



HOW TO PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to Pray in the Spirit

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 8:26-27

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1975

As Christians, prayer is our greatest privilege, yet our greatest failure. Knowing this, God has given us a Helper: the Holy Spirit. Because we are up against the world, the flesh and the devil, it is crucial that we know how to pray in the Spirit.

Romans 8:26-27 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

The Spirit activates our will to pray. Our flesh resists prayer; but the Holy Spirit in us recognizes God for who He is, and reignites our will to pray.

The Spirit animates our bodies to pray. When our minds wander and grow weary, we must yield to the Holy Spirit and receive His energy and power.

The Spirit adapts our requests. Sometimes we’re not sure how to pray; but, glory to God, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate transformer. Simply pray with a clean heart, and He will adapt our prayers.

The Spirit administrates our access to God.

Ephesians 2:18 says, “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

God has given us the royal invitation to pray, and the Holy Spirit is our guide into the throne room.

The Spirit articulates our words. The Holy Spirit understands our groans and wordless heartache. Even when we don’t have the vocabulary to express our thoughts, God knows our hearts.

The Spirit enunciates our confidence. We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28) His plans are for our holiness, not our happiness.

The Spirit amplifies our victory.

When we pray in the flesh, we are no match for Satan; but when we pray in the Spirit, we remember: if God is for us, who can stand against? (Romans 8:31)

LIFE APPLICATION

Prayer is warfare; have you prayed in the Spirit today?

Adrian Rogers says, “The Holy Spirit wants to think through our minds and speak through our lips; He wants to weep through our eyes and groan through our spirits. It is the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, together with and instead of.”



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Prayer is the greatest Christian privilege.
- b) Prayer is the greatest Christian service.
- c) Prayer is also the greatest Christian failure.
 - i) We probably fail more in our prayer life than in any other area.
 - ii) Most Christians are not satisfied with their prayer lives.
 - (1) We are in a battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil that do not want us to pray.
 - (2) There is the problem of indifference.
 - (a) Many of us really don't want to pray.
 - (3) There is the problem of ignorance.
 - (a) We don't know how to pray or what to pray for.
 - (4) There is the problem of inability.
 - (a) We don't have the energy or the strength to pray.
 - (5) There is the problem with language.
 - (a) We don't know how to form or articulate our prayers.
 - (6) There is the problem of satanic attack.
 - (a) When we endeavor to pray, the devil comes to invade our minds and draw away our attention.
- d) God knows about these struggles and failures, and He has given us someone to help in our prayer lives.
 - i) He has given us the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Romans 8:26-27
 - (1) The word "infirmities" in this passage means "weaknesses."
- e) The Bible teaches us that we are to pray in the Spirit.
 - i) Ephesians 6:18
 - (1) The apostle Paul is not talking about spirited praying or praying with energy but about praying in the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Jude 20
- f) To pray in the flesh is to fail; to pray in the Spirit is to succeed.
 - i) The word "flesh" is just another word for the old nature.
- g) The early church was mighty in power because it was mighty in prayer.
 - i) They were mighty in prayer because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- h) In today's message, we will learn seven ways that the Holy Spirit of God will help us in our prayer lives.
 - i) We will see the necessity not only to be saved but to also be filled with the Holy Spirit.

2) THE ACTIVATION OF OUR WILL IN PRAYER (Romans 8:5-7)



