

The Power of Praying in the Spirit 3

"I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach." Charles Spurgeon

"The man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history." Andrew Murray

"Time spent alone with God is not wasted. It changes us; it changes our surroundings; and every Christian who would live the life that counts, and who would have power for service must take time to pray." M.E. Andross

"What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use— men of prayer, men mighty in prayer" E.M. Bounds

I. Review: We have been talking about the benefits of praying in the Spirit.

A. (1 Cor. 14:2 NKJV) ²*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

B. (1 Cor. 14:14, 15 AMP) ¹⁴*For if I pray in an [unknown] tongue, my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind is unproductive [it bears no fruit and helps nobody].* ¹⁵*Then what am I to do? I will pray with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will also pray [intelligently] with my mind and understanding; I will sing with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will sing [intelligently] with my mind and understanding also.*

II. Review: 10 Benefits of Praying in the Spirit.

A. **Praying in the Spirit strengthens and builds the spiritual man; the inner man.**

B. **Praying in the Spirit helps us to express thanksgiving and worship to God.**

C. **Praying in the Spirit ministers rest and refreshing to the inner man.**

III. Praying in the Spirit helps us to pray in line with God's will in areas in which we are not certain about God's will. (Rom. 8:26 NKJV) ²⁶*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.* 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.*

A. This passage teaches about the Holy Spirit's role in our prayer lives. It is a commonly misunderstood passage, because at a glance it appears to be saying that

the Holy Spirit prays for us. But a careful study of this passage shows that it is really talking about how the Holy Spirit **assists us in prayer**.

B. Notice that the Spirit helps in our **weaknesses**.

1. "Weaknesses" in the Gr. means want of strength or infirmity. Whenever you see this word used in the New Testament it is wise to observe it in its setting in order to determine the nature of the weakness that is being discussed. In some cases, it refers to sickness, in others a weakness in understanding, or weakness against superior forces, or weakness against persecutions and buffetings.

2. In this case, it is referring to the weakness of **not always knowing "what we should pray for as we ought"**.

3. We know the promises in the New Testament are the will of God for our lives. But we do not understand everything that is going on in the spiritual realm (activities of Satan, demons, and angels) that affect people in the world. We do not understand what is going on in the hearts of people (men look on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart); we do not know everything about every detail of the past, present, or future. We often do not have wisdom to apply the principles of God in prayer. **So we need help**.

C. So how does the Holy Spirit help us? Does He do the praying for us, while we sit by?

1. No, He is not going to do our praying for us. **The Lord has commanded us to pray. (Luke 18:1a NKJV) *1Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.***

2. The Holy Spirit helps our praying. He **assists** our praying. Remember, He is the Helper who has been sent to help us.

3. A key to understanding how he helps us is found in the meaning of the Gr. word that was translated "helps" in this passage.

4. **"Sunantilambanomai" means to take hold of, together with, against.**

5. **The Holy Spirit does not do our praying for us; rather He takes hold together with us (in our infirmity of not knowing exactly what to pray for) against the weight of the problem we are interceding about.**

6. Here is how He takes hold together with us: **by supplying us with intercession that cannot be uttered (in our own articulate speech)**. That is the meaning of the Gr. word translated "groanings which cannot be uttered" according to Greek scholar Dr. P. C. Nelson.

7. **This is a reference to praying in the Spirit or praying in other tongues. (1 Cor. 14:2 NKJV) *2For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. (ALT) For the one speaking in a tongue does not speak to people _but_ to God, for no one understands [him], but in [his] spirit [or, by [the] Spirit] he speaks secrets [or, mysteries].***

(CEV) If you speak languages that others don't know, God will understand what you are saying, though no one else will know what you mean. You will be talking about mysteries that only the Spirit understands.

(WNT) For he who speaks in an unknown tongue is not speaking to men, but to God; for no one understands him. Yet in the Spirit he is speaking secret truths.

a. When we pray in tongues, we are praying in the spirit ("in the spirit he speaks"). That means that our spirits, by the Holy Spirit within us, are praying to God.

b. **We are speaking Divine secrets, things that are not revealed to our understanding, mysteries that only the Spirit understands.**

c. By this means, we are enabled by the Spirit to pray beyond our infirmity of not knowing exactly what to pray for; **beyond the limitations of our finite minds.**

d. **You see, you can only articulate to the limits of your understanding.**

e. When you pray with the groanings, or tongues that the Holy Spirit supplies then you can pray beyond the limits of your own understanding.

D. The Lord in heaven understands the mind of the Spirit that is expressed by these utterances on tongues.

E. These utterances in tongues, given by the Holy Spirit, are in line with the will of God.

1. **When we pray in tongues, we are praying the express will of God.**

2. It will always be in line with the Word. The Word and the Spirit agree. **(1 John 5:7 NKJV) 7For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.**

3. When the will of God is prayed, it will result in effecting the desired change in the lives of the ones being prayed for.

4. When you give yourself to intercession in other tongues, you are serving God with your spirit...giving Him the use of your spirit to pray His will into the earth.

(Rom. 1:9 NKJV) 9For 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.

F. When we pray in tongues, we are praying out the will of God for our lives and for others, and God is making this intercession work together for our good.

