

The Prayers of Saint Paul

Praying with fervency like the Apostle

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"God wants warm-hearted servants. The Holy Spirit comes as a fire, to dwell in us, we are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. Fervency is warmth of soul. A phlegmatic temperament is abhorrent to vital experience. If our faith doesn't set us on fire, it is because we have frozen hearts. God dwells in a flame, the Holy Spirit descends in fire. To be absorbed in God's will, to be so greatly in earnest about doing it that our whole being takes fire, is the qualifying condition of the man who would engage in effectual prayer." E. M. Bounds

Chapter 1

An overview of prayer that strives

What follows is a brief overview of the type of prayer that strives, struggles and brings forth an answer. The overriding point in this kind of prayer is not primarily the effort we put into the prayer, but the wondrous grace of God that involves us in His purposes. The result of this, is His mercy poured out as He sees our fervency.

Let us never forget the truth that it is GOD who chooses to answer prayer, solely out of His mercy and grace. We are merely invited partners in the working out of His grand purpose. Sons; yes! Born again from above; yes! Seated in the heavenlies with Christ; yes! But despite all these astonishing truths, it is He who moves and causes prayer to be answered - we are still only "invited" and "called". Let's maintain humility in this, and as we rejoice in answered prayer, let HIM receive the glory, not us.

One of the greatest modern writers on prayer, Edward McKendree Bounds, wrote:
"Fervourless prayer has no heart in it; it is an empty thing, an unfit vessel. Heart, soul and life must find place in all real praying. Heaven must be made to feel the force of this crying unto God. Paul was a notable example of the man who possessed a fervent spirit of prayer. His petitioning was all-consuming, centred immovably upon the object of his desire, and the God who was able to meet it."

There are times in prayer when a real "striving" needs to take place, so that we might "breakthrough" as it were. We all know there's opposition at work to hinder our prayer life, whether it be the ordinary daily pressures on our time, the weariness of the flesh, or the unseen attacks of the Adversary.

Anyone who has entered into diligent prayer of any sort will have soon become aware that there are "seasons" of prayer - sometimes prayer is easier than at other times, and often it's downright difficult to pray. This might simply be a matter related to our human character or personality, but often the Lord will cause His people to perceive that a certain "season" is approaching in which diligent prayer will cause a significant break-through in some area of church life.

For instance, perhaps evangelism has been going on for some time in a local community, but it hasn't been very effective. From His vantage point, the Lord sees what the blockage is, and calls His people to pray with a zealousness for a set season. The intensity of this focused prayer drives back the Enemy's attacks, and the Gospel suddenly finds its mark in the hearts of people previously apathetic to its message. Striving prayer made all the difference.

This is what "contending" prayer is like. The actual term "contending" is found only once in the New Testament, where Jude writes that the brethren "should earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude verse 3). The word here rendered "earnestly contend" (Grk. epago nizesthai) is one of those words used by the NT writers which have allusion to the Grecian games. It means "to contend for or about, something", and would be applicable to the earnest effort put in by the athletes to win the prize. So we can readily see this is something more than just casual effort; it's demanding, requiring stamina, diligence and persistence to see it through.

By comparing Philippians 1:27 ("**Striving together for the faith of the Gospel**") and Luke 13:24 ("**Strive to enter the narrow gate**") we get an idea of the intensity and focus that's required to contend successfully. This is one reason why the word "contend" is often found coupled to the word "earnest".

In the Old Testament the word is found in a variety of ways, all dealing with a similar idea. For example, grappling (Strong's H7378), stirring up (H1624), pleading (H1777), and even to conduct a legal case. So Biblically speaking, "contending prayer" is by its very nature, something that requires "earnest" attention. Fervency has to do with our God, just as it has to do with our spiritual nature. Unless our spiritual life is fashioned by fervency and spiritual fire, then we shall accomplish little through prayer.

