

Lord, teach us to pray part 5: Petition vs Intercession

So, before we dive into part 5 of this series on prayer, I must ask all of you a question or two? Is what I've been teaching helping you in your prayer life? Has there been anything that has encouraged you to pray more, to feel like you are praying more confidently or made an improvement in your life when it comes to prayer? My goal in this series is to not only give you the instruction from the Word of God regarding "Prayer," but to give you practical application to help you grow in this area of your life.

To that end, I'm going to shift a little this morning in my sermon. I'm going to briefly explain the difference between "Petition" and "Intercession" and then I'm going to share from the Bible Hinderances to prayer, because there are a few.

In **2nd Corinthians 2:11**, Paul mentions that we are not to be "ignorant of the Devil's schemes..."

He has a lot of schemes. In the context of this verse, it's in relationship to unforgiveness, which is also in Jesus's Model Prayer, "Forgive us, as we forgive those who have sinned/trespassed against us." That's just one of his schemes.

I'm currently writing a book titled "Stealing the Devil's Playbook" where I'm highlighting the 3 main areas of temptation from the enemy in our lives. Like I just said, Satan has a lot of schemes that he desires to use against us: to tempt us into sin, to get footholds and strongholds in our lives and to hold us in bondage; to get us to live in unforgiveness, bitterness, judgment; to bring division in our relationships, in our marriages, in our churches... and the list goes on and on...

What are his schemes as it relates to prayer?

The first and foremost is: *to keep you from praying!!!* But if he is unsuccessful in that endeavor, then he will move on to other tactics, temptations and schemes. Okay, before we look at what those are, let me quickly explain Petition vs. Intercession. We are called to do both in the Scriptures:

[SLIDE →] ***"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints."*** -Ephesians 6:18

We see these same themes and descriptions come up multiple times in the Scriptures. Remember, in part 3 we looked at the Greek word for prayer in the Bible, used 127 times in the New Testament: proseuche. It means toward or close; it denotes intimacy. In that regard, prayer is about communion with God, and in a general sense any communication with God can be defined as "prayer." A friend of mine just happened to post this on social media this week in relationship to the word communication:

"The English word 'communication' has been derived from the Latin word, 'Communicare' which means to impart or participate or to transmit. The word 'Communicare' is derived from the root 'Communis' which means to make common or to share." - from a Google search on the etymology of the word. I'm pondering the idea of how we communicate. It is the mutual sharing of ideas. Sometimes I encounter folks who want to monologue their ideas to me, but not reciprocate and hear my thoughts. That is not true communication because it is one sided."

So, true prayer is communication with God and true communication with God is not one-sided. Prayer is when we talk with, but also listen to God.

Petition: [also known as "*supplication*"; *Deesis* in the Greek] to ask, request, implore or entreat; often times with urgency or fervor.

Philippians 4:6-7 says, ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."***

The context here is important: Firstly: Do not be anxious for *anything*. No anxiety, no worry, no fear, no 'worst case scenarios', no panic... Just make your requests/petitions known to God (with thanksgiving). The result? He will give you the peace that passes all understanding that will guard our heart and mind in Jesus. Sometimes it's better to have peace than it is understanding. ***"Thou will keep him in perfect peace, who's mind is stayed on Thee"*** (Isaiah 26:3)

Intercession [to intercede; *enteuxis* in the Greek; in-took-sees] This particular word has a nuance of "intercession" or meeting with God on behalf of someone or something else.

Though the word doesn't appear a great number of times in the Scriptures, we see lots of examples of intercession modeled in the Bible. Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moses intercedes on behalf of Israel. Elijah and Daniel, likewise, both interceded for Israel. The greatest examples of intercession though or Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

While certainly petition (making requests) can be done on behalf of another, most times that we petition God, we do it for our benefit. The major difference then, is that intercession is for the benefit of someone else.

There are many other types of prayer as well, in addition to Petitions and intercession: Prayers of confession, prayers of repentance, prayers of surrender, prayers of consecration, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of agreement... and more.

God wants us to pray without ceasing... to devote ourselves to prayer. The Devil doesn't want you to pray at all, or to give up on prayer. Let's look at some of the schemes the enemy tempts or attacks us with to keep us prayerless or faithless in our prayers.

The enemy of our souls will attack us with Hopelessness. Hope is what your faith shines off of and it is needed to walk in faith:

***“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction [evidence] of things not seen.”
-Hebrews 11:1 (emphasis mine)***

We need hope to exercise our faith. What the enemy does sneakily, is to get us to put our hope in a thing or another person or an answer to prayer, instead of putting our hope in Jesus.

“...indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope.” -2nd Corinthians 1:9 (emphasis mine)

Hope is the anchor of our soul (**Hebrews 6:19**). Don't let the enemy pull you down to a place of hopelessness. You can hope in God and in His promises. He is faithful. Trust in Him.

The enemy will attempt to keep you in a place of Guilt, shame, condemnation over decisions that you have made or even things that have been done to you. If he can keep you in these, he knows it will rob you of your confidence in prayer or keep you from praying at all.

“We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” -1st John 3:19-22 (emphasis mine)

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” -Romans 8:1, 2

Whom the Son sets free is free indeed (**John 8:36**). Be free of guilt, shame and condemnation and come to the throne boldly and with confidence to receive what He offers in your time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**).

The enemy will constantly push a narrative of Doubt (double mindedness). What if's become the fiery darts that he constantly throws at you, to see if any will stick. He repeats the phrase from the Garden often: Did God really say that? He knows that doubt is a killer:

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” -James 1:5-8

Have you ever had prayers you felt were not answered? Or at least not answered in the way you thought they would be? The enemy will try to keep you in a prolonged place of Disappointment and Disillusionment. If some of your prayers go unanswered, why pray?

We may not know this side of heaven why some prayers seemed to go unanswered or weren't answered in the way we hoped and prayed, but we cannot let this keep us from praying.

Sometimes the best prayer is the prayer of surrender to God's will: Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Monica's mom, Josie, who will be moving here shortly, prayed and prayed for years for Monica to come to know the Lord. She had her on every prayer list she could find. She even wrote Dr. Ben Carson asking him to pray for Monica, and he wrote back saying he would pray for her. She tried everything in her own strength to get Monica in church and to stop partying but nothing was working; the harder she pushed, the harder Monica's heart would become it seemed.

She would even pray angels around her all the time. [Tell the camping story]

Finally, one day God spoke to Josie and said, "Give your daughter to Me. She's mine more than she is yours. Give her to me and trust me. You take care of my other daughters who need me and I will take care of yours." [Sunset Strip homeless girl story]

We must pray without ceasing. We have not because we ask not (**James 4:2, 3**). We must pray in accordance with God's will. How do you know His will. You read it in His Word and You learn to hear His voice and listen to the Holy Spirit. If you struggle with hearing God, then come to my Hearing God Bible study or ask me for my notes. Remember, communicating with God is a two-way street. We petition and intercede and we listen to what He wants to say to us.