

# Expository Files

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### *Front Page*

#### *Lessons From Gethsemane*

*Matthew 26:39*

*By Jon W. Quinn*

On the evening of His arrest, we find Jesus in a state of extreme emotional distress. There is a conflict between His natural desire not to undergo the agony of the cross and His dedication to do God's will. It took much strength and moral character not to call down 12 legions of angels to save Him from that hour. He could have done exactly that, and it would be difficult to blame Him. But Jesus sought not the glory of men or angels. Instead, He sought to glorify God. It took strength to instead pray, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou will." (Matt. 26:39).

Of course, ultimately the struggle is won and Jesus did what had to be done with courage and conviction. He loves us that much. Why was Jesus so successful at facing this challenge? Is there insight as to how we may be more successful as we face the difficulties of making hard decisions?

First, He understood His destiny. It was He would pay the price to redeem us from sin. Only He could do it (Matt. 16:11). With that firmly planted in His heart, other options that would fail to fulfill that destiny were removed from the table no longer to be considered.

Second, He knew it was the Father's will and purpose. He had taught others to always put God's will first. He would do no less! When God's will comes first, the decision –making process becomes much, much simpler!

Every Christian faces trials, dilemmas and crises at times. We find success the same way Jesus did.

First, know your destiny. We are not earthbound forever. The time of our departure from this realm will come and we want to be prepared. Remove all options from the table that would deter you from fulfilling your destiny.

Second, know the Father's will and make it your own. You can find it in His word - the Scriptures - the "words of life." This will make the decision-making process much simpler for you as it did with our Lord. Fulfill your purpose.

***Gideon Answers God's Call***  
***(Gideon Series Part 2 of 3)***  
***Judges 7***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

Gideon was the fifth judge of Israel. He played a small but important role in the history of God's people. Gideon lived during a time when Israel had forsaken God and had worshipped idols. The nation had abandoned its true source of national strength and the source of its blessings much like our own nation has done today. God had withdrawn his blessings and protection, and the nation had suffered. As voices began to call upon God for deliverance, God used Gideon to answer the need. Gideon was a reluctant leader who was finally convinced of the power of God. He ultimately led the children of Israel in victory over their enemies, the Midianites.

**“Saved By My Own Hand”**

After God had called Gideon and Gideon had been persuaded to accept the task God gave him, it was time to act. We find the account of Gideon's defeat of the Midianites in Judges 7:1-8:21.

Gideon's army of 32,000 was reduced in size (vss. 1-8). Already sorely outnumbered (the enemy numbered over 120,000 swordsmen), most would

see this as a time to go out and recruit more warriors. But it might be that after the victory the Lord would give them, the people might think it had been by their own strength and ability that they had won the victory. So, the Lord commanded Gideon to further reduce the number under his command "...lest Israel claim glory for itself...saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" (Judges 7:2). Any who were "afraid and trembling" were told they could go home. Some 22,000 departed leaving 10,000 to fight the Midianites.

So, it went from being outnumbered 4 to 1 to being outnumbered 12 to 1. No doubt Gideon was surprised to hear what the Lord said next: "Then the LORD said to Gideon, 'The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there.'" (Judges 7:4).

At the site to which the Lord had directed Gideon's army there was drinkable water. The army stopped to drink and 9,700 knelt down on their knees so they might drink directly from the stream. The other 300 cupped their hands and took water into them, drinking it from their hands as a dog would lap water from his bowl. "The LORD said to Gideon, 'I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home.'" (Judges 7:7).

### **"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"**

Gideon attacked the Midianites with his 300 men who took torches, pitchers, swords, and trumpets. (vss. 9-23). "Now the same night it came about that the LORD said to him, 'Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands.'" (Judges 7:9).

Gideon's 300 divided into three groups of 100 each. They spaced themselves around the Midianite camp, and when signaled, they broke the pitchers revealing the torches. They shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" (Judges 8:20-23).

There was much confusion in the camp as startled Midianite fought against Midianite in the darkness. That night the Midianites were routed. As they retreated, the assistance of the tribe of Ephraim was requested to cut off the fleeing Midianites as they crossed the Jordan.

As Gideon's 300 continued to pursue the scattered remnants of the Midianites, the people of Succoth and Penuel refused to give bread to

Gideon's army. They did not want to give assistance because they were not sure which way the battle was going. If they helped, and Gideon lost the battle, they might be punished by Midian. Later, after the battle was won, Gideon would return and destroy the two towns (8:5,8,16,17).

The final battle of the campaign was fought at Jogbehah. The Midianite army was routed again, and the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna were killed.

### **One Man and God is a Majority**

God does not depend on large numbers of people to accomplish His goals. This is certainly one of the things we learn from the battle Gideon and his 300 waged. The Lord has often demonstrated His power by taking a few and accomplishing His purpose. To His disciples Jesus once said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:31-32). Don't be afraid of being in the minority if that is what it takes to be right with God! It is better to be in what Jesus referred to as "little flock" just as it was better to be among Gideon's 300. Paul once stated it this way: "...let God be found true, though every man be found a liar..." (Romans 3:4). Our number one priority is to stand with the Lord on any and every issue. We are at war; a spiritual conflict (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). We can go with the majority, or we can go with God.

