

PRAYING FOR PEACE

**What You Must Know
Before You Go**

**By Jimmy and Carol Owens
with Buddy Owens**

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Matthew 21:21-22

²¹Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.

²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Luke 17:19

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

John 14:12-14

¹²I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 15:7-8

⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 16:23-24

²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

1 Timothy 2:8

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Appendix #2: New Testament Prayer Principles and Promises

(All from NIV)

Matthew 6:5-8

⁵And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:9-15

⁹This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 9:29

Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you."

Matthew 18:19-20

¹⁹Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

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Appendix #1: Your Personal Relationship with God

When you come to Christ to receive his work on the cross as the sacrifice for your sins, you can be certain that he will hear you. And he will absolutely forgive every sin and failure, no matter how serious or dark. You will be clean in God's sight and a member of his family.

The Apostle John assures us: *"If we freely admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9 Amplified.)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever (that's you!) believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 NKJV)

A prayer that will establish your personal relationship to God can be simple but weighty, like a wedding vow—something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I regret and renounce all my sins, and I earnestly ask you to forgive me. Thank you for taking my punishment by suffering and dying in my place. I gratefully receive you as my Savior! Make and keep my soul clean now by your divine power. I pledge my heart, my allegiance, and my obedience to you all the days of my life. Amen."
This is your pledge to Christ.

And here is Christ's pledge to you *"... The one who comes to Me, (that's you!), I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, no never, reject one of them who comes to Me.]"* (John 6:37 Amplified)

Here is what your relationship to Jesus means. He says: *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life"* (John 5:24 NIV).

St. John tells us, *"I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life"* (1 John 5:13 NIV).

You can't get better guarantees than these anywhere.

Once this covenant is made, the Holy Spirit will begin to change you from the heart outward. Your prayers will have new life; your "works" will grow out of your relationship to Jesus and his work through you. Philippians 2:13 (NLT) explains it like this: *"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."*

Although this is the last of the sessions for outreach, we hope this kind of prayer will be a permanent part of your lives. Pray for your own people, church and government regularly and fervently. You will make a difference in our world.

* * * * *

We hope *Praying for PEACE* has motivated you and equipped you for more effective, faith-filled prayer. In such a short booklet, it isn't possible to expand on all the principles we've introduced here. For a lot more in-depth information and encouragement, let us suggest that you read [Restoring a Nation's Foundations](#) by Jimmy and Carol Owens.

It will not only help you intercede knowledgeably and powerfully for other nations, but for your own. At its most foundational level, it will help you get your prayers answered!

You can get it at the Saddleback bookstore, or order wherever books are sold, or from www.jimmyandcarolowens.com. Some material here is excerpted and condensed from it. It contains a small group study guide, and a Leader's Manual is available.

May God give you blessing and more success than you have dreamed of on your journey!

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- Enemy Territory: Witchcraft, Idolatry, and the Occult
- Your Commission

Appendix #1: Your Personal Relationship with God

Appendix #2: New Testament Prayer Principles and Promises

CHAPTER I

THE PEACE MISSION: PRE-PRAYER-ING THE WAY

So you're going on a PEACE mission. Congratulations! Prepare for blessings because Jesus said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers!"* (Matthew 5:9 NIV) That's you!

The PEACE Plan. What's it all about?

- Promoting Reconciliation
- Equipping Servant Leaders
- Assisting the Poor
- Caring for the Sick
- Educating the Next Generation

This little book is meant to help you and your group as you launch out into your PEACE project, whether it's local or global in nature. It's not only for the goers but also for the senders. Not everyone can go, but we can all be part of God's home front that sends the PEACE Plan into the world. Whatever your part in the Plan, you'll be a lot more successful if you launch out in prayer first. As John Wesley said, *"God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it."*

Why Pray?

Praying isn't something to remember to do when you're not busy doing something "important." Prayer is your foundation and your source of power and blessing. Here is what the Bible says:

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4 NIV emphasis added).

Prayer must come first. Notice what the Bible does not say in this passage: it doesn't say *"I urge, then, first of all, that work be done or plans be*

Let's Talk . . .

1. How would you describe your experience and familiarity with issues of spiritual warfare? What do you believe about the reality of it? How comfortable are you with the subject?
2. When are the battles of spiritual warfare fought? How are they fought? Is it an offensive or defensive struggle?
3. Someone read aloud Ephesians 1:19-23 and Ephesians 2:6, on page 50 of this book. Where then are we in relation to the devil? (Discuss.) Keep looking down!
4. What does it mean to be dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ? (Romans 6:11).
5. What are common examples of spiritual attack? How do you know that they are spiritual attacks? What should you do when they are discovered?
6. What are some clear examples of enemy territory, practices of spiritual oppression, and objects of ungodly influence?
7. Since this is the last lesson of this teaching on prayer (unless you want to do another session to review everything) is there anything you feel the group should revisit and talk or pray further about?

Let's Pray . . .

- There are so many prayer opportunities in this chapter! For a great, short, all-inclusive prayer that could be memorized by every team, see page 47.
- Turn the powerful Ephesians scriptures on page 50 into prayer.
- Learn to take back enemy territory with the prayer on page 52.
- Continue to pray covering and cultivating prayers. Don't forget to use the prayer on page 47. It can bring you spiritual victory in the hard places. And, above all, don't forget to worship!

Your Commission

The Bible says you are Christ's ambassadors, carrying his message of reconciliation to the world (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). When you go in PEACE, you are not just representing a local congregation, you are representing Jesus Christ himself. You are going in his name, with his authority, extending the influence of his kingdom. He has authorized and empowered you for this mighty work. So in the words of Jesus Christ,

"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 GNB)

* * * * *

laid or supplies be purchased or travel be planned." It says, first of all, pray. Yes, God *"wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth,"* but it starts first of all with prayer.

Pastor Buddy Owens says, *"If God has called you to a ministry, then he has called you to pray for that ministry. To attempt anything for God without prayer is as foolish as attempting a cross-country trip without putting gas in your tank—you will only make progress when you are going downhill. Never underestimate your need for prayer."*

In this study you'll be considering two aspects of your preparation for effective prayer:

1. Preparation of the individual for a life of intercession
2. Preparation of the PEACE Team for a specific mission. This will include:
 - How to pray more effectively for each other on your journey
 - How to pray for those you're reaching out to
 - How those at home can best pray for those who are going out
 - How to overcome some hindrances to answered prayer.

Becoming Intercessors

As PEACE volunteers you are embarking on an amazing adventure:

To stand between the needy and despair
To link the lost to the grace of God
To present the hopeless with courage and purpose

Whether you go to the nations or stay home and pray for them, you become intercessors, because that's what "intercession" means: "to stand between."

In intercessory prayer, you'll stand between others and God by pleading for his favor or forgiveness for them. Or you'll stand between others and Satan by praying for God's protection and deliverance.

In intercessory action, you'll stand between others and their spiritual, physical and material needs by bringing them the PEACE plan. This is "Life Intercession."

Pastor Rick Warren says that intercession—in prayer and action—*"can shape the destiny of our nation and our world."*

Pastor Jack Hayford says, *"God wants to, and will, change entire nations . . . if we, the church, will accept our role."*

These are strong statements by seasoned men of God who know what they're talking about. But destiny-shaping results happen only when informed and determined followers of Jesus Christ jump in and become co-workers with God. These people are intercessors and world-changers.

Loving Your Neighbors as You Love Yourself

John Calvin said, *"To make intercession for men is the most powerful and practical way in which we can express our love for them."* He's right; and it's the most powerful and practical way in which we can express God's love for them. Love is what the PEACE Plan is all about.

Over the last few decades, the whole world has become our "neighborhood." The question is, how do you love all these people as you love yourself? One way is to begin praying for them as you pray for yourself.

Every PEACE Member is a PEACE Intercessor

PEACE Intercessors should be:

- Aware of what is going on in our nation and the world. Only then will they know how to pray and what to do.
- Available to sacrifice some time and comfort to make a serious difference. This is one of your greatest privileges, and reaps both down-to-earth and eternal rewards.
- Petitioners who pursue God with their prayers for the world.

When you resist and rebuke the devil in Jesus' name, that means you are acting as Jesus' spokesperson. But it's a good idea to do a frequent "heart check" to be sure there is nothing in your life—or between your team members—that will give the devil a foothold. When you're walking in his territory, harboring some known sin, you're vulnerable to the devil's trap. He'll harass you in that weak spot until you make things right with God and receive his cleansing.

Enemy Territory: Witchcraft, Idolatry, and the Occult

Whether you believe in their power or not, witchcraft, idol worship, and the occult call upon ungodly forces. These practices are quite prevalent in many countries, and you can expect to be resisted by people who practice them. Stay away from all of this in any form. It's enemy territory. No astrology, no séances, no palm reading, no Ouija boards, or trance channeling. God says he hates these things and judges nations that adopt these practices. No "New Age," which is just a new term for Satan's old lies. If you have any of this in your history, it's best to confess it, turn away from it and destroy any paraphernalia you may have left over.

Please take a few minutes to read Isaiah 47:13-14, Amos 5:4-8 and Acts 19:18-20 to see how God feels about the occult. It's vitally important.

If and when you encounter these practices, your primary weapon for resistance is prayer, lifting up the name of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, or in other words, over all spiritual authorities (Ephesians 6:12).

You can pray something like this:

"We praise and glorify Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth. We claim cleansing from every sin and failure through the sacrifice of Jesus. We declare his overruling power in this place and in this matter, and we declare his authority over Satan's interference now. Jesus is the final authority and his word is the final word! In his almighty name, we resist and bind the forces of Satan who are at work in this situation that is against the expressed will of God. And we give the Lord glory! Amen."

Confusion. You're working on a ministry project. You're saying one thing but your partner is hearing you say something else, and vice versa. The more you talk the more exasperated you both get at your inability to communicate. It may be just semantics, but on the other hand, it might be something more serious. Or, you're facing a deadline and your computer is doing weird and obstructive things. Or, your own thinking is cloudy and confused. It might be the cough syrup, or . . . ? Whoa! Call a halt and pray. God is not the author of confusion (1Corinthians 14:33 NKJV).

