

## I Prayer: Only Jesus Can

*By Dan Camp eEncourager*

I once read somewhere that nothing is discussed more and practiced less than prayer. Most everyone has heard that prayer changes things.

One of the first things that God does when we pray is to peel away our sense of shame and fear. After Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3), they hid themselves. They certainly did not feel like praying.

The finished work of Christ provides for believers, among many things, a completely safe place with our Father. We are in Him, without condemnation, and unconditional acceptance and love are freely ours because of Jesus' Grace. As brand new creatures in Christ, we may experience total freedom to boldly and joyfully come to His Throne of Grace to "pray without ceasing."

After establishing the fact that we are loved and free to pray without shame or fear, it is extremely important to understand what prayer does *not* do. For all praying people, I mean no disrespect; but it is Christ Jesus, not prayer, that accomplishes all His glorious, holy will. Prayer changes things? No, only our Yahweh God changes things!

Our common misperceptions probably come from the words of James the Apostle, "**The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much**" (James 5:16b, NKJV). The core of the Greek word for *avail*, or accomplish, is *energoumene* (Gk), which points to energy, divine energy, resurrection Life energy, Jesus' energy. In fact, the entire book of James is based on this presupposition, which all the apostles had personally experienced and taught in the early churches. This is the great common denominator that Jesus is our DO'ER.

Faith without works is dead because true faith ALWAYS comes first and ALWAYS results in works that glorify God. Grace comes first, not works, and works do not save (Eph. 2:8-9). After Grace saves us through faith, which is the GIFT OF GOD, Grace then begins to produce through faith, works by His Holy Spirit in us. He is the One Who is doing prayer in us!

The fervent prayer of a born-again man, then, is a result of the energy and Life of Christ, which accomplishes God's will. It is not the prayer, nor the man; but is Christ within the man Who avails much. Paul used the same Greek word in his letter to the Galatians in 5:6 where we read, "**faith working through love.**" The Greek actually says, "faith by love working." We know, "**God IS Love**" (1 John 4:8, emphasis added). Love is a Person. That Person is the One working, as we depend on, believe in, and trust in Him.

Paul continues, in Galatians 5, that God uses our faith to provide the power *for* us and *in* us to walk by the Spirit (vs. 16), to win the battle against our flesh (vs. 17), to be led by the Spirit and become free from the law (vs. 18), to be free from the works of the flesh (vs. 19-21), and to experience the fruit of the Spirit being produced in and through us (vs. 22-23). Because we belong to Christ and He belongs to us, we surrender to His Cross, die to our self-life, and experience His resurrection Life working *for* us, *in* us, and *through* us (vs. 24). In all these

things, we keep step with Jesus by walking in His Spirit, Who lives in us (vs. 25), and by depending on "faith by Love (God) working" in us.

Perhaps the most revealing verse in the whole Bible about prayer is the little known Psalm 109:4. "In return for my love they act as my accusers, but I give myself to prayer." What's amazing about this verse is **there is no verb** between "I" (the subject) and "prayer." Young's Literal <sup>1</sup> translates the verse, "For my love they oppose me, and I – prayer!"

Here we see the person (the believer in Yahweh), inseparable from what he does - prayer. His automatic response in this threatening situation is prayer. He cannot, *not* pray.

I like Joseph Prince's comedic comment that going into McDonald's doesn't make you a Big Mac any more than going to a garage makes you a car." <sup>2</sup> His point is that sinning – for the believer – is not the norm and does not return Christians to their former identity as sinners. Professor Bill Gillham, <sup>3</sup> with the Lord, did the homework on the word "saint," and found it **59 times** in the epistles. I'm not sure where the false teaching came from that "you have to die to be a saint." The Bible teaches just the opposite.

In fact, the identity of the believer in Jesus Christ is so radically changed that the very person is a new and different person. A very popular hit song by Rick Ross <sup>4</sup> pleads, "I'm Only Human." The Apostle Paul, with reference to true Christians, begged to differ. We are no longer mere humans. We are certainly not just "sinners saved by Grace." We WERE sinners, and we have been saved by Grace, but we are now saints in Christ.

The Finished Work of Jesus has impacted every facet of our being, and His Spirit has so invaded us that prayer is who we are now. We don't "do prayer," according to the Psalm; we *are* prayer. The more we assume our true new identity, the more we realize that we have been given a very special place at the table with a voice that is wont to be heard. And even when it is not audible, ours is a vital part of the ongoing conversation within the Holy Trinity. Selah! Wrap your brain around that!

There are those who insist that prayer is "a necessary Christian discipline." I have a question for them. How *disciplined* was that delicious orange you had for breakfast? Those sweet strawberries must have been the most disciplined berries ever grown! Man, that grapefruit was a disciplined treat! You say I'm making an incorrect and unreasonable comparison? I hope not, because I got it from Jesus' own lips: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

My bride and I have just come through, and are still in, some very stressful and troubling times. Our understanding of Grace working in us and for us and through us brings out the prayer, which is part of who we now know we are in Christ. One of our precious parents at school yesterday asked me how I am doing. Before I could check myself, the Spirit put the words in my mouth for that lady: "I am very healthy. I just don't have enough problems. I need more problems! They cause me to rely on Jesus, Who is living His Life in me" (Gal. 2:20).

