

## **PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER**

### **PRAYER ... A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR**

In Eph 6:14-18 we see that the CHRISTIAN ARMOUR (PANOPLIA) consists of LOINS girded with TRUTH, the Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS, Feet shod with the EQUIPMENT of the GOSPEL of PEACE, the SHIELD of FAITH, the HELMET of SALVATION, the SWORD of the SPIRIT which is the WORD of GOD, and FINALLY, PRAYING at all times in the SPIRIT with ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION.

Many Christians are unaware of the fact that PRAYER is a WEAPON in their armoury, to be used against SATAN and his FALLEN ANGELS.

“Pray at all times – on every occasion, in every season – in the Spirit, with all (manner of) prayer and entreaty.” (Amplified Bible)

We must be persistent in our prayers. To pray once or twice and then give up will NEVER bring answers to our prayers.

GOD will always answer our prayers but we must continue to pray until we get the answer.

Some feel that JESUS forbade persistence in prayer when he said, “When thou prayest, USE NOT VAIN REPETITIONS, as the HEATHEN do: for they THINK THAT THEY SHALL BE HEARD for their much speaking.” Matt 6:7 (BATTALOGEO – Do not utter empty words.)

The fact that the Pharisees “For a pretence make long prayer” (Matt 23:14) does not nullify other clear calls for persistence in prayer made by the LORD himself.

What JESUS is speaking about is “VAIN PRAYER” and “PRETENCE”.

A good example of such VAIN PRAYING is that of the heathen votaries of BAAL who PRAYED to their god all day long without any results. 1 Ki 18:26-29

In the context of Christianity the use of rosaries and “Hail Mary’s” is similarly vain and a waste of time and effort.

### **THE JUDGE AND THE WIDOW**

In Luke 18:1-8 JESUS tells the story of a WIDOW who kept going to a JUDGE to obtain JUSTICE against her adversary. After much persistence on her part the JUDGE said, “Though I neither fear GOD, nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or SHE WILL WEAR ME OUT BY HER CONTINUAL COMING.”

Why did the LORD JESUS tell this PARABLE to his disciples? It was “To the effect that they OUGHT ALWAYS to pray and NOT LOSE HEART.”

We can see WHY the widow had to be IMPORTUNATE dealing with a person like this JUDGE.

But GOD is not like this at all. Why then this need for importunity?

The WIDOW wore the JUDGE down until, in desperation, he complied with her request. Must we, likewise, wear GOD DOWN to get an answer to prayer? Certainly not.

The answer to the WHY of PERSISTENT PRAYER is to be found in Daniel 10. Here we see how Daniel PRAYED and FASTED for THREE WEEKS before he got an answer to his PRAYERS. This despite the fact that he was a “MAN GREATLY BELOVED”.

The ANGEL who comes in answer to his prayer explains to Daniel that his petitions were HEARD BY GOD on the FIRST DAY he set himself to humble himself and to enquire of GOD. Why the delay then?

He says “The PRINCE OF PERSIA withstood me TWENTY ONE DAYS, but MICHAEL, one of the CHIEF PRINCES, came to help me.”

Because PRAYER is a WEAPON, part of OUR ARMOUR in this SPIRITUAL WARFARE, SATAN and his ANGELS can and do resist those whom GOD sends to answer our PRAYERS. PERSISTENCE and IMPORTUNITY is not, therefore, to convince GOD but rather to OVERCOME the forces who are HOSTILE to GOD and to his PEOPLE.

### **PRAYER ... THE NEED FOR PERSISTENCE**

The disciples request ... “As Jesus was PRAYING, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY, as JOHN also taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1.

JESUS then gives the disciples a PATTERN in what is called the LORD’S PRAYER, showing them HOW to PRAY.

With regard to GOD: Hallowed be THY NAME.

Thy KINGDOM come ON EARTH.

Thy WILL be done ON EARTH.

OUR OWN NEEDS: Provision.

Forgiveness.

Do not bring us TO THE TEST.

Deliver us from the EVIL ONE.

The LORD then told a parable about the friend at midnight.

As in the parable of the JUDGE and the WIDOW, the emphasis is on persistent prayer.

So we see in Luke 1:5-8 we see:

1. The Man’s need ... bread for a friend.
2. The hour ... Midnight.
3. His friend’s reluctance ... trouble me not.
4. His persistence ... because of his importunity.

