

(excerpts from the book “Answered Prayer Guaranteed,” by Frederick K.C. Price)

## 5. The Prayer of Intercession

Intercession means you are interceding—acting in prayer—on behalf of someone else. This person may be incapable of praying for himself or herself. Perhaps the person is on drugs or mentally confused by demonic doctrines. Perhaps the person is so sick he or she can't muster the energy to stay awake, let alone pray. On a general level, intercession involves praying in a general sense for others. For example: “Father, bless and protect our troops overseas in the war zone that they would return home to their families.” You aren't identifying a particular individual or even a particular unit. In general, intercessory prayer, you pray, for example, for the church or for our government. In Ephesians 1:15–18, Paul wrote:

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

This goes on, but Paul is making it plain that he prays for the church at Ephesus and for the individuals there to receive these blessings. He does not set himself in agreement with anyone, so this seems to be a good example of intercessory prayer. Likewise, in his greeting to the Philippians, he wrote: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you

all with joy” (Phil. 1:3–

4). The fact that Paul said he made requests *for* them suggests that this also was an intercessory prayer.

### **The role of the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer**

However, in Romans 8:26, Paul presents a different type of intercessory prayer— a higher kind of intercessory prayer:

“Likewise the Spirit also helps 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.”

This verse gets into the whole issue of being filled with the Holy Spirit, which is why the devil resists this kind of prayer so much. In order to explain this we will take a brief detour from our analysis of the different types of prayer. When a burden of intercession is placed on you, you need to pray right then. The Holy Spirit has plans for you to be a conduit to help or bless someone else.

People have the idea that God can do *anything*. In a sense, yes, He can, but in the truest legal sense, no, He may not. God has the *power* to do whatever He wants, but He has structured the system to work by laws—natural laws and spiritual laws, which involve spiritual authority. As the One who gave the law, He cannot Himself break the laws. Psalm 138:1–2 tells us: “I will praise You with my whole heart.... For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.” In other words, God’s Word—His laws—are more important than even His name, because if He doesn’t observe His own Word, then He is no different than we are. Moreover, God cannot and will not trespass on someone else’s will. When He gave the earth to Adam, Adam literally became the “god of this world.” He was the man; he was in charge. But in the Fall, Adam handed this over to Satan. In a legal sense, he gave Satan the title deed to

Planet Earth. Satan was the new owner.

Technically, the earth became the devil's property, and God cannot *legally* trespass on this earth without permission. I own a house—it's my house. I have the title deed. I can invite whomever I want into my house for a party, and as long as we don't disturb the peace—and you know how wild we ministers of the gospel can get!—no one can say anything about whom I let into my house. This house—the earth—was made for man. We have a right to be here, or, more appropriately, *had* a right to be here until Satan bamboozled Adam and got the title deed. Jesus Christ bought this back with His blood, but the purchase had a lease clause wherein the devil still maintained legal control until the last days, when Jesus would evict him. I can give you an example of this from personal experience with our Pepperdine property. We had some undesirable tenants who had promised to leave. Still, we could not get them out—even though we owned that property—until that lease was up because they had a legal right to be there. This explains why Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Asia, and the earthquakes in Pakistan were not “acts of God” but rather acts of the devil. *He* is the one still legally in charge of this planet. He has the lease. It is his domain. You may ask, “Dr. Price, do you mean to say that God isn't more powerful than the devil?” No! That isn't what I mean. In the twinkling of an eye, God could flush that old liar into the eternal pit of fire. But God *cannot* violate His word, and He gave His word to Adam that he would have dominion over the earth. Dominion means you have authority and control. Remember that if you can't sell something or give it away, you really don't have dominion over it. Through sin, Adam gave up his dominion over the earth to the devil. Therefore, God cannot legally violate the

devil's *civil rights* when it comes to authority over this world. *For a temptation to be real, you must be able to yield to it.* Otherwise it is little more than an invalid offer.

