

# A Life of Intercession

## II. The Practice of Intercession

- A. Intercession is practiced in weakness, not strength. If we don't understand the power of the principle of intercession we won't embrace a life of intercession because we won't see it as meaningful. But if we don't understand the weakness of the practice of intercession we won't embrace a life of intercession because we won't see it as accessible.
- 1) Intercession is simply telling God what He tells us to tell Him.
  - 2) It is deliberately weak to put it within the reach of everyone.  
**Psalm 8:2** Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger... 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion...  
**Matthew 29:14** Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
  - 3) It is deliberately weak to put it out of the reach of any who would try to lay hold of it in their own strength.  
**1 Corinthians 1:27** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.
  - 4) The kingdom functions in weakness. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) lays out the principles of the kingdom. It belongs to the meek, the poor in spirit, those who mourn and those who hunger. It is walked out in weakness in prayer, fasting, giving, serving and loving our enemies. Jesus concludes by warning us that exercising strength on His behalf is not what He's looking for (Mt 7:21-23) but anyone who seeks to build in the kingdom must build on the principles of weakness He just taught (Mt 7:24-27).
  - 5) It is deliberately weak to guard our hearts when the breakthrough comes. Intercession carries so much power that God couples it with only being able to access it in weakness to protect us against pride and arrogance. Through the process of intercession, God positions our hearts so that when the breakthrough comes, we are painfully aware that it had nothing to do with our might, our wisdom or our strength but only with His love and righteousness.  
**Jeremiah 9:23** Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.
  - 6) There are no prerequisites for intercession. We can certainly grow in it, but we can immediately engage in it and it immediately counts before the throne of heaven.  
**Growing in faith and in our knowledge of God's heart is a reward of a life of intercession, not a requirement for one.**
- B. Intercession is costly. To say it comes without prerequisites is not to say it comes without cost.
- 1) The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. Weakness is not the same as laziness. Left to itself our flesh will never choose the way of weakness, it takes a deliberate decision.

The kingdom of heaven is available to us even at our weakest if we will choose it, but it will never fall into our laps even at our strongest if we don't make that choice. The way is narrow and few choose it (Mt 7:13-14).

Matthew 11:11 “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

- 2) The problem with intercession is it doesn't cost us what we want it to. Like Naaman (2 Kings 5) we often express willingness to do great things for God if He asked them of us, yet we are unwilling to do weak things for God that He has already asked of us.
- 3) Intercession requires sacrificing time, strength and comfort.
  - a. Intercession means sacrificing time – carving out time in our schedules to spend in prayer.
  - b. Intercession means sacrificing strength – choosing the way of weakness that offends the mind – sitting in a room and asking God to move rather than moving out of our own strength.
  - c. Intercession means sacrificing comfort – choosing to need God even when we don't need God.
  - d. Outside of intercession, most of us live completely detached from the future of the church, the nation, the lost... When we begin to partner with God in intercession, suddenly we have a stake in kingdom come. We have invested time, energy and strength into the breakthrough of God's will and suddenly it matters to us whether it comes or not.
  - e. Choosing to need is critical to stepping out of a lukewarm relationship with God. If we remain detached from what's in His heart we can easily remain detached from His heart.

**Revelation 3:15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

- f. God responds to hunger and barrenness – to those who are poor in spirit – who know their need for God.

**Matthew 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

### III. A Life of Intercession

Living a life of intercession comes down to three things that must be present in our life: a life in the Word, a prayer life, and a vision to be a friend of God. They feed off each other when they're all present and over time the Spirit uses them to bring our hearts closer to God's.

#### A. A vision to be a friend of God

- 1) As essential as having time in the Word and in prayer in our schedules is, having a vision for friendship with God in our hearts is an absolute must.
- 2) Wrong motives can completely remove all value from good activities. They can become religious disciplines done out of strength even though the activities themselves are weak. Our heart must carry that posture of weakness – we are hungry for more of God, and therefore we pray and we search the scriptures.

