***Prayer

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-071***

Our subject today is "Prayer for the Colossians,” segment number five, in Colossians 1:9-14.

The Colossian Christians, we have observed, were a grace oriented group of people. They possessed many in their congregation who had super grace maturity. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. They understood about confessing their known sins so as to maintain the filling of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they were also the possessors of one of the most dramatic elements of the fruit of the Spirit – the quality of mental attitude love. For this, the apostle Paul was enormously grateful, because it told him a great deal about the potential of the people in that city.

Please remember that when we speak about the church in the city of Colossae, we're not talking about one room full of people such as this. There were many pastor-teachers throughout the city, and there were many small groups of believers, undoubtedly much smaller than even ours here today, because they met in people's homes. They met in convenient, outside areas that were suitable for gatherings. And they did not have such a concept as a big room (a church auditorium) in which to meet. That didn't happen for the first 250 years of the Christian experience. It was after Christians were no longer under persecution, and it was after they were no longer under the indignation and hatred of the Roman Empire political authorities, that they began being permitted to have places of worship, and of regular buildings of in which they met. Very often, they were the former pagan temples that the Christians would take over.

Now, the apostle Paul, speaking to these many pastor-teachers, of whom the head was Epaphras, who undoubtedly was a founding father in the Christian community there – Paul was concerned that these Colossian believers throughout all these home churches would maintain their splendid spiritual status in the face of false doctrine and false teachers that had inundated them. Satan's techniques for neutralizing the effectiveness of the Colossian Christians then were the same as those we reiterated in the last session. And no doubt, they were in full operation there. Christians were being constantly accused by Satan before God the Father, for their spiritual failures, in order to discredit and to discourage them as he tried to do with Job.

Satan was also maneuvering to isolate these believers from feeding upon the word of doctrine for their spiritual sustenance. In one way and another, he was already, in those days, trying to keep people from the church services.

Furthermore, the Colossian saints were being tempted to move out of the operational; the geographic; and, the mental will of God for them in a variety of ways. Satan was subtly trying to get the believers to focus on themselves; on material things; and, on people instead of on the Lord Jesus, with all the dire consequences that happens when a Christian does that. And that is still a great operational hazard in the Christian life. You do not make decisions on the way people act towards you, or how people treated you. You do not make decisions in spiritual matters relative to your circumstances in life. And that is one of the greatest excuses for not doing what we should do with our spiritual gifts, because our circumstances have fallen in dire straits. Nor do you do it on the basis of the material situation that you may find yourself in. You focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, and everything else falls into perspective.

Satan's primary objective in all this then, as today, was to destabilize, and to make the Colossian Christians uneasy ultimately about facing death, and thus to hinder their boldness. That is one of the great things that you must be careful of, and I must be careful of – not to have our boldness inhibited. You cannot believe the flak that I receive from what many of you will walk up for the last few weeks – you are euphoric with what you've heard. You have the reorientation; the renewed insights; and, the reevaluation from a different perspective – things that are indeed the super things, and the deep things of God. But the grinding teeth are out there, and the amazing thing is that, for those who find that their hearts have been struck and condemned, there are so many of you whose hearts are related and rejoicing over what you have come into. And what people do not want to do in our day is to face up to the fact that there is a difference between righteousness and unrighteousness; there is a difference between what the Bible teaches and what the Bible does not teach; there's a difference between godliness and ungodliness; and, there's a difference between being in the will of God and being out of the will of God.

