

I. Introduction to Romans Chapter 8 and Prayer Misconceptions

When you get into Romans chapter 8, you are in the heart of this great book, and it deals with the aspect of getting our glorified bodies and all the things that go along with that. You will remember that the first week when I read this passage, we began to talk about the misconception of prayer. I showed you that most people today really do not understand what prayer is. In fact, the Bible says, and we are going to read it here in just a moment, that one of the infirmities that we have, and I showed you that the Bible lists three infirmities that we have to struggle with, one of them is the fact that we do not know how to pray.

I went through and I kind of laid out for you the idea that people get about prayer, where they get it from, and most of it does not come from the Bible. Therefore, it leads to a lot of frustration in a lot of people's lives. The second week, we talked about a key issue in your life. I hope now that you went through that last week. That is, how does God answer our prayer? Again, there is a lot of misconception about that. We get the idea that God does it in one way, when actually we saw that week when we went back to the Tabernacle and looked at all of those things that were there, it was an incredible picture of how God and why God answers prayers and why sometimes He does not answer our prayers. Now we know better.

II. Understanding Biblical Principles

We have talked about the importance of Bible principles. I guess I have had several of you ask me about that this week, just to give you a better understanding of what I am talking about when I am talking about learning Bible principles. I told you and I showed you many, many examples, how that in everything in our lives that we do, every decision we make, we have to have a principle in the Word of God that guides us in that process.

The reason why we make such bad choices sometimes, and the reason why we make such bad decisions and get ourselves over our head, so to speak, in many areas of our life, is because simply we do not make those decisions based on the principles in the Word of God. Now, that word "principle" is kind of like a nebulous term. You say, "Well, principle, what does that exactly mean?" I have had several of you ask me that this week in our little one-on-one time together.

Basically, when I am talking about a principle, I am saying this: God has an opinion that is the right opinion about everything in life. That is really the Bible in its most basic form. I know the Bible lays out the plan of God. It lays out the Second Coming and all of the aspects, but in a very practical, basic sense, the Bible was written to give us God's opinion on everything in life.

I went through some of them last week. I told you that when something happens in your life, you automatically look at the principles. You go to the principles. You have a decision to make. I took it down even so far where I told you that if you buy a new puppy, you get a cat, you get some

kind of little animal that is going to be your pet, the Bible even tells you about how to deal with that. Somebody said, "Well, back in Proverbs where it talks about the fact that a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."

Proverbs 12:10A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

In other words, there are things, there is responsibility to things that we do, every aspect of your life. When I talk about Bible principles in your life and my life, here is what I am talking about: This book, God gives you His opinion on everything in life. He gives His opinion on who to marry, who not to marry. He gives you His opinion on every situation, every circumstance you are going to find yourself in. He is going to give you His opinion. Many times they are found in stories that show you the cause and the effect of what happened when you do not follow those opinions. The Bible is a book that gives you God's opinion on everything in life from His perspective.

The older I get in the Lord, and I know that many of you, if not most of you, are not necessarily young Christians, but you are still finding your way along this thing here. But the older I get, the more I understand that the Christian life is simply one process. The more you put this process in your life, the better off your life is going to be. That simple process is simply reading the Bible, finding out what God says about everything in life, finding out what His opinion is on everything in life, and then simply casting out my opinion and making my opinion God's opinion. That is basically what the Christian life is.

It is becoming more like, I talk about becoming more Christ-like. I am not talking about buying a pair of sandals and a white robe and letting your beard grow. I am talking about in your thought process becoming more Christ-like by letting His opinion become your opinion. That you view the world, people, circumstances, situations that you come up against in life, and the decisions you have got to make from what He says and how He would deal with them, not based on, many times, our home-spun theology of how we get out of the mess that we are in.

We ought to know now that the Bible is like an owner's manual. You bought your car, if you look in the glove box, there is an owner's manual. It tells you every aspect of your car. The Bible is our owner's manual. It tells us about everything that we need. You get a flat tire, and the real challenge today is to find a spare tire in your car, and then the jack. When I grew up, they made real jacks. Now they make these little goofy things. The first thing I do when I get a new car is throw that jack away and go down and buy one of them little hydraulic jacks that really work, because those other ones will kill you. But anyway, that is not the message this morning.

The bottom line is this: In that owner's manual is everything you need to know. Everything you need to know about how that car operates. The Bible is our owner's manual. God wrote it, He gave it to us, and everything in there tells us what we need to know about ourselves. He says, "Well, I have a struggle with my salvation. I cannot believe that I am really saved or God would save me." Do you know why that is? Because the Bible says in 1 John chapter 5 that God has given us a record of our salvation.

1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

There is a clear, detailed, title deed, a record of salvation for you and for me if we are saved, found in the Bible. Do you know why so many of God's people struggle with salvation? They do not know God's opinion on it. The older I get, the more I realize that my job as a child of God is just simply to throw out my own opinions in life that have gotten me nothing but heartache and problems, and come to the point in my life where I make God's opinion. That is our job, and that is why everything that we do, we try to bring it back to the Bible. That is why in this little mini-series on prayer, you are getting everything how God thinks and looks at prayer.

III. The Holy Spirit's Intercession in Prayer

Today we are going to look at another aspect of it. Last week we saw that when we pray, the Holy Spirit of God does His work. He takes our prayer. The Bible says He makes intercession for us according to the mind of God's Spirit. We know that as defined out of the book of Philippians and in the book of Corinthians that the mind of the Spirit is the Word of God. Paul told you and me to let this mind be in us which is also in Christ Jesus. He told another group of Christians that we have the mind of Christ. Of course, the mind of Christ is the Word of God. We have now everything that we need.

Then it says in Romans chapter 8, let me read this, it says this:

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask You today to bless us as we come to this great passage again. We look at this third installment on prayer. How that now that we are to pray, help us to learn the correct, the biblical way, the intelligent way that we get with God what we need to get out of it. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

Now down at verse 27, look what it says there: "And he that searcheth the hearts, he that searcheth the hearts." If you have been here the last couple of weeks on this, let me ask you a question. Based on what we have already talked about and what I have laid out, when you start to pray and the Holy Spirit of God begins to search your heart, let me ask you, what is He, now I know you are going to have a lot of answers you could give to this, but we are looking for the answer that we have talked about in our Bible in the last couple of weeks. What is He examining and looking for inside your heart when you pray? When it says, "he that searcheth the hearts." What is He searching for? What is He looking for?

Let me raise your hand and tell them. Laura? That is right, but I want a specific thing that we talked about. Troy? That is what she said and you are absolutely right, Pam. Motive, that is right, but that is not what I am looking for. Maybe I just better forget this sermon and preach the one I

preached last week over here. Biblical principles? No, that is good. They are all right, but you are all wrong. What is it? You were going to have your hand up, were you not? Or are you just going to slap her? She needs it. Go ahead. The cross. That is true, but now you are the hot one. They were kind of cold, but you are burning. Want to take it any farther? Come on. Okay, you cannot take it any farther. I cannot hear. Yes, ma'am. Okay, but what is that? You are all right, but put it into one word or the one concept that I showed you in the Tabernacle last week. Yeah. No? What? Yeah. That is right. He is looking for what kind of fire you have kindled this thing with. You are all right. Troy was right and he was not even here last week. You are all right. Just goes to show, years ago you paid attention, Troy. One time. That was that time. I remember that time, too.

He is searching to see what kind of fire. Remember we talked about in the picture of the Tabernacle that Aaron's two boys were killed because they offered strange fire, and I showed you that that fire that they lit the altar of incense, a picture of our prayer life, had to come off the brazen altar, the picture of Christ's death on the cross. Now, we are going to see why that is this morning in just a little bit, but that is what He is searching for. When you and I pray, the Holy Spirit of God looks inside and the first thing He looks for is where did this prayer originate from? That is what He looks for. Of course, Aaron's two boys, God killed them for offering strange fire. I doubt if God will kill you for that, but this is why you have problems. We have problems in our prayer.

This is why basically we do not get our prayers answered. This is why we have the misconception about prayer, which I told you last week that probably 90 percent of the things that we pray for and we are asking God for, the answers are already in the book in getting God's thoughts and getting God's opinion. They are already there. The problem is we do not understand the concept that when we pray to God, we speak to God, but when we read the Bible, God speaks back to us.