Lust. Men are especially susceptible to this one. In certain countries the sex trade is a leading part of the economy. Pornography is in plain view, even in the airport. The place is overrun by unclean spirits. What do you do? In addition to the list of things on page 54, the Scriptural answer is don't stand there and stare at it, but "*Flee youthful lusts*" (2 Timothy 2:22 KJV). What starts as a human temptation can suddenly turn into an attack by a spirit of lust, and it spirals out of control. Pornography is as addictive as heroin, and as damning to the peace of the soul. Pornography is vile, and the Bible says, "*I will set before my eyes no vile thing*" (Psalm 101:3 NIV). Vile means wicked, perverted, offensive to the senses, disgusting, cheap, or degrading.

This issue has significant implications for your prayer life. The Apostle Peter tells us to treat our wives with respect, "*so that nothing will hinder your prayers*" (1Peter 3:7 NIV). There are few things more disrespectful that a man can do to his wife than to look lustfully at another woman. Not only will it impact his married life, it will also darken his thought life, and according to the Bible, it will disable his prayer life. So, guys, if your prayers are being hindered, perhaps it has something to do with what you are doing with your eyes. You must guard your eyes, because they are a gateway to your soul.

If you find yourself being tempted by lust, quote this verse to yourself: "*I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl*" (Job 31:1 NIV). Then ask the Lord to cleanse your mind. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9 (NKJV), "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

- Proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that brings salvation and deliverance.
- Providers who come with some skills and solutions for the world's needs.

God didn't give the privilege and responsibility of intercession to angels; he gave it to Christians just like you. He looks for partners in his kingdom business who will invite his presence and power into every situation. When you respond to God's invitation, he will do "exceeding abundantly" beyond what you might ask or even think! (Ephesians 3:20) It's up to you—to all of us—to determine whether or not God moves. He is waiting for your response to his availability.

So, Intercessors: How and Where Do You Start?

We mentioned that there may be some hindrances to answered prayer. Later, we'll consider what they might be and how to get them out of the way. This could be a vital step in making your praying as effective as possible. But you don't have to know all that before you start to pray. Begin just as you are, right where you are.

The important thing is not that you become experts in the theory of prayer, but that your team becomes a praying unit. You all know how to pray; prayer is simply talking to God. What we want to do here is to help your team become a praying platoon:

- To be comfortable praying together
- To recognize your biblical authority in prayer
- To know God's prayer promises you can stand on
- To clear your spiritual decks for answered prayer
- To help you pray effectively for one another
- To help you pray for others where you go.

Practical Suggestions for Praying with Your Group

Group prayer is like team practice. A sports team that spends more time talking about signals and plays than actually doing the stuff is no match for a team that practices until it functions like a well-oiled

machine. So pray together. Schedule prayer early in your meeting, if necessary, so that if you run out of time, prayer isn't the part that gets brushed over.

If you're shy about praying out loud, that's all the more reason to (as Nike's motto says) "just do it!" Self-consciousness is usually the problem. Remember Rick Warren's words, "It's not about you!" So focus on God and simply talk to him. As your prayer muscles strengthen, you'll find your communication with God is transformed! Team members will hear one another's hearts and find themselves supporting each other and growing together in the Lord.

Here's an important practical rule: Please, don't mumble your prayers. If others can't hear you, how are they going to agree with you in prayer? You might as well be alone. On the other hand, don't get so loud or emotional that you become a distraction rather than a blessing. Keep your voice at the same conversational level you would use if you were speaking to the group and wanted everybody to hear you.

Also, a word to you experienced intercessors: please don't pray so long at one time that you cover the bases all by yourself. Leave a little breathing room and give everybody a chance to pray. You can pray more than once, and short prayers are acceptable!

When you start to pray, whether alone or together, a good way to begin is to *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise"* (Psalm 100:4 NIV). Thank and praise God for what he has done; worship him for who he is, the awesome Creator God who has chosen, because he loves us, to receive us as his children and allow us access to his presence. In a group prayer time, let various people speak out as others agree. First, take time to seek his presence, then bring your requests to him. With those few suggestions in mind, pray for your specific team and your specific outreach.

Fear. A spirit of fear is often the easiest to recognize, because you feel it instantly. You land in a foreign place and suddenly sense an evil presence and an unexplainable wave of fear. If you even suspect spiritual activity, immediately resist the devil, and call that thing by its name. Yes, you're going to have to speak up.

Since fear is one of the devil's favorite ploys, let's use that as an example of what to do:

- First, worship aloud. Honor Jesus Christ and his power.
- Ask the Lord to fill you and the place you're in with his presence.
- Bring the cross to the devil's attention. He knows he was defeated there. Now he knows that you know, and that puts things on a different footing.
- Tell him that you are Jesus' property and that you are standing under the cleansing power of his blood.
- Tell him that you belong to, and represent, the Kingdom of God.
- Quote a little Scripture to him: *"God has not given me the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7 KJV)
- Sing a good strong worship song. Martin Luther said, *"Music is a fair and glorious gift of God. I am strongly persuaded that after theology, there is no art which can be placed on the level with music. The devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the word of God."*
- Look for prayer warriors to stand with you. Remember, there's great power in agreement.
- Resist and rebuke: James 4:7 (NIV) says, *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* Pray this way: *"In the name of Jesus Christ I resist every demonic force that would bring fear (or confusion or lust) into my mind or heart. The Lord himself rebuke you"* (see Zechariah 3:2; Jude 1:9 NIV).

Use the same method when you're praying for someone else who is under spiritual attack.

What is Already Bound in Heaven?

At Jesus' ascension into heaven, *"he led captivity captive (he led a train of vanquished foes) and bestowed gifts on men"* (Ephesians 4:8 Amplified.) Matthew Henry's commentary on this verse says, *"He conquered those who conquered us."* It was a legal victory against the evil spirits, and it bought authority against them for his human co-workers.

Here are some simple spiritual legalities:

- Satan's cease and desist warrant has been signed by Jesus Christ, but he has appointed the Church to serve it.
- The court of heaven has approved Satan's eviction notice, but the Church has been appointed to deliver and enforce it.
- The legalities of divine jurisdiction have been established by the resurrected Lord, but he has appointed the Church to put them into action.

Through the benefits of Jesus' victory over the powers of darkness, he gives you the authority to bind God's spiritual enemies on earth as they have already been bound in heaven. He is teaching you how to reign with him.

First, be bold. You have Christ in you, so rest in that liberating authority. Then speak to demonic forces just as policemen speak to lawbreakers. As they say, "Stop in the name of the law!" you'll say, "Stop in the name of the Lord!"

Dealing with Spiritual Attacks

Now, you may never have occasion to deal with a case of demonic harassment, but it can happen. Whether an evil spirit is at work in someone else or has decided to pick on you, you need to recognize what's happening and know what to do.

"The devil made me do that" isn't always funny. If you see (or feel) uncalled for or uncontrollable fear, rage, envy, confusion or lust, you might very well suspect the work of an enemy. Let's look at three of these kinds of attack to learn how to defeat them.

How to Pray Before Your Outreach

First, be sure to make group prayer a constant habit. Everybody pray! God listens for our agreement in prayer. As you read through the New Testament, notice how many times God moved as people were praying "in one accord." Out loud. Here's what Jesus says about it:

"If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."(Matthew 18:19 NIV)

There are a couple of things you should ask God to show you as you pray. They concern your group assignment and your personal assignment from him.

First, what part of the PEACE Plan is your team to focus on? Promoting reconciliation? Training leadership? Assisting the poor? Providing aid and comfort for the sick? Teaching people to read and write? Teaching or leading worship? Be sure you understand your team's goal.

The second thing is to find your personal assignment on the outreach. The team leader will be able to give you direction, but remember, you, too, should be on the lookout for "divine appointments." They sometimes come at the most unexpected times and places. Be ready to pray for people and help in any way you can at every opportunity.

When you arrive at your assignment, ask God to show you and your team any needs you may not have thought about before you left home. Ask him for his wisdom on how best to demonstrate his love and concern for the people. God has promised wisdom to everyone if we'll just ask for it. (James 1:5)

As you prepare for your PEACE project, there are two types of prayers you can pray: covering prayers and cultivating prayers. Covering prayers are for your team, cultivating prayers are for the people you will be ministering to.

Covering Prayers

Long before you leave town, start praying covering prayers for God's physical and spiritual care for every member of your team individually.

Name names. Don't even think of leaving home without this! Here are some basic needs to address in your covering prayers:

- Health
- Financial provision for team members
- Physical protection from all harm and accidents
- Travel arrangements
- Spiritual courage and vitality
- Wisdom
- Divine ability to show Christ's love and grace
- A spirit of love and cooperation among team members

You might pray something like this:

“Father in Heaven; we come to worship and give you thanks. (Take some time to do this.) We present our bodies, minds and spirits to you for your protective covering. Please keep us well and safe from all harm. Protect us every mile we travel. Give us spiritual and physical strength by the Holy Spirit.

Lord, you promised to give wisdom if we would ask for it, and we do—for your wisdom placed in our hearts and minds to bless others. We ask for supernatural ability to demonstrate Jesus' grace, provision and power to everyone, everywhere.

We ask for constant renewing of the Holy Spirit within us. Use us to touch sick bodies, feed hungry mouths and souls. Make us part of your solution to the problems of this world.

Help us to love and cooperate with one another, submitting our personal desires and opinions to you and to one another, reminding ourselves, “It's not about me! It's all about you, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.”

Cultivating Prayers

To cultivate means to prepare soil for growing crops or to break up soil to destroy weeds. In cultivating prayers, we pray that God will open hearts, doors—and borders—and clear the way for our harvest. We also pray against the work of the devil, asking God to tear down strongholds that bind people up and prevent them from hearing the Word of God.

