

## Intercessory Prayer Week 1

Are any of you **suffering hardships? You should pray.** Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. **Are any of you sick?** You should call for the elders of the church to come and **pray over you**, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a **prayer offered in faith** will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be **forgiven**. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.** James 5:13-16 NLT

Turn to the passage, read various translations and note the different words used.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with **all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.  
Ephesians 6:18 NIV

Prayer is valuable in all circumstances, however, not all prayer looks the same. What kinds of prayer could **Eph. 6:18** be referring to? Personal, daily prayer, prayer petitions, declaring a passage or also called 'prayer of faith', silent prayer, praying a Psalm, laying hands on people with prayer, prayer of agreement, anointing with oil for healing, prayers of thanksgiving or lament. There are prayer meetings, prayer walks, prayer journeys (other places) and all accomplish something specific. These are all valuable to God, He hears every one of them, but they're not all done in the same way and accomplish the same thing according to Scripture.

## Intercession

### Definition

- According to the dictionary, to **intercede** means to 'go or pass between' two parties bringing reconciliation or to mediate, making *peace* or bring *shalom* or *wholeness* between two parties (Matt. 5:9 peacemakers). In a divorce you often have to go through 'mediation' with someone neutral in-between the two parties negotiating an agreement. That's the **lower story**.
- According to Scripture when you intercede or enter into **Intercessory Prayer** it means you have a desire to be the go-between or stand in the *middle* between the 'one' and God. The 'one' could be a prodigal, church, government, schools, you name it; we *stand in the middle* or stand in the gap interceding for them to God. That's the **upper story**.
- The Hebrew word for 'intercede' is **paga** meaning 'to meet'; we *meet with God on behalf of someone* who needs help. We get 'prayer meetings' from this idea. **Paga**

also means we're '*standing in the gap*' between someone and God, serving as the *middle man*. We also may **meet** with Satan when we pray for someone who has fallen into his traps and deceptions being unable or unwilling to pray for himself: **paga**. There's no fear in spiritual warfare since *greater is He who is in us than he who's in the world* (1 John 4:4); we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead us in what to say. More on that in Week 4.

## Bible References

### **Job 36:27-37:5**

*He fills His hands with lightning and commands it to **strike its mark**. His thunder announces the coming storm ... Job 36:32-33a NIV*

That phrase, 'strike the mark' is **paga**, your prayers of intercession are answered by God's powerful hands and they 'hit the bull's eye'. We are literally **painting a target** on the back of the 'one' for God's **light** to hit them. Notice how Job paints a picture for us as the rainstorm is brewing; heaven will meet earth like lightning. Heavy clouds, thunder, and lightning are all necessary for the skies to open and the rain to pour down. All Job knew about God was the lower story, everyday life, crops needing rain because it was vital to his food supply and as God prepared him for the storm he was alert and ready. **Lower story**

With Intercessory Prayer you may hear the **upper story** thunder first, some small indication that God's at work in the 'one's' heart and life, and that announcement gives you even more desire to be consistent and passionate with enduring prayer. The spiritual rain will bring life to this precious soul. God Himself will see the target of your prayers, like lightning, and at just the **right time** He'll hit the bull's eye: **Paga**.

### **1 Kings 18:17-40, 41-46**

**Part One-** (1 Kings 18:17-40) When Elijah confronted wicked royalty, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, he had a **meeting** (*paga*) with them on Mt. Carmel. Ahab was the Jewish king of Israel in the north, and God's people were wavering in faith, **between two opinions**, because of their influence. Would the people believe God or the lies of the enemy? The Message Bible says "*How long are you going to sit on the fence? If God is real, follow Him; if it's Ba'al, then follow him. Make up your minds!*" Sound like anyone you know? Then they need an **intercessor** to stand in the gap for them; it may be you.

