

PRAYER, COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

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Jesus walked this earth more than 2000 years ago and told us everything that we needed to know about our relationship with our Creator God in Heaven including how to communicate with Him. Yet many years later God inspired Jesus' brother James to write the following:

^{James 4:3} Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

And it appears as though most people today are in the same boat; they don't know how to communicate with the most important being in their lives, God. This thing called "prayer" seems to be a stumbling block to most because they have never paid attention to the instructions that God's envoy Jesus gave us. There are two accounts of these instructions: Matthew 6:5-15, and Luke 11:1-4. We will focus on Matthew's account because it contains the most details.

In considering these instructions we must keep in mind that Jesus was operating out of the Old Testament, the New one hadn't been started yet, much less written. (The New Covenant was forged in His Blood about three and a half years later).

Chapter 6 of Matthew's Gospel is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount started in the previous chapter. Jesus' instructions on prayer start in verse 5 of this 6th chapter:

^{Matthew 6:5} And 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. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

If all that you are trying to do is impress men, then that's all that you will communicate with is men. God will turn a deaf ear to your public prayer.

^{Vs. 6} But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

(Note: do not confuse this with group prayer like at meal time when we ask for God's blessing on our meal before we eat and give thanks after we have eaten and are full. See Deut. 8:10.)

^{Vs. 7} But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

The Greeks and the Romans would call their many gods and deities by as many different names and titles as possible and would remind the god of any favors that the worshiper was due because of the sacrifices that the worshiper had offered. Before them the Babylonians used a chain of prayer beads and repeated a series of prayers over and over much like the Arabs and some Christian denominations do today. (See Deut. 12: 29-31)

^{Vs. 8} Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

We are not supposed to barter with God; this is not: "Let's Make a Deal." Keep in mind that He is our creator and that He put us in this lock of space, time, and matter for now and has already made provisions for all things. This is all a matter of attitude; it is about our mindset. How do we see God when we go to talk with Him?

Vs. 9 **After this manner therefore pray ye:** Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

This is a formula, a format if you will, of how to structure our communications with God. We are to pattern our prayer something like this. We are not to repeat these words of Scripture verbatim. That just shows God that we didn't pay attention to these instructions of His Christ who is Jesus.

Now phrase-by-phrase we will pick this format apart to see what God is telling us:

“Our Father.”

The concept of God being our Father goes back to the Old Testament:

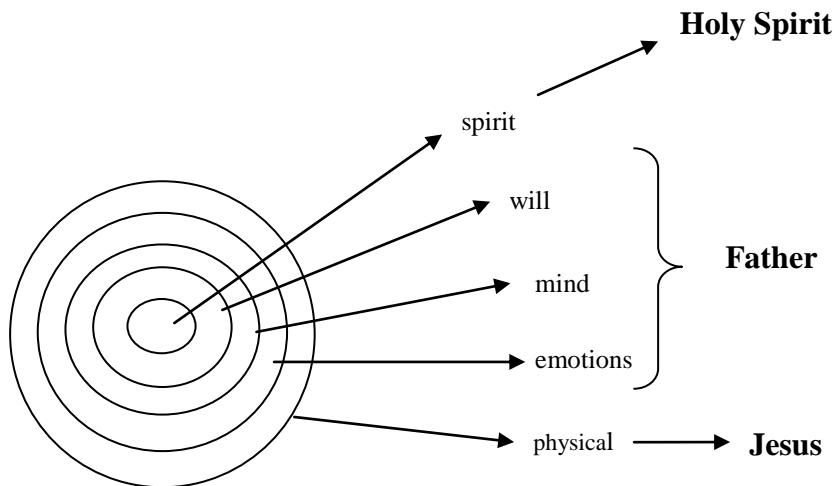
Exodus 4:22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, **Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:**

Isaiah 63:16 Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting.

This is a family relationship that He is wanting with us. He already sees us as His Children; but as stated above, how do we view our relationship with Him? And, an even bigger question is just what is our concept of Him as God? How do we view God who presents himself in three different manifestations? And yet He says to us: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:” (Deut. 6:4).

The following diagram is a simple way to view the structure of God. Since we are made in His image and likeness, all we have to do is look at our structure to see His.

The Concentric Circles of God



Since the Father is infinite mind we are told to pray to Him. He is the central three of the five eternal existing rings. It is the mind that is the center of the thought process and the decision making process. Therefore it is the Father that thought up all creation and is the author and Father of it. The Holy Spirit is the center and therefore is the power and holiness of God. Jesus represents the outer surface or the body of God. It is He that is the spokesman or mouthpiece of God; He spoke all things into existence by the power of the Holy Spirit. (See

John 1:1-3, 14 where He is called “the Word” or the logos.) He is also the five senses of hear, see, smell, touch, and taste for the God Being. It is through Him and in His name that we pray to the Father; He is our mediator, our go-between. If you stop and think about it, God took on human flesh and by this flesh, now points back to Himself and telling us to call Him “Father” because that is what He really is; He created us, therefore He is our Father.

