

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Our lesson text is one sentence in the Greek. When we look for the main idea, one obvious idea is intercessory prayer.

Paul lists four things that he is thankful for regarding Philemon that he always mentions in his intercessory prayer:

I thank (eucharisteo / p.a.ind.1ps) my God always, making (poieo / p.a.ptc.nsm) mention of you in my prayers" (ton proseuche) because I hear (akouo / p.a.ptc.nsm) of your:

- Love which you have (echo / p.a.ind.2ps) toward the Lord Jesus,
- Love which you have towards all the saints,
- Faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus,
- Faith which you have towards all the saints (vs.4-5).

Paul used the first nine verses to stage a request for a big favor from Philemon that occupied the other sixteen verses (vs.10-25). He began directing himself towards the request in verse 6:

“And I pray (hopos +aorist subjective of ginomai / *italicized*) that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake.”

Paul staged his request by emphasizing the importance of Intercessory Prayer in his life and ministry.

<b>Today’s lesson will study five importance aspects of Prayer in the life of the community of believers.</b>
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### **1. Intercessory prayer is a believer interceding on behalf of other believers before God.**

It is praying for someone’s needs, to a God who is able to meet those needs according to the directive will of God.

In the Book of Philemon, it was Paul interceding on behalf of a newly converted run away slave named Onesimus – “I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus.” (vs.10)

It is wonderful to know that spiritually mature believers are willing to step forward on behalf of others in time of great need.

Paul said he was motivated by God love and faith to intercede on behalf of others (Philm.4-6).

### **2. Jesus gave the Parable of the Midnight Visitor in Luke 11:5-8 to teach the importance of the perseverance of intercessory prayer.**

This parable was about three friends: friend visiting, friend visited, and the friend asleep. Remember that a parable is an earthly story with one heavenly message. You always look for the **one doctrinal point** – “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as needs.” (11:8)

The doctrinal point was not the need or the friendship, but the importance of **persistence or perseverance of intercessory prayer**. “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16b)

### 3. Intercessory prayer is not an end, but a means to an end.

The means is praying according to the will of God – “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

The means is also waiting on God to bring the end according to His perfect will. David interceded on behalf of his newly born baby for 17 days until he received the answer from the will of God (2 Sam.12:15-23) – “And he said, ‘while the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live. But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.’” (11:22-23)

This introduced us to a doctrinal principle regarding intercessory prayer. The intercessory prayer may or may not be answered the way we imagined.

### 4. Another doctrinal principle of intercessory prayer is that God’s answer may be greater than our request

“I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” (Luke 11:8)

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.” (Eph.3:20)

An example of this principle would Abraham’s intercessory prayer for Sodom where Lot lived. We see his persistence as he interceded with Lord (50, 45, 40, 30, 20, and 10). Here we see the greatness of God’s answer when Abraham settled for 10 but needed 3 (Lot, and two daughters) (Gen.18:23-33).

### 5. Intercessory prayer must be offered according to the will of God and not according to the whims of the you are interceding for in prayer

(1 John 5:14-15) “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

An example of this doctrinal principle of intercessory prayer is Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea with Pharaoh’s army marching on them (Ex.14:10-31).

- **Israelites** “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is it not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” (Ex.14:11-13)
- **Moses** “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.” (Ex.14:-14)
- **Lord** “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.” (Ex.14:30-31)

**“And being fully assured that what He had promised, He is able also to perform.” (Rom.4:21)**

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**HAPPY FATHER’S DAY!**