- a) “Carnally minded” means “fleshly minded.”
 - b) The Holy Spirit works in the activation of our will to pray.
 - c) Most of us do not want to pray.
 - i) Not wanting to pray tells us that we are carnally minded rather than spiritually minded.
 - (1) Romans 8:7
 - ii) There is something in our old nature that has an aversion to prayer.
 - d) When we are Spirit-filled, the Holy Spirit of God will activate our will in prayer.
 - i) Romans 8:15
 - (1) The “Spirit of adoption” is the Holy Spirit that puts us in the body of Christ.
 - (2) When we receive the Spirit of adoption, God becomes our Father.
 - (3) The Spirit in us recognizes God as our Father, and it is natural for the Spirit-filled person to cry out to God and to worship and praise Him.
 - ii) Galatians 4:6
 - (1) The Lord Jesus loved to pray.
 - (2) When the Holy Spirit is in our hearts and in control of our lives, then we will have the nature of Jesus.
 - (3) Just as it was normal and natural for Jesus to pray to God the Father, it will be normal and natural for us to want to pray.
 - e) When the Holy Spirit of God is in us and we are yielded to the Spirit and not walking in the flesh, then it is as normal as breathing to pray to God.
 - f) Philippians 2:13
 - g) When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will want to pray.
- 3) THE ANIMATION OF OUR BODIES IN PRAYER
- a) Sometimes when we pray, we get tired, sleepy, lazy and cannot concentrate.
 - i) Not only do we have a problem with our wills, but we also have difficulty with our bodies.
 - b) The Holy Spirit of God will animate our bodies in prayer.
 - c) Mark 6:31
 - i) There is a time for legitimate rest.
 - d) There is nothing wrong with physical tiredness.
 - i) The Bible tells us that Jesus was tired and went to sleep in the midst of a storm at sea.
 - (1) Luke 8:23
 - e) There are times when we go to pray that we become tired and our minds get fuzzy.
 - i) But something else (like a football game) can get our attention, and we become awake again.
 - ii) The problem is not physical; the devil has teamed up with our flesh to keep us from praying.
 - iii) Matthew 26:40-41
 - (1) Our flesh is weak.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit of God is willing to help us pray in these times.
 - f) The Holy Spirit will refresh our bodies.
 - i) Romans 8:10-11



- (1) We have been crucified with Christ, and He carried our sin to the cross.
 - (2) Not only did Jesus give Himself for us, but He gave Himself to us.
 - (a) When He gave Himself for us, the body is dead because of sin.
 - (b) When He gave Himself to us, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
 - (3) The Holy Spirit gives us vitality, energy and power.
 - (a) This does not take away from legitimate rest.
 - (i) Psalm 127:2
 - (b) When we yield to Him, the Holy Spirit will energize us when we need the power of God to do the will of God.
 - g) John 4:4
 - i) Halfway through His difficult journey, Jesus was tired, hot, thirsty and hungry; and there was an opportunity for ministry.
 - ii) John 4:5-34
 - iii) When the disciples came back, they found Jesus refreshed.
 - (1) The Holy Spirit had energized the body of the Lord Jesus.
 - h) Romans 8:26
 - i) "Infirmities" in this passage means our "weaknesses."
 - ii) We ought to accept and confess our weakness.
 - (1) Because it's a fact.
 - (2) Because it's an asset.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 12:9
 - (b) Many times, our problem is not that we're too weak but that we're not yet weak enough.
 - (i) When we come to the end of our strength and then appropriate His strength, we will understand how He will not only activate our wills but also animate our bodies.
 - iii) God's plan is to deliver us from self-sufficiency and for us to cast ourselves upon His sufficiency.
 - (1) He makes us perpetually weak that we might be perpetually strong.
 - iv) The word "helpeth" in verse 26 means "to take hold of" and "instead of."
 - (1) This is how the Holy Spirit helps us: together with and instead of.
 - i) When you pray in the Spirit, both you and the Holy Spirit are praying.
 - i) The Holy Spirit of God is praying instead of you, and He is praying together with you.
 - (1) You cannot do it without Him, and He will not do it without you.
- 4) THE ADAPTATION OF OUR REQUESTS (Romans 8:26)
- a) Sometimes we just don't know what to pray for as we ought; we don't know what to ask for.
 - i) Romans 8:14
 - ii) We may not know what to ask for, but the Holy Spirit does.
 - (1) Therefore, the Holy Spirit adapts our prayers.
 - b) In order for prayer to be effective, it must be elective.
 - i) There are so many things and people for which we could be praying.