Then the LORD JESUS says, “I say unto you, ASK ... SEEK ... KNOCK.

Let us take time to examine these THREE commands of our LORD in DETAIL.

A. ASK ... EFFORT IN ENQUIRY.

Keep on asking ... for everyone who keeps on asking receives.

B. SEEK ... EFFORT IN DESIRE.

Keep on seeking ... for the one who keeps on seeking, FINDS.

C. KNOCK ... EFFORT IN ACTION.

Keep on knocking ... to the one who keeps on knocking, the door will OPEN.

According to WILLIAMS, this continuance in prayer is in the present imperatives and present participles, often repeated.

This all points to the fact that we must be importunate, or persistent in our prayers.

In fact, according to Vincent, the Greek word translated “Importunity” here occurs nowhere else in the N.T. and means, lit, “SHAMELESSNESS”. So the Ampl. Bible renders this verse “Yet because of his shameless persistence and insistence.”

Two good examples in this kind of persistence are those of ABRAHAM and the EARLY CHURCH for PETER.

### **ABRAHAM**

When the LORD revealed to Abraham the fact that he was going to destroy SODOM, Abraham kept on asking God to spare the city. Each request was answered in the affirmative until finally Abraham prays, “Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure TEN shall be found there.” And God said, “I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.” Gen 18:32.

### **THE EARLY CHURCH**

Herod had killed James and then took Peter prisoner, purporting to do the same. “But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” Acts 12:5. God’s answer was to send an angel who led him out of prison to safety.

### **PRAYER ... WHY WE DO NOT RECEIVE**

At the outset let it be said that we NEED to ASK if we are ever to obtain. “You do not have what you want because you do not ask GOD for it.” Jas 4:2. Here we find encouragement to ask GOD for the things we need. Do not be deceived by those who say that we must not ASK for PERSONAL NEEDS.

### **WE DO NOT RECEIVE BECAUSE WE LACK FAITH IN ASKING**

JESUS said, “What things soever ye desire, WHEN YE PRAY, BELIEVE that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24.

In context we are told by the LORD to have faith in GOD and we shall be able to say to “this mountain” be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; AND SHALL NOT DOUBT IN HIS HEART, BUT SHALL BELIEVE THAT THOSE THINGS THAT HE SAITH SHALL COME TO PASS; HE SHALL HAVE WHATSOEVER HE SAITH. Mark 11:22-24.

So James also writes, “But when you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind. A person like that, unable to make up his mind and undecided in all he does, must not think that he will receive anything from the LORD.” James 1:6-8.

## **WE DO NOT RECEIVE BECAUSE OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT**

Mark is the writer who informs us that “When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your FATHER also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” Mark 11:25.

Thus an unforgiving spirit will prevent us from receiving forgiveness when we pray for it, and will also prevent us from getting an answer to our other prayers UNTIL we FORGIVE.

## **WE DO NOT RECEIVE BECAUSE OF WRONG DESIRE**

We read “When you ask you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures.” James 4:3.

Thus we will not receive from GOD if our motives are wrong. There are times when GOD has let men have what they asked for, but it does not bring blessing. Israel “Lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted GOD in the desert. And HE gave them their REQUEST; but sent LEANNESS into their SOUL.” Psalm 106:14-15.

## **WE DO NOT RECEIVE BECAUSE OF SIN IN US**

We read in Psalm 66:18-20, “If I CHERISH wickedness in my heart, the LORD will not hear; but certainly GOD has heard; he has given heed to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be GOD, who has not TURNED AWAY my PRAYER, nor HIS lovingkindness from me.”

The scripture here is clear. SIN inhibits answer to PRAYER. CLEAVE to SIN, CHERISH it in OUR HEARTS, and we can abandon all hope of answer to PRAYER. King SAUL’S DISOBEDIENCE caused GOD to refuse to answer him by any means whatsoever. 1 Sam 28:6.

Isaiah writes, “When you lift your hands in PRAYER, I will not look at you. No matter how much you pray, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this EVIL that I SEE you doing. Yes, stop doing EVIL and learn to do right.” Isa 1:15-17. (See also Prov 1:28-30; Isa 59:1-2.)

## **PRAYER ... NOT OPTIONAL BUT A COMMAND**

Samuel summoned Israel to Gilgal to renew the kingdom and, in his address to the people said, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to PRAY for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.” 1 Sam 12:23.