I don't know the young airman at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs (Colorado), who has been in the news lately, but Father knows him! And I love our young brother, and pray for him. On the wall outside his dormitory room, there is a white board. Every student has one, and every student has been free to post any message that is civil, helpful, or generally encouraging. He recently wrote out Galatians 2:20 in its entirety. The national uproar that has resulted, accompanied by a major media frenzy, has been glorious! I read today that the

secretaries of every branch of the U.S. military are meeting together soon to consider what to do.

I have no doubt that somewhere, sometime within the past couple of months, prayer was being offered that our young men and women in college, preparing to serve God and country, might have a chance to be exposed to the heart of the Gospel of Grace. Abba answered. I agree with Dr. Charles Solomon,<sup>5</sup> one of the noble and precious fathers of the Grace revolution in the U.S., that the Grace message of Galatians 2:20 is precisely what the malnourished modern church so desperately needs.

Last week we attended and supported one of our Veritas School families in the Home-going of grandfather, father, and husband, Mr. William McGaha, 80, of Thomaston, Georgia. Now with the Lord, he was a godly Christian man who had served in the National Guard for 27 years before starting a career in insurance. At the graveside, the guns blasted skyward, as though they needed to make an opening in Earth's atmosphere for Bill's soul and spirit with Christ to enter Heaven.

After the closing prayer of benediction, the American flag covering his casket was folded ceremoniously and presented formally to Ms. Gracie. Then the captain of the guard received three of the used gunshells, turned, and knelt in front of her. With his white-gloved hand, he extended the shells to her and said, "Ma'am, these shells represent the birth, death, and resurrection of your loved one. Do you accept?"

I heard those spine-chilling words, and immediately puzzled over the young man's careful wording. He did not ask her, "Do you accept these shells?" No, I believe his intent was quite clear, and that the Hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was subtly being presented with the gift. When my own dad went Home a few years ago, I spoke at length with him before his body died. He was absolutely convinced that Jesus, Who had been resident in his "earthsuit" (Gillham)<sup>4</sup> with him for some 50 years, was going to eject with him. The resurrection of the body is for real.

The Gospel of Grace offers Hope that conquers everything, including physical death, and if death, how much more so DAILY LIFE. Mrs. Judy Echols of Fayetteville, Georgia, another proud Veritas School grandmother went Home earlier this evening. Her believing, Grace-filled children and grandchildren are being literally overwhelmed with the Joy of the Lord in them and the Peace that is Christ in them beyond understanding. Two of her four sons, dear friends to us, have shared with me this evening that their mother has just joined the greatest, pain-free, bluegrass band in history! Surely David is there with his stringed instruments!

Perhaps a loved one of yours has recently joined that band, or is close to Home. Do you know the reality, "I, prayer"? Do you know that your Father loves you with such total abandon that you can rest in His love in every circumstance? He does not want you to miss His daily functioning Grace (Heb. 12:15a). He wants you to enter His Rest, which He entered after working for six days on Creation (Heb. 4:7-11). His Rest is not Heaven, beloved. ***His Rest is available, and it is right now.*** And right now. And right now...

I was privileged to be raised close to a beautiful lake in Tennessee. During the summer months we swam together almost every day. One of my favorite memories is of my daddy calling to me, "Come on in! The water's fine!" Dear one, whatever your present situation, Jesus is saying to you, "I've got you, and I've got this." Let prayer flow, let it flow, let it overflow. You need not try to pray. You are prayer. Assume your identity. The Grace of the Lord Jesus is all over you, filling you, flowing out of you like streams of refreshing water. Relax in Him. Don't tread, float.

Abide and rest. He will hold you up. He will never let you down. He will cause you to bear much fruit.

These priceless truths about Grace offer incredible liberty and inspiration for prayer. It is such a gift. It is a privilege. It is a partnership. It is a relief. It is a joy. It's a total God-thing. It is not a duty, not a burden, not one more thing on my "to do" list, not a requirement. But it is *always* an invitation: "Call on Me, abide in Me, ask of Me, and see what I will do for you and through you." Identity is your starting place. You are in Christ, Christ is in you. You may say with Him, "I, prayer."

<sup>1</sup> *Young's Literal Translation* (YLT) is an extremely literal translation that attempts to preserve the tense and word usage found in the original Greek and Hebrew writings. The original 1898 edition, by Robert Young, was published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI. <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Youngs-Literal-Translation-YLT-Bible/>

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Prince. *Destined to Reign*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 2007. [www.josephprince.org](http://www.josephprince.org)

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bill Gillham founded Lifetime Guarantee Ministries to encourage people to experience the reality of Christ as life. His transparent, humorous, down-to-earth style and sense of humor made him one of the most effective teachers of his time. He communicated with great clarity the full extent of what God accomplished in Christ and what that means for the Christian identity. Although Bill passed away in June 2011, his messages are timeless and will continue to impact generations to come. <http://www.lifetime.org/2005/01/graduation-day-dying-to-live-2/>

<sup>4</sup> *I'm Only Human* is from the second studio album *"Trills"* by Miami rapper, Rick Ross. Released March 2008, through Def Jam Recordings, Slip-n-Slide Records. and Poe Boy Entertainment. Wikipedia contributors, "Trilla," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Trilla&oldid=598702259> (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Charles R. Solomon is founder and president emeritus of Grace Fellowship International, Pigeon Forge, TN, USA.

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