



POTPOURRI FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

(remembrances of the Holy Spirit)



Answered Prayer Is a Divine Interactive Experience

Prayer is at the core of Father's relational priorities 11-2-2024

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,



Prior to our return from Israel with the Hebraic foundations, we received a prophetic warning from some followers of Jesus about what we would encounter in the US: "You're going to the hardest place on earth for anyone to embrace the Hebraic foundations. **Christians there don't need God and they don't need each other. Hellenism owns the church in the United States.**" How accurately this has described the Christianity of today which was spawned by *centuries of anti-Semitic obsession with creedal positions and religious practices* accompanied by the *academic-only instruction by pansyism*, and more recently by *the me-obsessed influence of Humanism*.

For nearly 3 decades we've been sharing the Hebraic foundations. We've tried to counter these departures from the Biblical way by repeatedly emphasizing the **relational connectedness** which our heavenly Father is restoring. God's Word clearly reveals how He personally interacted with Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul, for example. And because of the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit in all of the *genuinely born again*, we're able to partake of this intimate and interactive relationship. That is, **if** you refuse to be deceived that creedal obsession and religious fixation are our Father's requirements for His children.

❖ Originating with the preeminence of your Father and our Lord Jesus in your life, your spiritual journey would be described as **divine interaction that you can experience**. Some ways in which this occurs are: •through the prayers of the repentant resulting in Father answering, or •you receiving guidance and empowerment by the Holy Spirit, or •divinely orchestrated encounters and interventions. This life experience is the way our spiritual forerunners in the Newer Testament lived. Read about them for yourself, and discover that in belonging to our Lord Jesus you are offered an interactive and spiritually intimate experience.

Father's Relational Priorities



When you realize from Scripture the interactive life you are offered in Christ, we earnestly hope you'll free yourself from being a pacified pansy in the religious establishment. And we hope you'll have the courage to even question the contrived creedal positions and religious practices of the "hallowed" Reformers. They brought about what our Lord confronted in the religious leaders of His day: Religion without interactively relating to God. Their teachings bypassed the close relationship with God which Abraham had.

Picture this new way of living. When the Spirit of our Lord Jesus is living through you as His **redemptive ambassador**, you are unwavering in *praying for* and *seeking opportunities* to fulfill this divine privilege. Think about how fulfilling this one loving responsibility demonstrates more than any other your grateful appreciation for what

our Lord Jesus accomplished on your behalf on the cross — and you want others to experience His Spirit living in them as well by the new birth! Here's an example of how we choose to express our own love for our Lord and for others. We often pray for the opportunity to represent our Lord Jesus *before* we go into Spokane or into stores or to medical appointments or for any other situation that may arise. We are keenly aware that our compassionate Father desires no one to be lost. So our prayer expresses our trust that He will create divine encounters for us.

Does He make it possible for us to fulfill our ambassador role 100% of the time? No. But our prayers reveal our *relationally interactive* trust in our Father, *ABBA*—“Dad” (Romans 8:15). And this confidence in HIS faithfulness also undergirds our intercessory prayers in other situations. We have full confidence that our Father will answer according to His will being done so that we can share testimonies to His glory.

Your prayers must reveal your absolute trust in Father's sovereignty.



The privilege to pray to our heavenly Father through our trust in our Lord Jesus is a divine gift to us from a sovereign God. Father's sovereignty is a firm anchor in your faith journey. Nothing happens in this world or even in the entire universe that Father doesn't cause or allow! Even if you don't understand the events taking place around you or you're having a hard time accepting them, never doubt that Father caused or allowed it to happen for His purposes. He is absolutely sovereign and worthy of your complete trust. Through your prayers and praise you are revealing your complete trust in **WHO** will provide the answer. This focus erases all doubt and fretting. And if you've actively been participating with the Spirit of our Lord Jesus living through you, bringing glory to **WHO** answers your prayers is more crucial than receiving what you're praying about.

Having your prayers answered is near and dear to the heart of our Lord Jesus because of the testimonies which answered prayers produce to the glory of His Father. And our Lord rejoices in the ever-growing character qualities of patience and perseverance in the hearts of those who do trust Father to hear and respond. Prayer is an expression of the trust-based relational connectedness of our Lord's earliest followers to bring glory to His heavenly Father. It should be no different today for we who follow Jesus as Lord of our lives.

Please read Acts 4:1-31. Feel within you the boldness of those who have the Spirit of our Lord Jesus working through them. And notice their recognition of God's sovereignty over everything. Their holy boldness in the face of persecution is inherent in those who are dead-to-self (see also Revelation 12:11).

