



Prayer a Way of Life

**A Training Seminar
in Personal Prayer**

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REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA**

Prayer – A Way of Life

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PRAYER: COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

Prayer is the means God has given the believer to communicate with Him. It is through communicating with God that the believer maintains a relationship with Him. It is as a result of this relationship that the believer knows the will of God. It is in obedience to the will of God that the believer advances the kingdom of God. For the believer, prayer becomes a way of life.

1. PRAYER - RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Relationship with God comes from spending time with God.

(a) OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES.

It is out of their intimacy with God that Abraham, Moses and David approached God. They appealed to Him according to the characteristics of God that He had revealed to them as they spent time with Him. Their petitions and prayer were based upon what they knew about God - His nature as He revealed Himself to them.

Abraham is counted as righteous because of his faith. He knew God as a faithful God. When he pleaded for Sodom, he said to God, “*Would you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*” (**Gen.18:23**)

Abraham knew God’s heart to save the righteous and so he pleads with God (**v.23-32**).
v.25: “*Far be it from You to do such a thing as this; to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”

Moses had learnt to depend upon the Presence of God in all circumstances. The children of Israel recognised the special relationship that Moses had with God. They watched him as he went to the tent of meeting to talk with God. (**Ex.33:8**)

When Moses pleaded with God for God’s Presence to go with them, he said, “*For how will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?*” (**Ex.33:16**) Moses was bold to remind God of His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Israel (**Ex.32:13**) and speaks to Him about His honour.(**v.12**)

David spent much time with God, learning His ways, learning to trust Him completely, and living in awe of Him. Many of the Psalms are petitions where David calls upon the nature of God to save or deliver Him.

Ps.56:3-4: “*Whenever I am afraid I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?*”

(b) JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT PRAYING

(i) By example: Jesus knew the importance of being in relationship with God.

As the disciples spent time with Him, He revealed the nature of God to them.

John 14:9: “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*”

John 10:30: “*I and My Father are one.*”

He taught His followers by example who to pray to, when to pray, how to pray, and why they should pray.

Who did He speak to in prayer? **Luke 11:2**

When did He pray? **Mark 1:35 Luke 6:12**

How did Jesus teach the believers to pray? **Mt.6:9**

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Why did Jesus (in the Garden of Gethsemane) exhort His disciples to pray? *Lu. 22:40,46*

He was teaching His disciples that a prayerless life was a life without guidance from God and led to temptation and sin.

James 4:2-3 also warns the believer that “*you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*”

(ii) In parables: He taught **perseverance**.

Luke 18:1: “*Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.*” As the believer persists and travails in prayer, the Lord gives birth to something.

(c) JESUS TAUGHT THE BELIEVER:

(i) To pray in faith – expecting answers.

Luke 18:8: “*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*”

Jesus promised that “*these signs will follow those who believe*” (*Mk16:17*), and **His expectation is that the believer will pray in obedience to Him believing for the signs.**

Mark 11:24: “*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*”

John 15:7: “*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*”

John 14:13-14: “*And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*”

(ii) to pray with authority: we are to know the authority we have been given by Christ and to pray in assurance of this authority.

Luke 10:19: “*Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*”

(iii) to approach God boldly in prayer:

Through His death, He has reconciled the believer to God and has thus given free access to the Father in heaven.

Heb.10:19 “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus*”

Hebrews 11:6 “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.*”

These promises are dependent upon our relationship with Him.

2. HOW DOES THE BELIEVER APPROACH GOD IN PRAYER?

Let’s examine the following scriptures which give us very clear guidelines as to how we approach God.

(a) WITH THANKSGIVING

Ps.100:4: “*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name.*”

Col.1:12: “*Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness*

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and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

(b) IN PRAISE AND ADORATION OF GOD

Eph.1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

Ps.8:1: “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens!”

(c) IN CONFESSION

How do we approach?

Ps.51:1-2: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”

Who do we approach?

Heb.3:1: “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.”

(d) IN SUPPLICATION

We approach with confidence in the one to whom we come,

1 John 5:14-15: “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

and in assurance that He is faithful.

Philippians 4:6-7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

(e) WITH AUTHORITY IN WARFARE

We accept the authority that Jesus has given us “over all the power of the enemy”. (Luke 10:19)

We know the power of the One we are approaching,

2 Cor.10:4: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.”

and use the weapons that He has given to us, recognising the authority of Scripture.

Eph.6:17-18: “And take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”

(f) FOR OTHERS

Paul’s letters give us many exhortations to pray for others.

Eph.6:18: “being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-”

1 Thess.1:2: “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.”

1 Tim.2:1-2: “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”

(g) ACCORDING TO JESUS’ EXAMPLE

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.(*Mt.6:6-13*)

(h) WITHOUT CEASING

1 Thess.5:17 “Pray without ceasing.”

Our spirits are alive to God at all times. To pray without ceasing, we are dependent upon the Spirit of God. We do not always know how to pray or what we are to pray for. God has promised to help us in this.

(i) IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Rom.8:26 “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

3. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY?

(a) THE HOLY SPIRIT IS RELEASED AS PEOPLE PRAY.

Acts 4:31: “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

(b) HEALINGS COME AS THE BELIEVERS PRAY.

James 5:15: “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Acts 28:8: “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.”

(c) THERE IS JOY AS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

John 16:24: “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be complete.”

(d) THERE IS CHURCH GROWTH.

As the early disciples gave themselves “to prayer and the ministry of the word” (**Acts 6:4**), “then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (**Acts 6:7**).

(e) THE LORD REWARDS.

Luke 11:9-10: “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

What does the Lord promise to do for those who come to Him believing? **Heb.11:6**

Let us pray believing and expecting.

Jesus said the “violent”, i.e. those who are energetic and active in prayer will take the kingdom by force. (**Mt.11:12**)

[violent – Strong’s Gk.973 a forcer i.e.(fig.) energetic:-violent]

Let us pray with authority and enforce God’s rule here on earth.

Jesus has given us authority in prayer “over all the power of the enemy, and nothing

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shall by any means hurt you.” (*Luke 10:19*)

**LET US “PRESS IN” IN PRAYER
SO THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL ADVANCE. (Lu 16:16)**

EXERCISE:

Look at the following scriptures to see how God answered prayers.

1 Kings 18:36-39

1 Kings 18:41-46

Job:42:10

Jonah 2:1-2, 10

Acts16:25-34

LISTENING TO GOD and TALKING WITH HIM.

When God created man, He made him in His own image and commissioned him to “have dominion over all the earth”(Gen. 1:28). **We are created in God’s image so that He could communicate with us and it has always been His plan and desire to instruct and to guide man to fulfil this plan.**

GOD AND THE PROPHETS

God has promised that He does nothing without first telling the prophets (*Amos 3:7*) and the Bible is full of examples of God communicating with man, sharing with man what He is about to do. **God still wants to speak through the prophets to build His church.** In the New Testament, the apostle Paul reminds us that the household of God will be built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. (*Ephesians 2:20*). Right through Scripture God has kept reassuring His people that He would be with them, that He would never forsake them. (*Deut.4:31*)

GOD SPOKE TO MEN AS TO A FRIEND

In Scripture we see examples of men and women hearing from God and speaking with Him as with a friend e.g. “*So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend*” (*Ex. 33:11*).