I do not know how many times I have talked to somebody and they are saying, "I am going through this great time. I am going through this great problem in my life. I pray and I am praying and God to give me an answer." I ask him, I said, "How much time are you spending reading the Bible?" "Oh, I am so upset and I am so nervous. I just cannot concentrate. I just cannot read it. My mind wanders." And then they wonder why they do not get the answer. The answer is in that book through the principles that God has written for us as the owner's manual of our lives.

IV. How to Pray and What to Pray For

Today we want to look at another great aspect of prayer. This is very important. We looked at misconceptions about prayer. We looked at how God answers our prayer. Now we are going to talk about how to pray and what to pray for. When I think of my infirmity, not just in prayer, but all of my infirmities, but when the Bible talks about my infirmity of not knowing how to pray, do you know what verse automatically comes to mind? We want to turn here and look at this. It is in Isaiah chapter 55. Isaiah chapter 55, verses 8, 9, and 10, is really my verse for me that shows me why I do not get and not understand things, and shows me what my fatal flaw is in my character. This is your fatal flaw in your character. When the Bible talks about the fact that we do not know

how to pray, this is the fatal flaw that we struggle with, not only in our prayer life, but everything in life.

Now look at Isaiah chapter 55 and look at verse 8. He says this:

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Now that is a simple fact. Everybody here can understand that verse and apply that to your life and to my life of what the problem is. We look at the circumstances of life from a human standpoint. We look at the circumstances of life from a physical standpoint, from an emotional standpoint, from a human standpoint.

Somebody asked me a couple of weeks ago, I cannot remember somebody that came over and they talked about, "Is it wrong to hate?" I told them, I said, "Well, it is not wrong to hate as long as you understand how the Bible defines hate." I took them over to Psalms and I showed them where the Bible says in Psalms 139 that God hates. But when it talks about God hating, do you know what it says? It says that God hates them with a perfect hatred. Now that is the defining verse in your Bible on hate, by the way.

Do you know what it means when God says He hates things with a perfect hatred? It means that God does not have His emotions involved. It means that God is not taking something personal. It means that God wrote a book that is absolute, and up against that book's principles, when something goes against it, God hates it, but He does not hate it because He has got His emotions involved. It is like being in a war. If you are in a war and there is somebody on the other side over there shooting at you and you are shooting back at him. My uncle one time was, I had an uncle who was on Okinawa and he told this story. I do not know if it is true or not, but he told this story. He says he was over on this side of the lines and he was shooting at a Japanese soldier that was on the other side of the lines. He said the day went on and he would take a pot shot at him and then he would shoot one back at him. My uncle, he yelled over there and said, "Hey, let us knock it off. Let us kind of take a break here and eat some sea rations." The Japanese soldier yelled back and said, "Okay." Maybe it was okay. So they are sitting down there. My uncle eating, the Japanese soldier sitting next to him eating the sea rations. My uncle says, "Where are you from?" Japanese boy says, "Yokohama." My uncle said, "Well, what are we fighting for? I am from Tulsa." My point is this, that you will get that about three o'clock this afternoon when it will just hit you.

My point is that when you are in a war and there is a guy over there you are shooting at, he is trying to kill you, you are trying to kill him, he is trying to kill you, you do not hate the guy. You do not even know who the guy is. In fact, probably many of the old World War II vets that I have talked to, do you know what they have said about the men they have killed? There is a lingering thing inside of them because the guy said, "You know what? I did not have nothing personal. He might have been a great guy. He probably liked to fish just like me and you. I do. Probably if there was not a war on, him and I got along just fine." But you know what? He killed the guy. He

shot him. He killed him. He bayoneted him. He threw a hand grenade in. He put him with a flamethrower. He killed the guy, but he did not hate the guy. He did not even know the guy.

You see, hatred from God's standpoint, God hates with a perfect hatred. No emotion involved. When you look at principles in the Bible and you look at the things that you and I have to deal with, we have got to come to the point that that is our biggest struggle. Do you know what life is for a child of God? It is either going to be God's viewpoint in your life or it is going to be your own viewpoint in your life. You are either going to do it your way or you are going to do it God's way. Doing it your way, my way, we are usually lined up in a bad trouble side. Doing it God's way by learning the principles, applying the principles, making God's thoughts my thoughts and putting it into my life, that is the way it needs to go. Whether we know it or not this morning, this verse is the key to our prayer dilemma.

A couple of Thursday nights ago, somebody asked a question about what happens to somebody that dies. Where do they go? They talked about the verses of, "What do they do in heaven? Where are they at?" I laid that thing out. If you were there that night, you know how I laid it out without going into it this morning. I showed you that most people's conception of heaven is totally off base. The answer I gave that night is a very, very, very basic, simple answer. It is not that the answer is hard, it is complicated. The answer is hard because of the fact that as a human being, try to grasp the concept of eternal God. Me who has to run by a watch, who has to run by a clock, that everything in my life is scheduled, to try to contemplate a time and a place and a God that knows no time, that there is no morning, no afternoon, no evening. There is no 9 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 10 o'clock. The time is not relevant anymore.

Everything in our lives as human beings is built on a 28-day calendar in the Bible and Ecclesiastes. It tells us there is a time to this, a time to that, a time to this, a time to that, time to that. But when you get into eternity, there is no more time. How in the world do I, as a human being who is shackled by time, understand a God in eternity who does not have any concept of time in the sense that I do? He does not have a watch, He does not need a calendar. Where He is at, there is no time. How, when I die, do I make that transition from a timing place into a place where there is no time? Well, the answer is real simple, but grasping the concept from my standpoint as a human being, it is hard. It is hard.

This is why so many people struggle with things in the Bible. This is something that in time, every one of you need to come to the place in your life if you continually grow spiritually, that you begin to see every circumstance in your life. This is what Scott's class is all about. This is why everything we do on Thursday night is getting you in a framework, getting your mind in a frame set where you start to begin to look at the situation the way that it is.

Do you know what Scott is going to teach? He is going to teach you the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Do you know why that is so important? Because the reason why you do not view yourself the way God sees you this morning. Some of you, you have problems with who you are. Some of you have problems of where you have been and what you have done. Some of you are in the situations right now that you are struggling with. The number one problem is you are seeing yourself wherever you have come from, whatever you have done,

wherever you have been. You are seeing yourself from your own human standpoint. You have got to break out of that someday. You have got to get to the point where you begin to see yourself, not the way you look at yourself based on your emotional tags to all your life, but you sever that and you begin to look at yourself as a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things are passed away, all things become new. Getting that perspective in your life versus your own personal perspective is where it starts. Then we just add to it from there. That is the importance of biblical principles.

The ability as a human being to understand how an eternal God looks at things, how He thinks about things, how He accomplishes issues and does things, and how He looks at the issues that I think. There is probably not one person in here this morning, and if you are, you are probably only on borrowed time and your time is coming probably sometime before the end of the day. But there is probably not one person in here this morning that is not dealing with some or maybe multiple issues in your own life. You are struggling with something in your own life right now. The only way you are going to get past that, the only way as a child of God you are going to get the victory in that, is to see that thing that you are going through from God's standpoint and quit seeing it through all the emotional things that we look at our own problems through. That is the only way that it works.

I have dealt with men who were alcoholics and I have told men who were alcoholics or drug addiction. I have told them, I said, "You know what? You will never get over your addiction. You will never get over your addiction until you as a child of God see your addiction as God sees it." As long as you look at it as an illness, a sickness, or you even tag the word sin on it, you will never get over it until you understand from the Bible that things that go against God's law are anathema. They are absolutely against every principle until you see that whatever we do in our life is absolutely against God and then we try to change that in our life. You will never get over it.

If you had some glaring, and we all do, but if you had some glaring, glaring, glaring issue in your life that just drove your wife nuts and you want to make life just a little bit better, you can right now stop doing what we are doing that causes the issue and then adjust it into the right frame of mind. It is the same way with God. When you begin to see what we go through and the problem that I am facing from God's standpoint, then and only then do we have the wherewithal to stop and fix what we are going through.

Do you know what the problem is? We do not see it from God's standpoint. We see it from our standpoint. When we see it from our standpoint and we really do not hate it and we really do not want to quit it, do you know what we do? We will hang out with people just like us who will make us feel good about ourselves even though we are really against everything that God wants us to be. That is what human nature does. That is why many people do not like to come to church. They do not like to come to church because here, when you walk in the door, you may be my best buddy in the whole wide world. I may love you up one side and down the other, but when you sit in this seat and the music is over and I stand behind that sacred pulpit, I do not know any friends. I preach the truth and if it gets on me like it gets on you, that is what it is supposed to do.

