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## FRUITFULNESS: PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER (Cont.)

by Dan Trygg

In the last chapter, I began to share five principles from the Scriptures that were intended to give us a guideline for effective praying. We covered:

- 1.) **Ask.** The *principle of action*.
- 2.) **Ask in faith.** The *principle of attitude*.

To these two let me now add:

3.) **Ask in Jesus' name.** This *principle of approach* is coming to God through the proper avenue, i.e., the mediatorship of Christ (I Tim. 2:5) and His finished work (Heb. 10:10-23). Jesus said that no one could come to the Father but by means of Him (Jn. 14:6). Since Jesus was sent for this very purpose, i.e., to provide a way of reconciliation for men to approach the Holy God, and since He alone has accomplished this work, then **only those who identify themselves with Jesus have a definite basis for a hearing before God.** *The name of Jesus is like a password*, in that it opens the way into the heavenly throne room.

Beyond being a password, however, *praying in Jesus' name also signifies praying according to His character and nature.* Since the name signifies the person, praying in Jesus' name also implies praying according to His heart and purpose. How can the name of Jesus be truly applied to requests of selfishness or sin? Obviously, before God it is not possible. Since the invitation is that anything brought in prayer before God in Jesus' name will be done (Jn. 14:13,14; 16:23,24), and since this is clearly *not* a magical incantation, in that it does not work for all requests, we are faced with two possibilities: Either, (a.) Jesus was lying, and the New Testament is not true; or, (b.) there is more to praying in Jesus' name than merely tacking His name on to the end of our prayer as a password. As other Biblical passages on prayer are studied, it becomes more and more apparent that the latter option is the correct analysis.

4.) **Ask according to His will.** This is *the principle of accuracy.* If our prayers are to be consistently effective, we must petition God within the boundaries of His will. The content of our requests must be right. If they are, then we will receive what we ask for (I Jn. 5:14,15). This is part of what is meant in Jn. 15:7. If Jesus' words are abiding in us, then what we ask will come out of a heart full of *His* thoughts and desires. Then our requests will be in accordance with His will and shall be done. The opposite of this idea is recorded in Jas. 4:1-3. Here the prayers of those people have been disregarded by God because their hearts were selfish, and not at all in accordance with His desires.

5.) **Ask out of a true communion relationship with God.** This is *the principle of abiding.* Fruitfulness in the prayer life comes from abiding in the Vine. If the life-link between the branch and Vine is right, the true needs and desires of the branch, ...the thirsts and hungers due to the stress of life and the demands of growth..., are supplied by the Vine. If the life-flow is hindered in any way, however, the branch is cut off from the provision of the Vine. The person who cuts himself off from the Vine by unconfessed, cherished sin (Ps. 66:18; Isa. 1:10-15; Mic. 3:1-4; Jas. 4:1-3), or by the arrogance of fleshly striving (Gal. 5:2-4; cf. Gal. 3:1-5), cannot expect a fruitful life of prayer. What is to be done? Repent, return, and be restored to God (I Jn. 1:9; Jas. 4:4-10). Take up again the abiding place of life in Jesus, and begin to respond to His life-leadings. **The abiding life is the life of obedience** (Jn. 15:10). This not only gives us effectiveness in prayer, but also confidence in approaching God (I Jn. 3:18-24). Finally, **the life of communion is a life in the Spirit.** He is the One who reveals Jesus *to us* (Jn. 16:13-15) and manifests Him *through us* (II Cor. 2:14-3:6). Not only are we instructed to pray in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18), but we are also told that He prays in us and for us (Rom. 8:26). **The prayer life rooted in**

**Jesus' life is Spirit-led and effective** (Rom. 8:27).

A final comment regarding fruitfulness and prayer: Prayer is not only effective in its impact upon our growth and fruitfulness, ...and not only is *effectual prayer* the result of a life which is abiding in Jesus..., **prayer is also another means of bringing our hearts into the abiding relationship of dependence, and keeping us there.** In prayer, we cry out to the Vine and we are eager to receive from Him. In learning to be effectual in prayer, we learn more about abiding, because *the abiding life is the fruitful prayer life.* Thus, prayer is another opportunity, a learning situation or discipline, which draws us to Jesus. If we approach it in this way, our hearts can be drawn not only by the desire for answers to our prayer, but by the deeper, more fulfilling draw of knowing Jesus better, delighting in Him and receiving from Him. Let us, then, pursue prayer as one of the most effective tools for shaping our hearts to be effectively and consistently abiding and bearing fruit.

“Lord, teach us to pray...” (Lk. 11:1).

**FOR MEDITATION: John 15:7.**

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

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## BUILD AN EXTENSION CHAIN

“Each church should send out one or two extension workers, as did Antioch (Acts 13:1-3), to raise up daughter churches. The sooner the better. It is much harder to mobilize an older church for multiplication. Any mother church can start one or more daughter churches, which can in turn start more churches. This is the process we call an ‘extension chain’. The links are not individuals, but congregations.

“Any chain of spiritual reproductions (in which one reaches and trains another, who does the same for another, and so on) eventually fizzles out *unless it is continually re-energized by a Body of believers* indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The reproducing unit in the chain of spiritual reproduction is not the *individual* witness, but His *church*. Plan your extension chains with this in mind. Each church should be a link in the chain; ...each witness for Christ, an arm of His church. ...show each new convert how to witness to his family and friends. The Holy Spirit flows most readily through these bonds which already exist between people.

“Christ’s ‘church growth’ parables (Mt. 13; Mk. 4:26-29; Jn. 15:1-6) show us that churches, obediently shepherded, will grow normally, quite like plants. Like all other living things which God has created, they will produce after their own kind, bear good fruit, yield an abundant harvest, and grow on their own (one worker plants, another waters, but God gives the growth). *It is the inherent nature of the church to grow.* If it doesn’t, it is like corn which stops growing when only a few inches high; something *has* to be wrong. An obedient church in normal conditions *has* to grow; it’s her very nature. If not, it was planted in the wrong field, or it needs water, weeding, pest control, or more light. When a church doesn’t grow among a fairly responsive people, something is quenching the power of the Holy Spirit in the Body...”

“Do not accept the argument, ‘We can’t start a daughter church yet; our church is too weak; we must wait until we have a strong home base first.’

“*No church is too young to obey Christ.* As soon as a worker is available, send him. New churches raise up daughter churches more readily than old ones. If you wait for your church to get strong, it will also get hard; it is often impossible to mobilize an old church to start daughter churches.”

From “The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches” by George Patterson in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, A Reader. William Carey Library: Pasadena, CA. 1981.