Elijah had two bulls brought in, cut them in pieces, but commanded no fire be added to the respective altars. Followers of Ba'al called on this false god and later followers of Yahweh called on Him, then whoever answered by fire ... **He is God**. They were in agreement. Ba'al followers cried out, but no voice was heard; no one answered. They

kept leaping and dancing around the altar all morning long. Consequently, Elijah mocked them saying maybe he's meditating, on vacation, too busy, or even 'in the bathroom'. Possibly he's taking a power nap and needs to be woken up. They got louder, even cut themselves until blood flowed, but still there was no response.

Elijah, on the other hand, called the people to him, built his altar of 12 stones representing God's covenant people, and dug a trench around it. He put the bloody pieces of the bull on it as a burnt offering, and ordered water to be poured on all of it *three times*. Elijah's next step was **Intercessory Prayer**: he prayed or interceded for this situation by **meeting with God** by standing in between Him and His people. He passionately desired them to know for sure that Yahweh is God. Fire fell like lightning, God hit the 'bull's eye', literally, even the water from the trench was licked up, and everyone cried out, "The LORD—He is God! The LORD—He is God!" Their hearts were turned back to God. Those two situations are **lower stories**.

The **upper story** is that when we're praying as an **Intercessor** we stand in the middle between two parties. Someone we know is **wavering** between two perspectives, somehow being influenced, and they're sitting on the fence between the world's way, run by Satan or God's way, run by Jesus. We're like Elijah calling out to God to prove Himself so they know for sure that He loves them and isn't mad at them or punishing them. He's a good God who wants only good things for us.

**Part Two** (1 Kings 18:41-46) After the first encounter with Ahab, Elijah was filled with so much **faith** that he prayed in humility with his face between his knees for the three year drought to end as God had told him in the beginning (vs. 1-2). After Elijah and his servant waited for the rainstorm to arrive **he kept praying**, and finally after 7 times of **watching** the sky (remember Job), the servant saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand. The sky became black with storm clouds, strong winds, and the rain fell. It's all about God's timing. That's the **lower story**.

We intercede consistently, passionately, and with endurance until we see a little cloud, knowing the rainstorm of God's answer is on the way: **upper story**. He encourages us in the same way he did with Elijah; we watch signs in the sky like lightning and thunder or hand-sized clouds that are small indications our prayers are being heard and His divine timing is near. That's **intercession**: hitting the mark by consistent, passionate, and enduring prayer. That story is so powerful that Jesus' brother, James, included a line in his New Testament book.

*Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he **prayed earnestly** that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he **prayed again**, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. James 5:17-18 NLT*

**Daniel 9:20-23**

The prophet Daniel wrote that he was **speaking aloud**, praying, and confessing his own sin and the sin of his people as he presented his 'case' to God. During his *spoken* prayer time the angel Gabriel, whose name means 'warrior of God', appeared to give him insight and understanding. Angels are real and God uses them as He sends them on assignment for His people. LS

When we pray or **intercede** aloud, **spoken prayer**, there's often confession for yourself and for the one you're interceding for. We present our case before God admitting that punishment may be **deserved** for the person, but we're pleading for mercy. There may be angels dispatched, we may never know, but we do know that God hears and acts on our behalf. US

### ***Dan. 10:10-13***

An angel, possibly Gabriel again, reassured Daniel that he was sent from God and his prayers or words were **heard** from the first day Daniel prayed. Did he receive his answer right away? No. The angel was sent because of his words, however, Satan withstood him for 21 days, and then Michael was sent to come and help him. There was literal spiritual warfare in the heavenlies over God's people. Lower Story

God hears our prayers when they come out of our mouths, but often we have to **wait** for the answer. Sometimes it's simply His timing, other times it's spiritual warfare; either way we're reassured that He hears and answers. Praying out loud lets the **enemy** know that **we know** God is listening and will answer us. These accounts reassure us of the value of meeting with God as an intercessor: **paga**. Upper Story

### ***Ezekiel 22:30***

God is **looking for intercessors**, those who will stand in the gap, be the middle man, for someone or some situation, to make that commitment of prayer. In this passage the person who **intercedes** for another is like someone who, in the lower story, builds a wall or a fence to wall off something and then **stands in the gap** until God bursts forth with the answer! See Job 1:9; Hos. 2:6-7 if there's time.