We have already looked at the scripture which says “MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT TO FAINT.” Luke 18:1.

When wicked men wanted to destroy DANIEL they said, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, EXCEPT we find it against him CONCERNING THE LAW OF HIS GOD.” Dan 6:5.

Daniel was trapped. HIS GREAT CRIME? “He kneeled upon his knees THREE TIMES A DAY, AND PRAYED, and gave THANKS before his GOD.” Dan 6:11.

In the early church SEVEN MEN were ordained to care for the material matters of the church so that the apostles could “GIVE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY TO PRAYER, AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.” Acts 6:4.

It is no wonder that the LORD JESUS referred to the TEMPLE as a HOUSE OF PRAYER. Matt 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46.

We do not need a building to pray in however, for in Philippi there was a place where PRAYER was WONT TO BE MADE at the riverside. It was here that Paul found Lydia, a seller of purple, and led her to salvation. Acts 16:13.

Let us look at some of the scriptures commanding us to pray. We will confine our enquiry to New Testament passages.

We read in Romans 12:12 Paul’s command to be CONSTANT IN PRAYER.

So we read in 1 Cor 7:5, “The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain to the rights of marriage for a limited time, so that they can give themselves more completely to prayer.”

The next scripture is the one in Ephesians 6:18, a passage we have looked at before, where we are told to “PRAY ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION.” Paul is so explicit about our praying in Phil 4:6 where he says, “Do not fret or have anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance in everything by prayer and PETITION (definite requests) with thanksgiving continue to make your wants known to GOD.”

Paul addresses the Colossians as follows, “Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer (life), being (both) alert and intent in (your praying) with thanksgiving.” (Col 4:2.)

(PLEASE NOTE THE CONSTANT REPETITION OF THE WORDS “WITH THANKSGIVING”.)

Writing in 1 Thess 5:17 Paul says, “Be unceasing in prayer – pray perseveringly.” He could ask them to do this for he himself was always praying for them. 2 Thess 1:11.

Writing to Timothy (2:1) Paul says, “First of all then, I admonish and urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men.” WHY? “For such (praying) is good and right, and (it is) pleasing and acceptable to GOD OUR SAVIOUR.” 1 Tim 2:3.

Paul continues, “I desire therefore that in every place men should pray, without anger or quarreling or resentment or doubt (in their minds), lifting up holy hands.” 1 Tim 2:8.

Finally, Peter writes, “But the end and culmination of all things has now come near; keep sound-minded and self-restrained and alert therefore for (the practice of) prayer.” 1 Peter 4:7.

### **PRAYER ... ASK IN THE NAME OF JESUS**

In John 16:23-24 we read, “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, that your joy may be full.”

There are some who quote the first part of this verse as authority for not ADDRESSING the LORD JESUS in prayer.

Stephen, when he was being stoned, prayed, and said “LORD JESUS, receive my spirit.” Acts 7:59.

The disciples had been used to asking the LORD JESUS about all that they needed to know. What he says here is that, in view of his going away back to the FATHER “IN THAT DAY”, that is, in the time we are now living in, it would not be possible to petition him face to face, as he would no longer be here. We can, however, ask the FATHER, in HIS NAME.

Verse 26-27 repeats the fact that we can ask the FATHER directly, and that the LORD JESUS does not need to ask on our behalf because “THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU, BECAUSE YE HAVE LOVED ME.”

That what we ask IN JESUS’ NAME may be asked of him directly is clearly seen in John 14:13 where JESUS says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, THAT WILL I DO ... if ye SHALL ASK ANY THING IN MY NAME, I WILL DO IT.”

What we need to remember is that the LORD JESUS is the one person who enables us to have access to the FATHER. It is on HIS BEHALF that the FATHER FREELY gives us all things.

Again in John 15:16 we read, “... that whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER IN MY NAME, he may give it you.”

Thus we see that it was IN THE NAME OF JESUS that PETER commanded the man at the gate called Beautiful to rise up and walk. Acts 3:6. It was “HIS NAME THROUGH FAITH IN HIS NAME” that gave the lame man the perfect soundness he enjoyed. Acts 3:16.

After they had been threatened because of the healing of the impotent man, the church at Jerusalem prayed to GOD that they might have boldness to “SPEAK THY WORD” and that signs and wonders might be done in the NAME OF THY HOLY CHILD JESUS. Acts 4:23-31.