Most people, they will go to church a couple of times and that is not what I want to hear. So they will search around, find somebody that tells them exactly what they want to hear, and then they will just get comfortable with that. You never, ever, when looking for a church, you may not come to this one, it is your deal, but the bottom line is this, I will give you a little bit of advice. Whenever you are looking for a church, a pastor, or somebody in your life that is going to hold you accountable spiritually, do not ever find somebody who just always tells you what you want to hear. You are going to get in trouble real quick that way.

Do you know how I know the Bible? Do you know how I know that I love this book? Do you know how I know I love it more than anything else? Do you know what the greatest proof is? That I have not thrown it in the trash can 35 years ago. This book does not paint a nice picture of me at all. I would much rather have it be a book that opened up and there was Bob with a white robe with a halo on. I would much rather read the stories back there of the great men and my name be in there. I would much like that book to paint a picture of me that when I read it, "Oh, I see how great I am and I see how..." I mean, add another line to that great song, "How Great Thou Art." The third verse is, "How great I am," and we just all go along there, but it does not do that.

Every page I open that book, it tells me something wrong with me. Every place I go, it is jabbing me again. Every place I go is prodding me again. There is hardly a place I can go in there that I just do not get beat up on. But after a while, when you realize the process of life is making God's opinion your opinion, as the great verse in Proverbs says, "He that loves the honeycomb, even the bitter things become sweet." Why? Because you know it is for your good. I know that God would never hurt me. I know that God's prodding and pulling and pushing for me, there is a good thing.

There is a book out you all ought to read. I cannot remember the name of it, but I saw this guy, he is dead now. Somebody will remember it. It was the guy that had pancreatic cancer and he spent the last year of his life. Do you remember what his name is? Huh? Yes, that is what he did again. "The Last Lecture," that is right. He spent the last part of his life dying of pancreatic cancer, going around talking to everybody for his family. He died a while back and it is one of the greatest things I have ever read in my life and one of the things I ever went through in my life.

Do you know what he said? He said when he was a football coach, when he was a football player in high school, the coach used to just give him trouble all the time. It seems like that he would camp out on his plays and just mark the things that he did wrong. That he would just be on him all the time. Put it to him every time he turned around. After one practice, he goes in there and he is coming out of the shower. One of his friends said, "Man, that coach has got it in for you." He said, "Does not that bother you the way he just keeps beating you up and pointing out all the things that you do wrong?" Do you know what the guy said? Now this is why when he had pancreatic cancer and he is getting ready to die, he could focus on something else other than himself. But do you know what he said? He said, "You know what all that means is that coach sees all the potential in me that I do not see, and his being hard on me and rough on me and kicking me six ways for Sunday is his way of extracting out of me what he sees that is good that

I cannot see." Now there is a lesson, ladies and gentlemen, in that because sometimes that is what God does with us and we are so selfish with who we are that we do not like that. This is part of the problem that we are going to talk about this morning in the way that we approach prayer and the way that we do some things. The importance of knowing how to pray correctly, how to pray biblically, and how to pray intelligently.

V. The Importance of Communication with God

Most of you were alive for the first Gulf War in the 90s, and that was probably the first war that we ever had that you got to go to war, never left your front room. I mean, if you remember that in World War II, you realize in World War II there were things that happened that nobody even found about until after the war. Everybody knows about D-Day, June the 6th, 1944, when they went ashore in France. Everybody knows D-Day. Do you know that eight weeks before D-Day they were practicing a staged event on the north coast of Great Britain and they had all of the things that were in play there and they had like 30,000 guys that were going to go to shore? Do you realize in the middle of that rehearsal for the biggest day in the history of the world as far as combat is concerned, two German E-boats snuck in there and sank three LSTs and 1,900 American boys died in a training exercise, never got one foot on Omaha Beach or Utah Beach? They never fired one shot in anger. 1,900 young men died, drowned in the English Channel, drowned in the North Sea because two German E-boats snuck in on a training mission, sank three LSTs and those things sank in no time and lost all those boys. Do you know what? It was until 1951 that anybody knew about that. The parents just got a standard letter, "Your son was killed in action," end of story. There was a news media blackout, nobody even talked about it. Nobody did anything about it. Nobody, there were many, many times when things went on, but the news media were held at bay. They never got one piece of the story.

That changed with Korea, it certainly changed with Vietnam, but boy did it change with the first Gulf War. Now they had news crews embedded into the very combat troops. Still today you go to war every day on CNN. You go to war every day on the news. In the 90s, the Gulf War probably was the fastest war on record. It was led by one of the greatest generals I think that ever lived, and here is another guy's life story you ought to read, General Norman Schwarzkopf, called him Stormin' Norman. His battle plan was simple, thorough, and decisive. Do you know what he did? In the first 15 minutes of the war, we won the war. Now the war went on for several months after that, but the war was over in the first 15 minutes. Do you know what he did? In the first 15 minutes, they had already targeted where all the communication stations were for the Iraqi from Baghdad to everywhere around, and in the first 15 minutes, while he put a ploy evasion on one side of the country, what he did is snuck in under the radar and in the first 15 minutes he destroyed every communication center that the Iraqis had. At that point, after the first 15 minutes, nobody could communicate with the forward areas. The areas in the back have to depend on the orders they get of what to do because they are looking back, looking at the whole thing and telling people where to go to plug the gaps. They could not do that. In one failed swoop, he took out every communication statement.

Do you know what? We live in Missouri right down the road. Do you know what you got down there? You got Warrensburg, Whiteman Air Force Base. Do you know what they did? Whiteman Air Force Base is the stealth bomber. Do you know what they did? They loaded up with bombs in Whiteman down in Missouri. They flew off Whiteman Air Force Base down in Missouri, flew all the way to Iraq and bombed them, dropped their bombs on them, flew all the way back, loaded up, and they were crossing each other in the sky from Missouri. They would refuel in the air. The flight took like 19 hours round trip. They load them up with bombs. They take them off from Whiteman. They fly over Baghdad. They drop their laser guided bombs. They would fly back. They would load up some more, get another crew, and they were passing each other in the air from Missouri. Then the cruise missiles went in. All the thing, and in 15 minutes the war was over.

I like General Schwarzkopf when he finally gave his briefing. I am going to use his words now. It is a little rough so I do not normally talk this way, but I love to cuss in the pulpit and get away with it. He says, "Ladies and gentlemen, what we did," he said, "there is simply this." He says, "We sent our first strikes in and took out all the communication center, and then for the next 21 days," he said, "we bombed the hell out of them." That is exactly what he did. They had all these Republican guards, the cream of the crop, great fighters. They had all of the men and the armies that were out there, and after they took out their communications and they had no contact, do you know what he did? He found out where their positions were and he worked 21 days. 21 days, every minute, every 10 minutes, every hour, he bombed them consistently. At the end of that 21 days, I do not know if you saw it or not. They were stumbling out of there. The most terrifying, grueling thing you can ever go through is an artillery bombardment on top of your position. I mean, when they hit the trees, it splinters the trees and they set the fuses so if you are in a wood that they go off about 30 feet off the ground, not only do you get the shrapnel but it splinters the trees and those trees, sides of a toothpick, will go through five guys, and they drop those bombs for 21 days. When they were done and they moved in, those guys were so dazed, they were so out of control, they were so beside themselves, they have got actually footage where they were surrendering themselves to CNN crews. They just wanted somebody to get them out of here.

Let us put that into a biblical perspective. You see, without the ability to communicate with the higher headquarters, they were out of the battle. Without the ability, I said last week, a Christian will only be as strong as his or her individual prayer life back to headquarters. At work, Stormin' Norman took out the communication and bombed the hell out of him for 21 days. Well, the devil does, he destroys our communication and then he bombs the heaven out of us for 21 days. If you do not know how to communicate biblically, intelligently, and correctly, your battle is over before you get started. That is why 99% of God's people have lost a battle because there is no communication that works with headquarters where God is, there is no two-way communication with God. When the devil destroys your prayer life, he takes everything from you.