Our Lord's first disciples knew that even the Son of God relied on prayer to His Father. Earnest in their zeal to learn from Him, they pleaded, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). Jesus replied to them and to all of us, “*When you pray, say: ‘Father, let Your name be hallowed, let Your kingdom come’*” (v.2). Our Lord wasn't ordering us to pray a prescribed liturgical prayer. Rather, He was revealing to His own the humility of heart that's entailed in praying to our heavenly Father. Some facets of humble prayer are: >Our Father being glorified by us as we trust **WHO** He is, >His kingdom being extended through Christ's **redemptive ambassadors**, >fully realizing that our Father meets all our needs (Philippians 4:19), and >we certify that we forgive all others because of the forgiveness which Father extended to us through Christ (Mark 11:25).

We've previously noted that **seething bitterness** is pervasive throughout the US, and is seldom confronted in Christianity. If anyone comes to your mind who produces feelings of resentment in you, then you remain unforgiven by our heavenly Father until you forgive (Matthew 6:14,15). If you remain trapped in the past because of seething bitterness, you are defiling your current relationships (Hebrews 12:15). Thus you're unable to provide the *depth of love* and *emotional support* Father would have you give them.

Why does our Father consider prayer necessary?



In whatever words you use in praying (or even the wordless groanings or inexpressible joy you experience at times before Him), the core of your heart attitude is to *humbly recognize the sovereignty of WHO you're praying to*. Your humility as you pray is demonstrated in you trusting His preeminence above everyone and everything. Why is this crucial for Christians today? Because many Christians who pray are obsessed with receiving the particular answer they desire or even demand from Him. Having little or no appreciation for **WHO** will provide the answer, they ignore abiding by His prerequisites for Him hearing prayer. The self-seeking view of prayer has caused too many Christians to be dull to **WHO** they are praying to. And the ***me-centered, self-gratifying emphasis of Humanism in Christianity*** has worsened this.

You reveal your trust in our Father when you reveal your need without prescribing how you want Him to answer it. Those who love God and actively live **obedience-based** under the Lordship of Jesus are keenly aware of **WHO** they are praying to. They fully trust our heavenly Father for His wisdom and His answer to their prayers according to His will, His timing, and His limitless creative ways. By contrast, the **outcome-based**, against whom we frequently warn you, are fixated on the specific answer they want to their prayers. In so doing, they distrust His will or ways.

❖ A dear friend, "John" who was living in another city told us his car had died and he was praying for a white Jeep to be able to get to work. Sue encouraged him to just "pray for transportation and allow our Father to meet your need." Not long after John began praying with trust in our Father to meet his need, he met "Mark" who lived a few exits up from him and worked for the same company. Mark gladly offered to pick up John for the daily commute, and this began a relationship in which John started discipling Mark. On the hour-long drive to and from work they studied the Bible and prayed together. After a while, though, John began to feel like he was inconveniencing Mark and taking time from his family. We encouraged John to ask Mark's wife what she thought. She expressed deep appreciation for the changes our Lord was making in her husband because of their discussions and prayers during the commutes! Just a few years later Mark died of cancer, but left behind a whole family who fervently trusted our Lord Jesus.

Father, ABBA–Dad already knows your needs before you pray. Your petitions and thanksgiving to Him indicate that you understand your dependence on His sovereignty to meet these needs. And it's vital to remember that the indwelling Holy Spirit helps us to pray: *"Similarly the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but **the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf** with groanings that words cannot express. And He Who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will"* (Romans 8:26,27). Being firmly confident in the Holy Spirit assisting you in praying to our Father prepares you to trust Him in more dire circumstances: *"And when they bring you before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry or be anxious about how or what you may answer or what you will say, for **the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you ought to say**"* (Luke 12:11,12). And remember this glorious promise too, that Jesus always lives to intercede on behalf of those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25).

✦ If you're *genuinely* born again and living as our Lord's redemptive ambassador, then your testimonies of answered prayer in the name of your Lord Jesus are far more penetrating proofs for the unsaved that your heavenly Father hears and answers than you just spouting Bible verses at them. They need to hear that our Father and Lord Jesus are real to you, and not just Bible characters from 2000+ years ago. You can ask them for specific prayer needs you can bring before Father in Jesus' name so they can see His love and power at work on their behalf. And this may lead to discussions about the authentic Good News.

The prayer of the righteous is exceedingly effective.



An essential part of the New Covenant you entered into in union with Christ is for you **to bring glory to our Father!** To accomplish this glorious purpose is the intricate connection between •you repenting when you do sin, and •your heavenly Father’s willingness to answer your prayers. James connects a repentant heart with the magnificence of Father’s answer to prayer:

“Confess your sins to one another and pray on behalf of one another so that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours; and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its crops” (James 5:17,18). This is an assurance to the repentant from God’s Word to keep praying in trust according to His will. Don’t doubt it!

