***Prayer  
  
RV21-01***

We continue in our study of the book of the Revelation. We are studying the letter to the church at Thyatira, which is recorded in Revelation 2:18-29. We are observing one of the things for which Jesus Christ commended this church, which was their service. We are studying the principle of Christian service via Ephesians 4:12.

Christian service by the believers in the Thyatira church was actually spiritual combat in the angelic warfare in the daily lives of the believers of that congregation. We have seen from the Word of God that the Christian soldier is equipped for spiritual battle against Satan and his demons by means of a training program in the local church under the pastor-teacher. This particular fact, the local church as a training station for spiritual combat, is a very important doctrinal principle. We are currently in a very critical area of study. Some of you are going to be mightily enriched in eternity because this little overview on just this one word "service" is going to get things all together for you in your life in a degree that it has not been in the past.

The training program within the local church should teach the techniques for Christian living: the technique of confessing known sins; the technique of learning bible doctrine; the technique of maintaining spirituality; the technique of functioning on divine viewpoint; and, the technique of practicing prayer.

**The Belt of Truth**

In the course of this training, the Christian soldier is alerted to certain items of combat gear that he is responsible to put on himself. First was the belt of truth. This is Bible doctrine stored in the human spirit. It is secured via the grace system of perceiving spiritual truth. This provides the Christian soldier with divine viewpoint orientation toward life. That is very important. Unless you have divine viewpoint orientation toward life, you cannot be a soldier of Jesus Christ. You've got it all confused. This provides the soldier with understanding of God's standards; of God's requirements; and, of the way God does things. In other words, it gives you an insight into the reality on life.

The problems that we have with our society today are because people are functioning on unreality. They are not functioning on the way God has made us to be as human beings, and the way God has organized society during this era where Satan is the ruler of this world. Make no mistake about that. Satan is the ruler of this world, including the United States of America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. And if you've been around here long enough, you have senses, indeed, how there are mighty economic and political forces which are joined together that control the information that you get, and that control the orientation of the goals of government and the activities of our society. These are directed toward evil purposes. That is because there is a powerful force of human beings, as there is in every nation, that is under direct satanic control. Satan is the leader of this world. He is the god of this age.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was offered (in the wilderness of temptation) to become the ruler of the nations of the world, and Satan reviewed before Him all the glories of these nations, if the United States had been in existence at that time, that is one of the nations that the Lord Jesus Christ would have seen. So put yourself right there as a nation and as a people into that picture in the wilderness temptation. This is one of the countries that Satan controls and directs, and he would hand it over.

The only reality we have in such a society, which is completely deluded by Satan's viewpoint, is the belt of truth. The belt of divine viewpoint truth puts us in touch with the way things really are, and keeps us from following these degrading and insane patterns that are so prominent in the leadership of our country today.

The belt of truth gives understanding of mankind's origin, and how it functions. It preserves us, consequently, from spiritual insanity. That is the problem. The average Christian that you know is spiritually insane. You know what insanity is, don't you? Insanity is detachment from reality. Insanity is a person who has a toothpick, and it becomes the most precious thing in all the world to him. If you take his toothpick away from him, he's ready to scratch your eyes out. Now that's nuts. That's insanity, because a toothpick is not that important. But a person who is detached from reality will have some trivial item, and he will go violent over that trivial item. Most of the Christians you know are completely out of touch with spiritual reality. They are spiritually berserk. Only the belt of truth will preserve you from that. You and I are no different from anybody else in this respect.

**The Breastplate of Righteousness**

Then there was the item of the breastplate of righteousness. This refers to personal conduct which is compatible with God's standard of absolute righteousness. This is spiritual maturity expressed as experiential sanctification – sanctification in your daily lifestyle. Worldliness and immoral conduct result in a Christian soldier becoming a spiritual casualty. This is why the breastplate of righteousness is important. It must be kept intact without any cracks in it. Worldliness and personal immorality weaken that breastplate, and open it to exposure for the enemy's assault.