### **God's Power and Victory**

Another thing we learn from Gideon's victory over the enemy is that God's power is enough to win in any conflict. All spiritual victories occur because of God's power and not because of ours. The Scripture says, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18). Whether it be Gideon and his battle or ourselves and our salvation, the power for success is God's.

Those of Gideon's day had no reason to boast concerning their own power. The Lord wanted them to realize that they did not deliver themselves from the Midianites. Likewise, He does not accept our own boasting about our salvation. "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so

that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:30,31).

### **Assisting Those Who Fight the Lord's Battles**

One final point to be made from Gideon's experience is that we should always be willing to assist those who are carrying out the Lord's will. The people of Succoth and Penuel had refused to give bread to Gideon's army and were punished. They wanted to see the outcome first before they risked anything. Sometimes, people of faith simply must be willing to take risks when it comes to doing the will of the Lord. Paul expresses his gratitude for

“Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks...” (Romans 16:3-4). We are encouraged to support those who put forth effort in the field. This is a worthy and noble endeavor (3 John 5-8). Sometimes the battle will be ours, and we should be able to have confidence in our good brethren's support. Likewise, when the battle is theirs, we must fill the supportive role, that God's work might be done.

***Solomon on Money***  
***(Part 2 of 3)***  
***Proverbs***  
***By Edward C. Barnes***

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS HAS much to say about the wise use of money. In our previous article we learned from the wisdom of Solomon concerning our THINKING about money, the responsibility of EARNING money and the practice of BORROWING and LENDING money. We may have recognized a need to adjust our attitude about money in these areas in order to conform to Biblical principles. This week we will continue our study as we observe a few more points of Divine wisdom from the Book of Proverbs pertaining to how we use money.

### **SPENDING**

There is nothing wrong with spending money. There is nothing wrong with spending a-lot of money. However, there may be something wrong with HOW we are spending money. For example, if we are neglecting to purchase or invest in things that we need in order to spend money on things

we don't need, then we are spending foolishly. Wisdom and self-discipline are needed in this area. The wise man of Proverbs tells us, "He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame" (13:18). Wise spending is the result of thinking and planning ahead, i.e. budgeting. However, many people throw discipline out the window when spending money. The only rule is "how much can I beg, borrow and steal" then we proceed to spend until all resources are used up. Again we hear from Proverbs, "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has" (21:20). If we have trouble controlling our spending habits Solomon tells us to take drastic measures, ". . . and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony" (23:2). I suppose gluttony can apply to our consumption of things as well as food.

WHY we spend money can be as much of a problem as HOW we spend. Spending for many people is not just a matter of deciding what is needed, then going out and finding that item at the lowest cost. Modern shopping is about fulfilling emotional needs. We have a disease called "stuffitis" and it is treated with heavy doses of spending. People go out to the malls and spend because it make them feel good. For many, shopping thus becomes a sort of confidence builder. There is a certain pretentiousness involved in the shopping habits of people in our materialistic culture; a pretentiousness that is condemned. Note the following: "Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant, than pretend to be somebody and have no food" (12:9). "One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth" (13:7). We should not depend on spending to bolster a false confidence. Exercising self-discipline and bringing our spending habits under the control of God will produce a true confidence that spending cannot duplicate. Proverbs 3:26 states "for the Lord will be your confidence"

## **SAVING**

A discussion about spending is also a discussion about saving. Uncontrolled spending will undermine saving, whereas a disciplined savings plan will control spending. I once heard about an old man who preached for some denominational church. He had maintained a very modest income during all the years of his preaching life but retired with more that two million dollars in the bank. How did he do it? By saving a little at a time, consistently over many years. The wisdom of such discipline is reflected in Proverbs 13:11, which states: "Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow." Verse 18 of the same chapter says, "He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame . . ."

The principle of compound interest working together with the lifelong habit of saving a little each week will provide all the savings you will ever need, not only in retirement, but also for all the material possessions a reasonable person would ever need. However, you are not likely to learn these common sense principles in high school or college business classes. The financial wisdom taught by the world is based on making a high annual income, the crafty use of credit and the benefits of government hand-out programs. Some folks sell little kits that teach the concept of "get rich quick". You see such offerings advertised on radio and TV (not to mention telephone poles at intersections). But such will never come close to providing for you financially like the application of the principles found in the Bible. Our strong recommendation is that you go with God's wisdom. Note the following passages from the wisdom of Solomon: "The plans of the diligent lead to profit, as surely as haste leads to poverty" (21:5). "The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor" (10:15). "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has" (21:20). All these passages speak of the wisdom of saving.

*(Series to be concluded next month)*

***What is Heresy?***  
***{2 Pet. 2:1; Gal. 5:20}***  
***Warren E. Berkley***

In modern religion offerings there is a confusing concoction that needs to be sorted out. To many it is discouraging.

There are huge religious ministries raising millions of dollars, building big empires and putting their preachers into lives of luxury and their patrons in the poor house. The Bible is quoted and attractive promises were made, but without mature commitment to obey. There are denominations all around us, approved and applauded by the public; they've been around for hundreds of years but their organization, their system and their doctrines show no Biblical authority.