- ii) Even when we know what or whom to pray for, we don't know what to pray in that specific instance.
 - (1) How are we supposed to pray for the sick?
 - (a) John 17:24
 - (b) We pray for them to be healed, but Jesus may be praying for them come home to Heaven.
 - (i) Though God may direct us to pray for someone's healing, in average prayer meetings, we are more interested in keeping the saints out of Heaven than the lost out of Hell.
 - (2) Before the apostle Paul was saved, he wreaked havoc on the church and was having Christians put to death.
 - (a) He even held the clothes of Stephen while he was being stoned.
 - (b) The early church may have prayed for God to strike Saul, but God struck him alive; and he became the great apostle Paul.
 - c) The Holy Spirit takes what we ask for in prayer and transforms it into what we need.
 - i) Romans 8:26
 - ii) When you don't know what to pray for, just pray.
 - (1) God knows your heart.
 - d) We should pray with a clean heart and a right spirit, and the Holy Spirit will adapt our prayers.
 - i) Romans 8:27
 - ii) The Holy Spirit of God knows what we need.
 - e) If we do not get what we ask for, that does not mean that our prayer is not answered.
- 5) THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUR ACCESS (Romans 8:14-15)
- a) The Holy Spirit presides over the administration of our access into the holy presence of God.
 - i) We need Someone to bring us in to God's presence, to give us access to God.
 - ii) Romans 8:14-15
 - (1) The Holy Spirit gives us access.
 - b) Ephesians 2:18
 - i) Through Jesus, we have access by one Spirit to the Father.
 - c) We pray to God through Jesus in the Spirit.
 - i) We have a Father to pray to.
 - ii) We have a Savior to pray through.
 - iii) We have a Spirit to pray in.
 - d) Prayer is not just simply sending prayer missiles to Heaven; it is talking with a friend.
 - i) God gives us the royal invitation to pray, and He gives us a palace attendant to bring us right in to Him.
- 6) THE ARTICULATION OF OUR WORDS (Romans 8:26)
- a) Another problem in prayer is that we get tongue-tied and run out of words.
 - i) Words are just trucks to carry thoughts.
 - ii) Sometimes, the thought is too heavy for any truck.



- b) Sometimes there are things that are so deep and big and heavy that we don't know how to put it into words.
 - i) That's when we need to pray in the Spirit.
 - c) Romans 8:26
 - i) "Groanings which cannot be uttered" means sighs that are too deep for words.
 - ii) The one doing the groaning is the divine Spirit merged with the human spirit.
 - iii) The word "groaning" is the same word that means "birth pains."
 - (1) This groan is pain transfigured by hope.
 - (a) Prayer is pain transfigured by hope.
 - d) Romans 8:22-23
 - i) Our souls and our spirits are redeemed, but our bodies are not yet redeemed.
 - (1) Therefore, we live in a world full of pain and sorrow.
 - (a) Neither saved nor lost are immune.
 - ii) When we pray, the Holy Spirit of God enters into that agony.
 - iii) As Jesus wept in Gethsemane, the Holy Spirit of God merges with our spirit in wordless prayer (groanings too deep to be uttered) during our darkest, deepest hours.
 - (1) Even when we can't put it into words, God knows what He means.
- 7) THE ENUNCIATION OF OUR CONFIDENCE (Romans 8:27-29)
- a) The enunciation of our confidence comes from the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The will of God is to work all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, and He is doing it to make us like the Lord Jesus.
 - c) Sometimes we pray and weep, and it seems like nothing is happening.
 - i) God heard your prayer, and He is working all things together for good.
 - d) God's plan for us is not necessarily to make us healthy, wealthy and happy, but to make us holy and like the Lord Jesus; to be conformed to the image of His Son.
 - i) We may ask for one thing, but the Holy Spirit of God may give us another thing to make us more like Jesus.
 - e) Prayer is God's plan to make us like Jesus.
 - f) Romans 8:28
 - i) This is the enunciation of our confidence.
- 8) THE AMPLIFICATION OF OUR VICTORY (Romans 8:31-32)
- a) The devil doesn't want us to pray.
 - b) Romans 8:31
 - i) The devil will do all he can to keep us from praying.
 - ii) When we pray in the flesh, we are no match for Satan.
 - iii) When we pray in the Spirit, if God be for us, who can be against us?
- 9) CONCLUSION
- a) We cannot pray in the Spirit or in the name of Jesus until we get saved, until we surrender to the Lordship of Christ.



- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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What a mighty God we serve. Turn to Romans chapter 8 and a classic verse on praying in the Spirit. Romans chapter 8 verses 26 and 27.

And as you're turning to that, let me say that prayer is the greatest Christian privilege. Secondly, prayer is the greatest Christian service. Thirdly, alas, prayer is the greatest Christian failure. I think that we fail more in our prayer life than in most any other place. If I were to ask you, one by one, are you satisfied with your prayer life, most of us would hang our heads and say, "No."

Now the reason for that is that we're in a battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil that do not want us to pray. Many of us have the problem of indifference. We really don't want to pray. Some of us have the problem of ignorance. We don't know how to pray or what to pray for. Some of us have the problem with our inability. We do not have the energy and the strength to pray. Some of us have problems with language. We don't know how to form and articulate our prayers. Some of us have problems with satanic attack. When we endeavor to pray, the devil comes in to invade our minds and to draw away our attention. And many of us have some of these or all of these that cause us sometime to fail to pray as we ought.

