

Romans Part 19C: SPECIAL STUDY ON PRAYER PART 3

--OUTLINE:

...continued from Part 19B
IV. CONFESSION IN PRAYER
V. PRAYING WITH OTHERS
VI. THANKSGIVING IN PRAYER
VII. PRAYER AND FASTING
VIII. PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER WITHOUT "VAIN REPETITION"
IV. CONCLUSION

IV. CONFESSION IN PRAYER:

--once we are saved our sins are permanently forgiven... the event of us being forgiven and the righteousness of Christ being credited to our account is a ONE TIME PAST EVENT.

--in light of the following passages, 1 John 1:9 must refer to confessing our sins at the time of our salvation, not ongoing confessing to obtain temporary forgiveness that needs to be renewed: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

--Romans 5:1: "Therefore, **having been justified by faith [ONE TIME PAST EVENT!]**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

--Romans 4:5-8: "However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom **God credits righteousness apart from works**: 7 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.'"

--see also: *Romans 3:21-24; Galatians 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Luke 7:48-50; Luke 24:46-49*

--even though our sins are permanently forgiven when we are saved, regular confession of our sins is a natural part of our daily conversation with God as we ask Him for help in overcoming those sins and find comfort in the fact that we are saved from those sins.

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

--Daniel 9:3-5: "Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 **And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession**, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.... [Daniel goes on to pray a lengthy prayer of confession, meditation, and supplication]"

--when we let sin in our life go unchecked we grieve the Holy Spirit...

--Ephesians 4:29-32: "**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

--1 Peter 3:7 speaks of the potential for sin to interfere with our prayers: "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, **that your prayers may not be hindered.**"

--we should even pray for God to reveal our sin to us to help us overcome our sins and gain a deeper appreciation for the forgiveness of our sins.

--Psalms 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting."

V. PRAYING WITH OTHERS:

--examples in Scripture of people praying together:

--Acts 12:5-19: "Peter was therefore kept in prison, but **constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church**. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. 7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." 9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that **the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me** from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people." 12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, **where many were gathered together praying....**"

--back to Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9... we also see direct correlation between prayer and God working through angels: "while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 **At the beginning of your supplications the command went out...**" (Daniel 9:21-23)

--Daniel prayed on a regular basis... the incredible experience he had in his prayer in Daniel 9 was an exception... as we are diligent to pray on a regular basis, not every prayer experience will be the same... some will be ordinary and others will be mountain top experiences... "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, **as was his custom since early days.**" (Daniel 6:10)

--Acts 20:36-38: "And when he had said these things, **he knelt down and prayed with them all.** 37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

--Acts 21:5-6: "When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And **we knelt down on the shore and prayed.**"

--many of Paul's prayer requests in his epistles were addressed to groups of people...

--1 Thessalonians 5:25: "**Brethren, pray for us.**"

--other examples: *Romans 15:30-31, Philippians 1:19, Hebrews 13:18-19, Colossians 4:2-4, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Ephesians 6:18-20*

--James 5:13-15: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him **call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him**, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up..."

--oil was widely known for its medicinal qualities and anointing the sick with oil was a regular custom of the Jews... commentator Adam Clarke wrote about this passage: *In short, anointing the sick with oil, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews... And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a natural means of restoring health; and that James desires them to use natural means while looking to God for a special blessing. And no wise man would direct otherwise.*

--confessing sins to others for prayer to overcome those sins...

--after instructions about prayer for physical healing in James 5:13-15, James goes on to give instruction on prayer for spiritual healing to overcome sins (physical healing for ailments that resulted from sin could also be implied here)... **"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."**

--three strategic steps to fight temptations:

1. split-second thoughts... bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

--"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1-3)

2. prayer... if the sinful thoughts persist, take them before God in prayer... talk to Him about your struggle and pray about what pleases Him.... temptations lose momentum when we simply fall on our knees and have an honest talk with God about them!

3. accountability... for additional help, share your struggle with an accountability partner and ask him/her for prayer.

--these steps, involving truth from God's Word, prayer, and support from the body of Christ, are strategic "weapons of our warfare... mighty in God for pulling down strongholds..." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

--James then goes on to give the example of Elijah's prayer: **"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit."** (James 5:16-18)

--it's important to note that Elijah prayed according to God's will as the three year drought was God's punishment on Israel for their idolatry. (1 Kings 17-18)

--group prayer is a natural part of relationship within the body of Christ... people connected to each other through the Holy Spirit together praying to God through His Spirit...

--Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, **21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**"

--a profound bonding occurs when we pray together...

--when people look to God and pray together, a certain honesty and openness occurs and points of contention tend to diminish...

--more people praying for the same prayer requests (not necessarily all in a group at the same time) ensures greater coverage, since one person can't pray 24 hours a day... **sharing your prayer requests with others opens the way for a Spirit-led concert of prayer that transcends time and space!**

--in general, praying for the needs of others has a profound impact on our attitudes, taking our focus off ourselves and our problems.

--multiple purposes are ingeniously tied together in God's design for prayer, affecting both ourselves and each other.

VI. THANKSGIVING IN PRAYER:

--Philippians 4:6: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God..."

--Colossians 4:2: "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it **with thanksgiving...**"

--Romans 1:8: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world..."

--2 Timothy 1:3: "**I thank God**, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day..."

--other examples: *John 11:41-42, Romans 1:8, 1 Timothy 1:12, Philemon 4*

VII. PRAYER AND FASTING:

--perhaps one of the greatest benefit of fasting is simply the impact it has on us...

--fasting helps us to hear God better... tuning out the static of our flesh.

--fasting brings healing not only to our body but also to our soul.

--Ezra 8:21: "Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions."

--Daniel 9:3: "Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, **with fasting**..."

--Joel 2:12: "'Now, therefore,' says the LORD, 'Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning...'"

--1 Corinthians 7:5: "Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may **give yourselves to fasting and prayer**; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

--Luke 2:36-37: "**Anna, a prophetess... served God with fastings and prayers night and day.**"

--other examples: *Acts 13:2-3, Acts 14:22-23, Acts 10:30*

VIII. PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER WITHOUT "VAIN REPETITION":

--**Jesus warned about praying with "vain repetition"** (Matthew 6:7), that is, repeating empty words without any spiritual substance – without "praying in the Holy Spirit." (Jude 20)

--Matthew 6:7-8: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him..."

--**Scripture repeatedly speaks of Spirit-filled persistence in prayer...**

--Jesus prayed about the same thing repeatedly in the Garden of Gethsemane, but his repetition was not "vain repetition" but rather Spirit-filled repetition: "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "**O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.**" 40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping... 42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "**O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.**" 43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So He left them, went away again, and **prayed the third time, saying the same words.**" (Matthew 26:39-44)

--even though Jesus was sinless and had a perfect perspective, He still expressed real emotion to the Father... indicative of the vibrant relationship between He and the Father which involves heart to heart expression.

--Jesus often prayed... "So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."

--in Luke 11:5-10 Jesus spoke used a parable to teach persistence in prayer: "And He said to them, 'Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8 I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet **because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.** 9 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..."

--"ask" in the Greek is in the continuous tense, as in, *keep on asking...*

--James 4:2-3: "Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

--1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "**Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**"

--1 Thessalonians 3:9-10: "For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 **night and day praying exceedingly** that we may see your face..."

--Colossians 4:12-13: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, **always laboring fervently for you in prayers**, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis."

--Daniel exemplified persistence in prayer: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, **he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.**" (Daniel 6:10)

--Colossians 1:9-14: "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, **do not cease to pray for you**, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

--other examples: *Romans 1:8-10, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18, 2 Timothy 1:3, Colossians 4:2*

****again, it's important to remember that the persistence in these prayers is not merely a mental exercise of "vain repetition" (Matthew 6:7) that leads to burnout but rather persistence that flows from a heart that prays out of love for God...** Spending quality time of fellowship with God and meditating on His Word conditions our heart to naturally pray...

--Romans 8:15-16: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"

--again, the Aramaic term "Abba" was a term of tender, intimate address and was also used by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to address God the Father

--*side note:* "Abba Father" is recorded in Mark, but Matthew and Luke merely state "Father" ... this difference can be attributed to differences in style and translation from Aramaic to Greek (the Gospels were written in Greek but Jesus spoke in Aramaic...)

Jesus must have used the Aramaic term "Abba" and Mark's placement of the Aramaic term along side the Greek word for Father (Pateér) emphasises the intimate nature of Jesus' address to the Father)

--CONCLUSION:

--acronym to help remember key aspects of prayer:

A: adoration (meditation)

C: confession

T: thanksgiving

S: supplication (for yourself and intercession for others)