There are local churches we may "identify" with because the sign outside says, "church of Christ," but some of those groups have departed from the New Testament pattern, slowly but surely. The sign on the outside may be

familiar, but the worship and practice inside may be unfamiliar to devoted Christians! In the midst of all this, we need to hear again from John.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,” (1 Jno. 4:1-6).

**What Is Heresy?** When we face the challenge of testing the spirits we may use or hear this word, “heresy.” It is a Biblical term and perhaps through a simple study we can better face the issue of discernment that is crucial to our relationship with God.

The word is not HEARSAY, which means repeating something simply based on the fact that you heard it, or you heard that someone else heard it (that’s another sermon). No, the word we are using is heresy. Let’s look at the word in two settings. And I should like to apply a very simple definition.

*2 Peter 2:1 (NKJ): “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.”*

In this verse you see the phrase: “destructive heresies,” or in the King James: “damnable heresies.” In the NIV and ESV: “destructive heresies.” Whatever this is, it is destructive; or damnable.

Something that is destructive cannot be taken lightly. We cannot read in the Bible that something is destructive, and just mark that off or think it doesn’t matter. Peter speaks to the reality of false prophets and false teachers. Their work is destructive; they not only do not edify, they destroy, tear down.



And he says what the false teachers bring in! They bring it something that is destructive. The word “heresies,” is from a Greek word that means – to choose, or *a choice at variance*. It is about a choosing. {I’m aware of all the more complicated definitions, offering various nuances of use and meaning. Yet when I strip all that away and look into context, what I see is a simple choosing, almost like choosing up sides – but in this case, the wrong side! A choice at variance with the standard, the teachings of the apostles. See Gal. 1:6-12.} Heresies involve the choosing of teaching that is not true; is not the Word of God. When I choose to believe what a man says that isn’t in harmony with the Word of God, I have chosen something destructive: Heresy. {See the context of this, 2 Pet. 2:1-3}

False prophets and false teachers are introducing something that is destructive, bringing upon those involved swift destruction. It involves shame, exploitation and condemnation. This is not something you can just overlook. This is not a simple difference in opinion or judgment or some sincere soul who just hasn’t learned something yet. This is the bringing in of error, that is called “destructive heresies,” and that is deserving of “condemnation.”

We cannot take this lightly. We cannot believe just anything. We cannot pursue peace, at the cost of truth. And we cannot stand by while people are deceived and dominated by heretics. It is a serious matter. The other passage is . . .

### **Galatians 5:20**

The context is simple: everything in this list is destructive and to be avoided. As a Christian it should be my aim to know about these evils and be certain I am not participating at any level.

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)*

What is your reaction to the things in this list, these attitudes and behaviors? I’m relatively certain we are all opposed to adultery and fornication. We

would not endorse “uncleanness,” or “licentiousness.” If we took a vote or survey of EF readers right now, I’m pretty sure everybody would state their opposition to idolatry, to murder and to hatred. What we need to see is, everything in this list; all that Paul includes is “the works of the flesh,” and one is *heresies*.

When I choose any teaching or practice that is not in keeping with God’s Word, I’m guilty of this. When I let some organization, system, man or men lead me away from the Word of God, into something that is preferred by men but condemned by God I’m guilty of this. When I make the choice to identify with a group that’s on the move away from God, I participate in this sin. It is a work of the flesh.

One man said, heresy is the choice to disunite yourself from God, by departing from His Word!! That’s a work of the flesh, and it says: “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” From this study I want to take us to these points:

**1. Ecumenical Pluralism is attractive, but not God’s way.** By “ecumenical pluralism” I simply mean the popular concept that every religion is equal; everybody is OK; regardless of their indifference to Scripture. “Ecumenical pluralism” is the policy that puts peace above truth and that seeks unity with men, at the cost of unity with God. Jesus addressed the matter of how will go to heaven in these words: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven’.” That’s Matt. 7:21, and the words of Jesus Christ, to whom the allegiance of our hearts is due. Whether this is attractive or popular or not, this is what Jesus said. It stands.

**2. It is the responsibility of every Christian to practice discernment.** What we’ve been talking about is not just the duty of preachers and elders, though they must be vigilant. You cannot turn this over to somebody. Each one must read the Word to gain his or her own faith - - know it yourself! It is the duty of every one of us, to submit to the authority of Christ. Jesus said to individuals: “Beware of false prophets...,” (Matt. 7:15).

**3. Let us rededicate ourselves to training the next generation, for it may be they will be tempted more than we are.** One of the dreadful mistakes we can make is the assumption that our children know all of this; and that they have well in mind the difference between truth and error. We need to

have in mind, more than an assumption about the next generation. We need to take responsibility, and talk to our children and grandchildren about what the Bible says - - and the difference between the words of men and the Word of God. {Good reading on this subject, Psalm 78:1-6}.

Test the spirits. Heretics are not an ancient reference to men of old. They are still here.