- 3) It is possible to search the scriptures and come away hardened against God rather than having found God's heart (witness the Pharisees – John 5:39-40).
  - 4) It is possible to spend time in prayer and actually come away more cynical and hard-hearted than ever (again, witness the Pharisees – Luke 18:9-14, Mt 6:5).
  - 5) Our reward as an intercessor has to be primarily vertical – we're in it to connect with God, not to see the breakthrough or to get anointed. Those things are good, and they will come, but one of the primary reasons God requires us to pray is because in the process our focus shifts to Him rather than the breakthrough and so our hearts are protected when the breakthrough does come.
  - 6) If we're in it for God then our hearts are safe and we are positioned to receive all that God wants to give.
- B. A life in the Word fueled by prayer
- 1) We have to come to know what it is that we're asking for – to get to know the will of God. God's Word is His written will and His primary means of speaking to us.
  - 2) As we read the Word, it must become a living and active document to us. It is the testament of a living and active God who was, who is and who is to come. It tells us not only what He has done, but what He is doing and is going to do.
  - 3) As prayer becomes a regular part of our life, we read the Word differently. We start seeking God's heart in everything. What is He up to?
  - 4) Engaging the Word in prayer adds life to our time in the Word. It takes the words off the page and into our world and our life.
    - a. If a passage asks you to believe a truth then thank God for it and ask Him for a greater revelation of it.
    - b. If a passage asks you to obey a command then declare your intention to reach for it and ask God for grace in it.
    - c. If a passage is a promise or a prayer or a desire of God's heart, take it and make it part of your prayer life.
- C. A life of prayer fueled by the Word
- 1) We have to have a time of intercession where we're actually asking God for things.
  - 2) The actual asking takes the process of knowing God's heart outside simply being an academic pursuit and gets us actively involved. It helps immensely to actually vocalize our prayers (singing or speaking).
  - 3) The 'Apostolic Prayers' are prayers that the Holy Spirit inspired to be recorded in God's written word. Like everything in scripture, they are God-breathed and therefore we know they are in His heart to answer.
  - 4) The apostolic prayers have such depth to them that they can keep us praying them forever, but a simplicity to them that lets us begin praying immediately. They come complete with a God-given focus, angle and language.
  - 5) The idea behind using the apostolic prayers is not just to take and repeat the Biblical language. We want to take that language and internalize it so that it becomes our language.
  - 6) So, more than just praying the apostolic prayers, it helps to study them, pray through them in your own words and start searching out what they mean and what they're pointing to.
  - 7) Beginning to make them a part of our prayer language is a huge start. When we're praying them often they write themselves into us, and even if it is just words at first, having the general idea in us starts to open up doors of revelation in the Word.
- D. When these begin functioning together in our lives, the results are powerful.
- 1) The basic model for God's government on earth is He speaks, we respond, He moves.

We must maintain a life of dialog with Him through His Word if He is going to be able to speak. And we must maintain a life of prayer – of asking for the things that He has revealed are on His heart if we are going to respond and see Him move.

- 2) Carrying a life of prayer makes us ones to whom the Lord can entrust revelation – fueling our life in the Word.
  - a. God gives more to those who respond to what they hear.  
**Luke 8:16** “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. 18 Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”
  - b. Making prayer a regular part of our life gets us in the habit of stewarding revelation. When God finds someone who responds to His Word then He speaks.
  - c. This again comes down to a heart to be a friend of God – as a friend of God we are not seeking revelation for the sake of revelation, but for the sake of knowing His heart so that we can join Him in it.
- 3) Spending time in the Word continually opens our eyes to who God is, what He wants to do, and just how capable He is of making it happen – fueling our prayer life.
  - a. There is a progressive transformation of our minds as we spend time in the Word, and the end result is being able to discern His will.  
**Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
  - b. The result is authority in prayer as we begin asking according to His will.  
**John 15:7** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.
  - c. Again, this comes down to a heart to be a friend of God. Prayers with no revelation on them count. But our prayer life must maintain that desire to join with His heart or we're not really praying, we're just repeating words.