

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

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Jerry French

The Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and filled 120 believers in Jerusalem. This is the age of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come when He went away. So today, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit is here. As believers, He dwells within us.

When Jesus was baptized, the scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove. The dove symbolizes the nature of the Holy Spirit. A dove is gentle and so is the Holy Spirit.

In the book of John, the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth (John 14:16-17) He is the Comforter in that He will bring peace into our hearts which does not depend on worldly circumstances. He is the Spirit of Truth in that He takes the words of Christ and reveals the depth of meaning of the scriptures.

As we learn to walk in the Holy Spirit, we will learn to walk in truth and peace.

Since we have the Holy Spirit within us, if we will listen, we will be directed and guided what to do and what to say. As we witness to others or teach the Word of God, the Holy Spirit can anoint us with power so that God's glory will be made manifest to others.

We really get to know Him more in our prayer life. For example, in our endeavors to be a witness to others for God, many times we try to do the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to tell others of the love of God through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and all that that means in our lives.

But first we need to ask the Holy Spirit how He wants us to approach each person, what to say. If we just jump out and start telling others, even though we have a zealotness for God, we may turn off that person because of our approach. The Holy Spirit knows the best way to handle every person in every situation. First ask Him what is the best way to approach this person? What do you want me to say? Give me the words to speak.

We must get to know and work with the Holy Spirit. In order to get to know Him better, we need to spend time talking with Him and letting Him talk to us. The Holy Spirit has the mind of God. Jesus said that when He goes away, the Holy Spirit will come to teach us all things, to bring to remembrance what Jesus has said.

In **1 Corinthians 2:12-13** Paul says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

The Holy Spirit anoints us to minister the Word of God with power and authority, but He also protects us from the attacks of the enemy. He doesn't protect us from the attacks, but from the **effects** of the attacks.

In the **7th chapter of Acts** Stephen was proclaiming the Word of God with great power, yet Israel desired to kill him. They stoned him to death, but we read in **verses 54-56**: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

We have also read about many Christians today who have been tortured and killed for their beliefs in Jesus and how they were able to stand in spite of being shot or beheaded. It is the Holy Spirit that gives them the strength and courage to stand.

If our prayers feel empty, it could be that we are not fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit. He will bring us into the same joy, peace, and feeling of right standing that we so desire.

Remember what **Romans 14:17** says: "the kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Paul also told the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 12:1**: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" We are not to be ignorant of the spiritual gifts even today.

The Holy Spirit enters into a person when he is born again. After that, we are told to enter a more intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. Some call it being baptized or receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

We enter this fullness through prayer and also learn how to exercise our spiritual gifts through prayer.

We talked about the spiritual gifts in previous messages. These gifts are given as God chooses to give them **1 Corinthians 12:18**: "**But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him.**"

Once we know our ministry gift, we are to develop that gift. In **1 Timothy 4:14-15**: Paul was telling Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

In this last verse, Paul is telling Timothy that meditating in prayer will develop the ministry gift given to him.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul lists, not completely, but essentially, the ministry gifts: apostles, prophets, teachers, as well as miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, and languages.

So we know that your gift will only grow and develop through prayer and meditation. Prayer will cause the various gifts of ministry to work together - not in competition. Prayer will develop the motivation of love that will keep all spiritual gifts and manifestations in proper order. Prayer is the answer for everything.

Paul stresses the importance of understanding God's Word under the anointing of the Holy Spirit that comes through prayer when he states in **1 Corinthians 2:14**: "But the natural man

receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The reason the word of God is not understood by the world, even with all its natural wisdom, is because the word of God belongs to a higher dimension than just natural wisdom and understanding. It contains a spiritual dimension impossible to comprehend without the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing and hearing by a Word of God. God increases our faith as we develop hearing, or spiritual sensitivity. Our spiritual sensitivity comes by prayerfully studying God's Word.

When we come to depend completely on God it increases our sensitivity. Have you ever had a time when you exhausted all your own resources and had to come to a total dependence on God? Did you start to listen more fervently? When we get to the point that we give Him everything; all our cares, our concerns, our needs, our wants, and wait on Him to answer, we start to listen more closely because we don't want to miss His voice and what He has to say to us.

This all comes with prayer and meditation on His Word. I believe the problem with most of us is that we don't spend enough time in prayer fellowshiping with God and listening to His Holy Spirit who was sent to us to speak to us; to lead us and guide us and comfort us. We go to people, which I'm not saying is something we should not be doing; but first we should go to God in prayer and listen to what the Holy Spirit wants to tell us. He may even tell us to go to a person; but He was sent to us to help us. We need to utilize all that He wants to give to us, but we need to get to know Him by spending time with Him through prayer.

God is our Father, Jesus is our brother, our King, our Savior, and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter who was sent to us to help us, lead us and guide us. He will tell us things to come. Be attentive to His voice, His gentle leading, and His conviction.