Taking Back Territory

Once you've settled your authority and your position of strength in Christ, you're ready to take back some enemy territory. While spiritual authorities are never to be taken lightly, they are not to be feared by men and women who are walking in obedience to God. The most effective method of exerting God's authority anywhere is to start right off by declaring it in your prayer time wherever you are:

“Lord God Almighty, we bless and praise you. We lift up the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit over this place. We declare that Jesus Christ is the Name above all names; the King over all rulers and authorities; the Spirit above every spirit that exists. And we are his! We have come here under his authority to bring his blessing and message of spiritual liberty. In his Name, we resist every demonic influence that would hinder our work or the work of the gospel. Jesus Christ is Lord! Amen.”

Binding and Loosing

“No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.”(Mark 3:27 NKJV)

Jesus said you can't rob a strong man's house without first binding up the strong man (Matthew 12:29; Mark 3:27.) At some point, you may need to restrain a spiritual “strong man” as you rob him of his victims through the gospel. Be bold. As you call on the Lord, you can proceed with faith, knowing that he is there to fight for you!

As you've already seen, God has authorized you and your team to act in his name. But let us suggest that you'll have better success when you do it together! Remember, Jesus sent his disciples out either in a group or at least two-by-two. There's power in your agreement, as you discovered in our previous chapter.

Now, what does it mean to bind the strong man, and how do you and your team do it? The answer is: through that wonderful word “declaration.”

“Whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose (declare lawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19 Amplified)

as your Savior and Lord, God made you one with him. This means that in the reality of the spiritual world, the head (Christ) and his body (the church) are considered to be crucified, resurrected, ascended, and enthroned together in the place of highest spiritual authority. Because we (you!) are already “seated with him in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 2:6 NIV) from God’s point of view, that should always be your point of view, too: above every power and principality that is named.

Please let this become part of your thinking. As you put this authority to work by faith, you’ll begin to “reign in life through . . . Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17 NIV). Your life will be changed forever, and so will Satan’s as he is progressively challenged. Evil is defeated where the Church shows up, stands up and speaks up in the Name of the Lord.

If by faith in the Word of God you declare these next two Scriptures every day when your feet first hit the floor, your faith will grow, you will demoralize the enemy and become progressively more triumphant over sin, too! You’re not trying to make it happen; you’re just declaring something that is already true. This is how God sees you right now, not some day in the future, but right now. This is how you need to see yourself, too. It’s the word of God, so take God at his word. Try it and see. Say it aloud:

It is written: *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”* (Galatians 2:20)

It is written: *“I am dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ my Lord”* (Romans 6:11).*

*For wonderful clarity on this matter, try Watchman Nee’s “The Normal Christian Life,” or Andrew Murray’s “Covenants and Blessings.” They are astounding, life-changing books

Here are some basic needs to address in your cultivating prayers:

- Pray for the people you will meet, that God will begin preparing them for your time together. If you know any of their names ahead of time, then pray for them by name.
- Pray that God will give you favor with the local or national authorities.
- Pray that God will give you favor with the churches you will visit.
- Pray that God will direct your steps to the right places at the right time.
- Pray for divine appointments and unexpected opportunities.
- Pray over all of the details of your plans as they develop.

Pastor Buddy Owens tells this story of his experience with cultivating prayer as he prepared to go to Africa.

“In 2005, I made a PEACE trip to Malawi to train pastors in the Purpose Driven Church process. But in the weeks leading up to the trip, the strangest thing happened to me.

I had been studying a lot about Malawi and its people: the population had dropped from 12 million to 11 million in just a couple of years because of AIDS and famine; there are just 4,000 nurses and 240 doctors in the entire country—that’s one doctor for every 50,000 people; the average life span is 36 years; the mean age is 16; and Malawi has the third poorest economy in the world.

My heart began to break for these people and their plight. I prayed daily for them, asking God to prepare their hearts—and my heart—for our time together. But the closer I got to the trip, the more empty I felt.

It finally occurred to me early one morning as I read Matthew 9:35-10:8 that this was all a part of a process Jesus had taught. At the end of Matthew 9, Jesus saw the crowds and was moved with compassion. He said to his disciples, ‘The fields are ripe for harvest, so pray . . . pray that God will send someone into the field.’ (Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. Hmm, I wonder who that ‘someone’ might be.) Then in chapter 10 he says, ‘Oh, by the way, that someone is you.’

He's saying, first pray, then go and become the answer to your own prayer. And here's why: Jesus knows that you cannot pray for someone without investing your heart in them. Sincere prayer leads to sincere compassion. I was praying for the people of Malawi. But I felt empty because, in a very real sense, I had sent my heart ahead of me. I had to go to Malawi to get my heart back."

You can send your heart ahead of you, too, by your own intercession. Then watch God work as you go find your heart. This is what cultivating prayers are all about.

* * * * *

Seated with Christ: Your Position of Authority

Who does the devil think you are? It makes a difference.

If he sees you as unsure, uninformed and unequipped, he will take advantage of your uncertainty. If he sees Christ in you, armed and ready for him, that changes everything. How you see yourself matters, too.

Remember Mark Twain's story, "The Prince and the Pauper"? It's the one where the young street urchin is mistaken for the prince. He soon discovers that because he is identified with the real prince, all the prince's authority is at his disposal. Well, that's you.

In the eyes of both God and Satan, you are one with Christ (Galatians 2:20). You have authority—not in yourself, but in your identification with him. The church fathers experienced that "identification authority" and used it to change the world. There is one passage of Scripture so powerful that St. Paul prayed a special prayer that his readers would really get it:

"I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him . . . the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him . . . at God's right hand. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or the world to come. And God has put all things under the authority of Christ . . . for the benefit of the church . . . The church is his body; filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence." (Ephesians 1:19-23 NLT)

Then Paul goes on:

"For God raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6 NLT).

Alive in Christ: Your Position of Strength

This work of the Spirit has already been done. We don't have to work for it. It is the work of the cross. All we have to do is receive it by faith. It's a done deal. There isn't enough room in this little book to do a study of Romans 5-8, but God declares that you are already "in Christ" through Jesus' death and resurrection because when you received him

So, How Do You Prepare for This?

Here's the place to start:

"Do not let yourself become tied up in worldly affairs, for then you can't satisfy the One who has enlisted you in his army." (2 Timothy 2:4 TLB)

You see, if you're totally absorbed with worldly ambitions, mind-sets and values, you'll be too vulnerable to the enemy to be useful to God. Does that mean you can't be serious about your career? No; it means the main focus of your life is the will and pleasure of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you godly focus. He'll do it.

Once your priorities are in order and you're battle-ready, you need to know who the enemy is not. Remember, the fight God has called you to isn't against people, but against Satan and his works.

Alarming as that may sound, Satan is not the opposite of God: the dark counterpart of the Force, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present evil. He's a created, fallen being with limited powers whose life work is chaos and destruction (See Revelation 12:7-9; Isaiah 14:12-15) and he can only be in one place at a time. We as individuals will probably never come face to face personally with Satan (unless we become a major threat to his purposes, like the giants of the faith.) But the Scriptures list different levels of his evil hierarchy and different kinds of evil spirits. Demons are the foot soldiers, doing things in Satan's name, even as we do things in Jesus' name. In our dealings with the demonic we use the term Satan generically, to represent whatever level of his kingdom we may encounter.

And here's the good news:

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4 KJV)

Once you've settled that, it's time to use the prayer power, authority, arms and armor God has provided.

Let's Talk . . .

1. How would you complete this sentence, "To me prayer is _____."
2. When it comes to prayer, which one of the quotes from John Wesley (pg 1), Rick Warren (pg 3) Jack Hayford (pg 3), or Buddy Owens (pg 2) resonates with you the most?
3. What does it mean to be an intercessor? How do you feel about the idea of intercession and becoming an intercessor?
4. Of the five characteristics of intercessors (Awareness, Availability, Petitioning, Proclaiming, and Providing), which are your areas of strength and which are opportunities for you to grow? How might your area of strength be used on your PEACE trip?
5. When you're on the lookout for "divine appointments," how will you know when you've found one? How will you respond and take action? Have you ever experienced a "divine appointment"? What did that experience teach you?
6. What is the difference between cultivating prayers and covering prayers? Can you give a couple of examples of each? Do you find that you gravitate toward one or the other?

Let's Pray . . .

- Listen to each other's prayer needs.
- As you begin group prayer, several speak out short prayers of thanks, praise or worship before praying for needs.
- In closing this first session, someone might pray aloud the covering prayer on page 7. Then finish with a cultivating prayer for your PEACE project.

CHAPTER 2

PRAYING ON OUTREACH AND BEYOND

How do you know what to pray for in the neighborhood, village, city, state or country God is sending you to? You'll need to consider the people, the government and the Church. We'll use some scriptural instruction that covers all those situations and then give you some prayers you can use to "jump-start" your own:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (TLB) tells us how to do it:

"Here are my directions . . . Pray much for others (for "all people" as some translations read); plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them. Pray in this way for kings and all others who are in authority . . . so that we can live in peace and quietness . . . This is good and pleases God our Savior, for he longs for all to be saved . . ."

How you pray publicly with the people will sometimes be different from the way you pray privately as a team, especially when you're praying for government or church authorities. So in the following pages, we offer suggestions for public prayer and private prayer.

Public Prayer: Praying for All People

1. Listen: What is breaking people's hearts? What is breaking God's heart? Are you seeing or hearing about persecution, poverty, pandemic disease, spiritual hunger? What do the people need and want from God? These will be the things that should occupy your prayers.

2. Respond: Pray specifically for those needs. For instance, as you care for the sick, you may pray for them according to James 5:14-15 (NIV):

"(Let the) elders pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven."

brings. That would be nice, wouldn't it? But we're all going to hear from the devil whether we want to or not. We'll be better equipped to deal with him if we know more about him.

Is This Stuff Real?

The first question we need to settle is this: "Is the devil real?" Yes! Jesus says that he is (Luke 4:2-13; 8:12). The next question is, "Does prayer affect him?" It does (1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7).