Also, because people who are out of the will of God do not want to be reminded of that, they get very mean spirited. And most of you do not have my stamina. You do not have my spiritual inoculation to idiots, so that you are much more easily cowered, and bold over, and intimidated, and silenced than I am. I'm a lot "silencer" than I should be because I can't ignore the book of Proverbs, which says, in Proverbs 26:4, "Don't answer a fool according his foolishness, or you make yourself a fool." And most of these people who resist the Word of God, and who are antagonistic toward the good things they learn here – they are fools. And we should not get ourselves entangled in them. And that doesn't mean that, when we encourage you to know that that's the kind of attack you will get, that we are whining. Now, that is something when they accuse you of trying to pretend that you're Jesus Christ, and suffering like Jesus, and being in self-pity, when what we're doing is taking encouragement from Him, as He told us to do. And He reminded us that none of us have had to suffer any blood yet, but He did. So he says, "You're going to get the same flak that I got, but it's not going to be as bad. Just be prepared to take it." And as Peter says, "What an honor to be suffering like Jesus suffered."

So, you can go ahead and make fun of believers who are proud to suffer for righteousness sake, and to be filling out the sufferings of Christ, so to speak, as the apostle said. And that doesn't mean that we're eating ourselves up with self-pity. That means we feel honored to be in that position.

**Prayer**

Now, the apostle prays intensely that the Colossian Christians would not respond to the false teachers and their false doctrine, but that they would go on with the sound doctrine which they had received from Epaphras, their pastor-teacher, who received it from the apostle Paul. The power of prayer in the Holy Spirit is the most powerful weapon that Paul has to use in defending the Colossian Christians against Satan. He is, after all, a very long distance away from the city of Colossae in that prison cell in Rome. Therefore, he has to place these people in God's hands via prayer. That's his only protective custody that he can put upon them. And that's the one that you and I very often have nothing else to do. When you have rebelliousness within the circle of your family, there's nothing else you can do than to place that person under the supervisory care of God, and, if necessary, under the disciplinary care of God until they get their heads back in order.

Prayer is, of course, the battle tactic in spiritual warfare, and that is the tactic because that alone can defeat Satan. So, the book Ephesians, in speaking about the Christian soldier's armor, also tells us that the only way you can use that armor is with the tactic of prayer. So, we must understand, of all things, this facet of the angelic conflict. We have to know what prayer is all about. And you might be tempted to think, "Yes, you do know about that, but there are a few things that perhaps you don't have a clean perspective on. So let's look at the technique of prayer.

Paul says, in Colossians 1:9, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it (of your great love and all that that connotes about you) we have not ceased to pray for you." There are some basic principles that are involved in prayer.

1. **Only Believers can Pray**

First of all, only believers have the right to approach God in prayer. An unbeliever may go through the pretense, but it's not prayer. It doesn't go to God. It's a ritual. It's empty, it's nothing. Prayer is a family communication. You have to be in union with Jesus Christ through regeneration, through faith in Christ, where the Holy Spirit baptized you into Christ. You became part of Him. Now you can talk to Him. You're in the family. Unsaved peoples' prayers are mere pointless acts of useless religion.

1. **Asking God**

Secondly, prayer is basically asking God for something for yourself or for others. You should not be intimidated by people who try to make fun of you as being a "gimme" Christian. Prayer is a "gimme" operation. It's give me this and give me that. That's exactly what it's all about. This is indicated to us, for example in Matthew 21:22. Jesus says, "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." What are you going to receive? You're going to receive what you asked Him to give you. What are you not going to receive? What you didn't ask Him to give you. Prayer is basically asking. That's what prayer is all about.

Matthew 7:11 adds this, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask him?" Now, you couldn't be more specific of the fact that God wants you to ask for things that you need, for as best that you understand that He would be pleased to give this to you.

Now, . . . there are outrageous things that people who are ignorant about the principle of prayer will ask for. "God, I'm going to rob this bank. Please help it to be very successful. Help them to leave a lot of money lying around. Help me to get through the security system." Do you think people don't pray for that? Yes they do. They pray for that. They'll pray for God's blessing upon some evil act. Why? Because they're going to give 10% of the Lord's work. Now, it is all right to steal if you give 10% of the Lord's work. Everybody knows that, don't they? And there are many Christians who are going to do deceptive things to gain some ill-gotten gains, and they justify it because of the good that they're going to do with it. Therefore, they don't mind being a little bit shady about what they're doing.