Throughout Scripture we find examples of men and women who dared to pray with great earnestness and passion. Ones who would groan before the Lord, who would turn away from sleep, and who even cut earthly ties for a season until the answer came down. This was prevailing prayer with laser-like focus, a believing faith expressed in something deeply supernatural and entirely authentic.

What we might call "contending prayer" is the kind of prayer that labors, strives, seeks His face, that is not feeble in any sense, and that is charged with an atmosphere of spiritual fire. This praying is the antithesis of sentimental praying. To pray like this is to be absorbed with God's purposes and to possess such fire in the inner man that will carry you through until the answer comes! It is focused prayer; specific, does not chatter on, doesn't have to "explain" to God or the brethren what the prayer is about. In itself "fervency" is not prayer. But it does show the state of one's heart. Remember, "the prayer that doesn't move your heart is unlikely to move God's either". Let's enter into this fire and determine to pray with such power that brings heaven's answers flooding upon the earth.

But, a warning: due to our human nature we're likely to go beyond safe boundaries in this matter and let the soul have free reign as we pray like this. We can be very zealous in prayer as we grapple, stir up and even plead for heaven to bring about a breakthrough. Sadly this is where contending prayer can go astray. Zeal without wisdom and discernment, can so easily lead to fleshiness. And fleshy praying is full of good intentioned zeal that goes chasing its own rabbits down plenty of burrows - all without accomplish anything.

In our great desire to see some marked evidence of answered prayer, we can step into areas that are not our prerogative. There are some areas that are entirely the prerogative of heaven; there are definite mysteries about prayer that we should respect. We simply don't know why some prayers seem to be answered and some aren't. Has God ignored us? Did the prayer actually "arrive" in heaven? Was our cry unanswered because we didn't show enough faith? etc.

These are the mysteries about prayer that we have no answers for, as yet. In the eternities that lie before us, then we'll no doubt understand. But until then, let's treat prayer with the honor and mystery that it deserves.

The old saying still holds true: "Don't tear the garment lest you damage the mystery it holds within". So as we seek to engage in contending for whatever situation the Lord brings to heart, let's stir up that grace within. This is how Paul the Apostle prayed; he exercised his faith, he bent to his God in full belief that He would answer. He had faith that God would hear, and having prayed, he simply trusted in God to do it.

The great writer on prayer E.M. Bounds said: "**In almost every recorded instance (of Biblical prayer), faith was blended with trust. There is a point at which faith is relieved of its burden, so to speak; where trust comes along and says: 'You have done your part, the rest is mine.'**" In faith let's contend for all that heaven wants done. But let's also know the point at which we can simply trust our God to answer.

On the following pages you'll find some Biblical conditions for effective prayer: let's digest them well. Then there are seven of Paul's intercessions - prayers he offered on behalf of the saints under his pastoral care. I encourage you to use these prayers and make them your own. Personalize them where you need to (on behalf of your church, pastor, etc), but always tie your prayers to Scripture; this is truly effective apostolic praying. *Peter McArthur, The Issachar Ministry.*

Chapter 2

Nine conditions necessary for effective apostolic prayer

The following pages outline the conditions Scripture shows are required if our prayer life is to be full and effective. There may of course be more than those outlined, but these at the very least, are vital. The nine conditions are Faith, Persistence, Holy living, Honoring your spouse, The will of God, Praying in the name of Jesus, Having pure motives, Boldness, and Forgiveness.

1. FAITH

For truly I say to you that whoever shall say to this mountain, Be moved and be cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said shall occur, he shall have whatever he said. Therefore I say to you, All things, whatever you ask, praying, believe that you shall receive them, and it will be to you. (Mark 11:23-24)

Jesus answered and said to them, Truly I say to you, If you have faith and do not doubt, you shall not only do this miracle of the fig tree, but also; if you shall say to this mountain, Be moved and be thrown into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. (Matthew 21:21-22)

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

2. PERSISTENCE

And Jesus spoke a parable to them to teach it is always right to pray, and not to faint, saying, A certain judge was in a certain city, not fearing God, nor respecting man. And a widow was in that city. And she came to Him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not do so for a time. But afterward he said within himself, Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, that she not wear me down in the end. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says, "Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night to Him, though He has been long-suffering over them? I say to you that He will avenge them speedily. Yet when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:1-8)

Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. **For each one who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.** Or what man is there of you, if his son asks a loaf of bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he give him a snake? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him? (Matthew 7:7-11)

And He said to them, which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him? And he answering from inside may say, Do not trouble me. The door is now shut and my children are in bed with me. I cannot rise and give to you. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needs. And I say to you, **Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it shall be opened.** For what father of you, if the son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake for a fish? Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Luke 11:5-13)

3. HOLY LIVING

If I regard **iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear.** (Psalm 66:18)

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened so that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy so that it cannot hear. **But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you,** from hearing. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

And in this we shall know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him, that if our heart accuses us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not accuse us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because **we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.** (1 John 3:19-22)

4. HONOR YOUR SPOUSE

Likewise, husbands, live together according to knowledge, **giving honor to your wife,** as to the weaker vessel, as truly being co-heirs together with you of the grace of life, lest your prayers be cut off. (1 Peter 3:7)

5. PRAYER IS THE WILL OF GOD

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything **according to His will,** He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

6. IN THE NAME OF JESUS

And whatever you may **ask in My name,** that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If you ask anything in My name,** I will do it. But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you. (John 14:13-14 and 26)

And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly, I say to you, **Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name,** He will give you. Up to now you have asked nothing in My name; **ask and you shall receive,** that your joy may be full. (John 16:23-24)

7. PURE MOTIVES

You desire, and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and cannot obtain. You fight and war, yet **you have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss**, that you may spend it upon your lusts. (James 4:2-3)

8. BOLDNESS

Therefore let us **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

9. FORGIVENESS

But **if you do not forgive men** their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:15)

Therefore if you offer your gift on the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First **be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

The summary of all these nine points is that holy, believing and persevering prayer is an essential part of working with God for the apostolic release of grace in our lives.

Chapter 3

Apostolic prayer themes found in the New Testament

The following Bible texts are related to the releasing of the spiritual gifts (Grk. literally "spirituals") in the Body of Christ, for the fruit of the Spirit to be manifest, and for spiritual Wisdom to be evident in the corporate Body. These prayers can be used to pray for either an individual or the Corporate Body. Led by the Spirit, you can therefore "personalized" them to suit the specific situation you encounter. Used in this way these apostolic themes become powerfully anointed prayers based entirely on Scripture. What better way to pray!

Some apostolic prayer themes.

A prayer for THE GOSPEL To GO FORTH (Col 4:3-4)

Prayers for A RELEASE OF BOLDNESS (Acts 4:29-31 Eph 6:19)

A prayer to RESIST THE ENEMY OF OUR SOULS (Jhn 17:11-12 and 15)

Prayers to GROW IN ENDURANCE AND PATIENCE (2Thess 3:5 Col 1:11)

A prayer to EXPERIENCE WORTHINESS AND GRACE (2Thess 1:11-12)

Prayers for MORE LABORERS FOR THE HARVEST (Matt 9:37-38 Luke 10:2)

Prayers for JOY, PEACE AND HOPE TO COME FORTH (Rms 15:13 2Thess 3:16)

Prayers for UNITY AND LIKE-MINDEDNESS IN THE BODY (Jhn 17:20-22 Rms 15:5-6)

Prayers for SACRIFICIAL LOVE TO BE IN OUR HEARTS (1Thess 3:12 2Thess 3:5 Eph 3:18-19 Philip 1:9-11)

Prayers for PURITY AND HOLINESS IN THE BODY (Jhn 17:17-19 Philip 1:9-10)

A prayer for WISDOM AND REVELATION TO BE MANIFEST (Eph 1:17-19)

A prayer for STRENGTH IN THE INNER MAN (Eph 3:14-16)

A prayer for COMFORTING THE HEART (2Thess 2:16-17)

A prayer to MAKE GOD'S WILL KNOWN IN THE BODY (Col 1:9-11)