Now God knows this, and so God has given Someone to help us in our prayer life. And that Someone is the Holy Spirit of God. Look in Romans chapter 8 verses 26 and 27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," that's our weaknesses, "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for He," the Spirit, "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Oh, what a great text that is! And may God help us to understand it.

Now this is one of several texts in the Bible that teach us that we're to pray in the Spirit. For example, another one is Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18. The apostle Paul admonishes the church at Ephesus to be praying, "Always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Now he doesn't, he's not talking about spirited praying. He's not talking about praying with energy, as we say, "That's the spirit." No, he's talking about in the Spirit. He's talking about in the Holy Spirit.

And then in that classic verse in Jude verse 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." "Praying in the Holy Ghost." To pray in the flesh is to fail. To pray in the Spirit is to succeed. Now when I say the flesh, I don't mean the hide, the hair, the skin, the bones, the muscle, the sinew, the corpuscle, that make up the house that you live in. The flesh is just another word for the old nature. To pray in the flesh is to fail. To pray in the Spirit is to succeed.

Have you ever wondered why the early church were, w, was able to do what it did? That early church advanced on its knees. They were mighty in power because they were mighty in prayer. And they were mighty in prayer because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now in our message today, I want to mention to you seven ways, and all of them are found



right here in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans, seven ways that the Holy Spirit of God will help you in your prayer life. And then we'll see the necessity not only to be saved, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, number one: the Holy Spirit works in the activation of your will to pray; the activation of your will in prayer. Look now in Romans chapter 8 verses 5 through 7, "For they that are after the flesh," that is, the old Adamic nature, "for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded," that's just another way of saying fleshly minded. Carnis is the Latin word for flesh. A carnivorous animal is a flesh-eating animal. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Now, do you wonder sometimes why you don't want to pray? Here it is in verse 7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." That's the reason I said, "To pray in the flesh is to fail. To pray in the Spirit is to succeed." We might as well admit it: most of us do not pray, when we do not pray, because we do not want to pray. We do not want to pray.

Now be reasonable, be reasonable. Don't we do what we want to do? Now think with me. Don't we do what we want to do? Why is it that we don't want to pray? Because, friend, the flesh doesn't like it. And so when we don't want to pray, what does that tell us? It tells us that we're, we're carnally minded rather than spiritually minded. Look again in, in Romans 8 verse 7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." The carnal mind has no more desire to pray than your dog has to watch opera. I'm telling you, there's something in us, in that old nature, that not only doesn't want to pray, it has an antipathy toward prayer. And we need to stop trying to cover it up and admit it, that the reason that we don't pray when we don't pray is we don't want to pray. And the reason we don't want to pray is we're in the flesh rather than the Spirit. Now you get Spirit-filled and you'll have to backslide to keep from praying. I'm telling you. The Holy Spirit of God will activate your will in prayer.

Now, let me show you how that happens. Look if you will in, in chapter 8 and verse 15, "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," we're no longer slaves, you see, "but you have received the Spirit of adoption." Now the Spirit of adoption is the Holy Spirit that puts us in the body of Christ. And when you receive the Spirit of adoption, God becomes your Father. And then what happens? "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." You see what happens is when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, that Spirit in you recognizes God as your Father, and it is the natural thing for the Spirit-filled person to say, "Father, Abba Father," to worship Him and to praise Him.

Let me give you another verse that says exactly the same thing in another place in Galatians chapter 4 and verse 6. And here's what Paul says, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'"

Question: did Jesus love to pray? Yes. Was it natural for Jesus to pray? Yes. Who is the Holy Spirit? That's the Spirit of God's Son. If the Holy Spirit is in your heart and in control of your life, then what will happen? You will have the nature of Jesus. You will be like Jesus. And just as it was normal and natural for Jesus to pray to God the Father and to say, "Abba, Father," it will be normal and natural for you. You will want to pray. Listen to it again, "And because you're sons," that means because you've



been born again, you're in God's family, "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son," that's the Spirit of Jesus, "into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'"

You see, when the Holy Spirit of God is in you, and you're yielded to the Spirit, you're not walking in the flesh, it is as normal as breathing to pray to God. This is the answer to the problem of a lack of appetite for prayer. What does the Holy Spirit do? His ministry is the activation of the will in prayer. And, you see, we're not just taking ourselves by the nape of the neck and making ourselves pray as a discipline, though, indeed, if it takes that, we ought to do it. But Philippians 2 verse 13 says, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." You get filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll want to pray. Let me say that again. When you get filled with the Holy Spirit, you will want to pray. So if you don't have a desire to pray, admit it. The carnal mind is enmity with God. Got it? That's the first ministry of the Holy Spirit, praying in the Spirit. It is the activation of our wills. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Got it? Got it.