Prayer is basically asking for something for yourself or for others, and it should be something that is done persistently. The model prayer, often misnamed the Lord's prayer, which is in Matthew 6:9-13, is a series of requests. The high priestly prayer of Jesus, that is found in the whole chapter of John 17, is also a series of requests. Now, these two prayers of Jesus make it very clear that prayer is asking for things.

1. **Thanksgiving**

Prayer is accompanied, and should be accompanied, with thanksgiving for past blessings. Yes, we do thank God in the process of praying, but thanking is not praying. Philippians 4:6: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

A lady today told me that, in the course of her employment, one of her associates was expressing her great worry about something. And this lady is supposed to be a church person, and she was so worried about this, and worried about that. And our friend said, "Do you know that worry is a sin, but that God's solution is to pray for His provision rather than worrying? If you worry about it, that's sinful. But if you pray about your concern, then that's a godly thing to do." And the lady was outraged. She said, "What do you mean?" She couldn't believe such a thing – that when you worry, it's an act of sin, because she had good reason to worry. She couldn't conceive of taking it to the Lord and leaving it there. And it was obvious that she was very indignant, and acted very coolly after that, because she had been given the peace of wisdom (a doctrinal principle) that she had no capacity to understand.

However, prayer is to be accompanied by thanksgiving for blessings past, including whatever the problems are. You don't eat your heart out. You're not to be anxious about anything. You just thank God that here's a problem and He's got a solution.

1. **Spirituality**

Prayer must be offered while you are in the status of spirituality; that is; you are a spiritual Christian. Unspiritual Christians do not get very far in prayer. John 15:7 is a very dramatic verse, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask what you wish, and it shall be done to you." Now, we have to take this apart a little bit, because this has some significant information. John 15:7: praying must be done under the status of being filled with the Spirit, which means that you are under the controlling guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We find this established in Ephesians 6:18, "With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit (that is, by means of the Holy Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." With all prayer and petition, pray at all times by means of the Holy Spirit. Now, you cannot pray by means of the Holy Spirit if you're out of temporal fellowship. If you have an act of sin; if you have an act of failure; if you have not only committed something, but you have omitted something that you should do; or, if you have a dormant spiritual gift, that's an act of sin. And you have to get square with God about that before you go on praying to get other things resolved because they're not going to get resolved.

In the foyer to the book of the Revelation, the book of Jude 20, this is again reiterated: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith (learning doctrine), praying in the Holy Spirit." This is praying under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That's what a spiritual Christian is able to do.

Now, here in John 15:7, we have that same concept but stated in a little different way: as "abiding in Christ" "If you abide in Me." This "if" is a third-class condition. If you may remember, hopefully, that a third-class condition in the Greek language means that maybe you will and maybe you won't. But if you do, certain wonderful things will happen. If you don't, certain wonderful things will not happen. So, this is clearly a volitional word. This is something you decide you're going to pray, or you decide you're not going to pray. And you decide the condition under which you're going to pray, or you decide the condition under which you are not going to be able to pray. In other words, you decide whether you're going to pray in the Spirit or not. If you're going to pray as one who is in fellowship with God the Father, and thus you are a spiritual Christian; or, one who's out a fellowship.

The word "abide" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "meno" (men'-o), M E N O. What this refers to is the condition of being in the inner circle of temporal fellowship. "Abiding in Christ" means not your eternal fellowship. You couldn't use a third-class condition "if" with your eternal fellowship – the outer circle, because there's never any question about that. It isn't that you can or you can't. You're not able to put yourself in or out. It's only in this inner circle of being under God's guidance, and prayers being answered, that you can put yourself in or out. And it is sin that takes you out, and its confession that brings you back in.

So, when he talks about "if you abide in Me," he means that you are in the inner circle of temporal fellowship. You're on talking terms with the Father. It refers to temporal fellowship. Your eternal fellowship is never in doubt. You cannot go in and out of that.