Jesus said in John 14:30, "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." Jesus the Christ called the devil "the ruler of this world." Not God, but Satan. The word *ruler* in the New King James Bible is translated "prince" in the King James Version. In Greek, the word for "prince" is *archon*, meaning "ruler." In Luke 4:5–8 the devil makes an offer to Jesus: Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this has been delivered to me* and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" — EMPHASIS ADDED Notice something very important here. Jesus did not say to the devil, "You liar! You don't own these kingdoms, and they aren't yours to give!" Jesus could not say that, because Satan, for once in his mangy life, was telling the truth. Those kingdoms—the entire earth—had indeed been "delivered" to him with a big red bow from Adam. And it was just as true that the devil could have given them to "whomever I wish." (If you don't own something, you can't give it away.) There is still more to this verse, though, that makes it clear that the devil had dominion over this world. Have you ever heard the word *temptation*? What is the purpose of temptation? It is to get you to yield to the temptation, correct? I submit to you that if you cannot yield to temptation, it is not a temptation. Arab princes castrated slaves and made them into eunuchs so that they would not be tempted to have sex with the women in the harems. Let me give you a somewhat different example. If you offered me \$10 billion to get pregnant, that would be no

temptation to me whatsoever. Why? Because it's physically impossible for me to get pregnant. It would be like offering someone whatever they wanted if they could flap their wings and fly off a cliff. It won't happen. *For a temptation to be real, you must be able to yield to it.* Other wise it is little more than an invalid offer. Let's look back to our verses in Luke. Jesus could not have been tempted by the devil's offer if in fact the devil did not have legal title to all the kingdoms he showed Jesus. Luke 4:6 states: "And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give you, and their glory; for it has been delivered to me.'" He didn't even say he bought it—Satan said it was "delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." If the devil was lying, Jesus would have had to clarify this immediately for our benefit and challenge him—but He never did because it was true. It *was* a temptation, because the earth belonged to the devil, and he could, indeed, offer it to Jesus.

### **The role of the believer**

At this point, you might say, "What's the use? If God cannot do anything, aren't we doomed?" I didn't say God can't do anything—but He can only do those things in this earth realm that His Word, His promises, and His law allow Him to do. That's where we come in. God's will is that no one die in sin. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). There is a qualifier in that promise: "whoever believes." Before God can save you (according to His own Word, His own rules, and His own promises), you must *believe*. "Do you mean to tell me that God cannot save whomever He wants?" That's right. God cannot and will not save you against your will. Likewise, He cannot and will not force you to accept the Holy Spirit or to speak in tongues. He will not send you on a mission trip

you do not want to go on. God can encourage you; He can inspire you; He can set up circumstances to guide you; but He will not *force* you to act against your will. Hollywood makes many movies, and most of them are not worth watching, but every once in a while the producers and directors—perhaps unintentionally and perhaps even guided quietly by God—end up making some movies that have a powerful spiritual message. In 2003 there was a movie called *Bruce Almighty*, with Jim Carrey as “Bruce,” a television features reporter, and Morgan Freeman as “God.” The plot centered on Bruce thinking God no longer cared about him, or anyone, and whining that he, Bruce, could do a better job running the universe. So, the movie depicted God handing over some of His power and letting Bruce try it. Not only did Bruce discover that having unlimited power doesn’t produce happiness, but he also found that merely granting people every wish they want is a disaster. (The hidden message here is that the power of God must be used within the guidelines instituted by God.) Perhaps the most spiritual gem in that movie came when Bruce, who is in love with the appropriately named “Grace” (who continually forgives Bruce for his self-centered behavior), finally drives her off. He asks God, “How do you make somebody love you without affecting free will?”

One of the devices the devil uses to prevent people from praying in the Spirit is this: “You don’t know what you’re saying.” That’s right, you don’t. You have to trust God.

God laughs and says, “Welcome to My world, son.” You see, that is indeed the difficulty of allowing us puny humans to have free will—once God gave us that great and awesome responsibility, He could not take it back without violating His own Word. Love—and obedience—must be freely given, not commanded. God has set up the system, and it still works *if we work it*. In Matthew 9