Prayers for WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (Jms 1:5 Eph 1:18 Eph 3:18 Col 1:9)

A prayer to BE FILLED WITH GOD'S FULLNESS (Eph 3:19)

A prayer to KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST (Eph 3:19)

A prayer for SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT (Philip 1:9)

A prayer for DELIVERANCE IN ORDER TO MINISTER (Rms 15:31-32)

A prayer to UNDERSTAND OUR CALLING (Eph 1:18)

A prayer to HAVE THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Philip 1:11)

A prayer to WALK WORTHY AND PLEASE OUR GOD (Col 1:10)

Chapter 4

Some texts to be utilized as prayers for personal holiness

The Word is concerned about the development of our own godliness and holiness. This is something we should regularly be engaged in, and take stock of from time to time. The following texts are suitable to use as prayers. By making these texts your own and thus personalizing them, we find God will pour upon us those graces we need so much to walk in holiness.

A text about REMAINING ROOTED IN LOVE (Eph 3:17)

Texts about LOVING THE BRETHREN (1Thess 3:12 Philip 1:9 1Jhn 4:7 Rms 12:10)

Texts about CONTROLLING THE TONGUE (Jms 3:6-10 Eph 4:29 Col 3:8-9)

Texts about FORGIVENESS (Col 3:13 1Jhn 4:20 Gal 6:1-2 Rms 12:14)

A text about COMPASSION FOR ONE ANOTHER (1Pet 3:8-9 Rms 12:15)

Texts about NOT GRUMBLING OR COMPLAINING (Jms 4:11 and 5:9)

A text about HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE (Heb 13:18)

Texts about SEXUAL PURITY (1 Cor 6:18 1Thess 4:3-5)

A text about NOT JUDGING OTHERS (Rms 14:13 2Cor 5:16)

A text about NOT LETTING SIN REIGN (Rms 6:12-13)

A text about MATCHING OUR DEEDS TO OUR WORDS (1Jhn 3:18)

Texts about RIGHT USE OF MONEY (Rms 13:5-7 2Cor 9:6-7)

A text about BEARING WITH THE WEAKNESS OF OTHERS (Rms 15:1)

Chapter 5

Some texts focusing on God's purpose coming to completion in our lives

One of the great themes of the New Testament is that of "Perfection". This can also be translated as "Completion" or even "Maturity". The Father's desire for us is to be mature; to no longer be children, but Sons. These are texts we need to pray for each other, and it's not at all out of place to pray these for yourself ! I recall somebody once saying to me, "There are times when you should be praying for your own maturity, because it may well be that nobody else is!" Quite a sobering thought.

1) Perfection and Completeness

(Jhn 17:23) I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made **perfect** in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.

(2 Cor 13:9) For we are glad when we are weak, and you are strong. But we pray also for this, your **perfection**.

(1 Thess 3:9-10) For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sakes before our God, night and day praying exceedingly for me to see your face and to **perfect** the things lacking in your faith?

(Col 4:12) Epaphras greets you, he being of you, a servant of Christ, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand **perfect and complete** in all the will of God

(Philip 1:6) Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will **complete** it until the day of Jesus Christ.

(Col 2:10) And you are **complete** in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power.

(Col 3:14) And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of **perfectness**

(2 Cor 13:11) Finally, brothers, rejoice. **Perfect** yourselves; encourage yourselves; mind the same thing; be at peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

2) Fullness of God

(Eph 3:19) To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be **filled** with all the **fullness** of God.

(Eph 4:13) Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **full-grown** man, to the measure of the stature of the **fullness** of Christ.

(Philip 1:11) Being **filled** with the fruits of righteousness through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

(Col 1:9) For this cause we also, since the day we heard, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be **filled** with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

(Col 2:2) That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the **full** assurance of the understanding, to the **full** knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

3) Christ formed within

(Gal 2:20) I have been crucified with Christ, and I live; yet no longer I, but **Christ lives in me**.