In the same way, Jesus used this word about Himself, which confirms that this has to do with a spiritual relationship, not with a salvation relationship. In John 15:10, Jesus says, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and I abide in his love." Now the person who abides in the love of God is obviously the born-again person. And Jesus says, "I abide in My Father's love" Well, He's not talking about being born-again. He never was out of the Father's love relative to His eternal fellowship. But He is saying that He always was in the inner circle of temporal fellowship. He was never, in His experience, out of fellowship with the Father. He never thought wrong in His head; he never talked wrong with His mouth; and, He never did wrong with His body. He was a totally perfect man. He was always in temporal fellowship with God the Father.

That's what He's saying in John 15:10 – that we must be in fellowship with the Father. How? By keeping doctrinal commandments. If we obey those commandments, we're in fellowship with Him. It is when we don't obey them that we leave that fellowship. And He says, then in John 15:7, "If you abide in Me (you're in temporal fellowship with Me), and My words abide in you." This is a very important point of doctrine. In the Greek Bible there are two words for the word "word." One that you may be acquainted with is "logos" (log'-os). The book of the gospel of John begins "In the beginning was the 'logos,' and the 'logos' with was with God, and the 'logos' was God." This is obviously referring to Jesus Christ. He is called the "logos," because, in Greek philosophy, the word "logos" meant a thought; a concept; or, an idea. It had to do with an expression of something. And when this is used in reference to the Bible, it is referring to the entire book (the entire Bible) as a revelation of God. The Bible is the "logos" of God. The Bible is the thinking of God. And that word is used of the Bible in that way. It is the expression of the thought of God.

However, that is not the word which Jesus uses here in John 15:7, when He says, "If you abide in Me (you're in temporal fellowship), and My Words." This is the Greek word "rhema (hray'-mah)." Here's a great thing that you're fortunate to be here tonight to learn. This is a totally different word for the word "word." And this word "rhema," in the New Testament, refers to specific statements of truth: doctrine. This word does not mean the whole Bible like "logos" does. When He says, "If My words abide in you," He means, "If doctrinal principles are in you." And that's what Paul is leading to in Colossians 1:9 – the principle of doctrine stored somewhere within the invisible part of your being. If you have doctrinal principles abiding in you; that is, they are located in there, and in a usable form, then you have something very specific.

These principles of doctrine are, in Ephesians 6:17, called "the sword of the Spirit." Let me read that for you. Here's where you need a little help with your English Bible to really see what the Spirit of God is saying. Ephesians 6:17 says, "And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The word there in the Greek is not "logos." It's not the general revelation of God. The word there is this Greek word "rhema" again – the same one we have in John 15:7. He says that "the sword of the Spirit" are principles of doctrine.

Now, how good is your sword? How many Christians do you know who even have a sword of the Spirit in them? How many Christians do you know who have a nice clean blade – something that's not pitted, and chipped, and rusted? How many of you really know people who been given the capacity to build a sword of the Spirit? Not many. This is a rarity among Christians – to have a sword of the Holy Spirit, because it's a "rhema" doctrinal principle. That's what makes up the sword that the Spirit of God uses.

So He says, "If you abide in Me." You are filled with the Spirit, with all known sins are confessed, and you are in the inner circle of temporal fellowship: "And if His words of doctrine also abide in you." This is the sword of the Spirit – these categories of doctrine, which is the only way that you can fight in the angelic conflict. We told you in the previous session that you do not fight against people in spiritual warfare. You fight against the forces of evil: Satan and his demons. You cannot fight them with the human material weapons. They can only be fought with the sword of the Spirit: doctrinal principles.

When Jesus was in that wilderness temptation, the devil hit him three times with three very attractive propositions. And what did Jesus do every time to defeat the devil? He quoted a principle of doctrine. And every time, the devil collapsed. And he tried to approach Him in a different way. Jesus simply quoted a doctrinal principle that answered what the devil was trying to tempt Him to do, and He came off victorious. That's how you end every time. You have to have this sword of the Spirit.

