



## ***“Divine Dialogue” Part Three***



### **I. PERSPECTIVE ON PRAYER -- What is prayer?**

### **II. PURPOSE OF PRAYER – Why Pray?**

- A. PRAYER FACILITATES INTIMACY WITH GOD**
- B. PRAYER FOSTERS HUMBLE DEPENDENCE**
- C. PRAYER FURTHERS GOD'S WORK**
- D. PRAYER FORTIFIES THE SOUL AGAINST TEMPTATION**
- E. PRAYER FACILITATES PEACE IN THE HEART AND MIND**

### **III. PREREQUISITES FOR PRAYER – Who can pray?**

Acquiring an audience with the President of the United States would require several steps.

1. We would need an invitation.
2. We would need access – and appointment
3. We would need standing.
4. We would need some sort of connection or relationship - Kinship

Given the vast separation between an absolutely holy God and an absolutely sinful man, it is unimaginable any meaningful relationship could be established. What gives us the audacity to approach such an awesome God? What makes us think we can dialogue with God and survive? The Old Testament paints a frightening picture of relationship with God. The writer of Hebrews summarizes the sentiment of the Israelites.

*For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." Hebrews 12:18-21*

Smoke, fear, trembling, fire, earthquakes, ground opening up, lightening, struck with leprosy, death, distance, barriers, blazing light, flaming swords. The people feared the prospect of talking with God face to face. The law required elaborate rituals of purity and sacrifice to approach God. The thick veil in the temple that separated the holy place from the holy of holies in the time of Jesus graphically symbolized the unapproachability of God. The general feeling concerning relationship with God was fear and distance. Only a privileged few enjoyed close relationship with God i.e. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, the prophets, David.

Jesus changed all that. He demonstrated a side of God not readily understood; the love, mercy and grace of God who desires intimate relationship with His creatures. That change is what the Gospel is all about. I am here to tell that we have more than a friend in Jesus that assures us of God's ear. Meaningful dialogue with God comes through Christ's work, our walk and the Father's will. This message addresses the factors related to the WORK of Christ in securing meaningful dialogue with God. Next week we will address the prayer factors related to the WALK of the Christian.

#### **A. Factors related to the WORK and PERSON OF CHRIST**

Jesus fulfilled four important requirements for dialogue with God. I.A.S K.

##### **1. Invitation – by God's initiative**

The first thing necessary for an audience with the president would be a special invitation. No one gets into the Oval Office without a personal invitation. The Bible records plenty of invitations to come to God. God encourages us to continually come.

*All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mat 11:27-28*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10*

God wants intimate connection with His creatures on HIS terms.

## **2. Access – through the blood of Christ**

We need an invitation but we also need access to the throne room. Few people enjoy close proximity to the president. God's holiness bars access to those without proper clearance. Who are we to address the Almighty? What makes us think a sinful rebellious creature has any right to approach a holy and righteous God? We need validation of our identity. Without a fundamental internal change, we have no chance to approach God. In fact, attempting contact without the proper procedure and verification would be hazardous to our health.

Hebrews reminds us that our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:29) All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All of us have criminal records. It is the sacrifice of Jesus that addresses this critical issue. He cleans our record as if none of it ever took place.

Such unhindered access was graphically illustrated early.

*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. Mat 27:50-51*

*But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13*

*And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our **access** in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:17-18*

Through Jesus we not only have access but bold access; confident access.

*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. Ephesians 3:11-12*

*Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22*

Until Jesus, we could not enter God's presence. His death on the cross gives us confident access to God's throne. Don't take the privilege of prayer for granted. It came at great cost.

## **Implications?**

Stop letting the enemy dredge up ancient history to discourage you from approaching God. Stop letting your guilt discourage you from connecting to the God of abundant mercy and amazing grace.

## **3. Standing – through the righteousness of Christ**

It is one thing to gain access to God's presence; it is another to have standing. It is not enough to have our criminal record cleared. We need sufficient credentials/standing. We need a record of positive righteousness.

