



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers
In Prayer

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THE HOLY SPIRIT & PRAYER

In **John 14:16**, Jesus Christ says, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." Jesus announces to the disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit after He ascends to heaven. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "another Helper." The word "another" means one just like or one that is similar to. The Holy Spirit would be like Jesus. Just as Jesus had been to the disciples, so the Holy Spirit would now take on that role. What Jesus was to the disciples outwardly, the Holy Spirit would be to them inwardly, "But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (**John 14:17**).

As a believer, you have received the precious gift of the Holy Spirit. He lives inside of you. The Holy Spirit is your personal "Helper." He has entered your life to help you live the Christian life. The Christian life is life in the Spirit. You can do nothing spiritual apart from Him. You cannot live the Christian life apart from His presence and work. If you didn't need help, why did God grant you a Helper? The blessed and precious Holy Spirit indwells you in order to enable you to live the Christian life. He blesses you with the insight and power to walk in a personal relationship with God. You are in utter need of the Holy Spirit.

You need the Holy Spirit in order to pray. Now wait a minute. Slow down and read that first sentence again. Don't give it a passing glance and say, "Well, I already know that." Meditate on that statement. I long for this truth to sink into your heart and mind. It is only through the power and working of the Holy Spirit that you can pray and mature in prayer. There is no such thing as prayer apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. He and He alone can

lead and empower a person to enter the Father's presence, "For through Him we both have access by **one Spirit** to the Father" (**Ephesians 2:18, emphasis mine**).

Jesus opened the door for you into God's presence. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus provides you with access. You have the privilege of approaching the living God, your heavenly Father. That is why **Ephesians 2:18** that through Him (Jesus) you have access to the Father. Yet, notice also that you have access "by one Spirit." Jesus has opened the door into the Father's presence. You must now depend on the Holy Spirit to enable you and empower you to approach your heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit helps you take advantage of the access provided by Jesus.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on the Holy Spirit and your prayer life. We will examine what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit's role in your prayer life. We will also consider some ways to develop your dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer. It is my hope and prayer that you will receive fresh appreciation for and empowering from the Holy Spirit for your prayer life.

Three Basic Truths

The Word of God teaches three basic truths concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in your praying. These truths reveal the necessity of the Holy Spirit for prayer. They also point to the need for conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit in order to enter God's presence.

The first truth is that the Holy Spirit is the Author of prayer. He is the source of your praying.

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The Word of God says, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Galatians 4:6). Because you are a child of God through faith in Jesus, He has given you the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who lives inside of you empowers you to cry out, "Abba, Father." This phrase speaks of intimacy with God. It means "Daddy, Father."

The Holy Spirit gives you the assurance that God is your Father (Romans 8:14-15; 1 John 3:24, 4:12-13). Yet, He also enables you to have fellowship with your Father through prayer. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers you to cry out to God. He is the One who energizes you to plead with your Father. He is the One who invigorates your prayer life. He is the One helps you pour your heart out to your Father. True prayer is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in you through the Holy Spirit.

This is why the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of grace and supplications" (Zechariah 12:10). The gracious work of the Holy Spirit stirs you to pray. He is the One who gives you the ability and the power to seek your Father. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no true prayer. With the Holy Spirit, you can pray to and seek your Father with limitless possibilities. He enables you to enter into the Father's presence and to spend quality time with Him.

The second truth is that the Holy Spirit is your personal Teacher concerning prayer. In Luke 11:1, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. He does this by giving them the model prayer. Throughout His time with the disciples, He taught them about prayer. When Jesus announces that He is going to the Father, He reveals that the Holy Spirit will take up where He left off, "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" (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit would continue to teach them how to pray. He would guide them in the truth of how to communicate with the Father.

The Holy Spirit is the One who teaches you how to pray. He has been sent to guide you in the truth concerning prayer. Not only does He empower you to pray, He also teaches you how to pray. No one is born into the family of God knowing how to pray. A believer must learn how to pray. A believer must grow in his or her ability to communicate with God. Prayer is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit

in you. The Holy Spirit teaches you how to pray as you yield yourself to Him.

Nothing can substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit in your prayer life. He is the One who must teach you. This is why it is crucial to spend time praying. I'm often asked, "What's the best way to learn how to pray?" My answer is, "To pray." As you pray, you are yielding yourself to the Holy Spirit. You are opening yourself up to His work in you as you pray.

You need to obtain materials to help you pray. You should use prayer guides and prayer pointers. These are instruments that the Holy Spirit can use to teach you. Yet, nothing can take the place of actually spending time in prayer. When you do this, the Holy Spirit can teach you. He can guide you in the truth concerning prayer. The Father has sent the Holy Spirit to be your personal Teacher concerning prayer.

