

The Spirit's Part in Prayer



How to Be Led by the Holy Spirit (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing with you Keys To Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I'll be continuing with the theme which I commenced last week, "How to Be Led by the Holy Spirit." Understanding and applying the truths it contains is essential for your success in the life of faith.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's a brief, personal note.

Now, back to our theme, "How to be Led by the Holy Spirit."

In my talks on this theme last week I explained that there are two key experiences in which the Holy Spirit relates to us to God as His children. The first is the new birth, being born again of the Spirit of God. And Jesus said, "Except a person is born again of the Holy Spirit, he can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God." That's a one-time experience. But the second way in which the Holy Spirit relates us to God's family is by making us mature sons of God—not just little babies, not just little children. And the way that is brought about is by being led daily, regularly, continually by the Holy Spirit. "As many as are led [continually] by the Holy Spirit, they are the sons [the mature sons] of God." So the pathway, and the only pathway to maturity as a child of God to become a son of God, is to be led regularly by the Holy Spirit.

I pointed out that we must understand, in this context, that the Holy Spirit is a person. He's not a theological abstraction, He's not a system; He's a person. And in cultivating a relationship with Him, I pointed out the key word is sensitivity. We have to learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as a person.

And then, in closing my talk last week, I explained the relationship between God's Spirit and God's Word—that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is both the author and the

interpreter of scripture.

Today I'm going to speak about the part which the Holy Spirit plays in our prayer life. We must see that the Holy Spirit is the only source of effective prayer. Any prayer that does not come by the Holy Spirit is not an effective prayer. It will not accomplish anything and it is not acceptable to God. Paul makes this very clear in Romans 8:26B27. He says this:

> "And in the same way the Spirit [capital s, the Holy Spirit] also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words, and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." (NAS)

Paul points out in those verses that as sons of Adam, in our fallen nature, we all have one innate, universal weakness. It's not a physical weakness. You could call it a weakness of our understanding. It is this: that we do not know what to pray for. And even when we know what to pray for we don't know how to pray for it.

Now, I have spoken to very large audiences and challenged them and said, "Is there anybody here who always knows what to pray for and how to pray for it?" And never has one person ever challenged the truth of Paul's statements. This is a universal problem for all of us. It's the lack of understanding of what we should be praying for at certain times and even when we do know what we should be praying for, how to be praying for it. And Paul explains that that's one of the main purposes for which God has placed the Holy Spirit within us—it's to guide us in prayer, to show us how to pray. It says that when we do not know what we should pray for the Spirit Himself—and notice again the emphasis on His personality—"the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Sometimes no human words can express the kind of prayer that we need to pray but the Holy Spirit gives us the appropriate prayer. I would say the real key to successful praying is to allow the Holy Spirit to keep up a continual prayer meeting within you and I believe that can go on even when we're not praying with our minds or with our mouths. I believe the Holy Spirit is an eternal intercessor and when we give Him liberty, He's interceding within us day and night.

Also, the Holy Spirit gives us the power that makes our prayer effective. In Ephesians 3:20, speaking about prayer and what God is able to do through prayer, Paul says this:

> "Now to Him who is able [that is God]...to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." (NAS)

There is no limit that we can set with our minds or our understanding as to what God can do in answer to our prayer. But the effectiveness of prayer is according to the power that works within us. It's the power within us that makes our prayer effective. What is that power? Well, Paul has already made it clear in Romans 8—it's the power of the Holy Spirit.

We see this in reality. You can have two Christians. Each pray identical words, maybe for the healing of a person. One person gets everything he prays for, the other gets nothing. Now there's no difference in their words. The difference is in the power that's in the words. We have to acknowledge that we are totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit to guide us in prayer and to empower us in prayer. And, we need to bear in mind what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:20:

> "For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power."

It's not all the words we pray. In fact, sometimes I think we pray too many words and some prayers are too long. But, it's the power that works through those words. And we have to learn how to cultivate the Holy Spirit, how to understand the Holy Spirit, how to yield to the Holy Spirit, how to let Him guide us and empower us in our prayers.

I want to give you quickly four examples of different kinds of prayers that the Holy Spirit can give. The first is prayer based directly on God's Word. We take a promise of God and we turn it back to God and we say, "God, do what you've promised to do." David prayed like that in 1 Chronicles 17:23. God had told him that he was going to build him a family line, a house, that was much greater than anything David had conceived. But when David received this prophetic word from the Lord, he said this:

> "And now, O Lord, let the word that Thou has spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house, be established forever, and do as Thou hast spoken." (NAS)

That's the key, "do as Thou hast spoken." When the angel Gabriel came to the virgin Mary to announce that she would be the mother of the Son of God, the Messiah, that was far above anything she had ever contemplated in her whole life

but her reply was this:

> "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord: be it done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38 NAS)

That's the key. You can never pray a more powerful prayer than when the Holy Spirit gives you release to claim a word of God in your experience.