"No one is a firmer believer in the power of prayer than the devil; not that he practices it, but he suffers from it." Guy H. King

In case you're thinking that all this is teaching from some far-out fringe sect of the faith, here's a quote from The Baptist Press, April 19, 2007. In a column by Jimmy Draper, a former Southern Baptist Convention president, we read:

"Of great concern to every sincere believer is how we can help others—the rebuking of demonic powers in believers, and in some instances expelling a demonic presence in unbelievers. Every rebuke and expelling should be done in the Name and under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Because such an experience is very emotional and exhausting for the individual, Draper recommends that such activity be carried on in seclusion when possible and with the assistance of other obedient and submissive servants of the Lord. Draper goes on to say:

"We need to maintain balance in dealing with the demonic. Some of the problems that demons can cause are also caused by rebellion and disobedience to God. We must be careful not to attribute to Satan what is discipline from the Lord."

Well, how does that affect you? As Professor Peter Beyerhaus said, "Any advancement of the kingdom of Christ takes place by successive dethronement of Satan." This happens when Christians such as you take back enemy territory through the gospel and wreak havoc in the enemy camp through prayer—when you mess up his plans to impoverish and spiritually enslave people. That's spiritual warfare that dethrones the devil.

his people who bring the love and compassion of God. And the plain, simple gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful part of your “sabotage” campaign:

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV)

Your inroad into spiritual strongholds, and your defense while you’re there, is prayer. It’s your lifeline to the Lord and to his authority and power.

“Prayer from God’s side is communication between himself and his allies in enemy country.” S.D. Gordon

Here’s a short but powerful prayer from the leader of a missions team:

“Father, we submit ourselves to you and invite the enabling of the Holy Spirit upon us. May every grace be released and every ambush cut off.”

In two sentences he has covered the most important needs of any outreach team that wants the blessing and protection of the Lord:

- Complete submission to God
- The grace or favor of the Lord
- The enabling of the Holy Spirit
- The restraint of spiritual opposition.

Through your submission and obedience, you bring the blessing and grace of God on yourselves and on those you minister to.

Through your prayers, the Holy Spirit brings the enabling and restraining power of God against spiritual opposition.

Does this sound like heavy going? All you need is a little attitude adjustment. Take to heart this statement from an old saint:

“The monks have no sadness. They wage war on the devil as though they were performing a dance.” John Chrysostom

Of course, some Christians don’t want to hear about the war in the spirit. They just want to hear about Jesus and the good stuff their faith

What an amazing opportunity for you. Some of you may not consider yourselves to be “elders” in a legalistic way, but in many of the places you go, you will definitely be elders in the Lord. So go ahead . . . pray in faith for every need.

In fact, ask God for wisdom to help your group fill some of those needs yourselves as you are able, and according to his will. Petition the Lord as earnestly and often for these requests as you would if they were your own.

3. Pray Positive Prayers: Follow Paul’s directions to Timothy. He tells us to pray in faith, (“give thanks for all he is going to do,”) first for “all people,” then for all those in authority. Since he wants all people to be saved and blessed, why not begin there?

Public Prayer for the People

Here is a sample prayer to get you started:

“Father, you are magnificent and almighty. Nothing is too hard for you. We ask you to aid the people, save the lost, fill them with your Spirit. You see every need they have. (Then name the specific needs you find in each place such as spiritual hunger, need for food, shelter, health care and literacy.) We know that you love them and that you have sent us to help and bless them. You have said that when we ask anything in your will, we can be assured that you hear us, and if we know you hear us, we have the requests we’ve made of you (1 John 5:15). So we thank you for your promise and for all you’re going to do here because we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Public Prayer for Government

You are reaching out to cities and nations around the world because God wants “all people” to be saved and blessed. The authorities are the folks who can either blockade your PEACE efforts or give you favor. Their rulership can either help or harm their own people, too. That’s why you must pray for them. But remember, when you’re praying in public, pray positive prayers! (We’ll say more about private prayer in a moment.) Your public prayers for government may be something like this:

“Lord, you see the need for servant-leaders in all the nations. We pray you will watch over the leaders of this precious country and make them truly righteous and wise so they will bless the land.”

Then help the people pray positive prayers for those leaders. Name them by name and bless them in the name of the Lord. Now pray in faith and thank God for “all he is going to do for them” as he begins to move in their hearts and lives.

Public Prayer for Church Leadership

Public prayer for church leadership is a time for positive prayer, too. This isn’t the time to address what you might see as weakness or mistakes.

Here’s an example:

“Father, we pray for blessing on your pastors and teachers. They need your wisdom to lead the churches into holiness. Give them servant’s hearts, free from self-will or self-importance. Pour your grace and protection on all those who work in the church. Help the pastors raise up prayer intercessors and life intercessors who will make the church a blessing to their neighbors, their communities and their country. Make them examples of your reality and love that will lead people to you. Help them lead the church into worship, obedience and joy in every circumstance. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Positive prayer can accomplish a lot. It can address governmental or even spiritual conditions that you may not speak about negatively without being asked to leave the country. Or worse. As God answers, positive prayers can open doors that a negative attitude may slam shut. It’s amazing what sincere love and respect can accomplish. And think about it: little phrases such as “make them righteous and wise,” can have many implications, especially if they’re not already righteous and wise. It asks God to move in their lives without implying you’ve noticed that they really need it! Tact and courtesy go a long way.

CHAPTER 5

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: SETTING CAPTIVES FREE

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” [or, “in the spirit world.”] (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

As you reach out to touch the world for Christ with the PEACE Plan and reconciliation to God, you’re going to raise some of this spiritual opposition! You’ll be interfering radically in the plans of the devil and he won’t like it. Isn’t that wonderful? Evil forces may be at work anywhere, but they seem to be more openly active in non-Western countries. In Western cultures, they often are more subtle. They are happy to keep “sophisticated” people who don’t believe in the devil ignorant of their reality and influence. That unbelief is a big mistake.

We’re not talking about a physical fight against human beings, even though Satan most often influences and uses them in his plans. No, our battle is spiritual, but it is real! It’s a struggle with spiritual forces that incite people to lewdness, hatred, violence and idolatry—forces that keep people in bondage, ignorance and poverty. These “forces” are simply beings without physical bodies who obey their leader, Satan, just as we obey our leader, Jesus Christ.

Who, Me?

Now, you may say, “Who, me? How do I fight spiritual forces?” Well, first you should realize this: you are a spirit, too. That’s the eternal part of you. You live in a body; they don’t. So, you’ll learn to oppose them in the spirit. It’s not as spooky as it sounds.

“Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed, you might say in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in his great campaign of sabotage.” C.S. Lewis

Where the devil has successfully deceived and captured souls, God plans to release them—(that’s called “redemption”). He does it through

Let's Talk . . .

1. Explain the term Spiritual Warfare. (See the opening paragraphs of this chapter.)
2. Why do we need to “ever be being filled and stimulated with the Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18 Amplified)? What happens as a result of that? What should we do about it? Pray the prayer on page 37, expecting the Father to answer.
3. Ephesians 6:17 calls the Word of God a sword. How do you use it against the devil?
4. What do you do when Satan throws old sins or failures in your face?
5. How would you explain to a seeker “the blood of the Lamb?” How does it overcome the devil?
6. Which of the statements on fasting by Pastors Rick Warren and Lance Witt struck you the most?

Let's Pray . . .

- You might begin with the prayer on page 37 asking God for a fresh filling up with his Holy Spirit.
- This is a good time to practice wearing your spiritual armor. Try the prayer on page 38.
- Declare together what the blood of Jesus has done for you and what authority it gives you. Use the list on page 40. The cleansing blood of Christ is always our key to victory over sin and the devil.

Private Prayer: For Personal or Team Prayer Only

This kind of prayer is not always as “positive” as public prayer because it may be prayer for times of struggle with spiritually contested areas you may face. You’ll see some terminology in this chapter that you may not be familiar with such as “authority,” “spiritual armor and armory,” “declaration,” “invoking,” “rebuking” and others. We’ll explain what these terms mean and how to use them in chapters 4 and 5.

Spiritually contested areas are usually:

- Obstructive local governments or church leadership
- Political unrest that creates difficulty or danger
- Opposition from non-Christian spiritual forces

Prayer for these things should usually be done privately within the outreach group only. Praying publicly about these matters can lead to difficulties for the teams.

Private Prayer for Egocentric or Abusive Leadership

It’s good to understand that God is in control. He can pull down or raise up leaders according to his own will and in response to a praying people. Psalm 75:7 (Amplified) says that God can influence even national leadership: *“God is the judge! He puts down one and lifts up another.”* But God often waits and listens for intercessors.

Remember this: *“Praying men are the vice-regents of God; they do his work and carry out his plans”* (E.M. Bounds.) This being so, you can understand why God moves only through prayer and that he is waiting for his people to do their duty. He’ll answer prayers for mercy if we will just pray them. Certainly, we should be doing this constantly for our own country. If we do, God will answer. If we don’t, it’s a different story. Here’s how God explained it to Israel:

“I looked in vain for anyone who would build again the wall of righteousness that guards the land, who could stand in the gap and defend you from my just attacks, but I found not one! . . . and so I have heaped upon you the full penalty for your sins” (Ezekiel 22:30-31 TLB).

God looks and listens for intercessors . . . gap-standers . . . people like you. If your team understands and practices this, you can teach Christians everywhere to become intercessors for their country and its leaders. It is their privilege and responsibility to “stand in the gap” for their own nation. Help them pray positively and in faith for God to intervene both spiritually and governmentally.

Your team prayer time is a good opportunity to put on the spiritual armor and use the spiritual armory we’re going to talk about, and pray for defense against enemy influence. As you learn more about these, you’ll be able to start out with prayers like this:

Private Prayer for the People

“Lord Jesus, we pray for the people you love, but who don’t know you. That includes people who are still under the influence of Satanic spiritual forces. Your Word says, ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ So we ask for your Holy Spirit to move as we declare your Lordship over every spiritual force that exists! And we ask that your Good News will penetrate every spiritual stronghold and release the people into your kingdom.

Now we ask you to bless your believers and protect them from every evil influence and power. Through them, show your mercy and delivering power on behalf of this nation. Make them shining examples of your love and grace. Make them your hand of blessing. Make their witness powerful and liberating. We come to invoke your presence over us all as we lift up your name over this land. Amen!”