^{Genesis 2:7} And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

If you look up the word “breathed” you will find that it is synonymous with “spirit” which is the power of life. So here we have all three manifestations of God involved in the creation of man: the Holy Spirit is the power of reasoning life; the mind of God who is the Father, Who brought details to the idea; and the body of God did the actual forming of man and breathing into the nostrils.

The term “Father” then means “life giver,” the author of our life. Even in our human procreation we see a type of our Spiritual Father’s pattern of life giving.

One last thing about the idea of father: the father is always the head of His House – His family. It is He who sets the rules (laws) of the family operation. But it is also He who is the provider; the one who sees to every family member’s need: the comforter, the peacemaker, the disciplinarian, the provider of nourishment, and most of all the source of love, encouragement, and the one who picks you up when you fall and skin your knee.

“Who art in Heaven”

This is where He lives.

^{1 Kings 8:39} Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) . . .

^{Vs. 43} Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, . . .

But where is this place called Heaven?

There are three heavens: the first is the air that surrounds the earth (see Genesis 1:8). The second is the rest of the created universe or outer space. The third is God’s throne and it is a spiritual place.

^{2 Corinthians 12:2} I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven.**

^{Vs. 3} And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

^{Vs. 4} How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

But it is not necessary for us to give the number of which heaven when we pray because Jesus would have told us so.

^{Revelation 4:1} After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Vs. 2 And **immediately I was in the spirit:** and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

In order for John to see and hear all of the things that God was going to show him he had to be in the spirit because the third heaven is a place in the spiritual dimension. Remember Jesus said that “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23) If God is spirit then His Dwelling place must be also.

So where is this dimension of the spirit which contains God’s dwelling place?

Acts 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

If it is not far from every one of us it has to be everywhere because we are all over the world. The spiritual dimension is everywhere and yet it cannot be acquired by any of the human senses. It is spirit. Therefore it can only be seen by special invite. When John was invited up to view God’s throne he had to be “immediately I was in the spirit” in order to go there. The same holds true for anyone that enters in to heaven they must be in the spirit or be transformed in the twinkling of an eye into a spirit being with a spirit body. (1 Cor. 15:52)

“Hallowed Be Thy Name”

The source for this is Psalm 100.

Psalm 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts **with praise:** be thankful unto him, ***and bless his name.***

“Hallowed” is an older English word that we don’t see much of today

HALLOWED 37. To *make holy*, i.e. (cer.) *purify* or *consecrate*; (mentally) ***to venerate:***— *hallow*, ***be holy***, sanctify.

When we say, “Hallowed be thy name” we are proclaiming the Holiness of God the Father’s name. But what is His name?

There are three base names from which we get all of the Old Testament names for God & Lord. The first is “El” as in the word translated God in Genesis 1:1 “Eloheem.”

GOD 430. ***el-o-heem***; **plural of 433**; *gods* in the ordinary sense; but spec. used ***(in the plural*** thus, espec. with the art.) of the supreme *God*; . . .

433. el-o’-ah; prob. prol. (emphat.) ***from 410***; a *deity* or the *Deity*:— *God*, *god*.

410. ale; short. from 352; *strength*; as adj. *mighty*; espec. ***the Almighty*** (but used also of any *deity*):— ***God*** (*god*), × *goodly*, × *great*, *idol*, *might* (-y one), *power*, *strong*. comp. ***names in “-el.”***

El, the Name of God, incorporates all of God’s attributes, which includes Jehovah. Some examples of these names are: Eldad - God has loved, Elzabad - God has bestowed, Elijah, God of Jehovah (the use of both names El & Jah). There are 44 names in the Old Testament (Hebrew and Chaldean) that use the prefix of “El.” There are many more names that use the name of “El” as a suffix such Daniel – God is judge, Gabriel – valiant man or warrior of God, Michael – who is like God?

The second base name for God in the Old Testament is Jehovah, which is the English rendering of the name “Yehweh.” Its prefix is “Yah” or “Jah.” This name is first given to Moses in Exodus 6:3:

Exodus 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty (El Shadday), but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

We must keep in mind that Moses was not given this name until just before Israel (a name with “El”) left Egypt; even though Moses used this name in Genesis, which he wrote much later.

JEHOVAH 3068. *yeh-ho-vaw'*; from 1961 (the) self-*Existent* or Eternal; *Jehovah*, Jewish national name of God: — **Jehovah, the Lord. comp. 3050,** 3069.

3050. *yaw*; contraction for 3068, and meaning the adme; *Jah*, the sacred name: — *Jah*, the Lord, most vehement. comp. **Names in “-iah,” “-jah.”**

An example of this is the name of Jeremiah which means “God (Jah) will rise.” There are 27 names in the Old Testament that use the name of Jehovah such as: Jehovah-Jireh, Jehovah (God) will see (to it), Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah (God is) my banner, Jehovah-Shalom, Jehovah (God is) peace.