VI. Four Types of Prayer

Now in your Bible, and you want to go to 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, in your Bible, and this is the definitive passage on it, in your Bible in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, you were told that there

are four types of prayer. I want to give these to you as we start to go through this. Four types of prayer. It says in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1:

1 Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

Now what Paul did right there was he told you there are four types of prayer. You will find these four types of prayer defined for you in the Bible. I am going to give them to you here in just a second.

1. Supplications Supplications are the things that we think we need. A supply. The word supplication comes from the word supply. "Lord, I am out of supplies. I need this." Of course, the verse for that would be Philippians 4:7, along with many other ones.
2. Prayers The second thing he lists there is simply the word prayers. I do not know if you know it or not, but 2 Samuel 7:27 is the first time you find the word prayer in the Bible. We know from the law of first mention that is going to be pretty valuable. So here where we get the word concept of prayer, and this particular thing here when he talks about prayer is simply talking with God. Back there in Samuel, you have one of the greatest examples that I have ever saw in my life of how your life and my life should be in our communication with God. Do you know what it is a picture of? It is a picture of David just sitting and talking with God. You ought to, we ought to read that prayer. You ought to read that conversation. You ought to see the things that he is talking to God about. He is talking about the things that God has done for him. He is talking about how much he loves God. He is talking about the things that he wants to do for God. Some of the things he lists in there he never got to do. But it is his openness with God of having a conversation 24/7 where he just, he does not have any need. There is nothing that he is asking for. He is just keeping the lines of communication open that him and God just have a good old talk.
3. Intercession or Intercessory Prayer The third one is intercession or intercessory prayer. That will be found in many places in the Old Testament. One comes to mind right off the bat is Exodus 32, down around verse 9, I think it is. That is where you are praying for others. A great example of that would be Moses praying for the children of Israel and taking their intercessory for them to God. Great example.
4. Giving of Thanks Then the third type of prayer that he lists here is the giving of thanks. That is just where you are thankful for what God tells you to do. Now I am not saying you cannot add all these together and sometime, I am not saying you have got to say, "Okay, Lord, right now we are just going to be a slippery prayer, so get your separate cord out and put this down." They can go back over, you see it all goes all blended together. But there are times that we just give thanks.

Do you know what our biggest problem is in our prayer life, other than the fact that we do not think like God does? I will tell you something else, it is the fact that we take God for granted, especially in America. There is a really good upside of this church and that is the fact that every time you come here you get the Bible. You will never get a dud. You will never get Bob's personal opinion. It will not be a day that I do not show up that I am not ready to do what God

has called me to do. That day will never happen. You may catch me on a Tuesday or Wednesday that I am not ready, but not on Sunday.

The bottom line is this, that is a good thing for you. That is a good place to have to go where you know the Bible is going to be 100%. They believe the book right down the line and you can get everything you want. The good side about this church is that if you have got a problem in here, you can come see me 24/7. The good thing about this church is that you can come over, you want to learn the Bible. You do not have to just get the tapes. I will sit down with you one on one throughout the week and help you put it together. We have got an institute for guys that are, or guys that are higher down the road who really want to get it together. We have got Discipleship One. We have got Discipleship Two now with Scott. We have got all these things cooking for you down the line and that is all a good thing, but you know it is also a bad thing. Do you know why? Because when you get all that stuff, it is not much time you take that for granted too. Sure you do. Sure you do. Did you take your kids growing up? Did you not take your parents for granted? I did. I mean your parents, my dad worked two jobs. My mom worked two jobs. They grew up in a time when they did everything they could. Do you think I appreciated it? I appreciate it now. Well, I did not appreciate it then. I took them for granted just like you took them for granted. That is what we do. That is what human beings do. If something does not break that cycle, and the only thing I know that can break it is start seeing things from God's standpoint, not your own standpoint, and break that cycle. So we are going to talk about these things here for a moment.

I love bumper stickers. I think bumper stickers, believe it or not, and I am a very simple guy, but I think bumper stickers will always tell you the heartbeat of America. I think whatever the raging bumper sticker is, is where America is at. I really do. I really do. Barb and I were out riding somewhere the other day. We were going home from church, I think it was, and there was a guy in front of us that had an Obama sticker on his bumper. He went and got one of them metal things like they put on from the Ford companies. They put it, he had a metal thing that he had to drill through his trunk and put on there. Now that is a guy that he is for Obama. I do not want to tell you. I mean, I never seen any of you riding around with my name stuck in your car like that. But I think bumper stickers tell it all.

I saw one before I tell you that one I saw. I heard a thing today last week on the radio that I think it is the next couple of weeks at a big church in Kansas City here that they are going to have a "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" conference. It is a bunch of Christians and a bunch of Jews. Jewish rabbis, Jewish people, and they are all going to get together to try to solve out the problems going on in the Middle East and bring peace to Jerusalem. Now when I look at something like that, and you may be a young Christian here today, and certainly I am not being sarcastic at what I am saying, but what I am saying is, compared to what the Bible says, you see the stupidity of that. The guy was talking about, "Oh yeah, we take trips to the Holy Land together and they go look at their Christian sites and we go look at our Jewish sites and we are going to get together and we are going to sit down and we are going to talk about it and we are going to try to come up with a plausible way to try to bring peace to the Middle East."

Hey, let me speak at that conference. I will clear it out in the first 15 minutes. We will find out who wants because you know what? The only way the peace is going to come, if I would up there, I would say to the rabbis and all the Jews, "Let me tell you something, the only way peace is going to come is Acts chapter 2 verse 38. It is going to come to the times and refreshing. You are going to go through the tribulation period because when He was on the cross, you said His blood be upon us and our people. I am with Him. I love you and I think if America really wants to help you, we need to give you all the military ammunition, all the guns, all the rockets, all the bombs and everybody to blow everybody off the map over there, including us if we ever turn our backs on you. But the bottom line is, you are going to go through the tribulation. There is no point going over there to the Holy Land. Do you know why? Because it is not holy till He comes back." Boy, you want peace in the Middle East, I am all for it too, but you better look at Revelation chapter 19, you better look at Revelation chapter 21, you better look at Isaiah chapter 66, you better go back to the book of Ezekiel and look from Ezekiel chapter 36, 37, 38. You better find out what has to take place before that peace comes. Okay, just me, but that is part of my charm.

I saw a bumper sticker the other day, it said, "Prayer changes things." I thought to myself, bumper stickers always talk, they always, I think they always give the true temperature. The only bumper sticker I ever saw I really liked was one that had a skull on it with a big snake going through one of the eye and coming out its mouth with a dagger in the skull in the teeth of the skull and on the other side it said, "Kill them all, let God sort them out." No, that is the best one I saw. I have one, but I am not allowed to put it on the car.

"Prayer changes things." That is what most people in America, that is what we think. We think that prayer is our way of getting out of some horrible scenario we find ourselves in or to reverse the process in our lives that we really do not want to be in our lives. We think prayer changes the course of the world events. We talk about God, "Now there will be one more great revival. America will come back to God," and all of those things. We think prayer is our way as God's people that when we find ourselves in a very nasty situation, a very uncomfortable situation, a situation that we do not really want to be in, now what we do is we now have the ability to go to prayer and then change God's mind so we do not have to go through it and ask God to get me back into my comfort zone.

Let me tell you something, there are four things that have destroyed America in Christianity in America, and if not around the world. Somebody said, "Well, you know what? I believe America can come back to God." Really? Let me ask you a question, do you know what one of the problems you have about what is wrong in America? You do not know anything about history. Show me one nation in the history of the world, which one, just give me one. I do not want to, I will take one. I will even take half of one. Give me one nation of the world that once had the Bible, dumped the Bible, that ever got it back. Just one. All I want is one. Show me one nation in the history of the world who ever had it back. Germany had it, France had it, Spain had it, Czechoslovakia had it. Every nation and country on the face of this planet at one time had the Word of God, and when they rejected the book, you do not get it back. Now America had it. For

somebody to say, "Well, we will get it back," you do not know anything about God and how He looks at things in history. That is one of the problems.