Always remember Ephesians 6:18 (NIV): “. . . be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

Private Prayer for Government and Spiritual Leadership

“Lord God; we stand in the name of Jesus Christ and claim for the Kingdom of God these men and women who have authority over the people. We speak against every effort of Satan and demon powers that would influence them to create unjust, ungodly laws or to operate in self-interest.

Give this country ‘shepherds’ in the government and in the church who have your heart for the people. We ask again that you will truly make them righteous and wise. You see every good heart and every evil purpose, so we ask you to pull down or raise up leaders here according to your will

- The total fast: abstaining from all food and water (Deuteronomy 9:9,18; Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9)
- The normal fast: abstaining from food but not from water. (Matthew 4:2)
- The partial fast: eating sparingly or abstaining from some foods, often called a “Daniel” fast. (Daniel 10:3)

However you choose to fast, get ready for a struggle! Food is a strong addiction. While most fasts are for a single day, you might sense the Lord leading you to fast for a longer period of time. Begin with short fasts, a meal or two, then graduate to longer ones. Don’t ever go without liquids for more than two or three days; a longer time may seriously harm you.

Be wise. Here are some things to be aware of when you fast:

- Consult a doctor before you begin a fast, especially if you are diabetic!
- Don’t try long fasts without a special revelation from God. Remember those forty day fasts such as Moses undertook were by special instruction and empowerment in the immediate presence of God.
- If you’re fasting for guidance, don’t act on any decisions until you’ve broken the fast. You’ll be able to evaluate more clearly what the Lord has shown you then.
- Don’t fast for show by making it obvious. That’s what the Pharisees did (see Matthew 6:16-18). And don’t let it become ritualized or legalistic.
- When you fast, pray for the hungry. Use the time you would have spent preparing and eating your meals to read the Word and pray, exchanging physical food for spiritual food.
- Break your fast carefully. Eat lightly at first. If you’ve been on a long fast, break it with liquids. Take time to get back to normal eating patterns. Or better yet, don’t get back to normal eating patterns. This is the time to break bad habits and take control of your life.

Throughout Scripture, people fasted to supercharge their prayers:

- Moses fasted in the presence of God (Exodus 34:28)
- David fasted in mourning and repentance (2 Samuel 12:16)
- Esther and her people fasted for God's deliverance from their enemies (Esther 4:16)
- Daniel fasted to see the fulfillment of God's will for his nation (Daniel 9:3)
- The Ninevites fasted to avert the prophesied judgment of God (Jonah 3:5-9)
- Jesus fasted in preparing himself for his ministry (Matthew 4:2)
- The Apostle Paul fasted when appointing elders for the church (Acts 14:23)
- The Antioch church fasted and received guidance to send Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries, and they fasted as they commissioned them for their outreach (Acts 13:2-3)

The New Testament Church fasted for many of the above reasons. They all knew there is great spiritual power in fasting when it is combined with prayer.

The Call to Fasting

Today, the Holy Spirit is calling the church to fast—sometimes, in crisis situations, to united public fasting with prayer. It's happening all over the world. Considering the critical times we live in, every intercessor needs a balanced biblical understanding of this powerful exercise. It's an effective way to derail the plans of the devil and undergird the plans of God.

We suggest your team try fasting before you go on your trip. You might try a sundown to sundown fast, ending before your team meets for prayer. There are lots of ways to go about it:

A dictionary definition of fasting is “to abstain from food; to eat sparingly or to abstain from some foods.” There are three types of biblical fasts:

and wisdom. We come in agreement and ask your powerful, divine intervention right now. Amen.”

Then pray those “positive prayers” for the leaders. Name them by name and bless them. That blessing will include the moving of God on their lives: salvation, transformation, godly hearts. Ask God to have his way completely in the nation, remembering that he can pull down and raise up as he sees fit . . . and in answer to the cry of his people. Nothing whatsoever is too hard for the Lord.

Private Prayer for Political Unrest

This is something that not only you, but the home prayer teams should be fasting and praying about. This is a time to make some declarations:

“Jesus Christ is King over all kings, rulers, authorities and spirits that exist. We come in his holy name and pray his binding power over the spirits of violence and anarchy and spiritual hatred in this place. We pray for the covering canopy of God's protection and defense by heavenly powers. We pray this in agreement with your Word, Lord, that gives us the authority of Christ's name and affords us angelic protection.

Make us bold, but wise; truthful, but sensitive. Fill us up with the Holy Spirit's grace and power. We declare that Jesus is Lord of Heaven and earth. Amen.”

If you know the names of leaders on either side of the political question, lift up their names to the Lord and ask for his intervention in their decisions and actions. Pray confusion on wicked plans! Do it all in Jesus' name. But remember, these are private prayers to be prayed within your group. To pray this way publicly could result in interference or resistance from political leaders who would take offense at your words.

Sending Help from Home

(Share this with your home-based intercessors.)

Faithful intercessors at home share in the same rewards from God as do those who go out to the nations. In 1 Samuel 30:23-24 (NIV) David established an ordinance for Israel:

“[The Lord] has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us . . . The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”

Every PEACE Team should be able to depend on a group of strong intercessors praying for their spiritual and material needs to be supplied and guarding them with prayer.

Home-based intercessors need to know the names of the people in the team they’re covering, so they can pray for them individually as well as for the whole team. They can use the list of “covering prayers” on page 7. It’s important to keep in as close touch with the team as possible, so you can respond right away to SOS prayer requests! As you pray for them, listen; God may encourage you to pray for a need they haven’t even mentioned yet. In fact, it may be a need that, because of your prayers, they may never even be aware of!

While you’re praying those covering prayers for the teams, pray them for their families at home, too. It would be great if you learn some of those names and pray for them specifically. Phone numbers and/or email addresses of these folks are a great idea so you can keep informed of their needs. It will bless them and the teams to know that you care and that you’re praying.

Be aware of any political unrest or local spiritual opposition that might lead to problems for the team and for their outreach efforts, and stand in the gap for them. You are the intercessors standing before God on behalf of those on the front lines, so to speak. Your job is an absolutely vital one. You make a difference in what happens with the PEACE Team.

Here’s a note from Cathy Constantz after her team’s PEACE trip to India:

“I was just studying Philippians 1:19: ‘For I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.’ I was floored to see that Paul’s confidence on either being released from prison or delivered from his situation in prison through death would be accomplished by two things; the prayers of the Philippians and

open. Paul and Silas’s chains fell off and they were free (See Acts 16:25-26). Praise still works wonders today.

Does God always promise physical deliverance from our enemies? No. Through history many of God’s people have suffered and even died at the hands of their enemies. But God does promise, *“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him”* (2 Timothy 2:12 KJV). *“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”* (Romans 8:18 KJV). We’ve quoted the first half of Revelation 12:11 (KJV), *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”* The rest of the verse says *“they loved not their lives unto the death.”*

Supercharged Prayer: Fasting

Victory over your appetites is a key in your battle with Satan’s temptations. It also adds “weight and heft” to your prayer life, while taking it off of your body.

Pastor Rick Warren says:

“Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something. It shows that you are serious enough about your prayer request to pay a personal price.”

“Fasting releases God’s supernatural power. It’s a tool we can use when there is opposition to God’s will . . . United prayer and fasting has always been used by God to deal a decisive blow to the enemy!”

Pastor Lance Witt says:

“Fasting is not so much about food as it is about focus. Fasting is not about doing without; it is about looking within.”

“Fasting is an outward response to an inward attitude and cry of the soul.”

“Fasting is not a means of seeking God’s blessing, as much as it is a means of seeking God.”

“Fasting is feasting on the Lord, looking to him for comfort, power, strength, guidance, forgiveness and hope.”

The early church faced persecution. But they soon discovered they had power with God when even two of them agreed in prayer. Here are some Scriptures you can look up for starters: Acts 1:14, Acts 2:1; Acts 4:24. Your prayer partners are crucial to your success and protection as you go out with the PEACE plan. Be sure you have one. Or more.

King Solomon observed this phenomenon centuries earlier, and he wrote:

“Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one: if one falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble . . . A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 TLB)

The Power of Praise

The Psalmist says:

“The praises of our fathers surrounded your throne; they trusted you and you delivered them.” (Psalms 22:3-4 TLB)

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand . . . to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints.” (Psalms 149:6-9 KJV)

This is spiritual warfare, waged by worship. Whether sung or spoken, it binds spiritual kings and destroys their strongholds because it invokes the presence of God. Remember, King Jehoshaphat sent singers out before the army at one notable battle . . . one of the more amazing military strategies on record. When the singers began to sing and praise God, the Lord showed up and turned their enemies against each other, and they destroyed one another. There was no one left for Jehoshaphat’s troops to fight. (It was a real adventure to be in the choir in those days.) (See 2 Chronicles 20:21-23)

Centuries later, while Paul and Silas were shackled in prison, they praised and sang worship songs to the Lord. The Lord sent an earthquake, shook the place to its foundations, and threw the doors

the Holy Spirit. He places their prayers on par with the Holy Spirit in bringing about God’s desired outcome!”

How to Pray When You Get Home

Once you have been on outreach—once you have clearly seen the situation and know the people—you won’t forget them when you return home, will you? You know where and how much they needed your prayer-intercession and your life-intercession, and you responded to that. Now what? Is it all over?

As one lady in leadership teaches, *“When God shows you a truth, you are then responsible for the truth you now know.”* God has shown you some desperate needs. That means that your intercession doesn’t stop when you return to your home.

What you have done in Thailand or Africa (or America) isn’t finished yet. Is there further need for education, food, decent housing, health care, clean water, more compassionate, godly leadership? More need for Jesus? Then your intercession there is still vitally important.

Perhaps you’ll be involved in a follow-up trip. If not, why not find out who will be doing the next trip and give them all the practical and spiritual assistance you can. Keep the place of your outreach covered in serious, on-going, prayer. You’ve started, or added to, something godly and important and have seen something good going on. Now you can use prayer to “keep the wheels from falling off” of what you have built there.

Remember the people. Remember the governmental and Church leadership. God always depends on intercessors, so you will play a vital part in seeing this thing through to real change and blessing, and to the salvation of many.