Now let me tell you what else the Holy Spirit will do: not only the activation of our wills, but the animation of our bodies, the animation of our bodies in prayer. When you pray, do you ever get tired, sleepy, lazy, can't concentrate, your mind gather wool? How many of you? You know it's true. If you've ever prayed, you get sleepy, you get groggy, your mind goes out the door and around the world, and you get to thinking about all kinds of things. Why is that? Because not only do we have a problem with our wills, we have difficulty with our bodies.

But do you know what the Holy Spirit of God will do? Not only will He activate your will, but He will animate your body. Now I'm not saying that every time you're tired, that you're sinning or that you're out of the will of God. There is a legitimate rest. And Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 6:31, "Come ye apart and rest a while." And I read where Jesus was so sleepy one time He went to sleep in the midst of a storm in a sea. There's nothing wrong with physical tiredness. As a matter of fact, it's good to get tired and to get a good night's sleep. But folks, I'm telling you that sometimes you can go to pray and get so yawny and sleepy and your mind will get so fuzzy, and then a football game will come on and you're all awake. Where's the problem? Your problem there is not physical. The devil has teamed up with your flesh to keep you from praying.

Do you remember what happened there in the Garden of Gethsemane? Matthew chapter 26 verses 40 and 41. And Jesus had asked His disciples to watch and pray, and the Bible says, "And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, 'What? Could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'" And then notice what He said, listen to this, "'The spirit is willing, but,'" what, "'the flesh is weak.'" So what do you need? You need help. You need help! It is the Holy Spirit of God that is willing to help you to pray in these times. Now what the Holy Spirit of God will do is to refresh your bodies.

You're in Romans chapter 8. Look if you will in verse 10, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." What does that mean? It means you've been crucified with Christ, and because of your sin, that sin was carried to the cross. "But the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Not only did Jesus give Himself for you; He gave Himself to you. So when He gave Himself for you, the body is



dead because of sin. But when He gave Himself to you, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Now look if you will in Romans 8 verse 11, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." "Quicken your mortal bodies." That is, give you vitality; give you energy, give you power. I'm not talking about keeping you from your legitimate rest, because He also, "Giveth His beloved sleep." I'm talking about energizing you when you need the power to do the will of God. When the Spirit is willing and the flesh is weak, when you yield to the Holy Spirit of God, He will do that. It is obvious that Jesus was not expecting Peter, James, and John to be asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane. And the reason that they were, is they were in the flesh, and they were not in the Spirit. I know from personal experience that when I yield myself in these times when my mind wanders and I get all groggy and distracted, when I yield myself to the Holy Spirit, I get energized.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about from the life of Jesus. The Bible says in John chapter 4 that Jesus was on a journey to Galilee and, "He must needs go through Samaria." It was a torturous trek. They did not go by airplane or bus or automobile. And Jesus about the half-way point in His journey is tired. He comes to a place called Sychar. He's tired, hot, thirsty, hungry, and He is sitting on the curbing of that well. And then there's this opportunity for ministry. This Samaritan woman came and met the Lord Jesus there, and Jesus ministered to her.

When the disciples came back, they found Jesus refreshed. They had gone into the city for groceries to feed Him, to give Him energy, to give Him strength. And they came back and they found Him full of energy, full of vitality. They said, "Who gave Him something to eat? Who's been ministering to Him?" You know what He said? He said, "I have food to eat you don't know anything about." What happened? The Holy Spirit of God had energized the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit of God will energize your body and refresh you and to help you see how He does it.