Jesus is the English rendering of the Greek name “Iesous” (ee-ay-sooce’) But this Greek name is rendered from the Hebrew name “Jehoshua” (Joshua), which means “God has saved” or “God my salvation.”

JESUS 2424. *ee-ay-sooce'* **of Hebrew origin [3091];** *Jesus* (i.e. *Jehoshua*), the name of our Lord and two (three) other Isr.:— *Jesus*.

Hebrew 3091. Jehovah-saved; Jehoshuä (i.e. Joshua), the Jewish leader:— *Jehoshua*, *Jehoshuah*, *Joshua*.

Jehovah (YHWH) is the physical part of God (the current outer circle above) that is the God Contact with creation, Israel, the Church, and the Millennium. By this is meant that Jehovah is the mouth that spoke all of creation into existence, was the one who spoke to Moses in the burning bush, carved the ten commandments, spoke to all the prophets, became Jesus, shed his blood for us, sits now at the right hand of the Father, is our High Priest, and will soon marry the Church and return to rule this earth with a rod of iron.

The third name in the Old Testament for Lord or God is “Adonoy.” This comes from the root word that means “Lord” or “ruler” or “Sovereign God.”

In the New Testament the word for Lord is “Kurios” and is a respectful title. The New Testament word for God is “Theos” and means “the supreme Divinity God.”

Notice that all of these words that we have for the name of God are descriptive of His Deity, His Character Traits, His actions, or His benefits. They are all positive and point to some facet of God. But none of them incorporate all of what is our Great God. Look at Revelation 3:

Revelation 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God,** and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and **I will write upon him my new name.**

We are not given the name of the God of Jesus here. We are just told that we will have this name and Jesus’ New Name written on us. (These will be one and the same.) We will have

God the Father's Family Name. Holy is His Name. It is so holy that we cannot utter it in this existence. We can only describe it: "Holy is Your Name."

Before moving out of His Name we need to take a look at the third commandment:

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

As stated above, His Name is so holy that any use of God's Name in a vein context is sin. But this also includes references to His Name such as "J.C.", or "Jeepers Creepers," or "Jeeze," or "Jehoshaphat" which means "Jehovah Judged." We are not to use any of His attributes or character traits or actions in vein. We are not to make any reference or any connection to Him in vein such as "for heaven's sake" or "Oh my goodness." You have none.

Matthew 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not swear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

Vs. 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Vs. 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Vs. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Vs. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

That's very plain; we are not to use any extra words in our conversation except what is necessary to communicate the barest of points. Extra descriptive adjectives are not only useless but are sin.

"Thy Kingdom Come"

People in North America today have a hard time understanding the concept of a kingdom. A kingdom is family with its head (the Father) as the chief ruler governing over a territory with all its inhabitants by means of a set of laws. So what we are praying for is God's ruler-ship over us both individually and universally.

But it is more than just His ruler-ship over us. We are giving consent to his government and asking Him to make us eager participants in His government in cooperation with all humanity. This is government from the top down with God the Father at the top through Jesus then into two branches of church and civil government. There will be many levels and offices of administration and functions.

The Government of God

During the 1000 Year Reign

God The Father – Supreme Law Giver	
Jesus Christ – King of Kings and Lord of Lords	
Civil Government	Church Government
Abraham (Gal 3:7, 16, 29)	Elijah & Enoch (I Kgs 18:19-39, II Kgs 2:3-5, 4:38) John the Baptist (Lk 1:17, Mat 11:11)
Isaac (Gal 3:7, 16, 29)	Abel, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, Samuel,

		Levi, Melchizedek, & all the prophets (Judges & Chief Priests)
Jacob (Israel) (Gal 3:7, 16, 29)		Sarah – Mother of Righteous Women (1 Peter 3:6)
Moses (God gave the law to) w/ Joshua		Rebecca, Miriam, Deborah, Mary (Jesus' Mother), etc. Remember, there is no male or female in the Kingdom (Mat 22:30)
Gentiles	Israelites	144,000 Pillars (Righteous People) The pillars hold up entire Church structure. (Rev. 7)
Daniel	David (over all Tribes)	The countless multitude of Revelation 7:9-17 that "serve Him day and night in His temple."
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (Ez 14:14, 20 & Dan 12:13)	12 Apostles over 1 tribe ea. w/ Ephriam & Manasseh being the 2 leading nations (Mat 19:28)	
Paul (the latter Apostle)		
Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Luke, Mark, Philemon, etc.		
Noah – Race Relations & Boundaries (Gen 6:1, Mat 24:37, Lk 17:26)		
Joseph (son of Jacob) – Director of World Economy (Agriculture, industry, technology, commerce, monetary system)		
Job – Director of Urban Renewal (Job 1:3, 3:14, 38:4-6) & Solomon under Job		
Zerubbabal (Zach 11:4) (rebuilt The Temple)		

“Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven”

This is still speaking of His Government over all creation. But if we are requesting this Government to appear it obviously isn't here yet; His will is not done here on earth as we affirm it is done in Heaven.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Everything in Scripture is vital to life. But when God repeats Himself you had better pay attention with all your being. This repeated proverb lets us know that God's Will is not being done here on earth. So what is His Will?