Intercessory Prayer is meeting with God on behalf of someone else with passion, commitment, and endurance. It's agreeing with God to be the middle man, stand in the gap, and hit the mark in prayer. We recognize there's divine timing involved, the power of the spoken word, and Satan's role in the person's life. We partner with the Holy Spirit as we **intercede** when they can't or won't.

## **Intercessory Prayer Week 2**

*I urge you, first of all, to **pray** for all people. Ask God to help them; **intercede** on their behalf, and give thanks for them. For, there is one God and one **Mediator** who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.*

*1 Timothy 2:1, 5 NLT*

## **Mediator**

### **Definition**

- The dictionary meaning of mediator is one who **reconciles** differences between 2 parties, acts as a go-between, intercessor, or *middleman*. It actually means the same as **intercessor** that we learned about last week. Lower Story
- The New Testament tells us Jesus is our **One and only Mediator** and yet Paul tells us to **intercede**, same definition, for others on their behalf. Jesus reconciled us to God when He stood in the gap for us, taking our sin, and making us righteous. Now we can come to God boldly (Heb. 4:16), with free access (Eph. 2:18), whenever we choose.
- God often works through us, not independent of us, since we are His image bearers who have the Holy Spirit **in us**. Consequently, we have the privilege of **intercession: standing in the gap** for others in prayer as Jesus modeled in John 17. We bring reconciliation to those who are far from God.

## **Old Testament Mediators**

Num. 16:44-49

Aaron, the High Priest, stood **between the living and the dead** during a plague God sent to punish His people for disobedience. He was carrying the censer or container with incense and fire (prayer). The *priest's* responsibility was to meet with God (**paga**), representing the people to Him, and then leave the Holy Place and meet with the people representing God to them. They were the middle man, the intercessor, or **mediators**. Lower Story

As believers in Jesus Christ we are now those *priests* (Rev. 5:10), a 'kingdom of priests' who serve as intercessors between the spiritual life and death of the one God calls us to intercede for. Someone is dead in sin or life circumstances and we have the life and blessings of God to offer. We are the one in the **middle** representing that one to God with our prayers like sweet incense, a pleasing fragrance to God (Rev. 8:3-5) as the Spirit burns fiery passion in us (Rom. 12:11-12). Upper Story

Read over Jer. 7:16.

God saw that there was no justice for the needy ones within His chosen people and He was mad about it. His plan was for us to take care of others and show His love to them by our good works, but these were disobedient children and needed to be disciplined. He told Jeremiah to NOT intercede for them. Don't pray, don't stand in-between His judgment and the Jewish people because they are stubborn and hardhearted. God wants them to go backward and not forward ... not yet (vs. 24). Lower Story

That's how powerful intercession is; God didn't want a middleman standing between the people and Himself because He was bringing judgment. However, when Jesus became our **Mediator of the New Covenant**, He bore our sin on the cross, Is. 53:12b, He *interceded* on our behalf. That changed everything and now He desires us to stand in the gap for others, even when they're being stubborn and disobedient children. We become His followers. Upper Story

Is. 59:16

God knew there was no justice, righting the wrongs of mankind, and He wondered why there was **no one to intercede**. There was no one qualified to be the official Lamb of God, the Anointed One, the Messiah so God had to do it Himself; He was the only One qualified. His own arm of authority brought salvation; only Jesus would be the **Mediator of the New Covenant**, Heb. 8:6, 9:15, a better covenant with better promises.

Ez. 37:1-10

The prophet Ezekiel was taken by the Spirit to the **middle** of a valley full of bones as He questioned the prophet. "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel answered yes, of course. The Spirit continued, "**Prophecy** over these bones to **hear** the word of the Lord and God will cause breath to enter into them, flesh on their bones, and they shall live again. That evidence will prove that God alone is the LORD.