GOD SPEAKS TO MEN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Heb.1:1-2 “*God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.*”

GOD SPEAKS TO MEN THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

When Jesus returned to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with us. What did He assure us the Holy Spirit would do?

John 14:26 “*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will, teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*”

Today as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission we can expect God to speak to us and guide us as He has always done in the past. Jesus has promised that He will build His church. (*Matt. 16:18*) But He has left the actual task to the saints to do, with the promise, “*Lo, I am with you till the end of the age*” (*Matt. 28:18-20*).

**How will we know where to go and what to do next
unless the Lord speaks to us and guides us?**

What does the Bible call those who are led by the Spirit of God? *Romans 8:14*

As we trust Him, what does God promise to do for us? *Ps.32:8*

Today we need to be listening to God and seeking His face; waiting expectantly for His answers; being in relationship with Him in such a way that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us “*things to come*” (*John 16:13*).

As His friends, Jesus will fulfil His promise to make known to us all that He has heard from His Father through the Holy Spirit (*John 15:15*), so that “whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you” (*v.16*).

HOW DOES GOD GUIDE?

A) THE BIBLE – THE WORD OF GOD.

B) THE HOLY SPIRIT –through DREAMS, VISIONS and PROPHECY.

C) CIRCUMSTANCES.

A) THE BIBLE – THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible is God speaking to us.

It is written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2 Tim.3:16-17 : “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Rom.15:4 says that everything that is written there is for us to learn “*that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*”

(a) God’s word guides us.

Ps.119: 105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

God has promised to put His word in our hearts and His law in our minds.*(Jer.31:33)*

(b) It is God’s expressed will.

God has clearly expressed His will in His word. We don’t need any further instructions about how we are to behave in many areas of our lives. e.g. *Gal.5:19-21* gives moral guidelines and warns of the punishment for disobedience.

(c) It is God’s letter to man. It records the deeds of God and man. It is called “The Word of God” because it also records the different ways in which God has spoken to man.

From the beginning in the book of Genesis, we see God seeking man (Adam) to speak with him. *(Gen.3:9)*

He gives very specific instructions to Noah “who walked with God” *(Gen.6:9)*, and to Abram.*(Gen.12:1-3)* Both these men were obedient to God and consequently were blessed.

(d) It reveals the nature of God. This is important because it is out of our knowing what God is like that we are able to converse with Him.

There are many **conversations between God and man** recorded in Scripture. We read that “*God said to...*” and “*The word of the Lord came to...*” In fact, in reprimanding Aaron and Miriam, the Lord said of Moses, “*I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings.*” *(Num12:8)*

e.g. God conversed with Abraham *(Gen18:23-32)*

with Moses *(Ex33:12-23)*

with Jeremiah *(Jer.1:4-8)*

with Ananias *(Acts9:10-16)*

These and many others knew God’s character because they took time to be with Him. Therefore they were bold to converse with God and heard so clearly from Him.

Because of their relationship with Him these men changed the course of events as they conversed with God. Scripture records them **drawing apart to spend time alone with Him.** To hear clearly from God, **we, too, need to draw apart to be with Him.** We will not hear God distinctly if half our attention is on something else.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND GOD’S WORD

Because God’s word is inspired, we need to **ask the Holy Spirit for revelation or enlightenment as we read.** Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come and guide us into all truth. (**John 16:13**) The apostle Paul prays for enlightenment in **Ephesians 1:17-18.** Jesus said, *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* (**John 8:31-32**)

B) THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit Guides through Dreams, Visions Prophecy.

God has promised dreams, visions and prophecy to mankind with the outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

Joel 2:28 *“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”*

On the day of Pentecost Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled. (**Acts 2:17**)

GOD SPOKE TO MEN THROUGH DREAMS, VISIONS AND PROPHECIES:

(a) telling what was to come

Dreams and visions are often prophetic. Joseph had dreams himself and also was given the ability to interpret the dreams of others to whom God gave dreams. (**Gen. 37:5, 40:8, 41:15**)

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will tell us what is to come. (**John 16:13**) He also told us that *“the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner”* (**John 5:19**).

(b) bringing a warning

God spoke to Laban, Jacob’s father-in-law in a dream. (**Gen. 31:24**) God warned Joseph and the three Magi in dreams. (**Matt. 2:12-13**)

The Book of Revelation is the record of the vision Jesus Christ gave to John. The whole book is both a warning to mankind and a wonderful promise of where Christ is now and where we will be one day.

(c) giving directions and encouragement from God. **Prov.29:18** tells us that without visions people have no hope. Peter saw a vision that prepared him to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel. (**Acts 10:9-16**)

WHAT TO DO WITH A DREAM, VISION OR PROPHECY

We are to **expect God to speak through dreams, visions and prophecy as well as through His word.** Once God gives a dream or vision, it is our responsibility to **seek Him for further understanding** of what He has revealed. Many times the gift of interpretation of visions is released in the corporate prayer meeting.

Sometimes it may be necessary to seek understanding of a dream from a godly person who is known to have the gift of discernment. **What is revealed will always line up with Scripture and will leave us with peace.**

Hab2:1 encourages us to *“watch and see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.”*

v.2-3 : the Lord gives directions to record the vision and to wait for its fulfilment.

Pray the dream or vision into place.

PEACE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The prophetic word brought in a meeting will encourage those present, correct according to the scriptures, confirm what the hearer already senses God to be saying. **God's directions will always agree with Scripture, and will always leave us with peace.** God never brings confusion or doubt to us. The Holy Spirit guides us when we are in tune with God. He convicts us of sin and error, but never condemns us.

When the **Holy Spirit** convicts, He is **always specific** and shows us how to rectify the situation. **He restores our peace**, whereas condemnation leaves us with unease and there doesn't seem to be a way out of the situation. This is how we are able to distinguish between His advice and the tauntings of the devil.

C) CIRCUMSTANCES

There are times when **God opens doors** and gives us **opportunities** to go ahead with something that He has given us a desire to do. These doorways open in **God's timing**. e.g. Peter received a vision from God and an assurance from the Spirit of God.

Confirmation came when visitors arrived to invite him to go with them to the house of Cornelius. The door opened for him to obey the vision. (*Acts 10:9-23*)

As God opens a door, our circumstances come into line with what we desire and with what God is saying in the Bible. The Holy Spirit gives us peace in the situation so we know it is God speaking to us.

What does Jesus say about the doors He opens and shuts? *Rev.3:7*

To be sure we are in the perfect will of God, these three things, the Word of God, the confirmation that the Holy Spirit gives through dreams, visions or prophecy, and our circumstances must all line up.

HOW DO I HEAR GOD MORE CLEARLY?

Set time aside to be with Him in a place with no distractions. (*Mark 1:35*)

Be quiet and focus upon God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Spend time **praying in the Spirit**. Exercise the gift of tongues.