In our prayers, we need to remember that God always answers our prayers. We need to be persistent in our prayers. In Luke 11 Jesus gives a story in response to the disciples's request; "teach us to pray." (vs 1)

Jesus tells the story of a friend who is approached regarding loaning him 3 loaves of bread. The request is made at an inopportune time when the man had already gone to bed. However the urgency of the request causes the man to persist. Jesus then said, "Yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needs." (Luke 11:8)

Some prayers require a great deal of persistence. We are told to keep on praying. As I spoke last week, we don't just keep praying the same thing over and over, but we remind God of His promises to us and at the same time we are reminding ourselves of His promises to us.

Remember in Daniel when he prayed but did not get the answer to his prayer immediately? There were spiritual battles going on that prevented the answer from coming through until 21 days later. What if Daniel would have given up after a few days? It took 21 days. What if he gave up on day 20? Have you prayed for something and waited and waited and then finally gave up thinking it's not God's will or you just got tired of waiting? What if the answer to your

prayer was coming the next day and if you would have waited just one more day. you would have seen your prayer answered!!!

God will answer your prayer, but don't get impatient. Wait patiently on Him. **Psalm 37:7** says to "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him..."

Prayer brings health. Doctors are telling us that many diseases are caused by stress. In **Philippians 4:6-7**, Paul says: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. "

We have a choice. We can be anxious, or we can trust in God. If we are full of the cares of the world, what is the benefit of this?

Prayer deals with the cause and not just with the effects. If the cause of our illness is anxiety, then the way to deal with the symptoms is to get rid of the anxiety.

Paul tells the Philippians that the secret to living without anxiety is prayer. When you pray, you are placing the problem that has made you anxious in God's hands. Then, through thanksgiving, you leave the problem in God's hands and make sure you don't pick it up again!!! By dealing with the anxiety, most of the symptoms can disappear in time.

When we give all cares and concerns to God and leave them with Him, it produces a peace that only God can give. In **John 14:27** Jesus says "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." We don't have to be fearful, we can be at peace.

We have to give our problems to God in prayer. If we will do this, we can live healthy lives.

Prayer is powerful and as the scriptures tell us many times, we need to pray; it is how we communicate with God, build a relationship with Him, hear from the Holy Spirit to be led and guided by Him. To develop a close relationship with Him, we need to fellowship with Him through prayer. The more we pray, the more we get to know this loving God; our Father who loves us so much that He sent Jesus to take all the wrath that would have come upon us if it wasn't for Jesus sacrificing Himself.

He took all curses on Him so that we don't have to bear any of the curses of the enemy; sickness, poverty, lack, etc. Jesus became sin so that all our sins are washed clean and God our Father doesn't even see them! He doesn't remember them; **Psalm 103:12** tells us: "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

He even gave us authority to use His name to cast out the enemy, heal the sick. All praise be to God our Father and Jesus our Lord and our King. He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort us, to guide us, lead us and tell us things to come.

He has done all this for us! And through prayer, unceasing prayer, we can come to really know the heart of our loving Father and all the promises and blessings He wants us to have through our belief in Jesus.

Prayer is how we communicate. It is powerful and it is our lifeline to living a healthy, abundant life that Jesus came to give us. as Jesus tells us in John 10:10

To sum up; there are a few things that can motivate us to pray:

1. **Prayer produces power.** We need the power of God in us to deal with the attacks of the enemy. He has given us authority. **Deuteronomy 28:13** tells us: "The Lord will make you the head and not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom."

In Luke 10:19 Jesus tells us: "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome **ALL** the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."

The enemy is under our feet but too often we listen to the thoughts of the enemy and believe what he tells us more than believe what God's Word says and believe what He says.

2. **Prayer produces spiritual understanding.** Through prayer, our lives will be made more aware of spiritual reality. We have seen that our senses; hear, see, feel, have been more important and real to us. We need to change that and see with our spiritual eyes as Gahazi saw the multitude of angels ready for battle in 2 Kings 6:17 when God opened his spiritual eyes. We need to realize that there is a spiritual battle going on. In **Ephesians 6:12** it tells us that "we war not against flesh and blood, but against principalities".... See with your spiritual eyes the angels that encamp around us. **Psalms 34:7**: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them."

3. **Prayer is the door for a more intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit.** God gives to us gifts and we can learn how to move in our gift as we learn to pray. Each one of us has been given a spiritual gift that we must learn to use. Prayer is the way to learn.

4. **Through persistent praying, our prayers will be answered.** We saw that we don't keep praying the same thing over and over again, thinking that our "many words will cause God to hear us". **Matthew 6:7**: "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words," but instead we are thanking God for hearing our prayer and reminding Him of His promises and His will for us, as well as reminding **us** of His promises that are all "yes" and "amen". Remember the spiritual battle that was going on when Daniel prayed. He kept praying and thanking God. Had he stopped praying one day sooner, his prayer may have never been answered. Never give up. Know that God hears our prayers and He does answer.

5. **Prayer is the key to maintaining our physical health.** We saw that most diseases occur because of stress and anxiety. If we would give all our cares and concerns, all worries to God in prayer, we would not have the stress or anxiety in our lives and therefore we would live healthier lives.

Hopefully you can see how important prayer is and how we need to be consistent in our prayer life and be specific in what we are praying for, and believe what God has for us and never give up. We need to make prayer time a priority and pray without ceasing throughout every day.