Ezekiel obeyed the Spirit and a supernatural move of God came on the dry bones and there was sound of rattling as they came together. Again, the Spirit told Ezekiel to **speak** to the bones, but this time to **speak** breath into them and he obeyed. They became a great army. Lower Story

Intercessors can use this lower story as they stand in the gap, in the **middle** of the valley of dry bones for the one they feel led to pray for. As middlemen we speak to the deadness of a spiritual life, and the breath of the Spirit to enter into them giving new life. We pray the prayer of faith believing that God will do what we've asked, consistently, passionately, and with endurance as we strike the mark, hitting the target, or the bull's eye in prayer: **page**.

## **New Testament Mediators**

Rom. 5:10-11

*For if, while we were God's enemies, we were **reconciled** to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been **reconciled**, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **reconciliation**.*

We begin our new life through Christ's work of **reconciliation**; He brought two parties together as our **Mediator**: God and us. We were His enemies, but now, because of His death on our behalf, He exchanged God's perspective of 'enemies' to 'friends'. Now, as intercessors, we stand in the gap for others pleading their case to our loving Heavenly Father.

2 Cor. 5:17-20

Paul tells us that now, since He did reconcile us, we have the '**ministry of reconciliation**' or bringing people, actually pleading with and for them, to be reconciled with God as **His mediators**. When people won't listen to you ... you begin to intercede in prayer. We partner with the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to use our prayers of intercession, helping us to pray fervently and effectively, for others. We don't worry or have anxiety about our loved ones who don't follow Christ yet, but intercede on their behalf: **a priestly ministry**.

Romans 8:26-28

The first part of verse 26 begins with 'likewise' or 'in the same way' so we should go back to vs. 18. Paul talked about creation 5 times, giving us the lower story. Then in vs. 23 he speaks of our future redemption. Now he teaches us that there's **help**, an alliance with Him, a **partnership** or cooperation, between God the Spirit and us while we're on this earth waiting for His return. He helps us as the pray-er since we want the same thing: healing for weaknesses. We come in **agreement**, joining or partnering with God, asking for the Spirit's **help** as we pray for others.

The Spirit '**helps**' us in this partnership when we pray to see not only the facts of the circumstances but also the 'bigger picture'. People's actions seem to indicate one thing, addiction, depression, backsliding, rage, all emotional components, but God wants to reveal to us in prayer that's there more going on calling it our '**weakness**'. There's more to the story that only He can reveal; only God can see what's in a heart.

The Spirit Himself **intercedes** for us, the saints, according to the will of God as we pray. We may say things in prayer that we never thought of, the Spirit shows us something that points to the emotional healing that's needed; we've become a **mediator**. The addiction may be a sign of covering pain suffered, rage may be hiding fear, etc. and only the Holy Spirit can show you what it is so you can hit the mark in prayer.

The Greek word 'intercede' is used three times in Rom. 8, vs. 26-27 and again vs. 34 helping you understand that you're appealing or even **pleading** with God to **rescue** that one. It's the picture of 'hitting the mark or the bull's eye' by striking hard. It can also mean to go and **meet** with someone to talk, consult, or intervene. Jesus is our Mediator and Intercessor not in the way we are, **He's the Middle Man** who rescues, He isn't sitting at the right hand of God praying the way we do. He's the One who says to us, "*Let Me help you, partner with Me to rescue the one who needs it.*" He makes the lightning strike the bull's eye, heaven to earth, since He's the go-between. Kingdom come! Will be done! On earth ...

That *groaning* is when the Spirit draws out of us a sound, like the venting of steam, a cry for help without words, or a heavy sigh. He can even use those to give us insight into how to pray since He's living in us ready to be our Helper. We work together (vs. 28) in **mediation**.

