Listen, if you fall for those things, you've never been grounded in Christ. You may be converted, but you may not be grounded in Christ the way you ought to be.

When it was proclaimed that 'I come to you in the name of the God' of this country or that country, what is in the mind of the one hearing it? Some people may think since God is *God* of all people, therefore, it's okay to say that. And since Jesus said, 'It's more blessed to give than to receive,' it's okay to have the Gospel of give and get. *No!* The true Gospel is *repent and be baptized*. And only one baptism that I know of ever occurred, which was with the personal assistant to that apostle.

The thing is that's another Jesus; that's another gospel. Subtle! You need to understand that. I challenge everyone: when you look at *The Journal*

compare it with the Bible. You will find it one of the big things that people want to do. And there's even a book of it: *Raising the Ruins*. Why would you want to raise the ruins when Christ wants you to become a new creation. Humm? See? Those churches and those men and those brethren are going to be punished again! Because they didn't get the message that these things were not of God but a perversion of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, and never came from God in the first place. Had it come from God it would not have been destroyed.

Today everything is an opinion. And we'll get to that when we see how Satan can tempt us personally and individually. But what we need to see is, and understand, why are we where we are today? And what happened to where we come here, to come to this point? We need to understand what happened.

I'm mentioning this so we get a clear view, because there are too many trying to resurrect the same old 'ruins.' And there are too many brethren out there also that like to have ministers to rule over them so they can blame them when something goes wrong. And isn't that the same excuse that the children of Israel gave when they heard the Ten Commandments. 'God, we're going to die if we listen to You. You tell Moses and let Moses tell us.' Then what happened when things went wrong? 'Moses, you did this. Moses, you did that.'

Verse 4: "For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different gospel, which you did not accept..." Let me tell you something very loud and clear: ***Today, because of having all the Bible—the knowledge of the Word of God we have today, that God has provided, and the Spirit of God that we have today—there is no excuse for having a different Gospel or one that is perverted, to whatever degree, by whatever means.***

"...which you did not accept, **you put up with it as something good**" (v 4). Like one man said, 'Well, I know this minister believes that Jesus was only created in the womb and that's when He first came into existence; and He wasn't God before, but this minister is sincere and he does good to help other people.' Well, of course! So, he concluded: 'Therefore, I work with him.' Well, no! Paul said if they don't adhere to the sound words of Jesus Christ, and preach another doctrine, **'withdraw yourself!'** That's basically why we are here where we are today.

Notice what happens when that occurs. You accept another Jesus, you have a different spirit, you have a different gospel and you put up with it as something good—what are you dealing with? *Opinions!* I think this, I think that, I think the other

thing. And what did he start out 1-Corinthians with? *They're following this man, that man. Some follow Apollo, some follow Peter, some follow Paul, some follow Christ, some follow some other men.* Is Christ divided? That's the result of it.

Now, let's see what happens. They begin comparing—don't they? Comparing these other false ministers coming in—now we'll talk about them here a little later—comparing them with Paul, and Paul with them. Amazing! So Paul has to answer it.

That's why he says, v 1: "I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me"

Verse 5: "But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles." That's what it means in the Greek—that's the best why I could translate it, because it is the 'super, hot-shot' apostles.

Verse 6: "For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you freely?" (vs 6-7).

He did this to combat those false apostles who were *taking tithes and offerings*. And what happens to all these highly exalted, so-called apostles who set themselves up and create big churches and buildings and things? What happens? *I already said it, they ask for more money, more money—don't they?* So, Paul said, 'All right, I'm going to give it to you free.'

This is why we send out what we have to everyone, no cost, everyone that's on our mailing list. There are some people that have nothing to do with us and they just want it, they can buy it online at Amazon.com, that's fine, we have that out there The Church is not in the business of selling. This is why I preach once a year on tithes and offerings. And every Holy Day it is mentioned because we are to take up an offering. I do not ask people for money because of what Paul has here. Don't need to ask them for money. Let God inspire them to love God and obey God and everything else in their life, including how to tithe and offer will fall in line sooner or later. And if not, then by sermons to beat and extract money from people what good is that money going to do anyway?

You may be able to do something with it in the immediate time when you get it, but what is the end? *The end is merchandising!* And the end is *looking to the physical thing* rather than ***building up the brethren spiritually!***

This is why he did this, v 8: “I robbed other churches...” The reason I’m going through this is so that you can have a good comparison to understand how you can escape the wiles of the devil, and how you need to be delivered from the devil and his cunning craftiness. And look, understand this: If it can happen in one of the churches of Paul—and even later Paul said, ‘All those in Asia have abandoned me’—we need to understand that unless we have the constant relationship with God, and are being delivered from the evil one daily, we’re going to find ourselves in trouble. And God doesn’t want us in trouble. I mean we have enough overcoming human nature, don’t we? And overcoming the world, that we don’t have to fight and overcome a church, which in degree has been infiltrated by the teachings and doctrines of Satan, which appear blessedly to be true. Need to understand that.

Verse 8: “I robbed other churches, receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you.” Paul did not take tithes that went to the local church and they gave him a wage—that’s the way it should be; and not great, highly exalted wages either. In that great, exalted church that I was talking about, every evangelist had a six-figure salary, which varied from \$100,000 to \$250,000. You calculate how much went to salaries, how much went to buildings, how much went to maintenance, and then how much really went to feeding the flock and you will see why God destroyed it. And if you don’t understand that ***I can’t help you!***

Verse 9: “And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs)...” Paul did this because he wanted to show the Truth of God compared to all of these false ministers which were there.

“...for I kept myself, and will *continue* to keep myself, from being burdensome to you in anything.... [because he wanted them to be converted first] ...*As the* Truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows *I do*. But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion from those who are desiring an occasion; so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*” (vs 9-12).

Very important! He did it for a specific purpose. Right in this Church of God, all of this satanic activity was going on. Why? *Because the brethren weren’t adhering to the sound words of Jesus Christ and they weren’t praying to be delivered from the evil one, daily!* And it happened to them!

What I want you to do, if you have a

religious channel, watch some of the different ministers and speakers and listen to the message. See where it’s headed compared to what’s in the Bible. That’s why God has given us His Word—which is Truth—so we can compare it with the Bible, and we have to know how to do so and not just take the word of any man; very important to understand. Because eventually—especially with the hierarchical churches—men take over. And then men cut them off from God. And men, who start out as perhaps dedicated preachers, end up becoming servants of Satan.

Let’s see where Paul even prophesied of that; let’s see what he explains here. In understanding about Acts 20, we need to realize that this was probably about 58-59<sub>A.D.</sub> when Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem. And he knew that all the elders in Ephesus he would never see again. So, this becomes a significant farewell address to them. I think it’s important that we understand it in the light of contemporary history of which we have gone through. And which many churches, even Protestant churches in the world, have gone through.

Acts 20:17: “Now, from Miletus, he [Paul] sent to Ephesus *and* called for the elders of the Church.... [It doesn’t tell us how many elders were there. But there indicates that there quite a number.] ...And when they had come to him, he said to them...” (vs 17-18). We need to grasp the significance of what Paul was saying here, because later, in 2-Tim. 1, he says ‘all those in Asia have left me.’ That’s quite a significant statement. This tells us two things:

1. True spiritual knowledge does not stay in the mind if you don’t exercise it.

*Like with the Spirit of God—if you don’t use the Spirit of God, if you don’t study the Word of God.*

2. Paul is preparing them for what he knew would happen.

And as we go through this, those who have had experiences like that within the Churches of God, I want you to relate those experiences to what is being said here, simply because this is a prophecy that should have alerted us that this would happen.

Verse 18: “And when they had come to him, he said to them, ‘You know how, from the first day I came to Asia, *and* all the time I was with you, I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations...’” (vs 18-19). Nowhere did he exalt himself over the brethren. Nowhere did he say that he was the *one* to rule in their lives.

“...which came upon me through the plots of the Jews...” (v 19). That’s very significant because Paul, before God called him and converted him was probably the #2 leading man in Judaism at

the time (Gal. 1). And he was out there arresting and causing to be killed true Christians.

When he was converted, the Jews were after him all the time. And it's kind of like a rabbi said in recent years: 'Jesus I can understand. But Paul I can never forgive.' Why? *Because Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees!* So, if you have the *Code of Jewish Law*, know that that's exactly what he was doing. He had to avoid being killed and I'm sure that he was happy that they didn't have helicopters at that time, because you know that they would have flown around with their machinegun helicopters waiting for Paul.

Verse 20: “*And how I did not keep back anything that was profitable, but preached to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house*”—meaning, *in their homes*. And that's why the thrust of things with Church at Home is just going back to the beginning.

Verse 21: “*Earnestly testifying, both to the Jews and the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.... [preaching the whole Gospel] ...And now behold, I am bound in the spirit, and am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall happen to me there; Except that the Holy Spirit fully testifies in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I myself do not take any of these things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*” (vs 20-24).

And this is how we need to gauge all of our lives. Because really when we get down to it, that is a key of faith and understanding. Not to be at the disposal of some minister to have you do something—like these suicide bombers and radical Islam today. They're even now enlisting women. Women who have had troubles with their husbands and divorced and now they're set to be killed or raped—and if they are raped, anyone in the family can kill them because they have been defiled.

So, now they have a program on that: any woman who is disgraced and facing the death penalty at the hand of the Sharia Law and men can volunteer to become a suicide bomber, and now she will have blessings in paradise. This is not what it's talking about. Because when we are Christ's we wholly belong to Him, but we do so in an intelligent and converted and faithful and dedicated way.

Verse 25: “*And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom of God, will see my face no more; Wherefore I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all, For I have not held back from*

preaching to you all the counsel of God” (vs 25-27).

Verse 28 is a key prophecy and he knows that this is going to happen: “*Take heed, Therefore, to yourselves...*” All ministers, teachers and elders need to take heed to themselves. And don't get carried away in great grandiose things. And just like Paul wrote: ‘You that teach the law, don't you teach yourself?’

God wants everyone to be controlled; ***to control themselves by God's Spirit and His Word, and you are self-governing under God.*** That's how God wants it. Not from ministers to police people's lives, tell them what to do—go here, go there, go to the other—because we're all to grow up in Christ. The way we grow up in Christ is let Christ rule in our hearts, let the Holy Spirit lead us and don't get carried away in anything. He's telling this to the ministers. Very important to understand!

Verse 28: “*Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers...*” It's not something you get by vote. It's not something you get by reward. It is the Holy Spirit that does it.

“**...to feed the Church of God...**” (v 28). That's the important thing. Feed them what? *Feed them the Word of God!* That's why in Psa. 34 it says, ‘Oh taste and see that the Lord is good,’ so that we can all grow in grace and knowledge and love and all of this that we understand. That's what God wants.

“**...which He purchased with His own blood**” (v 28). ***When you start messing with the Church of God, you're messing with Christ!***

I want you to think about all your past history in the Church of God, or all your past history in a Protestant Church, or your past history in the Catholic Church—and I don't know if there are any Muslims out there, but if there are, you have *giant* hurdles to overcome, to come to understand the way of God. But it can be done.

“**...which He purchased with His own blood**” (v 28)—which we know is the New Covenant, therefore, we need always to serve the people of God the way God wants them served; to teach them the Word of God; to show them the way to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 29: “*For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock... [that happened then and we see it happening today again] ...and from among your own selves...*” (vs 29-30). Here were elders who were dedicated to God, but something happened because Satan came along and tempted them, and

they yielded to the temptation.

Verse 30: “And from among your own selves... [those right there speaking; he was looking them right in the eyes] ...men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves.” That is *seeking power*, and seeking wealth. And all you have to do is just extrapolate that out and look at what happened with the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, which today is the world’s largest landowner in the world. Hey they got quite a thing going. Everybody works for nothing and it all goes into the church coffers. That’s not God’s way!

Verse 31: “Watch, therefore... [He’s telling them: Watch your lives; watch what is being said; watch what is being taught.] ...remembering that *for* three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears. And now I commit you, brethren, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothing. Rather, you yourselves know that these hands did minister to my needs and to those who were with me. *In* all things, I have showed you that you are obligated to so labor to support those who are weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus Himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ And after saying these things, he knelt with them all *and* prayed. Then there was much weeping by everyone; and they embraced Paul *and* fervently kissed him, Being distressed most of all by his saying that they would not see his face any more. Then they accompanied him to the ship” (vs 31-38).

- 2 Timothy 1
- Galatians 1
- Psalm 34

Also referenced:

Sermon series:

- *Galatians*
- *Romans*
- *Hebrews*

Books:

- *God’s Plan Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried & Hyman E. Goldin
- *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*
- *Raising the Ruins* by Stephen Flurry

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All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural references:

- 1) Matthew 6:13
- 2) Revelation 12:9
- 3) Matthew 4:8-9
- 4) Jeremiah 23:19-22
- 5) Acts 26:15-18
- 6) 2 Corinthians 4:1-3
- 7) 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11
- 8) 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
- 9) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- 10) 2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 1, 5-12
- 11) Acts 20:18-38

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 4
- John 6:44-45; 14:6
- Isaiah 28
- Ephesians 3; 4

## Keys to Answered Prayer XIV Importance of Being Rescued from Satan

Fred R. Coulter

Two of the keys to answered prayer are:

1. Understanding that your relationship is *directly* to God the Father and Jesus Christ.
2. Your relationship with the ministry and with the brethren has to *based upon*
  - the **Word** of God
  - the **love** of Christ
  - the **knowledge** of the Truth

Consider that there are so many false doctrines, dingy doctrines, weird ideas that have come out of the major Church of God. And one of the things is this: What God has destroyed, why are men in such a hurry to try and re-build? They're doing that now: building buildings. One man, as I mentioned, has appointed himself apostle of all the Churches of God; and has even said since he's apostle over all the Churches of God—because he had a vision from God—that even the two witnesses would be subject to him. An apostle is greater than prophets if you read Eph. 4. This is self-exaltation! Where does that come from? And why do people fall for it?

Let's read what Paul says of the false apostles. 2-Corinthians 11:13: "For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers..." You have to understand, if they '*do not speak according to this Word there's no light in them.*' And what will they do? *They will deceitfully handle the Word of God!* That's how so many false doctrines come down, because they use the Word of God and twist it and turn it.

Notice where the power comes from: ...deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (v 13).

Let's see the power from where this came, and it is from Satan the devil. If you do not have a right relationship with God and you are in a church that is so carried away with every wind of doctrine and every idea that comes along, you couldn't possibly have a decent prayer-life with Christ, because you're 'tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,' and you have no stability in your life. If you don't believe that is so, go back and think about the time when you were going through the throws of the upheavals within the Church of God.

- How was your prayer life?
- How were your emotions?
- How did you feel?

—when they started bringing in these teachings of the world. Here we come clear back to Acts, the eighth chapter and a man called, in history, Simon Magus. Remember what Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria when she said, 'Our fathers worship in this mountain.' He says, 'You don't know what you're worshipping.' Let's see what they were worshipping. And here is actually some of the beginning seeds which later became the Roman Catholic Church. And out of which also came the so-called 'Christian Gnostic' beliefs, from where you have all the Gnostic gospels.

Philip came and was casting out demons and so forth, Acts 8:8: "And there was great joy in that city. But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery... [sorcery is witchcraft and that comes directly from Satan the devil] ...practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one" (vs 8-9).

Now compare that with what Paul said of himself: '*I'm less than the least of the saints.*' And how many men today, even supposed to be ministers of Churches of God, are proclaiming themselves to be 'great ones.' And are demanding people follow them; and are demanding money so they can build buildings, have big schemes, do great things—*when the need is to serve the people.*

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed... [I want you to think about how everyone gives heed to the pope today, because the successor of Simon Magus is the pope.] ...from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'" — meaning that *he has authority of God.*

This is why, in some of the commentary in the New Testament, I've got some quotes in there from the pope's themselves, as to whom they claim themselves to be. And even one pope said, 'Considering all the powers that I have and how I'm over all the kings in the temporal bases, I'm over all bishops and all cardinals and I myself am the representative of God, what can you say of me, but I'm God.'

"...Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the gospel—the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed..." (vs 11-13).

It's like this: his belief was the way he wanted to believe. And it's kind of like sitting down with the Soviets and talking about human rights and democracy. In their minds they have a definition of it, so when you talk to them about it, they seem to agree with you. But they don't agree with you at all, because their definitions are different than your definitions. Here he also believed. He didn't believe unto repentance—*that's the key*. We'll see in a little bit *why* he believed; and after being baptized—so he was already baptized! Imagine! Can there be a false baptism? *Of course!* How can there be false baptisms? *Because there must be repentance first.*

Well, the question is: Was he able to dupe Philip? Philip probably thought, 'Oh boy, isn't this great. This man is being baptized.' That's why God didn't give His Holy Spirit to any of them, and we'll see what happened here as we go along.

"...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip..." (v 13). Remember this: Go back to the last Passover of Jesus. Who was there beside Jesus and the apostles? *Satan! Satan likes to get close to someone who's doing the will of God, to subvert them!* So, the only thing we can say is, that Philip—not having the experience—probably made not too good a judgment in this. It wasn't sin, but God caused this so we would know the wiles of Satan and how he wants to get into the Church, to control it.

"...and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them" (vs 13-14). Two leading apostles—right? *Yes!* 'We better get down here and find out what's going on' because they probably also heard that Simon was baptized. And they probably said, 'What! Simon was baptized?!' It's like this, let's just use another extreme case today. Someone goes to Iran and Ahmadinejad is baptized. WHAT?!

Verse 15: "Who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them... [all the others that Philip had baptized] ...that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them..." (vs 15-16). The reason it didn't was God was holding it back because of the situation with Simon—but God wanted to teach the Church and everybody a lesson, that as soon as things start going the way God wants, Satan is there to try and turn it.

"...but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 16-17).

Now let's look at Simon's attitude, v 18: "Now, when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles,

he offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit'" (v 18-19). Let's analyze this for just a bit:

He was leader of the religion in Samaria. He was practicing witchcraft and sorcery. And they obviously had their idols or statues and everything that they had there, just kind of picture walking into St. Peter's Basilica and that's what you're dealing with. You're dealing with fear, with superstition. You're dealing with demons, because Philip came casting out demons. How did they get all the demons? *Probably through going and worshipping under auspices of Simon Magus!* This will give you more of the realistic scene of what was happening.

If Simon had totally repented, what would he do? *He would completely renounced sorcery, witchcraft, idolatry, superstition, Satan.* It probably would have been recorded that Simon really repented and he got himself a big sledge hammer and went into his own church and destroyed every idol, tore down the altar, ripped down all the pictures, burned them and fell on the ground in great, weeping repentance and humility. *Didn't happen!*

What was he going to do, which he did anyway? *He was going to use the name of Jesus Christ and continue doing what he was doing.* And developed one of the first Gnostic, satanic religions called 'Christian.' Now, if you want a real eye-opener on it, go to *McClintock and Strongs Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* and read about Simon Magus. Even the Catholic Church condemns him, and they condemn him not only because he was wrong—which they could see that he is wrong—but so they would not have any of their origin traced back to him. You would have to do it.

Let's see what Peter said, v 20: "...May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither **part nor lot** in this matter... [*in the apostleship and preaching the Gospel*] ...for **your heart is not right before God**" (vs 20-21). Yet, what did he want? *He wanted authority, he wanted power, he was going to use money—and if he used money, what would he do? He would merchandise everybody who came along!*

Verse 22: "'Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness... [this is in the strongest terms possible in the Greek] ...and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you... [God gave Peter discernment of his heart and of his mind] ...For I perceive *that* you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness'" (vs 22-23). That's describing a captive of Satan the devil. Is this not Satan's attitude? *Yes, it is!*

Now notice Simon's answer—this is really something! Verse 24: "But Simon answered *and* said, 'You beseech the Lord on my behalf...'" He didn't want to repent, he wanted someone else to do the repentance for him. And we have the same thing carried over today—don't we? You go to the priest, you confess your sins and he prays for you, while you do 'hail Marys and our fathers.'

"...so that none of *those* things which you have spoken may come upon me" (v 24). But they did come upon him. History records he went out, used the name of Jesus. He was one of the first ones to believe in the trinity. He picked up one of the local prostitutes there, made her the image of god—her name was Helen. And went on down into Egypt where there were plenty of Gnostics waiting for him. So see, whenever the Truth of God is really preached and those ministers and elders who teach and preach it, ***they must watch themselves***—as Paul said.

2-Corinthians 11:13<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>. They are 'transforming themselves,' claiming it's a work of God. They're doing for themselves. And I'll tell you one thing, if you want a sure route to disaster and it doesn't tell you how long it will take, you start using the tithe money from the people of God, and using it for yourself to build your own empire and to up-build yourself, know for sure the judgment of God is going to come. So, all those who have been through the Church of God where these things have happened, you need to look back and understand why God destroyed it. And don't ever get yourself in a situation where you're helping to build up that kind of empire again.

Let's understand something very important which needs to be brought out here: Do not try and re-build what God has destroyed. You need to build on the foundation of Christ. And there are too many ministers and members who want to go back to the 'good old days.' But those were the *bad old days* when you really understand it. And let's see what else happens when all of these false ministers—supposedly being the ministers of God—what happens to them. Let's understand a couple of other things here. Before the infiltration really took place and the Worldwide Church of God started to go bad, when they were preaching the Truth, following the Gospel, living by the Word of God, it was good—and they were growing in grace and knowledge, and God was blessing them. But there came a time BAM! when it began to change—and it probably began with the death of Herbert Armstrong's wife, Loma. And everything else went down from there.

Look at the destruction of Jerusalem and how many times people tried to rebuild it—and it has failed. Finally, God let it be rebuilt by the Muslims—Gentiles. And the Jews are still at it. God

will let them build the temple in the end-time to show them for sure, animal sacrifices never make you right with God, period!

2-Corinthians 11:13: "...transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (vs 13-14). Always there is a benefit; always there is something good. That's how Satan entraps people. When we get to overcoming the wiles of the devil and being rescued from the evil one.

Verse 15: "Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works. Again I say, no one should consider me a fool; but if otherwise, receive me even as a fool, that I also may boast a little" (vs 15-16).

We'll go through some of the things that the Apostle Paul went through. I don't think there's any of us today who has gone through what he's gone through. But I'll tell you this: every true minister of God who has remained faithful, has had to go through a lot of things—they, their wives and their families—to remain faithful to God because people went on with their foolishness.

Verse 17: "What I am *now* saying, I do not speak according to *the* Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting." It's here in the Word of God, so now it is of God to teach us a lesson. And let's look at what he went through.

Verse 18: "Since many boast according to *the* flesh, I also will boast. For since you are *so* intelligent..." (vs 18-19). 'Since you're so smart'; that's what he's saying.

"...you gladly bear with fools.... [*'every wind of doctrine,' every slight of hand*] ...For you bear *it* if anyone brings you into bondage, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*, if anyone exalts himself... [*over you*] ...if anyone beats you on the face" (vs 19-20).

Look at all the abuse that people took. This is what happens, and there's even one man who was so arrogant, and yet, so fearful in his controlling the people in the Church, that he's absolutely gone against God by ***forbidding***—under pain of disfellowshipment and lost of salvation (which no man can do)—that if you even talk to your father and mother, if they belong to a different Church of God, you are sinning against God. Well no, he's causing them to break the commandment: 'honor your father and your mother.' And know that his day of judgment for doing so ***is not to far down the road***. Because if we haven't learned anything from our experiences with the turmoil in the Church, then

there's a very short space.

Verse 21: "I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever way anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold."

Now let's look at their qualifications. This is why it was so deceptive. And remember, they didn't have rapid communications like we have. No one could pick up a phone and say, 'Hey, watch out for this guy, he came to our congregation and just about blew everybody away.' And since it was so close to how the original church was, and what happened to the original church? All the apostles came from where? *They were considered Jews, but they were actually from the tribe of Benjamin and Levi!* Here come these false prophets. Now let's think of it this way: I want you to go back and just kind of keep this in mind: How many people followed Jesus around when He was preaching and teaching and doing miracles? *Thousands and thousands!* They saw Him. They heard Him, and He fed the 4,000 and the 5,000. As Peter said, 'This thing was not done in a corner.' This was well known everywhere.

All right, here we come years later to the church that Paul established in Corinth. And here comes some false preachers. And they present their credentials. Since all the apostles were Jews or Hebrews, what did they say they were?

Verse 22: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." So, you look at all the physical qualifications and they say, 'Hey, I've heard Jesus. I saw Jesus.' I wonder how many were Levites saying, 'Well, hey, I'm a Levite. Since I'm a Levite you can tithe to me.' I mean, just think about what was going on here.

Verse 23: "Are they servants of Christ? (**I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.**)...." (vs 22-23). *No!* If you want to know the servants of Christ, they are the ones who truly teach the Word of God and serve the people of God. It's that simple. If you go on Trinity Television Broadcasting and watch that, look at them and ask: Have any of them gone through anything here?

None of us has gone through anything that Paul went through. However, anyone who's going to really preach the Truth is not going to get on television and compromise it. Because they have one little requirement for the Trinity Television Broadcasting—they don't state it this way, but I will: You must believe in the false doctrine of the trinity or you're not allowed to speak on this television station. They don't say false doctrine, but they say you must believe in the trinity. All right, that eliminates any minister who's going to speak

the Truth of God that there are two: God the Father and Jesus Christ, Who was God before He became human. Eliminates all of them.

So, you already have those there who believe in false doctrine. Watch what they do. Watch what they say. How much is it to build themselves up? Look at the way they dress themselves in slick suits. Look at the stage setting that they have: with gold, I've seen some of it. Gold mirrors and very expensive furniture and all of this sort of thing. And they're talking about God and they pet and curry each other how good they are. And 'if you send in this offering, we'll send you this.' So, they're merchandising people.

Paul—in order to show his true credentials as compared to them, and what he had to go through in order to come and preach to them—notice what he experienced. And none of us can say we've experienced any of this.

Verse 23: "Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) So am I, above *and beyond measure*—in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in imprisonments more frequent, in deaths often... [death watches] ...Five times from *the Jews* I received forty *stripes* less one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned... [and he was left for dead (Acts 14)] ...three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I spent in the deep... [holding on, clinging to some part of a wrecked ship] ...*I have been* in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from *my own* race, in perils from *the Gentiles*, in perils in *the* city, in perils in *the* desert, in perils on *the* sea, in perils among false brethren" (vs 23-26).

So, there are false brethren, too. He did all of this to preach the Truth. He did all of this to serve the brethren. He's making a point, that look, you have all this that was given to you on a golden platter and what do you do? You run off and follow false doctrines, false ministers and have turned dingy! So, there's a great application for us today.

Verse 27<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides *all* these things from the *world* outside, pressing on me daily is the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I do not burn? If it is necessary for me to boast, I will boast *in* the things concerning my weakness.... [not how great I am] ...The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is blessed into the ages *of eternity*, knows that **I do not lie**" (vs 27-31). That's quite something— isn't it? *Yes!*

I know this is going a little astray from the

*keys to answered prayer*, but it's really not from the point of view when we understand that if you're attending a church where there are all kinds of strange things being taught and preached, weird ideas that are coming from many different corners, how do you feel while you're sitting in that congregation?

How can you really go home and pray and study unless you're being fed and built up in the World of God? Because the truth is this: ***the key for any of us in answered prayer is to be inspired from the Word of God to want to do the will of God.*** To be inspired by the love and Truth of God that we may repent, because God loves us, and He wants us to be His children. But men come in and create the religions and create their way of doing things and have their own brand of Christianity, and it takes away from the real Truth. We can look out and see this in the world.