**The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**

Then there is issued to us the shoes of the gospel of peace. Peace with God through the gospel creates the motivation, or the readiness, to move out into spiritual combat. That is, we have combat morale. It is the fact that we have peace with God which gives us the readiness to do battle with satanic forces. We have the means of creating peace in the souls of men because we have the means of enabling them to secure absolute righteousness. We reach out in love to these wandering sheep that we see in the world around us. We have the gospel of peace. We can bring peace to their soul. Because you have this motivation of peace in your own soul, you are ready to move out for the Lord. God has, in other words, reconciled the sinner to Himself without violating His own holiness. So salvation is a genuine reality. It is not a delusion. It is actually possible to escape the lake of fire and go to heaven. You can just rest at ease on that matter.

**The Shield of Faith**

Then there was the item of the shield of faith. This is belief in the truth of the Word of God, the Bible, as inerrant. The shield of faith enables you and me to refuse to let some human viewpoint opinion cause us to doubt a biblical statement of truth. That is what we are constantly being faced with – doubting a biblical statement of truth, because some powerful authority with human viewpoint opinion comes through, or because a large group holds a certain viewpoint. This, of course, was the initial way that Satan got to Eve. If Eve had had her shield of faith intact and operational, the moment Satan came along and questioned to her that God had said what He indeed did say concerning not eating of the fruit of that tree, she could have rebutted him immediately and said, "You betcha He said that. That's exactly what He said, and that's exactly what He meant." There was no question about it. Instead, she doubted a statement of the Word of God.

The shield of faith is absolutely necessary for us to be able to deflect the attacks of Satan against us as Christian soldiers. Doubt is demoralizing in combat. I can guarantee you that. Doubt is demoralizing in combat. If you have doubts, you cannot fight. If you have doubt of the cause for which you're fighting, it's demoralizing. If you have doubt about your capacities, it's demoralizing. If you have doubt about those associated with you in the combat, it's demoralizing. If you have doubt about your own equipment and training, it's very demoralizing. So believing the Word of God and what it has said is critical to success in battle in the spiritual combat.

**The Helmet of Salvation**

Then there was the item of the helmet of salvation. That is the realization that salvation provided by grace, apart from human doing, can never be lost. That is indeed a great comfort. To be able to have this on your head protects your thinking: "I can never again be lost." That is very important. If you think you can be lost, you are a shattered believer. You are no good on the field of combat. That is why the devil has been so consistently seeking to destroy the concept of security in salvation by grace. If God has saved you, God has done it. God is perfect. God provides a perfect salvation. The human element is not involved in any way, and so it cannot undo what God has done.

Satan's authority over the Christian soldier has forever been terminated, no matter how carnal a Christian may become. The devil wants you to think that your salvation is not secure so that you will be incompetent and neutralized on the field of battle. He's been highly successful in doing that with vast numbers of Christians. I can guarantee you that any Christian who thinks that he can be lost at any moment is absolutely no threat to the devil at all. God can never repudiate a believer and send him to the lake of fire. That provides us with courage as we face Satan, who is not beneath taunting us through human beings for our own weaknesses; our own failures; and, our own sins. You and I have both been taunted by others for our weaknesses and our spiritual failures. That is the devil's agent speaking to us, but it doesn't mean a thing. It will never in any way affect us when we have the helmet of salvation in place.

**The Sword of the Spirit**

Then comes perhaps the most critical item in all the battle gear, and that is the sword of the Spirit, or the sword *from* the Holy Spirit. This refers to propositions of Bible doctrine truth which are provided by the Holy Spirit through the inspiration of Scripture. The categories of Bible doctrine are used in our attack upon the evils of human viewpoint that we encounter in one way or another. There is no other way to attack Satan and his world system with authority. That's the point. You cannot come against our society, and what it is doing, and what it is saying, and what it is teaching, and what it is thinking, with authority to oppose these things without the sword of the Spirit. That is the only thing. It is the propositional truth of the Word of God. It is something that you can take the Bible and say, "Here is a book which has no mistake in it. I can demonstrate that in a variety of ways. Prophecy alone is an evidence that this book came from God and not from man. This book is without error. It is that way because it is the book that God has provided. Therefore, when it speaks, that is the final and the last word." When people want to come up with a counter human viewpoint idea, the only way you can attack it is with the sword of the Spirit (with the Word of God) in hand.