This type of intercessory prayer takes the burden off of us and puts it onto God who wants the 'one' you're praying for to be reconciled to Him or to others.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*  
*Philippians 4:6-7 ESV*

We learn to exchange our worry or anxiety about the 'one' for His peace that passes our understanding and full expectation that He'll answer.

Jesus said,

*If you remain in Me and **My words remain in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.* *John 15:7-8 NIV*

Lord, teach us to pray.

## **Intercessory Prayer Week 3**

### ***Parables***

Jesus used many teaching devices, but the one we'll study today is the *parable*. Matt. 13:10-16 tells us that Jesus' disciples went privately to Him asking why He spoke to the people in parables. The Lord's response was 'in order to know the *secrets of the kingdom of heaven*'. **Unbelievers** cannot understand the upper story of a parable,

they're like secrets or mysteries, only **believers** receive His insight since it's the Holy Spirit who reveals the meaning.

Parables are simply **lower stories** told to give **upper stories** to those who will listen with their hearts receiving insight. Mark 4:10-11 tells us that after teaching the Parable of the Sower the Twelve were alone with Him and Jesus told them,

*"To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in **parables**," Mark 4:11 ESV*

### **Luke 11:5-13**

Jesus had just finished His short teaching on the Lord's Prayer in response to His disciples' request to teach them to pray (vs. 1-4) and He continued telling this parable. As you read the story you'll see it's using an analogy of the love of a friend, contrasting with the love of the Father.

The **lower story** (vs. 1-8)- the characters are three friends with one 'in the middle' (friend #2). Jesus asks, "Do you have a friend (#1) you can go to when it's **inconvenient** (middle of the night) asking for food because of an unexpected visitor (friend #3)?" Friend #1 in the story says to stop *bothering* him because everyone in the house is asleep and they'd wake up if he helped out: it's **inconvenient**. He makes excuses not to give Friend #2 his requests, however, it wasn't because of their friendship that he caves, but because he knows friend #2 will **relentlessly persist** until he finally gives in. The friend in the middle (#2) is insistent, persistent, and relentless in his request for Friend #3.

The **upper story** revealed by Jesus is that our continual, even shameless persistence, acting like the 'man in the middle' type of friend (#2) will yield results not because of friendship but because of persistence. That's a true **intercessor**. A friend who doesn't want to be bothered is contrasted to the type of **Friend** the **Father** is. He gives us what we ask for because He loves us and isn't bothered by our continual, almost ridiculously persistent pleading for someone: He's so much more. He's not **inconvenienced** at our persistence but ready, willing, and able to help us as a father would help his child, in fact, He'll give us whatever we need. 1 Thes. 5:17 is Paul telling us to pray continually and **don't give up!**

Jesus confirmed the meaning of the parable as He **continued** to tell us the familiar axiom,

*And I tell you, **ask**, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; **knock**, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10 ESV*

Those three verbs, **ask**, **seek**, and **knock** are present imperative; that means continuous and repeated action, a long term commitment with **emphasis**: do it and keep doing it, don't stop! Jesus gave them more examples of the Father's love and desire to answer your consistent intercessory prayers,

*What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:11-13 ESV*

### **Luke 18:1-8**

**Lower Story-** The picture of the widow in this story is given to show us not only the value of prayer, but **continuing** to pray and not **lose heart** when you don't see immediate answers. The unjust judge heard the widow's case over and over again as she demanded justice against her adversary. He got *frustrated* after a while and decided to give her the *justice*, right the wrong committed against her, instead of having to listen to her continual appearances. It's **exaggerated contrast**, she got what she wanted **not** because he cared about her, but because she *bothered* him to no end and was wearing him down.

**Upper Story-** The contrast to that story is that our Heavenly Father loves us very much and desires to answer our daily cries to Him about someone or some situation. He will not delay but give justice speedily; the problem is that **God's speed** isn't always our speed. The *kicker* of this story is that God desires to hear these kinds of **prayers of faith** on the earth until He returns; Jesus is looking intercessors who will keep praying even when you can't see the answer ... until His Return.