Matthew 18:14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, **that one of these little ones should perish.**

John 6:40 **And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life:** and I will raise him up at the last day.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Vs. 2 And be not conformed to this world: **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

Galatians 1:3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

Vs. 4 Who gave himself for our sins, **that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:**

¹ Thessalonians 4:1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more.

Vs. 2 **For ye know what commandments** we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

Vs. 3 **For this is the will of God, even** your sanctification, **that ye should abstain from fornication:**

Vs. 4 **That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;**

Vs. 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

Vs. 6 **That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter:** because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

Vs. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Vs. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

¹ Thessalonians 5:16 **Rejoice evermore.**

Vs. 17 **Pray without ceasing.**

Vs. 18 **In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Vs. 19 **Quench not the Spirit.**

Vs. 20 **Despise not prophesyings.**

Vs. 21 **Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.**

Vs. 22 **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

God's will for us is that we should accept His Government over us by means of His Commandments and that we should do good at all times concerning our fellow man.

2 Peter 3:9 The **Lord is not slack concerning his promise**, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Only those that in the end refuse His Government over them will perish as in not exist anymore. Their fate will be the same as Satan's, permanent and forever non-existence.

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

Remember verse eight above?

Matthew 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for **your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.**

So just what is our “daily bread?” Do we pray for the things that we think will sustain us or do we pray for the things that will put us in, or keep us in luxury? Janis Joplin sang “Oh Lord won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz?” She wanted luxury and was using God like a “sugar daddy.” We all need sustenance both physical and spiritual on a daily basis. But here, even though God says that He already knows what we need; that we should ask Him for all things one day’s need at a time. He gave us some further instructions later on in this sixth chapter:

Vs. 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Vs. 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Vs. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Vs. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Vs. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Vs. 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Vs. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Vs. 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Vs. 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Vs. 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Vs. 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Vs. 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Vs. 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Vs. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Vs. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

These verses are part of the same narrative as the prayer format of verses 9 through 13 and should be read together with them. This part of Matthew's account of one continuous sermon given by our Savior. Don't try to lift any portion of it out of context.

If we seek wealth and luxury then we are guilty of coveting and idolatry. We are putting these things between God and us. This is sin!

But by the same token we are not to just sit back and let God provide. You can get mighty hungry doing that; remember Genesis 3:

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

Vs. 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Vs. 19 **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,** till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

It will not be until the Kingdom of God is established here on earth that this curse will be lifted. But He gave us an example of how it is supposed to work for now:

Matthew 25:14 For *the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

Vs. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Vs. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

Vs. 17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

Vs. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Vs. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Vs. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

Vs. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Vs. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

Vs. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Vs. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Vs. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

Vs. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Vs. 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Vs. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

Vs. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Vs. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

God gives us talents, abilities, and sometimes monies to invest for Him in the service of others. Sometimes we might be called upon to cook for others, sometimes to teach, or to listen, or to give money to someone for groceries. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is another fine example. Janis Joplin wanted to possess for her own selfish ego that nice car. But God sees the heart of all and gives accordingly. In the parable above his Lord knew the servant that only was given one talent for investment, and that is why he was only given one talent. Everything belongs to God to give or not to give according to His pleasure.

Psalm 50:10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Vs. 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

Haggai. 2:8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

He knows our needs and our daily requirements for life. But by asking Him for them every day we are exercising our faith in Him and our commitment to do all things His way. Then we allow Him to show us His generosity to us by giving us these gifts, which are opportunities to grow in His Character.

In Deuteronomy 4:1-9, 40, 6:1-13 and many other times God ties prosperity, wealth, greatness, good health, and long life to the obedience of His Law, His Commandments. Jesus says it many times Himself and it is repeated several times in Revelation.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: **for this is the whole duty of man.**

This is how we “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.” For us this is “our daily bread.” It is more than some food on the table; we seek God’s Character, His wisdom, and His understanding.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

“And Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors”

Luke’s account reads: “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.” (Luke 11:4) Even though they are different Greek words they mean the same thing in this context. Sin is the transgression of God’s Law (1 John 3:4) and it becomes a debt that we owe Him that we could never repay; we should already be dead from it. But because we have been spared we have the sign that we should forgive others.

Immediately after the “Amen” in Matthew’s account (Mat. 6:13) the next two verses take up this commandment to forgive others.

Matthew 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Vs. 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Since this is instruction in prayer Jesus zeros-in on the only thing that this format requires of us: we must forgive anyone that owes a debt. (This applies to both real and imaginary offences.) After these two verses He moves on to the subject of fasting.