Recently, I had the experience of having the biblical vows, which I like to use at weddings, which record the responsibilities of husbands and wives. I was told afterward, by a group of people who were indignant about what they heard, that it was called garbage by some of the guests. We have this interesting case here that the fact that a wife is to be in subjection to her husband is viewed as being garbage. The reason for that was that (these people said) marriage is a 50/50 proposition. I got to thinking, as I heard that. If some of those people had come up to me and said, "Boy, that was really a pile of garbage you put out there," what would I have done? Would I have had my feelings hurt? Would I have made a snotty remark? No. The only thing that would have been effective was the sword of the Spirit. What does the Word of God say? Do you think it's a 50/50 proposition?

Well, let's take a look at what the Bible says. Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman, He said, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception. In sorrow you shall bring forth children. And your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you." That doesn't sound like 50/50 to me" "And he shall rule over you." Well, they would tell me that it probably doesn't mean what it says. "And your desire shall be to your husband." The Hebrew word "desire" ... means that you're longing for fulfillment. It means to be dying of thirst. You're just so parched, and nothing is going to fulfill it by the quenching drink of cool water. So toward your right man, you have a famished quality such that nothing is going to be fulfilled. Nothing can fulfill it – only he. That sounds like authority and subjection to me.

The reason I'm taking the time to show you this is because I don't want you to be intimidated by that kind of language. I want you to see what the sword of the Spirit can do in the face of that kind of opposition. It's kind of a classic example.

1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ." That's the authority over each man. "And the head (the authority) of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." So here's a channel line of authority. God the Father is authority over God the Son; God the Son is authority over the male; and, the male is authority over the female. I don't care whether you like it or not. That is how God says, "I put this world together, and it's not 50/50."

Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord." That doesn't sound like 50/50 to me.

Titus 2:5: "To be discreet, chaste keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands that the Word of God be not blasphemed." The wife who is not subject to the authority of her husband is a blasphemous woman. She's a blasphemer. She blasphemes God. She blasphemes the Word of God. That doesn't sound like 50-50 to me. That doesn't even sound like 49/51.

1 Peter 3:1: "In the same manner, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any don't obey the Word, they also may, without the Word, be won by the behavior of the wives." Peter recognized that some husbands are not all that they should be. And yet a wife who is going to meet him man-to-man, and go into combat with him, is not going to change him, for sure. That is self-defeating. But a wife who says, "I recognize you are the authority, and I think you are mistaken at this point, but we follow your leadership" is the wife who is going to find a husband that's going to stand back and think it over, and God's going to get through to him. That's all Peter is saying. But it certainly is not 50/50. So the Bible indeed says, "No, this is not so."

Can you imagine the problem that would be confronted by somebody who looked at these propositions that they heard read and said, "That's a bunch of garbage?" And of course, they have a very great authority. The president of the United States himself said that he doesn't believe everything that Paul has taught about women; silence; subjection; and, all that. But then the president has just found out about Russia. So he may find out about this, too. He's coming along. So that's not surprising that that should be so. But, when you have people in authority who share those opinions, that makes you think that you know what you're talking about? So how can these people be met?

Well, it was fortunate that the young woman from our group that happened to be the one that they spoke to said, "Well, that was all the Word of God. That was just the Bible that you heard." The response then was, "Well, I never read it in the Bible." They couldn't deny it, but they couldn't immediately dismiss it. The sword of the Spirit (that makharia, short 18-inch blade) stuck them. For the moment, they had been wounded, and they could not respond.

It is no wonder that people in liberal churches who want to follow this line of feminism will inevitably tell you that the Word of God has mistakes. They inevitably follow the higher critical view of Scriptures. The higher critical view of the Scriptures is that the Bible is written by men, and then other men took those writings and reworked them. They were worked over several times by so-called redactors. The result is a book that is filled with human descriptions of religious experience, but is not the Word directly from God. It is not a book without error. It is therefore a book which human reason must evaluate; must judge; and, and must decide what is true and what is not true. It is not a book that you can read, and you must accept what it says as authority from God. You will find inevitably that churches who have this attitude toward the woman's role, and the preservation of her happiness and her security as requiring this position of subjection, move off from the Word of God as being without error and the authority. It's no wonder they cannot have an inerrant Scripture.

This is the kind of thing (this kind of insanity) that you can meet only with the sword of the Spirit. Christians who do not use the sword of the Spirit under conditions like this can easily be defeated, and to be made to look like fools. If you do not attack with the doctrines (the categories of doctrinal truth), you will be made to look like a fool.