Read the Word of God asking the Holy Spirit for revelation. (*Ephesians 1:17-18*) Pray according to the scriptures you are reading. Ask for understanding for what God is saying in the passage and what its relevance is to me today.

Expect God to hear you when you speak to Him. Then wait for Him to answer you. (*1 John 5:14-15*) Have a pen and paper handy to record what He says.

Give thanks for what you hear.

WHAT HINDERS ME FROM HEARING FROM GOD?

Deliberate sin. (*Is.59:2*)

Unforgiveness toward another person. (*Matt.6:15*)

Wrong relationship between a man and his wife. (*1Pet.3:7*)

Selfish motives. (*James 4:3*)

Involvement with other 'gods'; yoga, meditation, all occult practices such as fortune-telling, 'cards' etc. (*Ex.20:3-5*)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In Luke's account of the Lord's prayer, the disciples asked Jesus: "*Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples*" **Luke 11:1**.

In **Mt.6:9**, Jesus said: "*In this manner, therefore pray:*"

Throughout history, this prayer has been recited with sincerity and great faith. It also has been used as a model in the prayer life of the church.

In it, Jesus has given us a summary of some important issues to pray.

A. WE FOCUS ON GOD and COME INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON.

B. WE WORSHIP GOD.

C. WE PRAY FOR HIS KINGDOM TO COME.

D. WE SEEK HIS WILL.

E. WE PETITION GOD FOR OUR NEEDS.

F. WE SEEK FORGIVENESS.

G. WE ASK FOR GUIDANCE.

H. WE PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE EVIL ONE.

I. WE CONCLUDE IN WORSHIP.

In this study, we will look at and interpret each verse according to Scripture, and pray with enlightened understanding.

A. WE FOCUS ON GOD AND COME INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

"Our Father"

Jesus draws us into family relationship with God Almighty, Creator of the universe, through Himself. We are to call God, "Our Father".

We receive "*the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'*" (**Rom. 8:15**).

We are given an assurance of a place in the family of God. As we reflect on this relationship, we are filled with awe as we recognise the inheritance that has been given to us. "*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God*" (**1 John 3:1**.)

"In heaven"

God dwells in heaven, His eternal home. "*Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool.*" (**Is.66:1-2**). We see God in all His glory enthroned on high, in heaven, yet esteeming and wanting to dwell with the humble and contrite of heart. We remember that Jesus has already risen and is seated at the Father's right hand in heavenly places, (**Eph. 1:20**) and we have been raised up and made to "*sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" (**Eph.2:6**). "*Our citizenship is in heaven*" (**Phil.3:20**) and we are to keep our minds fixed on heavenly things and seek "*those things which are from above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God*" (**Col.3:1-3**). We lift our eyes from earthly things to focus on God.

We meditate on passages of Scripture that describe heaven.

Neither Ezekiel nor John (who both received visions of heaven) can find adequate words to describe what they saw in their visions. They tell of things that are "like" or "having the appearance of". (**Ez.1:27-28**)

However, we are given the impression of a place of inexpressible beauty and we can

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meditate on what they describe:

the inhabitants worship non-stop (**Rev.5:14**)

the radiance of God and of the Son provides the light (**Rev.21:23**)

the throne of God is central (**Rev.4:2**)

streams of living water flow from this throne with water for healing. (**Rev. 22:1-2**)

“a house not made by human hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

B.WE WORSHIP GOD BY HALLOWING HIS NAME

“Hallowed be Your name.”

His name is special. Jesus is telling us to praise and honour God’s name

[hallow: to make holy, to venerate;-hallow, be holy, sanctify. Gk.#37 SC]

We have very clear pictures of worship in heaven where heavenly beings hallow the name of the Lord. **Rev.4:8:** *“And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*

THE NAME OF GOD

God told Moses His name was **“I AM WHO I AM.” Ex.3:14**

Since that time God has revealed Himself in His name in a number of ways on various occasions. His names reveal His nature and His character.

Some Names Of God:

Jehovah - Jireh: the LORD will provide **Gen.22:14 I AM IS OUR PROVIDER.**

Jehovah - Rophe: the LORD who heals you **Ex.15:26**

Jehovah - Nissi: the LORD is my banner **Ex.17:15**

Jehovah M’Kaddesh: I am the LORD who sanctifies you **Lev.20:8**

Jehovah - Shalom: the LORD is Peace **Judges 6:24**

Jehovah - Tsidkenu: the LORD our righteousness **Jer.23:6**

Jehovah - Rohi: the LORD is my shepherd **Ps.23:1**

Jehovah - Shammah: the LORD is there **Ezek.48:35**

[Please note that JEHOVAH is not an accurate translation of the name of the LORD from the Old Testament Hebrew. This form of His Name has been popularised. In more recent times, YAHWEH has been used for the transliteration of His Name. This is more closely derived from the 4 consonants, YHWH, which is apparently how the Name appears in the original text (ie. four Hebrew consonants).

The Jewish believers of Old Testament days never spoke the Name but referred to the LORD by the name ADONAI, which means Lord or Master. In most English Bibles, the Name of the LORD, appears as LORD, that is, the four letters are all rendered in upper case or as capital letters. When the title ADONAI is translated into English, it is written as Lord, ie. 1 upper case, then 3 lower case letters.]

THE NAME OF JESUS

“His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is.9:6).

“the virgin shall bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Is.7:14). God is with us.

The **Lord** (supreme in authority, controller, master) **Jesus** (Jehovah is salvation) **Christ** (Messiah, the promised one) is the full title given to the Son of God. As His name is truly acknowledged the Father is glorified.

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue

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should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”(Phil.2:11).

In Jesus, God has fulfilled all that He revealed Himself to be in the Old Testament. In truth the Lord Jesus Christ has become my provider, my healer, my banner, my righteousness, my peace, my sanctifier, my shepherd, my everything. Jesus has declared to us the Father’s name. (**John 17:26**) He has prayed that the Father would keep (protect) us through His name. (**Jn. 17:11**) There is safety and deliverance through His name.

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” (**Prov.18:10**)

“Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” **Acts2:21**

As we lift His name high, Jesus will draw all men to Himself. (**John 12:32**) As we praise God and hallow His name we give others the opportunity to hear about Him and thus the opportunity to know Him.

C.WE PRAY FOR HIS KINGDOM TO COME

“Your Kingdom come”.

We are praying for the Kingdom that will reflect all the attributes of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (**Revelation 19:16**) Only this King has the right and authority to claim divine worship. John the Baptist prepared the people for the coming of Jesus warning them that *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (**Mt.3:2**). Jesus began His ministry by preaching repentance *“for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (**Mt4:17**). In other words, the kingdom came (was revealed) in Jesus, the King.

