

Romans Part 19B: SPECIAL STUDY ON PRAYER PART 2

--OUTLINE:

- I. PRAYER MEDITATION / PRAYING SCRIPTURE
- II. PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD
- III. INTERCESSORY PRAYER

I. PRAYER MEDITATION / PRAYING SCRIPTURE:

--About two hundred years after the Puritans came the man recognized as one of the most God-anointed men of prayer ever seen by the world, George Muller. ... In the spring of 1841, George Muller made a discovery regarding the relationship between meditation and prayer that transformed his spiritual life... --Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines For the Christian Life*, pg. 74

--George Muller wrote, *Now, I saw that the most important thing was to give myself to the reading of God's Word, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, whilst meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord. ... The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less to prayer. When I have been for a while making confession or intercession or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened...* --as quoted in *Spiritual Disciplines For the Christian Life*, pg. 75

--This is one of the most compelling concepts on prayer I've ever learned. Meditation is the missing link between Bible intake and prayer. The two are often disjointed when they should be united. We try to read the Bible, close it, and then try to shift gears into prayer. But many times it seems as if the gears between the two won't mesh. In fact, after some forward progress in our time in the Word, shifting to prayer sometimes is like suddenly moving back into neutral or even reverse. Instead there should be a smooth, almost unnoticeable transition between Scripture input and prayer output so that we move even closer to God in those moments. This happens when there is the link of meditation in between. ... The process works like this: After the input of a passage of Scripture, meditation allows us to take what God has said to us and think deeply on it, digest it, and then speak to God about it in meaningful prayer. As a result, we pray about what we've encountered in the Bible, now personalized through meditation. And not only do we have something substantial to say in prayer, and the confidence that we are praying God's thoughts to Him, but we transition smoothly into prayer with a passion for what we're praying about. Then as we move on with our prayer, we don't jerk and lurch along because we already have some spiritual momentum. -- Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines For the Christian Life*, pg. 71

--meditation on scriptural truth can be a precursor to prayer or a part of prayer. Worship songs, Bible reading, listening to the Bible on CD, and Bible memorization all facilitate meditation.

--one might think that praying scripture is simply telling God something He already knows, but there is a deeper substance in prayer than just the simple facts! **Praying scriptural truth in an attitude of worship during prayer opens up new channels for God to speak to us and give us new insights into the scriptural truth we are praying.**

--meditation / praying Scripture is not a matter of rattling off Scripture at the standard reading speed of 250 wpm, but rather it is a matter of rolling each word or thought in a passage over and over in our minds, sometimes as slow as 1 word per minute or 10-15 words per minute.

--memorizing Scripture can be an especially potent technique to help make meditation a part of prayer.

--being in a prayerful state of mind while reading Scripture is a form of meditation, but there is greater potential when you aren't limited by the neurological channel between your brain and the pages of Bible...

the difference could be compared to the difference between a dial-up internet connection and a dsl connection.

--one practical technique to help memorize Scripture is to print out abridged versions of each book (see example on last page of notes) and then memorize abridged versions of each book... a gradual process that spans a lifetime!

--the natural flow of the book and order of the book serves as a memory aid, opposed to random, isolated passages.

--memorized portions of Scripture become like spiritual songs we can sing in our hearts in prayer or anytime throughout the day!

--Colossians 3:16: "**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

--Hebrews 4:11-12: "For the word of God is **living and powerful**..."

--Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind..."

--Colossians 3:1-2: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on things above**, not on things on the earth."

--brief examples of praying Scripture / scriptural truth combined with supplication prayer:

--in 2 Kings 19:15-19 Hezekiah began praying by proclaiming scriptural truth: "Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: 'O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ...'"

--in Jeremiah 32:16-25 Jeremiah began praying by praying scriptural truth: "Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: 17 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. ...'"

--in Acts 4:23-31 a group of Christians began praying by praying scriptural truth: "And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.' 27 'For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.'" 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 they spoke the word of God with boldness."

--in John 17:1-12 we even see Jesus praying scriptural truth to the Father: "Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

II. PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD:

--**meditating on the Word of God not only takes prayer to a deeper level, but is also helps us align our thinking with God's thinking and naturally leads to our prayers being more aligned with His will.**

--Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect **will of God**."