(2Cor 4:16) For this cause we do not faint; but though our out-ward man perishes, yet the **inner man is being renewed** day by day.

(Gal 4:19) My children, for whom I again travail until Christ should be **formed** in you.

(Philip 3:10) That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made **conformable** to His death.

(Phlip 3:21) Who shall change our body of humiliation so that it may be **conformed** to His glorious body, according to the working of His power, even to subdue all things to Himself.

4) To have the mind of Christ

(1 Cor 2:16) Who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the **mind of Christ**.

(Rms 8:6) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace.

(Rms 12:2) Be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.

(Eph 4:23) Be renewed in the **spirit of your mind**.

(Philip 2:5) For let this **mind be in you** which was also in Christ Jesus.

(Philip 3:15) Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, **be of this mind**. And if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you.

(Col 3:2) Be **mindful of things above**, not on things on the earth.

5) To be Truth-Bearers

(Jhn 17:17) Sanctify them through Your **truth**. Your Word is **truth**. As You have sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world. And I sanctify Myself for their sakes, so that they also might be sanctified in **truth**.

(2 Cor 4:2) But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God, but by the **revelation of the truth** commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

(2 Cor 13:8) For we have no power against the truth, but **for the truth**.

(1 Jhn 5:20) And we know that the Son of God has come, and He has given us an understanding so that we may **know Him who is true**. And we are in Him that is **true**, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the **true** God, and the everlasting life.

6) To be complete in Wisdom

(Eph 1:17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the **spirit of wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

(Col 1:9) For this cause we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in **all wisdom** and spiritual understanding.

(Eph 5:17) Therefore **do not be unwise**, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

(Col 3:16) Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly **in all wisdom**.

(Col 4:5) Walk in **wisdom** toward those on the outside, redeeming the time.

Chapter 6

Prayers for the Corporate Body

We cannot help but see that in Paul's letters he not only instructs the believers, he prays for them too. His great concern concerning the Individual is that maturity should prevail; but his concern for the Corporate Body is that unity should be practiced. This is of course the same theme as Jesus' great High Priestly prayer in John's gospel.

The following texts can readily be turned into prayers for the Church of the One Body, that it might indeed remain "in" Christ who is its Head. These are powerful apostolic prayers that are so much needed in the 21st century Church.

Prayers for the One Body of Christ

(Jhn 17:6-8) I have revealed Your name **to the ones whom You gave to Me** out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word... For I have given to them the Words which You gave Me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from You. And **they have believed** that You sent Me.

(Jhn 17:20-24) And I do not pray for these alone, but for **those also who shall believe on Me** through their word, that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, **that they may be one**, even as We are one, I in them, and You in Me, that they may be **made perfect in one**; and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me, that they may be with Me where I am, **that they may behold My glory** which You have given Me, for You have loved Me before the foundation of the world.

(1 Cor 12:12-14) For as **the body is one** and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are **one body**; so also is Christ. For also by one Spirit we are all baptized into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, even all were made to drink into one Spirit. For **the body** is not one member, but many.

(Eph 1:3-5) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as He **chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having **predestined us to the adoption** of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

(Eph 1:17-23) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, **the ones believing** according to the working of His mighty strength which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name being named, not only in this world, but also in the coming age. And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things **to the church**, which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

(Eph 2:15) Having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into **one new man**, making peace between them.

(Eph 2:19-22) Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the **household of God**, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom every building having been fitly framed together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are **built together for a dwelling place** of God through the Spirit.

(Rms 8:28-30) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to **those who are called** according to His purpose. For whom **He foreknew**, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers. But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, those He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified.

(Eph 4:11-16) And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying of the body of Christ**. And this until **we all** come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we no longer may be infants, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the dishonesty of men, in cunning craftiness, to the wiles of deceit. But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ; from whom **the whole body**, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the **growth of the body to the edifying** of itself in love.

(Eph 5:27) That He might present it to Himself as **the glorious church**, without spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

(Philip 3:20-21) For our **citizenship** is in Heaven, from which also we are looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation so that it may be fashioned like His glorious body.

