

**Series: Praying Always
“What is Praying in the Spirit?”
Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20**

Big Idea – Effective prayer is done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18 “...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”

Jude 1:20 “But dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up, praying in the Holy Spirit.”

It is worthy of note that the Holy Spirit’s assistance in prayer is more frequently mentioned than any of His other offices.

All true praying springs from His activity in the heart. Both Paul and Jude teach that effective prayer is “praying in the Holy Spirit,” which has been defined as praying “along the same lines, about the same things, in the same Name as the Holy Spirit.” All true prayer rises in the spirit of the believer from the Spirit who indwells him.

Praying in the Spirit means praying in the realm of the Holy Spirit,

The Holy Spirit is in us and we are in the Spirit.

John 14:16, 17 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it does not see him or know him.

But you know him, because he lives with you and he will be in you.

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Don’t you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person, because God’s temple is holy and you are that temple.”

1 Corinthians 6:19 “You should know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit who is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. So you do not belong to yourselves,

20 because you were bought by God for a price. So honor God with your bodies.”

Romans 8:11 God raised Jesus from the dead, and since God's Spirit is living in you, he will also give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from the dead, and he will give life through His Spirit that lives in you.

14 The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.

15 The Spirit we received does not make us slaves again to fear; it makes us children of God. With that Spirit we cry out, "Father."

16 And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say we are God's children.

Many prayers are mental or emotional rather than spiritual. They move in the realm of the mind only, and are the product of our own thinking and not of the Spirit's teaching.

But praying in the Spirit is something deeper. The prayer envisaged here "utilizes the body and demands the cooperation of the mind but moves in the supernatural realm of the Spirit." Prayer conducts its business in the heavenlies.

It can also mean praying in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit

"Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18, NEB).

James 5:16b "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

17 Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years!"

Prayer demands more than human power and energy for its supernatural task, and the Holy Spirit supplies it. He is the Spirit of power as well as the Spirit of prayer. Mere human energy of heart and mind and will can achieve only human results. But praying in the power of the Spirit releases supernatural resources.

It is the Spirit's delight to aid us in our physical and moral weakness in the prayer life, for the

The praying heart labors under 3 limiting handicaps; but in each of them we can count on the Spirit's assistance.

The conscious iniquity of our hearts.

The Spirit will lead and enable us to appropriate the cleansing of the blood of Christ which will silence the accusations of the adversary and remove the sense of guilt and pollution.

1 John 1:7b "...the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin.

9 But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done."

the limiting ignorance of our minds.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "No one has ever seen this, and no one has ever heard about it. No one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

10 But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.

11 Who knows the thoughts that another person has? Only a person's spirit that lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we did not receive the spirit of the world, but we received the Spirit that is from God so that we can know all that God has given us.

13 And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom but with words taught us by the Spirit so we explain spiritual truths to spiritual people.

The Spirit who knows the mind of God will share that knowledge with us as we wait on Him. Then there will come the quiet, clear conviction that our request is in the will of God, and faith will be kindled.

The weakness of our bodies.

The Spirit will quicken our mortal bodies in response to our faith and enable us to rise above physical and climatic conditions.

Both our Lord and Paul made it clear that prayer is no mere pleasant, dreamy reverie. "All vital praying makes a drain on a man's vitality," wrote J. H. Jowett. "True intercession is a sacrifice, a bleeding sacrifice."

Jesus performed many mighty works without outward sign of strain, but of His praying this is recorded:

Hebrews 5:7 "While Jesus lived on earth, he prayed to God and asked God for help. He prayed with loud cries and tears to the One who could save him from death, and his prayer was heard because he trusted God.

8 Even though Jesus was the Son of God, he learned obedience by what he suffered.

9 And because his obedience was perfect, he was able to give eternal salvation to all who obey him.”

“Epaphras is always wrestling for you in his prayers,” wrote Paul to the Colossian Christians (4:12). How wimpy our prayers look next to Epaphras’

The word “*wrestling*” is where we get our word “agony”. It is used of a man toiling at his work until utterly weary (Col. 1:29), or competing in the arena for the coveted laurel wreath (1 Cor. 9:25). It describes the soldier battling for his life (1 Tim. 6:12), or a man struggling to deliver his friend from danger (John 18:36). It pictures the agony of earnestness of a man to save his own soul (Luke 13:24). But its supreme significance appears in the tragedy of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:42 "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.

46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

We see here an agony induced by His identification with and grief over the sins of a lost world.

Prayer is evidently a strenuous spiritual exercise which demands the utmost mental discipline and concentration.

Perhaps it was because of this fact that our Lord sometimes linked prayer with fasting?

Matthew 17:21 “This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.”

True intercession is costly. Jesus first gave Himself and then made intercession for His murderers.

Luke 23:33 When they came to a place called the Skull, the soldiers crucified Jesus and the criminals—one on his right and the other on his left.

34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they don’t know what they are doing.”

He could do no more for them. Are we asking of God something we ourselves could supply? Can it be true intercession until we are empty-handed? True intercession demands the sacrifice and dedication of all; it cannot be costless and cross-less.

So then what does it mean to pray “in the Spirit?”

Meaning? – not tongues speaking. It’s praying in concert with the Spirit who is making intercession for us (Romans 8:26)

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The Holy Spirit helps us to know what and how to pray - v. 26

The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf - v. 26

God hears our hearts more than the words in prayer - v. 27

Prayer is always answered (vs. 28-29), though not always according to our agenda.

God’s four basic responses to our prayers.

No—Your request is not in God’s will

OT: 2 Sam. 12:15-16, 22-23

NT: Matt. 26:36-39

Slow—Your request is not God’s will at this time

OT: Gen. 15:2-6; 21:2

NT: John 11:3,6,14-15,17,43-44

Grow—Your motives are wrong

OT: Num. 14:26-45

NT: James 4:3

Go—Your request, timing, and spiritual condition are okay...Yes!

OT: 1 Kings 18:36-39 (cf., James 5:17-18)

NT: Acts 12:5-7,12-17