Here’s a suggestion: read the letters of the Apostle Paul and see how his prayers and counsel continued constantly for the churches he had established. He never forgot them for a moment. They were his people and he kept them covered by intercession. Let’s use that as our example of faithful, intense prayer until the job is done and the Lord returns.

* * * * *

Let's Talk . . .

1. What is the difference between public prayer and private prayer while on outreach? What situations or circumstances call for which kind of prayer? What are the benefits of praying the right prayer and consequences of praying the wrong prayer in public?
2. What kinds of questions should you ask people as you seek to listen and pray publicly for them?
3. Imagine if the tables were turned and a PEACE team from another country came to visit you. How would you want them to pray for your government, church leadership, and people?
4. What are some things your group can do to ensure that intercessors at home are able to pray for you effectively? Why is intercession from home such an important part of being on outreach?
5. Intercession, both in action and prayer, does not end when you get home. How can you continue in intercession after you've returned?

Let's Pray . . .

- This is the time to begin praying those “private” prayers for the people, for the government, and for church leadership in the nation or city you have selected. You may let the prayers on pages 15 and 16 help start you off.
- Then wait on the Lord for a while together. Let him put his prayers in your hearts, and pray aloud as he prompts you.
- Continue to pray covering prayers for one another.

Memorize Romans 8:1 and 1 John 1:9. They'll protect you from the devil's harassment.

“There is no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1 TLB)

“If we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.” (1 John 1:9 TLB)

The Blood of the Lamb and the Word of Your Testimony

In the foregoing scenario, you have used these two weapons, combined with the Word of God, to combat the devil. You used Revelation 12:11: *“They overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”*

Romans 3:25 (NIV) says, *“God presented him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.”*

When you need to assert spiritual authority, declare what the blood of Jesus has done for you. Make these declarations out loud—as the confessions of your mouth as well as of your heart.

- I am cleansed from sin through Jesus' blood and have peace with God. (Romans 5:1; 1 John 1:9)
- I belong to Christ. I am his possession. (Romans 1:6, Ephesians 1:13-14; James 1:18 NLT)
- I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God. (Ephesians 2:19)
- I am under his divine protection. (Romans 8:1, 37-39)
- I am acting under his authority. (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 2:6)

The enemy may resist your authority, but if you know your rights and assert them, he has to give way. *“Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7 NKJV)

The Power of Agreement

Jesus said, *“If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them.”* (Matthew 18:19-20 TLB)

“God has chosen to make known . . . the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27 NIV)

There is more spiritual covering to put on. It armors the inside of you:

“. . . Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience . . . forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (Colossians 3:12-14 NIV)

These character traits are the opposite of Satan’s, who comes to steal and kill and destroy. They protect you, they disarm him, and they disarm people you’re ministering to who may not receive you well at first. But remember, love melts hearts, even the hardest ones.

Your Spiritual Weapons: for Offense against the Enemy

“I use God’s mighty weapons to win my battles, not those made by men, to knock down the devil’s strongholds.” (2 Corinthians 10:4 TLB)

In addition to prayer, the Bible lists several weapons for spiritual warfare including the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the blood of Jesus Christ, our testimony of the gospel, the power of agreement, and the power of praise.

The Sword of the Spirit

This is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). It was Jesus’ personal weapon of choice when he was tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Over and over, he said to the devil, “It is written,” and then quoted the Scripture to him. Finally, the devil gave up and cleared out. So, learn the Scriptures well. Learn who you are in Jesus. Then when the devil tempts or harasses you, speak or read the Scriptures to him. He will go away.

One of Satan’s favorite ploys is to use condemnation against you by throwing old sins or current failures in your face. Tell him you have already confessed (haven’t you?), been forgiven, and cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Tell him you know that God never condemns a repentant heart. When you do that, you have stolen his weapons.

CHAPTER 3

FIVE KEYS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

What happens when our prayers seem to go unanswered? Are there any barriers to answered prayer? Yes, there are. 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV) gives us important keys that will open the blockades and make our prayers even more effective. Here’s what it says:

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

While this verse deals primarily with the healing of a nation, there is a principle here that applies any time we need to get the ear of God (“then will I hear from heaven . . .”) That’s what we want: God’s attention and his answers. This is one of God’s if/then promises: if my people will . . . then I will . . . Here is what it says we need to bring to the altar:

1. A personal relationship to God
2. Humility
3. Prayer
4. Worship
5. Repentance

Let’s look at them one at a time:

Key #1: A Personal Relationship with God

“If my people, who are called by my name . . .”

First things first: Are you called by his name? Are you sure of your reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ? This is where personal relationship begins.

Sometimes people want to “do something important for the world” because they have compassionate hearts. That’s good! But it isn’t a motive with the exciting experience of co-working with God, nor is it one with eternal results.

Sometimes people want to “do something important for God” in order to earn his approval. But what earns God’s approval isn’t what you do, but what you allow him to do: forgive your sins, change your spiritual direction and save you by his grace. Grace is simply God’s unearned favor and love.

If you haven’t yet taken this step, or if you’re just not sure that you’re one of God’s people through your relationship with Jesus Christ, this is your opportunity to make certain. Please stop right here and turn to Appendix Number 1 in the back of the book. There’s the information and help you need, just waiting to transform your life.

Once you’re sure you’ve met Condition Number One, you’re ready for the next key listed in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Key #2: Humility

“If my people . . . will humble themselves . . .”

The second key to opening prayer blockades is humility. Pastor Rick Warren defines it so well: *“Humility isn’t thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of yourself less. Humility isn’t denying your strengths; it’s admitting your weaknesses and depending totally on God.”* It is developing a servant’s heart that demonstrates the heart of Jesus. The Scripture tells us to humble ourselves. This is a whole lot better than God having to do it for us.

Humility is the opposite of pride. Pride was Satan’s original sin. It still creates havoc. Here are important Scriptures to write on your heart:

“Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18 NLI)

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6 NKJV)

That’s what we all need most: grace. Humility brings it to us. Here is a list of some of the entangling “pride snares” that tempt everyone. Make sure they’re not snaring you.

The Helmet and the Breastplate: These are Jesus’ salvation and his righteousness given to you by the grace of God. By faith, claim them as your own. God will honor it.

The Belt of Truth: You are girded or belted with the truth of God. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life.”* You’ll find every weapon and protection you need in your relationship to Jesus.

The Shoes of the Gospel: Ancient soldiers wore heavy boots with metal leggings, designed to protect them from the early equivalent of land mines—sharp sticks and traps laid in their path to disable them. Even so, the “Preparation of the Gospel of Peace” shields us from the snares (wiles, temptations, attacks, etc.) of the devil and gives us firm footing.

The Shield of Faith: This is simply your trust in Christ. Knowing that you are his, that you are under his orders and protection and love, will defend you from every doubt and discouragement (those “flaming arrows”) the enemy can fire at you.

The Sword of the Spirit: You must know the Word of God in order to defend yourself from the lies of the enemy. We’ll say more about the sword in the section on spiritual weapons below.

Putting On the Armor

Allow the Holy Spirit to work out Jesus’ righteousness and truth in you and to increase your faith daily. You might pray like this:

“In the name of Jesus I put the helmet of his salvation over my mind and the breastplate of his righteousness over my heart. I gird myself with his truth. I take his Word as my sword, his gospel as my message and his shield which is the faith of the Son of God who lives in me.”

All this is summed up in one phrase in Romans 13:14: *“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ!”* Remember, you are in him. This is what the enemy sees. Pray out loud so he can hear, too! You will be depriving him of any foothold in your life and character as you claim the wonderful mystery of the life of Christ in you!

If you've never really surrendered to the Holy Spirit, you can do it now. Open yourself up to God and ask him to keep you filled with himself. Here's a short, simple prayer you can pray, and mean it. God will honor it.

"Heavenly Father, I yield myself to you. Fill me up anew with the Spirit as I surrender myself to his direction. Holy Spirit, I invite you to take control of my very being. Teach me and use me for Jesus' sake. Empower me with your presence. Help me, by faith, to yield to more and more of your life within me. Thank you for the precious gift of your living presence. Amen."

Now, by faith in Jesus' promise, trust the Spirit of God to bring his peace and power and, especially, his love into your life. These are gifts you can then bring to other people as you reach out with the PEACE plan.

Your Spiritual Armor: for Defense Against the Enemy

As we've said before, evangelism brings opposition. If you're going out to stir up a hornet's nest, it's best to wear protective clothing. Just as no general would send out an army without orders and weapons, neither has God left us clueless, unarmed or unprotected.

God has tailor-made a suit of armor for intercessors. Ephesians 6:11 tells us to put on the whole armor of God so we can resist evil and stand our ground. Here is the armor:

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace . . . take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." (Ephesians 6:14-18 NIV)

Pastor Rick Warren says he does this every time he gets up to preach. You can also keep yourself armored daily against sin and the devil this way. Let's consider this armor:

Material Pride

Wealth is too often used as a measure of personal value—an ungodly and destructive standard. It can lead to self-indulgence, arrogance and greed. (Can there ever really be "enough"?)

Here are some check-up points:

- Have material goods become the focus of my life?
- Has success dulled my appetite for the things of God?
- Is my heart in the right place? In Matthew 6:21, Jesus says that my heart will be wherever my treasure is. If what I treasure most is material, my heart will be earthbound.
- Do I spend more money on status symbols than on feeding the hungry and spreading the gospel to lost people?

These are things that shape your character and show you whether or not you are becoming more like Jesus.

Intellectual Pride

God doesn't put a premium on ignorance; in fact he tells you to study the Scriptures. But he also says you won't find him through worldly wisdom. Even an illiterate man may understand the character and ways of God and be a fountain of his grace. So, don't judge by society's standards. As one Scottish teacher observed, *"Did you nevrerr notice that God has the most disconcerning way of blessing the wrrrong people?"*

Humility means that you are teachable, that you are willing to put your PhD in your back pocket and listen to and learn from the humble.

