***The Technique of Prayer, No. 1

Techniques of the Christian Life

TL11-02***

**Jude 20**

Before we get specifically to the technique of prayer, let's review the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The first part of Jude 20 declared to us and advised us to meet apostasy by building a spiritual maturity structure in our souls by means of the Word of God. You and I as Christians have been given a living human spirit at the point of salvation. God the Holy Spirit came to indwell us for the purpose of leading us into spiritual maturity. Because this is true through the learning of the Word of God, we are able to develop the facets that constitute spiritual maturity which we have looked at before. On the other hand, failure to learn the Word of God and to respond to it exposes us to all the hazards of apostasy and all the misconception on all of the deception that is inherent in an apostate age. Under those conditions our soul, instead of being sensitive to God, becomes calloused and the guidance of God the Holy Spirit is cut off. Then a condition of spiritual darkness sets in upon all the facets of our soul and we are just completely out of touch with the mind and thinking and guidance of God.

**The Teaching Ministry of God the Holy Spirit**

So the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is very vital. Here's a brief review on that:

1. The indwelling of the believer by the Holy Spirit is permanent in the church age (John 14:16). He is here and He will continue to indwell us throughout the church age. This is one of the unique features of the church age. This was not true in other age. The Holy Spirit came and went sovereignly.
2. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to learn the Word of God. The Holy Spirit can only teach a spiritual Christian; that is, one who is filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). To the Christian who is filled with the Spirit, God the Holy Spirit is able to teach him the spiritual phenomena of doctrine. Also, it is the Holy Spirit who brings to the Christian's memory what Jesus Christ has said. John 14:26 promises to us that the Spirit of God will do this for us. He will help us to remember what the Lord has said. The Bible contains what Christ has said, and consequently the Bible is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). But the Christian can obviously remember only the doctrine that he has studied. What he has not studied cannot be called to his memory.

This is where many Christians make a serious mistake. They know that they have a living human spirit, and they know that God the Holy Spirit has been given to us as our guide and as a teacher, and they think that just having the Holy Spirit is all you need to have guidance from God. But you can go from the point of salvation, God the Holy Spirit coming into your life and indwelling your body, and never have one moment of guidance from the Spirit of God unless you have the Word of God which is the means through which He guides us. Consequently, unless you are a spirit-filled Christian who can be taught the Word of God, and unless you are a Christian who is learning the Word of God, you cannot expect to have any guidance from God the Holy Spirit. What you do is fall into some trap of emotionalism; some trap of sweetness and light outlook; or, some substitution of some kind, and you call it the guidance of the Lord.

1. The Holy Spirit teaches the Christian's human spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Compare with that Romans 8:16.
2. The Father gives divine guidance to the believer through the teaching of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14). What you have not learned, the Spirit of God cannot use to give you the Father's guidance.
3. To know the will of God for oneself, we must know the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Timothy 3:16).
4. The results of the teaching of the Holy Spirit are found in 2 Timothy 3:16. They are:
	1. It is profitable for doctrine. We learn categories of truth.
	2. It is profitable for reproof. That is, it points out our sins to us when we learn the Word of God.
	3. It is profitable for correction. It points out how to get back on course again. 1 John 1:9 is getting back on course through the Word of God.
	4. Finally, it is profitable for instruction in righteousness which is our experiential sanctification; that is, knowing doctrine tells us how to live.
5. How to learn from the Holy Spirit is explained to us in Isaiah 28 13. There you have the expression "precept upon precept," which is classification of truth upon classification of truth. You have to learn the Word of God by its classifications. It also uses the phrase "line upon line," which means just like you see it in your Bible, verse-by-verse instruction in the Word of God. Thirdly, it says, "here a little, there a little," which means regular study of the Word of God on a day-by-day basis. Spiritual binges inspired in you by some challenge that somebody gets up and gives will not do it. This is what is dangerous about spiritual challenges. If God's people are not given the word of God along with a challenge, they will be inspired to storm out to do something that they will not be able to cope with. Challenges are very dangerous things. You have to have the basis of a systematic intake of the Word, and then you have all the challenge that you need.
6. The Holy Spirit cannot teach the believer who does not expose himself to the teaching of Bible doctrine. That should be a self-evident fact. If you are not someplace where you are being instructed, then the Spirit of God cannot teach you.
7. Failure to know necessary doctrine in a life situation is compensated for with emotional responses. When you don't know doctrine, you go to emotion, and you cover up with that. With that point I should say we are not decrying or belittling emotion. Again, we're trying to put it in its proper perspective and in its proper place.