Now, what the Holy Spirit does when you have this sword is that He brings the appropriate doctrine that has been stored in your human spirit to your mind in the midst of the spiritual battle, and the sword is angled at the right way. It is pointed the right way. The proper factor comes up to the front, so that the tip of the sword is now deadly to spiritual forces. It does that automatically. You may later think back, and realize what part of the Word of God you were functioning on, but in the heat of battle, you will react automatically in the right way, providing that has been stored, and that sword has been built, and it is in your human spirit.

Those of you who have done this, that's why you are head and shoulders above people in your family, with their religiosity, and their pathetic, emotional orientation of human-reasoning approach to the Christian life. This is why you are head and shoulder above the people of society that surround us who know nothing about God, but know a lot about religion: "If you abide in Me (temporal fellowship, inner-circle, confessed sin), and My words (my principles of doctrine) abide in you (stored in your human spirit)." This is in the aorist tense in the Greek Bible, which means that it's the point when doctrine is stored in your human spirit. And we're going to look in a moment once more to review how it's placed in there. You are in fellowship with doctrine. That's what he means by: "My words abide in you." It is there, and it is active. The Word of God works on your mind. It is cycled up by the Spirit of God from that human spirit reservoir. And it produces divine viewpoint frame of reference. And it is in a subjective mood because it's a potential condition. If you use the grace system of perception, you will learn it. You use the filling of the Spirit, you'll be a winner.

Now, this is an essential condition if you want to pray in the will of God. If you do not abide in the inner circle of temporal fellowship, and if you do not abide in the doctrines of the Word of God, you cannot pray effectively. So, how much good praying that you know of in your circle of Christian friends do you think is being done? How many of them understand the very simple principles now that we have an outline for you relative to the human spirit, and to its role as a storage of truth, and to the sword of the Spirit as principles of doctrine, not just the whole Bible as such? Not many. But once you do this, you are in that inner circle of temporal fellowship, and this is not something you eat your heart out about, wondering whether you are or not. You know very well when you've done something wrong. You know very well when you have taken an attitude that is improper with the principles of the Word of God. You know very well when you've gotten yourself emotionally attached and oriented to someone's cause, when you should have used the mentality of the soul and the Word of God upon that problem. And you know very well when the Word of God is not abiding in you. So, you know when you need to make confession, but you do that, and you have taken the trouble to learn the Word of God, then a wonderful thing is promised.

"Ask" is the Greek word "aiteo" (ahee-teh'-o) A I T E O. This is the word for desires which are sought. Ask whatever you may request. This is in the present tense. In the Greek Bible, if something is in the present tense, it means that you may do this at any time. You may ask for whatever you wish. You may ask because you'll have the guidance of doctrine. And you'll have the power of the Holy Spirit directing you, because you're in temporal fellowship with him. What a combination. That's how Jesus made it in His humanity.

It is in the middle voice in the Greek language, which means that you yourself become the beneficiary. The intercessor personally benefits by asking.

And thirdly, believe it or not, this is a divine command. It's not just an invitation. It's not just something nice to do. This is a divine command. God Almighty says, "If you know doctrine, and you are in temporal fellowship, I want My will to be executed through you. I want you to fulfill My mission. I want you to be a victor in the Christian life. Therefore, I am commanding you to ask for the things you need to do that. And the Spirit of God, My Helper, will guide you to what you should ask." He will give you the proper doctrinal principle to guide you in the decisions, and how you should conduct yourself relative to the problem (the issue) at hand. But I want you to ask, and I'm telling you to do it. Therefore, you may ask for what you wish. And it is whatever you choose to have, whatever you desire, and it shall be done. The Christian's prayer requests are granted.

