



Men's Discipleship Class – Week 6  
October 25, 2018

**Verses:**

*Ephesians 6:17-1*

*1 John 5:13 – 15*

*Matthew 16:17-19*

*James 5:16 – 18*

*1 Kings 18:36 – 39, 42 – 46*

*Romans 8:26 – 28*

We are going to start today. Whenever you enter into prayer with the father there are basically what I call PACTS. There is just **personal** time between you and the father. There is a time when you praise him called **adoration**. There is a **confession** time when you actually tell him you agree with the Holy Spirit on what is in your life and should not be. 'T' is **thanksgiving**. 'S' is **supplication** which is a fancy word for praying for something or for someone. We are going to talk about intercession today only. This is going to be the easiest to understand scripture that we walk through. It will be the single most difficult aspect you will ever try to implement in your life. Most of you will not implement it. Most of you will fail at this. I have taught it for a number of years. No one ever argues with what we walk through in the scripture, but it is incredibly difficult to pray. When I grew up I was always taught that if you pray for something you really got one of four answers. You got a 'yes' from God. You got a 'no' from God. You got a 'wait/maybe' from God, or you got a 'you are kidding, right' from God. You got one of those four things.

The Bible is the exact opposite. Walk with me through this. Look at Ephesians 6:17-19. Remember last week we talked about the fact that you have this Peter principle where God is going to break you so that you will be dependent on the Holy Spirit in control of your life. Here is what it says in Ephesians 6:17-19. He talks about the armor of God, and then he makes this statement:

*17Take the Helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

*18Praying at all times in the Spirit, and with all prayer and supplication.*

So one of the things he says after he gives me the armor is that he wants us against the enemy. You are going to be at all times in the spirit. So, if I do not pray in the spirit, I am not going to be effective in that prayer life.

Now. I want to show you what that means. Go to 1 John 5. I want you to listen carefully as we walk through this. Listen to exactly what this says. Again, listen carefully.

13I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know you have eternal life.

Now here is the first thing then. The first prerequisite for intercessory pray is that I have got to be a believer. I have to be a Christian. If you are not a Christian, you do not have any power of prayer.

14This is the confidence, which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

So, I have got to verbalize a request. You can do it in your head. You can do it aloud. I do not care how you do it. There has got to be a verbalization of requests. You have to utter something before the father.

...if we ask anything according to His will...

So, I do not get to pray mine, right? Right?

He hears us.

Now, what is the flip side of that? If I pray my will, does he hear me? No. He hears it. When the Bible says 'He hears it.', it does not mean audible 'He hears it.' It means he responds to it. So, he does not respond to me if I pray my will. If we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the request we have asked of him. He just told you to ask based on his will. If you do that, he hears you. The answer is always 'yes'. That is exactly what he just said. That is the opposite of Southern Baptist teaching. All my life I have heard that if you ask God and stay on it he will maybe answer you with a 'yes' or 'no'. That is not what 1 John 5 says. I utter something. His will not mine. He hears it. The answer is always 'yes'. This is the opposite of what we have been taught all our life.

Let me show you again. Go to Matthew 16:17-19. This is when Jesus takes his disciples off. They are in Caesarea Philippi at the mouth of the Jordan River. They are up in Galilee. He has them there. Peter has confessed that he is the Christ of the Son of the Living God. I want you to listen to what Jesus says to him.

17And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Sim Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18I tell you you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

Now listen. Anybody have New American Standard in here? Somebody did last time. Now listen to English Standard.

19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

What does the New American Standard say?

17And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in

heaven.” 20Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

Do you hear the difference? The footnotes in the English Standard says,

or shall have been bound or shall have been loosed.

It is a difficult translation. The Greek is the New American Standard. It does not say ‘what you bind would be bound’. The Greek says ‘what you bind will have been bound’. In other words, I get to bind and loose on this planet, but I do it on what he has based on what he has already decided is to be bound and is to be loosed. It is his decision not mine. Now, the charismatics (I am not anti-charismatic. Do not go out of here and say that.) will take this and say ‘I am going to go out of here and bind this and loose this and bind that and loose that’ based on what they think should be bound and should be loosed. The Bible indicates according to Jesus ‘no, you bind what my father has already decided’. That goes back to the previous statement where he said my father has spoken to you. It is my father’s voice you have listened to, and there is the basis. I know what God wants. This is actually identical except in a different way to 1 John 5.

Go to the book of James 5. Go to James 5:16-18. Half-brother of Jesus. Pastor in Jerusalem. James 5. Now.

16Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

Prayer is obviously a verbal utterance of a righteous person. It is a person who has been saved.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. And, then he gives you an illustration in the Old Testament. 17Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,

This means he was not any different than us.

and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. 18Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain and the earth bore its fruit.

James takes an Old Testament story and says that you have the power to control the weather. That is what he says. James’ prayer controlled the weather. Now. If you go back to these passages, this seems to contradict these. Elijah says that he is going to pray for six months that it does not rain. I am going to pray for six months it does rain. Whoever is still praying for rain in this building, you need to get right with Jesus. You are not walking with the spirit.