**Prayer**

We are now confronted with a study of the subject of prayer. What is prayer? Prayer is talking to God. It is speaking to God as we would speak to our earthly fathers. It is coming to God trustingly with your sins, your problems, and your needs. It's bringing to God whatever it is that you want to ask him about, the direction you need, and the requests that you have. People will often discredit prayer as being nonproductive. They pray and nothing happens is the way it goes. But the problem lies with the technique that you use in prayer. The problem does not lie with the provision of prayer that God has given us. If you use the wrong technique, your prayers will indeed neither be heard nor answered. People have certain caricatures about prayer, and then when nothing happens, they discredit this means that God has provided for us to accomplish the Lord's work and to receive our needs.

For example, they will have a caricature of burning incense. I'm going to pray so I'm going to go and burn incense. Or, I'm going to light candles. When I was in Guatemala a few weeks ago, every Roman Catholic cathedral was filled with people who were on their knees lighting candles and earnestly speaking to the candle almost as if it were a living thing in itself, trying through that religious act to reach God. They were praying. To light that candle meant that you were praying. This is a factor of heathenism.

During World War II when I was in China, I was in Peking on one occasion visiting some of the temples. I had an excellent rickshaw boy as a guide. He took us into one temple that was dimly lit. When I first came in, I thought there were two huge posts in front of me. Then I realized that these were not posts but that these were the legs of a monster giant Buddha. You finally had to look up and you saw this Buddha standing over there, potbellied and smiling, looking down on you. He was the Buddha of long life. Our guide said, "You may pray to Buddha to give you long life." And he handed us a taper to light the candle right there--good old heathen pagan mystic ritual. He handed it to me and I shook my head and said, "No," because I knew who was behind Buddha of long life--fatty boy up there--and it wasn't God. The other Marine officer with me went for it. He took it and he lit it thinking that by this act of prayer, by lighting this candle, he would achieve something.

They also used to have prayer wheels in China. You would walk through the temples of the priests, and here was the prayer wheel, and here was this fellow babbling and spinning the wheel the whole time. People used to throw in a few prayers. They'd walk by and give that wheel a spin sending a lot of prayers out.

Some people think that we should have that back home here sometime. That's the idiocy of paganism. But there are people who spin their wheels and then they say, "Hmmm, prayer doesn't work. God is not answering." Some people bring sacrifices; they use their prayer beads; they read their devotional books; they make pilgrimages; they bring offerings of food; they fast; or, they practice self-denial. That has nothing to do with the technique of prayer. So if you hope to get God's attention through these rituals that you may perform, you're going to be disappointed because your technique is wrong.

So Jude 20 has told us to meet apostasy, in the first place, by developing a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. "But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Now the last part of that verse gives us a second defense against apostasy, and that is praying in the Holy Spirit. Here is the second way that God provides to enable us to resist apostasy--praying in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has a major role in our prayer life. Praying in the Holy Spirit means praying from a soul which is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, we have immediately touched upon a major technique of the Christian life. You understand that there are certain techniques by which we live as Christians. If you do not use these techniques, your Christian life will falter. One of them, for example, is the confession of known sins. Another one here is a life of prayer. The Christian who does not pray is neglecting a major technique of the Christian life, and will be become eventually an effective believer.