And then there's prayer that's directly inspired. In Psalm 81:10 the Lord says to His people:

> "I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide and I will fill it." (NAS)

So, sometimes we don't know what we're going to pray. I don't know if you've ever been in that situation, you just open your mouth and let the Lord give you the prayer. Let Him pray it through you. That's one of the ways sometimes that you can discover God's will. When you begin to pray something that you never thought of praying, maybe about yourself or a certain situation, that's the prayer the Holy Spirit has given you, that's the revelation of God's will.

And then there's supernatural prayer. In 1 Corinthians 14:14B15 Paul is speaking about praying in an unknown tongue, entirely supernatural, possible only through the Holy Spirit, and he says this:

> "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind: I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." (NIV)

When Paul says, "I will pray with my spirit," or "sing with my spirit," he means, "I'll pray words given me by the Holy Spirit in an unknown tongue, words that I do not understand." But he also says that's not the only way I'm going to pray and sing, it's just one kind of way.

And then, finally, there's what I call "travailing" prayer. In Romans 8:23 Paul speaks about this and he says:

> "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves..." (NAS)

He's talking about a prayer that cannot just be expressed in words. It's so deep, it goes so far beyond our natural understanding, that we just have to let the Holy Spirit travail through us. It's very important to remember that in the kingdom of God there is no birth without travail, just as in the natural order.

There was a great move of God in the year 1904 in the little country of Wales and the man whom God used as an instrument to bring about this tremendous revival was named Evan Roberts. But his brother recorded later that months before the revival broke out—they were of a poor family, they shared the same bed—he said night after night his brother would be writhing and groaning in his sleep, uttering terrible groans which the brother couldn't understand. That was the travail of prayer that brought forth the Welsh revival.

So we have to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit, how to let Him be effectively Lord in our prayer life. Remember I pointed out last week He is Lord and one of the areas in which we have to yield to His Lordship and trust him in faith is in the area of our prayer life.

Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. My title for tomorrow's talk is a strange one, "Be Prepared to be Foolish." Be sure to tune in!

My special offer this week is my book, Purposes of Pentecost. This book explains why God has given us the Holy Spirit—all the many ways in which the Spirit is ready to help us and to do for us the "exceeding abundantly above" anything that we ourselves could ask or think. Also, my complete series of talks this week on "How to be Led by the Spirit of God, Part 2" is available in a single, carefully edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

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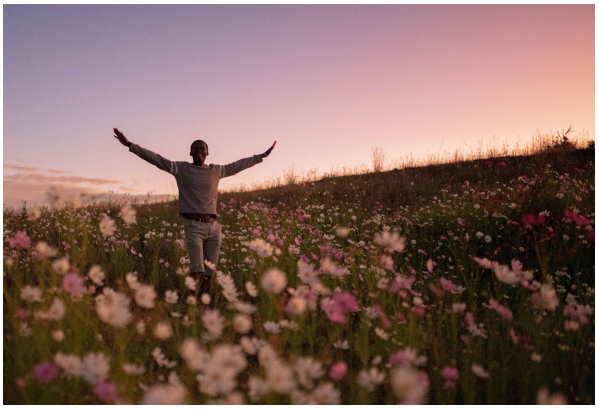

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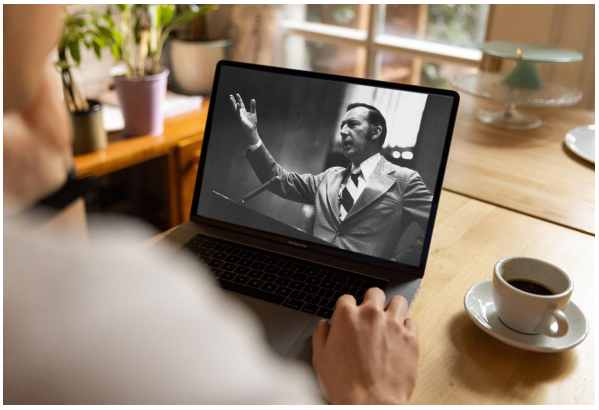

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