"God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:27-29 MKJV)

Or in Harald Bredesen's version, *"God has chosen the nincompoops to confound the compoops."*

Social and Racial Pride

These attitudes can be passed right along from generation to generation. Let them stop with you. There will be no such divisions in heaven. Galatians 3:28 says that all Christ's people are one in God's sight; so all are worthy of dignity and respect. This is a great time to

face those attitudes of social and racial pride and toss them out of your life. Love and unity are our most powerful testimony to the reality and love of Jesus. He prayed for all of us:

“My prayer is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father . . . so that the world will believe you sent me.” (John 17:21 NLT)

As reconcilers, you are a beautiful gift from God to the world.

Spiritual Pride

This is a subtle one. When God uses you to teach or help others, you may be tempted to think, “I do believe I have arrived!” When you reach that lofty position in the church, the Body of Christ, you may become its pain in the neck. For instance, veteran intercessors who pray for hours at a time shouldn’t feel superior to those of us who haven’t achieved these Olympian feats. While we are all called to be intercessors, some have a specific life-calling to that ministry. They must recognize that others have life-callings different from theirs, calls the heavy-duty intercessors will never be asked to fulfill. In every area of our spiritual lives, we are to reach for excellence and holiness, but a holier-than-thou attitude, (even if it’s a secret one,) is a sure turn-off to others and to God.

As you honestly check for any of these prideful attitudes in your life, you might pray like this:

“Father, search my heart. As you show me any pride, arrogance or feelings of superiority in my life, I will confess them and hand them over to you to change my heart. Right now. (You might wait here and let God bring them to mind.) Forgive me where I have offended you, wounded your people or created division. And where others have wounded me, I ask you to forgive them, too, and reconcile all your people. Make us like Jesus. Amen”

stimulated with the Holy Spirit.” We must be regularly reshaped and refilled by God. If we read Romans 7:15-24, we’ll see the apostle Paul struggling with his human nature, too: *“Oh, what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?”* So, we think, if Paul had such a struggle, what chance do I have to overcome sin? You might even use Paul’s problems to excuse your own failures and just give up trying.

Well, don’t camp out on those verses. Paul didn’t. The ground is hard there, the sun is hot, shade and water are scarce, and there are scorpions. Time to pull up stakes and move on. Go to Romans 7 verse 25 where Paul answers his own question and shouts the source of his victory: *“Thank God! Through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

The Lord has redeemed you, too, by his blood and sent the Holy Spirit to you. Now go on to Romans 8:5 (TLB): *“Those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God.”*

The Normal Christian Life: Walking in the Spirit

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”(Galatians 5:25 KJV)

God’s own Spirit within us will teach, guide and protect us. He’ll convict us, too, if we mess up. Then we can quickly repent and move ahead. He’ll fill us up, clean us up and, someday, he’ll take us up. But it’s all his work. Our job is to seek, to ask, to surrender.

Jesus said, *“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (Luke 11:11-13 NIV).

This surrender to the Spirit, then, is the most vital part of our preparation for mission. He is our power for service; our protection against sin; our prayer-partner and protector. Don’t leave home without him.

- Glorifies Jesus (John 16:14)
- Lives in us (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- Guides us into all truth (John 16:13)
- Reveals things of God to us (John 16:15)
- Reminds us of things Jesus said (John 14:26)
- Empowers us to be Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:8)
- Strengthens us in our inner being (Ephesians 3:16)
- Gives us power to overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16)
- Convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8)
- Gifts and empowers us to enable our service to God (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

The Holy Spirit was Jesus' guide and power source and he must be ours. We have to keep plugged in.

Charles Spurgeon said, *"No matter what level of spiritual maturity we are on, we need renewed appearances, fresh manifestations, new visitations from on high . . . We need the windows of heaven to be opened again and again over our heads."*

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us and helps us in our intercession. (See Romans 8:26-27). He will show us what to pray for and how to pray for it. Our job is to search the Scriptures, wait, and listen for his voice in our hearts. It's the key to intercession that God loves to honor. The Holy Spirit is God's great gift to the intercessor.

Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, instructed those who came to share with his teams about worship and prayer: *"Just make sure they are all filled with the Spirit."* He knew what was important.

The Christian life is not just about imitating Christ and refraining from doing what no decent person would do anyway; it's about being filled with Christ's own Spirit. Jesus' disciples were filled and then refilled with the Spirit (see Acts 2:4; 4:31; 13:52). The Scriptures say we need to be refilled, too. Why refilled? Didn't the Holy Spirit come in when we first received Christ? Yes. *"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ"* (Romans 8:9 NIV). But, according to Ephesians 5:18 (Amplified) we need to *" . . . ever be filled [or ever be being filled] and*

Key #3: Prayer

"If my people . . . will pray . . ."

Here is 2 Chronicles' third requirement: Pray! Prayer is simply conversation with God. Two-sided conversation. You talk; he listens. He talks; you listen. Make every detail of your needs known to your Heavenly Father who loves you. Then listen.

One of the best and surest ways of hearing God, and making sure that God hears you, is to pray the Scriptures. They are your best prayer partners as you find what God has to say about your situation and pray his own words back to him. Remember 1 John 5:14-15? It says, *" . . . If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us and if he hears us . . . we know we have the petitions we have asked of him!"*

To get off to a good start, you might use the Psalms to prime your "prayer pump." You'll find the writers experienced just about everything you have, and then talked to God about it. Go ahead; read them out loud. God will love hearing those words again and the original authors won't mind.

Or you may respond to teaching you find there. For instance, you might pray about Psalm 1:1-2 like this:

"Lord, help me never to follow ungodly people or be fooled by them, or to enjoy hanging out with those who mock you. Put fresh love for your Word in my heart so I won't sin against you. Forgive me where I've failed in these very basic things. Please renew me in my spirit. Thank you, Father. Amen."

Of course you can choose any Scripture to pray from. After you've done that, take off on your own and just talk to the Lord. He loves you and he's your true friend. He especially likes prayers from the heart that is hungry for his fellowship.

"Father, I want to know your presence, too. I want to hear your voice in my heart, and see the transforming truths in your Word. Let that Word come alive in me to lead me and protect me from evil. I want two-way communication between us. In Jesus' name I ask you to hear my prayers

now. You know all my needs and you are my supplier! Bless me with your fellowship and, by your grace, please respond to my petitions.”

Key #4: Worship and Praise

“If my people . . . will seek my face . . .”

A fourth key to opening prayer blockades, which we’ve touched on before, is worship and praise. If you really want God’s fellowship, come and worship. That’s what “seeking his face” is all about. Come to him with thanksgiving and praise; they will fix your focus on him, and they’re a key to answered prayer: *“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart”* (Psalm 37:4 NIV). They pull you close to him as he responds to your praises. (see Psalm 22:3 NIV).

Praise and thanksgiving are “celebration” prayers. Recite God’s faithful answers to your past prayers and watch your faith grow red hot! These are the prayers that let you *“enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise”* (Psalm 100:4 NIV). This is where he waits for you.

Worship is “bowing down,” focusing-on-God prayer. Re-read aloud the Scriptures that reveal God’s holiness and heart-stopping majesty, such as Psalms 93 and 96.

Think about this as you pray: he is the eternal monarch who doesn’t need the vote to stay in office, or approval to ratify his actions. “I Am!” he says, and he is; from the tiniest sub-atomic particle to the farthest galaxy; from earthly kingdoms to unseen spiritual rulerships, he is there. Try worshipping with a Scripture here, changing the pronouns from “him” to “you” as you pray out this verse of high praise.

“For it was in you that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through you and in and for you. You yourself existed before all things and in you all things consist (cohere, are held together).” (Colossians 1:16-17 Amplified)

CHAPTER 4

AN ARMY OF LOVE

God is Love. And love is what the gospel is all about. And it’s what the PEACE Plan is all about—ordinary people taking the love of God into a world damaged by sin, poverty, and disease, many without hope or the knowledge of God. This does not go unchallenged: the Prince of Darkness hates God and mankind, and he deploys his invisible army to stop it. This is war at a cosmic level. We are all touched by this war, whether we want to be or not.

Any army must have armor, weapons, provisions, training, and leadership to do its job, and the army of Jesus Christ is no exception. The Apostle Paul, in comparing the church to an army, pointed out that we are not fighting against flesh and blood and our weapons are not made by men (see Ephesians 6:10-18). Our warfare is in the realm of the spirit. Hence the term spiritual warfare.

Jesus said he has come to destroy the works of the devil and to set the captives free (Luke 4:18). He continues to do it today through his Body on earth, the church. And though most of us seldom give it much thought, God’s angelic army is beside us. Our handicap is that we are, of course, unable to see into that realm, though they can see us (see 2 Kings 6:15-17), but we have God’s Spirit and his Word to guide us and the promise of his presence to empower us.

Our Power Source

Of all that God has given us to live victoriously and serve him triumphantly, the most important factor in our lives is the Holy Spirit. He is real, he is God, and he is available.

Here are some of the things the Bible says the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, with whom we are sealed, does in us, for us, and through us:

- Leads us (Romans 8:14)
- Teaches us (John 14:26)
- Prays for us (Romans 8:26)

Let's Talk . . .

1. What five keys to answered prayer are described in 2 Chronicles 7:14? Which, if any of these, do you feel the need to deal with in your own life?
2. Are you sure of your personal relationship with God? Now might be a good time to ask your friends to pray with you if you have any doubts. See Appendix 1 for more assistance.
3. How do worship and praise, with thanksgiving, enhance our prayer time?
4. What does Isaiah 58:6-12 tell us about God's other requirements for answered prayer?
5. What is Life Intercession, and how does it prepare the way for evangelization?
6. Discuss the power of forgiveness in setting ourselves free. (See page 28-30) Is there anyone you need to forgive?

Let's Pray . . .

- Begin with thanksgiving! Remembering God's blessings and seeking his presence increase our faith for answered prayer.
- Privately, silently, pray the prayer from Psalm 139 on page 27. Please take your time here; this is important to the maximum power of your intercession.
- Continue to pray covering and cultivating prayers for your team and your project (see pages 6-8).

St. Paul's language is lofty, but he is trying to express something of what divinity is all about. Is it any wonder that prophets and apostles fell down before the Lord like dead men? They weren't afraid of punishment; they were felled by awe.