One morning this week, I turned the television on to see what was going on in the world, and to see if it was any different than it had been in the past. I happened to catch a talk program. This talk program had two older women up in their 50s. They were more mature women. They were very sophisticated; very derogare; and, very worldly. One of them didn't look 50 at all. The other one did. They were both very nice looking people. They had both written a book. The books that they had written both had one common theme. They had described and were promoting the lifestyle of a woman whose husband had died – a lifestyle of fornication with younger men, and their experiences with younger lovers. The audience, in general, responded favorably. It's fantastic to watch this evil being displayed and dignified on public television, and the audience was getting up one after another in a very sophisticated way and saying, "I think this is wonderful. I just think this is so great – the fact that you have been able to find such fulfillment for your life." Of course, the two ladies set up there smiling and gracious. One was from England, and her mother was so proud to tell us that she had been in the women's suffragette, which was the feminism of that era. She was a very liberated woman. The other woman was very gracious. They were both just smiley and sweet.

Finally, one lady did stand up in the audience and said, "I'm sorry. I can't agree with what you're saying, because what you're doing is sinful." Well, I thought, "Hot dog. Here it comes." Usually in these discussions, nobody ever interjects what God thinks. They just carry on: "You think; I think;" and, so on. So now I waited for what was going to happen. Well, the first thing that happened was the two sophisticated, charming, gracious ladies stop smiling. The one from England became sweetly vicious and contemptuous. She said to the other lady, "Oh, she's throwing fornication, the Bible, and all that at us." Then she says, "Madam, I'm so happy for you that you are able to find a lifestyle that does not include this sort of thing that you're happy with. I'm just so happy for you that you have found fulfillment without these things." The other woman, who was an American, had already several times indicated that she had had great guilt feelings about this. Then she tried to explain how she had overcome all that. She was a little more timid about this.

The emcee of the program tried to sneak in a little bit of situation ethics. He said, "Well, now you don't object to men doing this, do you?" She said, "Oh, yes. I'm not for a double standard. I think it's wrong if men do this; that is, if older men do this with younger women. I'm talking about this being a sinful thing." At this point, what do you think was necessary? This emcee was now trying to convey the idea that this was just this woman's personal desire, and that she is not ready to convince somebody else who chooses a different so-called "lifestyle."

Well, at this point in the conversation, I sat there, and I got closer and closer to television, because I was whispering stuff to the lady – what to say. At this point, what you needed was authority, wasn't it? These girls were smooth. They were sophisticated. They were impressive. And now you needed authority. You needed the sword of the Spirit. I'm sad to say that it almost made me feel like weeping. The lady who had the courage to stand up and say, "What you say is sinful," defended it by saying, "This is what I've always been taught, and I believe this." And that just finished it. Here were thousands of viewers now who could have been alerted and put on their guard, who were ready to respond to this kind of evil. She wasn't able to come back with the sword of the Spirit.

Here was obviously a born again lady. She was some church member who hadn't been prepared to know how to go into combat. She had the opportunity there on public television to say, "The Bible, which has never been proven to be in error, has recorded for us what God has said concerning sexual morality. What He has said is that sex outside of marriage is a very grievous evil. It is destructive to the individual, and it is destructive to society. If you do not cease and desist from what you are doing, you will destroy yourself now, and you will come into great destruction after you die. In the process, you will take a lot of people down with you, over whom you bear influence and who will listen to you." And then maybe she could have added a verse or two just saying the Word of God (all of us agree) includes a moral code that controls the conduct of mankind. The moral code of the Old Testament Scriptures is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Sexual immorality is forbidden by the God who made us.

It saddened me as I looked at these two women, because they were not duds. They had obviously had capacities. Here were two people in the image and likeness of God prostituting themselves. That was sad. There was nobody there to turn around and to wield the sword of the Spirit, and to make the wound in them to expose the evil that they were doing for what it is. There was no other way to counter this praise of fornication except with the authority of an infallible record from an infallible God. That sword would have cut this evil down in the face of thousands of viewers who would have been confronted with the holiness of God.

