

Intercession

Part 2

Introduction

In the first part of this study, we learned that God wants all of us to be intercessors -- to cooperate with Him in bringing His plans to fruition. We also began to look at some of the principles of intercession. In this second part, we will show you what else the Bible teaches to make us successful intercessors.

Our Study

To be an effective intercessor, we must stand clean before the Lord.

Pray With a Clean Heart

Sin has a way of invading our lives even when we are trying to live godly lives. But sin hinders our prayers. Before we intercede, we must make sure that we stand clean before the Lord.

The Scripture: Isaiah 59:2

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

1. What can separate us from God? _____
2. What is the result? _____

And we might add - we won't hear him.

The Scripture: James 4:3

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

3. Why do we sometimes not receive the answer to our prayers? _____
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Yes, even when we are interceding for someone, we can ask selfishly or with the wrong motives.

Pray God's Prayers

Because intercession is God's idea, He knows what He wants to accomplish through our intercessions. Before we can intercede adequately, we must know what those desires are so we can pray His prayers.

Since intercession is a form of prayer, anything the Bible reveals to us about prayer applies to intercession.

How do we know what is on God's heart? The obvious answer is to ask Him. Usually, He will tell us. But if for some reason, we don't hear Him, we have another way of finding out. We can learn God's will by reading His revealed will in Scripture. Let me give you an example.

The Scripture: Matthew 9:37-38

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

4. What does Jesus tell us in this scripture? _____

5. What does He tell us to do? _____

As we intercede, in addition to praying for workers, we can pray for their health and success. We can pray for their financial support and an ever-growing zeal for souls. We can pray that the Lord will increase the size of the harvest. Scripture reveals much of God's will for this world.

Pray In the Spirit

The Scripture: Ephesians 6:18

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

6. How should we pray? _____

The Scripture: Romans 8:26, 27

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

7. Why should we pray in the Spirit? _____

8. What does this enable Him to do? _____

9. How does He pray? _____

Perhaps you have heard others groaning in prayer, or perhaps you've had the urge to groan in prayer yourself. These are prayers so deep they that cannot be expressed in words.

The Scripture: Proverbs 3:5

"Lean not on your own understanding."

10. What should we not do? _____

To pray God's prayers we must realize we are entirely dependent upon Him. Not only will He tell us what to pray, sometimes His Holy Spirit will pray His prayers through us.

Pray With Faith

The Scripture: Matthew 21:22

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

11. What should we do in addition to asking? _____

The Scripture: Mark 11:24

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

12. How do we receive an answer to our prayer? _____

Just as faith is a key to answered prayer, so lack of faith is a hindrance. Lack of faith on the part of others even hindered Jesus.

The Scripture: Matthew 13:58

"And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith."

13. Why did Jesus not do many miracles in His hometown? _____

The Scripture: James 1:6-7

"When he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

14. How does James describe someone who doubts? _____

Although this scripture is talking specifically about wisdom in particular, the same principle applies to prayer.

There is a teaching going around that says repeated praying for something shows a lack of faith. This teaching says we should pray for something once and then believe that we will receive it and stop praying. But that is not what the Bible teaches.

Persevere In Intercession

The Scripture: Luke 11:5-10

"Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is a friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

15. Briefly summarize the story Jesus told. _____

16. How does Jesus end his story? _____

These are powerful promises. But Jesus is making an important point here. We are to persist in intercession no matter how long it takes to receive the answer.

The Scripture: Galatians 6:9

"Do not become weary in well doing; for at the proper time we shall reap a harvest, if we faint not."

17. What does this Scripture tell us? _____

Sometimes as we battle in intercession, the battle goes on for a long time and we are tempted to give up. But only as we keep battling, can we be assured of victory.

A careful look at Scripture yields another principle of intercession.

Identify With Those for Whom We Intercede

Jesus is our model. It was God's great love and concern for His creation that made Him identify with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us:

The Scripture: Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15

"For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted in that He is able to help those who are being tempted....For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin."

18. Why did Jesus have to be made like his brothers in all things? _____

19. Why is He able to come to the aid of those who are tempted? _____

In other words, in order to become our Savior, Jesus had to first identify with us. The Old Testament is rich in examples of prophets and leaders who identified with those they were interceding for.

Although Daniel had risen to one of the highest positions in the Babylonian Empire, he never lost his sense of identity with the Jewish people.

Recognizing that the time for Israel's restoration was at hand, Daniel came before the Lord. As he prayed, it was not a case of "you," and "me," but rather "we."

The Scripture: Daniel 9:4-6

"The Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey His commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kinds, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."

20. How did Daniel identify with Israel? _____

Other examples of intercessors who identified with those for whom they prayed are Ezra, Moses, and Queen Esther to name a few.

What a great honor God bestows upon us when He makes us partners with Him in intercession, sharing His heart for the world and enabling us to cooperate with Him to bring His desires into existence. Let us be faithful to live up to His faith in us.

The Answers

1. Our iniquities
2. God will not hear us.
3. We ask with the wrong motives.
4. The harvest is plentiful, but there are few workers.
5. To ask the Lord to send out workers to go into the harvest fields
6. In the Spirit
7. Because the Spirit knows the mind of the Spirit
8. To intercede in accordance with God's will
9. With groans that words cannot express
10. Rely on our own understanding
11. We should believe.
12. We must believe we have received it.
13. Because of people's lack of faith.
14. As double-minded, unstable in all he does
15. A man goes to a neighbor at an inconvenient time to borrow some bread to feed a visiting friend. At first the neighbor refuses, but he eventually does as he asks because of the man's insistence.
16. Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.
17. Not to be weary and not to faint
18. So He might become a merciful and faithful high priest to make atonement for our sins
19. Because He suffered when he was tempted but was without sin
20. He said, "We have sinned and rebelled, turned away from God's commands and laws. We have not listened to the prophets."

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