- 1.) Losing the Book One of the things that messed this country up was losing the book. Once you lost the book, you had no truth.
- 2.) Great Prosperity The second thing that messed us up was the great prosperity of this country. The great prosperity of this country, and all we all like to be prosperous. We all like to have things. We all like to have nice houses. We all like to have nice cars, two or three cars. We all like to have this, we all like to have that, and I am not saying there is anything wrong with that, but I am saying this: when you have all those things, you have a tendency to forget the real things in life. Great prosperity brought about no reality.
- 3.) Absence of the Knowledge of History The third thing was the absence of the knowledge of history. We have no lessons we have learned. So what happens when we do not learn the lessons of history? We just keep on repeating the same mistakes over and over and over again.
- 4.) Absence of Biblical Prayer Then the fourth thing is absence of biblical prayer. We have no communication with the headquarters. In reality, prayer was never given so you and I could change God's mind about anything, but rather prayer was given that you could get on the inside with what God was doing and understand better why you are going through what you are going through.

I want to go back for a moment to what we talked about when I laid out the Tabernacle up here and I showed you how that within that Tabernacle, it is a picture of your life and my life on the inside of the furnishings that we have. We had the bread which was a picture of the Word of God on the table of fellowship. We had the seven-pronged candlestick which was a picture of the Holy Spirit of God that illuminated the Word of God, the bread. Then we had the altar of incense up there that was representative of our prayer life. I told you how that the fire that lit those candles and the fire that came up, let that incense and that smoke fill in that place, was a picture of our prayers. I took you back in the Bible and showed you where that was. That fire had to be kindled off of the brazen altar. Why? Because it was the brazen altar where the sacrifice was made and that fire had to be what was used to light those things. I told you any prayer, and this is why we do not get our prayers answered, this is what the Holy Spirit of God is searching for when you and I pray, where did that fire come from?

Now what is the importance of that? Why is that such a big deal? Why did Aaron's two boys get killed because they offered up strange fire? Why is God such a stickler on this point? Why should everything you and I do as a Christian go back to the cross of Calvary and the price that was paid? I will tell you why, especially in your prayer life. When you and I have a need, you and I are going through some struggle, you and I are going through some tough time in our life, or you have some request that you are asking for or some need that you think you need, if your point of reference is in Calvary's cross and the sufferings that He paid on that cross, if it is not ingrained and enrooted in you the agony, the suffering, the price that was paid for your sin, if that is not where your prayer is rooted, I will tell you, if your prayer is rooted in that, when you start, when we start to ask for the things that we ask for, when you have a point of reference that is His

suffering, you see and I see how stupid what I am asking for. You begin to realize that He suffered for me, maybe He wants me to suffer for Him. Did that ever enter your mind?

The reason our prayer life in most cases is worthless is that when we pray, which is kindled with strange fire, we have no point of reference to keep us focused on what we are going through. When your prayer life is based on the cross and the price that was paid, you understand Christ's sufferings. You now have a point of reference for what your sufferings are.

Do you know what? I meet people all the time that are always feeling sorry for themselves, and I get that way. I do not get that way very often, but we all do, we are human. This is certainly none of this is a criticism because I am preaching to myself and I would never criticize myself, but I am telling you the bottom line is we all feel sorry for ourselves. Do you know the best thing for you and for me when we feel sorry for ourselves and we are going through some piddly little thing that we magnified like it is the end, and we think we are Elijah out there all by ourselves and you are going through some struggle? Do you know what you ought to do? You ought to go over to St. Joe Hospital and go through Four West. Do you know what Four West is? That is the cancer ward. You have got to talk to some people that only got six months to live. You have got to go down to Children's Mercy Hospital and see those little eight or nine year old kids with their head shaved, got leukemia, probably never see their 20th birthday. Look at their moms and dads standing over there hoping against all hope, putting their faith and trust in some doctor and some chemotherapy, and when that does not work, the doctor comes down and he says, "Well, we got some experimental thing that we are going to try to work." Mom and dad look into their eyes, look at that pain. You all got little kids, how would you like to find yourself in a situation like that? Do you know what we need to do? We need to get out amongst the people who got some real problems in life. Do you know what it does? It puts ours in perspective, does it not? It is a reality check on where we are at. It is a reality check on where we are at. The bottom line is this, He suffered for you and for me, and ladies and gentlemen, I need to tell you something today, He may ask you and I to pay a price for Him. Prayer helps you not to get out of it, but helps you get through it for Him, and that is the key.

VII. The Fallacy of Fasting

Now, we are going to come back to that. This is kind of like a little compartmental thing and it is all going to tie together at the end, I hope. But anyway, we talked about the fallacy of fasting and I have got to show you this now. I want you to get two passages because here is what it is. We talked about this last week. You like the idea that when you pray and God does not answer your prayer that if you get hungry, God will feel sorry for you. That if you do not eat, if you do not eat, if you go a day or two days or three days, that God is going to come down and look at you and say, "Oh my, he is about ready to die. We got to do something because Bob, he is staggering down here." That is not what it is for.

Now I am going to give you the two definitive passages in the Bible on fasting and I am going to show you how the Bible always interprets itself. I am going to show you one of the greatest things you will ever learn about the Bible anywhere on planet Earth. You do not have to necessarily say you got it from me because I stole it from somebody else anyhow. Psalms 69:10,

let us go there first. Let us get that in one hand and then get Psalms 35:13 in the other hand. Fasting was never intended to get your prayers answered. Never was, never was. But I will show you what it was intended to do. Now I am going to show you two of the greatest defining verses anywhere in the Word of God. Go to Psalms 69:10 first and then go to Psalms 35:13 second.

All right, let us look at Psalms 69:10. Watch it very carefully.

Psalms 69:10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

All right, now flip over to Psalms 35:13. Let me show you how the Holy Spirit of God changes the words and shows you what you got.

Psalms 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

You see, the last place it was chastened, this place is humbled. He changed the word chastened to humble to show you what He is trying to get across to you. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. Here it comes, "and my prayer was answered." Is that what it says? No, that is mine. It says, "and I am reading from the reverse revision." It says, "But for as for me, oh, this is the modern Laodicean Christian, get your prayer answered a Bible I got here." But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer was answered. That is not what it says. It says, "my prayer returned into my own bosom."

Do you understand what you have got here? Fasting was never intended to get your prayers answered, but it was intended for you and me to chasten and to humble our soul that you pray something that that prayer returned back to you. Because you are going through a fasting state, and if you have never fasted, let me tell you something, you ought to try it for just a day or two days, just for the experience. Do you know what fasting does? It shows you how rotten and despicable our flesh really is. It shows you and me how little control we have over our flesh.

I have talked to men who were alcoholics and they said, "Oh, I am not really an alcoholic. I can stop whenever I want to." Yeah, right. Watch them try to stop. I have had people that smoke cigarettes all their lives and said, "Well, you know what? I can stop whenever I want. I just do not want to." Try to stop. You see very quickly you are not in control of anything. Your flesh is controlling you. Do not eat a meal. Get up in the morning, pass on breakfast, pass on lunch, pass on dinner, and about eight o'clock tomorrow night, call me if you are still alive. You will all be alive, but I will tell you this, you will have cramps, you will have a headache, you will be dizzy, dizzier than you already are. You will be moaning, you will be saying, "Oh man, I am so hungry." Your stomach will be growling. The neighbors will call up and say, "Will you feed that thing? It is keeping the kids awake tonight." You know, you are, and what you will get out of it is that your flesh is so vile, my flesh is, I am so out of control of it that I cannot miss two meals a day without that flesh raring up and revolt. That is what you need to understand when you are trying to find out and get on the same page with God what you are going through. You have got to come to the end of self.

When you are fasting and you are praying, it chastens your soul, it humbles your soul, and it brings your prayer right back to your heart and it shows you, "Here I am asking God for this, and I am so despicable, I am so weak, I cannot do anything on my own. My flesh is such in control that I cannot even miss a meal without a headache, without the shakes, without my knees being wobbly." It helps you to get on the same, me to get on the same wavelength as God is on by even further revealing how weak I am, how proud I am, how arrogant I am, how despicable I am, and how much my flesh really has control.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Fasting helps you to get even more to the end of that. You get yourself out of the way that you have to get sometimes in your life, ladies and gentlemen, when you are going through something and some struggle is in your life and you cannot get, God did not give you prayer so you could get out of it. God did not give you prayer so you could change directions on it. He did not get you prayer so you could get out from under it, get the comfort. He gave you prayer, well, I am going to show you, I am going to show you why He gave it here just a second.

VIII. Three Reasons Why Things Happen

Go back to Romans chapter 8. Two things here we have got to see and we will look at verse 27 back of Romans 8:27. We have got to see this. Let us pick it up in verse 26.