Look if you will, now, in Romans 8 verse 26 of this same passage, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." That literally means our weaknesses. Now look up here and let me tell you something. You ought to accept and confess your weakness. Don't deny it. I'll tell you, first reason you ought to do it, because it's a fact. The Bible declares it. Our weakness. Our infirmity. Okay? It's a fact. Got it? Admit it. Number two: It's an asset. You say, "No, my weakness is a liability." No! Your weakness is an asset. What did God tell the apostle Paul in Second Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9? He says, "And He said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'"

You see, our problem many times is not that we're too weak; our problem is we're not yet weak enough. We have never finally said, "Lord, I can't. I don't have what it takes." And we're still struggling. But folks, when you come to the end of your strength and then you appropriate His strength, then you understand how He will not only activate your will, but He will animate your body. You see, God's plan is to deliver us from self-sufficiency and cast ourselves upon His sufficiency, so He makes us perpetually weak that we might be perpetually strong.

This word helpeth, it's a very interesting word in verse 26. It has a double prefix in the Greek language. On the one hand, it means to take hold of. The only other time it was used is in Luke 10 verse 40 when Mary came out, Martha came out of the kitchen and said, concerning Mary, her sister,



“Jesus, would You tell her to come in the kitchen and help me? Come in here and get her hands in the kitchen and help me with these pots and pans?” It means to take hold of, and it also means instead of. That’s very interesting. That’s the way the Holy Spirit of God helps us, together with and instead of. That’s what it means. Together with; to take hold of. Together with, and instead of. Now this is not a contradiction.

So when you’re praying in the Spirit, who is praying, you or the Holy Spirit of God in you? The answer is yes. The Holy Spirit of God is praying instead of you, but He is praying together with you. You cannot do it without Him. He will not do it without you. Oh what a partnership and what a privilege to pray with the Holy Spirit. You see the Holy Spirit of God wants to think through our minds. He wants to speak through our lips. He wants to weep through our eyes. He wants to groan through our spirits. It is the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, together with and instead of.

Now, here’s a third thing the Holy Spirit of God does in our prayers. First of all; there is the activation of our wills. Secondly; there is the animation of our bodies. Thirdly; there is the adaptation of our requests, the adaptation of our requests. You know, another problem is that sometimes we just don’t know what to pray for as we ought. Look again in Romans 8 verse 26, “Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” You know, lot of times we just don’t know what to ask for. But look if you will in chapter 8 verse 14, “But as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they’re the sons of God.” We don’t know what to ask for, but the Holy Spirit of God knows what to ask for. And so what He does is He adapts our prayers.

You see we all have specific duties for prayer. I know that I ought to pray for my wife. I know I ought to pray for these men on the platform. I do pray for them. I know I ought to pray for you as a congregation, and so forth. I have certain responsibilities. But there are many things I don’t know whether I ought to pray for them or not. I mean, I can’t pray for everything. If I tried to pray for everything, I’d end up not praying for anything. My prayer, rather than being a mighty river would become a stagnant swamp! In order for prayer to be effective, it must be elective! And even when we know what to pray for, we don’t know what to pray in the specific thing.

Suppose you have a loved one who’s sick. How are you going pray for that loved one? “Lord, heal them.” Well, yes. But what if God wants to take them to Heaven? I mean, you know what Jesus prayed in John 17 verse 24? “Father, I pray for them whom Thou hast given Me that they may be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.” We’re praying, “Lord, let them stay;” Jesus is praying, “Father, let them come.” Do you ever think about that?

You get in an average Baptist prayer meeting, how many people are praying for the unsaved? Most people are praying for the sick. And they’re praying not only for the sick, they’re praying for sick saints. They’re praying for Aunt Bessie who’s one of the finest Christians in the church. They’re praying for Deacon Jones, saint of God, “Lord, heal him.” And God sometimes directs our prayers that way. But have you ever noticed that sometimes we’re more interested in keeping the saints out of Heaven than the lost out of Hell? Have you ever noticed how, the way we pray sometime? We’re not agonizing to get the lost saved. How do we pray? Sometimes we don’t know how to pray. Admit it. We don’t know



what to pray for. And then we don't know how to pray when we know what to pray for.

When the apostle Paul was making havoc of the church, before he was the apostle Paul, he was the persecutor of the church. His name was Saul. And he was having Christians put to death. He even held the clothes while they stoned one of the greatest Christians ever lived, his name was Stephen. I imagine that early church said, "That man is the arch enemy of the church. God, strike him dead!" But God didn't strike him dead; God struck him alive. God made him the great apostle Paul. We don't know what to pray for sometimes as we ought. But I'm telling you that the Holy Spirit of God is active in the adaptation of our requests.