## ***Paul in Prayer***

***By Kyle Pope***

*(Presented at Florida College Lectures - February 2002)*

Introduction. The church in Corinth, which struggled with so many issues, in particular stood in need of instruction on the matter of spiritual gifts. Having brought into their attitude towards the miraculous gifts which they possessed the same concepts they had held when they were “carried away” by “dumb idols” (1 Cor. 12:2), Paul had to correct their misconceptions. The Corinthians seem to have imagined that prayer could be some type of ecstatic experience, as the pagans had advanced, in which the suppliant communicated with a deity in unknown babblings. Paul suggests:

*...If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding...(1 Cor. 14:14,15, NKJV).*

We notice in this text that Paul teaches two things directly and one indirectly. Directly he teaches that prayer must involve both the spirit and the mind. While Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit serves to clarify the unspoken need of the heart before God (Rom. 8:26), the child of God must not imagine that communication with God involves shutting off our minds. Nor should we think prayer in the spirit involves some unknown “prayer language” (as our Charismatic friends would have us to believe). Indirectly, however, he offers twice the subtle declaration of an intention that we almost miss in the broader discussion about miraculous spiritual gifts. That is, the simple statement - “I will pray...” As a servant of God who is committed to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16) the apostle Paul maintains a deliberate and consistent commitment to go to God in prayer.

### **I. Paul’s Prayers for Fellow-Christians.**

The student of Scripture cannot begin to read the words written by Paul, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, without immediately seeing the importance that the Apostle placed upon prayer. He begins his address to the church in Rome declaring - "...God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (Rom. 1:9, NKJV). In his first epistle to the Corinthians he shows his care in claiming - "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus" (1:4). To the saints in Ephesus, where Paul had faced such frightening opposition (Acts 19) he wrote - "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:15,16). The same is said to the Colossians for whom he said he was "praying always" (Col. 1:3), and the Thessalonians for whom he thanked God always mentioning them in his prayers (1 Thess. 1:2).

Paul's prayerfulness was not solely for congregations but to individuals like Philemon he would write - "I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers" (Philemon 1:4). He would have Timothy know that - "...without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day" (2 Timothy 1:3).

Perhaps the highest position of prominence in Paul's prayers for brethren was reserved for his dear Philippians. He would write - "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy" (Phil. 1:3,4).

These simple affirmations to churches and individuals reveal some important things about the Apostle's prayerlife. Let us consider some characteristics of Paul's prayers of the saints.

**A. Remembrance of the brethren.** The word translated "mention" (mneia), in the texts above comes from a verb meaning "to remember" (mnaomai). The idiom "to make mention (mneia)" suggests the utterance that is made from the recollection of the heart. When used without the idiomatic word "making" (e.g. Phil. 1:3), it is translated simply "remembrance" (Vincent 3:516). We generally remember those things that are dear to us, and forget what we consider less important. When a husband remembers his anniversary, it is not the sharpness of his memory that pleases his wife, but

the fact that in remembering the occasion he demonstrates that the relationship he has with her is important. In this case the recollection of his heart bears witness to the love which he feels for his wife. Paul shows us that a vital element of our love for others involves calling them into our minds as we talk to God.

**B. Gratitude for the faith of others.** It might seem unusual that time and time again Paul expresses gratitude to God for the faith of others. Yet, if we consider Paul's priorities we see there is nothing unusual about this at all. First, as a child of God he understands and teaches thankfulness in all things (e.g. Eph. 5:20 - "giving thanks always for all things to God"). Second, as a preacher of the gospel the growth and development of faith in the hearts of others fulfills his purpose. Finally, in the face of all of his personal hardships, strong faith in the hearts of his co-workers in the kingdom served to encourage him. This is reflected clearly when he tells the brethren - "...in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord" (1 Thess. 3:7,8).

**C. Requests for the brethren.** Although Paul might not be able to be with the brethren he remains interested in their spiritual growth and maturity. Although at the time he wrote the book of Romans he had not yet been to Rome, he prays to God that he might come to them (Rom. 1:10). Yet, his motive is not carnal. He is not curious to behold the grandeur and splendor of "that great city that reigns over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). Instead, he tells them - "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established" (Rom. 1:11). For these miraculous spiritual gifts that gave to the early Christians complete revelation Paul thanks God for what had already been given to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:4-7).

For the Ephesians and Colossians Paul prays that they may receive "the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17); and "be filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9). These requests may not involve the miraculous, but how the saints would utilize and implement what had already been revealed. If God would grant this prayer, as the Ephesians and Colossians let Him work in them, they would then "have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10); and "know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18).

The apostle's prayer for the Thessalonians is that in them "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified" (2 Thess. 1:12).

While Paul's special affection for the Philippians is evident, it is not exactly clear for what he was "making request" with joy "in every prayer" (Phil. 1:4). Since the word "request" is the same word previously translated "prayer" (with an article in the Greek) Lenski takes this to refer back to "every prayer" for them which he had just mentioned rather than any specific request (p. 706). In other words, every prayer he makes, he makes with joy over their standing in Christ. On the other hand, he may refer to the statements he will go on to make concerning their "fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:5) and his confidence that what God had begun in them, He will "complete it until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Clearly, as a spiritual man he is interested in their spiritual endurance.