Romans 8:26-28 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Now here it comes, two things you want to get because He maketh intercession for the saints, here it comes, according to the will of God. Next verse, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who were called according to His purpose." There is a purpose to your suffering. There is a purpose why you are going through what you are going through and it goes back to the will of God in your life.

Somebody raise your hand and tell me, when I have talked to you over the years, what is the will of God for you? What is the will of God? Yes, ma'am. Be more like Christ every day of your life. All right, if you are going to be more like Christ every day of your life, what would you think that you would want to do more every day of your life to fit into that? I already told you that earlier in the message. Somebody raise your hand and tell me that, what is it? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." So if you are going to be more like Him and that is the will of God that you are more like Christ every day, and that comes to the point that you become His mind in you, then what is the second greatest aspect of Christ that you better buckle your seat belt on? Somebody raise your hand and tell me that. You are the only one who knows the Bible in this whole church. No, you are wrong. You are done. John, suffering. How do you

become more like Christ every day of your life? How, if the Bible says that He became your sacrifice and you and I are being a living sacrifice, do you know what that means? That you and I have to go through things in life and suffer for Him.

The Laodicean church will never get there, and I want to say this, and I have always been very careful with this, kids. I know there are a lot of young Christians here in this church, and I know there are a lot of people in here that I look at you and boy, I will tell you what, you are the cream of the crop as far as I am concerned. But I also understand what I am saying today, you might not be able to get to, and I do not want you going out of here today feeling bad about that. I want you to go out of here today thinking heavily on that, but I do not want you to beat yourself up today because you are in a process, and as best I can see, 98% of you are going to make that process and that transition that you come to that point in your life. But it is sermons like this, it is mini-series like this on prayer, it is getting into the Bible on this level that gets you to that point and helps you make that transition. So you may not, you may not be able to say, "Well, God, I am willing to suffer anything for you." You may not be there yet. I am not putting that on you today. I do not want you to walk out of here and think you are a failure because you cannot walk out in the middle of I-70 with a sign that says, "I am giving my life for Jesus," and get hit with a truck. You will get there.

But I know that the Laodicean church cannot grasp this. Revelation 3:17. I talked a little while back about the despicable prosperity and what it brings into our country, into our own lives. The great mark of the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:17, it says:

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

And that includes God and the Holy Spirit of God in God's prayer. We do not need prayer. Most of us can buy our way out of anything we get into until it comes to Children's Mercy, until it comes to Four West. There are some things that money cannot buy you that only God can get through to you on. Now when it comes to our prayer life, we have to understand according to His will, according to His purpose. It talked about thinking like God, seeing things from His standpoint.

In our first lesson, we talked about an unsaved man in prayer, how God does not hear the prayers of an unsaved man. I showed you from the book of Ecclesiastes that time and chance happens to an unsaved man, right place, wrong time, wrong place, right time, time and chance. But time and chance will never, never find its way into a Christian's life. God has a purpose for you the moment you got saved. The moment you got saved, God had a purpose for you. He has something that He wants you to accomplish with your life. You may never accomplish it. You may never get there. That does not take away the fact that He has something for you that He wants to accomplish through your life. He has a purpose for you. You find that purpose, that plan, only as you fulfill the will of God and become more like Him and begin to see the things in life, the decisions you have got to make, the process, the function, and everything else from His standpoint and quit looking at it from your own.

What I am about to give you right now as far as a Christian is concerned will probably be the greatest thing I have ever given you or can ever give you. I do not know of anything that I ever have given you in the past, and I have given you a lot of good things that were really valuable to you, but nothing that I ever will give you will be as valuable to you as what I am giving you right now in this next section. This will be more valuable to you than anything else you will ever get from me, and you will get a lot of good things because I share with you what God gives me. But I will never be able to talk in your Christian life for where you are at, for what you are wanting to accomplish, and where most of you are wanting to get. Here it comes, and you need to understand what I am about to say. We are talking about prayer. We are talking about the misconceptions of prayer. We are talking about the struggles that we all go through.

Now let me just say this to you, He said, "To them are called according to His purpose." Things happen in your life and my life for three reasons. It will not be four, it will not be five, it will be three. One of these three, or in some cases a combination of these three, but you can safely say that everything you are going to find yourself in, every circumstance you are going to find yourself in, every decision you have got to make, every process that comes into your life, everything that you are going to struggle with tomorrow, the next day, or the rest of your life, every issue you have got to face, everything that comes your way, it is going to fall into one of these three categories. All you have got to do as a Christian is define which category it is. That is all you have got to do. I have told you time and time again, the Christian life is not complicated. We like to make it complicated. It is not complicated. But I am telling you, I am telling you right now that wherever you are at in your world, whatever you are going through or whatever you ever will go through, you can safely, if you remember this, you can forget everything else I said, I hope you do not, but you could. If you just go home with this today, you will be farther ahead than you have ever been in your life if you understand what I am about to say.

Things happen to us for one of three reasons, and this will greatly help you to have an intelligent, biblical prayer life.

- 1.) Because we are out of fellowship with God. Things happen first of all in our lives, and this is the most obvious, because we are out of fellowship with God. Now I am not going to belabor this point because it is pretty obvious, but let me just talk to you for a second here. I see so many Christians that are sinking. They are like a boat that is sinking and it is like they hit a rock and the water is coming in the boat and they are going to sink. But you know what they do? They get a bucket and they start bailing out the water and they actually think that by bailing the water out of their sinking ship that they are not going to sink. Now, to me, it is a no-brainer. If I am in a ship and there is water coming in a hole, then I hit a rock, what is the best way to keep me from sinking? Fix the hole. That is profound. You see, the more water you are bailing out, it is still coming in. In other words, until you fix the root problem in your life, you are going to wear yourself out bailing. At the end of the day, the ship is still going to sink. You have got to fix the hole. There was an old lady one time in a church and every time the pastor gave the invitation, she would come down in the middle and make a scene in front of everybody. She would, everybody come down, and she would come down and say every time, every week, every week she would come down there and she would come down and

she would hit the altar and she would say, "Oh God, oh God, fill me again with Your Spirit." She would get up and she would go back down, make a spectacle every week. Months, a year went on, and the preacher got, I mean, when it is real, it is real, when it is not, it is not. So one Sunday he said, "I am going to fix this old dear sister." So she comes down and same thing, she comes down, falls on her knees, cries out, "Oh God, fill me again with my Spirit." The preacher says, "No, God, just fix the leak." That is what is wrong. We need to fix the hole. Now you think that you could figure that out. All of my life I have seen God's people who get in some of the most unbelievable predicaments in their life. I have seen it affect their families. I have seen it affect their kids. I have seen them lose their wives. I have seen wives lose their husband. I have seen them get into scenarios that it was just a very difficult situation to see them get into scenarios that it was just. And for the life of me, and then after it all happens, after it all happens, they walk around and they say, "Now why did God put me through that? Why did that happen?" Hello, you violated every principle there ever was. You violated somebody you did not even know existed. You did your thing your way all your life. You did it exactly the way you wanted to do it. You did not care about God. I saw you in jams when God came through for you, and as soon as God got you back on your feet and took care of you, you dumped Him and went right back to your arrogant attitude. Hello, what part of you cannot get away if you are a child of God without being what He wants you to be? Do you not understand? Would you just allow your child to do it when you go home, to break things? Mom and dad say, "Now don't do that, Johnny." "Hey, mom and dad, take that." If you said to little Ralph, "Hey Ralph, now don't do that." Ralph comes up, "Boom! I will do it if I want to." How about when you pick him up and as a little guy and you say, "Oh, you are cute," and he goes, "Hey, would you put up with that?" How about if you have some friends over and you are over there and the kid comes in and he says, "Hey, you are really fat." Would you say, "Oh, it is a cute part of his charm?" Would you allow your kid to do that? Would you allow him to break everything in your house? Would you allow him to just to run rampant and do whatever he wants to do? I hope not. Do you know why you should not? Because you ought to be a good, responsible parent who has an accountability factor for those kids. Well, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father in heaven give good things than I am going to ask Him? He is going to hold you and me accountable just like you hold your kids accountable. What part of that do you not understand? What part of that do you not grasp? I am going to give you a verse you ought to put down here and boy, if you have one, you ought to memorize. You ought to memorize it backwards and forwards. You ought to have it on your mirror when you shave in the morning. You ought to have it on your rearview mirror in your car. You ought to have it everywhere you go, and it is found in one of the greatest principles anywhere, and brother, it is a principle. Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Now what part of that do you not get? Nobody twisted your arm to get saved. Nobody made you trust Christ your own personal Savior. You did it as your own free will, and when you did, you are not your own now. You are bought with a price. You do not have a right to do your own thing. You do not have a right to cop an attitude with God. You do not have a right to get mad at God if it does not go your way and then God fixes it and you tell Him to stick it again. Do you actually think God