I think it's sad that we should find this as often as we do. I find this really regularly on these talk programs. When they get around to an issue of morality, the Bible never comes into the picture. I think it's sad that we have church members who've been left so untrained by their pastor-teachers that they can be easily disposed of in spiritual combat. I think it's even more tragic that those church members don't know that that's happening to them. So they keep going to those churches. They don't realize the cost to them in time, and the more tragic cost to them in eternity. They keep going to those churches; they keep pouring their money into those churches; they keep pouring their efforts into those churches; and, they do not rise up in indignation. Is it any wonder that Jesus looked out upon mankind and said that the field was ripe unto harvest – sheep without a shepherd?

You're supposed to have a pastor-teacher who is your drill instructor and your shepherd. Most do not. They have some clown who substitutes in that role that gives them everything else that they want to hear, except what they need to know to survive and to be rewarded.

**Prayer**

The final thing that we have in Ephesians 6 that has been provided for spiritual combat is stated for us in verse 18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." This is the tactic of prayer. This item has to do with the conduct of the battle. A soldier must not only be equipped for battle; he must not only be trained; he must not only have proper combat gear; but, he must have a proper plan of attack. He must have a plan of tactics by which to conduct the battle. The divine tactic for engaging in spiritual combat is prayer.

Prayer is the source of our divine orders. Prayer is the source of our logistical support – our supplies. Prayer is the source of our enablement in combat so that we have combat effectiveness. Without the use of the tactic of prayer, there is no combat effectiveness. I don't care if you've got all the techniques down cold, and if you've got all the combat gear in place, you can still be defeated. Great armies in military history have experienced defeat on the field of battle, who were well-trained and who are well-equipped, but who had bad tactics in the disposition of those forces.

So don't treat this one lightly. This perhaps is the most important of all the information given to us relative to your service as a Christian. Don't forget that that's what we're talking about – your service as a Christian. Without service, you go to heaven with zero in rewards. With proper service, you go to heaven with great potential reward. And service is dependent upon the tactic of prayer. Without the use of prayer in battle, the Christian soldier will neutralize all his armor and his sword. If Satan can dissuade the Christian soldier from prayer, he has little to fear from that soldier. He manages to do that with most believers.

Therefore, prayer comes under very severe attack by Satan who knows full well how spiritual battles are won. Many Christians listen to him. Many Christians wonder why they don't pray more. Many Christians wonder why they're not inclined to want to pray more. Well, the reason is because the devil has gotten to you. He has undermined your understanding of the importance of the tactic of prayer. Satan prospers things in our lives that sidetrack us from prayer. When we have crises, we're more inclined to prayer. When we have hard times, we're more inclined to prayer. When we have great decisions to make, then we're more inclined to prayer. Satan wants Christians, in other words, to be active in church work, but negligent in prayer.

However, the principle of Scripture is prayer without ceasing: always; on all occasions; and, without letup. That is the constant use of this tactic in the battle. Verse 18 is telling us, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication." The word "praying" means face-to-face, direct approach to God. "Always" means on every occasion of going into battle. Praying always in Greek is connected to the words "in the Spirit," meaning under the filling of the Holy Spirit: "Praying on all occasions while filled with the Holy Spirit." Lots of praying is not Holy Spirit-led, so that kind of praying is no threat to Satan. The tactic of prayer can only be used with effect when it's under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is to include these general requests. That's what he means by "praying with all prayer." That includes general requests in view of the impending spiritual battle. Then he uses the word "supplication" which refers to specific requests – desperation in the midst of the combat.

The prayer tactic is to be pursued in behalf of all fellow Christians with perseverance and with specific supplications – specific requests for those believers. This is so important. Anytime you people are negligent in sustaining us in this ministry in prayer, you are asking for trouble. Your prayers sustain me; they sustain the staff that works here; they sustain the believers who work here; and, they sustain the people that you're in close operation with in some area of the ministry. If you don't pray for us, you are asking for trouble, and you are asking for spiritual defeat.

None of us is above being wounded. You better not forget it. None of us is above being spiritually wounded. One of the supreme preserving qualities is this tactic of prayer. When it is used, we are practically invincible and invulnerable. Any deviation from prayer in the angelic warfare will bring injury and defeat to ourselves and to others.