How is it in the Church of God? And it does affect everyone's prayer life, who is concerned in it.

- How do you pray?
- How do you have a clear conscience when someone is putting fear into you, being preached from the pulpit? *Of course, it does!*
- How does it affect your prayer life when you understand the hypocritical nature of what is being done and God finally exposed them for their hypocrisy?

Some people give up on God! So that's why it's very, very important that your relationship—as I have covered over and over again—that your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is so important.

Now let's see what they were battling. Let's see how this developed. Let's also understand this: What we're talking about concerning churches and religion, you also see it in politics. Little different scale, little different way of doing things, but you're dealing in it; because what do they do? *They tax and take money—right? They lie and cheat to you. Tell you wonderful things they're going to do and it never happens.*

1-John 2:18: "Little children, it is *the* last time; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up..." What is an antichrist? *Someone who speaks against the Word of God and someone who twists and turns the teachings of Jesus!* That's who an antichrist is. The personification of the final antichrist, that's going to lead the world, does every one of those things.

"...by which we know that it is *the* last

time" (v 18). Let's understand: That applied then because they were coming to the close of what age? *The close of the apostolic age and the destruction of the temple*—which was a prophetic fore-type of the end-time! This is not only a statement in fact of then, but it's a prophecy for our time, today. Do we have a lot of antichrists today? *Everywhere!*

Verse 19: "They went out from among us, but they were not of us because if they were of us, they would have remained with us; nevertheless, *they left* that they might be exposed *to show* that *they* all were not of us." That's where it got to; it was really quite a thing that was going on.

Let's see a warning by Peter. He's talking directly to elders, and this reflects that Peter learned some lessons, too, from the things that he had done.

1-Peter 5:1: "*The elders who are among you* I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God *that is among you...*" (vs 1-2) How do you feed them? *With the Truth, with the Word of God*—that's how you do it.

That's why every minister or elder has got to study and preach, study and put together, let the Word of God ***rule*** in his mind. Ask God for inspiration in the teaching. And in every sermon—whatever is given—or teaching, there needs to be preparation. People ask me: How do you prepare for sermons? My answer is: *all the time*. But I have to sit down and put my sermons together, and I have to make them so it's going to feed the flock. The worst kind of sermon that anyone can give is to give a sermon to impress people of how good you are, because your vanity's going to come out. And we've seen enough of that. You have to understand the brethren. You have to know the needs of the brethren. And feed the flock because—as we started out in Acts 20—*God has made you overseers to feed the flock of God*. It's a great and awesome responsibility.

"...exercising oversight not by compulsion... [just because it's been pushed upon you to do it] ...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*" (v 2). I think the *King James* says 'not greedy for filthy lucre'—why? This shows that the churches and the elders handled the tithes and offerings. That's what it's showing.

Verse 3: "Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions..."—because the brethren of God and the flock of God belong to God. They're not the minister's; they're not the elder's. Don't belong to them. A minister and elder is a steward to help and to teach and to uplift, so that the brethren

- can study and pray and have their lives

- changed
- have their prayers answered
- have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

That's where it is! That's what it's all about!

"...but *by* being examples to the flock of *God*" (v 3). The worst thing in the world is to have a hypocritical minister who says: 'Do as I tell you, but not as I do. You are not to live in sin, but don't question me living in sin.' Being examples! Because the day of reckoning is coming.

Verse 4: "And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory." Let's notice what he gets into, because if these are not the right attitudes in the eldership and within the fellowship groups and the congregations, what happens? *You open the door to Satan*. And that affects everything.

Verse 5: "In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all *of you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time" (vs 5-6). And when is the 'due time' and the 'exaltation'? *The resurrection!*

Verse 7: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [What you can do is say this, because if you are not doing everything—vs 1-7—notice]: ...Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, **seeking anyone he may devour**" (vs 7-8). So, when we pray 'deliver us from the evil one' there's a whole lot to that little phrase in the prayer in Matt. 6, is there not? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 9: "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith... [You can't combat Satan the devil with your own devices, because he's smarter than you.] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world."

That's why being rescued and delivered from the evil one is an important part of our prayer life every single day. Now, we'll continue on and get into the way that Satan likes to come into individual lives.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Corinthians 11:13
- 2) Acts 8:8-24
- 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-31
- 4) 1 John 2:18-19

#### 5) 1 Peter 5:1-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 4
- Acts 14
- Matthew 6

Also referenced: *Mclintock & Strongs Encyclopedia of religion and Ethics*

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## Keys to Answered Prayer XV Trust God for Deliverance

Fred R. Coulter

Let's review just a little bit some of the keys to answered prayer:

### 1. Believe God

- believe what He says
- believe what is in His Word

God does not have to talk to you directly, because what you have in the Old and New Testament combined are the very words of God. So, in order to believe God, *you have believe His Word!*

### 2. Obey God

God is not a God of lawlessness. God is a lawgiver. If God, being the Lawgiver abolishes law, then He is capricious and He is lawless and He is a liar and cannot be God.

### 3. You have to love God

Love God with all your heart, mind and soul and being.

### 4. You have to trust God

### 5 God will deliver you

Today we're going to cover *trust God* and the *deliverance* that God will give us. Let's first of all understand how important that this is. We're going to focus in on *trusting God!* What we have to realize is that *regardless of the circumstances, always trust God*, even in the face of what looks like immanent death.

I heard the story of a Seventh-Day Adventist who was drafted into the German army in WWII, and he trusted God to place him where he wouldn't have to be in combat—so they placed him in the transportation and mechanics department. He was allowed to have the Sabbath off because he did good work and trusted God all during the war. He was never wounded. He saw a lot happen, but he was never wounded. At the end of the war he was in the eastern zone and God opened the way for him to come to the western zone before the Soviets really finally took over. He gave that as his personal testimony that in spite of the circumstances, regardless of how bad it may seem, *you can always trust God!*

Psalms 40:1: is a very good for that: "I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry." This has to do with prayer. You're not going to get your answers to prayer immediately just because you pray. Sometimes you have to continuously pray.

Some people have asked me: 'What if I'm continuously praying for the same thing day after day? Is that 'vain repetition'? *No!* It's not vain repetition as long as it is something that you are praying about and you need an answer to it; you keep at it!

Just like the widow who kept coming to the judge 'to avenge me' (Luke 18). Kept coming, *kept coming, kept coming!* That is not *vain* repetition; that is *needed* repetition.

Verse 2: "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps"

When I read that I think of Jeremiah. The circumstances of his ministry and prophecy at times was almost unreal. The king and the princes were so against him when he would come and prophesy the Truth that they connived to arrest him and they threw him into the muck of the sewer.

Here you are God's prophet and God says: 'I'll be with you.' Here you are in 'skubalon' up to your chest, and the smell and the stench! What did God do? *God sent a man who was a Cushite!* He got some other men and they got some old rags and made a rope out of it and called 'Jeremiah, are you still alive?' He said, 'yes!' *Here, put this around you and we'll pull you out.* Can you imagine trying to pull a body out of that muck—sucking you in—get up out of that and all the filth? If I was in circumstances like that I know I would have vomited all over the place; and think of all the bugs and all the creatures down there and the rats and things down there in the sewer. I think of Jeremiah and the circumstances he was in.

Verse 3: "And He has put a new song in my mouth..." That reminds me of Paul when he and Silas were arrested for preaching the Gospel. What did they do? *They sang hymns all night!* And at midnight God sent an earthquake, destroyed the jail and the jailer was all upset and he came out and he said: 'You men of God, are you still alive?' *Yes!* 'I'll take you out; come on in, come and eat.' And he and his whole household repented.

"...even praise unto our God: many shall see and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.... [regardless of the circumstances, remember this]: ...Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust and... [who offers them a way out] ...does not respect the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies" (vs 3-4)—to avoid the problem. So, you can always

avoid persecution for a time by denying Jesus. But that's not trusting in God. We'll look at what Peter did a little later.

This is why the Psalms are so good, regardless of the physical circumstances of what you have. While we're going through this, we need to understand that *you have nothing you didn't receive—nothing!* So, don't get the big-head over anything, regardless of what you have

Psalm 44: 6: "For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me." Even in physical circumstances and spiritual circumstance—either way—the physical things are not going to save you. God has to give you a way out.

Verse 7: "But You have saved us from our enemies and have put them to shame, those who hated us. In God we boast all the day long and praise Your name forever. Selah" (vs 6-8). All of you Laodiceans out there, listen up! This is especially for those who are Laodiceans:

Psalm 49:1: "Hear this, all you people; give ear, all inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline my ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the lyre. Why should I fear in the days of evil..." (vs 1-5). {Note: Psa 91 }

"...when the iniquity of my supplanters surrounds me? Those who trust in their wealth ... [think of all who are wealthy] ... and in their many riches boast themselves" (vs 5-6). Remember what happened to Hezekiah after God gave him 15 years to his life and he lived? What happened? *The ambassadors from Babylon came over!* What did he do? *He showed them all the wealth of the whole kingdom of Judah!* And God said, "Why did you do that?"

Verse 7: "No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is costly, and no payment is ever enough. That he should live forever and never see corruption, for he sees wise men die; likewise the fool and the brutish person perish together, and leave their wealth to others Their inward thought is that their houses shall go on forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names" (vs 7-11). Great memorials to them!

If you travel through West Virginia—since you had Senator Harry Byrd as your senator back there—you have more Senator Byrd streets: avenues, boulevards, circles, hospitals, roads, buildings named after Senator Byrd. The reason is, he got the money from the government to do it.

Verse 12: "Nevertheless, man, though high in honor, does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the way of the foolish, and of their followers who delight in their sayings. Selah" (vs 12-13). God is the One Who will redeem it. That's quite a Psalm.

All of these have to do with prayer, and the circumstances of prayer, and the reason to pray. These are *the keys to answered prayer*. And another thing that is important since we're talking about trouble and distress: *don't wait until you're in troubles and distress before you pray*. Just like America when 9/11 happened—'Oh, God bless America'—well they hadn't given it a thought up to that time. Don't wait until disaster is upon you. Pray every day. That's why prayer every day is absolutely essential for your relationship with God. However, if you are in distress, *pray!* Don't wait till you can get some place to get on your knees—just pray right in your mind right at the time.

Psalm 118:5: "I called upon the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place. The LORD is on my side..." (vs 5-6). The reason He's on our side is because we are on His side. It's just like Moses, after he came down and the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf, which Aaron made, and Moses said, 'Aaron, why did you do this?' He said, 'Well, I got the gold and threw it in the fire and out came this calf.' Moses said, 'All of those of you who are on the Lord's side, come over here.' So, all the Levites came over there, and the ones who were involved in it, the earth opened up and that took care of them. *In order for God to be on your side, you first have to be on God's side.*

Verse 6: "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" If you're going to trust God, you don't have to have fear of any kind. That doesn't mean that you go out and wildly do things and don't have caution and do things in a proper way, at all.

Verse 7: "The LORD is for me as my Helper ... [you'll see that over and over again] ...therefore, I will look in triumph upon those who hate me." You don't have to go out and fight your battle. God is perfectly able to take care of it—always remember that. You have to do your part:

- by prayer
- by trusting
- by believing God
- obeying God
- loving God
- and trusting Him

Verse 8: “**It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in princes** [rulers].... [especially the political climate that it is today] ...All the nations surround me, but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.... [this is actually a prophecy of what Christ is going to do when He returns] ...They surround me; yea, they surround me, but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them” (vs 8-11).

The Proverbs are really a very good place—especially for teenagers and young adults—to program your mind with the things that will give you absolute right and wrong. Let’s just give you an example of it:

Proverbs 11:27: “He who diligently seeks good seeks favor; but he who seeks mischief, it shall come to him.” Good lesson in life. If you want to ding around and fool around you’re going to get yourself in trouble. But if you diligently seek good, you’re going to procure the favor and you will get the things that you need.

Verse 28: “He that trusts in his riches shall fall... [Absolute living truth. All of those who have been in the Worldwide Church of God should understand that. When the church came to the point of trusting in its riches and its property and its wealth and its influence, what happened? *They fell!* Not all at once. A fall doesn’t necessarily come all at once. It can come in stages.] ...but the righteous shall blossom like a branch.”

By the way, studying the Proverbs is good for anyone who has had problems with the Law; and has a problem of thinking of right and wrong; good and evil. Too many people today are taught relativism; and too many people today are taught lawlessness—and they get in a habit pattern of thinking that they can do anything. Get in a habit pattern of thinking, ‘Well, if I do this then I’ll improve myself.’ That is really an illegal type of gain thing. And this is the kind of thinking that gets into those who get involved with drugs, who get involved with sex, who get involved with these things—well it doesn’t matter. Yes, it does! Because always remember this: ***No one is ever free from God anywhere at a any time. Never! Whether you’re converted or not converted!*** If God knows when a sparrow falls, God also is responsible for blessing the righteous, for cursing the wicked. Every act that you do is recorded in your mind. And God is a heart-knowing God.

So, if you love God and keep His commandments and if you believe in and obey His voice, and if you trust Him, then He’s going to bless you. If you don’t, then you’re not going to be

blessed. That’s why the Proverbs are so good—helps get your thinking straight.

Proverbs 28:25: “He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but **he who puts his trust in the LORD shall be enriched**.... [you will be made prosperous in the Word of God] ...He who trusts in his own heart is a fool; but whoever walks wisely, he shall be delivered” (vs 25-26).

Proverbs 3:5 is really a keystone of behavior: “Trust in the LORD... [whenever you’re in trouble] ...Trust in the LORD [if you feel like it] ...Trust in the LORD...” if you are comfortable; **NO!**

It says, v 5: “Trust in the LORD **with all your heart**... [then God will lead you; God will guide you] ...and lean not unto your own understanding.” That ties right in with that Proverb: ‘he who trusts in his own heart is a fool.’ So, you can’t go by how you feel. You can’t let your emotions dictate to you what should be. You have to have the Truth of God, the Word of God and the Spirit of God to do that.

Verse 6: “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil” (vs 6-7).

Let’s understand something, brethren: Prayer from the heart—trusting, believing—God will always answer ***always!*** The answers don’t come all at once. The answers may be a little different than you have figured. And some of the answers some of the time, may be ‘no’ for your own good. Not every prayer to God is a ‘yes’—because God is not going to answer a prayer that you pray to fill your own lust. He may answer the prayer by giving you a trial, rather than give you what you want.

This is why the Proverbs are so good, because it’s black and white, right and wrong, good and evil, righteousness and wickedness. God is the Supreme Parent, and just like parents don’t give everything to their children—for their own good—likewise God does not give everything to us and answer every prayer in the affirmative, for our own good. What God is trying to develop is character—His character in you.

Proverbs 15:8: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD...” Think about it for just a minute: Why do the Holy Days start with the Passover? *Because you cannot approach God without a sacrifice!* The ***supreme sacrifice*** is Jesus Christ. That’s why! You can’t take it any way *you want to*; in a manner that *you want to*, because then you’re not trusting God, you’re not believing God, you’re not obeying God, etc. That’s why, and you

can't have any greater sacrifice. That's why also every day in our prayers we ask God to forgive us our sins—and that requires a sacrifice.

Notice the second half of this: "...**but the prayer of the upright is His delight**" (v 8). Have you ever thought about that God delights in your prayers. God intervenes to help you. You're upright because of Jesus Christ.

Verse 9: "The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD... [You have two abominations—don't you?] ...**but He loves him who pursues righteousness.**" Sometimes God gives us correction. And remember what Jeremiah said: 'Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him to direct his paths. Oh, correct me with judgment.' Of course, that means mercy as well.

Verse 10: "There *is* grievous correction for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof shall die." Very interesting— isn't it? All of those showing that *you have to trust in God!*

Now, let's come to Psalm 115:1: "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory... [all the glory goes to God, everything that there is] ...for Your mercy and for Your Truth's sake" (vs 1-2). That's why if you try and gauge your righteousness and standing with God based upon your physical possessions, you're going to miss the whole point.

That's what the Laodiceans never understand. They say, 'Well, God blesses those who...whatever—tithes or whatever. All of that is true. But, don't turn around and look and say, 'I must be righteous because God gave this to me.' or 'I must be good because God gave this to me.' *No!* There is 'not one good, no not one.' But it's 'for His mercy and for His Truth's sake.'

Verse 2: "Why should the nations say, 'Where now is their God?' Our God is in the heavens; He has done whatever He has pleased" (vs 2-3). God is going to help you. God is going to intervene. This whole Psalm is on trusting God. Now, it's going to be vs trusting in idols. There are a lot of people who run into a Cathedral—it could be Catholic; it could be Buddhist; it could be Hindu, whatever; it could be Protestant.

Verse 4: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; they have noses, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; they have feet, but they do not walk; they do not make a sound through their throat. The ones who make them are like them, and so is everyone who trusts in them"(vs 4-8).

Think about this when you see a cross or a crucifix hanging on a mirror in a car. They're trusting in that idol. Think about this when they go before an idol and pray to the virgin Mary. She can't do anything. It's the work of a hand. You're worshipping something that some man made. 'Oh well, this represents...' God said, 'Don't even make it.' It doesn't represent anything. That's a lie and a delusion.

Notice a comparison, v 9: "O Israel... [since the Church is spiritual Israel, we could say: 'O Church of God'] ...trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron... [we could say: 'O the ministers of the Church of God.'] ... trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O you who fear the LORD... [That's anyone. It starts out with Israel and then Aaron and now everyone.] ...trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the LORD, both small and great. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children" (vs 9-14).

Now let's understand this: We need to be blessed in the spiritual understanding of the Word of God, being led by the Holy Spirit of God. Some people might say, 'Well, I don't know how to pray.' Well, we'll get to that in just a minute. Let's finish off this Psalm because this is a great Psalm here.

Verse 15: "May you be blessed of the LORD Who made the heavens and the earth.... [you can't get any greater blessings than that] ...The heavens, even the heavens, are the LORD'S; but the earth He has given to the children of men. The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence. But as for us, we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. O praise the LORD!" (vs 9-18).

Psalm 116:1: "I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice... [He'll answer your prayers] ...*and* my prayers. Because He has bowed down His ear to me, therefore, I will call upon Him as long as I live.... [regardless of the circumstances] ...The sorrows of death hemmed me in, and the pains of the grave took hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: 'O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.' Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me" (vs 1-6).

Let's see a great principle for us today. But not only can we pray, but we also have a great deal of help with our prayers, Romans 8:22: "For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that*, but

even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies” (vs 22-23). Showing the inner turmoil and strife that we go through—and we do.

Verse 24: “For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees?... [that’s self-evident] ...But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience. Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses... [we all have our weaknesses, every single one of us] ...because we do not fully understand what we should pray for, according as it is necessary...” (vs 24-26).

How do you have a perfectly righteous prayer, which is coming from us who are carnal, yet, we have the Spirit of God? This is why we can’t save ourselves. We can only be saved by something greater than us. We can only have been created by something greater than us. So, we have the Spirit to help us.

“...but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed by us” (v 26). This is not talking in tongues as the Pentecostals believe. This is merely saying that the Spirit of God is communicating to God our thoughts and filtering out all of the other things that interfere in our prayer, and is making known to God in the language that he receives what we’re actually saying and the desire of our heart.

This is very interesting, too, when praying because if you’re praying in faith and belief and trust; and your prayer is sincere and honest and forthright, then God’s Spirit, which is the Spirit of Truth is going to convey that to God. But if we’re praying with pretense, if we’re praying for show, God’s Spirit is also going to reveal that, too—isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!* God is there to help us. The Spirit of Truth is there to help us.

Verse 27: “And the One Who **searches the hearts**... [that’s what God does with His Spirit, He searches the heart] ...comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints **according to the will of God**.... [That’s something—isn’t it? God intervening in that way and the Spirit intervening in that way.] ...according to *the will of God*... [that’s how our prayers are answered] ...And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*” (vs 27-28). That works right with that.

- Don’t feel as though that you can’t pray.
- Don’t feel as though that it’s too hard for you to do.

- Don’t feel as though because you’ve had prayers in the past, which have not worked out the way that they should, or prayers that you have felt that God didn’t answer.

Let me tell you this: ***Trusting in the Lord, believing in God is so important***, because you can be absolutely guaranteed this: If you pray—and then you get up off your knees and say, ‘I wonder if God heard me?’ You just canceled the whole prayer. If you doubt whether God hears you, do like David did. How did he start out some of his prayers and Psalms? He said, ‘Oh God, hear me!’ And another one: ‘Lord help my unbelief. I believe, but help my unbelief.’ That’s all a part of confessing our sins and drawing close to God.

Psalms 112:1: “Praise you the LORD! Blessed *is* the man *that* fears the LORD...”

Psalms 111:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”

Psalms 112:1: “...Blessed *is* the man *that* fears the LORD, who **delights greatly in His commandments**.” Not griping, not complaining, not thinking about, ‘Well, if I didn’t keep the Sabbath I could be doing thus and such and so and so.’ Sure you could. But how is God going to deal with you because you think that way. We’re to call the Sabbath ‘a delight.’ God is giving us His blessing and His Spirit on the Sabbath Day. He’s not depriving us of anything! That’s why when the Sabbath comes, BAM! You make the Sabbath the best day of the week. And you keep the Sabbath—not just to keep it, but to **fulfill** the Sabbath. How do you do that?

- with prayer
- with study
- with looking at the Sabbath as the greatest day of the week
- a day for relationship with God
- a day of fellowship with brethren if you can do that

Verse 2: “His seed shall be mighty upon earth... [yes we will after the resurrection] ...the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house...” (vs 2-3)—true wealth, true riches. Remember what Jesus said, ‘If you’re faithful in a little, you’ll be faithful in much.’ If you haven’t been faithful in a little, Who’s going to trust you with the true riches? This is talking here about the true riches. Not the riches and wealth that we have in the deceived world today—where there is no money. All you have are digital accounts where you have funds. And that’s it!

“...and his righteousness endures forever. To the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness. It is well with the man who is gracious and lends freely; who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.... [of God] ...He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, **trusting in the LORD**. His heart is established; he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies” (vs 3-8).

Of course, you could also transfer that to Christ, of which it said of the Father, that Christ is going to succeed until He puts all the enemies under His feet and then deliver the Kingdom up to God the Father. “His heart is established; he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies.”

(go to the next track)

We’ve covered part of this during the Days of Unleavened Bread, which is deliverance or being rescued—rescued from Satan and deliverance by God. He’s the only One Who can rescue us. That’s why in Matt. 6 it says: ‘deliver us from evil’ but it really should be translated: ‘rescue us from the evil one.’ Because Satan is the there to really try and tempt. And when these things come along, we need to look to God to rescue us from it—and to help us with it. Help us to overcome.

- We know that Satan is deceiving the whole world.
- We know that Satan has many people working for him today.
- We know that Satan’s ministers appear as angels of light, and he himself does, too.

We already covered that God doesn’t tempt with evil. We’ve already shown that Satan tempts with evil, with power, and he tempts with those things which look good—to give a benefit. And that’s how Satan started out with Eve: ‘I’ll give you a benefit if you do it my way.’ It appeals as a benefit! It looks like it is good! But what is it appealing to?

Let’s come to 1-John, the second chapter, and let’s see why we need to be delivered from our own sins, be delivered from Satan. Also, in order to be delivered from Satan, we need to know what his tactics are, and we need to know that we can overcome.

1-John 2:12 “I am writing to you, little children, because *your* sins have been forgiven you through His name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known Him Who *is* from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked *one*....” (vs 12-13). We can’t be rescued from Satan and overcome the wicked one **unless we look to God to rescue us and**

**deliver us.**

“...I am writing to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I wrote to you, fathers, because you have known Him Who *is* from the beginning. I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God is dwelling in you, and you have overcome the wicked *one*....” (vs 13-14). He says that twice.

Here’s how you have your part in overcoming the wicked one, v 15: “**Do not love the world...**”—the society around, because *we have to be rescued from sin, self, Satan and society.*

“...**nor the things that are in the world...** [Never let your life be all wrapped up in things, gadgets, acquiring this and that and the other thing.] ...**If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him** because everything that *is* in the world...” (vs 15-16). Now that’s quite a statement—isn’t it? EVERYTHING! I want you to take v 16 and when you’re watching television just see exactly that’s how Satan deals.

“...—the lust of the flesh... [Isn’t that what we have when we see all these commercials, pleasing the flesh] ...and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world” (v 16).

This is how Satan approached Eve—didn’t he? Came to her and said,

- you’re going to have a benefit
- you can become gods
- if you eat this, in dying you shall not surely die
- even though you may die, you’re really not going to die
- God didn’t tell you the truth
- you can get a benefit now. Now look how pleasant this tree is
- look how good the fruit looks
- it’s something that you desire to make you wise

Then the ‘pretentious pride of physical life.’ We see that in all the sports—don’t we? *Everything!*

Satan will come along and say, ‘I’ll help you.’ **Of course he will!** He’ll even do you good so that he can deceive you later. He doesn’t come in with pure evil right at once—just like with Adam and Eve. ‘This is good for you. Oh, I know what God said, but just think how good this will be for you.’ It’s not from the Father, but is from the world.

Verse 17: “And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”

Let's look at some other temptations that come along with this—temptations to do good, because there are a lot of do-gooders out in the world. Satan loves a good cause. All I have to do is draw your attention to the fantastic lies of the *Inconvenient Truth about Global Warming*. And I will simply answer the question this way: I think that we should send Al Gore to Mars and let him see if he can stop the global-warming on Mars because Mars is warming up in the same number of degrees that the earth is. Global warming is not from the pollution of men or CO<sub>2</sub>—carbon dioxide feeds the plants and they absorb it and it returns back oxygen.

Rather, the things for global warming are coming because of things from the sun, from the solar system and even some things from far outer space. So, it is from God, and man isn't going to be able to stop it. But a lot of the heating is coming because of more intense sunspot activity. It's not because you're driving your car.

But Al Gore has now got his own mini-college where he brings volunteers to 'train them' to go out and evangelize other people. Schools have it so that parents must come and watch these things at school with their kids. Kids even have nightmares because they think the world is going to flood over and they're going to die. Global-warming also has to do with the internal heat of the core of the earth and the way that it's reacting—and that reacts magnetically from the magnetic storms from the sun. So you've got it from outer space and you have it from within. But everybody now that goes to this global-warming college are sent out as evangelists. They love a good cause. They don't care if it's a lie. They don't want to prove what is true.

Satan works at *getting a good cause*. Right after Peter answered the question that when Jesus said, 'Who am I?' Peter said, 'You're the Christ.' And Jesus said to Peter, 'Flesh and blood hasn't revealed this to you, but My Father has revealed it to you,' which shows that even people who are able to understand some of the Truth can be subject to deception by Satan. Now then, after that:

Matthew 16:21: "From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day.... [Now, notice Peter's reaction—a good cause!] ...But after taking Him aside... [Peter took Jesus aside] ...Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God will be favorable to you, Lord. In no way shall this happen to You'" (vs 21-22).

The implication is because 'I, Peter, am here to rescue you.' And remember who was the one who had the sword that was aiming for the servant of the high

priest's head and missed and got his ear? *It was Peter!* Can you imagine the ego that Peter would have had if he could have prevented the things that Jesus went through. 'Lord, I rescued You.'

Now notice Jesus' answer—and the reason that this is important is because Satan was trying to put an idea of good, which would lead to evil, in Peter's mind. And after all, really, the whole purpose of Jesus' coming, goes clear back to Gen. 3:15—doesn't it? And the whole Old Testament is announcing about the coming of the Messiah—isn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 23: "Then He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan!...' Remember this: ***Not all 'good' thoughts come from God!*** Have you ever been well intentioned? And then you do something and it doesn't turn out right, because the good intention is not what is right and is only a good intention based upon a faulty premise.