Turn to Matthew 16:13-19:

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?**

Vs. 14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Vs. 15 He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

Vs. 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Vs. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

Vs. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Vs. 19 **And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

So just what are the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven? These principles of “binding” and “loosing.” But what are these two principles?

Turn to chapter 18 here in Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew 18:15 **Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**

Vs. 16 **But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.**

Vs. 17 **And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**

Vs. 18 **Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

Here's those principles of "binding" and "loosing" again only this time we get a clue as to what they are about: the context is about the sins of others or debts that others owe us, or as in this context they are called "trespasses against" us. It's all the same thing: people have done injustices against us and now owe us. Now the light bulbs come on and Peter begins to understand that it is all about forgiveness and has to ask an important question; let's read on.

Vs. 21 **Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?**

Vs. 22 **Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

He said seventy times seven or 490 times a day. In other words, we are to remain in a constant state of forgiveness just like He is with us.

Vs. 23 **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.**

Vs. 24 **And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.**

The sum of ten thousand talents is figured this way: a denarius – a penny - was one day's wage for a laborer. (See Mat. 20:2) A talent was worth about six thousand dinarii. So ten thousand of these would multiply up to be about 60,000,000 day's wages. That would be reckoned as a debt that is impossible to repay; the same as our debt because of sin.

Vs. 25 **But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.**

Vs. 26 **The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.**

Vs. 27 **Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.**

Look at the wording here, "loosed him and forgave him the debt." This is the principle of loosing.

Vs. 28 **But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.**

According to our reckoning above “an hundred pence” would be 100 days wages or a little over 3 months wages.

Vs. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Vs. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

The wicked servant was holding his fellow servant “bound” to his debt.

Vs. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Vs. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

Vs. 33 Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

Vs. 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

His debt was reinstated.

Vs. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Notice that both servants end up in the prison of unforgiveness. This must be a torturous place. And, did you also see that the Lord could not forgive the debt that one of His servants owed to another? God has set the law in motion that we must forgive each other without exception.

This is what is meant by the “keys to the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mat. 16:19). These are the “keys.” If you don’t forgive all others you don’t get into the Kingdom of Heaven. Loosing is the key that unlocks the “gate” of God’s Heaven. (Matthew never calls it the Kingdom of God in order to avoid using God’s Name. (See Ex. 20:7)

“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil”

This should read “and do not allow us to be led away by temptation.” And here is why:

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Vs. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Vs. 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Vs. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Vs. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. (By thinking that God tempts us.)

Vs. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God doesn’t lead anyone into temptation. But Satan sure does!

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

He – Satan – is called “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). In 1 Peter 5:8 he is called “your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Look at the Book of Job.

Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Vs. 8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Vs. 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Vs. 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Vs. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Vs. 12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Vs. 13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house:

Vs. 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

Vs. 15 And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Vs. 16 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Vs. 17 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Vs. 18 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house:

Vs. 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Vs. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

Vs. 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Vs. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Did you see just who accused Job and Who defended Job? Satan accused Job of only being Righteous because God protected – “made an hedge about him.” But God knew the heart of Job and of Satan.

Next, some time later, Satan asks for more:

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although **thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.**

Vs. 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Vs. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Vs. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.

Vs. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Vs. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Vs. 9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Vs. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Both times it was Satan that brought about the evil with God's permission. God will never tempt us to do evil. God is in the business of doing good and He wants us to imitate Him by doing nothing but good.

If you read the whole Book of Job you will see that God allowed Satan to test Job; and he passed the test with flying colors. Yes, this testing brought out a flaw in Job's character, but that was corrected which was the whole purpose of the test to begin with.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

God promises His children protection from Satan, so that they don't fail any test, if we will “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7, also see 2:19)

There are three sources of temptation: Satan, the world, and our own human nature. God summed it all up this way in 1 John 2:

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Vs. 16 For all that *is* in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,** is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Vs. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Verse 16 is the key to understanding our own human nature, which is in the world. Let's take a look at how it works by reviewing two other recorded temptations; one in which the human failed, and one that the human passed.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Vs. 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Vs. 3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, **neither shall ye touch it,** lest ye die.

God did not say that they should not touch it. It was one of the trees of the garden that they were to dress and care for. Eve did not correctly know the Law of God.

Vs. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Vs. 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Vs. 6 And when the woman **saw that the tree was good for food,** and that **it was pleasant to the eyes,** and a tree **to be desired to make one wise,** she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Did you see that? The "tree was good for food;" and that covers the lust of the flesh. "It was pleasant to the eyes;" and that covers the lust of the eyes. And finally it was a tree "to be desired to make one wise;" and that covers the last one of the pride of life, which is the third of the three in 1 John 2:16 above. Satan just pointed out to Eve the tree and that she should consider it; she should take a good hard look at it from the stand point of food regardless of what God said. When she gave place to it in her mind and started to consider it regardless of what God said, that is when the sin began. Take a look at this:

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Vs. 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Vs. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

That is the progression; that is how it works. But it is all stopped if we don't give it place in our minds. Now let's take a look at a temptation where the human was successful at resisting so that the devil fled from Him.