The place where they were praying was shaken, they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST and they spake the word of GOD with BOLDNESS.

In Acts 16:16 let it be noted that it was as they “WENT TO PRAYER” that the demon-possessed damsel began drawing attention to Paul and his company.

Finally Paul said to the spirit, “I command thee in the NAME OF JESUS to come out of her.” He came out the same hour.

Coming to the epistles we read in Eph 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

So Paul says to the Colossians, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, giving thanks unto God and the FATHER by HIM.” Col 3:17.

In Heb 13:15 we read, “By HIM (JESUS) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our LIPS, giving thanks to HIS NAME.”

Finally, in Jas 5:14-15 in prayer for the sick the elders are to pray over the sick one, ANOINTING him with OIL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD and the PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK.

## **PRAYER ... THE PLACE TO PRAY**

The TEMPLE was the place of prayer in former times. Thus the LORD JESUS said, “IT IS WRITTEN, my HOUSE shall be called the HOUSE OF PRAYER; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Matt 21:13. (See also Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46.)

Thus the LORD JESUS cleansed the TEMPLE of those who were using it to further their own avaricious purposes.

The FIRST CLEANSING took place at the beginning of his ministry. John 2:13-17. JESUS here accused the JEWS of turning his FATHER’S HOUSE into a house of MERCHANDISE.

Then, at the end of his ministry, he cleansed the TEMPLE a second time. Matt 21:12; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46.

Now JESUS said IT IS WRITTEN, MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER.

So, turning to the Old Testament we read in Isaiah, “... make them joyful in my house of prayer ... for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Isa 56:7.

SOLOMON also, in his prayer of consecration of the TEMPLE said, “... hearken unto the PRAYER which thy servant prayeth toward this place. Harken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of THY PEOPLE ISRAEL, which they shall make toward THIS PLACE. (i.e. THE TEMPLE) 2 Chron 6:20-21. Devout JEWS prayed there regularly. Thus Anna, a prophetess “Departed not from the TEMPLE, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” Luke 2:37.

In his parable in Luke 18:9-14 JESUS speaks of TWO MEN going up into the TEMPLE to PRAY.

The disciples continued to use the TEMPLE as a place of PRAYER. Thus after the LORD’S ascension they “were continually in the TEMPLE, praising and blessing GOD.” Luke 24:53.

We read in Acts 3:1 that “Peter and John went up together into the temple at the ninth hour, being the hour of prayer.” That they went there to PRAY is self evident.

We are not confined to ONE PLACE, however, when it comes to PRAYING.

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus said that “When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to PRAY standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men ... But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy FATHER which is in secret ...” Matt 6:5-6.

JESUS is not prohibiting PUBLIC PRAYER, but making it clear that PRIVATE PRAYER is VITAL. PUBLIC PRAYER is only meaningful if it is preceded by and backed up by PRIVATE PRAYER.

JESUS HIMSELF prayed in PUBLIC. John 12:27. But he prayed even more in desert places. Luke 5:16.

So DANIEL PRAYED in his HOUSE with WINDOWS OPEN towards JERUSALEM. Dan 6:10.

ANNA the prophetess PRAYED in the TEMPLE (A PUBLIC PLACE). Luke 2:37.

JESUS PRAYED in the WATER at his BAPTISM (Luke 3:21) but also in DESERT PLACES.

PETER prayed upon the housetop of the house of SIMON a tanner. Acts 10:9.

People PRAYED by the RIVERSIDE at Philippi. Acts 16:13.  
At PHILIPPI, Paul and Silas even prayed in the stocks in a prison cell. Acts 16:25.  
What these scriptures teach us is that it is not the PLACE of PRAYER that is important, but the MOTIVE, whether it is true seeking after GOD or made to impress men when it is done publicly.

## **PRAYER ... KINDS OF PRAYER**

### **1. Worship and Praise**

Before anything else in PRAYER, we ought to WORSHIP and PRAISE GOD, for what he is, and what he had done.

An example in the O.T. is that of ABRAHAM'S servant on finding a wife, REBEKAH, for ISAAC. "The man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of my master ABRAHAM, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." Gen 24:26.

We read in Psalm 22:3 concerning the LORD, "O thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel."

Again in Psalm 29:2, "Give unto the LORD the GLORY due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

### **2. Intercession**

Prayer for those who cannot and do not ask for themselves. This applies particularly to the lost.