is going to allow, do you actually think that you are going to prosper in your Christian life when your attitude is against Him? Oh boy, you have got some lessons to learn, and tragedy is, it is going to cost you your children. It is going to cost you your wife. Your marriage might even cost you your own freedom. It is going to cost you. The price tag with that is going to come so heavy and so high, and still you are going to walk around and say, "I wonder what happened. How did this happen, preacher? Tell me." Oh, may I tell you. So the first thing you can look at, and this does not take, do you know what the good thing about the first one? It does not need any explanation. We all know when we are not right with God. You may have your Sunday face on this morning and you may have it all done up and have the big old, got the big old 50 pound Bible out today and you may be praising the Lord and amen and all over the place, but the bottom line is, and I do not need, it is between you and the Lord, but the bottom line is, you know where you are at this morning. I have never met, I have never been a time in my life when I did something wrong or I was wrong that even though I said to everybody else I was right, deep down inside, Lord said, "No, your word." I said, "Keep that to yourself." He said, "Okay, I will, between me and you." Is that what you want? Yeah, good enough for me, Lamb.

- God wants to strengthen you through this. The second thing, now when you get past the first one and you know that you are right with God, because you are going to go through things in your life and you are going to have some bad times come in your life and it is not going to be because you are not doing what is right with God. I want to tell you that, and you have got to look at some time when you go through something, if it is not the first one, then you have got to ask, and you need to be honest with yourself, and you have got to ask yourself, then God wants to strengthen me through this. You know the Bible says to prove all things, and God puts Himself into that category because in Malachi 3:16, He says, "Prove me." Sometimes God puts us in scenarios because that is the only way we grow. Sometimes, you know the old thing at the gym, "No pain, no gain." Sometimes you have got to stretch those muscles and you have got to hurt to get to the next level. So sometimes God will put you in some things and allow you to go through some things so you will get to the next level, so you will grow through it. Now I am going to save that one because we are going to get into that one next week and the third one.
- Somebody else needs what you are going through. But I will give you the third one right now. Sometimes if it is not the first one, it is not the second one, and sometimes these are combinations, you have got to know that. But if it is not the first one and the second one, then I guarantee you it is because somebody else needs what you are going through. Somebody else needs what you are going through. This is called God consciousness. I am going to give you a great verse, another great verse. Look at Romans 14:7-8. Romans 14:7-8 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Every Christian should understand sitting here this morning that it is a matter of God's will in your life to be more like Him and God's purpose in His life or what He wants to put you through. Every Christian should understand that we live not for ourselves but for God to give Him the honor and glory out of our lives. The mark of a mature, and maybe some of you are not here this morning, I totally understand that, but the mark of a mature, strong Christian

is one who knows and understands that it is that and is at peace with God in the fact that God can get more honor and glory out of everything in my life whether it is good or it is bad. Let me ask you a question, what if God could get more honor and glory out of you or me going through some affliction than He could out of you, me, and being whole? Anybody here know a guy by the name of David Ring? Anybody know a guy by the name of David Ring? Good. I suggest this afternoon if you have some time, go get up on your computer and Google him. Just put David Ring and watch what comes up. Do you know who David Ring is? He is a young man that when he was born, he was born with terrible cerebral palsy. The doctors thought he would not live past he was five years old, but he did. The doctor said that he would never have a family. The doctor said that he would never work. The doctor said that he would never, never, never be able to communicate. He was so severe in what he had. The doctor said he would never walk. He would never have a family. He would never communicate. And now he is 40 some years old and he is one of the most dynamic evangelists that you will ever hear in your life. At some point I am going to have David Ring come to our church. I do not know, I do not know in a day and age that we live in when we are so selfish and we look at our little problems and we look at our little things that we go through and we magnify because here is a man who you ought to see him, he is one of the most handsome men that I ever met, but his hands are twisted and his legs are crooked. He cannot talk. He talks like, "My name is David Ring," and he says, "I want to tell you today about my Jesus." He said, "I want to tell you today that I was lost and I, I am not a very good preacher." And he says, "But I want to tell you," he said, "I want to sing a song." He says, "I heard an old, old story, how my Savior came from glory, how He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me. Oh, I heard about His healing, of His cleansing power revealing, how He made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see." You will break your heart and men and women sitting out there that have both their legs, have both their arms, can speak clearly. Here is a man that has an affliction that we look at and he could have given up so easily. He could have been just like us who looks for any little thing in his life. Check him on the website this afternoon. Look at him and here there is even some efforts of his message. Hear him speak and hear him talk. Here is a man that you would not even know that he had an infirmity. A guy got up and introduced him one time and he said, "We have David Ring here today and David, would you come up and just give us about three minutes of a testimony?" David comes up and he says, "Thank you, Pastor. Pastor wants me to give you testimony about three minutes. Pastor, I cannot even say my name in three minutes." God used him all over this country. You see, whatever you are going through today, whatever I am going through today, it is nothing. That kid hurts every day when he gets up. Oh, we are so selfish. Oh, I will tell you what, a guy like that, he just, the first time I heard him, I just wept. I just got on my knees and wept. I could not stop crying. I stopped by myself, "Oh God, I am so selfish. Oh God, I am so full of myself. I am so full of this and that. And here is a man that I complain about so many stupid things and so many dumb things. And here is a guy that he cannot walk and he cannot talk and he cannot use his hands and yet he stands there with the, what a song to sing. He has got the victory." We sing it, we know nothing about it. What if God could get more glory and honor out of you going an affliction like that? Would you say, "God, go ahead"? Would you say, "God, go ahead"? You go to the doctor someday and he

comes back and he says, "Well, I got some bad news for you. Got cancer." Can you say, "Glory to God"? Can you walk out of there saying, "Well, God, this is not how I would have played it, but if this is what You want for me, so God be the glory"? What if God could get more honor and glory out of your death than He could your life? Back in that bookstore back there, there is a book you ought to get called "David Brainerd: The Life and Times of David Brainerd." David Brainerd lived in the early 1700s, came over in the when the colonies were started. David Brainerd died when he was 29 years of age of tuberculosis and pneumonia. David Brainerd was a young man that had such a burden for the American Indians. He married one of the daughters of one of the great preachers, Jonathan Edwards. But David Brainerd, he wanted to go to the Indians in Pennsylvania and New York and he wanted to strike out as a missionary and he had such a burden and a fever and a fervor for the American Indians who were lost without Christ. David Brainerd struck out on his own in the great snowdrifts of Pennsylvania in the winter time of New York and he would go out to the American Indians and he would try to tell them about Christ and they did not want to hear it. He one time he preached a message to a bunch of Indians through a drunken Indian as an interpreter and nobody got saved. He spent long hours under the pine trees of New York and Pennsylvania praying for the American Indians. When he had fever so bad from the pneumonia that the heat from his body melted holes and pools of water down through him. He died when he was 29 years old. When you saw him, he looked like he was 129. He never had one comfort in his life that anybody knows about. By the standards of Christianity today, he was every bit of a failure. He was every bit of a failure. He went out there in the woods, prayed eight hours a day in the freezing cold because he had a burden to win the American Indians and he never won one convert to Christ in 29 years and he died. He died in a bed full of tuberculosis and consumption and pneumonia. He died never fathering any children. He died never building a church. He died never having one person respond to his message. But he left behind a journal. In that journal he wrote about his burden. He described how he prayed and how his tears froze on his face. He talked about shivering in the woods so cold while he prayed for the American Indians. He talked about his burden and his crying and his prayers for the American Indian and he left that all in a journal. I cannot tell you how many hundreds of thousands of men and women down through the years have read the journal of David Brainerd, but I know that three that did. There was a young man growing up behind him in the 1800s by a name of William Carey. William Carey had a burden to go to be a missionary and he found the journal of David Brainerd and he read that journal and it burned into his heart and then he gave the rest of his life to go to India, never came back to the States, buried in India. I think of Robert McCheyne who read the diaries of David Brainerd and went to the nation of Israel to the Jews. I think of Henry Martyn, I think of how that he read it and how he went also to India. In those three men's lives, probably millions and millions and millions of men and women came to Christ because one man who never won a convert in his life was willing to say, "God, if You can get more honor and glory out of my death than You can my life, do what You have got to do." You did not see him getting mad at God because he did not get what he wanted. You did not hear him say, "Oh God, can You fix this, change this? God, could You call me to Florida where the Indians are warmer?" He paid the price on the field, never won one convert to Christ, but probably three or four million