The **words** and **works** of Jesus demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

His words:

He spoke parables to give us understanding of the Kingdom.**Mt13**

He taught that we enter the Kingdom through repentance. **Mt4:17**

He said that the Kingdom of God is within. **Luke 17:21** and that we must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. **John 3:3,5**

We are to seek first the Kingdom of God. This should be first priority in our lives. **Mt.6:33**

He taught that obedience to the will of God is essential as a prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of heaven. **Mt.7:21**

His works:

Jesus demonstrated the Kingdom of God with signs of deliverance from demons (Mt.12:28) and with healings.

1 Cor.4:20; *“For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power”*

Rom.14:17: The Kingdom is *“in the Holy Spirit”* and its power is ministered through the gifts of the Spirit. We are to bring forth fruits of the Kingdom. **Mt.21:43**

Jesus Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension has raised us up to be instruments of the Kingdom. We are to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to *“all the nations”* (**Mt.28:19**); to *“every creature”* with signs (**Mk.16:15**); and *“then the end will come”* (**Mt.24:14**). The Kingdom of God replaces the kingdom of the demonic powers. (**2 Cor.10:3-6; Phil.2:9-11**)

Jesus will be honoured by all men and all powers. **Rev.11:15**

When will the end come? **1 Cor 15:24**

Who will inherit the Kingdom? **Mt.25:34**

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This is the Kingdom for which we are praying: the Kingdom of God which is *“righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom.14:17).*

D. WE PRAY FOR HIS WILL TO BE DONE

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

We discover what God’s will is in His word - the Bible. We have already seen God’s ultimate will for the Kingdom and for his saints. The word of God transforms us by the renewing of our minds that we “may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (**Rom.12:2**). We are to *“understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph.5:17).*

As we receive revelation through the word of God, we become more like Jesus and God’s will is done on earth. **2 Pet.1:3-4**: *“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature....”*

The word of God reveals His will for:

those in authority **1 Tim.2:1-6**

all to be saved **1 Tim.2:4;2Pet.3:9**

His followers to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt,28:19-20).*

Jesus Obeys The Will Of God

Jesus makes it clear that all He says and does is in accordance with the Father’s will. **John 5:19; 14:10b**

What does Jesus say about Himself? **John 6:38-40**

In prayer we seek to discern God’s will for particular people and for particular situations. It is the abiding word that reveals God’s will (**John 15:7**) and Jesus has promised His Spirit will declare what is His to us. (**John 16:15**)

E. WE PETITION GOD FOR OUR NEEDS

“Give us this day our daily bread”.

What is our daily bread? Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our temporal needs. **Mt.6:25-32** He has promised that if we seek first His Kingdom, then everything else will be added unto us.v.33

The true bread of life is a person.

John 6:33: *“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”* Jesus is the bread of life. We are to eat and drink of His life daily..**Jn 6:50-56**

Jesus said: *“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).*

Bread is frequently used as a symbol for spiritual food throughout Scripture: the manna, the table of showbread, the Passover bread (now the communion bread). Job *“treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).*

God invites us to eat of the abundance that He gives. *“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance” (Is.55:2).*

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In prayer ask God daily for your spiritual food. His word is food to nourish our spirits and our souls.

His word is also seed for us to sow into the lives of other people. It is *“seed to the sower and bread to the eater” (Is. 55:10)*.

E. WE SEEK FORGIVENESS

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”.

We recognise that forgiving others is foundational to receiving forgiveness ourselves. Jesus emphasises this in *Mt.6:14-15*, *Mk.11:25-26* and in the parable about forgiveness. *Mt.18:21-35* Many times healing and deliverance come as a person forgives someone who has hurt them, or someone whom they feel owes them something. There are occasions when the hurt or abuse has been so great that we need special grace from the Lord to be able to forgive. When we choose to forgive, God gives this grace to enable our forgiveness to be real. Forgiveness does not mean we agree with the wrong done. God hates sin, but forgives the sinner.

**As we focus on the cross, we see that Jesus died for the sin of the whole world.
That includes the sin committed against us.**

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Through the grace of God, when we forgive someone, the pain and hurt fade from the memory.

H. WE ASK FOR GUIDANCE

“And do not lead us into temptation”.

God does not tempt us!

“For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world”(1 John 2:16).

“but he who does the will of the Father abides forever” (v.17).

How are we tempted? *James 1:14*

What advice does Paul give to Timothy? *2 Tim.2:22*

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).

**We know:
our sins are forgiven
we are sons and daughters of God
we are seated with Christ in heavenly places
Jesus is in heaven interceding for us
His blood is on the mercy seat
Jesus has overcome all the power of the evil one**

G. WE PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE EVIL ONE

“But deliver us from the evil one”.

Jesus prayed for our protection: *“I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15).*

The word of God abides in us and we overcome through the blood of the Lamb (knowing what Jesus has accomplished for us at Calvary) and the word of our testimony (telling others what He has done for us, or confessing the rhema word as in *Mt.4:4,7,10* when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.)

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When we are tempted, ask for the way of escape, 1 Cor.10:13

Rom.8:33-34 *“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, and is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”*

As we see what Jesus has done we focus on Him, recognising His great power to deliver and save us from the evil one.

What do we do? **James 4:7-8**

We use the weapons God has given us, for they are *“mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4).*

We bring *“every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (v.5).*

We use *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph.6:17).*

We reject all the lies of the evil one. God delivers us from the evil one as we trust Him.

What is our confidence in Christ Jesus? **1Jn.5:18-20**

Who overcomes the world? **1 Jn.5:5**

Recognise these truths and “overcome evil with good”(Rom.12:21).

I. WE CONCLUDE IN WORSHIP

“For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

we praise and exalt the Lord, giving all the glory unto Him

we have entered into an awareness of His kingdom, an experience of His power and the exaltation of His glory

we have entered into a family relationship with God Almighty and have worshipped our heavenly Father

we seek for His Kingdom to come here on earth

we grow in the knowledge of His will, being used by the sovereign Lord to be a vehicle whereby His will is executed through prayer in the earth

we feed on the “finest of the wheat”, our food

we repent of all sin and receive God’s forgiveness on the condition that we forgive others

we deal with our weaknesses, avoiding temptation as the Lord guides us, warning us through His word

we enter into necessary warfare

we end the prayer caught up in exaltant worship of our great God and King.

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE

Go to a quiet place alone. Write the Lord’s prayer leaving space between each verse. In the spaces note thoughts, prayer points, scriptures and anything else that comes to you. Talk with the Lord as you do this prayer exercise. Remember, prayer is communication with God, two-way dialogue. Ask the Lord to speak to you and guide you.

PRAYING SCRIPTURE.

THE ABIDING WORD

Jesus said in **Jn.15:7**, "*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you*". Jesus offers an open ticket for prayer being answered. However this open ticket is conditional upon our abiding in Christ and His words (rhema) abiding in us.

**The result of such prayer is the Father is glorified,
we are fruitful, thus proving our discipleship (v.8).**

LOGOS and RHEMA

In the New Testament, two Greek words appear that are translated generally by the same English word. The Greek words in English transliteration are **logos** and **rhema**.

Jn. 1:1: "*in the beginning was the Word (logos)...*". Here the logos refers to Jesus. In many other verses, the word logos is used and translated "word", (approx.200 times). As well logos is translated by various other English words such as:- communication, doctrine, question and up to eighteen other words. The logos refers to the Bible being the "word of God", the objective revealed word, recorded in total for us.