You may ask for whatever you wish. Now, what do you wish to ask for? That will always work, because you are in the Spirit of God's guidance. You're not asking something that's out of keeping with doctrine. Therefore, what you ask for is the will of God. You can really say, "I'm asking this in the name of Jesus." You can't just say, "I ask this, this, this, and I ask it in the name of Jesus," because when you do that, you're saying, I ask it because He approves it. And if you're not sure that He approves it, you better not add His name to it. But if you genuinely are in the name of Jesus, which you are when you're in that fellowship situation, you're acting on the principles of doctrine, and you're using prayer in its proper way, then it says, "Whatever you request (whatever you wish), it will be done." You have the right to receive this, and this is a very terrific and wonderful thing. You have the right to have this request granted to you. It shall be done. It will come to pass.

So, prayer is the very powerful tactic of the Christian life, and this is the way it works. Prayer is to be offered of course in faith, the Bible says, rather than as a mere hopeful thing but a doubtful speculation. I'll pray, but I don't know that it'll do any good, because I haven't received any answers. Well, yes, but that may be because God's timing is not right. It may be because you haven't quite learned the lesson that He's teaching you through your situation. But I guarantee you that when the timing is right, and the lesson has been learned, and it is the will of God, the answer will be there, and it'll be quick. And you have had the experience of finding how God just brings things together for you. You ask Him for guidance, and you don't even know how to ask; what you should do; the specifics of guidance; or, how to solve it, and all of a sudden you know exactly what to do.

In Mark 11:24, Jesus says, "Therefore, I say to you all, things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you." If you're working on the system, you can count it as good as done. And when God's good timing is in place, it'll be done: "I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted to you." You have to treat prayer with the same respect with which God views it.

In James 1:5-6, James says this, "But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously, and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind." What is it that you are not to doubt? You are not to doubt that God is interested in dealing with your problem. You are not to doubt that God is listening. You are not to doubt that God is going to do for you like Jesus asked Him to do: "If it'd be Your will."

In Gethsemane, Matthew 26:39, the God-Man Who knew it all said, "Father, if there's any other way for the covering for sin to be made, and for redemption to be secured, I wish we could do it that way, but not My will: Your will be done." And what He was making very clear was that He had full confidence that He was being heard, and the Father was going to give the answer. Some of you are smart enough to know that God always answers prayer, and sometimes the answer is no. And you must believe that prayer is that much of a reality. Otherwise, it's an insult to God.

Also, prayer must be offered according to the will of God to be granted. This is stressed for us in 1 John 5:14, "And this is the confidence which we have before Him – that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." Now, you can't put it more explicit explicitly than that. "This is the confidence which we have before Him – that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. You cannot ask for things that are out of keeping with doctrine. You cannot ask for things that are out of keeping with the peace that the Spirit of God lays upon your heart. Don't go ask Him for something that you're uneasy about. Don't go ask Him to bless some to bless you when you're saying no to Him, and you're uneasy about saying no to Him, because the prospering and the guidance for your problem is not going to be there. This being able to ask with the will of God is a result of the filling of the Spirit and knowing the doctrines of Scripture. This is what it means to pray in the name of Jesus.

We should also point out that God knows our needs before we ask Him for our specific needs. He knows beforehand what we need, but He has ordained that this is how His channel of blessing works. Yes, He knows what you need before you ask Him, but He says, I want you to ask Me. I want you to know that I am the Father, and that I am the source of that blessing. In Matthew 6:32, Jesus says, "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." And He guides you to ask for what He knows you need.

When the Communists were in power in Russia, schoolchildren were punished if they asked for something in God's name, or they thanked God – even if they thanked God for something. They were punished for it because the state was the one that they were to be grateful to. The state was the one that they were to ask things from. They were to look to the government to take care of their need, and they were punished if they brought God into the picture. And that curtain of darkness was so complete that our missionary Donna Turnbow in Siberia was amazed to find that you cannot speak to the Russians today about the Bible, as if they had any frame of reference. You talk about the Garden of Eden, and the eyes are blank. You talk about Adam and Eve, and the eyes are blank: "Oh, who are they?" The same is true if you talk about any of the basics of the Bible. It was so completely wiped out. And a cone of silence dropped upon anything that had to do with the Bible. It was so complete that, after 75 years, the people, to them – it's a totally unknown book. And they have to begin with the simplest things.