## **Praying the Word**

**Ex. 4:10-17** God's words in your mouth

### **Romans 10:5-10**

Jesus is the Word (John 1:1, **Logos**), He is God, and when we speak that truth **out loud** things happen. Paul said it's the 'word of faith' that we proclaim.

The second Greek word for word is *rhema*, meaning a spoken word, a word we declare out loud, the **rhema** of Christ. When we declare God's word (**rhema**) over a person or situation we're saying that Jesus is the Word (**Logos**) and I believe His Word. It has His full authority and power to move mountains when needed. *Logos* in ... *rhema* out.

Mary, Jesus' mother, understood that truth when the angel **Gabriel** said,

For **no-thing** (no rhema, word) will be impossible with God. Luke 1:37

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your **word** (rhema-word)." And the angel departed from her. Luke 1:38 ESV

The shepherds responded to an angelic visitation,

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this **thing** (rhema) that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." Luke 2:15 ESV

It seems to me that God is teaching us that **words matter**, they have the power of death and life (Prov. 18:21 the power of the tongue) and we need to learn to speak the **Word of God** into our intercessory prayers: both **Logos** and **Rhema**. When learn to pray the Scriptures we're letting the Word work, hiding behind it's effectiveness as we find the passages, the truths, to support what we're praying. That's how Jesus stood against the enemy during His temptation (Luke 4): He spoke the Word (Ps. 138:2b).

## Prayer of Agreement

Another aspect of praying God's Word is we can **know** it's His will; He wouldn't put it in Scripture if it wasn't already His Word of Truth. You never have to wonder if it's God's will if you find the promise in Scripture.

When we get in **agreement** with God it's like the sounds of a symphony.

Again I say to you, if two of you **agree** on earth about anything they **ask**, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them. Matthew 18:19-20 ESV

The Greek word for **agreement** that Jesus chose there is where we get the word **symphony**; sounds that are **agreeable**, producing a harmony, that's pleasing to the ear. When we act as a go-between we get in agreement with the **Word of God**: Jesus Himself. This word can also mean to 'make a compact or agreement,

They all **joined together constantly in prayer**, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. Acts 1:14 NIV

And they **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the **prayers**. Acts 2:42 ESV

Those weren't just any prayers but the word *devoted* means prevailing, overcoming prayer as you stay in a fixed position on the Word of God being consistent, continuing, and waiting. Later, the Holy Spirit filled the room of **intercessory prayer warriors** with

Himself and they continued speaking out loud the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31). It was a **symphony** in the Lord's ears.

Isaiah was an intercessor or watchman for Jerusalem reminding God of His Word.

*On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who **put the Lord in remembrance**, take no rest, Isaiah 62:6 ESV*

Jeremiah spoke what God told him,

*Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am **watching over My word to perform it.**" Jeremiah 1:12 ESV*

In the Bible **promises** often include the fulfillment. Abraham and his offspring were **promised** (Rom. 4:13-16, 20-21) by God to be 'heirs of the world' by the righteousness of faith by grace.

The Holy Spirit is **promised** (Acts 1:4), our children coming to faith (Acts 2:39), Jesus was promised (Acts 13:23), 2 Cor. 1:20 tells us the '**promises** of God are 'yes' and 'amen'. God's Presence is **promised** in 2 Cor. 7:1 (referring back to 6:16b-18), Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 4:8 that His **promises** are for this present life and also His Return for eternity (2 Tim. 1:1; 2 Peter 3:4, 9; 1 John 2:25).