(Col 1:24-28) Who now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and I fill up the things lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, on behalf of **His body, which is the church**... the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. For to them God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

(Col 2:19) And not holding the Head, from whom **all the body**, having been supplied through the joints and bands, and having been joined together, will grow with the growth of God.

(Col 3:15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you also **are called in one body**, and be thankful.

Chapter 7

Seven intercessory prayers of Paul as he prayed for the saints under his care

One of the great lessons about prayer is this. Prayer is general, Intercession is specific. Let's use praise, confession and thanksgiving in our prayers by all means, but when we intercede try to tie as many requests as possible to Scripture. In the following prayers we find wonderful insights into the mind of the great Apostle. Paul had a mind-set that was firmly entrenched in the ideals and values of heaven, and his mind was fixed there. See how often his letters express his heart-focus. Let's use this same framework and conduct our prayer-life patterned on it.

1) Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians (2 Thess 1:1-12)

(Verse 1) Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Verse 2) Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Verse 3) **We are bound to thank God always for you, my brothers, as it is right, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of each one of you abounds toward one another;**

(Verse 4) **so much so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations which you endure.**

(Verse 5) **For this is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you also suffer,**

(Verse 6) **since it is a righteous thing with God to repay tribulation to those who trouble you,**

(Verse 7) **and to give rest with us to you who are troubled, at the revealing of the Lord Jesus from Heaven with the angels of His power,**

(Verse 8) **in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

(Verse 9) **who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,**

(Verse 10) when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all those who believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that Day.

(Verse 11) Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of the calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

(Verse 12) that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The portion highlighted above in bold print are the things Paul focuses on in this prayer:
He gives thanks that the saints faith is growing (verse 3)
He rejoices that their love is increasing (verse 3)
He gives thanks that they persevere under trial (verse 4)
He is convinced of God's righteous vindication (verses 4-8)
He knows the Day of the Lord will surely come (verses 9-10)
He prays that they would be counted as worthy (verse 11)
He prays that Jesus may be glorified in them (verse 12)

2) Another prayer for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:7-13)

(Verse 7) Then, my brothers, we were comforted over you, through your faith, even in all our affliction and needs,

(Verse 8) for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

(Verse 9) For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sakes before our God,

(Verse 10) night and day praying exceedingly for me to see your face and to perfect the things lacking in your faith?

(Verse 11) And may God Himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you.

(Verse 12) And may the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all, even as we also toward you,

(Verse 13) in order to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Here the highlighted bold text above shows the things Paul focuses on:

He is greatly comforted by the saint's faith (verse 7)
He encourages them to stand fast (verse 8)
He rejoices over them (verse 9)
He longs to be with them (verse 10)
He desires to give them what is lacking in faith (verse 10)
He prays that he might find a way to be with them (verse 11)
He prays that their love will abound even more (verse 12)
He prays that God will establish them in holiness (verse 13)

3) A prayer for the Colossians (Col 1:3-14)

(Verse 3) We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

(Verse 4) **since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love you have to all the saints,**

(Verse 5) **for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel,**

(Verse 6) **which has come to you as it has also in all the world, and it is bearing fruit, even also among you, since the day you heard and fully knew the grace of God in truth,**

(Verse 7) even as you learned from Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you,

(Verse 8) he also having shown your love in the Spirit to us.

(Verse 9) **For this cause we also, since the day we heard, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,**

(Verse 10) **that you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every work and increasing in the knowledge of God,**

(Verse 11) **being empowered with all power, according to the might of His glory, to all patience and long-suffering with joy-fulness,**

(Verse 12) **giving thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.**

(Verse 13) For He has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son;

(Verse 14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins.