If answers to powerful and effective prayer haven’t been your reality, we want to highlight a prerequisite of our Father for answering prayer. Peter warns of this precondition: *“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil”* (1Peter 3:12; also Psalms 34:15; Proverbs 15:8,9). An evildoer is someone who intentionally violates God’s righteous commands and refuses to repent. This truth about our Father’s prerequisites for answering prayer was voiced by a blind man whom our Lord Jesus healed: *“We know that God does not hear sinful men, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, this man He hears”* (John 9:31). John provides an even clearer understanding of heaven’s view of sinners who refuse to repent: *“Everyone who keeps sinning is committing lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. No one who remains united with [Jesus] continues sinning; whoever keeps on sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him”* (1John 3:4,6).

When we do violate our Father and sin, He has given us the means to restoring righteousness with Him through confessing: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1John 1:9). If you’ve confessed your sins, purposing to forsake them and walk in the righteous way of His commands, then Father hears your prayers the moment you pray to Him. But how does His answer get to you?

The Book of Daniel reveals that prayer is engaging in spiritual warfare.

Let’s delve a little deeper into remaining repentant and praying unceasingly. From Daniel chapter 10 we can glean some discernment about the nature of your prayers and the spiritual warfare that surrounds you receiving Father’s answer. Here’s what took place in response to the prayer of a righteous man and the battle which the angelic messenger faced against demonic foes:



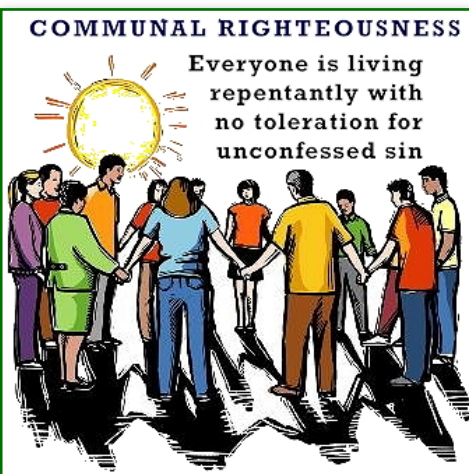
“Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia” (Daniel 10:12,13).

The example of Daniel encourages us to stay repentant in righteous standing with our Father as we keep praying for something according to His will until we receive His answer! An angelic messenger who may be delivering Father’s answer to you may have to fight through a host of demonic forces in the unseen realm, and this may take some time. This is why our Lord has given us the parable of the widow who keeps going to the judge to seek justice (Luke 18:1-6). Jesus is urging you to keep on praying until the answer is received—and thanking Father that He has heard you. In essence, through your prayer and the possibility of the answer glorifying

your Father, you're engaging Satan's demonic hierarchy. Those demons will do all they can to keep you from gratefully testifying to our Father's glory. You might say that the moment you begin to pray to our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus, the devil will try even harder to entice you to sin or to doubt. Your part in this battle is to determine by grace to **LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY** and **PRAY UNCEASINGLY**. Remember, your life purpose as you follow Jesus is to bring our Father glory through your loving and obedient trust as the Spirit works in and through you.

Your *unconfessed* sins might be hindering the answered prayers of others.

The Reformers instilled an individualistic understanding of being a Christian which eradicated the communal view of our Hebraic ancestors. The first followers of our Lord Jesus were keenly aware of **communal righteousness**. The Bible reveals that our Father holds each person within a family or fellowship family communally accountable to confront sin in the others (see Matthew 18:15-17; James 5:19,20). The Older Testament also uses examples like Korah's rebellion, King David numbering his troops, and Achan taking the devoted items to show that God punished other people for the sins of one person, including family members (Numbers 16:3-35; 1Chronicles 21; Joshua 7).



Unlike the individualist view which the Reformers introduced into Christianity, our heavenly Father holds us mutually responsible in upholding communal righteousness. When the two of us are seeking to enter fellowship with others as a faith family, we state our own conviction about our commitment to communal righteousness so that Father will answer our prayers. We ask them to pray about doing the same through stating an intention something like this:

“My family and I will do nothing to hinder your prayers from being answered by our heavenly Father. We can’t promise you that we won’t sin, but we will be quick to repent and to walk in His ways so that our Father will hear and answer our prayers and yours as we stay repentant before Him.”

Our Lord reinforces communal commitment to one another when He tells the genuinely born again, *“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I among them”* (Matthew 18:19,20). Fellowshiping in homes as extended spiritual family provides the interactive means to uphold communal commitment through the encouragement and loving admonition of each other.

This was the pattern of the earliest followers of Jesus who gathered in one another's homes. Unconfessed sin is more easily exposed in a smaller group in which everyone knows each other well. When everyone's prayers begin to go unanswered, then you need to discern who is sinning and is unrepentant. Your only option in order to maintain communal righteousness is for them to repent or for you to evict them until they do repent (Matthew 18:17). Each home in the fellowship family must be a perimeter of righteousness where repentant hearts are found. Then the fellowship is a gathering of homes of righteousness. This is the relational connectedness to each other as part of the body of Christ that communal righteousness fosters. Why would anyone want anything less than communal righteousness which results in answered prayer and our Father glorified through people who love and serve His Son Jesus as their Lord and Savior?