The third truth is that the Holy Spirit is your Guide in prayer. The Holy Spirit empowers you to pray and teaches you to pray. Yet, His ministry does not stop there. He also guides you as you pray. He is able to lead you when you pray. He can lead you to pray the will of God, which will result in answered prayer (1 John 5:14-15).

The Word of God says in 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit knows the things of God. He knows what is on the Father's mind and heart. This means that He knows what the Father's purpose is in all circumstances and at all times. He then is able to reveal the Father's purpose to us.

When you pray, the Holy Spirit can guide you to pray what the Father has purposed. He knows what the will of God is. When the text says that the Holy Spirit "searches all things, yes, the deep things of God," this does not mean that the Holy Spirit needs to seek knowledge of the Father. It means that He probes and understands the Father's purpose in order to reveal it to us. He can guide you to pray according to the Father's purpose. As you pray, He can reveal to you what to pray because He knows the deep things of God.

The Holy Spirit can guide you in prayer even when you don't know what to pray. The Bible says, "Likewise the Spirit also helps 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" (**Romans 8:26**). In your weakness, you are often perplexed about how to pray for others and yourself. Yet, the Holy Spirit intercedes for you. Notice that Paul says that "the Spirit Himself" prays for you. The Holy Spirit takes over and speaks in your behalf. He acknowledges your struggles, weaknesses, sighs, and groans and intercedes according to the will of God for you (**Romans 8:27**). The Holy Spirit knows your heart—He knows your desires. Even when you can't express what you're feeling, He can pray according to God's will for you. When you can't articulate what you need, the Holy Spirit can plead for you according to God's purpose. When you are so burdened about another person that you can't speak, the Holy Spirit can intercede for that person.

This should stir you and motivate you to pray. The Holy Spirit is your Guide in prayer. He can lead you to pray the will of God for people and for situations. And when you are burdened and don't know what to pray because of your weakness, the Holy Spirit can take over and pray for you. He can intercede according to the will of God for what is on your heart.

Practical Applications

These are the three basic roles of the Holy Spirit in your prayer life. How do these truths affect your prayer life?

- (1) *The Holy Spirit will supply you with the power to pray.* It is the Holy Spirit who empowers you to pray. He is the One who stirs you to seek God. He can strengthen you and enable you to pray fervently and faithfully. Paul speaks of being "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (**Ephesians 3:16**). The Holy Spirit can provide you with the power to pray and to continue in prayer. He is the Source of power and strength for your prayer life.
- (2) *The Holy Spirit will teach you how to pray.* Your heavenly Father sent the Holy Spirit to teach you how to pray. Your personal Teacher concerning prayer lives inside of you. He is always with you. He can instruct you on how to seek God. He can show you how to deal with problems in your prayer life. Remember the promise of Jesus in

John 14:26. This extends to guiding you in the truth about prayer.

- (3) *The Holy Spirit will reveal insights to you for your prayer life.* The Holy Spirit knows the mind of your Father. He understands the Father's purpose. He can guide you by revealing those things that you need to pray about. He can lead you to pray for particular people and needs according to God's will and timing. He can provide you with truths that you can use in pleading with God and interceding for others. The Holy Spirit is your Guide in prayer. He will lead you as you pray and follow Him.
- (4) *He will convict you of the sin that can hinder your praying.* The Word of God says in **John 16:7**, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin." The Holy Spirit has come to convict you of sin and to lead you to repentance and confession. Sin hinders and renders your praying powerless and ineffective (**Psalms 66:18**). The Holy Spirit works to help you face and deal with the sin that will block your communication with God. He strives to help you confront the sin that will keep you from receiving answers from your Father.

Learning To Depend On The Holy Spirit

Since the Holy Spirit is utterly essential to your prayer life, it is crucial that you learn to depend on Him. Powerful and effective praying can only be done through His power. Therefore you must yield yourself to Him and depend on Him. The following are some suggestions that you might use to cultivate your dependence on the Holy Spirit in prayer.

- *Acknowledge the necessity of the Holy Spirit for prayer.* You learn to depend on the Holy Spirit when you realize the utter need for Him in your prayer life. I keep the main verses from the first section on a 3 X 5 card (**Galatians 4:6; John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Romans 8:26-27**). I place this card in my prayer journal. I then review these verses on a regular basis. The reason for doing this is to remind myself of my need of the Holy Spirit for prayer.
- *Confess your need of the Holy Spirit.* A healthy spiritual exercise is to confess to the Holy Spirit