Google search the promises of God regarding your specific prayers. What Scripture are you standing on? Keep track of them, write them down, declare them often, and let your faith grow as you proclaim His Word, **Logos** and **Rhema**, over the 'one' you're interceding for. The Word works (Is. 55:10-11),

*Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received His message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very **Word of God**—which, of course, it is. And this **Word** continues to **work in you** who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 NLT*

## **Intercessory Prayer Week 4**

### ***Spiritual Warfare***

After God cast Satan out of heaven to the earth it was temporarily *delegated* to him (Eph. 2:2): Paul called it '*the ways of this world*'. Since he couldn't take over God's throne in heaven the Creator authorized him to do anything legally (Luke 4:5-7), or within his parameters while on earth, and gave him *limited* power to come against God and His image bearers (Gen. 3:15). For that reason we can see God's extraordinary love and mercy: he can't win or overcome us. There are specific methods and devices

Satan uses and Scripture exposes, thankfully we have the power of the Holy Spirit to defeat every one (1 John 4:4, 13).

Look up comparing NIV to NLT:

*"... so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his **evil schemes**.  
2 Corinthians 2:11 NLT*

*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He **prowls** around like a roaring lion, **looking** for someone to devour. **Stand firm against him**, and **be strong** in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. 1 Peter 5:8-9 NLT*

*We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's **mighty weapons**, not worldly weapons, to knock down the **strongholds** of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every **proud obstacle** that keeps people from knowing God. We **capture** their rebellious thoughts and **teach** them to obey Christ.  
2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NLT*

Satan's names **define** him: Adversary, devil (slanderer), enemy, evil one, prince of darkness, prince of the power of the air, ruler of this world, destroyer, father of lies, ancient serpent, god of this age, murderer, accuser, deceiver, tempter, angel of light, strong man, clever or tricky, patroller of the earth, intimidator, fear-monger ... and that's not exhaustive.

As intercessors our mission is first to know who we are *in Christ*, our greater power in the Spirit than our enemy, and our prayer assignment. We are not defenseless against him, but powerful *in Him* as we wage war on behalf of someone.

*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power** to destroy strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:4 ESV*

As **intercessors**, middlemen, we use our power of the Spirit in prayer knocking down strongholds and destroying them. That's waging war.

## War for souls

Matt. 16:19 (keys of the kingdom: binding and loosing); Ephesians 6:10-13 (stand in His strength), 18-20 (praying always in the Spirit); 1 Tim. 1:18 (fight like a good soldier engaged in war), 6:12 (fight the good fight); 2 Tim. 2:3-4 (share in the suffering of others like a good soldier).

The Greek word for 'fight' is where we get the word '**agonize**'; intercessors agonize or struggle over the 'one' they're praying for. Jesus' model from the Garden of

Gethsemane shows us that truth (Matt 26:36-38); He was our '**man in the middle**' and now we become His '**man in the middle**'.

How do we fight the good fight of faith and share in the sufferings of others in prayer? Let's understand the value of our words with some Hebrew insight again. The Hebrew word for mouth is **peh** which means an entrance or opening, the edge of a sword, or the mouth of a well. God uses the *analogy* of a mouth to picture fighting with a **sword**: our only offensive weapon. The writer to Hebrews reiterates that truth,

*For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged **sword**, it **penetrates** even to **dividing** soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges** the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NIV*

Is. 55:10-11 tells us Scripture can be used as a weapon against our one and only enemy: Satan. Remember, people are not your enemy ... Satan is. God uses our mouths (**peh**) like a sword against the lies and deceptions of the ruler of this world. It will work as His Word is released out of our mouths and accomplishes its purposes: it will succeed.

In Ex. 17:8-13 Israel went to war with their enemy Amalek and Moses became their **intercessor**: middle man. He stood on the top of the hill holding God's staff in his hand. He was *standing* in God's authority with his hand lifted up to heaven, consequently, when his hand was up Israel *prevailed* and when his hand lowered Amalek *prevailed*. Joshua was then able to successfully fight for Israel, but Moses' arms got tired so his brothers helped him out by having him sit down and held up his arms. Joshua overwhelmed the enemy with the **sword** or the Word of God. Lower Story

Paul tells us we're in a **spiritual war** not with material weapons, but spiritual ones: our **words** which are sharper than any natural weapon. As Israel defeated physical enemies with the 'edge of the sword' (**peh** Num. 21:24) we defeat spiritual enemies with the words of our mouth as we learn to pray the Scriptures. Lower Story