In **Mt.4:4**, Jesus said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of God*". Here the Lord gives an explanation of the word rhema, the word that is proceeding from the mouth of God, a now word, a quickened word.

It is a most informative study to look up a concordance and list the verses in which the word rhema is used (approx.60times).

For example:

Rom.10:17: "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) concerning Christ, (or the rhema of God)*".

Mary answered the angel in **Luke 1:38**: "*Be it done unto me according to Thy word*".

Rom.10:8: "*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...*".

What is the key that Jesus gave us to praying scripture? **Jn.15:7**

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Praying scripture is both a disciplined learning process as well as a revelatory release of the knowledge of God's will. Together the process and the release make up a fulfilling and rewarding prayer experience.

HOW IT CAN WORK:

Recently, I was driving to an early morning prayer session. I was prayerfully putting on the whole armour of God (**Eph.6:13**). As I took the shield of faith, I was confessing faith in Jesus Christ over my family and talking to God about each family member. Suddenly, I remembered God's word to Abram in, **Gen.15:1** "*I am a shield to you*". This excited me greatly as I realised God Himself is our shield, that putting on the shield of faith was actually accepting God as my shield. The nearness of God as my shield was exciting. What is more, I recalled that God called Abram as the father of a family (**Gen.18:19**), and it seemed God was saying to me, I am a shield to your family as well. Praise God. With great release and joy, I thanked Him for being my family's shield. When I shared this quickened understanding with the prayer group,

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they were blessed and encouraged.

THE KEY IS FAITH:

Jesus teaches on prayer in *Mark 11:22-25*.

(i) The key is faith in God. "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen*". (*Heb.11:1*) In other words, **faith is believing in God on the basis of what His word tells us about Him and reveals Him to be.**

(ii) Secondly, "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (*Rom.10:17*). But this is the rhema word from God, the quickened word that releases faith as we hear His voice.

(iii) We pray, believing we have received what we ask for; and it will be granted. (*Mk.11:24*) We pray in response to hearing God's word which has quickened faith in our hearts. We do not pray in blind faith for biblical faith is based on hearing from God. We know we are praying in the will of God and have confidence that He will hear us and answer.

Effective prayer is prayer made in faith, and faith is derived from and grows through our knowledge of the word as it is revealed or quickened by the Lord to our understanding. In effect we are praying scripture.

When we pray the Lord's prayer we are obviously praying scripture. It is more effective in some instances to apply the verses of this prayer laterally, that is by understanding each verse from a broader scriptural context and praying in the light of that understanding

WHAT DO WE PRAY?

There are innumerable starting points in scripture. We will start in *Rom.12:1-3*.

1. Present Your Bodies:

The scripture tells us to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice. This is our least spiritual worship. I find there are no better words to pray than the words of scripture: "Lord, I offer myself to You, my whole body as a living sacrifice through Your mercy. I thank You, Lord, that I am holy and acceptable to You. Lord I worship you".

2. Be Transformed in Your Thinking:

Verse 2 tells us to be transformed through the renewing of our minds. This is the exact opposite to thinking in the world's way. I recognise that the Holy Spirit gives me the spirit of a renewed mind (*Eph.4:23*), and I thank Him that this spirit is of love, power and a sound mind (*2Tim.1:7*). As my mind is renewed through meditating on the word of God, I am able to prove what the will of God is.

How do I know the will of God? Through a growing knowledge of the word. This does not mean I have to be able to recall reams of scripture. I can read and God has written His word to us. If I need further help to find the answers in scripture there are cross-referenced bibles and dictionaries and concordances.

3. I Pray in Agreement with God:

Turn to *Mt.6:25-34*. If I am anxious about some temporal issue, I pray in agreement

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with verse 31 and thank God that He knows my needs. Then in the obedience of faith, I seek His kingdom and His righteousness, and prepare myself for the challenges of that day. These verses of scripture need to be applied regularly in prayer as Christians easily become anxious about their temporal needs.

Philippians 4:6-7 give us further grounds to deal with anxiety and to know how to pray scripturally. We are to present our requests with thanksgiving. We know God has heard us when we receive the "*peace of God in our spirits*".

4. Personalise the Text:

Turn to **Ephesians chapter 1**, and simply prayerfully read from verse 1. Paul is writing to me, a saint in Toowoomba, who is faithful in Christ Jesus. As I read I put my name in the text and personalise the pronouns. I own it; I pray the text; I am encouraged and quickened by the word. Often I end up in praise or singing because I want to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed me with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places (**v.3**).

5. Proving What the Will of God is:

Colossians 3 is a powerful passage to pray through, obediently doing what the scripture says:

- (i) I recognise that I have been raised up with Christ and I am to seek the things above;
- (ii) fixing my mind on things above, I move into the spiritual realm, realising I have a reborn spirit and God the Holy Spirit dwells within: my life is hidden in Christ. I go into the secret place in Him and commune with God.
- (iii) **v.5-9**, I confess sin to God, hating its presence in my life, forsaking ungodliness and putting off wrong attitudes and emotions.
- (iv) I identify with the new man who has been renewed or recreated in Christ Jesus (**Eph.2:10**), putting on all the godly characteristics listed in **v.12-15**.
- (v) **v.16** instructs me to "*let the word of Christ dwell richly within*"; this is logos here. In other words I immerse myself in the reading of scripture; I read it prayerfully, asking the Lord to reveal Himself through His word. As well the scripture exhorts us to sing songs and psalms that express the word.
- (vi) **v.17** propels me into action.

Praying scripture is powerful; it is enjoyable; it is revelatory; it is instructional; it is proving what the will of God is: that which is "good, acceptable and perfect"(Rom.12:2).

6. Each has Received a Measure of Faith:

Notice in **Rom.12:3**, each of us has received a measure of faith. The Greek word for faith is pistis but comes from a root word peitho, to persuade, to have confidence. The apostle says each has received a measure of this faith from God. The measure is sufficient to serve Him through the gifts then listed in **Rom.12**. Thank God for the faith He has put in your heart.

Our understanding of the true God will always be based on the revelation of scripture. Our confidence is in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the Bible.

PUTTING ON THE ARMOUR OF GOD

Many of us have been instructed to prayerfully put on the whole armour of God each day (**Eph.6:10-18**). How do you do this? Do you mechanically repeat the items of

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armour, telling God you are putting on the helmet, the breastplate, the shoes etc. Or do you prayerfully and meditatively apply these scriptural truths to your life and bring your thinking and planning into agreement with God's will for you in that day. For example, the helmet obviously protects our head, which represents both our decision-making centre and our mind. What is more, it is the helmet of salvation which gives a huge scope of Bible truth to recognise and think upon.

Isaiah 26:3 tells us of the fruit of a mind that is fixed on God. *Col.3:1-2* tells us to think on things above. Simply taking a symbolic helmet and with accompanying actions, pretending to place it over our heads will not achieve much. But confessing and believing God's word about salvation, about the renewal of the mind, and meditating on His word day and night, will be very effective and powerful, building us up to resist the evil one, and protecting us from ungodly thoughts.