The Holy Spirit plays a major role because the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit edits our prayers. In Romans 8:26 we read, "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmity, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because he makes the intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Praying: this is the Greek word "proseuchomai." It is a verb in the present tense which as you know means that it's to be a constant experience of the Christian life. "Pray without ceasing" is the Scriptural admonition. It is active which means you do it to yourself. You don't go to a priest or some intermediary or some great religious leader and say, "Pray for me." It is not wrong for you to ask other believers to join with you in prayer for a specific need that you have. However, be sure that you are simply asking them to join you before God in that prayer and not asking them to do your praying for you. All of you are perfectly qualified, as believers, to do your own praying. So, it is active here. You are to do your praying. It is a participle which means that it is a divine principle which is here being declared. To pray in the spirit means to pray in the condition where you are in fellowship with the Father because sins have been confessed and the Spirit of God is enabled then to lead you in your prayer life.

**The Mechanics of Prayer**

1. **Address the Father in prayer**

First of all, we need to look at the mechanics of prayer. A lot of people get this mixed up. When you pray, to whom do you speak? Whom do you address in prayer? You should not be careless about teaching your children in addressing God in prayer. Once in a while, we'll hear somebody in Sunday school in the little departments of the beginners and primaries who are saying, "All right children, let's fold our hands we're going to pray, 'Dear Jesus.'" Right away they've taught some false doctrine. It's okay to ask the kids to fold their hands and bow their heads and close their eyes so they can establish privacy to speak to God in prayer. But don't you then promptly teach them to address the wrong person of the godhead in prayer.

The Word of God declares to us that we are to direct our prayers to the Father. In John 17:1, we have the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in that prayer he addresses the Father. "These words spoke Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven said, 'Father the hour is come.'" In Ephesians 5:20, the Apostle Paul gives guidance again for the direction of prayer" "Giving thanks always (which is one of the elements of prayer) for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." You do not address the Son. In Matthew 6:9, we again have prayer directed in that occasion when the disciples said, "Teach us to pray." We have what is mistakenly called the Lord's Prayer. It should be called the apostles' prayer. "Jesus said, 'After this manner, therefore pray. Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name." The prayer is always addressed to the Father. So that's point number one. If you want to learn how to pray, learn the mechanics of prayer. The first step of prayer is to address it to the right person of the godhead. And you never address anybody in prayer except the Father.

1. **Pray in the Name of the Son**

Secondly, you pray in the name of God the Son. In the Book of John we have several verses clarifying this point. In John 14:13 Jesus said, "And whatever you shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." In John 15:16 He says, "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you shall ask of the Father (notice that it is addressed to the Father) in my name, He may give it to you." It doesn't say, "Whatsoever you shall ask of Me the Son." In John 16:23-24 Jesus says, "And in that day you shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Heretofore you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." Then, of course, Ephesians 5:20 again adds that same point that we are to pray in the name of the Son. "Giving thanks always for all things and to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So the place that the Son comes into your prayer life is that you are praying in His authority. You are praying as a child of God who is born again and who therefore has complete access to that throne of grace. It is your right and privilege at any time of the day and night to approach God the Father in prayer through the authority of the Son to whom you are united by your faith in Him.

1. **Pray in the Power of the Holy Spirit**

The third factor of the mechanics of prayer is the role of God the Holy Spirit that Jude refers to here, and that is that we are to pray in the power of God the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching there and to with all perseverance," and so on. In Romans 15:13, Paul says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Our functioning in the Christian life is always by means of the power of the Holy Spirit. Of course, this is what Jude 20 has also been teaching us.

Here's the divine technique for prayer. God has given us a divine provision. Prayer was designed for His children to be able to talk to him. So there is a proper way of handling prayer, and when a proper prayer is dispensed, it instantly spans the vast space between us and heaven and it is immediately received in heaven. It's much better for you and me as believers to use the instrument of prayer in times of crises in our life than it is for you to get on the phone and call some friend to yak about it. It is a lot better for you to talk to God than to some person about the crises. You have a direct line, I'm happy to tell you, right into Heaven's throne room. You should automatically turn to God in prayer rather than to your friends. The problem, however, is to make the right connection. We need to repeat the requests of the disciples, "Lord teach us to pray."