## **II. The Work of Prayer.**

From Paul's requests for the brethren and the appeals he makes for prayers for himself it is evident that Paul had a complete confidence in the ability of prayer to influence Deity. His confidence is not like the quasi-new age concept of "the power of prayer." As some address it, they attribute to the act of prayer some type of mystical power in and of itself, failing to acknowledge Deity as the focus. In some cases this treats prayer almost as if it is some untapped human power. For Paul the value of prayer rests not in the act itself but in the fact that it allows communication with God - the source of all power.

**A. Prayer's Influence upon Deity.** The rights, privileges and gifts granted to the apostles might lead one to imagine that an apostle would have no need for the prayers of others. On the contrary, Paul earnestly seeks them. Not only in a broad sense, as in the simple appeal - "brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25), but in specific hopes and needs. He asks the Colossians to pray that God would "open a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:3). As Paul, in chains faces an uncertain future, he tells the Philippians that all "will turn out for my deliverance [salvation, ASV] through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19). In other words, he is confident that with the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him and through their prayers he will attain "deliverance." Chrysostom understood this to refer to an escape from his present danger (Homilies on

Philippians 3). Yet, Paul sets both life and death as possible ends to his present imprisonment, declaring “Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (Phil. 1:20). I believe Alford has it right in concluding - “...from the context it must refer to his own spiritual good - his own fruitfulness for Christ and glorification of Him, whether by his life or death...” (3.159). The Philippian’s prayers then, on his behalf, will influence Deity towards strengthening Paul so that he might be delivered faithful whether life or death lies before him.

In Paul’s letter to Philemon he expresses confidence in the influence of prayer upon Deity as it concerns his travel. He writes - “But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.” (Phil. 1:22). Here Paul suggests that whether he will be allowed to come to see Philemon or not, to some degree rests upon Philemon’s own appeals to God that he might come to him. It would be a mistake for us to see in these words some deterministic picture of a set course of life that God had already planned out which could not be influenced by Paul’s own choices. Nor should we limit ourselves to imagine that God could only answer such a prayer through miraculously altering some natural course and, contrary to nature, manipulating events so that Paul could make such a journey. Instead what we see throughout Scripture is the principle that spiritual souls attribute every aspect of life to God, in the understanding that “if the Lord will, we shall live and do this, or that” (James 4:15). Paul simply recognizes that since God ultimately has all control, Philemon’s prayers have an influence upon Deity to grant, within the Lord's permissive will, the conditions that would allow Paul to come to him. We can recognize this same truth today, as we avoid trying to tell God how He will answer such prayers, yet always believing that our appeals have an influence upon Him.

**B. Fellowship in Prayer.** This portrayal of the role of prayer in the Christian life makes it an active, dynamic and vital activity. The Christian who engages in prayer for some good, or for some outcome in the life of another person is truly engaged in something that can, within the providence of God, help to bring it about! This is illustrated nowhere as clearly as in some of Paul’s descriptions of those who are in joint participation with him in prayer on some spiritual front. One such co-worker was Epaphras, the Colossian who was Paul's companion upon the writing of the book of Colossians. When Paul extends Epaphras’ greeting to the church he describes him as “...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect

and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12). The word translated “laboring” (agonizomai) is a very forceful word. Our word “agony” comes from its noun. In its primary usage it refers to competing in an athletic contest, or fighting in a battle (BAG, p. 15). With a prefix it is used in the epistle to the Romans where Paul begs the brethren to:

*...strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 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, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you (Rom. 15:30-32).*

With a different prefix the word is used in Jude as the writer speaks of their “common salvation” urging them to - “contend earnestly for the faith” (3). On Greek inscriptions this same kind of wording - “contending for the common salvation” is used of warfare (Moulton, p. 8). Paul is describing Epaphras as “going to war” for the Colossians in prayer. He is asking the Romans to “take up arms” with him in prayer. Now obviously this is not setting God in the position of being their military opponent, but he is emphasizing the effort that Epaphras is exerting and that he is asking the Romans to exert in their work of prayer to influence God on their behalf.

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians he credits his previous escape from death (in part) to the prayers of the Corinthians on his behalf. He claims that they had been “helping together in prayer” (1:11). Like the words above, this is an active, effectual claim concerning their effort. Derived from the Greek word for work (ergo), with prefixes that intensify the meaning (upo) and communicate joint participation (sun), the word translated “helping together” (sunupourgeo) shows the sense in which the prayers of the Corinthians were a spiritual work the brethren had shared with Paul. This is like the very way he describes his companions who were “fellow workers” (sunergos - Phil. 4:3; Col. 4:11). The Corinthians, although not present with him when they shared the labor of prayer, were his “fellow workers” in much the same way.

### **III. Types of Prayers.**

It is in the writings of the Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit teaches us about the nature of prayer by utilizing different words that describe prayer. In Paul’s first letter to Timothy he makes reference to “supplications,



prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks” (2:1). Let us consider each of these descriptions.

**A. Supplications (deesis).** While this word originally communicated the idea of the need of something that was lacking, it came to refer to a request or an entreaty. Lenski sees this as a rather narrow word requesting something, as opposed to general prayer (p. 706). Plato used the word for the requests or demands made by tyrants upon their subjects Letters 329d). In Philippians 1:4 (as noted above) the word is used twice: “in every prayer (deesis)” and “making request (deesis).” Here the translators have chosen to bring out its primary meaning in the second instance to avoid repetition in the English. When the Christian understands, as James tells us, that God is the giver of “Every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17) it becomes natural for him to offer to the Lord the requests he may have for those things he desires whether physical or spiritual.