Thus MOSES interceded on behalf of Israel concerning their idolatrous worship of the GOLDEN CALF. Exodus 32:32.

So GOD instructed JOB to pray for his friends, "... my servant JOB shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right." Job 42:7-8.

Again, "If any one sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and GOD will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death." 1 John 5:16.

### **3. Guidance**

We often are in the dark about something. Daniel did not KNOW what was going to HAPPEN TO ISRAEL after the expiry of the 70 YEARS. He set his heart to enquire of the LORD, and, after THREE WEEKS, an angel came and made known that which was determined upon his people. Dan 9:3 et. seq.

So in Psalm 143:10 we read, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my GOD: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."

DAVID sought GOD'S counsel even when he went to war. We read in 2 Sam 5:23 "And when DAVID enquired of the LORD, he said, thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them..."



4. **Provisions and Requests**

Our daily needs are to be made known to GOD. Matt 6:11.

For forgiveness. Matt 6:12.

For workers in his kingdom. "Pray ye therefore the LORD OF THE HARVEST, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Matt 9:38.

WISDOM. "If any of you LACK WISDOM, let him ask of GOD, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Jas 1:5

All is covered by Mark 11:24, "Therefore I say unto you, WHAT THINGS SOEVER YE DESIRE, WHEN YE PRAY, believe that ye RECEIVE, and ye SHALL HAVE."

5. **Healing**

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the NAME OF THE LORD: and the PRAYER OF FAITH shall save the sick ..." Jas 5:14.

6. **Thanksgiving**

"I will offer unto thee the SACRIFICE of THANKSGIVING and I will call upon the name of the LORD." See Phil 4:6; Col 4:2.

**PRAYER ... PRAYING WITH THE UNDERSTANDING**

We need to have definite objectives in our prayers. Goals that we aim for should all be in accordance with the WILL OF GOD.

Paul the apostle, in his first letter to the Corinthians speaks of TWO KINDS of prayer. He writes, "I shall pray with the spirit and I SHALL PRAY WITH THE MIND ALSO." 1 Cor 14:15.

We shall look at the SECOND KIND OF PRAYING mentioned by Paul, first.

**PRAYING WITH THE MIND**

When we pray with the MIND we PRAY for specific needs known to us and with PURPOSE.

Thus it is good to have a LIST of PRAYER OBJECTIVES, perhaps in our BIBLES. Such a list would contain the names of unsaved friends and relatives, backsliders who are in need of restoration. It would contain the names of the people in our local fellowship. It should contain the names of those who are engaged full-time in the ministry of God's word to the Church and also to the world at large. Paul wrote, "Brethren, PRAY for us." 1 Thess 5:25

Again, "Finally, brethren, PRAY FOR US, that the WORD OF THE LORD may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you." 2 Thess 3:1.

See also Hebrews 13:18.

Such a list should remind us to PRAY FOR ALL MEN, PRAYING specifically for kings (or rulers) and all who are in authority. 1 Tim 2:1.

We read in Psalm 122:6, “Pray for the peace of JERUSALEM: may they prosper who love you.” Thus prayer should be made for ISRAEL, JERUSALEM and all JEWS everywhere, that they may come to the realisation of the fact that JESUS is their MESSIAH.

Let us not be spasmodic in our PRAYER LIFE. Paul says we must be “Devoted to PRAYER.” Rom 12:12. Again, “Devote yourselves to PRAYER, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well ...” Col 4:2-3. Again, in 1 Thess 5:17, Paul writes, “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.” May GOD help us to do so for in our own strength we cannot.

### **PRAYING WITH THE SPIRIT**

There is a great advantage for us when we pray with the spirit.

When we PRAY WITH THE MIND, we need to ascertain the WILL OF GOD concerning the matters we pray about. When our MIND is involved, we can and OFTEN DO, PRAY SELFISH PRAYERS.

But when we PRAY WITH THE SPIRIT, the MIND is BYPASSED, and we then ALWAYS PRAY ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD.

PAUL writes, “For if I PRAY IN A TONGUE, MY SPIRIT PRAYS, but my MIND is UNFRUITFUL.” 1 Cor 14:14. Then he states, “I SHALL PRAY WITH THE SPIRIT, and I SHALL PRAY WITH THE MIND ALSO.” 1 Cor 14:15.