**John 14:6**

In the Old Testament, they placed the call to heaven through the Levitical Priesthood. All prayers went through the Levitical Priesthood. If you wanted to pray to God, you went to the priest who made your sacrifice and you made your approach to God. But in the New Testament, the dispensation of grace, we have a direct dialing system. When we are born into God's family, every Christian becomes a believer priest. This is taught in 1 Peter 2:5 and 9. So believers today have direct access to the Father without any human manipulator in between. We place our prayer to God the Father as we've already indicated (Matthew 6:6, Matthew 6:9, John 16:23, 1 Peter 1:17). You place your prayer call directly to God.

The number that you have to dial is JOHN-146. John 14:6 is the number you have to dial on this direct dialing system. If you can't dial this number and have not dialed this number, you have no access and no hope of being heard. John 14:6 reads, "Jesus said unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by Me.'" The connection is established through your new birth through your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now once the connection to heaven is established, it never has to be reinstalled. You have a permanent hotline to the Father's throne of grace. You will never call this number and find a busy signal, day or night. The service man will never come by and cut off your service because of lack of payment. It is a grace system, and it's all been paid for already. The Father invites us therefore without any hesitation for any reason at all to call him at any time. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call into me and I will answer thee and show the great and mighty things which you know not." Hebrews 4:16 adds to that, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." You have no reason whatsoever at any time to have any hesitancy to approach God.

Now the Old Testament saints were taught a technique for prayer. When the Old Testament believer approached God, he had to approach God on the basis of the promises that God made. They would call upon God and say, "Now God you promised to do this, and I call upon you as a true and honest God to do this that you have promised." Sometimes they would even be given the very words to use in this prayer. In Deuteronomy 26:5 ff, they are given the very words that they were to use in prayer. But Christians today are not told what to say. We are, as a matter of fact, not to use some stereotyped repetitious prayer that we read somewhere, that someone has written, that we repeatedly use. That's religion. Consequently, it is wrong to use the Lord's Prayer as an approach to God. There is nothing more ridiculous than using the Lord's Prayer. Religion is the worst thing that ever happened to mankind--man trying to gain God's favor through his own efforts. This is what religion teaches people.

I saw a television program one time where there was a man on the high seas. He was in a boat and the boat was sinking. He ended up in the ocean. His boat was sinking under him and a school of sharks was circling him. So guess what he did. "Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name." He starts repeating the Lord's Prayer while the sharks are circling him. Why? Because he thought this was a way of gaining safety against the sharks. Instead he should have been yelling, "God do something about the sharks please." He'd have been more on the beam and probably would have gotten better results. The model of the Lord's Prayer is simply a model, and it's meaningless superstitious magic for us to repeat it.

What God wants you to do is to talk in your own words. How would you feel as a parent, those of you who have children, if your youngster came up to you and he decided he'd like to ask you for an ice cream cone? So he came up with his little brother or sister and said, "Daddy, I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream," because you read a little poem, a little jingle, to talk to you. Every time the kid opened his mouth he was dangling to you in some way. That's exactly what we do with God the Father who is infinitely more interested, the Bible has indicated, to supply us with our requests than even our earthly fathers are. So, don't treat God with your little stereotype poems and your little religious rituals. When you use a prayer like that, you are just a little bit away from the man who is spinning his prayer wheel and trying to approach God in that way.

Now the basis of effectual prayer is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name refers to all that He is as the Son of God; all that he has done; and, all the authority that He represents. Jesus taught this change from the Old Testament order of praying on the basis of God's promises to praying on the basis of His authority as the Son of God (John 16:24). This new basis, the Christian is told, will guarantee him results. In John 16:23, the Lord says, "Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name (on the basis of My authority, on the basis of My leading a view through the Spirit of God), he will give it to you."

There are certain practices that the unsaved try to imitate. They try to approach God in prayer. They try to ask God even in Christ's name, but they have no authority to use His name. They have no relationship to the Son of God so this will not work. Sometimes, however, God will answer the prayer of unbelievers. I don't think we can say that He will not do that. There have been many occasions when unbelievers have called upon God and their prayers were answered. If God did the answering of that prayer, it was only on the basis of the grace of God and His mercy that he elected sovereignly to extend. It was not because that person had a claim. But you and I, as believers, have a claim upon God. When we speak to our Father, he has to listen to us. He has to consider and he has to respond because we approach Him on the authority of His Son whom he will never reject, and to whom he will never turn a deaf ear. You have a totally different ground than the unbeliever does.