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Vs. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

Vs. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, **command that these stones be made bread.**

Vs. 4 But he answered and said, **It is written,** Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Vs. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

Vs. 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, **cast thyself down:** for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Vs. 7 Jesus said unto him, **It is written again,** Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Vs. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

Vs. 9 And saith unto him, **All these things will I give thee,** if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Vs. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**

Vs. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

The same thing took place here: the lust of the flesh; bread to eat because he was hungry. But this time the one being tempted, Jesus, resists with the Word of God; and not just any word, but by quoting God's Law from Deuteronomy 8:3.

Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know **that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**

Next Satan tempts Him with the lust of the eyes; cast yourself down from this high spot so that God can protect you. And did you notice that the devil now quotes Scripture too? Only he quotes from Psalm 91, not the Law.

Psalm 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, **to keep thee in all thy ways.**

Vs. 12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Satan also miss-quotes the Scripture by omitting the phrase "to keep thee in all thy ways." Satan is a deceiver. And in order to deceive he twists and distorts any and all things in order to get us to see things his way. But Jesus sees right through this sham and quotes again from the Law of God in Deuteronomy 6:16

Deuteronomy 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

The last area of temptation is the pride of life: “I will make you the king of the world.” And for the ultimate defeat Jesus quotes the Law of God again:

Deuteronomy 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

By knowing the Law of God and how to apply it we are able to defeat Satan, the world, and our own human nature. Then verse 11 will happen to you: “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him;” now that is a beautiful picture. This is what it is like to be an over-comer as described in Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26 - 28, 3:5, 12, 21.

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

If you don’t know the Law of God then you are wide open to succumbing to temptation and committing sin. The Law of God is your guide to life both now and for eternity. It is God’s lifestyle; it is how He lives. And, because we are made in His Image and Likeness to be like Him, we had better start to imitate Him by living out His Law, His instructions for life in the God Plane. This is how God has provided for us NOT be lead away by temptation: His Law. This is how He has delivered us from evil.

“For Thine Is The Kingdom, And The Power, And The Glory Forever, Amen.”

We affirm these things that “the Kingdom” – the government of the entire universe and all of creation for that matter, is securely in His all-powerful control. This is why we must learn and live His Law now. By submitting ourselves to His Law now we are acknowledging Him as King. **If you deny the Law, you deny Him as your King.** He is the Lawgiver and we are His subjects.

“The Power” – which emanates from His Holy Spirit, is the same power that raised Christ from the dead; and is in the control of our Heavenly Father. This is an admission of faith; that we know that He has all power. And, we can rest securely in that.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

But there are conditions to us being able to tap into that power.

1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, **because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.**

Vs. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

His Commandments are His Law and as stated above they are to be lived by every fiber of our beings.

“The Glory” – is:

Ezekiel 1:26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

Vs. 27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the

appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

Vs. 28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Ezekiel wasn't the only one to see the Shekinah Glory of God.

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Vs. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Vs. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

These descriptions are how the Glory of God appeared to these two human men's eyes. All of the positive attributes of God radiate out from Him like light in the colors of the rainbow, which is the entire light spectrum with all of its hues. This is just how it appears to the human eye and it is a part of our inheritance; we will share in His glory if we keep His Commandments.

“Amen” - ‘so be it,’ or “so let it be,” or “it is finished.” God has heard; it will be done: “Father I know you have heard and You will answer.” When we say “Amen” we are letting go of our prayer to Him for to answer.

Prayer is communication with God your Father, and Creator, and the designer of your salvation. He wants to hear from you even though He already knows your heart and needs. It is the faith thing that we do when we address our talk directly to Him. He doesn't want to hear you spout out someone else's words, especially in a repetitive fashion. He wants to hear from you words that come from YOUR heart. If you have a need that has not been fulfilled even though you have asked Him several times, ask for the wisdom to understand the whys and His timing. And be prepared for the “no” if it should come.

Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

He is your God and Father and He will look out for you and always keep your best interest in His Heart. So when you approach Him in prayer approach with respect for Who He is, and then you can pour out your heart. (Ps. 62:8) He will listen better than any human. And once you learn to hear Him your conversation will be two-way. He has already left us with a 66-volume compilation of His thoughts for us (The Bible) and He would like for us to know even more than that about Him.

Thank You Father in Heaven for giving us this outline on how to talk to you.