So, prayer is essentially knowing that the Word of God has granted to us, full access to God, and we need to ask specifically what we need. He knows what we need. He is the channel of that blessing. In Matthew 6:32, the stress was that the things that the Gentiles need are things that everybody commonly needs. And these are things that people normally say, "I need these things. God knows I need: I need the food; I need the shelter; and, I need the clothes." But He says, you should ask for them. I know that you need them.

Prayer is a grace operation. His blessings are not something you earn or something that you deserve. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us, therefore, draw near, with confidence, to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need." Now, that's all the verse you need to go to prayer. That's all the justification that so many of you loyal people, who arrange your lives, and who are loyal to the practice of prayer – that you're out here on Wednesday night at prayer meeting with us. Some of you are here personal great expense and trouble. And on the other hand, not to be at prayer meeting, you must ask yourself: "Where was I? What was I doing? Was that better for all eternity?" This verse makes it very clear that you draw to that throne of grace, and you do it with confidence, providing you do it on the basis that we've enunciated here.

In John 14:13, Jesus says, "And whatever you ask in My name, I'll do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." And in the book of Ephesians 6:18, again: "Prayer and petition at all time in the Spirit" – prayer in the Spirit of God.

Finally, in the technique of prayer, we should know that prayer played a vital part in the life of Jesus Christ, sometimes all-night praying, and it played a vital part in the early New Testament church. This is not something we can ignore. This is not something we can pass off. This is the reality of the Word of God.

**Hindrances to Prayer**

Now, there are certain hindrances to prayer that we ought to mention to tie this up. Satan knows that prayer is his undoing. God moves through prayer. Therefore, Satan does everything he possibly can to belittle prayer to make it look foolish, and to cause you to not have a great deal of concern or confidence in it.

Secondly, a lack of effective prayer in the life of a believer can neutralize the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit. You can know a great deal about God. You can know a great deal about the things of God. And yet, if you do not have the prayer capacity, then even if you have the armor of God, it won't be successful in a combat situation.

The demon angels, therefore, are constantly pressing their attack against your private and your group prayer life. Christians who want to pray are often puzzled by their failure to do so. That's usually because they're out of temporal fellowship. The demons are so cunning that they will help promote activities in our lives that take us away from prayer times. They'll get you involved in things so that you can't go to prayer. Demons will hinder our praying with a lot of things. We're tired. We're hustling to serve God, so we don't have time to pray. We're excited over some answer we receive, so we relax and don't pray again. We're taking a course on prayer, so we don't have time to pray. We're reading books on how to pray, so it's kind of hard to pray when you're reading books on how to pray. We have visitors in our house that are disturbing us, so we can't pray. We have telephone conversations. You have to watch "Murder She Wrote." That interrupts you with prayer time. Then you get to thinking about all the things that God has said "No" to, and you don't know why. And Satan says, what's the use?

Prayer is of great use. It is the way that God wants you to go. What Satan wants to do, to those of you who are faithful in Christian service activities, is to make you be negligent in prayer. Be great in activities of God, but be negligent in prayer.

It was Martin Luther who, very perceptively, said, "I have so much to do today that it'll take me at least three hours of prayer to get it all done." That's crazy. You going to waste three hours in prayer if you have so much to do today? "I have so much to do today, it'll take me three hours of prayer to get it all done. But that's exactly the way God works.

So, the apostle Paul, who knows all this about how prayer works, knows what he's doing, when he says to those Colossian Christians, "I pray for you, and I pray for you regularly, ever since I discovered what kind of quality Christians you were." And then he approaches the two important words in this verse, and in all the Christian life. And now that will put together the capacity on your part to do the kind of praying we are talking about here. And we shall look at those dramatic words on our next occasion.

Father, we want to thank You for this time in the Word together.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

[**Back to the Colossians index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/colossians.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)