BE BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Eph.5:19 tells us that being filled with the Spirit means speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. Have you noticed that many of the choruses are direct quotes from scripture? that many of the hymns and spiritual songs express great Bible truths and doctrines? Praise and thanksgiving and sung worship are very much part of prayer. As we do what the scripture says - we sing scripture - we are being filled with the Spirit.

SOME PRAYERS IN SCRIPTURE

1. The Early Church Prayed Scripture:

In *Acts 4*, the company of believers quoted passages of scripture in their corporate prayer. In *verse 24*, they quote from *Exodus 20:11* and *Psalms 146:6*, and then in *verses 25-26*, *Psalms 2:1-2* is quoted.

2. Paul Prays for Us:

Paul's prayers for the church are inspirational. I often pray the very same prayers for myself and for our church.

Eph.1:15-19: Paul includes thanksgiving, confession and intercession in his prayers. He prays that we will be enlightened to know the revealed will of God for His people.

Eph.3:14-21 Paul is expressively God-centred in his prayers; so conscious of the Lord's power and purpose. It is because of God's riches in glory that Paul believes He will abundantly answer the prayers. The answer will come in power and will be of the Spirit.

This prayer takes us deeper into the love of Christ. God's life will overflow into His people. God will share His glory with no man but He freely pours it out on His people in Christ. Christians are no longer "after the flesh, but after the Spirit". Notice that the power through which God answers is actually already working in the believers. No wonder Paul says "*to Him be glory in the church*".

In *Eph.6:18*, Paul exhorts us to continual prayer for the saints. Look in *Phil.1:3-11* for ideas as to how to pray for people. It is not: "Lord bless someone and make them happy", but rather "that the saints' love may abound more and more in real knowledge and all discernment".

Again in Colossians, Paul excels himself in enlightened prayer for the church. Prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of inspired exhortation and revelatory direction flow. Paul cannot help but break forth in profound praise of the great God who makes all these things possible.

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Eph.3:21
Rom.16:27

Phil.4:20

Rom.11:36

1Tim.1:17

Jude also breaks forth in a powerful statement of praise, confession, adoration and worship (v.24-25).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Amen (Eph.1:3).

INDIVIDUAL WORKSHOP EXERCISE:

Choose a passage of scripture and go to a quiet place alone with God. Pray through the scripture. You may then wish to write a prayer based on what the scripture is saying.

Some suggested passages are:

Gen.15:1-6; Gen32:24-32; Exod.33:13-23;

Josh.5:13-15; Ps.23:1-3; Ps.23:4-6;

Ps.27:4-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Is. 43:18-19;

Jer.29:11-14; Jer.31:31-34; Hos.6:1-3;

Joel 2:28-32; John 10:9-11; Jn.10:14-17;

Rom.10:9-11; Eph.1:17-19; Eph.3:14-21;

Phil.3:10-14

These are but a few of the innumerable passages of scripture that inspire powerful prayer, based on hearing what God is saying in the scripture.

FASTING

The word “**fast**” comes from the Hebrew word “tsuwm” meaning “to cover the mouth” (Strong Concordance #6685); and from the Greek word “nesteuo” meaning “to abstain from food” (SC #3522)

Derek Prince describes fasting as “*voluntarily abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.*”.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT / FASTING

The **Day of Atonement** was established in the Jewish calendar as a day of fasting when the people recognised that they could do nothing to free themselves from sin. On that day, God said, “*You shall afflict your souls*”(Lev.16:29). They were required to humble themselves before God.(Leviticus 23:26-29)There are many references in the Old Testament to this **Day of Fasting / Atonement**. It became a regular discipline to bring a focus onto God. This is the Fast that Paul refers to when he tried to dissuade the centurion from sailing in inclement weather.(Acts 27:9)

FASTING IN GENERAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are also many references to fasting apart from this regular day. In every instance there is a recognition of the need to be humble before God: in repentance, seeking revelation and guidance, to petition God for help in time of need, in mourning. Often fasting was associated with sackcloth and ashes, signifying the humbling of oneself. Fasting was always meant to bring the carnal nature under submission to obey the Spirit of God in man; to bring the carnal nature into subjection.

Thus David says: “*I humbled myself with fasting*”(Ps.35:13)“*and chastened my soul with fasting*”(Ps.69:10).

There are three types of fasting spoken of in Scripture:

- (a) **THE NORMAL FAST**
- (b) **THE PARTIAL FAST**
- (c) **THE ABSOLUTE FAST**

(a) **THE NORMAL FAST** involves **abstinence from food**, but not from fluids. e.g.Jesus in the desert “*ate nothing*” (Luke 4:2) and later “*He was hungry*”.

(b) **THE PARTIAL FAST** involves restriction of diet for a period of time. e.g.Daniel in mourning “*ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine*” for three weeks (Daniel 10:3).

(c) **THE ABSOLUTE FAST** is **abstinence from both food and drink** for a period of time. e.g.Acts 9:9 records that Saul “*neither ate nor drank*” for three days. Esther sends out an edict to “*neither eat nor drink for three days, day or night*” (Est. 4:16)

Ezra “*ate no bread and drank no water*”(Ezra 10:6) as he mourned for the sins of the people.

[Three days is the absolute maximum length of time to go without water, without supernatural intervention.]

Moses was on Mount Sinai “*with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither*

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ate bread nor drank water” (**Ex.34:28**). We can only assume that this must have been a supernatural fast where Moses was in the Lord’s presence (with the LORD).

REASONS FOR FASTING

1. TO FOCUS ON GOD

Zech.7:5: “Did you really fast for Me - for Me?”

Arthur Wallis says: “Fasting has a way of detaching us from the world of the material so that our thinking becomes rightly orientated, focused on God and the unseen world of which He is the centre.”

A fast according to God’s plan is to be unto Him: where **we set ourselves apart for Him, to minister to Him, to honour and glorify Him, to accomplish His will.**

Mt.6:18: “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” for such a fast as this.

2. FOR PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION.

Ps 69:10: “When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting.”

This kind of fasting leads to repentance and mourning.

3. FOR NATIONAL REPENTANCE.

What did the children of Israel do as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their fathers? **Neh.9:1-2**

How did Ezra humble himself as he pleads for the nation? **Ezra 9:3-6**

Who did Samuel call to fast as he judged the nation for their sins? **1 Sam. 7:5-6**

Daniel set his face “toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes” to plead for God’s mercy for the children of Israel (**Dan.9:35**).

4. TO BE HEARD BY GOD.

Fasting brings an urgency into our praying and gives force to our pleading. Fasting to find God indicates we are seriously seeking God. The Lord says “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning” **Joel 2:12. v.15** “Consecrate a fast”

v.17 “Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O LORD’.”

In **God’s chosen fast Isa.58:3b-5**, the Lord reprimands His people because their fasting is with the wrong focus and motive. **v9** He promises to answer when we fast His way.