So, our approach is, we who have accepted Christ, to come to the Father which in itself declares and admits that only He can solve our problem, and our names carry no weight, but the name of Christ carries all the weight that we need. Since the Father gave up His Beloved Son in salvation (that was the greatest thing he could do for us), He will not refuse us lesser things. Romans 8:32 tells us this.

**The Elements of Prayer**

Now there are certain elements in prayer that we should learn. Let's look at these briefly--elements that should be involved in prayer. You understand that prayer is your privilege. Your approach is on the basis of the fact that you are a believer in union with Jesus Christ, that you have His authority to approach the Father, and that the Father is eager and ready to listen. You have a direct dialing system. You as your own priest may approach God without any intermediary. There are certain elements that should be included in prayer.

1. **Confession**

Obviously, point number one should be confession as per 1 John 1:9. Prayer has to be made, as Jude 20 indicates, in the power and control of God the Holy Spirit. Every one of us is either operating under the control of the Holy Spirit or under the control of the old sin nature. When the old sin nature controls our lives, we have trouble on the line with our calls to heaven. That's one of the reasons the calls don't get through, and we think that prayer is not working. There's nothing wrong with prayer. It's our technique that we're using, trying to talk to God when we are not in a spirit-filled condition. We are in an unconfessed state of sin. Unconfessed sin automatically keeps our prayer from getting through to heaven.

Now this is very important. Don't waste your time trying to talk to God if there is known unconfessed sin. Take care of that first. Now you may go through all the motions of prayer. You may have all of the greatest sincerity in the world. But because you have unconfessed sin, your line is out of order. Your fellowship has been broken. That's what Psalm 66:18 means when it says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." He couldn't say it any plainer than that. If there is sin unconfessed, God will not hear you. Now when you come to prayer meeting, I trust you do understand that it is important that you make confession of sin, but not in prayer meeting. Don't get in the prayer group and do your confessing to God there where everybody is listening in. That should be done on your own private line, so do that at home before you come, or sit there silently while it's coming up your turn, your opportunity to pray, and get your confession made.

1. **Thanksgiving**

Another element of prayer is thanksgiving. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Ephesians 5:20 tell us to express this kind of continual thanksgiving to God. Confession has been made. The line is open. Now we begin speaking with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving implies praise. Psalm 107:8 says, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. Thanksgiving is a way of praising God. Christians do not bring animal sacrifices to praise God. Instead we bring what Hebrews 13:15 refers to as the sacrifice of praise; that is, the fruit of our lips. We praise God in a different way than they did in the Old Testament with those sacrifices. All good things come from God. So, he alone is worthy of our fullest praise (James 1:17). So we confess sin. Then we express our praise, our thanksgiving. We remember what the Lord has done for us and we express that gratitude.

1. **Intersession**

The third element in prayer is intercession for others. You can turn freely to the heavenly Father for guidance and for daily needs of those around you (Philippians 4:6). Ephesians 6:18 calls upon us to intercede for all the saints. It is God's will that you should pray for others: for Christians as per Ephesians 6 18; and, also it is God's will that you pray for unbelievers (1 Timothy 2:1-3). God also wants you to pray for those you love, and also to pray for those who run you down. Matthew 5:44 calls us to pray for those who abuse us, who despite-fully use us. Pray for those who mistreat you. Also we are to pray for the salvation of the lost (1 Timothy 2:4), and we are to pray for our national leaders and the country (1 Timothy 2:2). While we realize from prophecy that the nations of the world are going to a certain self-destructive end, yet we also realize that God has established, as one of his divine institutions, human government for the protection of the human race. We are constantly admonished that we are to pray for our government. Why? Well, we are to pray specifically that we may enjoy peace because peace gives us the condition and the opportunity and the situation for the propagation of the Gospel and the Word of God. So it is very important that we pray for the government of our nation that it may establish a condition that the Word of God may have free expression.