Now, I was in my study once with some deacons. It was on a Wednesday night and we were having a committee meeting. One of the deacons dismissed in prayer, and he said, "Bless the Pastor as he preaches tonight." Well, folks, I wasn't going to preach. Someone else was going to preach that night. But he said, "Lord, bless the Pastor as he preaches tonight." And you know what the Holy Spirit of God did? He just brought that prayer right on to Heaven. And God heard the prayer. Now he was asking for Adrian to be blessed, but it was someone else who needed to be blessed. You think that confused God? No. The Holy Spirit says, "Here's what he's asking for. Here's what he needs." And it's done. You know, isn't that wonderful, how the Holy Spirit of God takes our prayer energy.

There's a transformer up on the light pole near your house that takes that incredible voltage that comes to that transformer. And in that transformer it is transformed and it goes into your toaster, and so you had toast this morning. But, friend, if it had come from that big, fat wire into your toaster, your toaster would have been toasted, right? Right! Because it has to go through that transformer. It's the same energy, but it's transformed. The Holy Spirit of God is that transformer. He takes our prayers, and God sees our heart, and sometimes we know not what we should ask for as we ought, "But the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us according to the will of God." Isn't that great?

So, folks, sometimes we don't know exactly what to pray for. Just pray! God knows your heart. Pray with a clean heart. Pray with a right spirit, and the Holy Spirit of God is the one who will adapt your prayers. I love Romans 8 verse 27, "And He that searcheth the hearts," that's God, "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," of course He does, "because He," the Spirit, "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." And the Holy Spirit of God knows what we need. So my prayer, I may not always get what I ask for, but that doesn't mean my prayer is not answered. If God doesn't give you what you asked for, He'll give you something better than you asked, when you're praying in the Spirit, praying in the Spirit.

Number four, here's another thing that the Holy Spirit of God does. When you pray in the Spirit, He presides over the administration of our access. Now, not only the adaptation of our requests, but the administration of our access. Now you see, you just don't burst into the holy presence of God. That may be a surprise to you. But you need someone to bring you into God's presence, to give you access to God. Look in Romans 8 and verse 14 and verse 15, look at it, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, 'Abba Father.'" Now what that means is that it's the Holy Spirit of God that gives us access. Put this verse down, Ephesians 2 and verse 18,



“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Through who? Through Jesus. We have access by one Spirit to the Father.

How does prayer work? We pray to God through Jesus in the Spirit. To God through Jesus in the Spirit. We have access by one Spirit.

One time I was invited to go into the Oval Office to meet with the President of the United States. How do you think you get into the Oval Office? You think you get out of a cab and just walk through the gates and go in the Oval Office and say, “Hi, Prez!” Do you think you do that? No, you don’t do that. What you do, you go into a particular room, and there’s a person who meets you there who is the personal envoy of the President and talks with you and chats with you until he’s ready. And then he takes you and he brings you in to that office. That’s what the Holy Spirit of God does when you come into a higher office than the Oval Office, when you come before the throne of grace.

You have a Father to pray to. You have a Savior to pray through. You have a Spirit to pray in. Have you ever prayed and it feels like you’re just praying at God rather than to God? And God’s a billion light years away? Have you ever heard the expression, “My prayers don’t get above the light bulb?” You see, that’s our problem. God’s underneath the light bulb. We think, “Oooh, way out yonder. Maybe if I can just get my prayers through.” Friend, when you’re in the Spirit, God is in you, and you’re praying in the Holy Ghost. And prayer is not just simply sending prayer missiles to Heaven; it is talking with a friend. God gives us the royal invitation to pray, and then God gives us a palace attendant, to bring us right in to God.

Now, let me tell you what else praying in the Spirit will do. Number five: not only do we have the administration of our access, but we have the articulation of our words. Another problem in prayer is that, folks, we get tongue-tied, we run out of words. You know what words are? Words are just trucks to carry thoughts. That’s what words are. They’re just trucks to carry thoughts. Sometimes, folks, the thought is too heavy for any truck. Sometimes there are things that are so deep, so big, so heavy, so imponderable that we don’t know how to put it into words. That’s when we need to be praying in the Spirit.

Look, if you will, in the last part of Romans 8 verse 26, “But the Spirit Himself,” and every time you see *Itself* in the King James there, it may better be translated, “The Spirit Himself, maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” That means sighs that are too deep for words.