Dt. 20:1-4, 12-14 God spoke to His people concerning physical warfare and encouraged them of His presence when they go into battle, however, the **priest** should *intercede* for them first. They shouldn't be afraid, let their hearts faint, or panic since it's the Lord, their God, who gives them the victory. In vs. 12-14 God also tells them to enjoy the physical spoils or benefits of war which now belongs to them. They've used their **swords** to win and now there's victory. Lower Story

In spiritual warfare we also remember that God is not only 'with us' but now resides '**in us**': that's even better. There's no fear, panic, or even faint-hearts because Jesus, The Word (**Logos**), already won the battle at the cross. How do we enjoy the spoils of war? We watch God changes lives, transform the 'one' He's calling us to pray for, and know we fight a good fight as we stand as intercessors in faith. Upper Story

Rev. 1:16, 19:15 Jesus is described by John in his vision as having a sharp two-edged **sword** coming out of His **mouth** to strike down nations and rule over them. Sword and mouth: very Hebrew.

## **Bowls of Incense**

Let's look at the **lower story** of God speaking to Moses,

*Using the usual techniques of the incense maker, blend the spices together and sprinkle them with salt to produce a pure and holy incense. Grind some of the mixture into a very fine powder and put it in front of the Ark of the Covenant, where **I will meet with you in the Tabernacle**. You must treat this incense as most holy.*

*Exodus 30:3-36 NLT*

The lower story of this fragrant incense placed in front of the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle was a picture for us of the **paga** or meeting we have with God in prayer (Session 1). This sweet fragrance is confirmed in the New Testament as well,

*But thank God! He has made us His captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now He uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a **sweet perfume**. Our lives are a Christ-like **fragrance** rising up to God. But this **fragrance** is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful **smell of death and doom**. But to those who are being saved, **we are a life-giving perfume**. And who is adequate for such a task as this? 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 NLT*

In Rev. 5:8, describing the heavenly Throne Room of God, we find the Lamb of God, Jesus Himself, taking the scroll to break open the seals and everyone, the four living creatures and the elders, falling down worshipping Him. The creatures and the elders were each holding what looked like a **harp** and golden **bowls** full of incense (lower story).

*And when He took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls **filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people**. Revelation 5:8 NLT*

*Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to **mix with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God** from the altar where the angel had poured them out. Revelation 8:3-4 NLT*

With every prayer we pray there's a fragrance released to God that's pleasing fragrance to Him and we can be confident He's listening and preparing to respond.

## Conclusion

- We're at war for those we pray for, but we don't enter in without the necessary weapons and armor (Eph. 6). Praying the Word of God (**Logos**) out loud (**rhema**) for the 'one' is like a sword dividing truth from lies and deception.
- There's no stronghold around a person that God's Word cannot penetrate. He loves them more than we do and uses our **prayers of faith** to tear down any stronghold.
- We stand in the gap for those who can't or won't pray for themselves as we, their middleman, 'resist the devil and he will flee' (James 4:7-10). We pray that God will draw them to humility and they'll draw near to Him. However, repentance is **crucial**. He'll lead them to tears of remorse, sadness and gloom, and then He'll lift them up in honor. *Repentance* always comes first and then deliverance (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).
- Our prayers of intercession are like a perfume that flows into the heavenlies as we meet with God. As His spiritual priests we don't need a temple because our Spirit-filled bodies are His temple, however, we do seriously commit to pray for the 'one'.

Model prayer:

- Declare that we're not unaware of our enemy and his methods.
- We understand that the greater One lives in us.
- We know we're at war, but we also know we have the victory in Christ.
- We've been given God's power to pull down and destroy strongholds.
- The Word of God in our mouths is our greatest weapon; it's sharp, penetrating, and dividing.
- Thank you for the sweet fragrance and the symphony-sound that ascends into heaven when I pray.