Paul writing to the Romans deals with this kind of praying. He writes, “And in the same way the SPIRIT also helps our weakness; FOR WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE SHOULD, but the SPIRIT HIMSELF INTERCEDES FOR US with groanings too deep for words; and HE who searches the hearts knows what the MIND OF THE SPIRIT is, because HE intercedes for the saints according to (the will of) GOD.” Rom 8:26-27. Thus we see:-

1. PRAYING WITH THE MIND ... MIND OF MAN OPERATES.
2. PRAYING WITH THE SPIRIT ... MIND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES.

Because OUR MIND is not always in TUNE with the MIND of GOD, our PRAYERS can be OUT OF TUNE with the MIND OF GOD.

So we can PRAY selfishly. We can PRAY for things which GOD will not GRANT. This was the case with MOSES. He PRAYED, “Let me go over.” That is, over JORDAN into the promised land. GOD answered, “Speak no more unto me of this matter.” Deut 3:23-29.

PAUL also concerning the thorn in his flesh says, “Concerning this I entreated the LORD THREE TIMES that it might depart from me.” GOD answered “MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, for POWER IS PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS.” 2 Cor 12:8-9.

When we PRAY IN TONGUES we PRAY according to the MIND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT who is NEVER OUT OF TUNE with the other TWO PERSONS of the GODHEAD.

So when we pray with other tongues we CAN NEVER PRAY PRAYERS WHICH ARE NOT CONSISTENT with the WILL OF GOD.

We can also “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING” for we do not need to THINK when we thus PRAY.

### **PRAYER ... THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS**

The PRAYER LIFE of JESUS is referred to in EIGHTEEN passages in the four Gospels. As some incidents are repeated in more than one Gospel, we find the twenty two references concern FIFTEEN incidents in our LORD’S life. Luke is particularly the account of the LORD JESUS as the SON OF MAN and, as such, most of the incidents are to be found in his Gospel, namely TEN references.

### **INCIDENTS IN LUKE’S GOSPEL**

We will commence by taking a look at the THIRD GOSPEL, as LUKE has the main teaching concerning this subject.

1. There is very little in the Bible concerning the life of JESUS, until he began his public ministry. There is nothing to be found about JESUS praying in the years of obscurity. However, as soon as his PUBLIC ministry began, we find a record in Luke. He is the only writer to record the fact that it was as JESUS was baptised that he was PRAYING when the HOLY SPIRIT in the FORM OF A DOVE descended upon him. Luke 3:21.  
We notice THREE important facts about JESUS at the commencement of his ministry.
  - (a) He was BAPTISED
  - (b) He was PRAYING
  - (c) He was FILLED with the SPIRIT
2. The rendering of the A.V. of Luke 5:16 is not clear that JESUS made a HABIT of retiring into desert places to pray. William’s renders it as follows: “But the news about him continued to spread, and great crowds were gathering to hear him, and to be cured of their diseases. But JESUS HIMSELF continued HIS HABIT of retiring to lonely spots and praying.”  
He never let up on his fellowship with the Father no matter how pressing the crowds became. He needed to get alone to pray, how much more do not we?
3. The need to appoint the TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB was at hand. Luke is the only one who tells us that JESUS PRAYED ALL NIGHT before he chose them. “Now it was in those days that he went up on the mountain to pray, and HE SPENT the WHOLE NIGHT in PRAYER to GOD.” Luke 6:12.  
When the day came he called all his disciples to him, and there were many, and from amongst them, he chose the TWELVE.  
Never let it be thought that the choice of JUDAS OF KERIOTH was a mistake. Even the choice of the one who was to betray him, was a deliberate act of the LORD JESUS, and he KNEW even then, what JUDAS would ultimately do.

