



*Prayer
&
Providence*

Lesson 4 – Praying for Others



Learning to Pray from the Psalms

Prayers of Penitence

- “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled.” (6:2)
- “O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me.” (25:2)
- “Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.” (25:4-5)
- “I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden.” (32:5)

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a scenic landscape. It features a dense forest of green trees in the background, a calm body of water in the middle ground that reflects the trees and sky, and a clear blue sky above. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

What are Intercessions?

*The action of intervening on behalf of another
Prayer, petition, or entreaty in favor of another*

OT – Typically more for physical deliverance

*NT – Typically more for spiritual deliverance
and well-being of others*

“I Am Third”



*Gale Sayers' life motto:
“The Lord is first,
my friends are second,
and I am third”*



Intercessions in the Scriptures

- Abraham
 - **Gen. 18:22-33; 19:29**
 - **We may not always receive exactly the answer we desire. But God will hear us and answer in keeping with His will and broader objectives.**
- Moses
 - **Ex. 32:30-35**
 - **We really see the wonderful character of Moses in this intercession.**



Does it matter how many pray for another?

- Prayer does not follow some mathematical formula
- God encourages prayerfulness from large groups
 - **The people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5)**
- The Israelites in Egypt
 - **“Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. (Ex 2:23)**
- Paul encouraged and solicited group prayers from various churches; the early church prayed together for Peter
- The shared concern of many faithful people has an effect
- There is value in praying together for shared concerns



The Example of Jesus

- On behalf of Peter at the last supper
 - **Luke 22:31-32**
 - **Prayer for strength of faith especially in the face of trials**
- For the apostles and Christians to come later
 - **John 17:1-2,6,9-16,20-23**
 - **Vv. 20-23: An intercession for us! For our oneness in Christ; for unity; for the perfection of us in this regard**
- On the Cross
 - **Luke 23:33-34**



“Father forgive them.”

Is there someone you find difficult to forgive?


How can such prayers help us with this?

- Acts 7:59-60
- Interceding on others' behalf by going to God and requesting His forgiveness for them.
- Have you done that for people you've had trouble forgiving?
- You are doing one of the most loving things you can do for another: seeking God's favor for them.
- Turning it over to God can be very freeing. As you continually do that, it can have a softening effect on your heart and your relationship with that person.



In praying for others, how does prayer change me and my relationship with them?

- An intercession is an increase in my awareness.
- When I pray for another person, I am praying for God to open my eyes so that I can see that person as God does.
- Bringing them into God's presence changes my attitude toward them and ultimately affects our relationship in a positive way.
 - I start to see them differently.
 - I might even begin to empathize with them on a whole different level than I did before.



“When I bring others before God, I bear in mind that God is present both to me and to the people for whom I am praying. Starting from the center point of God’s love, my prayers move outward in widening circles, like ripples in a pond, from those closest to me to those in the distance.”

Philip Yancey



Paul's Intercessions

- In the prayers of Paul, we can clearly see the widening circle of love
- Those closest to him
 - Timothy – 2 Tim. 1:3-4
 - Philemon – Phm. 1:4-5
- His deep concern for Christians more broadly
 - All the churches – 2 Cor. 11:28
 - The Ephesians – Eph. 1:15-16
 - The Philippians – Phil. 1:3,9-11
 - The Colossians – Col. 1:3,9-12
- Jewish Nation
 - Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1



For whom should we pray?

- All Men
 - 1 Tim. 2:1-2
 - “men of every race, whether Jew or Gentile, of every station and of the various situations of life”
 - “for kings and all who are in authority”
 - That they facilitate the living of a godly life, and keep us free from opposition and oppression
 - “all men” – prayerful for their salvation



For whom should we pray?

- Enemies
 - Mt. 5:44-45
 - **Spitefully used? Pray for them.**
 - **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Lk. 23:34)**
 - **Who needs our love more than those who are consumed with hatred? Through prayer, we stand beside our enemies and plead to God on their behalf.**
 - **The demon-possessed never asked Jesus for a cure; they were incapable. Instead, other people brought them to Jesus.**



For whom should we pray?

- Open Doors
 - Col. 4:2-4; 2 Thes. 3:1-2
 - Of course, it's not enough to pray for open doors. We have to be ready to walk through them and take advantage of such opportunities.
- All the Saints
 - Eph. 6:18-19
 - Brethren in different parts of the world and the struggles they often face.
 - We should lift them up to God in prayer, seeking their well-being and the furtherance of the gospel.



For whom should we pray?

- Brethren Who Have Sinned
 - **Christ is ready and willing to forgive us of our sins.**
 - 1 John 2:1-2
 - **A responsibility to pray for one another**
 - 1 John 5:16; James 5:19-20
 - Coupled with our efforts - Gal. 6:1-2
 - **Those who confess – do we continue in prayer for them?**



“Are our prayers really praying or just saying words to God? To what extent do we pray for open doors, for laborers to the harvest, for the real spiritual needs of brethren, for the salvation of the lost, and for wisdom to meet the problems of life – the spiritual, physical, and material? Are too many prayers just scatter-gun shots into space, rather than definite aims at specific needs?”

Homer Hailey



Next Week – Lesson 5 – Prayer in Time of Trouble

1. Generally speaking, what are troubles the result of? (cf. Gen. 3:1-19)
2. Read Job 14:1-2; 5:7; Eccl. 2:20-23. How do we avoid complete despair as we consider these things?
3. We have many examples of prayer in the face of trouble: David – Ps. 142, 51; Hannah – 1 Sam. 1:9-18; Jonah – Jonah 2:1-9; Hezekiah – Isa. 37:14-20; Daniel – Dan. 6:10-11; Saul – Acts 9:8-12; Peter – Acts 12:5,12. Reflect on the kinds of trouble each of these individuals faced and how each situation is unique. What do these individuals have in common?
4. The readings from the Psalms for week 4 are Psalms of Penitence. How do these psalmists describe the effects of their ‘troubles’ or sin and what do they plead for?

+ Daily Readings from the Psalms