The things Paul focuses on are highlighted in bold in the above prayer:

He reminds them of his constant prayer support (verse 3)

He is encouraged by their combination of faith and love to both the Lord and His saints (verse 4)

He reminds them of their grand future in heaven (verse 5)

He declares that the Gospel and prayers bear fruit (verse 6)

He prays that they will be filled with knowledge of God's will; and that wisdom and understanding will be their lot (verse 9)

He also prays for their life-style, that four things of great importance would be evident - that they walk truly; that they please God; that their works be fruitful; and that they increase in the knowledge of God (verse 10)

He then asks that they would be strengthened with all might; know the Lord's power, and act with patience and joy (verse 11)

He remembers to give thanks to the Father for His great work of salvation and its eternal benefits (verse 12)

4) A prayer for the Philippians (Philip 1:1-11)

(Verse 1) Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.

(Verse 2) Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Verse 3) **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**

(Verse 4) **always in every prayer of mine making my request for you all with joy**

(Verse 5) for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

(Verse 6) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,

(Verse 7) even as it is righteous for me to think this of you all, because you have me in your heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of my grace.

(Verse 8) For God is my witness how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

(Verse 9) **And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception;**

(Verse 10) **that you may distinguish between things that differ, that you may be sincere and without offence until the day of Jesus Christ,**

(Verse 11) being filled with the fruits of righteousness through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The things Paul focuses on in this prayer are:

He thanks the Lord for the saints whenever they come to mind (verse 3)

He rejoices when he prays for them (verse 4)

He prays that their love for one another will increase, and that knowledge and discernment will operate in them (verse 9)

He goes on to pray that the ability to discern and judge rightly about matters will be evident in them, and that they will stand firm in all sincerity without any offence until Christ comes (verse 10)

5) A prayer for the Ephesians (Eph 1:15-23)

(Verse 15) Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints,

(Verse 16) **do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,**

(Verse 17) **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,**

(Verse 18) **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

(Verse 19) **and what is the surpassing greatness of His power to-ward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength**

(Verse 20) which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

(Verse 21) far above all principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name being named, not only in this world, but also in the coming age.

(Verse 22) And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church

(Verse 23) which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The above text highlighted in bold is what Paul focuses on in this prayer:

He reminds the saints that he's diligent in mentioning them in prayer before God (verse 16)

He specifically prays that they'll receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation in order to know God better (verse 17)

He continues to pray quite specific things for them, notably that their spiritual eyes will be enlightened so they can have a deep knowing of their call and inheritance (verse 18)

In the same vein he prays for them to know that great resurrection power that's at work in all believers (verses 19-20)

6) Another prayer for the Ephesians (Eph 3:14-21)

(Verse 14) For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(Verse 15) of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named,

(Verse 16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man;

(Verse 17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

(Verse 18) may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height,

(Verse 19) and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

(Verse 20) Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

(Verse 21) to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever. Amen.

Here again the highlighted text (all of it above!) shows us the things Paul focuses on:

He declares that all his prayer comes out of devotion to the Father (verse 14).

He sets the scene for prayer, that all the "Called Out Ones" are a family under God (verse 15).

He now prays that this Father would strengthen them inwardly through the Holy Spirit (verse 16).

That Christ might actually indwell them, and that their faith in Him would be well-grounded in love (verse 17).

He asks that they would be able to grasp the entirety of God's love (verse 18).

That in doing so they would be filled with all God's fullness (verse 19).

He finishes this awesome prayer by praising God who can perform his petitions abundantly (verse 20).

And concludes with praise that states the church to be a glorious thing in the purposes of Christ, forever! (verse 21).

7) A prayer for the Romans (Rms 15:30-33)

(Verse 30) But I exhort you, brothers, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

(Verse 31) that I may be delivered from those disbelieving in Judea, and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints;

(Verse 32) so that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed with you.

(Verse 33) Now may the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The highlighted text above tells us what things Paul focuses on in this prayer:

(1) He prays for deliverance from his enemies, as well as asking that his ministry to the saints in Jerusalem would be worthwhile and acceptable (verse 30).

(2) The reason he seeks this prayer support is so that he might have joy in knowing answered prayer so he can come and be refreshed in the company of believers (verse 31).

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