In the execution of prayer, you must remember that it can only be used by believers. Unbelievers cannot pray. God doesn't listen. Asking God for something He approves is what prayer is all about. We must ask while we are in a status of spirituality; that is, while we are filled with the Spirit. If you'll turn to John 15:7, we have this spelled out for us. There, Jesus says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." "If you abide in me" – that's a third class condition "if" in the Greek. Therefore you know that that means maybe you will, and maybe you won't. But on any occasion when you are "abiding in Jesus Christ" means to be in temporal fellowship with Him. You are in the inner circle with your known sins confessed.

Then, if in your King James Version, you have the words "You shall ask," that is wrong. Cross out, "You shall." Those words do not belong in there. This is a command in the Greek. It simply should say, "If you are in temporal fellowship with Me, and My words abide in you (Bible doctrine truth is in you, and you're positive toward it) – under those conditions, you're ready to pray: ask." And the command is given to, "Ask what you will because God is leading you in that asking." The result, "It shall be done" means that the Holy Spirit has led this request, and it will be granted.

We are to ask in faith, knowing that God hears. We are to ask under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That is in Jesus' name. Our asking is to be addressed to God the Father. Prayer is a grace operation. It functions apart from the fact that you deserve the answer. It's done because of God's grace. And group prayer is uniquely effective as a prayer tactic. So this, of course, is prone to be discouraged by Satan. I know why a lot of people do not attend Wednesday prayer meeting here in this ministry: because Satan has gotten to them. It is a uniquely powerful use of the tactic of prayer. Great things are accomplished, and the Scripture promises great things to be accomplished, when people get together in prayer.

We sort of have an example of that in the case of the apostle James, who was the first Christian martyr. We have the description of the problems that he faced with the Sanhedrin, and with the Jewish authorities, and with the Roman authorities. James was taken out and he was killed. He was the first of the apostles to die as a martyr. And as we look over Scripture, it's interesting to note that there's no indication of prayer as a group involved in the problem. We come along to Peter being put into prison, and the first thing that leaps out at us from the pages of Scripture is Christians getting together and they're praying. They're in a group. They're not home: you here; you here; and, you hear. They're in one place, and they're praying. What's the result? Peter gets let out of prison by an angel. We cannot help wondering whether James died because the believers did not get together in prayer, and they learned their lesson, and they got together, and they saved Peter.

The day of Pentecost was ushered in as a result of the fact that they were gathered together under the maximum impact of prayer. That is the tactic used in its finest expression – when people get together in prayer. So maybe you can't make it to group prayer times. But don't knock it. Recognize it for the fact that it is God's supreme demand upon the local church ministry. It's the means of breaking all of the bottlenecks, and it's the means of ensuring victory.

**Guidelines of Prayer**

Here are some guiding principles, as we read Scripture, concerning the use of the tactic of prayer.

1. **Uninhibited Asking**

Number one is uninhibited asking. In Luke 11:5-8, you read the story about the man who wanted some help at a late hour from a friend of his because some guests had come by. It was midnight, and everybody was asleep, and this man comes knocking at his friend's door and says, "I need some bread because some folks have just dropped in, and I'm short. And the man says, "Oh, man. Don't bother me now. I'm in bed. The kids are in bed. We're all sleep. We're all tired." The man said, "Nothing doing. I'm going to keep beating on this door." The Bible describes this as shameless persistence. Luke 11:8 says, "Yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needed." The word importunity in Greek means "shameless persistence." The man had a need, and he did not hesitate to pursue and to insist upon it.

Subsequent to this parable, here is the point of it: In Luke 11:9-10, we read, "And I say unto you, 'Ask, and it shall be given to you.'" But the Greek says, "Keep on asking, and it shall be given to you." The Greek says, "Keep on seeking, and you shall find." The Greek says, "Keep on knocking, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks, receives; he that seeks, finds; and, to him that knocks, it shall be opened."

So don't hesitate to ask God. I don't care what it's for. As long as you feel free that this is compatible with the integrity and the holiness of God, and God the Spirit is leading you, then ask. Uninhibited asking is at the heart of the use of the tactic of prayer.

1. **Continual Asking**

Then a second factor is demonstrated for us in Luke 18:1-8. That is continual asking. Here you have the case of the widow who wanted justice from a judge who was not interested in listening to her. She persisted in continually asking. Someone this week said, "Is it right for me to go back to God and ask for the same thing that I've been asking for? Do I ask him once and then let it go and forget it?" I said, "No, you do like the widow. You keep going back to the Sovereign Judge and you keep asking, unless God the Holy Spirit leads you to discontinue that request." There are times when he will lead you to discontinue praying for something, and you will be given the clear indication that the answer to that request is "No."