"...You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men" (v 23).

That's why John wrote: ***Do not love the world.*** You can see how these things then interfere with your prayer life. One of the biggest Churches of God got in such a habit of lying and fooling the brethren and they became more and more sinful and everybody thought everything was right and God was getting ready to take it down and when it went down they said, 'Why did that happen? It was so good.' *No!* You didn't see the evil and the corruption that went on. It was terrible.

Let's look at another good intention by Peter. Let's see another reaction of Peter, especially after Jesus told him what was happening. And this took place no less than at Jesus' last Passover. Remember, at the last Passover they were arguing ***who was going to be the greatest.*** Luke 22:21 shows that the carnal mind sometimes never gets it, even with the evidence right smack in front of you:

Luke 22:21: "Behold, even *now* the hand of him who is betraying Me *is* with Me at the table; And the Son of man indeed goes, according as it has been appointed, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" Then they began to question this among themselves, which of them it might be who was about to do this. And there was also an argument among them, *even* this: which of them should be considered *the greatest*" (vs 21-24).

What does this do? *It tells you they understood a lot about what they were going to do as kings ruling with Jesus!* They wanted to know: who's going to be the greatest?

Verse 25: "And He said to them, 'The kings of the nations lord over them, and those who

exercise authority over them are called benefactors.” That was long before the Democrat Party, trust me!

Verse 26: “But *it shall* not be this way *among* you; rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving. For who *is* greater, the one who is sitting *at the table*, or the one who is serving? *Is* not the one who sits *at the table*? **But I am among you as one who is serving.** Now you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom; So that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (vs 26-30). This still didn’t satisfy.

Verse 31: “Then the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon [Peter], listen *well*.... [Today we would say, ‘Listen up!'] ...Satan has demanded to have you, to sift *you* as wheat.... [Now just think: if Satan was able to really get the Apostle Peter—he couldn’t get him, so he got Simon Magus instead, right? *Yes!*] (now notice): ...But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren” (vs 31-32). ***He didn’t get the point!*** Because of his impetuosity and his self-willedness.

Verse 33: “And he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.’” ‘Lord, I’ll fight for You!’ And how many people want to go out and do a good work for God? *No, let God do the work in you and let Him provide the work He wants you to do.* Not going out and establishing your own work. All ministers better listen up! Do not set yourself up as the great, almighty mucky-muck. Remember what happened to the man who proclaimed himself as God’s only apostle on the earth, and learn a lesson.

Yes, Peter said, v 34: “...‘Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.’ But He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, *the* cock shall in no wise crow today before you have denied knowing Me three times.’” Did that happen? *Yes, it did!* That’s why you have the opposite.

All right now, Satan tempts with ***comparing***. Who are you to compare yourself to? *Jesus Christ, that’s Who*—because it’s very deceitful. Let’s come here to Mark, the fourth chapter, and let’s see that in the parable of the sower. Because this is how some people really get themselves in trouble: they compare themselves with other people.

Mark 4—Satan wanted Peter, apparently because Peter had the proclivity to be impetuous and to act without thinking; to fall for a good cause, rather than something which is true. Comment was made: That’s pretty strong to say that Satan

demanded.

- Did Satan know what he was going to do? *Well, I think that he probably did!*
- Did he not have his Peter’s in the past? *Yes, Balaam, who was at Pethor, which is another name for Peter.*
- What are the priests of Satan’s religion called? *Fathers or Potters or Peters!*

So yes, he knew.

Here is the interpretation of the *parable of the sower*—and let’s see why we have the prayer to ‘rescue us from the evil one.’ And we need that every day because ***the biggest thing that can happen to people in the Church is to be tempted by what seems good!*** Because ‘*there is a way that seems right to a man but the ends thereof are the ways of death.*’

Mark 4:14: “The sower sows the Word. Now, the ones by the way, where the Word was sown, these are the ones who hear, but Satan comes at once and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts” (vs 14-15). And that’s what Satan wants to do with people in the Church. Get them diverted just a little bit, bring a little more diversion, change the course a little bit and begin to take it out of your heart. That’s why we have to be rescued from him. That’s why we went through the whole thing:

- you need to believe God
- obey God
- you need to love God
- trust in Him
- and then we look to Him for deliverance

Verse 16: “And the ones which were in like manner sown upon the rocky places, these are *the ones* who when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with joy; but *because* they have no root in themselves, they do not endure...” (vs 16-17). You hear people say, ‘Well, I wonder where all the people who were in the Church are? *There’s your answer: they didn’t endure!* So, you have to endure to the end.

“...when tribulation or persecution arises...” (v 17). Or you can say: splits or divisions within the Church.

- Are those not persecutions and tribulations? *Yes!*
- What are you going to choose?
- Are you going to choose God and the Truth?
- Are you going to go in a way that seems right to you?
- Maybe that way that seems right is Satan holding out a *good cause for you to latch*

*onto!*

“...arises because of the Word, they are quickly offended. And those which were sown among the thorns, these are the ones who hear the Word, But the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things *that* come into *their lives* choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful” (vs 17-19).

You can probably look back, if you’ve been in the Church a long time and see many people fit into these various categories. Isn’t that true? *Yes! Absolutely!* So, the Word of God is true, every one of them. The point is this: Every one of these examples that we have used, Satan is there: it’s looks good to do this; they go a different way that looks good to them; then you throw in Satan’s twisting and turning of doctrine and then you have it. If they have the cares of this life, comparing themselves, the deceitfulness of riches—well, I have all of this—and the lust of other things comes into their lives and **chokes the Word and it becomes unfruitful**. You might say they are ‘choke Christians.’ And they always say that, too, in sports. When someone fails to do what they ought to do, they ‘choke under pressure.’

When you put the focus on the ‘cares of this life’ and the ‘deceitfulness of riches’ and the lust of other things that comes into their lives, what are you doing? What is your standard? *Your standard is comparing yourself with others!* You do not want to become the poor, humble person that is of God.

I remember a man who the first time he went to church he thought he was really something. He came into church and what did he see in church? *He saw farmers, ordinary people, poor people!* And he thought to himself: How can this be the Church of God? *Later he realized that’s whom God calls!*

2-Corinthians 10—let’s see the warning here: **Never compare yourselves with others—never, never do that!** We’ll read down through because it’s very instructive to read what Paul wrote because there’s a lot in here:

2-Corinthians 10:3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war... [our spiritual warfare] ...according to *the* flesh.”—because it is **spiritual!** That’s why you can never accomplish spiritual things by physical means. It must be with God’s Spirit.

Verse 4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds.” The greatest stronghold to overcome is your own selfish, lustful, carnal mind. And the only way you can do that is by using God’s Spirit to change and overcome.

Verse 5. “Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ... [that’s a daily effort; that’s something you do all the time] ...and having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled.... [he shows the purpose of that] ...Are you looking at things according to their appearance?....” (vs 5-7).

You can’t do that. You have to look at everything in a total package. And James brings this out. The first thing he said: ‘What if a man comes in your congregation who is dressed very poorly. And you say to him, ‘Friend, go sit over here in the corner.’ And then another man comes in who’s decked out with gold and silver and fine apparel, and you say, ‘Friend, come right up front.’ James says, are you not partial and are you not judging the heart?’ Looking at things according to their appearance.

“...If anyone is persuaded in his *own* mind that he is Christ’s, let him reconsider this concerning himself... [maybe he’s not] ...for exactly as he *is* Christ’s, so also *are* we Christ’s. For even if I should boast somewhat more concerning our authority, which the Lord has given to us for *your* edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be put to shame In order that I may not seem as though I am frightening you by means of epistles. ‘For on the one hand,’ they say, ‘*his* epistles *are* weighty and strong; but on the other hand, *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech *is* contemptible” (vs 7-10). In other words, how can someone like this write epistles like this! And we see him, what makes us want to follow him? And then he writes these epistles to correct us. Who does he think he is?

Verse 11: “Let such a one think about this: that exactly as we are in word by epistles when we are absent, so *we will be* in action when we are present. But we dare not join ranks with or compare ourselves with those who are commending themselves; for those who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves... [and that also means to others] ...**have no understanding**” (vs 11-12). And that’s exactly what Satan wants to get people to do. Then he can begin taking away from you.

All right, the next thing that Satan wants to get you to do is to *join the world*—have a good cause. And Satan will come along with a good cause. Let’s take care of these people over here. Let’s have this do-gooder activity. Let’s come to James, the fourth chapter, very instructive. Now, I’m going to read about the Church of God. It’s written to the Jews, but I’m going to read about the Church of God, because this is what is happening in the

Church of God today. And this is also another reason why prayers are not answered, because you're acting like the world, you're talking like the world, you're thinking like the world. In other words, *you're carnal!* And remember, you can never accomplish spiritual things with physical means.

James 4:1: "*What is the cause of quarrels and fightings among you?... [Think about this!] ...Is it not mainly from your own lusts... [lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, the pride of life.] ...that are warring within your members?*" That's a source of everything. And who is there to stir it up? *Satan the devil!* Let's have a good quarrel.

On some of the news that they have today, they have debates, and they never let anyone really speak what they need to speak, they just fight back and forth. No one is going to convince anybody because it's all after their own lusts and their own positions and they think they are right. The thing that Satan loves to do is get you on a cause that you think is right, *and you're totally wrong.* And when you get to the point that it makes no difference whether you're right or wrong, but the cause and the thoughts of the cause become important, then you're in trouble.

Verse 2: "You lust, and have not; you kill, and are jealous..." We're not out actually killing people, but you can destroy them by what is called *stabbing them in the back.* How does that work? *By gossip; by talk; by double-crossing!*

...and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask.... [they're not praying] ...*Then* you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume *it* on your own lusts" (vs 2-3). James is pretty strong here—isn't he? Don't be asking for things to consume on your lusts. Don't look at others and see what they have and say, 'Oh God, give it to me, too. After all I believe in communism. Let's have equal shares.'

Verse 4: "*You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?.... [Satan wants to get you to join the world] ...Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*" God is going to let you do it if you desire; because there are the choices before us.

Now let me give you a good example, a modern-day example. I mentioned in one of my sermons that Dr. Richard Land and Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church in Southern California, have joined the Council on Foreign Relations. And here is a perfect description of how it seems right in joining the world because you have a good cause. Jesus said

we are living *in* the world, but we're not to be *of* the world. They joined the Council on Foreign Relations so they can more moderate the evangelicals and fundamentalist to blend in with a more moderate world religion. So, this member in the Church sent him an e-mail and here's the answer he got back. This is Dr. Land's statement:

Council on Foreign Relations—the CFR—is a non-partisan think tank that seeks to better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.

The way you understand it is go to the Word of God—know what is right and wrong, good and evil.

In 2006 the membership extended an invitation to me to join the Council because of their desire to broaden the Council's scope by having more evangelicals involved in it's deliberation. Another example of this emphasis is that recently Michael Gerson, an evangelical who is a former chief speechwriter for President Bush, joined the CFR as a senior fellow in their Washington, D.C. office. Having accepted this unique opportunity...

Remember, they want to set up the one-world government. They want to set up the final 'beast.' That's their goal! Unique opportunity! See, Satan comes along and gives you a unique opportunity.

My participation in the work of the CFR is entirely in line with the Biblical mandate for believers to salt and light in society. Now we are.

Does Satan quote Scripture and make it sound good? *Yes!* But Jesus said we're not to become part of the world. Jesus says, 'My Kingdom is not of this world.'

The Council offers other opportunities for me to be a positive influence. [Is he going to call them to repentance?] And bring my Scripturally derived values [but are they, in truth?] beliefs and convictions to this diverse arena. It is my view that as God gives the occasion, we must be faithful to honor Him by carrying His Truths and wisdom into the marketplace of ideas and thought. As the Apostle Paul was given the opportunity to speak to the cultural elite of his day on Mars Hill, my individual membership in the CFR allows a Biblical world-view to be delivered without compromise in this venue.

Oh really? Let's see what Paul said.

Let's come to Acts 17, here's a perfect example of quoting Scripture without quoting Scripture. You name it, but you don't quote it. Why did they invite him? Do they want him to come because he represents all the Baptists? And if he can get the Baptists to begin thinking like they want them to think—and you do it a step at a time. You compromise one step at a time. How are we going to solve this problem? *You can't solve it God's way because the Kingdom of God is not here.*

Acts 17:22: "Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars' hill *and* said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities; for *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, "To an unknown God." So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance..." (vs 22-23). I can't picture Dr. Land calling all these elite 'ignorant' like Paul did here.

"...*is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands... [not of this world] ...nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things. And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord..." (vs 23-27).

I don't picture Dr. Land saying this: "...if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, 'For we are His offspring.' Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man'" (vs 27-29).

Do you think that on the Council on Foreign Relations that he's going to say, 'You know, I suggest that you tell all the Buddhists to destroy all their idols; and you tell all the Catholics—and my advice to the pope is this: Stop praying to Mary and pray to the real God.' REPENT!

Verse 30: "For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent." If he did that at his first meeting, he would no longer be invited. He would be very unceremoniously **uninvited** to ever come again.

Verse 31: "Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a

man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by* raising Him from *the* dead."

That's the message that Paul preached on Mars Hill—which is quite different from what Dr. Land has given. Why don't you just follow and see what Dr. Land is going to be preaching and how he's going to be working everything in to the ***one-world order—which is the coming Babylon the Great—which is going to take over the whole world.***

Comment was made that this is the wedge into all the Baptists now, for one of the last bastions of Protestantism that have some semblance of Truth. And we said years ago, God is going to do something with the Baptists and confront them with the choices; because as it says in the Old Testament: what is coming upon the world is coming upon ALL nations.

***Everyone is going to have to choose!*** Satan is there trying to make inroads wherever he can. And unfortunately, we can say of not joining the CFR, but remember when Worldwide Church of God said for the members: 'Well, you can join the local Rotary and you can join the local Lions and you can join these clubs.' What are they? *They are lower level operatives of the same system! You join the world!*

What is said in Rev. 18 is this whole Babylonian system is developing; it's going to encompass the whole world. Let's see God's advise about joining the world. We are not to join the world.

- we don't hate them
- but*
- we don't think like them
  - we don't act like them
  - we don't join them

And even in their causes—which appear good—are those really causes of God? *or* Diversions by Satan which look good? *or* To have do-gooders busy doing things to keep them involved in something that is going to lead to what Satan is building?

Revelation 18:1: "And after these things I saw an angel descending from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird; because all nations have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication..." (vs 1-3).

That's Babylon the Great. And we are seeing now the governments turning to religion to solve the problems of the fighting and warring

among religions by getting them to cooperate. And the thing that is spurring this along in a very fast pace is radical Islam, killing and slaughtering and bombing. And the governments can't stop it. They have to go to the religionists to get them to try and change it. It's all part of it.

"...and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury.' And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, '**Come out of her, My people**...' [We are to come out of this world. We are not to join the world.] ...so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues, For her sins have reached as far as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (vs 3-5).

*If you join these things, you're joining the world and Satan has got you exactly where he wants you. **Unless you repent, you're going to go right along with the system. Those are all the things that Satan does to try and divert us!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 40:1-4
- 2) Psalm 44:6-8
- 3) Psalm 49:1-13
- 4) Psalm 118:5-11
- 5) Proverbs 11:27-28
- 6) Proverbs 28:25-26
- 7) Proverbs 3:5-7
- 8) Proverbs 15:8-10
- 9) Psalm 115:1-18
- 10) Psalm 116:1-6
- 11) Romans 8:22-28
- 12) Psalm 112:1
- 13) Psalm 111:10
- 14) Psalm 112:1-8
- 15) 1 John 2:12-17
- 16) Matthew 16:21-23
- 17) Luke 22:21-34
- 18) Mark 4:14-19
- 19) 2 Corinthians 10:3-12
- 20) James 4:1-4
- 21) Acts 17:22-31
- 22) Revelation 18:1-5

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 18
- Psalm 91
- Matthew 6
- Genesis 3:15

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## Keys to Answered Prayer XVI Epistles of John

Fred R. Coulter

This sermon was originally done in June of 1995, as #12 in the Epistles of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John. However, because it covers some additional aspects of the keys to answered prayer, we decided to put it into the series. This is why it will go a little bit beyond some of the things concerning the keys to answered prayer. All of the rest of it will also be fundamental building blocks of our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and hence keys to answered prayer.

We want to know, we want to understand, we want to realize *exactly* what the message is that John is telling us and that we have seen the parallels between John's time and the events in the Church and our time and the events in the Church today.

1-John 5:13: "These things I have written to you who **believe in** the name of the Son of God..." Present tense participle=*you who are believing into*—because it's more than just 'on'; it is *into* (KJV). A relationship that God wants us to have spiritually is from your innermost being *into* Christ and back to you. Unfortunately, the *King James* translates it *unto* rather than *into*. The Greek word for *into* is 'eis'—when it's *into*; and when I come to the Greek word 'eis' I most generally translated it *into* because the relationship is not just, 'Oh, I recognize that Christ is the Son of God.' But your relationship is an involved relationship *into* Him and back to you.

Now, Romans 1:17—and this is the whole purpose of the, of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith..." Faith is a gift of God that comes from God *into* you, which goes back from you *into* God, as it were. So, your relationship is a deep, spiritual, continuous, ongoing thing that God has given you. And that's what's important.

"...from faith unto faith, according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'" (v 17). That is *the righteousness* (#2), whereas *the righteousness of the law* (#1)—the one who does them shall live in them.

Now let's come back to 1-John 5:13: "...you who believe in the name of the Son of God **in order that you may know...**" I want us to understand: how many times you find in the Epistles of John *knowing!*

"...**know** that you have eternal life..." (v 13). That's why it's a damnable thing for a minister to come along and try and threaten you out of eternal

life. There's going to be a time when that may be a possibility that you need to be warned unto the loss of eternal life. But to continually hold people in fear that way is not right. We are to be *knowing* on a constant, ongoing basis that we have eternal life because of the begetting—note Eph. 1:13, which is the *earnest* of the Holy Spirit (2-Cor. 1:22. And if we have that then ***we know*** that ***we have life***.

"...and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God" (v 13).

Now let's look at some things that we need to *believe into* and *believe upon* and understand concerning the things that God has given us so that we can really understand this as we're going along. We're going to show that not only believing *into* the name of the Son of God, we are believe *into* the Father and also *into* the Son.

John 5:24: "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who hears My Word..." The one that is hearing; *listening to*. As Jesus said, '*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.*'

"...and **believes Him** Who sent Me..." (v 24). It's a little different in the Greek here. It means that you are actually *believing* the Father; not just upon, but you are *believing* Him. So, you have to believe in the Son, you have to believe on the Father, you have to believe in the name of Christ.

"...has everlasting life and does not come into judgment; for he has passed from death into life" (v 24). This is why a lot of the philosophers think that John is writing at their level. ***He is not!*** Not all of the facts are given here. You have to have the rest of the Scriptures to put it together. If you have the Spirit of Life, you have the Son—***you have life!*** And you have passed from condemnation into the righteousness of God.

John 6:29: "Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God... [If anyone wants to get out and say, 'this is the work of God,' here's what Christ said it is]: ...that **you believe in Him Whom He has sent.**"

In other words, *on Christ!* In this case it's 'eis'—*into*. Our relationship is *into*. Very important! That helps make it deeper. I know that just helped me a whole lot when I first understood that concept. You can ask a Catholic, 'Do you believe on Jesus?' *Yes.* 'But do you have a relationship from you into Him?' *Oh no, we can't understand God. He's a trinity. It's a strict mystery.*

1-John 5:14, concerning answered prayer: “And this is **the confidence...**” God wants us to have confidence, always: boldness, courage, understanding. That doesn’t mean we lack in humility. That doesn’t mean we think we’re the greatest things in the world, because we’re not. **But confidence in Him!**

“And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that if we ask anything **according to His will...**” (v 14). Everything we do must be according to the will of God. And sometimes the things we experience, which are according to the will of God, we don’t think that that’s good for us. But it is in the long run. And in the long run means you have patience and you have faith, and in hindsight you understand it clearly. You don’t understand at first. I know some of the things we’ve suffered and gone through, we did not understand that. Yes, God was answering our prayer, but He was answering it *according to His will*, the way *He* wanted it answered. “...if we ask anything according to His will, **He hears us**”

We also have this promise from Jesus Christ. and I think lots of times, because we have not had that real relationship *into* Christ that many things that we have asked for have not been answered because we haven’t had the confidence or go boldly before the throne of God or be willing to wait patiently for God.

Here are the words of Christ, In John 14:13: “And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (vs 13-14).

Sometimes we have to ask in such a way according to His will, and it all has to be based upon that, and sometimes in our asking we end up *saying*:

- God, do this
- God, do that
- God, do the other thing

*Rather than:*

- God, would You please

I know in relationship in dealing with people, lots of times what we have to do is just completely put it in God’s hands and ask God to work it out the way that He wants it worked out. And that’s what’s going to have to happen.

Also notice what asking the prayer is based upon: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments” (v 15). It all ties together. This is really some good stuff.

John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me...” That’s a pretty profound statement. If you want a Bible study sometime:

- What does it mean to dwell in Christ?
- How do you live?
- What do you do?
- How is your life?

If you’re dwelling in Christ!

Verse 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...”—or live in you. This makes a whole different story in relationship to answered prayer, because if the words of God are dwelling in you, that means *the Scriptures*, and that’s the thing that’s so important. We must come to the independent expertise of *knowing God’s will* so we live by it.

**The entire purpose of any ministry is to teach the brethren to become independently competent in the Word of God.** That’s what the ministry is to do. It is not to have people around to be his little followers that he can use and dictate and manipulate and all of this sort of thing. Because he is to teach them to have this: To dwell in Christ and **have the words of Christ in them!** And now we’ve got the **whole** Bible and all the tools and things we’ve never ever had before, to where that can be. That’s my whole goal as a minister; this is what I want to do. And as I mentioned: one of my long-term goals is to make sure that we go through and study the entire New Testament in depth so that we fully understand that. And that’s why I do the things like this translation, so that we can really get into it. It’s not that I’m trying to say, ‘Well, I know more than anybody else.’ But, I’m just trying to do what I feel what it is that God wants me to do in helping to really teach the brethren.

Christ says, v 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.” God will do that. You take your worst, most terrible problem that is hanging and lingering for which you have not had an answered prayer yet, and just lay it before God and say: ‘God, it’s all in Your hands.’ And ask God to perform **His will**. And especially if it’s involving another person, it may take a little time, which you’re going to find that **God will work it out.**

We **know** that He hears us. 1-John 5:15: “And if we know that He hears us...” That’s pretty profound—isn’t it?

- When you pray are you sure that God hears you?
- Do you know that God hears you?
- *We should!*

If we're having this relationship *into* Christ, and if we have this kind of deep, spiritual relationship of loving God and loving the Father, then we *know* that He hears us. Our prayers are so much more profound. And really, when you get down to it, our prayers really reveal a greater amount of helplessness on our part—because we know that only God can do it. We know He hears us! And "...whatever we may ask, we know..." We are *knowing*—that's profound! We're not to guess. ***We know!***

"...that we have the requests that we have asked of Him" (v 15). If *it's according to His will!* I tell you, if you want to be guaranteed of not having a prayer answered, you pray and then get up from that prayer and say to yourself: 'Well, I wonder if God heard me?' Forget it! It's over with!

- Was that a prayer in faith? *No!*
- Was that a prayer in belief? *No!*
- Was that a prayer in confidence? *No!*

Rom. 8 tells us something about prayer. And I tell you what, when you're praying and you really understand the love of God and let the Spirit of God stir you up, let God's love inspire and just uplift you, then your prayers are going to be so much more effective. You're going to have this kind of confidence that John is talking about. God wants us to know. And God wants us to have this confidence.

Romans 8:23 is talking about us and the Spirit of God groaning in us: "And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved..." (vs 23-24). This hope is what gives us the overcoming. And hope comes from love. ***Love hopes all things!***

"...but hope that is seen is not hope..." (v 24). That's why you cannot be 'born again' now, because then you have no hope of the redemption of the body—correct? And did you know the pagans have a 'born again' status in the flesh? Did you know that? *They do!* That's why when Christ told Nicodemus—who was a *Pharisee*, who studied *philosophy*—when he was talking about *born again*, he was directly going against the *born again* doctrine of the philosophers. I mean we have not really understood John.

"...for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience. Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses..." (vs 24-26).

- weakness of the flesh
- weakness of the spirit

- weakness that we succumb to in temptation

"...because we do not fully understand what we should pray for..." (v 26). Many times, you know, that's maybe the place to start with our prayer:

- God, I really don't know what I really ought to ask for
- help me to love You
- thank You for loving me
- please grant me Your Spirit
- give me Your strength
- help me to really pray in a way that I ought to

*Okay, we don't know how to pray!*

"...but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed *by us*" (v 26). This is not speaking in tongues, because speaking in tongues is something that is *uttered*. This is the spiritual communication between you and God. Now, with these groanings 'which cannot be uttered' then this is the spiritual communication that goes to God. What language do our prayers come to God in? *We don't know because the Spirit converts it into what God receives and the Spirit then makes the intercession.*

Verse 27: "And the one Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of God.*" *It makes intercession for us!*

- Do you really think that the fleeting thoughts about your burning cake in the oven really gets to the throne of God?
- Do you really think that the fleeting thought

—and sometimes when you're praying you actually may have a thought in overcoming sin that you have to put down right while you're praying (and don't tell me you've never had that happen), because if you don't then you haven't been praying—

- that does not go to God. How do our prayers go to God?

Revelation 5:8: "And when He took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." So, it goes to God in a spiritual form. That's why we can have that confidence. And if you have the Spirit of God—which you do—you can have that confidence. And may we grow in that; and may we grow in the Spirit

of God even more than we've even had an idea that we need to grow into. This is tremendous, brethren.

God shows that He will intervene—we know. Let's come back to 1-John 5:15: "...we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him."

- because it's according to His will
- the Spirit is making intercession in it
- we have Christ living in us
- we are living in Christ
- we have His Word living in us

1-John 3 shows, again, over and over and over again that this is exactly what He's talking about.

1-John 3:18: "My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love in deed...*" The word there is 'ergon'—which means *work, deed, endeavor or labor*, whatever. So, there is *work* to love.

"...and **in Truth...**" (v 18). We're going to find especially in 2-John, he reiterates **the Truth**, so much.

Verse 19: "And in this *way* we know that we are of **the Truth** and shall assure our hearts before Him." God doesn't want us to go around with a 'kicked in the head' feeling; a 'kicked in the stomach' feeling, a discouraged feeling; thinking God is against us, Christ is against us, the world is against us, it's all hopeless. **Nonsense!** He wants us to have confidence.

Verse 20: "That if our hearts condemn us..." It does when you sin. When you sin, and know you sin, you feel bad—don't you? And your heart is condemning you—isn't it? **Yes! That's when to pray!** I know I've done this too much, I figure, well, I'll pray about this and repent when I get straightened around. **You're not going to get straightened around until you repent!**

- Does God know that you've sinned? **Yes!**
- If you know, do you think God knows? **Yes! Sure!**

All this stuff we're just kidding ourselves. And you end up with a condemnation. God even covers this, and he says: "...if our hearts condemn us, God is **greater** than our hearts, and knows all things.... [even when you sin] ...Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God" (vs 20-21).