5. TO CHANGE GOD’S MIND.

When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, they “believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth.” **Jonah 3:5** What did God do when He saw their repentance? **v.10**

1 Kings 21:27-29: Because Ahab repented and fasted, God relented and did not punish him.

Why did David fast when his son was dying? **2 Sam.12:22**

Fasting does not obligate God to do something for us.

After his plea to the people to return to the LORD “with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning”, Joel says: “Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a

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blessing behind Him.” Joel 2:14.

6. TO FREE FROM BONDAGE.

What does God say His chosen fast will accomplish? *Isa.58:6*

What did Jesus say were the prerequisites for delivering a boy from an evil spirit?
Mk.9:29

Esther called for the Jewish people to fast with her while she prepared to approach the king to revoke the edict which he had given for their destruction. (*Esther 4:16*) Fasting changed history and God released the Jews from this oppression.

7. IN TIMES OF WAR.

What did King Jehoshaphat do? *2 Chron.20:3*

How did God respond to this fast? *v.15, v.17*

How did the King and his subjects respond to God? *v.18, v.21*

What happened to the enemy? *v.22-23*

v.27-30 And glory was given to God.

During a time of war, Ezra sought the Lord for protection for the people to travel through enemy territory. (*Ezra 8:21-23*)

8. FOR GUIDANCE.

During the civil war between Israel and the Benjamites, the children of Israel “*came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening..... so the children of Israel inquired of the Lord...*” (*Judges 20:26-27*).

9. FOR REVELATION.

Daniel fasts (*Daniel 10:1-3*) and has an encounter with God’s messenger (*v.10*) and is given understanding (*v.14*).

Note that it was while Peter “*wanted to eat*” (*Acts 10:10*) that he received a vision from God that led to the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit.

10. FOR HEALTH.

Daniel and his friends did not want to defile themselves with the wine and fine foods from the king’s table. Their restricted diet resulted in good health. (*Daniel 1:8,15*)

In all this we see fasting as more than obedience to a discipline ordained by God. **It becomes an effective and important assault on the powers of darkness and results in liberty from spiritual bondage and oppression.**

Prayer and fasting call forth divine intervention on behalf of God’s people.

We see God fulfilling His promise: “*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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land*” *2Chron.7:14*.

GOD’S CHOSEN FAST

In *Is.58:1-5*, God reprimands His people because fasting had become a religious practice. In fact, the people were even abusing each other on a day when they were meant to be focused on God.

What did God expect of His people during a fast?

v6 v7 v9 v10

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What does God promise will happen when we fast the way He chooses?

v8 v9 v10

JESUS AND FASTING

By the time Jesus came to earth, fasting had become a religious or pious ritual for many. John the Baptist had challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees to “*bear fruits worthy of repentance*” (**Mt.3:8**). Jesus, too, reprimanded these religious leaders for their outward display as they fasted. (**Mt.6:16**) He gave new instructions about the outward appearance of fasting as He drew men back to the recognition that **a fast is unto the LORD, a seeking of the LORD, and therefore should be a time of joy and expectation.**

What did Jesus say to do? **Matt.6:17** What will be the result of this kind of fast? **v18**

JESUS AFFIRMS FASTING AS A DISCIPLINE

He says: “*When you fast*” (**Mt.6:16 & 17**).

He began His ministry with a forty day fast. During this time He overcame the temptations of the devil and emerged “*in the power of the Spirit*” (**Luke 4:14**). In answer to the criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees, He says: “*Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days*” (**Luke 5:34-35**). He brought the reason for fasting - **a seeking of the presence of God** - back into focus.

FASTING IN THE LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Saul and Barnabas are sent out on a mission trip.

The Holy Spirit speaks as the prophets and teachers were “*ministering to the Lord and fasting.*” **Acts13:2** The disciples continue to fast and pray, then they “*laid hands on them*” and “*sent them away*” **Acts 13:3**.

2. As the new churches were established, Paul and Barnabas set elders in place “*and prayed with fasting.*” **Acts 14:23**.

3. In **2 Cor.11:27** Paul speaks of fastings amongst his experiences. He refers to “the Fast” (the Day of Atonement) when he is a prisoner on board ship. (**Acts 27:9**)

FASTING TODAY

1. Is the Holy Spirit guiding me? Is the desire to fast God-given? **Luke 4:1**: “*Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*”

2. Is my motive to seek God, to humble myself before God, or to impress others with piety? **Mt. 6:18**: “*Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*”

3. What do I hope to achieve spiritually through this fast? **Phil.3:12**: “*I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*”

4. Am I focused on my own needs or on the needs of others? **Is.58:10**: “*If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.*”

5. Is my chief desire to minister to the Lord during this fast? **Acts 13:2**: “*As they ministered to the Lord and fasted*”

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU FAST

During the first few days there will be **hunger**. There will be **withdrawal symptoms** for those who are addicted to some types of food or drink. e.g. coffee and tea are addictive and **headaches may occur** when a person abstains for a few days. Often there will be **weakness**, a **lack of strength**. After a few days the body adjusts and will function on stored fat. Sometimes the **body aches**. During a fast the body cleanses itself of built up impurities. After a time the body feels as if it could go on forever fasting. **Hunger will return when it is time to break a fast.**

It is important to **increase the amount of fluid intake** during a fast. Water aids in the cleansing process and fruit juices help adjust the food imbalances in our bodies.

HOW TO BREAK A FAST

Because the body makes many adjustments during a prolonged fast, it is necessary to **break the fast gradually**. As hunger awakens in the body it is important to curb the appetite until the body is able to cope with normal quantities of food. The stomach has shrunk during the time of fasting. The best way is to **start with fruit and vegetable juices** and **gradually work up to the fruit and vegetables themselves**. It is wise to refer to a good diet plan to restore the body. (See recommended reading list.)

CONCLUSION

Jesus said that we need to fast when the bridegroom has been taken away (*Luke 5:35*). The church is awaiting the return of Jesus Christ, our bridegroom. The prophet Joel called three times for a time of fasting so that the Lord would return to His people. The promise was that He would pour out His Spirit in response to our obedience to fast and weep before God. Jesus began His ministry by fasting. How much more do we need to “humble our selves”?

Recommended Reading.

Prince, Derek, *Fasting*, (Whitaker House, Springdale PA, 1986)

Towns, Elmer.L, *Fasting for Spiritual Break Through*, (Regal Books, California, 1996)

Wallis, Arthur, *God's Chosen Fast*, (Kingsway Publications, Ltd. Sussex, 1968)

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Jude 20-21: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life".

What does praying in the Spirit mean?

Is it praying out of our minds? Or is it praying out of our spirit? Is there a difference? The Bible has much to say on this and it can appear difficult to understand. There is no doubt that God is emphasising the person and work of the Holy Spirit in our day in His church. Integral to our knowing the person of the Holy Spirit and experiencing His work in the world, is our understanding of:

- i. the tripartite nature of man,**
- ii. the rebirth of a person to enter the kingdom of God,**
- iii. a growing knowledge of the difference between soul and spirit.**

1Thess.5:23: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". This verse clearly presents the three parts of the human unit. The confusion comes in knowing the division between soul and spirit.