None of us could do enough good works to merit standing before God who is pure righteousness. There is only one place to acquire that kind of righteousness. Christ gives us His unquestionable and impeccable righteousness. His perfect record of righteous acts and character has been inscribed in our journal. Instead of a “rap sheet” we have a “righteousness sheet”.

*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21*

*Now not for his sake (Abraham) only was it written that it (righteousness) was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it (righteousness) will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. Romans 4:23-25*

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2*

### **Implications**

You don’t have to get cleaned up to talk to God. You don’t have to be perfect. You don’t have to earn an audience. You have standing with God because of Jesus who presents us before the Father holy and blameless. He gives us His pure robes of righteousness in place of our filthy rags so that we can enter His presence without condemnation, shame or guilt.

*And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. Colossians 1:21-22*

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 1:24-25*

Through Jesus we have **STANDING**.

### **4. Kinship – through the name of Christ**

Now we have access and standing to approach the throne. We also need personal connection. We need connection if we are to enjoy the benefits of our dialogue. Generally, relatives receive preferential treatment. Donald Trump’s kids don’t need to get special permission to talk to their dad. They automatically have his ear due to their relationship. It is not what you know but who you know.

It is the power of the name of Jesus God’s son that provides automatic connection. He authorizes us to use His credit card. We come in His name.

*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Col 3:17*

We have connection to the Father through Christ. Because of Jesus we have at least four levels of connection with the Father.

#### **a) Legal Connection – High priest, lawyer, intercessor**

Jesus is our mediator, high priest, lawyer and intercessor.

*...since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith... Heb 10:19*

*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6*

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 1 John 2:1*

*Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:24-25*

### **Implications?**

Jesus fulfills all the rules established for connection with God. He is there to address whatever issues arise  
Talk to Him!

#### **b) Family Connection – joint heir, brother, friend**

*The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ... Rom 8:16-17*

*In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. John 16:26-27*

### **Implications?**

God grants the same access and standing and relationship that Christ enjoys with the Father. Whoever has connection with Jesus has connection with the Father. God establishes union and oneness with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit.

*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are IN Me, and I IN You, that they also may be IN Us... John 17:20-21*

This goes beyond a God WITH us to a God IN us and we IN Him.

#### **c) Marital Connection – bride of Christ**

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. Ephesians 5:25-27*

The Son's bride has equal standing with the Father. He Himself cleanses and purifies His bride for Himself and for relationship with the rest of the family.

#### **d) Spiritual Connection – Holy Spirit**

*Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Gal 4:6-7*

It is the Holy Spirit that encourages us to connect with the Father. He not only stirs our hearts to dialogue with the Father but He also helps us talk about the right things and translates for us when we don't.

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes** for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-27*

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Spirit**, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. Jude 1:20-21*

Jesus' WORK on the cross illuminates any hesitation or barrier to dialogue with the Father.

On the basis of the work of Jesus Christ - “**I ASK**”

**We have an Invitation through His connection with God.**

**We have Access through His blood (death on the cross).**

**We have Standing through His righteousness (resurrection.)**

**We have Kinship through His name (ascension)**

There is **NO** reason for us not to talk to God. Our sin cannot block access. Our sin does not affect standing. Our sin does not break family ties – we are His children who come in the name of His Beloved Son.

His door is always open to us.

His arms are always open to us.

His heart is always inclined toward us.

We never get a busy signal.

This is ALL freely gained by the **WORK** of Christ. There is nothing more that needs to be done on God’s side to facilitate meaningful dialogue with Him. There are some things on **our** part that can strain our communication with God. There are some things on our part that interfere with the lines of communication. There are some factors related to us that may affect answers to our requests.

Understand your confident access to the throne of Grace.

Thank Him always.

Talk to Him often.

Next week we will explore some of the factors that either boost or block the effectiveness of our prayers.

*The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16*