I want you to understand something very profound. This is what needs to be preached more often and which has been lacking for years in our relationship in the Church and the teachings. I'll just

draw your attention to the spiritual battle that Paul was relating to in Rom. 7, and the 'law of sin and death' within him. He was fighting to overcome. You do that. I do that.

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is now no condemnation...*" This does not give us license to sin. **No way!**

- because we have the battle
- because we are overcoming
- because we are yielding to God
- because we are trying to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

**There is no condemnation.** Why?

- Christ is our sacrifice
- Christ is our Savior
- Christ is our justifier

That's why: **no condemnation.** That's why when you do sin, **repent!** Don't figure, 'I'll get right.'

- How can you get right without Christ?
- How can you get rid of condemnation of heart when only Christ can remove it?

And He tells you there is no condemnation. That's something!

- That's to *uplift us!*
- That's to *encourage us!*
- That's to *inspire us!*
- That's for us to *understand* that in spite of the 'law of sin and death' in us:
  - ✓ God is for us
  - ✓ God wants us converted
  - ✓ God wants us to love Him more
  - ✓ God wants us to grow in grace and knowledge

That's what this is all about.

Verse 1: "Consequently, *there is now no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit; because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death. For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit" (vs 1-4). That's why we have this right here.

1-John 3:21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God." We need to understand: God does not want us to have that condemnation. That's why going to church and having a 'guilt trip' put on you every week is

against Christ! *Absolutely and totally against Christ.* Should not be!

Verse 22: “And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

- Can we please God? *Yes!*
- What did Christ tell the man who gained five talents with the five? *He said, ‘Well done good and faithful servant.’*
- Pleased with him? *Yes!*
- What pleases God more than anything else?
  - ✓ *loving Him*
  - ✓ *believing Him*
  - ✓ *loving Christ*

Then everything else will flow from that:

- commandment-keeping
- getting along with each other
- overcoming

That doesn’t mean you aren’t going to have any problems—you will! You may have a passel full of them; I do, I can tell you that.

Let’s come back to 1-John 5:16: “If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death....” What is a sin that is sin ‘not unto death’? *The wages of sin is death*—correct?

Verse 17: “All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death.” What is a sin ‘not unto death’? Let’s put it this way:

- there are sins that are eligible for repentance
- there are sins that are *not* eligible for repentance

Did you know that? *That’s right!* You go back and read the life of King Manasseh in 2-Chron. 35. My, all the stuff he did, *he repented!* He could repent of that; he did repent of that. I think we’ll find this very enlightening, and let’s follow this through, because this becomes very important; we need to understand this:

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; *and* let us run the race set before us with endurance.” Sin easily besets you. Those are sins that are ‘sins not unto death.’ You can repent of them. Maybe it will take you some time to even recognize it. But you can repent of it; it’s *eligible for* repentance. We’re going to see that there are sins *not eligible* for repentance.

Here’s how we repent of it, v 2: “Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of

*our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds” (vs 2-3). So, it is a battle; it is a process; it is a difficulty and does take effort.

Verse 4: “You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin.” Not yet! As I mentioned before, I have yet to anoint someone who says, ‘I got this wound fighting against sin.’ No we haven’t.

Verse 5: “And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him.’” It has to do also with a sin that God is going to correct you for. With this correction that comes, you *yield to the correction*—don’t you? That is a sin, which is a ‘sin not unto death.’

Verse 6: “‘For whom *the* Lord loves He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening...” (vs 6-7)—for the repentance of sin, because that’s the whole topic here.

“...God is dealing with you as a *Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*? For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days...” (vs 7-10). Our fathers in the flesh

“...in whatever way seemed good to them; but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness.... [that’s the whole purpose of it] ...Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous...” (vs 10-11).

I have yet to enjoy a trial. I don’t. And sometimes I try to avoid it and hide from it. But you can’t because it will follow you ‘wither thou goest’; because God wants you to “...be partakers of His Holiness.”

“...nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it” (v 11). Which means God leads you to repentance with His graciousness. It says in Rom. 2:4 that the ‘goodness which is the graciousness of God **leads you to repentance.**’ And that’s part of the correction process that takes place.

I'll tell you what, the best and easiest correction is this: **You yield to God and let His Word and His Spirit correct you.** *That is the easiest correction!* When He has to use trials and difficulties and other people and circumstances that are very upsetting, that is the hard way! The hardest way is to be so defiant that He must take you to the nth degree of your life. That is the hardest way, which He equates into the tribulation.

Verse 12: "Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down... [if your heart condemn you, He's greater than your heart] ...and *revive* the weakened knees; paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed" (vs 12-13). That's what a lot of people need to do spiritually, today, with all that's going on in the Church. When you first find out about some of these things, you get mad, you get angry, some people get bitter, some get upset—but **let it be healed!** There has to come a time of healing.

Verse 14: "Pursue peace with everyone, and Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking diligently..." (vs 14-15). Here's the reason I went through all of these verses, because we have covered all the sins which are eligible for repentance—that is all the sins that you repent of and yes, even unto the heavy hand of the correction of God you repent of—and that's what King Manasseh did, he was sent off in captivity.

Verse 15: "Looking diligently, lest anyone fall from the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and through this many be defiled... [now comes the unpardonable sin]: ...lest *there* be any fornicator or godless person, as Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright; because you also know that afterwards, when he wished to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; *and* he found no room for repentance, although he sought it earnestly with tears" (vs 15-17). And for the lake of fire that is called 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

That is the difference between 'a sin which is not unto death'—which we should pray for. And if you see a brother sin unto sin, it doesn't say:

1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death..." He shall run to the minister and report it—NO! He should go to the deacon and tell him and work up his brownie points for the next ordination. NO! Now, I'm speaking of things we're all familiar with—correct? *Yes!* What should you do? **If you see him do it doesn't even say go to him. You quietly go pray. Ask God to work it out.**

I know that when I sin I don't want someone coming to me and saying, 'Fred, guess what?' Neither does anybody else. But I'm sure glad when someone prays. I'm sure happy when God leads me

to repentance. And then you're willing to change and repent. Because if you run up to the person, if you do the spy trip and report them, it will never be solved. If you run up and tell them when it's none of your business, because sometimes the sin is just the person's own individual business and not yours. And you ask God to intervene and help, then you see God intervene and do that, that's fine.

"...he shall ask, and He will give him life... [for the 'wages of sin is death'] ...for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death... [which is the unpardonable sin, that does not qualify for repentance] ...concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any* supplication to God" (v 16).

Just one thing—let's go to Jeremiah 7—there comes a time when God says **don't pray**. Now, that's pretty tough! That's tough! I mean, isn't that something?! When God says this—He told Jeremiah—and I'll explain to you why when I get to this.

Jeremiah 7:16: "Therefore, do not pray for this people, nor lift up cry nor prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for **I will not hear you.**" Those are tough words! And we're going to see who and what that applies to with the unpardonable sin. And believe me, there are some people who are deliberately edging close to it and causing God's people to sin that are in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. And when we understand that, I hope you will likewise help all the brethren you know who are being fed all of this satanic garbage, which is not true!

1-John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death." This is given as encouragement:

- that we can repent
- that we can have a pure heart
- that we can have a tender heart
- that we can have an honest heart before God

—*every bit of it!*

Verse 18: "We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not practice sin..." Doesn't mean you're incapable of sinning. Now, how do we know it means you're not practicing sin?

Let's see exactly the whole formula that we have here with it, 1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not **practicing** the Truth." A present tense participle *practicing, doing*.

Verse 7: "However, if we walk in the Light... [Christ is the light] ...as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the

blood of Jesus Christ His own Son **cleanses** us from all sin.” Present tense, **cleansing** from every sin! All unrighteousness!

Verse 9: ...If we confess our own sins... [which are the sins ‘not unto death’] ...He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

That’s why he’s saying in 1-John 5:18: “We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not practice sin; for the one who has been begotten by God... [is not sinning, practicing sin] ...keeps himself... [‘keeping himself’—overcoming, guarding himself, letting the Spirit lead him.] ...*by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him.”

Remember what Satan asked Christ of Peter. Christ told Peter, He said: ‘Satan has asked for you that he may sift you like wheat, but I pray that your faith fail not.’ Satan may come around and cause us problems, but he can’t touch us. Look at Job: Did Satan touch him? *Yes, sure did! Sure enough did!*

(go to the next track)

“...and the wicked one does not touch him.” (v 18). In other words, we are put in this covenant, into a state that God will—all these factors combined—give us the overcoming. We know Satan is after us. We know Satan will persecute us. **But he can’t touch us to take away eternal life!** That’s what it’s talking about.

Revelation 12:10: “And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb... [through the forgiveness of sin, then] ...and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death’ (vs 10-11)—even though you die! If you die as a martyr or testifying, or if you die resisting sin, Satan is going to be right there and say, ‘Look what I did.’ But Christ is going to say, *Oh, no! You didn’t even lay a hand on him.* ‘The wicked one touches us not!’

1-John 5:19 is very important and does tie in, which is a sin, which is ‘a sin unto death,’ which you should not pray for. 1-John 5:19: “We know that we are of God...” Part of the sin, which is the ‘sin unto death’ is to come to the people of God and say: ‘You don’t know God. He is a mystery, you can’t find Him out.’

Verse 20: “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding...” This means the spiritual

comprehension and insight that we can experience none other way but by His Spirit.

“...so that we may know Him Who *is* true [the Father]; and we are in Him Who is true...” (v 20). Notice all the way through here: *knowing, true, truth*. In 2-John we will see that repeated in a very profound way because it’s important. That’s why with the Word of God and the Truth of God we need to know as never before. And ‘we are in Him Who is true.’

“...and in His Son Jesus Christ. He [Christ] is the true God, and the eternal life” (v 20).

- **No other way!**
- **No other person!**
- **No other means!**
- **No other method!**
- **No other doctrine!**

John 20:30: “Now then, Jesus did many other miracles in *the* presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.” I’ve often wondered what they are.

John 21:25 “But there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I do not suppose that even the world itself could contain the books that would be written. Amen.” What Jesus did was most profound, that was something! He says many other things.

John 20:31: “But these have been written, so that you may believe... [that ties right in with 1-John 5—we are believe, we are to know, we are to act upon that in faith, in confidence, in strength and in every way of God] ...that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life through His name.”

That’s exactly what we are seeing right back here: 1-John 5:13:

- “...believe in the name...”
- “...that you may know...”
- “...believe in the name of the Son of God
- v 14: “And this is the confidence...”
- v 15: “...that He hears us...”
- “...we know...”

Verse 19: We know that we are of God and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one.” **The whole world!**

- Eph. 2:1-3—the prince of the power of the air.’ The whole world lies in the ‘power of the wicked one
- Eph. 2:1-3; Rev. 12:9—deceiving the whole world
- Eph. 6:11-16—that there are wicked

spirits in high places.

They run this world. That's why any political reform is doomed to failure, because **Christ alone can reform it**. The return of Christ alone can do it and bring it.

1-John 5:20: "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, so that we may know Him Who *is* true; and we are in Him Who *is* true, and in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and the eternal life." If anyone wants to know: is Christ God? There it is right there, without a doubt! He is the true God!

Verse 21: "Little children, keep... [that is guard] ...yourselves from idols. Amen."

John wrote this from Ephesus, which was the capital city for the goddess Diana. The goddess Diana was double sexed—male and female. And when you look at the Statue of Liberty you will look at her and you will see very masculine features. The one who did that and gave it to us knew exactly what he was doing. The double-sexed goddess, who is holding the light. We have been Babylonianized. Just like Solomon, Babylonianized Israel of old.

Let's notice that in 1-John we are told that there were the antichrists who were leaving. Now we are talking about antichrists in the Second Epistle of John, the Church is further disintegrating—it's reached another stage of disintegration. When we come to 3-John we find that the Church is literally exploding and rejecting John and whatever the other apostles may have been living.

2-John:1: "The elder..." Notice he doesn't make any great to-do over his apostleship—right? He doesn't make any great to-do over the fact that Jesus Christ was the One that loved him—does he? Other than an oblique passing statement two times in the Gospel of John, that's it. Other people I know would brag about it—right? *Yes!* He doesn't say what a great age he was. He doesn't say how faithful he was to God all of his life.

He just simply says, "The elder..." All elders are elders. All functions they do vary from being apostles sent, evangelizing evangelists, pastoring pastor, or teaching teacher, or just a help. But they are all elders. And I think if we really understood that and applied it the way that it should be, then we would have much greater peace and understanding within the Church. Rather than leading to a disrespect of ministers, it would lead to a greater respect of ministers because the ministers are not putting themselves in high, exalted positions. Rather they are relying on the Spirit of God and the love of God and the knowledge of the Word of God to teach the brethren to grow. That way then there is

the true love and true respect. So, I see it here in John in writing this.

"...to *the* chosen lady..." Some people say this may have been the aged Mary, the mother of Jesus—possible. But I think it's to the Church in general.

"...and her children, whom I love in Truth, and not I alone, but also all those who have known the Truth; for the sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever" (vs 1-2).

Notice how he finishes the Epistle of 1-John 5:20:

- "...we may know Him Who is true
- "...we are in Him Who is true...."
- "...He is the true God..."

Now notice what he starts out with 2-John 1-2:

- "...in Truth..."
- "...have known the Truth
- "...of the Truth which is dwelling in us..."

We get the Truth from the *true* God! If you don't have the true God or you don't have the true nature of God, you don't have the Truth. That's what he's emphasizing. This is what he's combating here.

2-John 3: "Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, **in Truth and love**." He's emphasizing this *Truth* all the way through. This is profound.

"...and love." *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and that is Truth!* So, all of this ties together. This is really something here.

Verse 4: "I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth ..."—***living*** in the Truth.

1-John 1:7: "...we walk in the Light as He is in the Light..." Truth/Light and life and true God all together vs hatred, lies and deceivers. Now from verses 3-7 he is talking to the Church to keep them together in a time when the Church is disintegrating and there are antichrists out there.

That's why he's saying in 2-John 4: "I rejoiced exceedingly that I found among your children those who are walking in the Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father." And that means everything that the Father has commanded. You can go back and tie in the chapters of John 14-17—those are the words of the covenant, those are the words from God the Father—from Christ to us.

Verse 5: “And now I am beseeching you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have observed from *the* beginning, that we love one another.” Again, *loving, walking, commandments, truth*. Go back and see how many times John says we should be loving one another.

When we’re loving one another—and it’s not the kind of razzmatazz club of love. If you belong to the Elks, they love you as long as you belong to the Elks and bow down to their horned idol in the middle of their services. This love is because you have the Spirit of God, because you love God and this is *true* love.

1-John 2:7: “Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the message that you have heard from the beginning.” Which is:

- the love of God
- the Truth of God
- Christ died for our sins
- the whole Gospel

That’s the whole Gospel message.

Verse 8: “Again, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.” So that we *may be walking in the Light; walking in the Truth*.

Verse 9: “Anyone who claims *that* he is in the Light, but hates his brother, is in the darkness until now.” You have the opposite of love, which is hate.

Verse 10: “The one who loves his brother is dwelling in the Light, and there is no cause of offense in him. But anyone who hates his brother is in darkness, and is walking in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (vs 10-11). You put that together back here with what he says in 2-John about walking in the Truth, walking in the commandment—in order that you may be walking in it.

Now comes the warning, 2-John 7: “Because many deceivers have entered into the world...” Just a few antichrists who have left us, now *many* deceivers have entered into the world. What do you mean, ‘entered into the world’? Where did they come from? *They came from the Church of God*. Think on that for a minute. They are part of the *tares* of Matt. 13.

“...many deceivers have entered into the world—those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is *the spirit of the*

deceiver and the antichrist” (v 7). Have you not heard things that Jesus was not in the flesh as we’re in the flesh? *That is antichrist!* To be believing the Truth and believing the Father and believing that Christ came in the flesh means you believe the Truth concerning that Jesus was God before He became flesh.

- He was not the thought of God incarnated in the flesh.
- He was not the first created being of God in the flesh.
- *He was God in the flesh*—as much as the flesh can handle God in the flesh.

That’s what it means here that “...Christ has come in the flesh...” if they’re not confessing that. Now, when someone says, ‘Oh I believe He came in the flesh as a human being’—you need to ask them, ‘What kind of flesh are you talking about? Like you and me?’ *Oh, no*. Well, then he’s not confessing that Christ has come in the flesh.

Verse 8: “Watch out for yourselves in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished... [so we need to be diligently building up in love and faith and service] ...but *that* we may receive a full reward.”

How do you receive the full reward? Paul tells us very clearly that we are to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

1-Corinthians 3:12: “Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones...” We would have to equate love with gold; silver with hope; precious stone with faith. ‘Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.’ But, that if we build with gold, silver and precious stone.

It shows, v 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a **reward**” (vs 13-14)—the complete thing. That’s what’s important.

2-John 8: “...that we may receive a full reward. Anyone who transgresses... [sin is the transgression of the law] ...and does not continue in the teachings of the Christ **does not have God...**” They may know about His name, they may use His name, but do they have God *in them*? That’s another whole story. In given enough time and given enough space and given enough experience *it will become evident*. We have a guarantee that it will. It’s called: *‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.’* And sooner or later the lie will come!

“...*But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”

(v 9). You've got to have both. We'll talk about denying the Father and denying the Son and how that is an unpardonable sin when it's taught.

Verse 10: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine..." Doctrine is important; the true teachings of Truth and love and faith and hope and obedience and commandment-keeping and all of that is important!

"...do not receive him into *your* house..." (v 10). He had to now give some instructions that there were people who had gone so far out, don't even have them in your house and don't even say greetings because if you do, you're partaking of their evil deeds.

I'll give you a nice, interesting quote. Someone said to those who were on the doctrinal board of a recently formed, rather large Church of God: What do you believe concerning the nature of God? 'Oh, that's not important now, we will tackle that in January.' **He who has ear to hear—you better hear!** Because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is going to speak and the lie is going to come—guaranteed! All of those of you who follow that, you're going to be hoodwinked again. So, you better watch out!

Verse 11: "For anyone who says, 'Welcome!' to him is partaking in his evil works. I have many things to write, but I do not wish to convey *these things to you*... [right now] ...with paper and ink; but I am hoping to come to you and speak face-to-face... [the Greek there is 'mouth-to-mouth'—I'm going to sit down and I'm going to eye-ball you: face-to-face, mouth-to-mouth. So, we know what it's all about.] ...in order that our joy may be *completely full*" (vs 11-12).

Now let's go back to 1-John, first chapter, and show how that ties right in with what he was writing. God wants us to have the joy of the Holy Spirit. The world's bad enough! Times are bad enough! Overcoming is tough enough! Why not have some joy in this? *Yes!* And that comes from knowing the Truth,

- knowing the peace of God
- knowing the mercy of God
- the love of God and the Spirit of God *in you*

That brings you the joy. But here's what really brings the joy:

1-John 1:3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship... [this is the way it is in the Greek]: ...—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ. These things we are

also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full" (vs 3-4).

He says 2-John 12: "...that our joy may be completely full.... [Again, all of us together have the joy of God. That's something!] ...The children of your chosen sister salute you. Amen" (vs 12-13)

3-John shows where the Church is disintegrating and they're even fighting in the pulpit. I heard of that recently—haven't you? Fights in the pulpit? *Yes*, someone's going to get up and speak but they cut off the sound system so he can't speak. *Yes*, that's what's happening here. Here the Church is literally exploding! So, now he's conveying his information from visits and so forth.

3-John 1: "The elder to Gaius... [he's writing to an individual minister in this particular case—and Gaius means: *joy in the Lord*.] ...the beloved, whom I love in Truth..." That's what's so good about the Truth. You don't have to have an agenda. You don't have to have a front to block off what people are doing. Save that for the world. But for the brethren:

- God wants us to be open
- God wants us to be loving
- God wants us to be unassuming
  - ✓ thinking no evil
  - ✓ speaking no evil
  - ✓ hearing no evil

and if you're loving God and doing that, *you will!*

That's why it such a joy. Wait until you get to the Feast of Tabernacles. Last year was ***such a joy!*** I mean that last day you could just feel God's Spirit right there in the whole auditorium. And if there was ever one time that we were filled with the Spirit of God and the mind of God and the happiness of God and the joy of God ***that was it!*** I have never experienced anything like that in all the years I've been a minister. But God wants us to experience that. ***In the Truth!***

Verse 2: "Beloved, I personally am praying for you [Gaius], that in all respects you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul is prospering." That is *spiritually speaking*—and he better with all the fighting and battles going on; he better be.

Verse 3: "For I rejoiced exceedingly at the coming of *the* brethren *who* testified of you in the Truth..." Namely, how you are walking in the Truth—'living,' in the walk of life, the way of the Lord. It's called 'the way of the Lord,' so you're *walking in the Truth*. Notice again: ***Truth***. Let's look at 2-John:

- v 1: Truth
- v 2: Truth

- v 3: Truth
- v 4: walking in the Truth

and then we have *love, walking in the commandments*, coming all the way down here, all the way through. Then again he reiterates it over here that you're *walking in the Truth*, whom I love in the Truth. My, by time you circle all of those and connect those together, it's something—isn't it?

Verse 4: "...I am hearing—that my children are **walking in Truth...**"

Truth is mentioned 80 times between Acts and Revelation—that's profound! Get out your handy-dandy concordance and study it. It is profound! That's why, brethren, when you take the Truth of God and exchange it and turn it into a lie—once you have known the Truth—that is damnable! Damnable! *Damnable!* Paul only said anathema twice.

- Do we think that we're going to get into the Kingdom of God without Truth?
- Do we think that we're going to support the Truth of God with lies?
- Fables and mysteries and philosophies that aren't true?

Listen, every one of these philosophers admit they were demon inspired. No wonder they ended up worshipping Satan the devil.

Verse 5: "Beloved, you are faithfully practicing..."

Philippians 2:12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God is not going to give you salvation just because you're good in the presence of a minister. Trust me, it won't work! You've got to be faithfully practicing it as a way of life, living and walking in it

3 John 5: "...whatever you have been doing for the brethren and for strangers... [so it's an all inclusive statement here] ...Who *have* testified of your love before *the* Church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God" (vs 5-6). Those are the ones who are traveling and carrying the messages and bringing the epistles and so forth.

"...because for the *sake of His* name they went forth *preaching*, taking nothing from the Gentiles. For this cause, we are personally obligated to receive *those who do* such *service*, in order that we may be fellow-workers in the Truth" (vs 5-8). My, there it is again—"fellow workers in the Truth."

Now then, the second half of this epistle is another warning—which is quite astonishing, v 9: "I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes, the one who loves to be chief among them, does not accept us." Did they actually end up kicking out the Apostle John? *Sounds like it!*

Let's go to Isaiah 66—remember what Jesus said: 'The time is coming when they're going to kick you out of the synagogues. They're going to beat you. The time is coming when they will kill you. They are going to think they are doing service to God.' Now, unfortunately, a lot of brethren have been killed via the disfellowshipment—by political means. What we're seeing here with Diotrephes is a political action, which is not of God.

Isaiah 66:5: "Hear the Word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word..." That ties right in with:

- walking in the Truth
- keeping the Truth
- loving the Truth
- keeping the commandments

"...Your brethren who hated you... [which are, as John said, 'the brethren that hate you are not the true brethren of God'] ...that cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified.'... [they did it in the name of God] ...But he shall appear to your joy... [you who have been kicked out] ...and **they will be ashamed**" (v 5). Have you experience that? *Yes! Yes, indeed!*

3-John 9: "...does not accept us. Because of this very thing, if I come, I will call him to account... [bring to remembrance] ...for the actions... [he's going to come and confront him face-to-face] ...that he is practicing with evil words... [**bringing unjustified charges against us!** Why they're not accepting this 'new truth' of this great new philosophy—which is of the antichrist.] ...—bringing unjustified charges against us; and he is not satisfied with these things, *for* he himself neither receives the brethren, *nor does he permit* those who wish to *receive the brethren*, but he forbids *them* and casts *them* out of the Church" (vs 9-10).

Standing up there in the name of God saying: 'Brethren, you are not to talk to this person. I have disfellowshipped this person. Don't ask me why I disfellowshipped him, but I did.' A political disfellowshipment. And sure enough, as dutiful little brethren, what do they do, they avoid that person and turn their discouragement into overwhelming sorrow, that if you even pass by on the street you don't even say, 'Hello, how are you?' And I know there may be many, many brethren that way. If you know any, you pick up the phone and you ask them,

‘How are you?’ And see if you can help bring them back to Christ. You can do that because you know better. We’ll do what we can here to help them and inspire them.

Verse 11: “Beloved, do not imitate that which is evil; rather, *imitate* that which is good. The one who practices good is of God; but the one who practices evil **has not seen God.**” That’s quite a statement there because I assume that many of them were saying, ‘Well, I’ve seen the Lord, I’ve seen God, in bringing these doctrines.’ But if they’re practicing evil they haven’t seen God.

Verse 12: “We have received testimony from everyone on behalf of Demetrius...” Here you have a minister who is following the Truth in Gaius, you had one that wasn’t in Diotrephes, and then you had another one who was in Demetrius.

“...and from the Truth itself...” (v 12). That’s how you’re going to know—by the Truth!

- Do they love the Truth?
- Do they believe the Truth?
- Do they preach the Truth?
- Do they walk in the Truth?

—that’s how you’re going to know.

“...and we also bear witness, and you know that our witness is true. I had many things to write, but *now* I will not write *them* with ink and pen...” (vs 12–13).

I think it’s interesting. He must have had a lot of his letters censored, to do these short, one pagers and say, ‘I’ve got a lot of things to write, but I’m not going to.’ What was that King Jehoiakim knife, when the message of Jeremiah came to Jehoiakim he was sitting in his winter house before the fireplace and took his knife and cut it out and burned it. And so God told Jeremiah, He says, ‘You get Baruch and you tell Baruch those same words and you write a special message for Jehoiakim. He has had it. He’s going to die because he didn’t believe these words.’

“...that our witness is true. I had many things to write, but *now* I will not write them with ink and pen; for I hope to see you shortly, and I will speak with you face-to-face. Peace *be* to you. *Our* friends salute you. Salute the friends by name.” (vs 12-15)—and *no* ‘Amen’

We’ve never been able to figure out why no ‘Amen.’ There is in 1-John. There is in 2-John. And we find there are a total of three books in the New Testament, which do not have an ‘Amen’: Acts, James and 3-John.

I think we have plausible explanation for James, which Carl Franklin reiterated, which I think is undoubtedly true. He feels that the Epistle of James was a cover letter for the book of Hebrews. Because no one in Jerusalem would accept any writing of Paul. If any writing were known to have come from Paul it would have been burned on sight without even being opened. That’s why there is no indication as to who wrote Hebrews. And that’s why it is that the theology of Paul, but the writing of Luke, because Paul dictated it to Luke and I think Carl is right that that was sent then to James and James put the cover letter on it and sent it out to all of them. Now that’s the only rational explanation I can find for no ‘Amen’ in James.

I can’t tell you with Acts except that it was deliberately left out. And 3-John I don’t have a clue. One possible explanation is that Acts wasn’t finished with ‘Amen’ because the acts of the saints is not done, yet. That’s true. However, those who thought they were going to write in it, I don’t think they’re going to have much writing in it myself. Wait until the whole history is done from then until the return of Christ.

Maybe there was no ‘Amen’ in 3-John because John wanted us to know that this would be a continuing problem all down through history. I think that’s a good explanation.

