

**THE LIFE-CHANGING POWER OF PRAYER**

By T. W. Hunt

**LESSON 6**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER**

Praise God for your desire to study the Bible. We welcome you to join our Wednesday Night Bible Study sessions at FAME, 7:00 – 8:00 PM before the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays.

*Directions: Please read and study the scripture lesson and any other scripture references, the Illumination section, and the Observation section, than answer the questions in the Exploration section. When you submit your answers on the answer sheet a Bible study teacher will review your answers and provide comments within 2 weeks of submission. These comments will enrich your Bible study experience and is not intended to grade or judge your knowledge or understanding.*

Scripture Lesson	Illumination
<p>I Corinthians 2:6-16</p> <p><sup>6</sup>We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup>No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—<sup>10</sup>but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup>This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. <sup>14</sup>The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: <sup>16</sup>"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.</p> <p>Romans 8: 12-16</p> <p><sup>12</sup>Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup>because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.</p> <p><b>Acts 9:1-9</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup>Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup>"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup>"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup>The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.</p> <p><b>James 4:1-3</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup>What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup>When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.</p> <p><b>Matthew 6:16-18</b></p> <p><sup>16</sup>"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you</p>	

**THE LIFE-CHANGING POWER OF PRAYER**By **T. W. Hunt****LESSON 6****ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER****Observations**

- ❖ If God Already Knows Everything, Why Should We Pray?
  - Yes God know everything.
  - God desires fellowship, not silence of His children. Prayer is fellowshiping with God. Prayer allows our spirits to connect with the spirit of God. I Corinthians 2:6 - 16
  - As children of God we have spiritual work to accomplish. As children of God we are in training. We are joint heirs with Christ. II Tim 2:11-13; Rom 8:12-17; Romans 8:28-29; I Cor 15:46-49; I Cor 3:18-23;
    - God is the project manager and owner/client of spiritual works.
      - We have to get our assignments from the Lord – Prayer
      - We have to know and understand the assignment - Prayer
      - We have to cooperate with the project manager – Prayer
      - We are accountable to the project manager - Prayer
      - We must use spiritual methods in order to do spiritual works. – Prayer Romans 8:6
  - God could move on His own, but he wants His children to learn.
    - God has appointed us as stewards of this earth.
    - We learn and mature as we pray for humankind, government, churches and other kingdoms.
    - We exercise our faith by praying for a hostile world.
    - We learn how to be thankful and praise God in a hostile environment. Phil 4:6
  - God could move without our cooperation.
    - God has chosen to work through His children most times.
    - Prayer provides the mean for us to cooperate with God.
  - God could work without prayer.
    - God decided to include us in the governing process which is why He made us stewards.
    - We do not pray to give God information. We pray because of who He is and who we are.
- ❖ If People Are Free to Make Choices, What Good Is Praying for Others?
  - This is the age old question concerning God's sovereignty and humankind's free will.
  - God calls and predestines. John 15:16; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 9:15.
    - God initiates the calling.
    - God introduces factors that affect our decision. Acts 9:1-9
  - Humans make the choice how they will respond to God's calling.
  - God does not want our talent or money. He wants our love which we control. When we give Him our love everything else comes with it. Matt. 22:37-40
  - Prayer allows us to communicate with God concerning our choices and the choices of others.

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## ❖ For What is it Proper to Pray?

- Philippians 4:6 says we should pray for everything.
- As children of God there is no division between the spiritual and the secular. Therefore in our prayers there is no need to have a division between our spiritual and secular blessings and needs.
- Our motives for asking should be for the right reasons.
  - It should not be solely for our own pleasures that are not in keeping with God's will for us an individual and family. It should not contradict the nature of God and His work.
  - It should be for the edifying of God's kingdom.
    - To love God, self and others.
    - Spiritual growth of His children.
    - Providing for all the things that we need as God's children to live.
    - Advancement of His kingdom in this world – salvation of the unsaved and for their needs to live and survive.

## ❖ Does God Hear the Prayers of Non-Christians?

- Depending upon who you ask and their biblical understanding you will get different answers.
- In answering this question I want us to consider the following facts as revealed in the Bible.
  - God loves all persons. Jesus died to make salvation possible for all persons. God introduces factors into all people's lives and the Holy Spirits woes all persons so that they can accept Jesus Christ as Lord. II Kings 5:1-20.
  - God is free to use Christians, non-Christians, or anyone to accomplish His purposes as He sees fit. Daniel 2-4, Daniel 6:4-27; II Chronicles 36:22-23; Numbers 23:7-10, 18-24.
  - We are told to love our enemies – Matt.5:44; Luke 6:27. Israel was given instructions in the Law to love aliens and to include strangers in their national life – Deut. 10:18-19; Numbers 15:15-29; Exodus 12:48.
  - God is the creator of all life.
  - God always places His purposes ahead of all wants of Christians and non-Christians.
- God's omniscience (knows all things) enables Him to hear all human discourse.
- An omnipresent (present everywhere at once), omnipotent (almighty), omniscient God is not to busy to attend to matters of all His creation.
- As His children we have a special relationship with Him which includes promises. God has promised to hear our prayers and answer according to His purpose.