**B. Prayers (proseuche).** Chadwick suggests that the word translated “prayer” (proseuche) “is a word reserved for address to God” whereas the other words in 1 Timothy 2:1 may be addressed to men (p. 207). Although at times the word for “prayer” and “supplication” can be used synonymously, in general a “supplication” (deesis) is a specific request and a “prayer” (proseuche) is “calling on God” in general. Kittel explains that the distinction between the two rests “solely in the content” (2.807). Origen, considered the content of a “prayer” (proseuche) to concern “matters of importance” presented “in a dignified manner” (On Prayer 14.2, Chadwick). This may take the the distinction too far. In the epistle to the Philippians Paul teaches the brethren - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer (proseuche) and supplication (deesis), with thanksgiving (eucharistia), let your requests be made known to God” (4:6). This shows that with the proper disposition the content of prayer may include both important matters and those of little consequence.

**C. Intercessions (enteuxis).** The primary meaning of this word concerns encounters or meetings between separate persons (LSJ 576). The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus used the word of a request made to a ruler for ownership of two slave girls (16.55). Chadwick suggests that it does “not necessarily mean what the English word ‘intercession’ does - prayer in relation to others” but “involves a ‘bold’ approach to God” (p. 207). Origen claimed that “an ‘intercession’(enteuxis) is a request to God for certain things made by one who possesses more than usual confidence” (On Prayer

14.2, Chadwick). The only other example of its use in the New Testament is in chapter four of the same epistle, as Paul explains that in Christ all food is now clean - "for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (enteuxis)" (1 Tim. 4:5). The confidence that we are granted in Christ allows the child of God to go before God on behalf of those foods which were at one time considered unclean, with thanksgiving. The relationship that we have with God in Christ, which allows us to "come boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16) allows us to appeal to God on behalf of our concerns whether it involve other people or different events in our lives.

**D. Giving of Thanks (eucharistia).** The word translated "giving of thanks" has come into the English language in connection with the name the religious world has adopted for the Lord's Supper - the Eucharist. While the New Testament will not apply this word to the Lord's Supper, we do find the verb form of the word used in all four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper when Jesus "gave thanks" (eucharisteo - Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17; 1 Cor. 11:24). By the second century Christians had begun to refer to the memorial in this way. Justin Martyr refers to "the food we call Eucharist" in a description of the Lord's Supper (First Apology 66, Richardson).

In general the word refers to thankfulness and gratitude. An early papyri uses it of the Emperor Claudius' gratitude to some gymnasts who had performed for him (Moulton, p. 267). We see this sense of formal gratitude in Tertullus' flattering praise of Felix as he begins his accusation of Paul (Acts 24:3). The word is often associated with prayers offered before a meal. In Acts 27:35 Paul "took bread and gave thanks (eucharisteo) to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat." In I Timothy 4:4 Paul addresses Christian liberty in the eating of meats in writing - "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving (eucharistia)." It is not limited to prayers for food, but can concern anything that demands our gratitude before God. The Christian must live a life of gratitude for all the ways that God has blessed us. Prayers of thanksgiving are a continual means by which this can expressed.

#### **IV. The Regularity of Prayer.**

Both with respect to his own prayers and in those things which he teaches others Paul puts a great deal of emphasis upon remaining constant in prayer.

A. Prayer Without Ceasing. Four times in his epistles Paul refers to praying “without ceasing.” The first three of these instances refer to his own prayers. Paul mentions the Romans in prayer “without ceasing” (Rom. 1:9). In his prayers for the Thessalonians their “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope ” together with their reception of the word of God are called to mind before God “without ceasing” (1 Thess. 1:3; 2:13). As the Apostle ends the same epistle in which twice he had used the term for his own prayers for them, he then tells the Thessalonians - “pray without ceasing ” (1 Thess. 5:17).

This phrase, which is only one word in the Greek, translated “without ceasing” (adialeiptos) literally suggests “not leaving off” the particular action to which the word is applied. The Roman historian Polybius applied the word to the “unbroken” series of victories Hannibal won over the Romans (Histories 9.3.8). In the Apocryphal book of First Maccabees, it was used of regular sacrifices and prayers made in memory of friendly allies (12:11). Origen felt that Paul used it to describe the entire disposition of a Christian, writing:

*That man “prays without ceasing” (virtuous deeds or commandments fulfilled being included as a part of prayer) who combines with the prayer the needful deeds and the prayer with the fitting actions. For thus alone can we accept “pray without ceasing” as a practicable saying, if we speak of the whole life of the saint as one great unbroken prayer: of which prayer that which is commonly called prayer is a part (On Prayer 12.2, Chadwick).*

Paul is obviously not advocating a prayerlife that prohibits all other thought or action. Instead he is teaching by word and example a regularity in prayer that transcends sporadic utterances offered only in times of hardship or need. Alford suggests that supplications “may be unceasing, in the heart which is full of His presence and evermore communing with Him” (3.281).