When you get to the book of Romans there are three ‘Amens’—because he edited that so much that he had three ‘Amens’ on the end of it. And in translating it, I can tell where he added phrases into it, to make it clearer.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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- 30) 1-John 5:30
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## Keys to Answered Prayer XVII God's Spiritual High-Tech Blessing

Fred R. Coulter

I was watching the History Channel and they have a series on there, *Modern Marvels*. I don't know if any of you watched *Modern Marvels* but I was watching a high-tech *Modern Marvels*. They have so many high-tech things it is really astounding, and they are working with what is called 'nano-technology.' When that first came out, they just discovered how they could build things an atom at a time. And they said that this is going revolutionize everything. Well, I haven't heard too much about it until watching this *Modern Marvels—High Tech*.

They now have RFIDs that are as small as dust. So, if they want to track someone, all they have to do is just hit them with a dust bullet—in other words it will dust and splatter on them—and even if they brush it off they can track you wherever you go. And they also have videos with nano-technology. I've got this clear plastic, which is probably about 8-10 mm thick. Well, with nano-technology they can give high-definition, brilliant color on plastic that is 3-mm thick. They can with that same technology put a chip in the eye of someone who has macular degeneration and they can hook it up to the nerves and it will impulse light to the nerves—light and color.

Then they showed brain implants. They showed this one paraplegic who could not move—and it's rather primitive from the point of view that they have to have the metal projecting out of the top of his head and then they screw in like a television cable into that and run it through a machine, and then have a screen with a cursor on it. And he is able to sit there and *think* the cursor up, down, right, left; just by thinking, because they are now able to pick up the brain waves. They know where the part of the brain is that controls that kind of thinking. They even showed where they hooked him up, where they had a prosthetic hand and he thought it open/close, open/close, just by thinking and running through the machine.

Then there was another one—and this gets interesting because it ties in with the potential of the *mark of the beast*. There was a man who was doing the same thing—not with a chip in the head; his was more sophisticated—with a band that he put around his head and on the forehead he had four electromagnetic sensors. And with it, he could move the cursor around the screen. If he wanted it to go up, move his eyebrow up. If he wanted it to go down he would move his eyebrow down. If he wanted it

go right he'd move his eye right. If he wanted it to go left he'd move his eye left. And I thought, look at all that men are able to do—really quite a thing! It just projects forward to help us understand even more the *mark of the beast*.

Are they working on something to help those with spinal-cord injuries? *Yes!* So much so that they are able to even construct clothes that you can put on which will give you extra strength that you can lift five times what you normally would. Tie that together with some of the battle equipment that they're making.

That's like the *Six-Million Dollar Man*, a favorite television program, the world's first bionic man. Well, they're on the verge of doing those things. Combine that with what they have militarily and then you re-read Joel 2 where they run straight on their path and nothing deters them—they 'run on the wall, they leap into the windows, they go through the houses.' Then you read Rev. 8 where this army of 200-million is just invincible.

I think that God is going to let man reach the ultimate that he can reach—technologically—so that he can think and suppose that he can even overcome God! Because the question always comes up: Are men really stupid enough to fight against God? *Yes, if* they think have all these invincible high-tech things, they will say 'Yes, we can overcome that, look what we can do.' Plus the delusion of Satan the devil thrown in there.

And I got to thinking, we're at the point of the Tower of Babel—anything we can imagine to do we can do, as far as human beings are concerned. You see why God had to restrain man until the end? Also, if men think they can overcome angels then they might be deluded to think they can overcome God. How far away is the end-time? *We need not only to look to prophecy, but we also need to look to technology!* But here is what struck me: All of us who have the Spirit of God have a higher technology that men cannot understand and a greater power with the Spirit of God. And our tools are:

- the Spirit of God
- the Word of God
- and prayer

Prayer is really a very specialized, Godly, high-tech that we receive the Spirit of God. We'll plug in some Scriptures here and look at these things—and see how God has given us something greater than all the

high-tech of men, though we may be the few and the weak of the world. Just like all technology we'll call this key to answered prayer: *God's Spiritual High-Tech Blessing that He Gives to Us*. Because in spite of all the high-tech that men have, they can't understand God; they don't know who God is; they don't know where He is; they don't know what He's doing.

As a matter of fact, they all reject Him. And of course, the Bible says that 'they're fools while they imagine themselves to be wise' and able to do and make all of these things. So, it's an incredible thing.

John 4:21, when He answered the woman: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship...'" (vs 21-22). And the world doesn't because they all worship Satan the devil—one form or the other.

"...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews" (v 22). Of course, it came through Jesus Who was of the tribe of Judah, the house of David.

Verse 23: "But the hour is coming, and now is, **when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...**" That brethren, is higher than any high-tech of men. Think of that!

"...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth" (vs 23-24)

This is why prayer becomes so important, because it is the key to the relationship that we have with God. That's why in Romans 1:17<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> it says: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith, according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'" It comes from God to us and from us back to God. And that's why prayer is so important because we keep this relationship always going.

Now let's see what else this relationship does. We also have something beyond what any man can invent or do—chip, technology, secret formula or whatever—that men, without the Spirit of God, have no understanding concerning. This is what needs to be in our lives.

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God." That's as high-tech as you can get—isn't it? God to lead you? But He still gives you free choice. He doesn't put a chip in your brain, but He puts ***the seed of His Spirit in your brain***; and unites with the spirit of man that you have already, which He's given to all human

beings so that you can have the contact with God, that God can lead you, lead your thoughts. This is why we 'bring every thought into captivity to Christ and cast down vain imaginations.'

Verse 15: "Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear..." That's what all of this is coming about with this high-tech, ***to put people in bondage!*** When you take away choice and Godly character, and you reject God and you reject His laws and reject His commandments, then you must have control of lawlessness so that things don't get out of hand—and that's where the *mark of the beast* is going to come in. And it will be like we have said for years: not just identification. ***It is for control!***

Every one of these research things that they showed. And this was a presentation on History Channel. But everything that they do is to control people. Whereas, God has it this way: He's given you choice and He wants you, by your choice and if you have the Spirit of God, with His Spirit to choose what is right. That way then, it is a joint participation between you and God. Not only just in prayer, but the way you live, because ***prayer is the maintenance of your relationship with God. Study is the fuel of God's Word*** that He gives to you, so that you can be led by His Word and Spirit to live your life the way that God wants you to. Rather than:

Verse 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Let's see that there's a dividing line—has always been a dividing line—between the children of God and the children of the devil. There are the children of the devil that consist of those who worship him; those who follow him though they may not worship him; those who live in his society and go along with what he says, etc. But they all fit into the category of transgressing the commandments of God. Let's look at the difference here. We need to understand how God views us.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!..." There's nothing greater that you can be in this life. There's nothing greater that you can receive in this life than that. And it's very interesting: Children here comes from the Greek 'teknon'—which means *the begotten children of God*. Your very children; not adoption, but God's very children.

"...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him.... [They have all of their high-tech devices to try and get an upper

hand.] ...Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [We don't yet know, but it's fantastic!] ...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (vs 1-2).

So, we wait for the change and the resurrection to become like God. Whereas today: What do they do? *They want to become like God through their high-tech!* So, quite a comparison— isn't it? Fifty years ago we couldn't make this comparison, but today we can. Here's what we are to do:

Verse 3: "And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." This shows the daily growing and overcoming; add in there the whole aspect of prayer and keeping the commandments of God, and so forth. Here's the comparison.

- a) The children of God—vs 1-3
- b) The children of the devil, beginning v 4

Verse 4: "Everyone who practices sin..." Lives in sin as a way of life. That's differentiated between Rom. 7 where we sin because of the weakness of the flesh, where we sin because of the law of sin and death in us, and we're not intending to. These are the ones who live in sin and the ones who practice it the most highly—do so with both hands earnestly with all their heart, all their mind, to seek out and do and worship Satan the devil—the ultimate in it.

Verse 4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness." In the *King James* it says that 'sin is the transgression of the law.' But it's more than just the transgression of the law, that's why the Greek is *lawlessness*. Because it means this: Men have the carnal proclivity and vanity of thinking that they can improve on God. And all you have to do, if you want to search, go online and look up various versions of the Ten Commandments. Look up humanism. Look up the human manifesto. They all have their commandments of what they think are better than God's. So, *lawlessness* is a more accurate translation of it because it brings more than just transgressing of the law.

Verse 5: "And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him..." (vs 5-6). If you're dwelling in Christ because it is *practices*. And that follows all the way down through the context.

Verse 6: "Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin..." Doesn't mean he cannot sin,

because that would be contrary to what John even wrote in 1-John 5

"...anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him.... [it means 'practice' all the way through] ...Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (vs 6-7). Note: Rom. 8:1-3. We have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

Verse 8: "**The one who practices sin is of the devil** because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.... [we have *practices sin; practice righteousness*.] ...For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil." That one statement stretches all the way from *when Satan rebelled until he's put away* (Rev. 20). That one verse includes the whole Bible. Isn't that amazing!

Now, v 9: "Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed... ['spermatos' from which we get the word in English *sperm*, for the male impregnation of the egg] ...His seed of *begettal* is dwelling within him... [everyone who has the Spirit of God] ...and he is not able to *practice* sin..." Does not mean he cannot. Why is he not able to 'practice sin'? What happens when you sin? *You're convicted in conscience! Your heart pricks you!* And even if you go along for a while and fool yourself and get involved in things you ought not for the time being, God's Spirit nevertheless is going to keep pricking at your conscience, pricking at your conscience to lead you to repentance. To let you know you can't live that way!

Verse 10: "By this *standard*..."—and the Greek there is 'en toutoo'—so you have to furnish the word there which is *standard*—then means 'by this means'; 'by this standard'; 'by this way.'

"...are manifest... [This is before God; and also, in some aspects, before the world.] ...are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil.... [he has his children, and these are the tares of Matt.13] ...**Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**... [What is 'righteousness'? *Keeping the commandments of God; worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth!*] ...and neither is the one who does not love his brother" (v 10). That's quite a thing when we understand it. Here we have this greater high-tech than anything that men can do: *the Spirit of God; begettal of the Holy Spirit of God*.

Let's see what this does for us, and we'll see all of this ties in with prayer. Romans 8:16 "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit..." God's Spirit works with us, because the truth is, human beings in the flesh, without the

Spirit of God, are not complete. God made us to receive the Spirit of God.

“...conjointly with our own spirit... [works together with us] ...*testifying* that we are the children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs... [tie that in with what we just did back there in 1-John 3] ...—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—...” (vs 16-17). Doesn't everyone want to be the greatest that they can be? What does every society try to do? *Make itself bigger, stronger, better, greater than every other society!* And they can't do it.

But here, we have the greatest goal laid out for us, being the children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Now, we're still 'looking through a glass darkly,' but what does that mean? Well, since Christ is going to inherit the universe; *that means that God has been preparing the universe for His Family!* And when New Jerusalem comes down to the earth, we're going to have new heavens and a new earth. So, that is a fantastic thing.

Living in this world there's something we have to go through and this is why we need to maintain our relationship with Christ in prayer.

“...if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God” (vs 17-19). Everything that man is trying to do:

- to make the world a better place
- to make people a better place
- to get everyone together
- to get rid of war
- to have people love each other

is not going to be accomplished by human means, but is going to be accomplished by God and He has called us to do that. Amazing, isn't it?

I was thinking: My, my! Look at all those high-tech things, and then it dawned on me. Hey, that's nothing compared to what God is going to do for us. That is nothing compared to what God has already given us.

Verse 20: “Because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, in order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (vs 20-21). We are going to have to start out, as we know, in bringing the government and rule of God on the earth with the earth absolutely in near destruction.

Verse 22: “For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope...” (vs 22-24).

That's why you can't possibly be born again now, because you've already fulfilled the hope. It's over with; you need nothing else. And that's the way the Protestants pretty well approach it. If you have this simple little formula and say this simple little prayer, and you feel good in your heart, you've got it made and there's nothing else for you to do because Christ finished it. Not so!

Why does it say, 'were saved'? *Well, there are three steps to being saved:*

1. Eph. 2: You're saved from your sins and Satan—*have been saved*
2. 1-Cor. 15: We are *being saved* if we're standing in the Gospel
3. *We shall be saved* at the resurrection

So here it says, “...by hope we were saved...” because you believed in forgiveness of sin; you believed in Christ; you believed in His sacrifice—and now you're in the process of being saved. As long as you're in right standing with God, *you have been saved*. But you have to also endure to the end. It ties together. Then he goes on to explain it here: That even though you are saved, you still haven't had the finality of that salvation.

“...but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience. Now in the same way... [here's where prayer comes in]: ...also, **the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses...** [God's Spirit helps us, working together; that ties in there with v 16—conjointly, working together.] ...because we do not fully understand what we should pray for... [So prayer becomes sometimes a difficult thing.] ...according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed *by us*” (vs 24-26).

This is not speaking in tongues, because any noise that you can make comes out of your mouth, you're expressing it, even if it's babble. This is the Spirit conveying to God the innermost feelings of our heart, of our mind, of our desire; and strips away, what you might say, all of the carnality and humanness that we're fighting against, and brings to God the deep, innermost things that we feel. And there will be times when you will experience that in profound ways. There will be other times when you won't.

Verse 27: "And the one Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of God*."

Then He gives us hope. Isn't it interesting that he starts out with *hope*? and he ends up with *hope*? Always remember this: ***Sometimes in faith you have to go through it because you can't see the end of it!***

But nevertheless, v 28: "And **we know...** [this is part of the faith, part of the hope] ...**that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**" Everything works together for good. Even the difficulties and things that we come across; even the trials that we go through. And the reason is, because we have the Spirit of God; we have the *hope* of God.

Plus, this is what God has given to us. This is how the Holy Spirit works within us, it works conjointly with the spirit of man that we have, which has the begetting of God's Spirit so that we can become the sons and children of God. And also, with the Spirit of Christ in us—because there are two aspects to the Holy Spirit of God:

1. Spirit of Christ to give us the mind of Christ
2. the begetting of God the Father so that we can become His children

Hebrews 10:15: "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us..." The Spirit does that by convicting us; by leading us; by guiding us—and the Holy Spirit works with us.

"...for after He had previously said, 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds' (vs 15-16).

That's the process of overcoming, that is the reason for study, that is why we learn the Word of God. And that's why it is 'here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept'—that God builds it in our mind—as we pointed out previously—much like the potter molding the clay. God is working with us. What is in your heart and in your mind is how you act—is that not correct? *Yes!* The more that you have of God's Spirit and His laws and His Word and so forth, the more that you are going to have the mind of Christ.

Now, here's a promise. This is why Paul also wrote that you are saved and that you stand before God righteous: "...And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again" (v 17).

That's why each day is a new day. That's why whatever difficulty you had yesterday don't drag it in to today. Whatever problems you have today, don't drag it into tomorrow. "...will not remember ever again." Now this then is the encouragement that we get from God, and why prayer is really a Godly, high-tech operation.

Verse 18: "Now where remission of these *is*, it is no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin. Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh)" (vs 18-20).

To come right into the Holy of Holies. That is as high-tech as it can be—isn't it? *Yes!* To have your prayers and your very presence and being, through your heart and mind and God's Spirit, come right before God! That's astounding—isn't it? I'd like to see History Channel and *Modern Marvels* try and portray this. Never happen!

Verse 21: "And *having* a great High Priest over the house of God." Who has been perfected? Who has overcome death? All the high-tech ability of men cannot give them what they want—right? That is ***to live forever!*** That's what they strive for.

Verse 22—comes into the whole thing concerning prayer. When you have these things in your mind, and these concepts that you understand when you come before God and pray:

1. you're going to want to pray
2. you're going to believe when you pray
3. you're going to realize that it is coming before God

and that you can expect an answer according to the will of God. Not our will, but God's will, in God's way, in His time, accordingly as ***He*** decides

Verse 22: "Let us approach *God* with a true heart..."—because you have to; *you can't fool God!* That's why confession to a Catholic priest is futile. Everyone who's a Catholic, I always ask them: 'Well, when you went into the confessional booth and you confessed to the priest, did you really tell him the whole story?' And the universal answer is, '*Never!*' That's why we have a great High Priest.

Verse 22: "Let us approach *God* with a true heart with full conviction of faith, our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water." Going right back to baptism and your covenant with God. That's about as high-tech as you can get.

This is how we look at things and our perspective, notice what it does, v 23: "Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess..."

[See how that ties in with Rom. 8] ...for **He Who promised is faithful**." God is true, yet, what do men do? *First thing they do is say God is a liar, that God didn't mean it!*

God has built into every man that he wants to live forever. Every woman wants to live forever. And think of it this way: Just stop and see if you can contemplate when you did not exist! *No!* Even though you know that you're going to die, you cannot contemplate when and how you may die. Which, with the spirit of man that God has given into man—because it's spirit and not flesh—God has given us just by nature a desire to live forever. And that's why all religions have some form of 'to live forever.' And Satan comes along and says, 'Ah-ha, live forever like me.'

Let's understand something here that is fantastic when we realize it. He's talking about how complacent that they got, so here's the message to all you Laodiceans out there: *God holds out to you to repent!*

Hebrews 6:11: "But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the hope until *the end*; so that you do not become lazy, but *that you be imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises*" (vs 11-12). Looking back to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Joseph, to Moses, all the way down the line.

Verse 13: "For God, after promising Abraham, swore by Himself... [you're part of what God did, to swear by Himself] ...since He could swear by none greater, Saying, 'Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you'" (vs 13-14). Down toward the end of the age, we can look back and say, 'Wow! God has really done it!' But it's not finished until we're done with the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment—the Last Great Day—because all of those are going to come from the promise that was given to Abraham. So this is staggering!

Verse 15: "Now, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." That is of a son; and he lived long enough to see Jacob two years old, and that was it. So, he saw Isaac, Jacob and Esau.

Verse 16: "For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them.... [unless they're all liars] ...In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose..." (vs 16-17). God isn't going to change His mind. If we follow along with all the *ifs* and we do what God says:

- love Him
- believe in Him

- hope in Him
- maintain our relationship with Him
- grow in grace and knowledge

"...of His own purpose confirmed *it* by an oath; So that by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for God to lie...*" (vs 17-18). God cannot lie! God does not have the ability to lie, **because He is Truth and love and power.**

"...we who have fled for refuge... [We need a lot of that today—don't we?] ...might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been set before us*; Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul... [if you've got a huge anchor you're not going anywhere] ...both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil; where Jesus has entered for us *as* a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec" (vs 18-20).

There you have *the operation of God's fantastic high-tech operation* between Him and His saints. Now, let's see how this works in operation concerning prayer.

(go to the next track)

Let's see how this fits in with prayer. Let's come back to where we started the series, Matt. 6 and work our way down through the model prayer. We'll look at some other aspects of the model prayer and see how that fits in with praying; and then we will tie it in with the Psalms and see how we can use the Psalms in our prayer life for our benefit in helping us to be able to pray better, draw closer to God. Also, see all the different circumstances that David faced as a prototype on some of the things that we would face and how he handled them and prayed about them so that will relate to us.

Matthew 6:13: "...but rescue us from the evil one...." We have to be rescued from Satan and **only God can do that**. The evil one also can mean *evil circumstances*—that's why the *King James* translates it *evil* rather than *evil one*.

But let's look at some of the things that we can use, that we can do that will help us. **God is the only One Who can rescue us from the evil one** because He's the only One Who has the power. We cannot do it ourselves. Any man thinking he can stand against Satan by himself—without the Spirit of God, without the Word of God, without the power of God to rebuke him and get rid of him—is just kidding himself. It will never, *never, never* happen!

Colossian 1:10, Paul writes: "That you may walk *worthily*..." There's the responsibility for us. We all have to take responsibility for our lives, to live in God's way, to live in His Truth, to keep His commandments, to maintain our relationship with Him and so forth

“...of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God” (v 10). This shows a progressive, growing grace, strengthening and all of these things.

That's why, in keeping the Sabbath—and I think it's true, that if you go to church where it's a boring Sabbath, you're going to have a boring spiritual life, because a boring Sabbath—especially when the minister is there and supposed to teach—indicates that he's not growing in grace and knowledge to really teach the people how to grow in grace and knowledge, and growing in the Spirit of God, so that there can be the fullness of growth, the use of God's Spirit and everything like that. Otherwise it just degenerates into a social club. And too many people only go to church because of the people that they associate with, rather than understanding that the Sabbath has primarily, first of all to do with your relationship with God, and that we always have to constantly be growing.

Another thing that we can understand concerning *growing*. Is it possible, however long *you* live, to develop the character of God unless you're constantly working at it and growing in knowledge? *No!* This again includes all the Laodiceans out there, which includes all of us because we all were. If you think that your past association was with the 'Philadelphia' Church of God, you're all mistaken; because it says there in the Greek that you've *grown rich and increased with goods*.

What you need to realize is this: if you're not doing that, “...being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy” (vs 10-11).

If you're not doing this, then you're only kidding yourself. Don't 'wax eloquent' against the Catholics and their ritual, or against other churches and what they do—because you may be doing the same thing, only worse. If you're bored because of the Sabbath and the Holy Days of God then you're in worse condition than those in the Christianity of this world because they don't know. But we do know. That's why Christ holds out to the Laodiceans: Repent and be zealous!

Here's another reason for it, v 12: “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified...” He's the One Who makes us qualified:

- by His Spirit
- by His Truth
- by His Word
- through Christ

“...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has **personally rescued us**... [God has to do it!] ...**from the power of darkness** and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love” (vs 12-13). God is the One Who has to rescue us from it. Then it goes through explaining about the forgiveness of sin and so forth.

Now let's understand *being rescued from evil situations*. We have to be rescued from Satan the devil, but we also have to be rescued from evil situations. God does this, too, and He gives us a promise. So, if you're going through a trial or difficulty that appears to be too much for you, in your prayers claim this promise: ***that God will not lay upon you more than you are able to bear, though you may come to a point where you feel like you can't take any more!*** Why does God want us to come to that point? *Very simple: so we trust in Him.* That's why. And know that there are certain things we need to do.

1-Corinthians 10:10: “Neither *should we* complain against *God*... [If you're complaining against God then you need to change you're whole approach to God] ...as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them *as examples*...” (vs 10-11).

That's why we need to know and understand, as much as possible, the Old Testament as well as the New. And I think if you go back and read over and over again that these are examples for us so that we realize that ***you cannot accomplish spiritual things by carnal means!*** And if you don't have the Spirit of God then everything is going to end up constantly like it happened to the children of Israel. It just will.

“...and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming. Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall” (vs 11-12). We always need to do that.

This is how it ties in with overcoming evil situations, v 13: “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind...” When it happens to us, we think it's the worst possible. And then, somewhere along the line you're going to see someone who's in worse circumstances than you.

“...For God, Who *is* faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*... [He's not going to let it happen. But you also to have to be willing, too.] ...but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape...” (v 13). Which means you must take the way out—and that is God's way.

Classic example is crossing the Red Sea. Everything was impossible. There they were in evil circumstances. God deliberately brought them there. There they were, they couldn't swim across the Red Sea—that would be impossible. And Pharaoh and his armies—you could say symbolized Satan and the demons—were coming after them, and so God rescued them and they had to take the one way out, which was across the Red Sea, as God provided. So, He provided a way out; a way of escape. "...so that you may be able to bear it" (v 13).

Whatever your circumstances are, *in prayer*—when you have a trial and difficulty—*ask God to show you the way out*. Ask God to show you how to overcome. Then ask Him to bless you in your efforts to overcome it, because it can be. Sometimes we get so frustrated that we just don't do what is set before us in the way that we ought to do it, and then we wonder why the trial continues. So, we need to consider that, too.

Let's see something else right along this line. We have here 1-Cor. 10 as being *delivered from evil, trying circumstances*. In Rom. 7 we have to be *delivered from our own law of 'sin and death'*—which is in us! And God has provided that way, too. God has given us the way on how *we can do this*.

After he was going through and saying that's what a lot of people do, 'Well the law is sin.' He said, 'May it never be! The law is not sin.' He says:

Romans 7:12 "Therefore, the law *is* indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good." It points out what sin is. And God wants you to overcome the sin. He will forgive the sin. He will rescue you from Satan the devil and all of that is part of our prayer. So you can take that model prayer of Matt. 6 and you can take each phrase and it will expand like a great tent or tabernacle including the whole Bible.

Verse 13: "Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me?... [Because the 'wages of sin is death, and the law is good.']. ...MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin in me..." There comes a conviction of how sinful human nature is, because we need to be delivered from the sin within, as well.

"...be exposed as sin in me by that which *is* good..." (v 13). Now, you have a comparison between what God has said is good and what your thoughts and mind and intentions are, which are evil. Then, with God's Spirit, convicts you of what is wrong so you can repent.

"...was working out death..." (v 13). In other words, the law defined the sin, '*the wages of sin is death*,' and God, with His Spirit then showing us truly what sin is:

"...so that, by means of the commandment, **sin might become exceedingly sinful**" (v 13). In other words, you understand the full significance and gravity of sin to the nth degree—not just say, 'Well a little sin is okay.'

Verse 14: "For we know that the Law is spiritual..."—to teach us spiritual things. That's why the carnal mind cannot have the laws and commandments of God written in their hearts and minds because it is spiritual; and it must be done spiritually.

"...but I am carnal..." (v 14). He's talking about himself—apart from God's way, apart from God's Spirit. But just looking at himself and the futility of human nature, apart from God.

"...but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin; because what I am working out **myself**... [*by my own*] ...I do not know..." (vs 14-15). Isn't that true? You try and work things out, and it never works out. You try and work it out your way and it doesn't come the way it needs to be. Why? *You're doing it yourself apart from God!*

"...For what I do not desire to do... [everyone intends to do good] ...this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do" (v 15). That's why he's saying: that with the laws and commandments of God, and the Spirit of God that you understand the exceedingly sinfulness of sin—and that you have got to be rescued from this.

Verse 16: "But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.... [Because you sin, does not change the law. It's good!] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself..." (vs 16-17). He understands that when self is involved, there's something else working with self to pull him down, and to cause him to do things that he really does not want to do.

"...rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me..." (v 17). Because the carnal mind, the carnal nature and the natural proclivities of the way of thinking and behavior and actions of human beings is sinful—though there is good mixed within it. And you can see this even with children who have not learned how to sin as human beings sin. But what happens? You see fighting, jealousy, greed, hatred, emotionalism in little children because it's part of human nature. Now, the 'law of sin and death' within them has not come to the full, because that also likewise has to mature as people get older.

Verse 18: "Because I fully understand... [now this is 'since I'm converted.' You don't understand this until you're converted.] ...that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good...." We might have a nature of good and evil, but all the evil counteracts the good.

"...For the desire to do good is present within me; but how to work out that which is good... [according to God] ...I do not find. For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing..." (vs 18-19). This is what becomes frustrating to people, and this is what causes many people to not pray as they ought to because they don't understand the conflict within that this 'law of sin and death'; they need God to rescue them from it. And it is part of overcoming.

"...but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing" (v 19). Think about that the next time you make a blooper. Some bloopers are little. Some bloopers are big. Some are gigantic. And think about that the next time you have the good feeling—this is a good day, everything's going right. Then something comes up and you blow your stack! Well, you didn't start out this morning and say, 'O God, what a wonderful day. I'm going to blow my stack at 2:10 in the afternoon!' But nevertheless, and every one of us have things that we need to overcome.

Verse 20: "But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out **myself**, but sin... [what happens is that the self and sin work together like a hand-in-glove] ...*that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, I find this law *in my members*... [you might say this is the law of carnal nature] ...that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me" (vs 20-21).