**A Prayer List**

It is not a bad idea in fulfilling this part of your prayer life to have a prayer list. Some of you keep one. It is a helpful thing just because our minds skip. This is especially true when people come up and they do consider you a person that they'd like to have join with them as a believer in prayer. Someone comes up and says, "I have this thing coming up. I'd like to ask you to pray with me for the Lord's guidance in this." It is easy to say, "Yes, right. You bet." And then other people come up and talk to you. Other things come in your mind and you never think about it again. It would be better to say, "Yes, okay," and then reach in and take out a little card, jot the thing down, and then if you have a list at home, add it to that. You'll be surprised how many things you will find regularly to pray for. Then you'll also find that it's quite a great pleasure and an encouragement to take a pencil and cross through the ones that God has answered one way or another and given you a disposition of. It is not a bad idea to keep a prayer list and to make your requests specific. People have a lot at stake. You have a lot at stake. Prayer is the solution for much of that. It would be too bad to forget somebody at some strategic moment.

1. **Petition**

Finally there is a fourth element, and that is petition for our own needs. John 15:7 and Romans 8:32 tell us to ask for those things that are our personal needs--requesting things for ourselves before the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). The blind beggar Bartimaeus asked a lot and he received his sight (Mark 10:51-52). He asked for himself. You and I can equally ask for the great things, the big things. God has the same offer to you and me to day. He gives us a blank check. Just fill it in. Just ask for the things for yourself (John 15:7, John 14:13-14). Please remember that prayer basically is asking God. When you reduce prayer to its basic feature, it is asking. That's what it's all about. Other elements come into it in an associated way but they're not exactly prayer, such as our confession and our thanksgiving. It is that intercession for others and that asking for ourselves that is at the heart of prayer. That's why God designed it. The father may not always grant our wants but he will always grant the needs which we have requested and which it is His plan for us to have (Philippians 4:19).

**Petitions vs. Desires**

There is another factor that I'd like to cover, and that is the relation of prayer petitions and prayer desires. I don't want to run over this quickly because I think this is an important feature for us to understand. There is a difference between what we ask of God and what we desire. Many times we ask in a confused way because we are confused about our desires. First of all, there are certain conditions where we have illustrated in Scripture where people have a petition answered. They ask God for something. God gives them what they asked for, but what they wanted by their petition--their desire--is not granted. The petition is answered. But the desire is not answered.

**Numbers 11:4-6**

For example, Numbers 11:4-6 says, "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell to lusting and the children of Israel also wept again and said, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons and the leaks and the onions and the garlic, but now our soul is dried away. There is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes; and the manna was a coriander seed,'" and so on. Here was a request, a complaint, first of all, concerning what they had to eat. So verse 13 says, "From where should I have flesh to give unto all these people, for they weep unto me saying, 'Give us flesh that we may eat.'" That was the petition that the children of Israel directed to God through Moses. They wanted to get off that manna diet and they wanted some meat to eat. That was the petition. Psalm 106:15 reads, "And he gave them their request (referring to this desire for meat) but sent leanness into their soul." They thought they would be happy and find satisfaction if He sent them the meat. He sent them the meat and they found that it did not satisfy and it did not produce happiness. It hindered their happiness.

**1 Samuel 8:5-9**

Another example is 1 Samuel 8:5-9, where we have the request on the part of Israel that they have a ruler to be placed over them. That was their desire. 1 Samuel 8:5 says, "They said unto him, 'Behold, you are old and your sons walk not in your ways. Now make us a king to judge just like all the nations.' But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed unto the Lord." The Lord went on there and told Samuel that he has not been rejected, but the people are rejecting God Himself. Verse 9 says, "Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king who shall reign over them." Their desire is, "Give us a king." Verse 19 says, "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. They said, 'No, but we will have a king over us.'" So they got their king. God granted their desire, but as you know they did not become like other nations. It brought them a great deal of grief. They thought other nations were happy with a king. They found themselves unhappy, and actually they remained under God's control and under God's direction, but their request did not fulfill their desire of personal satisfaction as a nation. It brought them all the grief that God promised them it would.