**B. Prayer at All Times.** We noticed above that Paul spoke of his companions in prayer in military terms (Rom. 15:30-32; Col. 4:12). In the book of Ephesians Paul characterizes prayer as a continuing function of the spiritual soldier. Through the Holy Spirit he writes:

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,*

*being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Eph. 6:17-18).*

Let us notice three parts of this text:

**1. “Always” (en panti kairo).** The New American Standard Bible instead of “always” literally translates the text “at all times.” Lange suggests that this phrase “gives prominence to the prayer as persevering, despite all change of relation and circumstances” (p. 225). This is one of the great challenges for the soldier of Christ. Trials and hardships can overwhelm us to the point that our hearts are filled with worry and anxiety, leaving no time for prayer. On the other hand, sometimes good times and the joys of life can keep us so satisfied with this world that talking with the Lord is absent from our minds. In the same way that Jesus warns us in the parable of the sower that the word of God can be “choked with cares, riches and pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14), Paul urges us to make prayer a part of our spiritual regiment during every phase of our lives.

**2. “Being Watchful” (agrupneo).** The primary meaning of this is “to lie awake.” It is understood metaphorically to mean “to be watchful” (LSJ, p. 16). There are only three other instances of the use of the word in Scripture. In two of these instances Jesus associates watchfulness with prayer in order to prepare for times of judgment (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36). In the book of Hebrews the word is used of those ruling in a congregation who “watch out” for souls (Heb. 13:17). Paul is suggesting that the soldier of Christ must maintain a spiritual vigilance in their prayers for the saints as well as for all things.

**3. “Perseverance” (proskarteresis).** While this is the only example of the use of this in the New Testament, the verb form (proskartereo) occurs a number of times. Campbell defines the verb - “to persist in adherence to, to be intently engaged in, to attend constantly to” (p. 8). Three times in the New Testament it is used of the steadfastness and faithfulness of the early church (Acts 1:14; 2:42 & 46). The seven servants of the church in Jerusalem were appointed so that the apostles could give themselves “...continually (proskartereo) to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4). Paul teaches the Romans to be - “...patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly (proskartereo) in prayer” (Rom. 12:12). Paul admonishes the brethren to “adhere to” the saints in their continued memorial of them in prayer.

**C. Everything in Prayer.** In the second epistle to the Corinthians Paul allows us to see a glimpse of his own struggles in prayer. He tells us about what he refers to as a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7). While Scripture does not reveal to us what constituted Paul's “thorn” there are a few things about Paul's prayers for this matter that are important to our study. First, it is clear that Paul was persistent in his appeals regarding this thing. We are told - “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” (2 Cor. 12:8). The word translated “pleaded” (parakaleo) basically means - “to call to one’s side,”

Vine suggests: It is used for every kind of calling to a person which is meant to produce a particular effect, hence, with various meanings, such as “comfort, exhort, desire, call for,” in addition to its significance “to beseech,” ... (p. 62).

This is the same word Paul uses in teaching Timothy that an evangelist must “exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2). In Titus 1:9 Paul teaches that an elder must “exhort (parakaleo) and convict those who contradict.” As it is used above we see Paul calling upon God to come to his aid with an intensity that equals the calls of exhortation made to the ungodly and rebellious.

Next, we notice that Paul’s request was refused. Whatever this “thorn in the flesh” might have been, the Lord concluded that Paul’s service to him was not contingent upon its removal (2 Cor. 12:9). Does this suggest to us that Paul had “asked amiss” (James 4:3), and because it was improper the Lord refused? Not at all. Nicoll observes, “Like Another who prayed thrice that the cup of suffering might be removed from Him (Matt. 26:44), St. Paul did not receive the answer his spirit longed for” (3.111). Clearly Jesus did not “ask amiss” in spite of the fact that His request was denied. Sometimes as Christians we may imagine that there are certain kinds of appeals that are too trivial to bring before the Lord. In the example of Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” one might conclude that it was something of such minor significance that the Lord refused his request. Perhaps, but the very fact that the Lord answered him directly shows that it held some importance. The broader lesson is seen in the fact that, whatever this thing might have been, Paul brought it before the Lord. This is exactly what Paul would teach the Philippians - “...in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). The child of God in our day must learn the same thing.

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***Respect For Things Holy***  
***Topical Page***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:14-16).

One characteristic of God often ignored by folks in general today is His holiness, and His requirement of us to be holy as well. We must approach God with reverence to be acceptable before Him. This has always been the case. He told Israel long ago, “For I am the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy.”

(Leviticus 11:45). In fact, if you'll notice, the first four of the ten commandments deal specifically with treating God as holy by living holy ourselves (Exodus 20:3-11).

The promise had been given to Israel that after they entered the promised land of Canaan, that if they would keep God's commandments He would bless them, but if not, they would be cursed. Israel would suffer horrendously in the future because of their lack of regard for the holiness of God. To profane things which God has declared "holy" is a sin, then as well as now, whether it be the Scriptures, marriage, church, worship or behavior. It would do well for the church, or spiritual Israel, not to make the same mistakes Israel of old did.