And I've found this: When I've done things that I really just do something that spiritually you know is good and right and fine and you're happy about it, next thing I know something happens and carnality catches up with me and brings me to the reality that there is evil dwelling within me and I've got to be rescued from that, as well. And that's the 'law of sin and death.'

"...when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man... [You're not ready to give up on the law of God—of course not!] ...But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind... [where the Spirit of God is] ...and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members" (vs 21-23).

There's that struggle going on—always, *always*, **always!** And God uses that so that we can understand that we can't save ourselves; that we can't overcome by ourselves. God will help us with

it, but we need to desire the help of God, and so forth.

Verse 24: "O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save [rescue] me from the body of this death?... [we need to be rescued from self and sin within] ...I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, on the one hand, **I myself serve the law of God with my mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, I serve the law of sin**" (vs 24-25).

That puts you in a really difficult situation. We all go through this. Let's just admit it, all of us, altogether. Did we not this last week have something come along just like this where this happened? *Yes!* And if it didn't—wait till next week! Or tomorrow! However, don't get discouraged because this is something that God uses to help you draw close to Him in prayer to understand you need to be rescued from even yourself.

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... [*who are fighting this battle to overcome the sin within*] ...who are not walking according to *the* flesh..." If you walk according to the flesh, you have no desire to overcome the sin within. You go along with it.

"...but according to *the* Spirit" (v 1)—because God's Spirit is leading you and guiding you and convicting you.

Verse 2: "Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death" You're delivered from it. Let's put it this way: On an ongoing basis, because as long as we're in the flesh, it's still there.

How does God do it? Verse 3: "For what *was* impossible for the law to do..."—because the law couldn't change human nature. You can't have the laws and commandments of God written in your mind unless you have the Spirit of God—because it's a spiritual thing that is taking place. The law just written on tables of stone, as it were, or on a piece of paper to read it—the law cannot do anything except define sin. It's all it can do. Simplest example I've used many times, I'll use it again: You come down here and there's a red sign that says 'Stop.' Does that stop sign do anything to you if you don't stop? Does it shoot you? Does it throw down iron bars in front of you so you can't go? *No!* So, even though going through a stop sign would be considered a minor thing, it serves as an example that there is the law—the four-letter law—which says, 'Stop!' The law can't make you do it; you have to choose. That's why we need the Spirit of God and relationship with God through prayer *so we can be rescued from the sin within!*

Verse 3: "For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." That's a real key in understanding about how fantastic it was that Jesus didn't sin—because He had human nature like we do. That's how He was able to be tempted in every way like we are—yet without sin! That was a tremendous thing that God did, so that there would be the complete victory over the 'law of sin and death' in all of those who are converted and attain to the resurrection.

Verse 4: "In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us... [being fulfilled is a process with God's Spirit] ...who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit."

Now let's look at something else: How we need to do this. God will do it for us, but we have the Spirit of God so we have our part. We have to provide the desire. We have to provide the work. God will provide the power through His Spirit. And as we exercise God's Spirit, we may have varying degrees of success, depending on how we yield to God.

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh." This is what he was describing in Rom. 7—the inner battle; the war within. So, there's the war *within*; there's the war *without*—that is where Satan is and the enemies of God. "...we do not war according to *the* flesh."

As I've already said: ***You cannot accomplish spiritual things with physical means!*** This is why the counterfeits come along and say: 'If all men just do good everything would be fine.' That's discounting the evil of human nature, of the 'law of sin and death' that everyone has.

I've mentioned to you about this book I'm reading—it's taking me some time to go through it, but it's based on some of the Jesus Seminar things—and this woman who wrote it used to be a practicing Jew—she's still a genetic Jew. But she's changed her name to Ruth Rimm, and what she's doing—just like the Jesus Seminar—lowered Jesus to a prophet like Buddha and Confucius and Mohammad and take the good from all religions and put it together. So I need to finish the book, and it is called: *The Lost Spiritual World for Those Who have Ears to Hear* means delving into the demonic spiritual world. That's what these people do who reject Jesus as being God before He became human. They reduce Him to just another prophet.

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal... [we have the spiritual battle *within*, the spiritual battle *without*] ...but mighty through

God... [by His Spirit] ...to *the* overthrowing of strongholds." Where is the biggest stronghold? There are several.

1. in talking about the 'law of sin and death' within is ***the carnal mind***—that's a stronghold. We have to overcome that.
2. ***Satan and the society around us***, because we come up against the strongholds of the spiritual power that's out there in the world, which holds it in bondage.

So we are overthrowing the strongholds.

Here's how we do it, v 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations..." Don't let the sin within overcome you; cast it down. Doesn't say it won't be there, but what do you do? *You take thoughts like that and you literally—mentally and spiritually—grab a hold of it and cast it down.* That's where prayer comes in. That you can pray and ask God right then: 'Oh God, help me to overcome this thought.'

The Greek also means *reasonings*. And what is the greatest reasoning that you have to overcome? It's called *self-justification!* *You justify what you do because every man's way is just in his own eyes!* Whose justification do we need? *Christ's justification!* We need the mind and the thoughts of Christ. This is why prayer and study become so important. And become the spiritual tools that you need to overcome these things.

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God..." (v 5). 'Well, I can do this! I don't need God'—so says man. That's why God says that those who say 'there's no God' is a fool—he doesn't have clue as to what he's talking about. And yet, it rules the world today. As I mentioned before, they are asps—atheists, secular, progressive socialists—snakes in the grass. And Satan is a serpent and he's the 'prince of the power of the air.'

Philosophy—especially Greek philosophy—is rationalist. You rationalize your way; think your way out of any problem. And the human mind is capable of doing many, many things, so you think you can do it—right?

Also, I saw on the History Channel *High-Tech Marvels: The Seeds of Destruction*—which is all the genetic engineering going on in food and different things like this. And what they're finding is all of the great things that men think they can do without God, go greater than God, will make a tomato not subject to freezing. By putting in a gene from a flounder. And we will make corn so that it will grow and be perfect by putting in the genes of insecticides. Now they're finding, when it gets into the system, it does things to the inside of the system.

As I've said before: **Avoid like the plague**, all artificial sweetening, all sodas. They now know that all sodas have preservatives in it which cause, in the long term, grave illnesses—even Alzheimers. Avoid like the plague: soy oil. It is the most genetically modified of any oil. And that means you're going to have to avoid some of the foods that you buy prepared in the store because they're cooked in soy or canola—both of those oils: **avoid them like the plague**. And what they're going to do in making restaurants go from trans-fats to vegetable oils—guess what oils they are going to use? Soy oil and canola oil which means if you live on Kentucky Fried Chicken, don't be too surprised if you start coming up with some sicknesses that you don't even know anything about, on the long-term. If you eat it occasionally, that isn't going to hurt you, but you have to be careful.

If you drink a soda a day you're likely to come down with type-2 diabetes—over years and years probably. Avoid, like the plague as much processed food as you can. And the microwave! If you are old and retired and you live on bread and soup and you buy canned soup, avoid that like the plague because it has MSG in it and flavorings, and then you put in the microwave to heat it up, you have just created yourself the most totally un-nourishing kind of meal you would ever want.

Now some people are going to say, 'Ahhhhhhh, what is Fred Coulter talking about?' Well, go on your way if you desire! But just like we need to pull down these spiritual things, there are physical things we need to be aware of, too, because we can also get ourselves into a physical state—not counting inherited problems or things like that. But we can get ourselves into a physical state that we cause our bodies to get sick and then it affects our spiritual relationship with God. Because if you feel like 'blaaaaaaa' you're not going to want to go pray. We need to understand that.

Verse 5, again: "Casting down..." That means active warfare. You have a thought that is plaguing you, coming into your mind over and over again, you ask God to help you **cast it down**. 'God, remove this from my mind. Help me to not let it enter into my mind again.' And also, if you are affected by some very traumatic thing in the past, that's almost impossible to get rid of, ask God to help put it into perspective so that it is not going to continually traumatize your thoughts today. And that is called, post-traumatic stress. And the thing is, you live it over, live it over, live it over! You go to bed, you think about it. Live it over, live it over, live it over. You've got to come to God and ask God to help you **cast that down**. You have got to put those thoughts aside, with the Spirit of God. That's all a part of overcoming in our relationship with God.

"...vain imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ... [that's the goal] ...and having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled" (vs 5-6).

That's the formula on how to overcome. When it says there, deliver us or rescue us from the evil one, there's a whole lot to do with it. That has to do with Satan and his demons out in the world, yes. It has to do with evil people in the world! It has to do with our own inner-human nature that we need to overcome, all combined together.

Now, lest you get discouraged, let me tell you this: *You have all the power and help and strength from God's Holy Spirit to do this!* You can do it, but

- you have to be active at it
- you have to be constant at it
- you have to be faithful and persistent at it

These things are all part of the keys to answered prayer. It reaches out more than just a simple little four or five or six or ten points on how to have prayers answered. It involves your whole way of living and your spiritual standing with God.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) John 4:21-24
- 2) Romans 1:17
- 3) Romans 8:14-15
- 4) 1 John 3:1-10
- 5) Romans 8:16-28
- 6) Hebrews 10:15-23
- 7) Hebrews 6:11-20
- 8) Matthew 6:13
- 9) Colossians 1:10-13
- 10) 1 Corinthians 10:10-13
- 11) Romans 7:12-25
- 12) Romans 8:1-4
- 13) 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Joel 2
- Revelation 8 & 20
- Romans 1:18
- 1 John 5
- Revelation 20
- Matthew 13
- Ephesians 2
- 1 Corinthians 15

Also referenced: Book: *The Lost Spiritual World for Those Who have Ears to Hear* by Ruth Rimms

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## Keys to Answered Prayers XVIII Pray for Your Enemies

Fred R. Coulter

I just wanted to wrap up something here concerning God dealing with us in answering our prayers and helping us to change, grow and overcome. When we come through trials and experiences, I mentioned was that *don't let the problems of yesterday impact today; and don't let the problems of today impact tomorrow*. That's why we need to always put it in God's hands and ask Him to help us and guide us and direct us. Here's something else that we need to always keep in mind when we're praying, whatever we're doing as far as our relationship with God is concerned. Unfortunately, some churches leverage this to the ministry. Please understand that what we're going to cover here is *only to God, only to Christ*.

In marriage we're to commit ourselves—husband and wife—the way that we should; to become one flesh. That's why God made marriage. I'm not talking about that. But, I'm talking about anyone else. And especially overbearing ministers that want to use their authority to take to themselves the humility that we are to have to God and make that humility toward them so they can get done whatever they desire to do. God doesn't want that. But here's what our attitude has to be:

Philippians 3:7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me...” Whatever we do in the world, whatever ability—and things we have to do those things—comes from God. *We have nothing we didn't receive* in the first place. But as far as conversion in relationship with God, since we are to come out of the world—not be part of the world—but yet we still have to live in the world, then it is our spiritual relationship between us and Christ. Here's what Paul said:

Verse 7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ.” He had everything. He had power, he had prestige, he had the inside track with the high priest and he was one of the leading members of Judaism of his day and he had all of the privileges of it. Everyone was bowing down to him—“Yes sir! Yes sir!” this and that, the whole thing. He kind of got all but lost. Of course, he had a rather sudden loss of it—didn't he? On his way to Damascus, Jesus knocked him down and Paul understood what it was.

Verse 8: “But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...” That's a powerful statement:

- knowledge of life

- knowledge of God's Word
- knowledge of the purpose of Christ
- knowledge of why we are here

As we have seen one verse can actually build a whole understanding out of the Bible, and this is one of those.

“...for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ And may be found in Him...” (vs 8-9).

- He's our life
- He's the One Who is our Savior
- He is our High Priest at the right hand of God
- He is our Intercessor

“...not having my own righteousness...” (v 9). What does he mean by that? He means *people who are good have a certain form of righteousness!* If they have a religious rigor that they go through, which has nothing to do with the Bible; such as: Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, whatever it is, that righteousness is your own.

The righteousness that comes from God is the righteousness of the commandments, plus the righteousness of God's Holy Spirit and the righteousness of being put in right standing with God the Father and Jesus Christ. In that case then, God the Father actually imputes to you the very righteousness of Christ, though we don't deserve it. Just like He imputes to us, when we repent, the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. So, this is what he's talking about here.

He says: “...my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law... [direct reference to the laws of Judaism] ...but that *righteousness*, which *is by the* faith of Christ...” (v 9). This righteousness is not imposed from the outside. This righteousness *by faith* comes with God's Spirit from the inside—and by your love to God and your choice to do right.

So, it's called, “...—**the righteousness of God that is based on faith**” (v 9). Everything we do is based on faith. We have to fight ourselves, we have to fight human nature, we have to overcome those things; those are all there that we need to work, yes, absolutely true. But here's the goal, because what God wants us to do is always keep our minds on the goal. And the reason being is so that we don't get sidetracked on things that multiply problems.

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...” That’s what we are looking to.

As I mentioned concerning *High Tech Marvels Today*, there’s still one thing they cannot do: *come back to life after they have died*. I always get a big kick out of it when you see these specials concerning the Pharaohs and they talk about what great things that they had done and so forth. And then they show this mummy of the Pharaoh. I look at it and I say to myself, he’s still dead! Christ is the only One Who rose from the dead, and we won’t until He returns.

Verse 12: “Not as though I have already [attained] received... [this is why everyday we take as a new day] ...or have already been perfected...” We’re going to see that God wants us to be perfected; and we’ll see what kind of perfection that will be. But let’s also understand that perfection, in the final analysis, will be finalized at the resurrection.

“...but I am striving...” (v 12). This is what we need to do. We’ll be kind of like a chart. You know how charts are: they have highs, they have lows, they have ups, they have downs. But you’re striving.

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained...” (12-13).

Here’s an apostle who was personally taught by Jesus Christ for three years in Arabia before he came on the scene after his calling. And if you think that anyone would have attained something, it would be like the Apostle Paul. I remember one man who—I forget his age when he said it—said, ‘You know, I’ve been with Christ so long that Satan no longer has any interest in me’—and guess what? **BAM!** So you can never say that. “...**but this one thing I do...**” (v 13):

- this is the key to prayer
- this is the key to overcoming
- this is the key to attitude
- this is the key to a spiritual relationship with God
- this is a key to dealing with each other—

whether it be husband and wife; whether it be co-workers; whether it be people in the world

“...—forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13). Some things are hard to get rid of.

In watching some of these specials on some of the veterans that they have concerning WWII, and they say it’s awfully hard to forget the battles. And

some of them still have dreams of what it was like in the thick of the battle, like on Guadalcanal or on Okinawa—and those were terrible, terrible battles, just like on D-Day when they went into Normandy, and lost 5,000 the first day—killed! And those who survived remember heads blowing off, arms blowing off, brains splattered here and there, and they have a hard time forgetting it. How do you forget traumatic things like that? and experiences that occur? All of us have had experiences one way or the other—some very traumatic; some less traumatic. Nevertheless, we need to ask God to help us forget them. And if they’re such a magnitude that they can’t be completely erased out of our minds, then to put them in the perspective that we understand them so that it doesn’t bother us, and it doesn’t gather hold of us.

“...—forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13). Paul had a lot to forget—didn’t he? What did he do? *He caused those who were Christians to be arrested, put in chains and taken off to prison—men, women and children*. And Paul actually caused the death—by persecution—of many of the saints. He was standing right there when they stoned Stephen to death, and was agreeing with it. So he had a lot in his mind that he needed to forget. This is why the proper perspective and keeping our minds on the goal is very important. So, whatever experiences that you have had in the past, what you need to do is ask God to help you:

1. put them in perspective.
2. if they start coming up in your mind again, don’t dwell on it, set it aside

It will take practice and experience to do that. This way it’s going to help you **everyday!**

If you want to remember something, **always remember the good**. If there were things that were not good, then learn the lesson from it, which then will be good. That’s all part of it. And this is part of our prayer life—**that we come to God**. That we not only have our sins forgiven, but that we be able, with the Spirit of God, to overcome these things which are hooks of carnal nature and the society and the world around us in our way of thinking.

Here’s what you do: When you forget then you *put in* something else. If I want to get rid of something in this cup, I throw it away and I put something else in it. If you’re going to forget things, it’s like taking a cup of something and throwing it away. But, then what are you going to do with the cup? You just going to leave it empty? **No!**

“...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead” (v 13)—*the resurrection*—that’s the key. Like with the Sabbath, reaching forward to the things that are on the Sabbath make the Sabbath a delight, make the Sabbath something that you enjoy.

You do it by the effort that you put in by the prayer that you have all during the week. As far as an elder and minister, in order to make the Sabbath a delight for the brethren, what I have to do is study and prepare so that I can bring them messages that are going to help them, encourage them and inspire them, and give them the desire to do what God wants to do.

Verse 14: “I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.... [always pressing, always going forward] ...So then, **let as many as *be* perfect...**” (vs 14-15). We’ve seen as we’ve gone through 1-John *that love is being perfected* and that is the height of perfection.

This does not mean that you perfect others yourself by being super-critical of their behavior, to enforce upon them something that you see that they need to do. Occasionally, that may be necessary—to bring out to them something that they need to do—however:

“...as many as *be* perfect be of this mind...” (v 15). Forgetting the things that are behind, learning the lessons, reaching forward to the things which are before, look to the good, do the good. In the world they would say, ‘be positive.’ In Bible language:

- have faith
- have trust
- have love

“...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15).

What if you come up with a day when you have a *bad attitude!* We can all have that—right? What does God do? *God will reveal even this to you* so that you can *change; that you can repent!* Every time something comes along that isn’t right, it’s an opportunity to repent and change and go forward. When that is done, go forward! Put it behind you, learn the lesson and go on.

God will “...reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind” (vs 15-16).

We’re going to talk about one of the hardest things to do. Let’s go there and let’s see what Jesus said. This is part of perfection. Let’s understand, this does not mean be naïve or stupid or leave yourself open to be destroyed.

But Jesus says, Matthew 5:43: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to

those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you” (vs 43-44).

That’s a tall order. It doesn’t mean to be simplistic and stupid, but it does mean: ***do not let anyone in these categories cause you to go away from God.*** What you do in loving them, you put it in a proper perspective. If they’re in the world and can’t help it, you understand it. Maybe they just had a bad day that day. There are those who hate you. What do you do with them? Well, let’s look and see how you pray for your enemies. Here’s why it’s important: it has to do with your relationship with God.

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust”—doesn’t He? That doesn’t mean He doesn’t judge because of sin. In judging them the way that God does, that’s actually in love. But what He does, He wants us not to say, ‘Oh, look at those people in the world how miserable and evil they are, and how good I am.’ No, if we see their behavior the way that it is, what we need to do is say, ‘Well, we understand it.’

Example: I think someone has been praying for Cindy Sheehan—remember her? Hateful, loud-mouth, attacking everybody, attacking President Bush, even buying land to go down and be right across the road from President Bush and so forth and so on. Well now, she’s given up being a demonstrator. I think it is because her funding was cut off. There’s a perfect example that the circumstances can change. I don’t know if people were praying—I’m sure there were some who were praying. But there’s a good example of what happens to an enemy if you pray about it. What happen was, when she began to criticize some of the Democrats they came on her as viciously as the Republicans did and she found out that not all people are good hearted like she was, if she was good-hearted; or how she may have considered herself. That just proves the point here that we’re going through.

Verse 46: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?....” God is going to save the world eventually, in His way and His plan and how He’s going to do it. We need to keep that in mind.

“...Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?*.... [yes, they do] ...And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary?.... [Nothing!] ....Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?*.... [Of course!] ...Therefore, you shall be perfect... [This is the goal.] (How perfect?): ***...even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect***” (vs-46-48). And you cannot

obtain that without the Spirit of God. That's what's important. And God knows that just of ourselves this is an impossibility! But it is possible:

- with God
- the Word of God
- the knowledge of God
- the Spirit of God
- living God's way

Now, let's focus in on how the Bible shows we are to pray for our enemies. I have seven ways you can pray for them:

1. **Pray that God will convert them.** That's possible; Paul was.
2. **Pray that you'll receive grace and favor in their eyes.** That happened to Joseph when he was thrown into prison.
3. **Pray that they'll get caught in their own devices.** That's exactly what happened to Cindy Sheehan.
4. **Pray that God will fight against them for you.** He can do that, and He can create circumstances far different than you can even imagine.
5. **Pray that God will destroy them.** Now God shows that the wicked are going to go into the Lake of Fire. He's going to destroy them. Sometimes the wicked are so wicked that God will intervene and take care of them.
6. **Witness to them.** This may cost you your life.
7. **Conquer them through death.** That if they kill you it makes no difference because you're going to be resurrected.

Let's look at #6 and #7 again. Let's see how it is that we would witness to them. This also shows how we are to conduct ourselves, too, so that we don't act foolishly and bring things upon us needlessly. Jesus told the disciples as He sent them out on, what you might say, an evangelistic tour.

Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves.... [they were all licking their chops] ...Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men... [this is all part of loving your enemy—beware of them] ...for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues... [That's what Paul was doing to the Christians—wasn't he? *Yes!*] ...and you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles" (vs 16-18). There it is, witnessing to them.

Verse 19: "Now when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should

speak... [we're to have the Word of God written in our hearts and our minds] ...for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak." Now you become a tool in God's hands, and He has a purpose in that. God has purposed that He communicates to men through men, because He already communicated to men through Christ.

Verse 20: "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.... [even if it gets to this point]: ...Then brother will deliver up brother to death; and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death. And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake; but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved" (vs 20-22). And remember this: ***Not one hair is going to perish. You can't have any greater protection than that!***

Let's see, through prayer, how we can use the Psalms in coming to understand the will of God, and how to pray.

One clarification: by saying that if the wicked don't repent, ultimately they're going to be destroyed in the Lake of Fire, but I mean that God would destroy them from this point of view: Remember that man who committed that terrible adultery there in 1-Cor. 5, He said 'Put him out, turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.' In other words, what they go through will bring them to repentance. God destroys the enemy through war.

Psalms 109 will give us an example here of how David prayed. David was a man after God's heart—correct? Let's see how He prayed and let's see that this is entirely proper for us to do also.

Psalms 109:17 is talking about the wicked man: "Yea, he loved cursing, so let it come unto him... [In other words, you're putting him in God's hands—right? *Yes!*] ...he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing, as with his robe, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be to him as the robe which covers him, and for a girdle with which he is always clothed" (vs 17-19).

I want you to do is think about some of the things they did in trying to put away organized crime back in the 20s and 30s. Isn't that what happened? *Yes, exactly!* What you're doing in this, you're putting them in God's hands. You're not saying, 'Oh God, give me the sword to do it.' You're saying, 'God they're in Your hands and they are so wicked.' Was it just what happened to Hitler, because of what He did? *Yes!* This is what we're talking about.

Verse 20: "Let this be the reward of my foes from the LORD, and of them who speak evil against my soul. But You, O GOD the Lord, deal *kindly* with

me for Your name's sake because Your mercy is good, deliver me, for I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. As a shadow when it is stretched out, I am gone; I am shaken off like the locust. My knees are weak from fasting, and my flesh has become gaunt. And I also became a reproach to them when they looked upon Me; they shook their heads. Help me, O LORD my God; save me according to Your steadfast love" (vs 20-26).

That's a prayer in the Bible, how you pray for your enemies. You put them in God's hands for His judgment. Maybe through that they'll repent and things will be totally turned around. You never know.

All right, let's come a little further here and let's see some things what we need to do in using the Psalms as part of our prayers to help us pray. I remember a man said, 'Well, my prayer life is getting rather stale.' And I said, 'Well, tell me about it.' So, he told me about it and I said, 'Some things are needed every day. Do you need to eat every day?' *He said yes.* 'You think it's a vain repetition to eat every day?' *Well, of course not.* Even if you eat the same thing, what is it? It's necessary for you to live physically. So likewise, there are things we need to pray for every day. And it's not vain repetition to pray for it every day. But here is what we're doing in prayer, which is so important in our lives.

Psalm 34:4: "I sought the LORD, and He answered me..." In your prayer you're seeking God. If you are praying as one of the Pharisees recorded back there in Luke 18, to himself, and you're putting in time to pray because you heard a minister say you need to pray every day. Well, it's true, you need to pray every day, that's true. So, you grudgingly go off to put in your prayer time. If you're doing that, you're not seeking the Lord. That's the whole purpose of prayer: ***seek the Lord.***

"...and delivered me from all my fears.... [very key important things] ...They looked to Him and were radiant; and their faces were not ashamed.... [you're looking to God continually] ...This poor man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles" (vs 5-6). That is *IF* you put them in God's hands. What do you do when you have a lot of troubles and difficulties? If you're at kind of at cross-purposes what to pray about, take some of the Psalms, open it up here and claim the promises:

- God, You promised You would hear me.
- You promised You would save me from all my troubles.

All right, list out your troubles. List out your problems. Take them to God. 'This is something that is terrible, I need to repent of it. I need Your help.

There are circumstances against me that I can't control. Please intervene and change the circumstances. There are people who are coming against me that I need to have grace and favor because they're after my hide.' And God will give you a way of escape. 'Delivered him out of them all.' And addition to it you get extra help.

Verse 7: "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them. **O taste and see that the LORD is good...**" (vs 7-8). God wants you to do that. Let's put it this way: tasting is vital in food. 'Tasting the Lord' does not mean run up and take a chomp out of Christ. It means eating His way, His Word, that the Word of God becomes just like fine food in your stomach, the Word of God becomes fine food with God's Spirit in your mind. This is what it means.

Verse 8: "O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. O fear the LORD, all you saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him" (vs 8-9). ***God will take care of you.***

Verse 14—there's an obligation for us: "Depart from evil..." What is evil? *Sin, anger, hatefulness, bitterness, false accusations, overcoming things in your mind—depart from it!*

"...and do good..." (v 14). Just like Paul said back there in Phil. 3, 'Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth the things which are before.' Same principle: depart from the past, use today and the future.

"...do good; seek peace... [through love, encouragement, help] ...and pursue it.... [when you do there's a promise]: ...The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous... [God loves you, called you, watches over you] ...and his ears *are open* unto their cry" (vs 14-15). You lay it all before God, and in faith.

Here's another thing in faith that goes hand-in-hand with how to deal with your problems and adversaries, v 16: "The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.... [the world, the evil ones] (those who are righteous, those who are seeking God): ...The righteous cry, **and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles**" (vs 16-17).

Human life is subject to lots and lots of troubles. That's just the way it is. In this world it can be compounded even more. A hundred years ago if you wanted to get away from crowds of people you could go find some little plot of land that no one had ever been to and you go out there and stake it out and there you are—but not today. Everything is compounded; everyone is closed in together. I don't know how people can live in these mammoth cities

like New York and Chicago and Mexico City. What do they have? *12-million people in Mexico City—unreal!* Can you imagine, crushed in on every side with that?

He delivers you out of all your troubles. If you have things you're working on in overcoming, that's why prayer is important! And God will give the way. That's why you need to study His Word, you need to put love first—faith, hope, encouragement—all of those things are there, all available through prayer. Now notice what this does. This changes your whole attitude.

It says, v 18: "The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are of a contrite spirit." That way then you don't get all hoity-toity over everybody else. It doesn't matter if you're in charge. That's fine. But can you be in charge and be humble about it, yet, still carry authority? *Of course, you can!* There are times when say you're dealing with an unruly employee that really needs to be disciplined, that you just let it go and don't discipline him? *No!* But you do it in such a way as to encourage them so they can change. This helps us understand that it is God doing it *through* us and not of ourselves.