Praying Always

Now that we have an idea of how to pray; we need to see how often we need to do pray.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Those are our savior's words just after telling His disciples what would be the signs of His coming and the end of the age; and it is the last thing that He told them in this passage in Luke's account. The words "pray always" stand out because they are the instructions that will allow us to be "**accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.**"

But this is not the only time we are told to "pray always." Through Paul God gives us complete instructions in spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Vs. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Vs. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Vs. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Vs. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Paul is giving us these pieces of armor in metaphor of a Roman soldier's battle gear. The belt of truth is "Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**" (John 17:17) When we put on God's Word we are putting on His Truth. We are taking it into our minds; our hearts and making it part of ourselves. Remember how Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness with just quoting the Word of God in its proper application.

The breastplate of righteousness is covered by Paul in Romans chapter 4 where he quotes Psalm 32:

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness.**

Vs. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom **God imputeth righteousness without works,**

Vs. 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Vs. 8 **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**

This of course has to be followed by James' instruction in his letter:

James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Vs. 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Vs. 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and **by works was faith made perfect?**

Vs. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:** and he was called the Friend of God.

Vs. 24 Ye see then how **that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**

Abraham obeyed the command of God to offer his son Isaac even though Isaac was the son of promise. It was his faith that could only be faith if he put into action. We have a similar situation in that after we accept the gift of salvation as James so eloquently points out, we have to put that faith into works or else it is dead. This faith in action is our **breastplate of righteousness.**

Ephesians 6:15 And **your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

This is more than having read the four gospels and maybe the epistles. This is knowing them well enough to live them out in your life as an example to the world. This is **your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.**

Vs. 16 Above all, taking **the shield of faith,** wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

A shield is used mainly for defense but in close in hand to hand fighting it can be used as an offensive weapon by butting someone or using the edge to lash out at your opponent.

So our righteousness has to start with our faith then be followed up with obedient works. Where does our faith come from? “So then **faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” (Romans 10:17) If you hear the correct words of God and allow them to sink in then the seed of faith will grow into that mustard tree that Jesus talked about. (See Matthew 13:31-32)

Vs. 17 And take **the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Faith comes by hearing the word of God then salvation is the next step. We accept the free gift that God gives us of the taking away of our sins. And every time that we stumble we look immediately to Him and ask for forgiveness. But if we stumble it has to mean that we are trying to live our lives by His code that He gave us in the Ten Commandments, His Law. This is faith with works; it is our salvation.

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” is your only real offensive weapon; and it can also be used for defense. You see, these all revolve around the Word of God. And who is the Word of God?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**

Vs. 2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Vs. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Vs. 14 And the **Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,** (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Jesus is the Word of God; He is Truth, He is our Righteousness, He is The Gospel (The Good News), He is our Shield, He is our Helmet, He is our Sword. When we read the Bible we are reading Jesus and we are putting on the whole armor of God. The more intimate we are with Him through **The Word of God** the stronger our armor will be; especially the shield and sword.

Ephesians 6: 18 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication** in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

A mature Christian will be sub-consciously in a constant state of some form of contact with God because he has trained his spirit to be in tuned to the Holy Spirit. God sees the inner man that is in that state of prayer with Him; developing that relationship with Him; drawing closer to Him. This is what God is conveying to us through Paul: develop that state of prayer by becoming intimate with **The Word of God**.

The Exponential Power of United Prayer

Now we can talk about united prayer or group prayer and its effects.

Deuteronomy 32:30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

That is an interesting question and almost sounds like something out of a cartoon unless you understand the principle of exponential power of united prayer that God has put into His laws. As stated above for us today, we are not involved in physical warfare against the enemies of God; it is all spiritual in nature.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Vs. 12 For **we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

The number of Satan's army is spelled out in Revelation 9:

Revelation 9:16 And the number of the army of the **horsemen** were **two hundred thousand thousand**; and I heard the number of them.

The translated word "horsemen" appears only here in the Bible and means "cavalry force" (Strong's 2461). Satan requires a very large number of troops to deceive the world, 20 billion. The word for "thousand" here is different from the word used in chapter 7 for the number of each of the Tribes of Israel, which was Strong's number 5505. Here in chapter 9 it is number 3461 and it should read "two hundred ten-thousand, ten-thousand. That number would be as follows: $200 \times 10,000 \times 10,000 = 20,000,000,000$

THOUSAND of Revelation Nine, Sixteen *3461. moo-ree'-as*; from *3463; a ten-thousand*; by extens. a "myriad" or indef. number:—**ten thousand**.

When you consider that the population of the world today is just under seven billion that is about a three to one kill ratio in Satan's favor. That is three demons to every human on this planet.

So just what are our weapons and how do they work?

2 Corinthians 10:4 **(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)**

Vs. 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

But that still doesn't tell us what they are!

James 5:16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and **pray one for another**, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**

Vs. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and **he prayed earnestly** that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Vs. 18 And he **prayed again**, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

There is one if of our weapons: **Prayer**. But it must be with faith.