Did you know there is a form of wordless praying? Who is doing the groaning here? Well, it’s the divine Spirit merged with the human spirit. This word for groaning is the word that means birth pangs. If you’ve ever been around a woman in labor, you’ve heard that groan. You know what that groan is? That groan is pain transfigured by hope. That’s what prayer is. Pain transfigured by hope! Look in Romans 8 verse 22 and 23 of this same chapter. Look at it, “And we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruit of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Our bodies have not yet been redeemed. Our souls are redeemed. Our spirits are redeemed. Our bodies are not yet redeemed! And, therefore, dear friend, we live in a world full of pain and pang and moan and groan and sorrow and sickness and sighing and dying and crying.



It's all around us. And saved or lost, you are not immune. Don't get the idea that if you get saved, there's no sorrow, there's no groaning. The whole creation groans. Verse 23, "And we ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan." But the Holy Spirit of God, when you pray, He enters into that agony. And as Jesus wept in Gethsemane, in your darkest, deepest hours, the Holy Spirit of God merges with your spirit in wordless prayer, groanings too deep to be uttered.

If you've never been there, you don't anything about prayer, if you've never been there. But the time will come when you'll get there. You won't know what to do. You won't know what to say! But the Holy Spirit of God will blend with your spirit, and the dear Holy Spirit of God will help you, not only in the administration of your access, but the articulation of your desires. And God knows what He means, even when you can't put it into words. Isn't that neat? Isn't that wonderful?

Now I'll tell you what else the Holy Spirit of God does when you pray in the Spirit. Not only the articulation of our desires, but the enunciation of our confidence comes from the Holy Spirit. Look if you will, now, you're in verse 26, now notice how it's followed, verses 27 through 29, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Now notice in verse 27 it says, "He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." In verse 28 he says, "What is the will of God?" Well, "God is working all things together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose," according to His will. And then the next verse says that, "He's doing it to make us like the Lord Jesus."

Now, sometimes you pray, and you groan, and you weep, you ask, and it seems like nothing is happening. You say, "I prayed and God didn't hear my prayer." Yes, He did! All things are working together for good. It literally means that God is working all things together for good.

God's plan for you is not to make you healthy and wealthy and happy. God's plan for you is to make you holy and to make you like the Lord Jesus, to be conformed to the image of His Son, and God is hearing prayers. And you may be asking for one thing, but the Holy Spirit of God is giving another thing to make you more and more and more and more like Jesus. And that's what it's all about, folks. Prayer is not making God some sort of a Heavenly bellhop to wait on you and give you your whims and your wants. Prayer is God's plan to make you like Jesus. And so, the Holy Spirit is the enunciation of our confidence.

I had a prayer burden one time, the heaviest prayer burden I've ever had. I stained Heaven. I even came to the place one time where I yelled at God, not out of disrespect, but I cried out to God almost with a shout, not of defiance, but, "Oh, God, where are You?" Do you know what God did? God said to me, "Adrian, I have heard your prayer. I'll take care of it." He didn't tell me how. He just said, "Don't worry about it. I'll take care of it." That's Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." There is the enunciation of our confidence.

And last of all, when we pray in the Spirit, there is: the amplification of our victory. You see, the devil doesn't want you to pray. Look if you will in Romans 8 now, verses 31, "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The devil will do all that he can do to keep you from praying. He doesn't want you to pray. He comes against you. All of the artillery of Hell is leveled against you when you pray. Why? The devil



must say to his demons, “Boys, keep him from praying because if he fails to pray, we can beat him every time. But if he prays, he’ll beat us every time.” He’s against you. He’s against you. You have an enemy. He’s against you. “But if God be for us, who can be against us?” That’s why you can’t pray in the flesh, because you’re no match for Satan. But when you pray in the Spirit, if God be for you, who can be against you?

Those are seven things the Holy Spirit does when we pray in the Spirit. Now listen to me. You can’t pray in the Spirit, you can’t even pray in the name of Jesus till you get saved. But, you know you could be saved and get in the flesh and your flesh won’t even want to pray. So if you’re not saved, you need to get saved. And if you’re saved, you need to be surrendered and filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Amen?

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you’re not certain that you’re saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, “I’ve come that you might have life.” Could I lead you in a prayer? We’ll call this prayer the sinner’s prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? “Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”



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