Now notice, here's another guarantee—and this is why this Psa. 34 is a tremendous Psalm, that if you are burdened down with problems, you take this Psalm and when you pray, get on your knees, open this up and read these words, claim the promises that are here and make it part of your prayer. And this will help you to pray; this will help you to have faith in God.

Verse 19: "Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous... [Why? *Because you live in an evil world, that's why!*] ...**but the LORD delivers him out of them all.**"

Verse 20: "He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked... [it'll come back on him] ...and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.... [you put them into God's hands, He'll take care of them] ...The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of them who take refuge in Him shall be condemned" (vs 20-22). Great, great promises that you need to improve your prayer life.

When we come to the end of our lives, God delivers us from all of our problems by putting us in the grave and wait the resurrection. We're delivered from all of them—right? *Yes, indeed!*

(go to the next track)

Now, before we get into the Psalms and start analyzing the Psalms, what I want to do is I want to show you a principle of the Bible based upon Rev. 1;

let's see a tremendous principle that is in the Bible which helps us also understand the unity of Scripture. The Word of God: Old and New Testaments together are complete package and you need both of them. As I mentioned it's just like a lock and a key. You have the lock, but without the key, you don't know what's behind the lock. And if you have the key, you wonder: Where does this fit? I've got some old keys at home—Delores came across them and she said, 'What are these?' And I said, 'I don't know.' Likewise, with the Word of God. You can't just have the New Testament, throw away the Old; or you can't have just the Old Testament and reject the New.

I'm going to show a couple of principles here that I think are really very inspiring, Revelation 1:8: "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending,*' says the Lord... [this is to tell us that the beginning and the ending connect] ...'Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.'"

After John saw Jesus in His glorified form, v 17: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last... [telling us that Jesus is involved in the first and in the last] ...even the One Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the* grave and of death'" (vs 17-18).

Revelation 21:5 is when God's plan is finished: "And He Who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.'" That's why he's written, has had the Word of God written down. If it is written down, then it's something that everyone can always refer to—correct? If it were just by word of mouth, who would know how good the memory is? If it depended upon my memory or other people's memories, it might not be too all that fired good. That's why it's written down.

"... 'Write, for these words are true and faithful'" (v 5). You can take that and you can expand that to the whole Bible. All the Bible is inspired of God. All of it is true.

Verse 6: "And He said to me, 'It is done.... [finished up to this point.] ...I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life.'"

Let's go to Genesis 2:8, even the very name means *beginning*. "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden... [that's the beginning] ...and there He put the man whom He had formed.... [that's the beginning, one man] ...And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow

every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also was in the middle of the garden, and the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil” (vs 8-9).

Revelation 22:13: “I am Alpha and Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last. Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments... [it started out with Adam; He commanded the man] ...that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life... [you’ve got in the beginning the tree of life, and you have in the end the tree of life] ...and may enter by the gates into the city” (vs 13-14). Now we have New Jerusalem instead of the Garden of Eden—the completion of God’s plan. I get a little excited and cranked on some of these things.

We are going to do is see the consistency in the *first and the last* in the Psalms. Psalm 1:1: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water... [this is how we’re to grow in grace and knowledge and change and overcome] ...that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither, and all that he does shall prosper” (vs 1-3)—compared to the wicked.

Notice how this is compared to the tree of life in Genesis, and then the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis. Notice the second part here:

Verse 4: “The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish” (vs 4-6). Now this is referring to individuals.

Psa. 2 refers to it in relationship to nations and peoples and Christ, and I think this is the headline for today, Psalm 2:1: “Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Christ... [which means *Christ*] ... saying, ‘Let us break Their bands asunder and cast away Their cords from us.’.... [let’s have nothing to do with God] ...He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD scoffs at them. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and in His fury He terrifies them. ‘Yea, I have set My king upon Zion, My Holy mountain.’ ‘I will declare the decree of the LORD. He has said to Me, “**You are My Son; this day I have begotten You.** Ask of Me, and I shall give the nations for Your inheritance... [or that is, *the nations*] ...and the

utmost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be admonished, O judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son... [make peace] ... lest He be angry and you perish in the way, for His wrath can flame up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him” (vs 1-12). Quite a way for the book of Psalms to start out—right? Everything in the Psalms builds from there all the way through.

We are going to see the completion of the matter—the beginning and ending, the first and the last. We’ve read the first, now let’s read the last. We started out ‘Blessed is the man’ and now here it is:

Psalm 149:1: “O praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.” In other words, all the problems of human life have all been worked out. All the difficulties that you go through and find in the book of Psalms now has been worked out.

Verse 3: “Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the drum and lyre, for the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He crowns the meek with salvation.” (vs 3-4). Give them glory and splendor and honor. Quite a difference! In other words, instead of just being prospered in your physical life, like a tree planted by waters, now you’re beautified with salvation.

Verse 5: “Let the saints be joyful in glory... [now they share the glory of Christ] ...let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand... [we’re going to rule the world] ...to execute vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with iron bands, to carry out upon them the judgment written—this honor have all His saints. O praise the LORD!” (vs 5-9).

Psalm 150 is the completion of the matter. And I think it’s interesting that this is the last Psalm. Compare that with Psa. 2.

Psalm 150:1: “O praise the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the ram’s horn; praise Him with the harp and lyre. Praise Him with the drum and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipes. Praise Him on the loud cymbals; praise Him with the resounding cymbals. Let everything that breathes praise the LORD. O praise the LORD!” (vs 1-6).

Now, you talk about the completing of God's plan, and everything in complete harmony with God. Just like Genesis starts out the beginning, and the ending is complete harmony; so likewise with the book of Psalms—the beginning and the ending. That's really quite something the way that those things come together that way. And these things really help us and show us and teach us how then we can establish and maintain that relationship with God. So, I think that is really a very interesting setup that is in the way that it is designed. All the way through then we have the different Psalms—now we'll analyze a couple of these.

Let's come to Psa. 145 and let's see how this is constructed. Remember the model prayer that Jesus gave us. What was it? This is how you shall pray: 'Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Here's an honoring of God—praising His name.

Psalms 145:1: "I will extol You, my God, O King... [If there's a king, there's a kingdom—right?] ...and I will bless Your name forever and ever.... [Why? *Because it's hallowed!*] ...Every day will I bless You... [we're to pray daily] ...and I will praise Your name forever and ever" (vs 1-2). Notice the exaltation to God. If in your prayers you need some instruction and encouragement how to praise God, go to a Psalm like Psa. 145, use these words and start out and let that be a springboard for your prayers so that **your words** will begin to flow; and your own words will flow from that.

Verse 3: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works" (vs 3-5). Here it's still praising God for all He's done. So, when we come to God we say: O God:

- thank You for Your love
- Your mercy
- Your kindness
- Your goodness
- for intervening.
- for giving us Your Word
- that You've given us understanding of it

And you do all this before you bring up, 'Now God, here's my problem.' Because what that does, it gets your mind focused on God and His greatness and gets you in the right relationship with God and the spiritual attitude that you need so that when you start bringing up your problems, you don't say, 'God, I've got this problem and boy, I just wish You'd really do this to the other person who caused it.' *No!* You're coming to God:

- you're humble
- you're meek
- you're praising Him
- extolling Him

Then that gives you the spiritual attitude so when you bring up your problems it's: 'Yes God, and I know You can help me.' Comment was made: This also shows character traits of God that we need to have, too.

Verse 6: "And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness" (vs 6-7).

This whole Psalm here is to acknowledge everything that God does, so your prayer is NOT: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name and, God, let's get right with it.'

Verse 8: "The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion..." The way that you receive grace is understand that God is gracious, and acknowledge His graciousness and His compassion. Do you want forgiveness? *Yes!* Do you want other people forgiven? *Yes!*

"...slow to anger..." (v 8). Maybe your prayer is that you lost your temper real quick; that helps you also to build the character.

"...and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." (vs 8-9)—reaches out to everything that He does.

Example: In our house we have a window that we look out every morning and we can see the edge of the roof over the porch. We have a tile roof and on the edge we have these tiles that come over the edge. And in between each tile there's a little space that little birds can get into. They can come down and crawl up in there. We have as many as ten wrens laying eggs. And they come out there and we see them. They're Delores' babies. Yes, she talks to them every morning. And she's also their guardian because there comes a big black bird around trying to get into their nest. But they're protected behind the tile.

You can see God's tender mercies by creating such wonderful things as these beautiful birds—that are sweet; that are lovely; that are kind and all this sort of thing. I know some, after they're hatched, fly down on the tree. Last year there was one bird, it couldn't have been any more than an inch and a half long, and it would fly up and grab on the edge of the windowsill of the window, and then start pecking the window. You look at that sweet little thing and you think, 'Oh God, what a

marvelous thing that You made such creatures—for Your enjoyment, for our enjoyment.’ And this comes to mind when reading about His tender mercies are over everything.

You can see that one of the tender mercies that God has for everyone is a dog. Doesn’t matter who you are, doesn’t matter how you’re dressed, it doesn’t matter what your problems are, if you’ve got a ‘pooch-a-pooch’ and you sit down, he’ll come up and love you. So great is that thing with a dog, that they have found that they can turn hardened criminals around by letting them have a dog. Yes, because what they need is someone to love them. No one loves them because they’re hated, but a dog doesn’t know that. If you pet it, dogs want to be petted, and if you don’t pet them, they’ll come up and stick their head right under your hand till you pet them. There’s another example of the mercies of God.

We have a picture in here, because I made the comment one time: I wonder what it would be like to eat giraffe meat—because a giraffe is a clean animal. It has split hooves and it chews the cud. So I got this wonderful picture from Australia, with a note, and it showed a mother giraffe licking the head of her newborn giraffe, sitting there like that, with a note: ‘Fred, you wouldn’t want to eat this, would you?’ When we were up in Salt Lake City, we would go to the zoo and they had where you could walk up and you could look the giraffes right in the eyes, and they have the biggest, softest, kindest eyes; and they don’t make a sound.

You can just multiply that through everything. Those things God has given us to inspire us so that we have tender mercies; that we have love and understanding. And if God has done that, even for the animals, think about His tender mercies for us! That’s why you can take verses like these, read them, begin thinking about it, and pray to God concerning it. Verse 10: **“All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You.”**

Exactly how that is done, I don’t know. But whatever noise that they make, it’s in praise to God.

Revelation 5:11: “And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne... [in another place it says thousands of angels and ten thousand times ten thousand angels] ...and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice... [and this is one of my favorites in *The Messiah*]: ...‘Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing’” (vs 11-12).

Here, you can even use this to start out your prayer; and doesn’t this tie right in with what Jesus said how we are to begin our prayer: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name’? *Yes!* This is of Jesus.

Verse 13: “And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying...” How he heard this and what kind of sound this would be, we’re going to have to wait to the resurrection to see that and to hear that.

But notice what the message was, “...‘To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb... [so this is to God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...*be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity’” (v 13). Fantastic! So, there we have a fulfillment of the Psalm we read ‘let everything praise You.’

Psalm 145:10: “All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom” (vs 10-12).

What is the Gospel of Jesus Christ? *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God!* What was it? Come to Matthew 17, and I imagine that James, Peter and John thought about this a long time. Here’s one memory that you want to keep, if you had this experience. He didn’t take all of the disciples, He just took Peter, James and his brother, John.

Matthew 17:1: “And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light” (vs 1-2). You talk about an awesome experience. And when Peter talks about the Word of God being written, he bases it upon this experience here.

Verse 3: “Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.” We’ll see later this is a vision. He says, ‘Tell the vision to no man’—because Moses and Elijah are in the grave. Remember what it said about Moses, ‘He was buried in this mountain, Mt. Nebo, and no one knows where his grave is today.’

Can you imagine what Rome would do if they ever found a real tomb of Moses? Boy! What does this do? With this transfiguration experience, what is Jesus doing with these three men? *He’s raising them to the same level of access to God as Moses had*—because Moses saw part of the glory of God. Here they saw part of the glory of Jesus through the transfiguration. In either case neither full glory. And it had to be a vision because no man can

be in the presence of God and live, because His level of existence is so powerful that flesh would disintegrate.

Verse 4: “And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three tabernacles here: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’” That shows it was probably pretty close to the Feast of Tabernacles time.

Verse 5: “While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!’” Well, just like the children of Israel hearing God speak from Mt. Sinai!

Verse 6: “And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces in extreme terror. But Jesus came *and* touched them, and said, ‘Arise, and do not be terrified.’ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone.... [what an experience that must have been] ...Now as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead’” (vs 6-9). Quite an experience! And this was to put His seal of approval on them in the same way God put His seal of approval on Moses.

Psalms 145:13: “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.” Notice what God does. Look at all the praise to God numerating all of His qualities, His character, His Kingdom. And all of this just comes from the first two verses of the model prayer back there in Matt. 6.

Verse 14: “The LORD upholds all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down.” God loves you. God cares for you. He’s going to lift you up.

Verse 15: “The eyes of all wait upon You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (vs 15-16).

Just remember that when you watch some of these specials about wildlife and what God provides for them. The birds: what God provides for them, and how He provides it. Isn’t it interesting, each one eats something a little differently—right? *Yes!* And God keeps everything so clean. He has many scavengers: hyenas, vultures—they do the dirty work, that’s why they’re called *unclean*.

You can expand on that by watching specials like that’s been on Discovery Channel, about planet earth. And you watch *Planet Earth* and you will understand evolution could never have happened. Can you imagine the job in keeping the ocean clean. He’s got all kinds of creatures—from

little minute things to whales—and they patrol and keep it clean. Yes, “...satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

Verse 17: “The LORD is righteous in all His ways...” All of these things are good for us to reiterate to God, because this gives us confidence in God.

“...and loving in all His works.... [let’s realize that God is humble] ...The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in Truth.... [you’re ready to start praying in truth and honesty] ...He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His Holy name forever and ever” (vs 17-20). Quite a Psalm!

If you get down in the dumps and you think your prayers are kind of stale and too repetitious—now there needs to be some repetition in it. Just take a Psalm every day—depending on what your need is—and go through it.

Now, let’s look at a Psalm of repentance. Again, we will see that it’s based upon the model prayer that Jesus gave back there in Matt. 6. This is a good one if you’ve had bloopers during the week, or if you’ve just done something really bad and you wonder, ‘Oh God, will You hear me.’ The answer is, *Yes!* This helps you to repent.

Psalms 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.... [‘Yes, Lord, I just committed a great blooper!’] ...Preserve my soul, for I *am* Holy... [because you have God’s Spirit] ...O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You.... [then you’re coming to God, and you’re trusting God] ...Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for You, **LORD, are good and ready to forgive...**” (vs 1-5).

What is God waiting for? *He’s waiting for repentance, He’s ready to forgive!*

- because God deals with us
- and has called us
- and has given us His Word
- and knows that we’re weak in the flesh
- and knows that we have to change and grow and overcome
- and we’re fighting human nature
- we’re fighting sin
- we’re fighting Satan
- we’re fighting society

- we're fighting our self and maybe everyone around us—because we're in a bad, crank attitude or something

Is God able to forgive us of this? *Yes! He is ready to forgive, waiting for repentance!*

“...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You” (v 5). If you don't go to God and pray, you're not calling upon Him. Even though He's ready to forgive, He's waiting for you!

Verse 6: “Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (vs 6-7). This is a good example on how to pray when you're in trouble.

Verse 8: “Among the gods there is none like You, O LORD; neither are there any works like Your works.” Then you get your mind up on greater things—don't you? This is how we get out of the rut of the mundane stupidity we get ourselves in.

Verse 9: “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O LORD, and shall glorify Your name.” Knowing that when the Kingdom of God is on earth, yes that's exactly what's going to happen. And is God able to answer all their prayers? Hear every one of them? *Yes, because God is great and can do it!*

Verse 10: **For You are great, and do wonderful things; You alone are God.** God is ready to intervene in your life.

Verse 11: “Teach me Your way...” What happens with this is *the Psalms help you get into a repentant and teachable attitude*—and that's what God wants. And it's a spiritual operation. “Teach me **Your** way...” not Your religion—“...Your way...” {Note sermon series on *Why God Hates Religion*}

Verse 11: “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your Truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.” Notice what that does:

- then your heart is right
- then you can love God with all your heart
- Worship God with all your heart
- you can repent to Him with all your heart, and pour your soul out to Him

Verse 12: “I will praise You, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore, for great is Your mercy toward me; and You have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave” (vs 12-13). ‘You've forgiven all my sins. Blotted them out, cast them into the depths of the ocean, removed them as far as the east is from the west.’

Verse 14: “O God, the proud have risen

against me, and the company of violent men have sought after my life, and have not set You before them.” Again, you relate some the things that you're going through

Verse 15: “But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger... [and He's got to be with all of us] ... and abounding in steadfast love and Truth. Oh, turn to me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength to Your servant and save the son of Your handmaid” (vs 15-16).

Let God strengthen you. And how can God strengthen you the most, with His Spirit, to give you the right frame of mind? *Because if you have a bad attitude, you're not in a right frame of mind, you feel rotten—don't you? Terrible—don't you? Nothing goes right—does it? No, everything bad, bad, bad!* So, here you're in the right frame of mind.

Verse 16: “Oh, turn to me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength to Your servant and save the son of Your handmaid. Show me a token for good...” (vs 16-17). In other words, ‘Encourage me, God, with Your Spirit. Give me grace and favor in the eyes of those I'm having difficulties with. Let's that be a token for good.

“...so that they who hate me may see and be ashamed because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me” (v 17). The Holy Spirit is called ‘the Comforter.’

Now, we'll continue on next time in how to use the Psalms to improve your prayer life. We'll go through enough, like we did with these two today, so that you can see how then to use the Psalms

- so that you can pray
- so that you can get in the right attitude that you need to be
- so that you can focus on the love and power and mercy and forgiveness and kindness and goodness of God

—and let Him be your Help!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Philippians 3:7-10, 12-16
- 2) Matthew 5:43-48
- 3) Matthew 10:16-22
- 4) Psalm 109:17-26
- 5) Psalm 34:7-9, 14-22
- 6) Revelation 1:8, 17-18
- 7) Revelation 21:5-6
- 8) Genesis 2:8-9
- 9) Revelation 22:13-14
- 10) Psalm 1:1-6

- 11) Psalm 2:1-12
- 12) Psalm 149:1-9
- 13) Psalm 150:1-6
- 14) Psalm 145:1-9
- 15) Revelation 5:11-13
- 16) Psalm 145:10-12
- 17) Matthew 17:1-9
- 18) Psalm 145:13-20
- 19) Psalm 86:1-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 5
- Luke 18
- Philippians 3
- Matthew 6

Also referenced: Sermon Series:  
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## Keys to Answered Prayer XIX Faith, Belief, Obedience

Fred R. Coulter

Let's just review a little bit before we get into it. What are the two keys of answered prayer—the two major keys?

1. obedience
2. faith or belief

***You believe and you obey!*** This is why it's essential that we know and understand that we have proved God:

- His existence
- His Word
- that it is Truth
- that God has the power and capacity of preserving His Word

which He has.

With that we are to approach God in the way that He desires us to approach Him. But always remember this: ***In approaching God, we must approach Him the way that He tells us to.*** That's the whole story of the difference between Cain and Abel. God defined what the sacrifices would be, the way that they would be offered; same way when you come to Leviticus, the first chapter, and it talks about the burnt offering. We are to give it of our own voluntary will in obedience to what God says, but He defines the terms on how we approach Him. That's why we have the Word of God.

That's very important, because we are not to have our prayer life in a position that we are novices. We are to be growing in grace and knowledge and have developed a relationship with God so that we develop what Jesus spoke of in Mark 11.

Mark 11:20 becomes a very important thing for us to do. It's something that we grow in; it's something we develop. It's not something that you acquire all at once. Mark 9 is the account where the disciples could not cast out a demon out of a boy; the father brought him to them. When Jesus finally came down off the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, He arrived there and...

Mark 9:17: "Then one from the multitude said, 'Master, I brought my son who has a dumb spirit to You; for wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and gnashes his teeth, and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples, in order that they might cast it out, but they did not have *the* power.' And He answered him, saying, 'O faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.' Then they brought him to Him. But when the spirit

saw Him, *it* immediately threw him into convulsions; and he fell down on the ground *and* began rolling about *and* foaming *at the mouth*. And He asked his father, 'How long a time has this *demon* been with him?' And he said, 'From childhood. For it often throws him both into the fire and into the water, that it might destroy him. But if You have the power *to do* anything, have compassion on us *and* help us.' And Jesus said to him, '**If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes**'" (vs 17-23).

- What if you don't have the belief?
- What do you do if you have some doubts?
- What do you do if you're up against circumstances that make you question that belief?

Well, here's what the father said; first of all, he admitted his lack of belief, v 24: "And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, '**Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.**'"

- there's a *beginning belief*
- there's a *mature belief*
- there's a *beginning faith*
- there's a *mature faith*

When you start to believe you still have some doubts, but you still have to go to God and say, 'Help me overcome these doubts.' And what you do in doing that, you don't say, 'Oh, I have some doubts, I'll just put it out of my mind.' You can't just put it out of your mind. You need God's help to get it out of your mind. It is

- through prayer
- through God's Spirit
- through God's Word

that then those doubts can be removed. And also, in God answering your prayers, that helps you grow in that belief—does it not?

Verse 25: "Then Jesus, seeing that the multitude was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you *to* come out of him, and you are not allowed to go into him any more!' And after crying out and throwing him into severe convulsions, it came out; and he became as dead, so much so that many said, 'He is dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand *and* lifted him up, and he arose. And when He came into a house, His disciples asked Him apart, 'Why were we not able to cast it out?'" (vs 25-28).

Let's stop and think about that question for just a minute, because this will help us understand where we need to go in this one here concerning answered prayer. The disciples were with Him for a good period of time. We're not told how long—let's just say a year since we're not quite to the middle of it, we're a little past it, so let's just say a year and a half. They saw miracles; they saw healings; and they listened to Jesus, and so forth. But what was the problem that was there? *They didn't believe all the way!* Showing that it takes a period of time. And who were they? *They were the ones that Jesus had personally selected!*

"... 'Why were we not able to cast it out?' .... [or 'Why are my prayers not answered'?—whatever way you want to express it.] ...Then He said to them, 'This kind cannot *be made to go out* by anything except prayer and fasting.'" (vs 29-29). Prayer and fasting go together—especially when there is a problem, a doubt. What you do is you take the doubt and you put it full center right on the middle of the table, and you look at it and you examine it with the Word of God and prayer. ***You remove the doubt by proof!*** You don't try and put it out of your mind because if you try and put it out of your mind without proving what is right—and getting rid of the doubt by knowing what is true—then it will always come back to haunt you sometime later.

### **Prayer and Fasting:**

1. If you don't have full belief you admit and confess your belief to God and Christ.
2. Then, through prayer and fasting you ask God to give you the understanding as to why you have the doubt, why you have the lack of belief and ask Him to help you with your unbelief.
3. That can apply to any circumstance in your life.

Mark 11—now we're ready, because in here He tells us where we need to go as far as how we come to have the faith that we need to have.

Mark 11:20: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the roots*." That's the one He cursed on the way out when He left the temple in the evening, when He was going out of town.

Verse 21: "Then Peter remembered *and said* to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 21-22)—or *in* God—and the literal Greek really means ***the faith of God***—which means that *it comes from God*. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

As human beings, we have a certain amount of belief and faith in quite a few things. But human faith alone is not sufficient for answered prayer. You have to have the faith, which comes from God. God is not there just to answer a list of requests so that we can get up off our knees and, in pride say, 'God, has to answer me.' No! God doesn't have to do anything. *No man can command God!* God will if we approach Him the way that He has said—that's what's important in everything.

Verse 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say."

That's the biggest blank check you could ever have—correct? It's provided, that it's according to *the will of God*. It's not what we ask or demand of God. It's what is according to the will of God. So, if we are yielding to God in our hearts and our minds, and our thoughts are becoming more Christ-like and having the Spirit of God, then we will have our prayers answered. And we won't be presumptuous in asking for things to burn upon our own lusts either.

Verse 24: "For this reason I say to you, all *the things* that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given to* you. But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, ***forgive***" (vs 24-25). Do not come with vengeance in your heart. Know for sure you'll never get an answer to a prayer.

"...so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses" (v 25). The reason that it's important that we come God's way, through Christ, is because He's giving us permission to pray directly to God the Father in heaven above. That's why there doesn't need to be any priest along the way. But in order to do that, you have to do it God's way, through Jesus Christ.

Verse 26: "For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses." This is a prayer contract—isn't it?

- How do we approach God? *His way!*
- How do we approach God? *Repentant!*
- How do we approach God? *Humbly!*
- We approach God with *belief, faith and confidence!*

all of those combined.

Let's see some other things concerning how prayers are answered. Let's come to John 14. We've already covered this, but since we're getting close to the end of the series, it's good to review sometimes where we have come from, to know where we're headed. Here's another promise. Always remember this: ***In an attitude of repentance and humility you***

*can always claim the promises of God.* Because He committed Himself to it. ***He committed Himself!***

Here's what Jesus said, John 14:12: "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father." you read the first part of the book of Acts and, yes, they did greater works than Jesus did.

Verse 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.... [here comes the other part of the requirement]: **...If you love Me, keep the commandments...** [That's a literal translation from the Greek] ...—namely, My commandments" (vs 13-15). So, we find ***belief, faith and obedience.*** And this comes in with obeying the voice of God because Jesus said these words.

### **Dwelling in Christ:**

John 15:7—here's another aspect of it, especially for us. Those who know, who believe, who have the Holy Spirit and so forth—and that our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is continually maintained and developed—so:

- we grow in grace and knowledge
- we grow in the mind of Christ
- we grow in being able to love God and keep His commandments and understand His ways

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me... [this is also part of the requirements: *dwelling in Christ*] ...and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you."

We need to place everything into God's hands. Now, this doesn't mean that you're going to get an answer immediately. Sometimes the way that God will answer it, since it's according to His will, is differently because maybe what you ask for specifically is going to cause you problems. Lots of times we think very sincerely something is right, but the problem is we don't yet have all the facts. The problem is there are other things we don't know. But God knows everything—right? If we ask according to His will He will provide according to His will whatever we desire. Then you may have a situation occur where you've prayed about something and God didn't answer it! I wonder why God didn't answer. Then you find out later that He didn't answer the prayer because that was

1. not His will
2. it was going to be disastrous for you

and you didn't know. So, all of those factors are involved.

### **Ask the Father:**

John 16:23—this is what really makes the prayers *dynamic, humble, yielded, obedient, faithful*, all of those things all together, because here is something that is not given to the world to do so. It's given to us!

John 16:23: "And in that day... [that is the day that they would see Jesus resurrected from the dead—beginning in that day] ...you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you."

Think about this for a minute, all those who have been Catholics, and all who aren't Catholics today: Why did you think—or do you still think—that you need to pray to Mary and the saints? I am sure that this is in the Catholic Bible. They couldn't change the whole thing to accommodate their traditions. That's why they have to say, 'Well, in order to understand the Bible you have to have a priest present.' That's not because you couldn't understand the Bible if he wasn't there—that is because if you read the Bible you will find that what the Catholic Church teaches is not according to the Bible. They need to control you. The truth is: ***you need the Holy Spirit to lead you!*** You need to control yourself with the power of the Holy Spirit, through God the Father and Jesus Christ, ***because you're led by the Holy Spirit!***

"...you shall ask the Father...." How does the prayer in Matt. 6:12 start? *Our Father*—correct? It doesn't say 'Mary.' It doesn't say 'saints.' It doesn't say 'Jesus.' It says, '***Our Father***'

Verse 24: "Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in allegories; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will plainly disclose to you *the things* of the Father. In that day, you shall ask in My name..." (vs 24-26).