Waiting on the Lord for a decision preserves the Christian soldier from using carnal tactics. That's what's important here. If you wait upon the Lord, and you continue to ask, and continue to ask, you'll be preserved from swinging off to your carnal tactics, and to swinging off to your human capacities. So keep on asking until God indicates to you what He thinks about the matter. That's what this parable indicates. This judge would not listen to this woman on the basis of justice, but because of her continual asking, he did listen to her. If a human judge will do that, you may be sure that God, who is eagerly waiting for you to talk to Him, will certainly respond.

1. **Ask in Faith**

A third principle is to ask in faith. We have this taught to us in Mark 11:22-24. Praying is not blowing soap bubbles which you simply expect to disappear. Prayer as a tactic is conducted with expectation because God is faithful to His promises and to His ways. He has said that He will listen, and He will respond. God accomplishes the humanly impossible through believing soldiers. In Mark 11:22-24, you have humanly impossible things stated that are presented to us as the capacities that we have when we pray under divine leadership – that God will accomplish as a result of those prayers. He will move mountains. He will accomplish fantastic things.

So ask in faith (believing). Do not pray until you have learned how to pray without thinking it is soap bubbles that are going to float off in the air and then pop and disappear, and that's going to be the end of your requests. That is not so.

1. **Asking in Unanimity**

Then the final principle is asking in unanimity. Matthew 18:19 lays this principle down for us. Here we have Christians who are led to an agreement by the Spirit of God to pray, and they pray together. They have an impact: "Again, I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven." There is power in a group prayer meeting. It is produced by God the Holy Spirit. The conviction is produced by God the Holy Spirit. All easily join in then to the goal. Discord in a group prayer undermines the divine response.

I want to summarize this tactic of prayer with James 5:16. The latter part of that verse says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." This is talking about the Christian soldier's tactic in combat. First of all, take a pencil and scratch out the word "fervent" because it is not (again) in the Greek Bible. God is not impressed with emotional frenzy in prayer. People love to quote this verse, and they like to convey that if you just get down there, and you really get all emotional, and blubber, and get all excited with God, that you're going to push Him to accomplish something. God is not impressed with that at all. That word does not belong in there.

This verse more properly should be translated in this way: "The prayer of a righteous person is able to do much when it is used." That's what the verse is saying. Prayer is a useless tactic when it is not used. It is then non-operational. That is what this verse says. The effectual prayer is the operational prayer. The prayer which is in operation is the one that accomplishes much. A righteous person, of course, is one who is controlled by the Holy Spirit. You're in temporal fellowship so you know what to pray for. The prayer by such a person is capable of producing great results in the angelic conflict. The Holy Spirit wanted to emphasize this by putting the word "much" first in the sentence in the Greek Bible. It would be kind of hard to do that in English here. In the English, it's at the very end of the sentence. However, if you were to read this in the Greek Bible, you would discover that the word "much' is right there at the beginning of the sentence. When you put a word at the beginning of the sentence in Greek, that's the point of impact. That's the point of emphasis. That's the finger of God pointing and saying, "I want you to notice this word particularly." So the thing that God wants you to see particularly is that He is going to accomplish fantastically huge results when you pray. That is the point. That is doctrine. That is a principle that you can count upon.

Praying by such a person (a person in temporal fellowship – a righteous person): that's what it is. It doesn't say "righteous man" in the text. It says, "A righteous person (a man or a woman) accomplishes great results in the angelic warfare." The word for "prayer" here is the word that expresses a desperate need in the midst of the battle, and it is addressed to a sovereign God who acts in grace. That is that particular word for prayer that conveys a desperation of need in the midst of battle where the shots and shells are flying, and I'm in a desperate position, and I'm in desperate need, and I call out to God, and He (in His sovereignty), because of grace (not because I deserve it) responds. And if I talk to Him in the status of spiritual fellowship and in the status of compatibility with His will, as I find it in the Word of God, the result is going to be a fantastic amount of divine good production and victory. The prayer of a righteous person is able to do much. That is the victorious tactic of prayer.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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