### **Israel's Lack of Respect for God**

Israel's problems began with their disobedience. To protect Israel from the evil influences of idolatry and other pagan practices, God had commanded them to drive the other inhabitants completely out of the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:1-5). Israel got lazy and did not do so. The commandment was easy enough to understand. They were to make no covenant with the idolaters. The Lord said if they did not do this, they would succumb to idolatrous practices and be led astray. Israel did not take this warning seriously enough, that is, they did not treat God's word as holy. Consequently, the future of Israel would show numerous digressions into apostasies, idolatry, disloyalty, immorality and ultimately the consequences of destruction and captivity.

Israel had been forbidden to follow after other gods (Deuteronomy 7:5). But, they began to live by the code of "I do what I think I want to do" rather than "I do as the Lord directs." (Judges 21:5). Sounds much like prevailing attitudes today! Many grow to adulthood today completely ignorant of righteous principles of honesty, integrity and consideration for others. The parents have tremendous effect of future generations, good or bad (Judges 2:10).

The children of Israel had also been forbidden to intermarry with idolaters (Deuteronomy 7:3,4). Again, they did not treat God's word as holy. Again, the consequences were apostasy, sin and destruction.

Today, the will of God deserves no less respect than it did then, but sadly, our nation holds His teachings and commandments with about the same level of respect as Israel of old did. Who can look at this nation's divorce and remarriage situation, often in direct violation of God's holy word (Matthew 19:4-6;9) and think otherwise? On Israel, they began to think all gods were more or less equal. That's the sentiment often expressed today as well. The Dali Lama is not Jesus; he is not in the same category, but many believe him to be (John 14:6). To put Mohammed, or Buddha, or any other religious leader on equal footing with Christ is to treat the Son of God with contempt.

### **Israel Did Not Respect Holy Men**

“Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do as their fathers.” (Judges 2:16,17).

What a striking parallel! These judges were calling the people back to God, and speaking the truth. But often the truth of God is not popular with man. If you take your stand for the truth, then you will be unlikely to win a popularity contest, but you will please God and He will take care of you.

We need holy men and women today to serve the Lord faithfully and fully. Holy men need to step forward and prepare themselves to become elders of local churches, dedicated to leading them according to God's revealed word (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). We need holy disciples who will follow the lead of godly elders that the church may prosper. We need holy preachers and teachers who will proclaim the truth in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2-4; Titus 2:15). We need holy disciples going about and teaching God's word everywhere, urging all to treat God as holy (Acts 18:26; 8:4).

### **Israel Did Not Have Respect For Worship**

The sons of Eli became priests in Israel, but had no respect for the holiness of God, their own positions, nor the commandments of God ( 1 Samuel 2:12-16; 17:22-25; 29). They did evil as they sacrificed to the Lord. They cared little for God and His will. They refused to honor God, and were



dishonorable men themselves. They had betrayed the trust God had placed in them. They were and will be judged.

We need to understand that our worship, too, has been regulated in the word of God. To treat worship as holy is to obey God's instructions concerning it. There is a difference in worship and every day activities. Some churches, to attract crowds, have changed the work and worship of the church from what God commanded to something more in line with common things. Their might be entertainment, drama, musical shows, fairs, carnivals, games and even gambling. Some will involve the church in politics, or in gambling. Some have sponsored beer tents. The Lord spoke of this same thing happening during Israel's days and through Ezekiel said, "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." (Ezekiel 22:26). When we do similar things today, we also "do violence" to God's law and "profane" (make common) His holy things.

It is time we treat God as holy, and never regard His will with anything less than careful consideration and obedience.

## ***Plan of Salvation*** ***By Jon W. Quinn***

### Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

(Acts 2:36-38).

## Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

### The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

### Final Page

## **Psalm 8 – The Emotions of the Poet**

Warren E. Berkley

“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth...”

There are at least two songs I'm aware of, built around this statement of praise. One is #90 Hymns for Worship, Revised. There is another rendition in Great Songs of the Church, #562, by Horatio Palmer (1874). It is also published in Alton Howard's Sons of Faith and Praise, number 215. Thanks to my nephew, Jeremy Boyd, for this research. He is the “go to” guy for this kind of research.).

In the 8<sup>th</sup> Psalm, there is very simple structure. David's offers up this statement of praise, then immediately tells us why God is worthy of such praise:

*He has “set” His “glory above the heavens.”*

*He has “ordained strength.”*

*He has silenced the enemy and the avenger.*

Next, David takes us further into the excellence of God (vss. 3-5). David is so overwhelmed as he contemplates the creative work of God, he expresses his astonishment over God's attention to man: "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" The point of this is not to downgrade man. This is a poetic and emotional expression of his astonishment of the vastness of the divine-made universe.

Note this intriguing thing about Hebrew poetry that English-speaking people may not be familiar with: David visit two things side by side, that seem contradictory: the insignificance of man – but God's mindfulness of man. This is what happens when the heart of man tries to take in all God has made. One is so overwhelmed, it may be difficult to state in academic, objective terms.

Keep in the forefront, the theme: The excellence of God. Like a good preacher, David ends where he started: "O Lord, O Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth." I need to make that more of a part of my personal devotion. How about you?