Mark 11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, **Have faith in God.**

Vs. 23 **For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto 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 which he saith shall come to pass; **he shall have whatsoever he saith.**

Vs. 24 **Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**

Vs. 25 **And when ye stand praying, forgive**, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Vs. 26 **But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

Prayer, with unwavering faith, after forgiving all others is the second most powerful weapon in the spiritual realm.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Vs. 18 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

We saw these quoted above but we need to see one other point: God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, is the most powerful weapon in any realm. And when combined with our prayer as described above one can "chase a thousand."

Matthew 18:19 **Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**

Vs. 20 **For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

But here is where the exponential power of prayer comes in to play:

When two agree, the power is not just multiplied by two; it is two to the second power: $2^2 = 4$

In other words John is praying in agreement with Mary and Mary is praying in agreement with John. Their agreement is amplified by their number.

When three agree then the power is then three to the third power: $3^3 = 27$

Now we have John praying in agreement with Mary and Peter, and Mary praying in agreement with John and Peter, and Peter praying in agreement with John and Mary. The power of the agreement is not just tripled it is cubed.

When four agree then the power is now four to the fourth power: $4^4 = 256$

This goes on for every person that is added to the agreement in faith with forgiveness: the power is added exponentially: five for five, six for six, and so on to infinity. But the really neat thing is that you only need eleven persons in agreement, $11^{11} = 396,642,770,611$; for your number to exceed the number of demons that Satan has. That is prayer power!

Luke 10:19 **Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**

Vs. 20 **Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**

Thanks

There is one other aspect about prayer that we must look at and that is thanksgiving.

Psalm 100:4 **Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.**

Vs. 5 For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

As described above in the prayer format we are not only to enter His presents with praise: i.e. “Hallowed be Thy Name;” but now we see also thanksgiving. There are a lot of reasons for this: first of all He is our creator. He didn’t have to create us; He did it out of His unending love. Next He is our savior. He didn’t have to do that either; but here again out of His unimaginable love for us He sent Jesus to die for our sins. Then there is our daily bread and everything that we need to sustain life; He supplies because He loves us. Yes we have to work for it because the ground is still under a curse because of Adam’s sin; but He has not abandoned us. This everyday thanksgiving is His due from a grateful Christian.

Then there is the special thanks that comes from special favors that He does.

Luke 17:12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

Vs. 13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Vs. 14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, **Go shew yourselves unto the priests.** And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

Vs. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

Vs. 16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Vs. 17 And Jesus answering said, **Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?**

Vs. 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Vs. 19 And he said unto him, **Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.**

The others were cleansed but this one was **made whole** because he came back to give thanks to the one that healed him. When you come out of surgery you don't praise the instruments that were used to heal you like the scalpel, the forceps, etc. No, you praise and thank the surgeon. Well God is no different; He expects to be praised and thanked for all that He does for us; but especially when He does a special favor for us.

That covers two aspects of thanksgiving, the automatic thanksgiving that God is due every time that we pray; and the special thanksgiving that we give for special favors He grants us. There is a third aspect to thanksgiving that must not be overlooked and that is the thanksgiving that we give to God even before we receive the gift that we ask for no matter how long it might be before we receive it.

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them *to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

Vs. 2 Saying, **There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:**

Vs. 3 **And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.**

Vs. 4 **And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;**

Vs. 5 **Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.**

Vs. 6 **And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.**

This unjust judge gave the widow what she petitioned for because she was persistent and held her petition before the judge. How much more will our loving God give us the things that we desire if they be good for us? But His timing must be considered and that is where the aspect of giving thanks before we receive what we ask for comes into play. You see, when we give thanks for what we have not yet received, we are exercising our faith that we will receive what we ask for; and, we are not begging God and badgering Him.

It works like this: you place your request before God by your mouth. This is the planting of the seed. Then every time that you pray you give thanksgiving with your mouth for that request, even though you have not received the manifestation of it yet, that is the watering of that seed. The more you have contact with The Father, the more that your faith will be. Soon a blade from that seed will appear; then the ear, then the kernel. The kernel is the fruit of what we ask for. But even the kernel must be allowed to become fully ripe before harvest.

Conclusion

Prayer and imitation are our tools of courtship for developing the relationship with our creator God. He gave us His written Law which is His Life's guidelines so that we might imitate Him. Then, through Jesus The Word, He gave us the instructions to pray properly. This is our means of communication. We come into this world like any other baby having to learn how to talk. This is the same with God; we come to Him as a baby having to learn how to talk to Him because He lives in a different realm; the spirit realm. It takes time to develop communication skills for that realm.

As a baby starts to crawl He or she will point to things that they want and make sounds and the parents will give the baby what it wants. But that only works for so long; as the baby learns to speak it is expected to ask properly for the things it wants. Then, "please" and "thank you" are required from the now growing child because it is now being fed meat and not just milk. The same is true with God; He will only allow you to remain a child for so long then you must start to show maturity. He knows exactly what He put in you and what you are capable of and that is why He gave us these tools. Both are for our growth in Him, to be like Him; like Father, like Son!

When He comes let Him find us in prayer; Amen!

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