## ❖ Why do Christians Pray in Jesus' Name?

- Jesus told His disciples to offer pray in His name – John 14:13-14; 15:16, 16:23-24.
- Jesus' name is our legal authorization for prayer. He is our way to God - John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
- Jesus name establishes our identity. Jesus' name is now our name – Christians. It identities our family. The sons of Sceva tried to use Christ name and evil overpowered them because they had no right to use it – Acts 19:13-17.
- Jesus' name appropriates all God has done for us in Christ – Acts 3:6.
- Jesus' name is the intensifying agent of unity in the body of Christ.
- Jesus' name indicates reverence for divinity and His importance in the New Testament.

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- ❖ How Can a Christian Pray Without Ceasing?
  - Paul told the Thessalonians to “pray with ceasing” in I Thess 5:17.
    - It does not mean that we are orally praying all the time.
    - It is possible to be in a spirit of prayer.
    - It is possible to always realize God’s presence in our lives.
  - Our prayers should be regular and continuous.
    - We should have daily appointments to communicate with our God as Daniel. Dan 6:10
    - We should feel free and compelled to communicate with God at non-appointment times as there is need.
    - We should be open and available for God to communicate with us at all times.
  - Our prayers should reflect a constant attitude of relating everything in life to God every hour of the day.
- ❖ How is Fasting Beneficial?
  - Jesus fasted – Matt. 4:2. Moses fasted – Exodus 34:28.
  - Jesus provided instructions on fasting in Matt. 6:16-18.
  - Fasting allow us to concentrate on God. Our focus is on spiritual matters and not physical concerns.
    - It is best to fast when we are free from duties and other cares so that we can concentrate solely on God.
  - Prayer and fasting our joined at the hip. Prayer and meditating on God’s word are the vehicles by which we focus on God.
  - Fasting may be undertaken for many different types of special prayer efforts – revival, a need or simply a time to concentrate on God.
  - Fasting may be partial or complete. Due to illness some people can not give up food so they give us something else that is dear to them.
  - Fasting is not for the knowledge of others. Therefore there should not be any outward signs.
- ❖ What is the Purpose of Prayerwalking?
  - Prayerwalking is praying why you are walking thru a house or a neighborhood.
    - It is praying with your eyes open and an open heart as you ask God to do a special work.
    - It can help us to become more sensitive to the material, social and spiritual needs of those around us.
- ❖ Does God Always Answer Prayer?
  - Not all prayers in the Bible were answered with a yes. Many prayers were answered with a no when the request violated His purpose and character. Some prayer request He waited to answer.
  - Let’s examine some prayers that God answered no.
    - Moses
      - Asked to die in Numbers 11:11-15 when the people rebelled in the wilderness. Notice the number of “I” in this prayer.
      - Asked to enter the Promised Land when God had already told him that he would not in Deut. 3:23-29; Number 20:8-12. God did allow Moses to see the land. Deut. 32:48-52
    - David – David prayed for the life of his son by Bathsheba in II Sam. 12:15-20. However the Lord had already told him that the child would not live in II Sam. 12:14.

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- Elijah – Elijah prayed to die in I Kings 19:4 after fleeing from Jezebel. But God still had ministry for Elijah.
- Job
  - Sometimes God does not answer yes to allow our faith to be tested.
- Example from Jesus' parable.
  - The parable of the rich man and beggar named Lazarus. The rich man from hell asked Father Abraham to send Lazarus from heaven to give him water. It was too late for the rich man.
- Sometimes God does not answer prayer because of our ignorance. We don't always know what God has in store for us. This is why we pray for what we want, but we will accept what God wants for us.
- ❖ What If Our Prayers Are Not Answered?
  - We have two choices – desist or persist.
  - When we have a very close relationship with the Lord we usually know when to continue praying and when to stop when God's answer is not our request answered or God says wait.
    - Paul prayed three times for the thorn in the flesh to be removed in II Cor. 12:7-8. God finally told him no in II Cor. 12:9.
    - When God does not give us what we requested we need to be willing to accept God's answer.
- ❖ Does Prayer Change God's Mind?
  - The attributes, purposes and mind of God does not change. I Samuel 15:29; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17
  - There can be several roads that lead to God's purpose in a person's life. The roads are dynamic rather than static in which prayer can ask God to work.
- ❖ When Is It Right to Pray for a Miracle?
  - Miracles usually occurred in the Bible in moments of desperation (parting of the Red Sea) and when all other hope of help had been exhausted.
  - The miracles had certain factors in common:
    - They brought glory to God rather than humans.
    - Sometime they validated God's claims and identity.
    - They advanced the divine work.
    - Each miracle demonstrated an element of grandeur and awesome dignity.
  - God can still perform miracles today, but they should exhibit the above factors.
- ❖ Does God Hear One Person More than Another?
  - God hears the prayers of all His children.
  - God does not have favorites. But He is pleased by those who seek to love and serve Him and chose to have a close relationship with Him. Job 1:8; Hebrew 11:5; Dan. 10:11,19; John 11:5; John 20:2
  - Prayer warriors take time to prayer. They can be counted on to prayer. In addition the close relationship they have with God and as students of the Bible they can discern God's answers.

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**Exploration**

Consider the book, “The Life-Changing Power of Prayer”, the Illumination section and Observation section for your answers.

1. We will discuss each question in this lesson as a group. However please answer each question in your own words,
2. What is the common principle of prayer that is revealed in all the questions and answers?
3. Please ask any additional questions that you may have.

**Thought For The Week: God answer prayers according to His purpose.**