4. Luke records for us that JESUS was PRAYING just before HE asked his disciples who men said he was. It was PETER who supplied the answer, “Thou art the CHRIST of GOD.” Luke 9:18-27. Although both Matthew and Mark record the same incident, neither of them tells us that the LORD was praying at the time.
5. Then just eight days later, Luke tells us, JESUS took Peter, James and John up the mountain, and, as JESUS was PRAYING, he was TRANSFIGURED before them. Luke 9:28-36. Here again, although Matthew and Mark record the Transfiguration, it is only Luke who informs us that the LORD was praying, when he was transfigured.
6. In Luke 10:21 we have the FIRST recorded PRAYER of the LORD JESUS in this gospel. It was after the 70 returned from their mission. These are his words, “I praise you, FATHER, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, FATHER, for this was your good pleasure.”
7. It is Luke again who informs us that it was when JESUS was praying that, when he was finished, his disciples said to him, “LORD, teach us to pray, just as JOHN taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1-4.  
It was then that he gave them the DISCIPLE’S PRAYER, most commonly called the LORD’S PRAYER, which it is NOT, for JESUS neither needed to PRAY after that fashion, nor did he.
8. It is in Luke 22:31 that we again have a passage concerning the prayers of JESUS, recorded by no other writer. Here JESUS speaks to Peter and says, “SIMON, SIMON, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have PRAYED for you, SIMON, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” The use of PETER’S old name of SIMON three times is significant. SIMON of course means “A REED”.
9. In Luke 22:39-46 we have the record of the AGONY of JESUS as he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Let it be said here that JESUS was not praying for some miracle which would nullify the need for the CROSS. Nor was he, as some aver, PRAYING for the FATHER to send help because SATAN was trying to KILL him. Luke tells us that JESUS was in ANGUISH and his SWEAT was like GREAT GOUTS OF BLOOD. Mark tells us why JESUS PRAYED. It was because “MY SOUL IS OVERWHELMED WITH SORROW TO THE POINT OF DEATH.” Mark 14:34. It was this ANGUISH OF SOUL which caused him to offer “PRAYERS AND PETITIONS WITH LOUD CRIES AND TEARS TO THE ONE WHO COULD SAVE HIM FROM DEATH, AND HE WAS HEARD BECAUSE OF HIS REVERENT SUBMISSION.” Hebrews 5:7.  
Luke tells us an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. Luke 22:43. (See Mark 14:32; Matt 26:36.)

10. Luke records the final prayer of the LORD which he uttered when he was crucified. He cried out “FATHER, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34.

Apart from these TEN passages in Luke, Matthew and Mark record TWO other times when JESUS PRAYED, and JOHN records THREE.

### **PRAYER ... INCIDENTS IN MATTHEW AND MARK**

1. In Mark 1:35 we read that JESUS rose very early in the morning after he had healed Peter’s mother-in-law, and many others as well in Capernaum, and went off into a solitary place to pray.
2. Both Matthew and Mark record the fact that JESUS went into the hills to PRAY, after he had fed the 5 000. After he had PRAYED, he walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee, to reach his disciples who were labouring on the storm-tossed sea. Matt 14:23; Mark 6:46.

### **INCIDENTS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL**

1. The FIRST prayer of JESUS is to be found in John 11:41, where JESUS prays at the GRAVE of LAZARUS, before RAISING him from the dead. It is a short and simple prayer. “FATHER, I thank you that you have heard me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”
2. The next incident is in John 12:27. JESUS prays, “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘FATHER, save me from this hour?’ NO. It was for this very reason I came to this hour. FATHER, glorify your name.” This prayer makes it very clear that JESUS was not praying to be delivered from the CROSS, when he prayed in GETHSEMANE.
3. The last PRAYER is to be found in John 17. This is the LORD’S PRAYER, and is very particularly a PRAYER FOR HIS OWN.

### **PRAYER ... PAUL’S PRAYING**

- a) Right at the start of his spiritual life we read of GOD’S words to Ananias, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from TARSUS named SAUL, for he is PRAYING.” Acts 9:11. As he began, so Paul continued throughout his life.
- b) He who said “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING” says of himself “Without CEASING, I mention you always in my prayers.” Romans 1:9.
- c) Of Israel he says, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and PRAYER to GOD for them is that they may be saved.” Rom 10:1.

- d) Again in Rom 15:30 he writes, “I appeal to you, brethren, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and by the love of the SPIRIT, to STRIVE together with me in your prayers to GOD on my behalf ...”
- e) He writes to Ephesus, “I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, I keep asking ...”, and a number of things Paul is praying for is listed. Eph 1:16.
- f) In Phil 1:3-11 Paul records the substance of his prayers for the Philippians, beginning, “I thank my GOD every time I remember you ...”
- g) So also in Col 1:3-14, ... “We have not stopped praying for you ...”
- h) In 1 Thess 1:2 we read, “We always thank GOD for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our GOD and Father...” ... Night and day praying for you. (3:10) See also 2 Th 1:11.
- i) As for the CHURCHES, so also for individuals, PAUL prayed ceaselessly. 2 Tim 1:3.