Just think, this astounding Lord of ours is looking for worshipers! In Buddy Owens' book, *The Way of a Worshiper*, he writes, "*Jesus said in John 4:23 that the Father is looking for worshipers. So if you are looking for God and you just can't seem to find him, then stop what you are doing and worship him—and he will come find you.*"

This is a time to kneel, to raise your hands, to pray face-to-the-floor, to pray aloud with love and adoration. Most of us are not as poetic as St. Paul or the psalmists, but fortunately worship doesn't have to be fancy. It's just you loving the Lord the best you can. The more you do it, the more natural it will be.

You might pray like this with a little inspiration from the Psalms . . . and try it out loud:

"Father in Heaven, it humbles me to realize that you run the universe and yet you know my name and care about every detail of my life. How astounding is that? Oh, God, I worship you for the love and favor I didn't earn, but which you've given me anyway. You are greatly to be praised! I will declare your glory among the nations and proclaim your salvation day after day. Lord, help me to give you the praise you deserve and to be one of your best witnesses! Amen."

Remember, all the prayers we give you in this book are only "jumping off points" from where you can soar on your own.

Key #5: Repentance

"If my people . . . will turn from their wicked ways . . ."

Repentance is the next key. To repent means to reconsider; to think differently; to turn from a past course of action. We've already talked about repentance for areas of pride, but there are other things you may need to deal with before the slate is clean. God is out to make his people holy. He's after relationships with families, friends, sweethearts

and business associates. All he needs from you is a willing heart. Once God finds that, he'll call it to a continual cleansing.

No, you don't need to be saved all over again every time you fail or make a mess. But you do need to confess and repent as fast as you can to make sure things are right between you and the Lord, especially if you want your prayers answered. Psalm 66:18 says, *"If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not bear me."*

In *The Way of a Worshiper*, Buddy Owens writes:

Repentance is not a once in a lifetime commitment. It's not simply an apology with a promise to do better. It's a whole new lifestyle.

Repentance is a determination to change the way you live—to stop, turn around and head in a new direction.

Repentance is cooperating with God in the transformation of your character.

Repentance is a heart posture that is reflected in the choices you make.

Repentance is an act of worship.

Repentance is a marvelous privilege—a doorway to spiritual freedom and joy. God isn't waiting to beat you up as you confess; he's there to forgive, refresh, and renew you. So, don't put off regular heart-checks—daily is best. Keeping short accounts with God prevents unconfessed failures from piling up and building spiritual blockades in your communication with him. You can pray with the Scripture, like this, starting with Psalm 139:23-24:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me. I've come to confess as you put your finger on my heart and show me my sins. I will lay down every ungodly association, every unclean habit, every known disobedience. I confess these things now. (This is the time to name anything you know is out of the will of God.) Father, I really do repent of all the stuff that offends you and I offer you my heart so you can transform me by your Spirit. Thank you, Lord, for your forgiving grace. Amen."

succeed, pray, pray again. Remind God of your request and keep the faith. There may be some reason for the delay that you don't know about.

The prophet Daniel prayed earnestly for Israel on one occasion for three weeks before the angel Gabriel came and explained that his prayers were heard when he first started praying, but it took three weeks and a major spiritual battle between God's angels and the demon Prince of Persia to set some conditions right before Daniel's prayer could be answered (see Daniel 10:12-14).

The answer you've been praying for may not be as earthshaking as that clash of kingdoms; the delay may simply be God's timing as he prepares circumstances. Some answers take years. Remember, Jesus said, *"Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you"* (Luke 11:9 Amplified). May God grant you the desires of your heart.

* * * * *

you to contribute yourself? What can you present to the church when you return home that will involve others in solving these desperate problems in concrete practical ways, accompanied by intercessory prayer?

4. Taking on Family Responsibilities

“If anyone doesn’t provide for his own relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8 NIV)

This is a very serious, not to say scary, Scripture. Here is practical, down-to-earth Christianity. We can’t make points with God if we are neglecting our family responsibilities. These are covenant relationships. So don’t forget to think about other’s needs before splurging on yourself. Don’t forget Uncle Fred in the hospital or Grandmother in the rest home. See to their needs. Pour out your love. God doesn’t forget them. And he doesn’t forget that we forgot. It’s a point for serious repentance and change, and according to Isaiah 58, it’s a requirement for answered prayer.

All of these Isaiah 58 matters may require some confession of past failures and a whole new attitude. You might want to pray something like this:

“Heavenly Father, forgive me where I’ve failed in any of these things that are so important to you. I confess I haven’t been as sensitive to the needs of the hungry and homeless as I should be. May the Holy Spirit nudge me when I fail to pay attention to a need that you want me to fill. Forgive me for selfishness and for being self-absorbed. Holy Spirit, give me Jesus’ eyes and heart. Let me be his hands to a lost and needy world. Help me bless my family with the love and kindness and generosity of Jesus. Let my life lift him up and bring him honor. I ask it in his name. Amen.”

When Answers are Slow in Coming

So you’ve done your best to meet God’s requirements for answered prayer, but in your personal prayer life, you’re still waiting for that big one. Answers to prayer don’t always come as soon as we would like. One essential characteristic of an intercessor is stick-to-it-ive-ness. The Bible calls it importunity (Luke 11:8 KJV). If at first your prayers don’t

But Wait: There’s More!

God has other clues about unanswered prayer, too. Consider what Isaiah 58:6-12 has to say and write it in your heart. In this case the people of Israel had been fasting and praying for God’s deliverance and wondering why he was not answering. God said through the prophet:

“If you want Me to hear you, you must put away quarreling, break every yoke of oppression, feed the hungry, house the homeless, clothe the naked and take care of your relatives who need help . . . Then you shall call and the Lord will answer; you shall cry and he will say, ‘Here I am’ . . . Then your light will rise in the darkness . . . And the Lord shall guide you continually” (Our paraphrase).

This is Life-intercession. It opens hearts as people see in you the love and concern of Christ. After all, you’re on a PEACE trip because he has sent you to do these very things! But you’re also there to light up people’s souls.

Of course, you don’t mean, “If you listen to our gospel presentation, we’ll help you.” No, you help everybody you can—whomever and wherever they are. But people need to know that Jesus has sent you to bless them. If you give them the whole world, but they lose their souls because you haven’t given them the gospel, you haven’t accomplished God’s most urgent goal: Jesus’ Great Commission.

You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere . . . There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.” (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47 TLB)

So, whatever else you pray for, pray for souls. As an anonymous saint once said, *“Prayer is the real work; evangelism is just the mopping up.”*

Now, so we can effectively accomplish “the real work”, let’s get back to the first Isaiah 58 requirement for answered prayer:

I. Putting Away Quarreling

To put quarreling away means to get rid of it, to stop. It often requires apology and forgiveness. That can be hard stuff for some of us, but willingness to forgive is critical for the intercessor. Jesus tells us not to bother coming to the altar (the place to meet with God) if we’re at odds

with someone. Leave your offering, he said, and go make peace. Then come back to the altar. (see Matthew 5:23-24).

“Your heavenly Father will forgive you if you forgive those who sin against you; but if you refuse to forgive them, he will not forgive you.” (Matthew 6:14-15 TLB)

Wouldn't we all love to skip over that one? But there it is. Does that mean that if you hold a grudge, you lose your soul? No, it means there is still something standing between you and answered prayer and free fellowship with God. Remember that sin blockades prayer, and unforgiveness is sin. Your prayer offerings will sit on the altar, waiting for you to forgive.

Forgiving isn't the same as forgetting. It doesn't mean going back for another dose of abuse or betrayal. It means that you are not hoping for vengeance; that you've let it go and moved on.

“The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness.” William Blake

Nothing will heal damaged relationships and conquer resentment faster than four heartfelt words: “I'm sorry; forgive me.” Don't let pride stop you from saying them. Of course, three other sincerely spoken words are just as important: “I forgive you.”

If you're finding it hard to forgive, try this method:

- Go to the Lord and tell him all about it. (You may be mad at several people.)
- Confess your resentment as sin, mentally stuff it all in a big garbage bag; or you might make it a gift bag, since he's asked you to give all your troubles to him. However you package it, ask him to carry it away, understanding that he is willing and able to do just that.
- Receive your forgiveness by faith.
- Be free!

Does this sound too childish, too simple? Well, it is uncomplicated, but it's not always easy. Go back and do it over again if you need to, but don't hold on to that grudge just because it's taken you years to get that

mad! Let go. It will free you as well as the person who has hurt you. You might pray like this, ending with Philippians 3:13:

“Oh Lord, I confess my sin of unforgiveness and ask you to forgive me for Jesus' sake. Help me now to release every resentment to you.” (Go ahead and name them all.) *“I 'wrap them all up' and give them to you as a gift to carry away! You know my wounds. I leave them with you so that I can walk away free and start a new page, a new chapter. I am 'forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.' In Jesus' name, Amen.”*

If you can't seem to get the job done by yourself, be humble enough to ask for help. That's what counselors and intercessors are for. You were never meant to try to live the Christian life alone.

By the way, if you try your very best to make peace with someone and they refuse to receive or forgive you, don't carry around a feeling of failure or guilt. You should keep praying for them, but you're under no obligation to keep trying and trying, unless you want to.

2. Breaking the Yoke of Oppression

Oppression is the opposite of love and servanthood. These are vital concepts in addressing oppressive leadership. How do we address these things on our outreach? The best way is to model it by the way your team members relate to one another, and the way the team leader leads. As you prefer and honor one another, you model servanthood. People will quickly notice and listen to what you have to say about relationships and leadership if they see servant leaders.

Ask God to show you where poor leadership may be a problem in the community or country where you are going. Then give it serious prayer. Ask God to show you if and how you can address this. Ask for the right words and right attitude as you speak. Maybe all you will be able to do is pray. But that's a lot in itself!

3. Showing Mercy: Feeding, Clothing, Housing the Homeless

These are some of the basic “felt needs” that the PEACE plan can help meet by assisting the poor. Ask God to show you how to make an ongoing impact here. What can your team “bring to the table” that will provide more than sympathy and good wishes? What might God want