:38, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Jesus told His disciples to “pray ... to send out laborers.” It is *God’s* harvest—

but *we* are responsible for bringing it in. We are the only ones who have legal right to act on Satan’s ground, on his property. We can invite in whomever we want, and in our case, that would be God. Once we invite Him in, the devil can’t do anything—free will, remember? It works both ways. That is where intercession comes in. We need to be praying for one another. If you know a specific need—Susie needs a job, or Charles is going in for surgery— then you can intercede for that person specifically over that issue. However, most times we do not know all the circumstances of other people, and as a result, we might not be helping them that much. For example, Susie may think she needs a job, but her real problem is that even though her husband makes plenty of money,

she spends twice that amount. Maybe her real issue is overspending and an undisciplined financial life, not insufficient income. Maybe Charles appears to need pancreas surgery—but his real problem is a tumor that neither he nor you, or even the doctors, know about yet. That is why the truest form of prayer—the highest level— is mentioned in Romans 8:26. This is the purest form of intercessory prayer: 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. When a burden of intercession is placed on you (I use the term *burden* not as something negative but only an awareness), you need to pray right then. The Holy Spirit has plans for you to be a conduit to help or bless someone else.

**The Spirit and the believer working together**

Yet the verse says you don't know what you are praying for, correct? This is where the rubber meets the road and where we end up with a lot of resistance. No, in the natural, you do not know what you are praying for, unless by the word of knowledge the Holy Spirit has made you aware that Susie is spending too much or that Charles has a tumor. This is the purpose of praying in tongues. Intercessory prayer can only work if it is in line with God's plans and His law. In "normal" prayer—when you pray in English—your thoughts, prejudices, and fears can intervene and mess things up. Have you ever started to pray for someone, then suddenly had an unkind thought about, perhaps, how that person treated you once? Likewise, in "normal" prayer in English, you can be easily distracted because you are organizing the prayer in your mind. How many times have you started to pray and the phone would ring? Or the dog needs to go out? Or any number of other things take you off stride? Moreover, even if we are not diverted, we have trouble praying a *pure* prayer that is not infested with our own hangups. You want Tammy to have that job, but you know if she gets it that she will be your boss, and that might be uncomfortable. The Holy Spirit will give our own spirit the information to pray about, and we will pray pure and unadulterated prayer in the Spirit, that is, in other tongues. We do not have to know what we are praying about! One of the devices the devil uses to prevent people from praying in the Spirit is this: "You don't know what you're saying." That's right, you don't. You have to trust God. What are you really concerned about—that you intercede for someone or that you control what you are saying? Sometimes that is the real issue—control. You will note that the verse in Romans says: "But the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." As that is translated into English, it does not seem to make sense. After all, how can you have a "groaning" if it cannot be "uttered?" A more accurate translation would be: "But the

Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered *in articulate speech.*” Again, you won’t know what you are praying about, but that is fine.

You may be praying for someone on the other side of the world, even someone you don’t even know, but the Spirit knows that person needs intercession. There will be no need for you to pat yourself on the back or give yourself credit for praying for that

person. In the past, I’ve compared this to *transmitting* on a different radio band. When you tune in a radio on AM, you cannot hear music or talk radio that is currently being broadcast on FM radio—but it’s there all the same. Likewise, when you set your radio to FM, you cannot hear AM wavelengths. Prayer in the Holy Spirit is

the same thing: your prayers are *broadcast* to God in a language you can’t decipher, but the good news is that the devil can’t figure out what you are praying, either. As a result, he can’t interfere, divert you, or infect a prayer with racism, personal animosity, or any other

impurity. At the end of *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce finally realizes he loves Grace so much that he would willingly lose her if she could only be happy. God asks Bruce if he wants her back, and he replies, “No. I want her to be happy, no matter what that means. I want her to find someone who will treat her with all the love she deserved from me. I want her to meet someone who will see her always as I do now, through Your eyes.” God smiles and say, “Now *that’s* a prayer.” How often, though, can we, with a completely pure heart, pray such things, especially if our will for a person or a situation isn’t what God has in mind? If your son or daughter wants to marry a person of a different race or income level, can you pray, “Lord, I want my son or daughter to be happy and to love that person just as You love him or her”? Often we can’t even pray that about a person our son or daughter brings home of the *same* rac

e or income level. This is precisely why God gave us the intercessory prayer of the Holy Spirit. Finally, intercessory prayer (regardless of whether you pray in your native tongue or in the Spirit) can only work if it is in line with God's plans and His law.

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Holy Spirit guarantees that for us, running a *scan*, if you will, on God's plan for a person or a situation. It is a can't-lose proposition.