That's why every prayer we have, we say, 'In the name of Jesus Christ.' That's for several reasons:

- because of the Spirit of God that is in us—Christ in us is the hope of glory
- because Jesus said to

we could add other things on there; He says, 'ask in My name.'

Here's the key; this is why prayer becomes so important—and you grow in that relationship with God, and grow in that relationship with Jesus

Christ—because He’s at the right hand of God as our High Priest and Intercessor—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 26: “In that day, you shall ask in My name and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, For the Father Himself loves you...” (vs 26-27).

That’s why the first sermon that starts out the Love Series is *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You*. Everyone is going to come to a point in his or her life that he or she is going to feel completely alone, and there is nothing! They feel left, deserted, abandoned, rejected. There’s nothing left. But remember, ***God loves you!*** Even if there are sins or problems, ***God can forgive those and intervene!*** Always remember that.

Sometimes we have situations that continually remain with us—not because we are sinning, especially in husband and wife problems and in other problems—because the husband or wife does not understand or believe the way that you do or whatever the circumstances may be.

However, never look upon those kinds of trials as God being against you and not answering your prayers. Use that as something to draw closer to God and beseech Him to help you; to strengthen you; to see things the way that God does. Ask God to give you the love to show to that individual, whoever it may be, that they would give you grace and favor—minimum. And that perhaps through circumstances God may even call them.

Now, that’s up to God to do; and that’s up to the individual who’s involved. But this is how we need to approach it. Otherwise, what happens, you can get into a big BA—which is a bad attitude! And that’s how people who are supposed to be converted, begin acting carnally and treacherously toward other people.

So remember, ***the Father Himself loves you!*** “...because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father” (vs 27-28). Always remember that. ***Christ is there. The Father is there!***

### **The Word of God:**

Let’s look at the kind of help we have available to us. Let’s see what Christ is doing. Is it wrong in your prayer to also address Jesus Christ? *No, of course not!* We find in Acts 4 that they prayed to the Lord. But in Heb. 4 we find what Christ is doing, and this is important for us to realize, because this helps us overcome any discouragement that comes along. All of us are going to have discouragement. All of us are going to

have trials. All of us are going to have things that come along, which people in the world do not have in the same way. And the reason is because they are *of the world* and we’re not. God has called us out of the world. We’ll have a certain set of trials and circumstances that other people wouldn’t have that way.

But nevertheless, here’s what we need to understand; this is why you can believe Christ; believe the Word of God. This is how you can grow in faith and grow in strength. It doesn’t come as one swish and you have everything all at once. No, it comes as God grants it and gives it to us.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God...” That’s referring to the Scriptures of God. In John 1, what is Jesus called? *The Word of God!* So, we have a duality here with us.

“...is living and powerful...” (v 12). That’s why when you read and study the Bible, the Bible does things for you spiritually that no other book will do. All of us read other books. But you will never have the experience spiritually, mentally or emotionally, and even intellectually, that you have from reading the Bible. That’s because it’s living.

“...and sharper than any two-edged sword...” (v 12). It is one of the few books in the world that will expose your sins. To show that God is no respecter of persons, even of those that He has used, what does it show of all of the patriarchs? all of the apostles? *It reveals their weaknesses and sins!*

I read the Koran years and years ago. But I wonder if anyone has read it recently, if you could tell me. Does the Koran point out any faults of Mohammad, the prophet of God? *I doubt it!* Does the New Testament point out the weaknesses and sins of the Apostle Peter—whom the Catholic Church claims is the first pope—who is supposed to be perfect? *Yes, indeed!* You find no other book in the world that does it that way.

Notice how meaningful this is to our lives: “...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart” (v 12). No other book can do that, because when you read and study the Word of God, with the Spirit of God, it will do that for you. It reaches right into the very heart and core of your being.

Verse 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession of

*our faith.* For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin” (vs 13-15). We have full confidence.

*Upon repentance there is no condemnation*—remember that. Through Jesus Christ, all sins are forgiven, except the unpardonable sin. If a person commits the unpardonable sin, he or she doesn't care whether there's forgiveness or not because they have rejected Jesus Christ. That's why in the series in Hebrews, I did two sermons on the unpardonable sin. Every once in a while I get an e-mail or I get a letter or someone calls and says, 'I believe I've committed the unpardonable sin and I'm in great turmoil and I don't know what to do.' And I say: 'Okay, if you're in great turmoil you haven't committed the unpardonable sin. You've recognized that you have sinned. So what you need to do is *repent*. Because if you committed the unpardonable sin, you're going to reject Christ; you're going to reject everything; and you won't care. You will be haughty in your satisfaction that you can defy God.'

### **Wait on God at All Times:**

Here's why in prayer it's important, v 16: "Therefore, we should **come with boldness to the throne of grace**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." All of those things are the very basis and foundation of it. God is at the center of it all, and we come to God on His terms.

Psalms 62—here's how we are to pray. Now, we've covered this before, but we'll just review it and add it in here. Because sometimes if you take the same Scriptures, you combine them with other Scriptures, you get a broader, more clear picture.

Psalm 62:5: "My soul, **wait in silence for God alone**; for from Him comes my hope." What we do in the process of conversion. We all realize that *we have nothing that we didn't receive*—nothing physically, nothing spiritually, nothing at all—*it all comes from God!* We're totally reliant on God. This does not make you weak, this makes you strong.

Verse 6: "He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved.... [steadfast with God] ...In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God" (vs 6-7). This is the approach we need to have.

Here is the sum of what we have just read, v 8: "Trust in Him **at all times**, you people..." All times, not some of the time, part of the time, only

when you're in trouble—**all times!** And if you have received a tremendous blessing, do not get lifted up in your own importance. Be thankful to God and trust Him for it.

"...pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah" (v 8). That's a key to answered prayer. That also helps you understand things when you are done praying because of the exercise of your prayer and God's Spirit in you. You begin to understand things in a proper way and a proper perspective from God's point of view. "...pour out your heart before Him: God *is* a refuge for us..."

Verse 9: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." God holds all the nations as drop in the bucket. So the comparison: trust in God:

- Who loves you
- Who's for you
- Who is your refuge
- Who is your salvation
- Who is your rock

*or* trust in man of low degree—or high degree. What's the comparison?

Verse 10: "Trust not in oppression, and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them."—because they can go away. They can be gone, especially in our digital society. A delete button eliminates you, your identity and all that you have—which will be the ultimate coercion if you go against the government and have the *mark of the beast*. 'We will delete you' and you will become an enemy of the state. You cannot buy. You cannot sell. You cannot protect yourself. No one will talk to you. You will have no protection of anything. So, if riches increase don't set your heart on it.

Verse 11: "God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God. Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work" (vs 11-12). That's why if your works are loving God, serving Him, believing Him, praying to Him, living by every Word of God as much as you can, God is for you.

Since God loves us, we are to love God, Psalm 31:23: "O love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud doer." If you've got something that's a really big problem, put it in God's hands. **Let Him handle it!** He will handle it in a way that is going to keep you from trying to get involved and exercise your own will and get yourself in trouble.

Verse 24: “Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.”

- God is there to help
- He’s there to answer
- He loves us
- He’ll strengthen us

Here is a key thing, which goes right there into Matt. 6, ‘Forgive us our debts [or sins] as we forgive those who sin against us—or are debtors’ Here’s why:

Psalms 32:1: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven... [it puts you in a right standing with God] ...whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile” (vs 1-2). This is our relationship with God, and we renew it everyday—don’t we? *Yes, we do! That’s tremendous!*

Now, let’s look at some Psalms which we will sort of categorize them. You may want to go ahead and study through the Psalms on your own this way. Categorize the different Psalms. {note Appendix B: *The structure of the Book of Psalms* reproduce from Dr. Martin’s book: *Restoring the Original Bible.*} Psalm 38 becomes a real key. Here’s when you’re really deep in trouble and deep in sin. God is still able to help and forgive.

Psalms 38:1: “O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath; neither chasten me in Your fury.” Notice how low he sunk. We do not know the physical circumstances in it, but he got plenty ill and sick.

Verse 2: “for Your arrows stick fast in me, and Your hand presses heavily upon me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger; nor rest in my bones because of my sin” (vs 2-3). I wonder if Mohammad ever prayed that?

Verse 4: “For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” We’re all going to confront things that are too heavy for us to take.

Verse 5: “My wounds are putrefied and fester because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long, for my loins are filled with a burning; and there is no soundness in my flesh” (vs 5-7).

Notice how an absolutely miserable condition that he was in, v 8: “I am feeble and painfully broken; I groan because of the anguish of my heart.” You can read all the rest of it, but let’s come down here and see the conclusion of it.

Verse 21: “Forsake me not, O LORD; O my

God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation” (vs 21-22).

This is why the Psalms are there: ***To teach us how to pray.*** This is why it is good as you’re growing in prayer and grace and knowledge, to begin your prayers with some Psalms. What you will find is this when you do: then those words will connect with your circumstances and then you will have your own words to then pray to God, because you’ve been inspired with what you have read.

What happens when you’ve got yourself in a heap, big trouble; or you’ve really been down and out; or you’ve escaped a terrible circumstance? Since I drive down to Monrovia every other month, I always remember the spot on Hwy 5 where I rolled my car. I know within two miles where it is, because I was doing something foolish. I was trying to put something up to keep the sun from blaring on me, and the front edge of the front wheel went off the edge of the pavement and rolled. If it would have gone ten feet further, I would have gone head-on into the south-bound traffic and been killed instantly. I did not have my seatbelt on, and I remember the car rolling—and I can still see it to this day. It doesn’t frighten me because I’ve put it in perspective. Fred learned that lesson! Don’t do stupid things! I remember when it landed upright and I wasn’t hurt, I opened up the car door and got out, and the first thing I said was, ‘Oh God, thank You for saving me from my stupidity!’ It makes me much more cautious—wouldn’t you say? *Yes!*

Psalms 39:1: “I said, ‘I will take heed to my ways so that I do not sin with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked are before me.’” Then it goes through everything that is there.

(go to the next track)

God intervening! Here’s the end. Sometimes it’s interesting, read the first couple of verses and then the last couple of verse and you will see that all of these prayers have an opening, they have a closing, they address God with particular needs.

Psalms 39:13: “Look away from me, that I may recover strength before I depart and am no more.” Lots of times you just need to ask God to spare you from things—there we go.

Psalms 40:1: “I waited patiently for the LORD...” That’s hard in this day and age with everything instant—instant this, instant that, instant the other thing.

“...and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps” (vs 1-2):

- when there is relief

- when there is help
- when there is repentance involved

Verse 3: “And He has put a new song in my mouth... [There’s happiness, there’s joy—the joy comes *after* the correction, The joy comes *after* learning the lesson.] ...*even* praise to our God; many shall see and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.” It blends into a part of the situation referring to Christ.

Verse 4: “Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust and does not respect the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies.” Remember this: ***Every time you stick with the Truth, you’re going to be blessed!*** That doesn’t mean materially blessed. You’re going to be blessed in your standing before God. You’re going to be kept out of sin and out of trouble.

Verse 5: “O LORD my God, many things You have done, Your wonderful works and Your thoughts which are toward us; there is none to compare unto You; if I could declare and speak of them, they would be more than can be told.” There’s another thing. Stop and think about:

- all that God has given you
- how God has dealt with you
- how God has intervened in your life

All of those things are very, very important to rehearse and declare to God—to acknowledge that He has done it. And I think what will happen in your prayer life is this: That you will begin to see and understand more and more:

- that God is there
- that God hears you
- that God loves you
- that God is for you

Therefore, you can have more trust and confidence in God. This grows and it multiplies and it increases. Here’s what part of what Christ quoted in Heb. 10.

Verse 6: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.” Isn’t that interesting? Even right here in the book of Psalms, here is a prelude to the kind of relationship that we have with God; the kind of relationship that Jesus had, which also tells us about what kind of temple and sacrifices.

Since sacrifices are not required today, because Christ has come, and His sacrifice has fulfilled all sacrifices. When Christ is on the earth and the saints are ruling during the Millennium—the Kingdom of God—what need would there be for any sacrifices? Since God didn’t delight in them in the first place? didn’t desire them in a spiritual relationship with God?

Verse 7: “Then I said, ‘Lo, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me; I delight to do Your will, O My God; and Your Law is within My heart’” (vs 7-8). All of these things then, what you might say, are steps of conversion; steps of belief and faith and conviction.

Then here’s of Christ, v 9: “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not kept back my lips, O LORD, You know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation... [this is about the ministry of Christ] ... I have not hidden Your loving kindness and Your Truth from **the great congregation**” (vs 9-10).

What is the ‘great congregation’? *The ‘great congregation’ are the saints of God down through all history.* And at the resurrection, when they are resurrected and we’re all presented to God the Father, then He’s going to declare us as His brethren to God the Father. That’s amazing! I get excited about that! You think about being on the Sea of Glass and all the saints are there and Christ presents us to the Father; and we’re going to sing songs. Christ is going to sing a song. Hey! It’s going to be amazing!

Verse 11: “Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your loving kindness and Your Truth always preserve me.” How much does Truth impact our prayers? ***Well, truth is the very heart and core of our prayers!*** Not only the Truth of God, but the truth of our relationship with God.

Verse 12: “For evils without number have encircled me; my iniquities have taken hold on me...” This is getting back into David. So, lot’s of times you have a blending of the words or what Christ would say—and then blending back to David. But, think on this: Who bore the sins of the world? ***Christ!*** Are those innumerable? ***Yes!*** So, we can see that there.

“...so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me.... [obviously, with Christ that didn’t happen] ...Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me” (vs 12-13). Then it says let those be ashamed and so forth.

Verse 16: “Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You...” That’s where we need to come in our relationship with God and our relationship with each other. “...be glad in...” Christ!

Living in the world is tough enough. We don’t need to make it tough to get along in the Church of God. We don’t need to make obstacles of hierarchical, Hitlarianism over the brethren within

the Church, to make it a dirge and fear to come to church. Always remember this: **You can never inspire the love of God with intimidating threats of fear.** The love of God comes from:

1. your relationship with God
2. it comes through loving each other

Verse 16: “Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You, and let the one who loves Your salvation always say ‘Let the LORD be magnified.’.... [everything comes from God] ...But I am poor and needy; may the LORD think upon me...” (vs 16-17). Let’s contemplate that thought.

God the Father, the greatest Being in the universe **thinks on us.** Isn’t that amazing? That’s very inspiring to me. I don’t know about you. But you may not count to the world; **you may not account to anything to other people, but you sure enough do to God!** He thinks on you! You sure enough do to God because:

- He has called you!
- He has forgiven your sins!
- He gives you the understanding of His Word!
- He wants you to have the mind of Christ!

So therefore, let us rejoice. ‘The Lord *thinks upon me.*’

Whenever you get down and out and you think the whole world is against me—which it very well may be—and nothing seems to be working out right—which sometimes it works out that way—remember, **God thinks on you!** Then you can claim this:

“...You are my help and my Deliverer; O my God” (v 17). Go through and do some of the studying of the Psalms that way.

Let’s come here to a **victory** Psalm, a deliverance or victory Psalm. When you read Psalm 18, just before v 1, it says: “To the chief Musician.” Isn’t it very interesting? Even though David wrote many of the Psalms, he gave them to the priests, and they had to be entered in to the official record with their approval. So, it’s the priests who did the compiling of all of these:

*“To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he said:*

Psalm 18:1: “I will love You, O LORD, my strength.” So, in praying to God, let God know you love Him, because **loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being** is the key to the relationship

with God. And the second key to the relationship that you have with God is to **love the brethren.** If you love the brethren, you know they’re not perfect because *you’re not.* So, don’t be in a judgmental, condemning attitude even though you see problems and difficulties. Trust me and understand this:

- If you can see difficulties, does God know them? *Yes!*
- Is God giving them space to grow and change and overcome and receive mercy and forgiveness, which you desire? *Yes!*

That’s the whole lesson of the parable there in Matt. 18. You’re forgiven your sins and then you get up and you go out and beat other people over the head because of their sins. Well, God is going to say, ‘Hey, why should I forgive you your sins if you’re going to beat up other people over the head when you see their sins.’ *No!*

Verse 1: “I will love You, O LORD, my strength.” You can tell this Psalm was way before the incident with Bathsheba. After the incident with Bathsheba, David was under perpetual trouble, as part of the punishment. That, ‘I made you king, I gave you everything, and furthermore, in receiving the kingdom if that wasn’t enough, I would have given you so-and-so and thus-and-such. But you’ve given cause for the enemy to blaspheme because of what you did.’ This is way before that.

Verse 2: “**The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.**” What a deliverance! And always remember this: **God is there!**

Verse 3: “I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.” Then he reiterates what happens and how God intervened to help. And how God intervened to knockout the enemy. He moved heaven and earth. What did we start out reading there in Mark 11? *That He would move mountains—correct? Yes, that’s what He did here.*

Verse 6: “In my distress I called on the LORD, and I cried to my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him into His ears. Then the earth shook and trembled...” (vs 6-7). What an answer to prayer! Here you’re out here fighting, say, ‘Oh Lord, help me!’ There’s an earthquake. What do you think the enemy’s going to do? ‘Whoooo!’ Get all afraid and scatter.

“...and the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was angry. Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured; coals flamed forth from Him.

And He bowed the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under His feet” (vs 6-9). Hey, you think about when Christ returns what it’s going to be like. Awesome! Magnificent! You can go through and read the rest of it.

Verse 30: “As for God, His way is perfect...” Always remember that, even though there are some things you don’t understand; and even though some things are hard at first, **God’s way is perfect!**

“...the Word of the LORD is tried... [it’s like silver refined seven times (Psa. 12)] ...He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him, for who is God besides the LORD? Or, who is a Rock except our God? The God who girds me with strength and makes my way perfect” (vs 30-32).

When you walk in the way of the Lord, then you’re walking in the perfect way because His way is perfect. And He gives us that perfection. Now, we’re going to have varying degrees of this. I’ve also experienced this: Whenever something has been really been very good and wonderful and fine and great and marvelous and you’re happy about it—a couple of days later you’re going to do a blooper! And that’ll kind of bring you back down to earth and let you know that whatever was done God did.

Verse 33: “Who makes my feet like hinds’ feet, and sets me on my high places. He trains my hands for battle...” (vs 33-34). He was a warring man, but that kept him from being the builder of the temple—didn’t it? *Yes!*

Verse 34: “He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.” Let’s look at it this way:

- spiritually, we have a spiritual battle to fight
- we have spiritual things to overcome
- we have human nature to overcome
- we have carnal self to overcome

Verse 35: “You have also given me the shield of Your salvation... [Heb. 6:10-18—take the shield of God, the helmet—here’s part of it] ...and Your right hand has held me up, and Your gentleness has made me great.” Quite a Psalm; Psalm of deliverance.

Verse 46: “The LORD lives; and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” One of the best things that can happen in our lives, is this: When God does something for us, and when we know that God has done it for us, and we haven’t done it ourselves, and all the praise goes to God, what does that do? *That gives you love. That gives you joy!* But also it takes away vanity and

pride and egotism, and all of this sort of thing that comes along with the exaltation of self.

Verse 47: “The God who avenges me and subdues the people under me, He delivers me from my enemies; yea, You lift me up above those who rise up against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore, I will give thanks to You, O LORD...” (vs 47-49). That’s why many times during the day you need to be praying, even while you’re on your feet. While you’re driving, whatever it is may be.

“...among the nations, and sing praises to Your name, He gives great deliverance to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and to his seed forevermore” (vs 49-50).

Now, remember the sermon that I gave recently on the *Tabernacle of David*? In a sense this is the prophecy for the Church.

- Does He not deliver the Church?
- Does He not deliver us?
- Does He not forgive us our sins?
  - ✓ *Yes!*
  - ✓ *He fights against our enemies!*

Listen, we need to understand this: Part of the Church being scattered is that **God is fighting the enemies for us!** Another part of scattering the Church—because we all look around and we’d love to have great numbers of people, but stop and consider what did we have when we had great numbers of people? He’s also *perfecting His Church!* And it helps us also to get to know each other and love each other more—right?

I’ve been in a congregation at the Feast of Tabernacles one year up in Lake Tahoe, and we had 12,000. What happens in a big congregation like that? *Well, you find those that you know and you get together with a smaller group. Why? Because things function better in a smaller group!* That’s another reason why God has scattered the Church. So, all of these things come together. I think there’s going to be a great disappointment for those who think that they’re going to rebuild what God has put down and let go and scattered. We’ll just have to see how they do it.

However, if they all—in prayer and fasting—got together and really prayed to God, repented of their sins and put everything in His hands, that would be a different story. But that requires an awful lot. So, the only thing you can say is you hope that it would.

Let’s come to Psalm 27—there’s even a wonderful solo song that is taken from this Psalm. What all of these Psalms do is they help show us a converted attitude, converted spirit toward God in our approach to God and in our prayers. This is

really a prayer of deliverance. He's really elated here.

Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?... [We can have the greatest confidence, faith and belief.] ...The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell" (vs 1-2). Dropped dead right at his feet.

Read the account of what happened with Jehoshaphat and the army of the 180,000 of the Assyrians that could have come at any time and just taken over Jerusalem and taken all the Jews off into captivity. Hezekiah went to God and prayed and said, 'Oh God, this is more than we can do.' He said, 'I'll deliver you. This is My fight.' What happened? *They got up in the morning, went out there, they're all dead, all 180,000 killed each other!* The armies had all the loot and all the spoil and all the plunder that they had taken down on their encounter in Carchemish and into Egypt and they were carrying this back with them on the way back to Assyria.

So, they were three days carrying away all the spoil: the gold, the silver, everything that they had. Yet, here is the enemy standing right there and the representatives telling Hezekiah and the people, 'Hey, look at what the king of Assyria has done.' And telling the people, 'Don't trust in what Hezekiah has to say.' So, they walk out there and God delivered them. Here's the thing, whenever you're delivered from a great problem, thank God.

Verse 3: "Though an army should encamp against me..." Think about this: What did God tell Jeremiah? *He said, 'Now, don't be afraid of the people because they're going to make your forehead like flint; like bars of iron.* He needed that just to have the mental strength to go through what he went through.

"...my heart shall not be afraid; though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple" (vs 3-4).

### **Always keep the goal in mind:**

Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed that we can look at the problems at hand and we get our mind off the goal. What is the goal?

- conversion
- Kingdom of God
- eternal life

Then you evaluate everything else from that perspective. When you do, it will give you a focus

on what you need to do here, because you realize where you need to go ultimately. So this verse four is quite a thing!

Verse 5: "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me upon a rock.... [God will be there] ...And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me; therefore, I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy..." (vs 5-6). The sacrifices we make today are not the sacrifices of animals, but:

- of love
- of prayer
- of thanksgiving
- of joy, of praise
- of repentance

—all of those are the sacrifices and even in the prayer of repentance David said, 'What God desires is a broken spirit and a contrite heart.' Those are the true sacrifices of God.

Verse 7: "Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice; and be gracious unto me and answer me. When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O LORD, will I seek'" (vs 7-8). This is what we're doing in prayer.

You can lay down keys to prayer, but unless you have your heart in your prayers and unless you have a developed relationship with God, it's going to be more difficult. ***Really knowing how to pray does not come by a set of rules***, that is true. ***It comes from the heart! It comes from within!*** That's why in going through the keys to answered prayer, it's got to come from *within*, with God's Spirit.

Verse 9: "Hide not Your face from me. Turn not Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."

Verse 14; here's the conclusion of it: "**Wait for the LORD**; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong... [Does that sound a lot like what we read there in Mark 9 to begin with—'help my unbelief?'] ...wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD."

Now let's look at some other things concerning courage. Let's come back here to Joshua, the first chapter. What else gives us courage? They go hand-in-hand. You can't have belief without obedience; you can't have love without obedience. Here's what God told Joshua 1:5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life..." You can put in there anything you want:

- There shall be no sin take me away from God.
- There shall be no trouble that will take me away from God.

- There shall be no difficulty or circumstances that will take me away from God.

So, He tells Joshua: "...As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. **I will not fail you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage...**" (vs 5-6). This kind of courage is not from self-pride and vaunting self, but of faith and confidence in God.

"...for you shall divide for an inheritance to this people the land which I swore to their fathers to give it to them. Only be strong and very courageous so that you may observe to do according to all the law which My servant Moses commanded you..." (vs 6-7). It takes courage to keep the laws and commandments of God. It takes faith to keep the laws and commandments of God. There's no fight between commandment-keeping and faith—they go hand-in-hand.

"...Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the Law... [what we can do today is say the Word of God, the whole Bibl.] ...not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate therein day and night, so that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you in all places where you go.**" (vs 7-9). Isn't that true? *If you have the Spirit of God, He's with you!*

All of this comes with the Spirit of God, the love of God, the power of God—through prayer. Prayer is the key. Now I want you to notice the unity—and, in going through and doing the Old Testament it has given me another thing that I want to do in the future and that is show the unity of Scripture: Old Testament and New Testament, because it's not one vs the other. You can't have one without the other. You must have both.

Hebrews 13:5: "*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior... [Hey, every elder, minister, evangelist listen up!] ...but be satisfied with what you have; for He has said, **'In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.'***" We have here a trilogy again. Just like it was three times there:

- be strong and of good courage
- no, I won't leave you
- no, I will never leave you
- no, I will never forsake you

"...So then, let us boldly say, '*The Lord is my Helper...*'" (v 6). You can have confidence in that. If

you need to, start your prayer with that. Claim this promise. Always remember this: ***Every Word of God is a promise because it is true!***

"...'*The Lord is my Helper, and I will not be afraid. **What can man do to me?***'" (v 6). Well, as Jesus said, 'Don't fear him who can kill the body, but can't kill the life.' That's the ultimate that they can do to you, but what does it do? ***It seals the victory of God in your life!*** Isn't that what overcoming unto death is all about? *Yes!* We're going to face times down the road when we're going to face people who are going to be killing the saints. Jesus promised that it would be. But that doesn't mean that God has gone far off some place. We can have

- this confidence
- this kind of faith
- this kind of understanding

***This comes by prayer and loving and serving God through His Spirit!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 9:17-29
- 2) Mark 11:20-26
- 3) John 14:12-15
- 4) John 15:7
- 5) John 16:23-28
- 6) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 7) Psalm 62:5-12
- 8) Psalm 31:23-24
- 9) Psalm 32:1-2
- 10) Psalm 38:1-8, 21-22
- 11) Psalm 39:1, 13
- 12) Psalm 40:1-13, 16-17
- 13) Psalm 18:1-3, 6-9, 30-35, 46-50
- 14) Psalm 27:1-9, 14
- 15) Joshua 1:5-9
- 16) Hebrews 13:5-6

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6:12
- Acts 4
- Hebrews 10
- Matthew 18
- Psalm 12
- Hebrews 6:10-18

#### Also referenced:

#### Sermon Series:

- *Love* (#1 *When All Else Fails, Remember, God Loves You*)
- Hebrews Series

#### Sermon: *Tabernacle of David*

Book: *Restoring the Original Bible* by Dr. Ernest Martin

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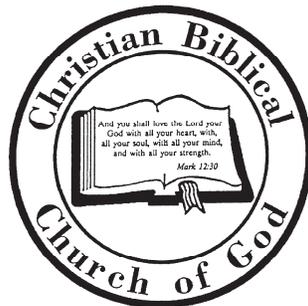
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## Keys to Answered Prayers

Series of 20 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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