people and it goes on probably to this day of the men and women that read his journal, see that absolute pure burden that he had and come to the place that he did that most of God's people never get. "God, take me and use me. Bring me to the place where You can have the honor and glory." "Do you know what it really comes down to? It comes down to this: how much are you willing to give yourself to God? It is really what it comes down to. You listen to a guy like David Ring and you read the stories of a David Brainerd, you and I do not have anything to say. I believe that you ought to do everything in your power to stay strong and healthy for God. I really do. I think you ought to stay in shape. I think you ought to keep your weight down. I think you ought to eat right. I think you ought to get good physical activity whenever you can. I think you only got one body to give to God and when you blow it, it is gone. I think you ought to keep things out of the temple that defile it and destroy it. I think you ought to stay as pure to God and let your body be what God wanted it to be. But you know what? When some tragedy follows you, when God puts you through some affliction, when you get to the place in your life that when you get to that point where God puts you into something and something comes into your life, you better go back and realize that that thing has only happened for one of three reasons. When you examine yourself and you look at the inside of yourself and you say, "Well, I am right with God. There is nothing wrong here. I got it where God wants me to be," then you need to look and say, "Okay, God, You went through it on the cross for me. I am going to go through it for You." Not saying you are all there. I am not saying I am there, but I am saying that is where we need to be. You need to come to the place where you realize that you are going through something because He has something He either wants you to gain from it or He wants somebody else to gain from it. I think of old David Ring. I think of how many hundreds of thousands of Christians. I have never seen him preach where there was a dry eye in the place five minutes after he started preaching, and it certainly was not anything that he said. But you know what it is? Because everybody in that place is saying, "My God, if a man like that can do what he is doing, my God, what is wrong with me? My God, how selfish I am. My God, how is all around me? If a man like that who had that stacked against him, who the odds against him doing what he is doing, and who cannot speak, who is not pleasant to look at, he is not pleasant to listen to, if a man up there can get up there and sing the song 'Victory in Jesus' with his affliction, my God, what is wrong with me?" That is where we are at. That is where we are at. Three things in your life, three reasons why things happen in your life, and this is the beginning of biblical, intelligent prayer. Being honest with yourself, looking at your own self and saying, "God, I cannot stick my head in the sand anymore. I got an attitude toward You and I have had an attitude for a long time, and the bottom line is I am not prospering at it very well. Lord, if I do not get this right, I will be in a cardboard box under I-35 before long." And yet for some people that is what it is going to take. Some people that will not even be enough. Do you know how I know that? Just go down to the city mission with us. 99% of the guys down there have probably been saved at some point in their life and still come to the point, boy, they just will not get rid of it. I told the story, my daddy died when I was 19 years old, 20 years old, of lung cancer. I will never forget, I was in the army and I called my mom on an Easter because they were going to come up and my mom began to break down and cry on the phone and I said, "What is the matter, Mom?" She said, "Your daddy just been diagnosed

with lung cancer." She said, "It is all one lung and it is in the other lung," and she said, "We are not going to be able to come." She says, "Can you come home?" Well, I got an, he had went in and had surgery and I finally got my leave and emergency leave and I got to go home. I will never forget, the last time I had seen my dad, he was a good size, strapping man. He was a steel worker, worked in a steel mill all of his life. I would never forget that night, I got in late, flew into Cleveland, somebody had to pick me up and bring me home. I walked into my house and there was my dad who had come down to meet me out the front, to weigh about 75 pounds. I mean, I was just, I do not, it would not do what to say. I watched him and I, and I look when they had cut him from here all the way around his back, all the way up the other side. It literally lifted him open and took out one complete lung, took out part of the other one, and then sewed it back up and he only had a partial lung that he could work on. My dad smoked four or five packs of cigarettes a day from the time he was 15 years old. I do not even remember my dad without a cigarette in his hand. After he had that surgery, after he went through everything he went through, I came home one day and my mom was mad at my dad, which was a normal thing in our house, and I said, "What is going on?" She says, "Oh, your daddy." She just drives me nuts. I said, "What is going on?" I said, "You know," she said, "You know what? After all he has been through, they cut out one lung, put out half the other lung, he has got stitches from one side to the other, and what does he do? I catch him down in the garage having a cigarette." Never got over it. Took him right to his grave. Took him back to his grave. If my dad could have let God's Holy Spirit control him as good as a pack of cigarettes, he would be alive today. I wish I was dedicated to my God as my dad was to his cigarettes. My dad could not go 15 minutes without one. I can go all day without saying something to God. You see, folks, it is about how much we are willing to give to God of ourselves. Prayer is not about you and me fixing things that we want fixed to get our own way. It is when we get into a circumstance or a situation, we look at one of three things. Am I where I need to be with God? First of all, am I where I need to be with God? If not, get there. Fix it. Get right with God. God put this affliction on me. Second thing is, okay, I am going through this. I am not going through this because I smoked cigarettes or I did this or that. I am going through this because God put His affliction on me. Okay, God, whatever You want through this, take it. I do not like it. I do not want it. I would rather choose something else, but You know what You did what You did for me. This is what You want. It is all right with me. How many of God's people can get there? How many can God's people get there? Somebody else needs what you are going through. And then after it is all over with, I bet you old David Brainerd, when he died, went to heaven. I bet he went in that old pearly gates with his hand in his pocket and his head down, tears streaming down his face. Walks up and there is the Lord waiting for him. He said, "David, how are you doing?" He said, "Oh Lord, I am sorry. I am so sorry. I know I do not know what I did wrong. I just screwed it up and went into the other. I tried the best I could." He said, "Really? Really, really messed it up, did you?" "Yes, I did." He says, "David, let me show you something. I am going to tell you something, David, you do not always get it all down on that side. Sometimes you get it over there. Come on, show yourself, Channel Six." "See that little guy right there? He is reading your journal. Do you know who that is? That is William Carey. William Carey lived a whole hundred years after you died, but your journal survived when you did not. And I am taking

that man to India and there are a hundred million people going to get saved. Every church in India is going to go back to that man." You know what? David not only goes back to him, it goes back to the point source from what he got his, and it was you because you know what, David, when you were down there praying in the woods of Pennsylvania, New York, and your fever was so bad and you were laying in pools of water from your fever melting that snow, you know what I saw when I searched your heart? I saw fire off the altar of God. David, you do not always get it down here. Sometimes you get it over there. These are lessons you need to learn, my friend.

Prayer was not given so you and I can change what we do not like. It was given so we could get ourselves on the same wavelength. We are going to better understand what He is doing so we could better be in touch with what is going on. Misconceptions of prayer, how God answers your prayer, third lesson now, how to pray. Some things you have a right to ask God to change, some things you do not. As you grow in the Lord, you will learn better what those are. Next week I am going to talk to you why bad things happen to good people. We are going to take this thing of the will and the purpose and the three things that we talked about. We are going to take this thing all the way to the end.

Let us pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much. Thank You for all You do. Thank You for our visitors today. Lord, may they avail themselves of our tapes back there that they want to get this whole series. Lord, we will send them next week so they want to get their address and we will give it to them. We love You, Lord. We thank You, Father, for all that You do. Help us, Lord, to understand. Help us to be in the mind of God. Help us to understand that things happen to us. We get so full of ourselves. We get so caught up with who we are. We think we are so something special when in actuality, Lord, we ought to be just whatever You want us to be to Him, wherever we need to be to it. Lord, I love You and I thank You for these folks. I love them so much and I am so thankful that they are part of my life and that You put them in part of my ministry here. I thank You for the men and the women who labor every day, who are side by side with me in everything that I do. Lord, together we work through and pull through. We go through the good times and the bad times, and Lord, always let this church be here for what the intended purpose it is, that is to give people the opportunity. Maybe they will not all do it, but we never not to give people the opportunity to do what is right and build a relationship with God. Father, we do thank You and praise You now. We love You. Thank You for all You do. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.