--1 John 5:14: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us."

--Matthew 6:9-10: "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 **Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven...**"

--Matthew 26:42-43: "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.**'"

--you might say, *I prayed for somebody's salvation and God didn't save them. Isn't it God's will for them to be saved?* Yes, but it is also His will not to force them; nevertheless, our prayers play a role in providing the means of salvation... 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you..."

--sometimes prayer is not answered the way we hope or expect...

--Romans 8:28: "And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

--pain and trials may seem like unanswered prayer... but they are opportunities to draw nearer to God and for God to be glorified through our lives

--death might seem like being forsaken... but for those who are saved death is the doorway to heaven.

--Paul's prayer requests for the church in Rome were all answered but in ways that made it first appear like they weren't being answered. God planned to use Paul's trials in ways that Paul could not foresee...

--Romans 15:30-32: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you **strive together with me in prayers to God for me**, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you."

--Paul was indeed delivered from those in Judea who did not believe, but God used their attempt to kill him and his subsequent arrest and years in prison to not only deliver him from them but also to answer the other prayer request that he would make it to Rome. By appealing his case to Caesar the Roman government transferred him from prison in Judea to prison in Rome where he was finally "refreshed together" with the saints in Rome. (Acts 23-28)

--Paul explained in his letter to the Philippian church how all things worked together for the good through his trials: "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." (Philippians 1:12-14)

--2 Corinthians 12:7-10: "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing **I pleaded with the Lord three times** that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

--God is glorified when He is our strength in our weakness.

III. INTERCESSORY PRAYER:

--exactly how intercessory prayer works is beyond our comprehension, but one thing that is crystal clear is that Scripture gives us many examples of intercessory prayer for us to follow.

--intercessory prayer for others is a heavenly activity that transcends human logic and involves a profound and mysterious interconnectivity between Jesus praying to the Father, us praying to the Father, and the Spirit of God within us praying to the Father...

--Jesus interceded in prayer for us during His ministry on earth: "**I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word...**" (John 17:20-24) "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 **And I will pray the Father**, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:15-18)

--Jesus intercedes for us in heaven now: "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them.**" (Hebrews 7:24-25)

--the Holy Spirit within us intercedes on our behalf: "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. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because **He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** (Romans 8:26-27)

--and we intercede for others, as the following examples illustrate...

--Romans 15:30-31: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you **strive together with me in prayers to God for me...**"

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

--Philippians 1:19:"I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance **through your prayers** and the **provision of the Spirit** of Jesus Christ."

--Hebrews 13:18-19: "**Pray for us**; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. 19 But I especially urge you to do this, **that I may be restored to you the sooner.**

--Colossians 4:2-4: "**Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving**; 3 meanwhile **praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word**, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

--2 Thessalonians 3:1-2: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, **that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified**, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. "

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

--Ephesians 6:18-20: "...**praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and **supplication for all the saints** — 19 **and for me**, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

--Jesus commanded His disciples to pray that God would raise up more disciples: "Then He [Jesus] said to them [disciples], "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore **pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.**" (Luke 10:2)

--**Jesus commanded us to pray for our enemies...**

--Matthew 5:44: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..."

--**simply praying for our enemies can not only impact our enemies but it can also be a powerful relief from emotional stress caused by our enemies!**

--**general intercessory prayers in the epistles, especially Ephesians and Colossians, are a great way to pray in the center of God's will...**

--Ephesians 1:15-20: "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the

saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead..."

--Ephesians 3:14-19: "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God..."

--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."

--2 Thessalonians 1:11-12: "Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1.

1Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf; 8who also declared to us your love in the Spirit; 9For 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; 10that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23for indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. 24I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27To them [His saints] God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of His mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

2.

2:1For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. **6As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 8Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principalities and power.**

11In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God; 20therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- 21Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle? 22which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23These things [commandments and doctrines of men v.22] indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

3.

3:1If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory

5Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; 6because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 7But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth, 8do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14But

above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

18Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. 20Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. 21Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22Bondservants, obey in the Lord all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

4.

4:1Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. 2Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. 7Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. 10Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12Epaphras, 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. 13For I bear Him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. 15Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. 16Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." 18This salutation by my own hand--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.