THE BODY

It is encouraging to know that God is interested in our full redemption, including our bodies (*Rom.8:23, Phil.3:21*).

SOUL AND SPIRIT

Heb.4:12: "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, ..., and is a discerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart".

It is God through His word who brings the division of soul from spirit. Before a person is born again of the spirit (*Jn.3:3,5*) they are "dead to God through trespass and sin" (*Eph.2:1*). "God is spirit (a Spirit); and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" *Jn.4:24*. That is why we must be born again of the Spirit (*Jn.3:3,5*).

SPIRIT AND SOUL

In the opening verse of the 'Magnificat', Mary's prophetic utterance in *Lu.1:46-55*, she says, "My soul exalts (magnifies) the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour". Here Mary prophetically gives us a clear difference in function of soul and spirit. My soul learns about God and thus I can praise Him and exalt Him with words that I can utter out of the experience of the soul.

My spirit experiences God in the Spirit, spirit to Spirit. My spirit rejoices in the experience of God's life within. Worship is of the spirit: my spirit responds to God the Holy Spirit in spirit communication.

SOUL AND SPIRIT

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, illustrates the difference in another way. When Zacharias met Gabriel, he did not respond from his spirit but from his soul's

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experience in the natural realm, and so he could not believe Gabriel's message (*Lu.1:5-22*). Later in *v.67*, the scripture says Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying ... Now his communication is very different, because it is coming from a different source. Before he could only register from the sense realm (which is the basis of reason), now he was speaking out of the Spirit within his spirit, "*combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words*"(*1Cor.2:13b*).

THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT GROWS

The scripture makes it clear that the spiritual life begins with a rebirth - a seed is planted (*1 Pet.1:23*)- and then grows as the spirit life within is fed and nurtured. There is much to be said about spiritual growth but it suffices for now to draw your attention to *IPet.2:2* where Peter tells us to "*long for the milk of the word*", and then to *Heb.5:12-14*, where the apostle is exhorting us to graduate to "*solid food*". The test of this graduation is our ability to teach the "*elementary principles*" of the Christian life to others.

Once a person is born again, and pursues the spiritual life, the soul is being fed and influenced by the Holy Spirit and by a growing knowledge of the word of God. The human spirit is now alive to God and the spirit grows from a seed to a mature spiritual person. Praying in the Spirit is praying out of, and in, the knowledge of God's will.

It is praying in the quickened reality of the Spirit. *Rom.8:14* "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons (children) of God*".

Remember the lessons from *John 15*: Jesus' `rhema' word abiding in us is the basis of answered prayer. This abiding is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT-LED PRAYING

The Spirit of God searches the deep things of God and reveals them to the saints. (*1Cor.2:10-16*) It is through the Spirit that we know God (rebirth) and through Him that true knowledge and understanding of God is given to us. Thus Paul prays for us in *Eph.1:17-19*, that "*the eyes of our understanding be enlightened*", and that God may grant to us "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*" We do not know or understand God through our human minds but through the Spirit "*who is from God*" (*1Cor.2:12*).

**Praying in the Spirit then is prayer that originates from the Holy Spirit.
He gives revelation and understanding, guiding and inspiring prayer.**

The Gift of Tongues:

Through the gift of tongues, the Holy Spirit gives the human spirit a language of the Spirit that speaks (prays) directly to Almighty God (*1Cor.14:2*). This gift aids praying in the Spirit tremendously as the person is able to pray in the Spirit's language, building up one's own spiritual life and dynamic, empowering the person to move into the Spirit's mind directly (*1Cor.2:16b*).

As Paul explains in *1Cor.14:13-19*, we can pray and sing to God effectively with our spirit, but even more effectively when understanding comes into our minds so we pray with understanding and with our spirit.

Building yourselves up:

"*Building yourselves up on your most holy faith*"(*Jude20*): "*one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself*" (*1Cor.14:4*). Edifies means to build up. Paul thanks God that

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he spoke in tongues more than us all, but in private, not in the church. (*v.18-19*) When I pray in tongues I am praying with my spirit through the gift language or languages that the Lord gave me when He baptised me in (with) the Holy Spirit. I am praying in the Spirit. I am not usually speaking to the body (corporate) but to God, speaking mysteries that only God understands. In *v.28*, Paul says to speak to myself and to God in my tongue(s).

Speaking in the Spirit:

In *Acts 4:8*, Peter speaks in defence of the miracle that has occurred. He was "*filled (having just been filled -marg.NASB) with the Holy Spirit and said ...*". When the believers prayed together in *Acts4:24-31*, they were obviously praying in the Spirit, the result being that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Praying in the Spirit cannot be limited to praying in tongues but includes any Spirit directed prayer. At the same time, let us not "normalise" praying in the Spirit to refer to any prayer. Often we are prone to pray only from our understanding, our minds.

A principle for group prayer in the Spirit:

We have shared about praying scripture and praying the will of God revealed in scripture. There are principles in the scripture that can be effectively applied to praying in the Spirit, corporately. Just as Paul says in *1Cor.14:29* "*let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment*", so in shared prayer, let two or three pray in agreement to a particular theme, expressing fully the mind of the Spirit, and the others can judge. Then move onto a different theme as the Holy Spirit leads.

Sometimes we can move quickly; other times we need to wait, to listen and fulfil the prayer in the Spirit.

THE FIVE WISE VIRGINS.

The parable of the ten virgins is a clear teaching on the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not lacking oil, when the time of His coming draws near. Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. We need lots of oil as the second coming draws nigh. Let us be praying in the Holy Spirit as we are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are told to pray without ceasing. It is possible to pray in your tongue, at many times, even when your mind is engaged on some other everyday (necessary) activity. We can pray in tongues silently, our spirit praying in the prayer language. As our prayer life deepens and life in the Spirit becomes more and more our daily experience, we can be conscious of our spirit praying, calling on God, when our conscious mind is concentrating on a task at hand in the sense realm.

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TEACHING / STUDY MANUALS AVAILABLE

- 1) *The Word and the Spirit*; 2) *Prayer a Way of Life*; 3) *Foundations of Our Faith*; 4) *The Power of Prayer*; 5) *This Gospel Must Be Preached*; 6) *Steps to Revival*; 7) *Strategy to Reach the Nation*; 8) *The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed*; 9) *Let us go on to Perfection*; 10) *And He gave some to be Apostles...*; 11) *The Cross to the Glory*; 12) *Planting the Church*; 13) *I will Build My Church*; 14) *Faith in Practice*
15) *Leadership in the Last Days*; 16) *The Spirit and Power of Elijah*
Youth and Young Christians: 1) *Prayer Attack*; 2) *Foundations of our Faith for Youth*;
3) *Born again to Serve*; 6) *Heroes of the Bible*
Children's Manuals: 1) *God Talk*; 2) *Joseph, Jesus and Me*
"Walking in Our Inheritance" a book by Paul Galligan