**Mark 5:12-13**

Another example is Mark 5:12-13. This is the story you remember of the demoniac and the demons that are cast out of him, and the demons say, "Please don't send us into the pit of the abyss. Let us go into the swine," thinking that they would be happy and they would be safe there. So the Lord granted this request. They were permitted to go into the swine, and the swine promptly drowned themselves in the sea.

So here we have examples of the petition answered, but the desire that they sought was not answered. We have another condition where the petition is not answered, but the desire is granted.

**Mark 5:18-19**

For example, in Mark 5:18-19, the same demoniac after he was healed requested to be with Jesus. But it was not granted to him. He thought that if he could just be with the Lord that he would be able to serve the Lord. He wanted to serve the Lord and this was granted to him. The Lord told him to go back and testify to the great things that had happened to him. He actually got to serve the Lord, which was his request, but not the way he asked for it. He said, "Jesus, I want to go everywhere you go to serve you." The Lord says, "Yes, you will serve me, but you will serve me at a distance from me.

This is man's way for solving a problem. How often have you asked for God to give you this solution to a problem, and God came along and he solved your problem, but in a different way. That's what we're talking about. Man's way is rejected. God gives His way. You don't get what you ask for, but you do get your desire fulfilled--the solution of your problem.

**Genesis 17:18-19**

In Genesis 17:18-19, we have the request that Ishmael should be an heir of promise. This was denied. The Lord said, "No, Ishmael will not be the son of promise. That's going to be a son that is to be born later." But what Abraham wanted was to see Ishmael a great nation, and he did get that desire. That was granted.

**Genesis 18:23-33**

In Genesis 18:23-33, the request on the part of Abraham was to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. Why did he want Sodom and Gomorrah spared? Because his nephew Lott was in the city and he didn't want his nephew to get killed. So he went and said, "Lord please spare Sodom and Gomorrah." That was his petition. The Lord did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah, but he gave him his desire. He did protect his nephew Lot.

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, the apostle Paul asked the Lord to remove the thorn, the physical problem under which he suffered, and which was a burden for him to carry. He said, "Lord would remove this burden?" He wanted relief from the thorn. The Lord did not remove the thorn but he did give him the grace to have the relief.

Then there is a third category where the petition is answered and the desire is answered--both of them.

**1 Kings 18:36-39**

In 1 Kings 18:36-39, the petition is that the heathen might know God. It is granted. Why was the petition made? Because of the desire that the heathen would know God's power and would come to Him.

**Judges 16:18-30**

In Judges 16:18-30, the petition was that Samson would receive back his strength to avenge the destruction of his eyes. He was granted the restoration of his strength. He was granted his desire also for vengeance upon those who had put out his eyes.

**Luke 23:42-43**

In Luke 23:42-43, the petition is by the thief on the cross is to be remembered in paradise. What was he asking for? Salvation. He asked to be remembered in paradise when Jesus went there, meaning, "I want to be saved." He was remembered and he was saved. His petition was granted and his desire was also answered.

**John 11:41-45**

In John 11:41-45, the petition was to raise Lazarus from the dead so that those about them would see and glorify God and believe. The petition was answered, and the desire was granted.

So here are three ways that your prayers are going to be handled:

1. You will sometimes ask God for something; he will give you what you ask for; but, what you wanted by that thing will not be granted you. This is a very dangerous experience to have and it happens to pushy Christians. It happens to people who insist and petition God that they are going to insist on having a certain thing, and when God grants it they discover that what they desired has not been fulfilled. As a matter of fact it causes people a great deal of grief.
2. There is also the situation where the condition is that the petition is not answered but you do get the thing you desired. God knows a better way to grant you what you seek.
3. Then there is the situation where you are right on the beam in Holy Spirit led praying. Your petition is answered and your desire is satisfied. That's the kind of praying that we should seek to accomplish.

Then we come, of course, to the sad category of petitions which are not answered and desires which are not answered. This is such a major classification that we're going to stop here and we're going to pick that one up in the next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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