

Intercession

Part 1

Introduction

Do you believe that intercession is only for a skillful few who have been given a special gift for it? This is not what the Bible teaches. It tells us that God wants all of us to be intercessors. Intercession is simply one form of prayer. At its most basic, it is praying for someone else. At its most sublime, it is sharing God's heart for the world and cooperating with Him to bring His desires into existence.

In this study we hope to take some of the mystery out of intercession and show you how to become the intercessor God wants you to be.

Our Study

Intercession comes to most Christians naturally. If you've ever prayed for a sick child, your husband's job situation, or a friend's money problems, you've interceded. Especially during our times of trouble, we want and need others to intercede for us.

The Bible is full of admonitions to intercede. Usually it isn't called intercession; more likely it's just called prayer.

The Scripture: Colossians 4:2

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

1. What does the Apostle Paul tell us to do? _____

This is a strong statement. Many of us are very busy for the Lord, doing good deeds, etc., but in this verse Paul says we are to devote ourselves to prayer. First Thessalonians 5:17 adds to this by saying we are to pray continually. The Apostle Paul repeatedly called upon the saints to intercede for him.

The Scripture: Colossians 4:3-4

"Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should."

2. What did Paul ask the Colossian church to intercede for him? _____

The Scripture: Hebrews 13:19

"I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon."

3. What did he ask the Hebrew church to intercede for? _____

Paul also urged Christians to intercede for all those in authority.

The Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

4. Why does Paul want us to pray for government officials? _____

The Early Church was an interceding church. In Acts 12, we have the account of an event in the life of Peter, who was in prison.

The Scripture: Acts 12:12

"Many people had gathered and were praying."

5. What were the people doing? _____

The Lord miraculously released Peter and he went to the house where his friends were praying. When a servant girl told them that Peter was at the door, they refused to believe her at first. Finally, they realized that God had answered their prayers. How they rejoiced!

The Scripture: Acts 13:2-3

"While they (the Church at Antioch) were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.'"

6. What was the church doing? _____

7. What was the result? _____

Jesus and Holy Spirit Are Our Models

If we need more evidence that God wants us to be intercessors, we don't have to look any further than Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture: Romans 8:34

"Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

8. What is Christ doing? _____

9. Where is He interceding from? _____

The right hand of God is the place of power and authority.

The Scripture: Hebrews 7:25

"He (Jesus) is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."

10. What does this verse tell us about Jesus? _____

The Scripture: Romans 8:26, 27

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans 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."

These verses tell us something important about the Holy Spirit's intercessions for us.

11. What is so special about them? _____

Just think about that for a minute. Not only does the Holy Spirit intercede for us, but because He knows God's mind, He can pray exactly the right prayer -- the prayer that is needed at that time.

As wonderful as interceding for others is, God has a much more important reason for wanting us to intercede. As we said in the introduction, in intercession we share God's heart for the world and cooperate with Him to bring His desires into existence.

Intercession Is Part of Spiritual Warfare

The Scripture: Ephesians 6:12-13

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes you may be able to stand your ground and after you have done everything to stand."

12. Who is our fight against? _____

13. What are we to do? _____

The Scripture: Ephesians 6:18

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

14. How are we to pray? _____

The Old Testament in particular calls intercession by many different names. Reviewing them should help us better understand what we are doing when we intercede.

The Scripture: Isaiah 62:6-7

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth."

15. What does the Lord say He has done? _____

16. What are the watchmen to do? _____

The Scripture: Isaiah 59:16 (The Amplified Bible)

"And He (God) saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor [no one to intervene on behalf of truth and right]."

17. What did God see? _____

This verse also gives us another picture of the intercessor -- someone who intervenes on behalf of truth and right.

The Scripture: Ezekiel 22:30

"I looked for a man among them who would build up a wall and stand before Me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."

18. What is God looking for? _____

One who stands in the gap is yet another term used to describe the intercessor. Our sins make gaps in the walls of protection God has built around us. It is the work of the intercessor to stand in those gaps with his intercessions.

We have an example of this in the life of the prophet Joel. At a time when Israel was being invaded by a great army (as God's punishment for their sins), the Lord called the land to a time of repentance and intercession.

The Scripture: Joel 2:12, 17

"Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning...Let the priests, who minister before the Lord weep between the temple porch and the altar."

19. What were the people and priests to do? _____

The Scripture: Joel 2:20, 25-26, 28-29

"I will drive the northern army far from you...and those in the rear into the western sea...I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten...You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed....I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

20. What was the Lord's promise if the people returned to him? _____

In answer to their obedience and intercessions, the Lord promised He would restore everything that had been taken away. He also promised He would pour out His Spirit on all people.

The last part of this promise was fulfilled on Pentecost.

Many people excuse their lack of prayer life by insisting they don't know how to intercede. In the second half of this study we will show you some of the insights and tools the Bible gives us to make us prayer warriors and intercessors.

The Answers

1. To devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful
2. That God would open a door for His message and that He would proclaim it clearly
3. That He would be restored to them soon
4. That we might live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness
5. Praying
6. Worshiping the Lord, fasting and praying
7. The Holy Spirit gave them instructions.
8. Interceding for us
9. At the right hand of God
10. He lives to intercede for those who come to God through Him.
11. They are prayed in accordance with God's will.
12. The spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms
13. Put on the full armor of God.
14. In the Spirit, with all kinds of prayers and requests
15. Posted watchmen on the walls
16. To call on the Lord day and night until their intercessions are answered
17. There was no intercessor to intervene on behalf of truth and right.
18. For someone to build up a wall and stand before Him in the gap on behalf of the land
19. Return to the Lord with all their heart, fasting, weeping, mourning
20. The armies would be driven away; they would have plenty to eat; never again would they be ashamed; God would pour His Spirit out on all people.

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