If you go to the Old Testament. 1 Kings. You will notice 1 Kings 18:36 – 39, 42 – 46. Go to 1 Kings. Hang a hard left. 1 Kings 18. This is when he has all the prophets. He gives them a chance to pray to their god Baal. He will ask them to put two sacrifices up and two altars. You ask your god to burn yours. I will ask my God to burn mine. They put them up. Baal has not come through. I do love where he taunts them. In verse 27, they have had a couple of hours to really beg Baal to do something.

27At noon Elijah mocked them crying, “Cry aloud, he’s a god! Maybe he’s musing or maybe he’s relieving himself.”

You have go to love this guy, right? Hey, maybe your god is in the bathroom. Just keep going.

Obviously, he is using the toilet paper and cannot get out. You have got to love Elijah. The guy was obviously a precursor to Southern Baptist. So. Listen to this.

36At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. 37"Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again." 38Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."

So, he does not say that he thought this would be a great idea. He says I have done everything at your word and then that word continues. Look at verse 42.

42So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times.

Now why does he have him keep going? God has obviously told him. You keep praying until you see a cloud.

44It came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.'" 45In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

Now. So, you have Elijah. This is the example that James is using, but you have Elijah saying I have done what I have done at your word. I have heard you. This is what you told me to do. I have uttered the prayer. You have sent the fire down. Now I am continuing in what you told me to do. I have been praying that it will not rain and it has not. So, my prayer based on your will you heard, and you answered. My prayer controls weather because it is based completely on that concept. You have Elijah. Go the illustration that James is talking about and it is exactly like 1 John 5.

Look at Romans 8:26 – 28. We should have some grasp of the Trinity now after finishing Ephesians. You have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit God the Father authorized your salvation. God the Son accomplished it. God the Holy Spirit applies it. Here is one of the places where he applies it. There are going to be times in your life where you do not know how to pray, and you do not know what to do. Now, listen to what he says.

26Likewise, the Spirit helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27and 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. 28And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28 is only true because the Holy Spirit intercedes for you according to what? He intercedes according to God's will. God hears. God does something good. Everywhere you turn in the scripture, this premise is found. This premise is everywhere. That is the difficulty.

There is a good preacher friend of mine in this city. I will not tell you who it is. He texted several of us the other day. He has thyroid cancer. In having this, every pastor texted him back 'praying for your healing'. Here is my deal. They texted him back immediately. I do not know that you are capable of knowing that quickly. That is Facebook. You go on Facebook and tell people you have cancer. You will have forty-five or fifty people say they are praying for your healing and praying for God to heal you. That may not be what he wants for you. What you discover then is you are praying against what God wants for your life. The pastor at First Baptist Woodway in Waco developed cancer. He put a video to his church. He asked that they not pray for his healing. He said that he firmly believed God is calling him home. Do not ask God to heal me. Instead, pray for my family. Now, I am going to tell you. You have to utter what he wants. Then he will hear. Then he answers.

Sometimes it is dramatic. When I was in high school going into my first year of college, I had just been called to preach. We took our youth group from First Baptist Slidell to this place in Alabama. We were at a camp. Wednesday night came. It was a weird thing. The night before a guy named Bill Lee and I stayed up. Bill Lee has stated that he was not walking well with Christ. He needed to get it straight. We stayed up late talking about that all night. The next day, which was the last night, they had a time for those who felt like they were right with Jesus to come and stand. Bill and I were standing at the front. They offered this invitation. All these kids from my youth group of the forty-five or fifty we had taken walked the aisle. The curious thing all through this I had this huge burden to pray for my best friend David. I mean it was a massive burden. I could not get it off. I just begged God and prayed for him. When we finished, David had not walked the aisle. I went over to talk to Bill. He said before I could even say anything that he had a burden through the entire thing to pray for David. We walked out the back of the church, and David comes around the corner with a troubled look on his face. He looks at me and says that he does not know Jesus. We go back to our room, and he asks Christ into his heart. Now, we prayed what the Holy Spirit told us to pray, and God answered that. Had we not prayed, there would have been no response. You have to make the prayer. You have to base it on what he wants. That is the most difficult thing that you will do.

Sherry Maggard, our preschool minister, had a best friend in the church named Donna Frances. Donna got cancer. The first time she did Sherry felt like she should pray. She prayed for Donna to be healed. Sure enough, the cancer was dealt with and Donna went into remission. Then in less than five years, the cancer came back. Donna wound up dying. I did the funeral. Sherry spoke at it. I asked her afterwards if this first time she had prayed for Donna to be healed. She said absolutely. I asked about the second time. She said 'no'. I asked why not since Donna was her best friend. Sherry responded that she knew God was not going to heal her. I asked what she did pray. She said she prayed for her family. This is the genius of prayer. If you just always pray what you want and it is not what God wants, you are wasting your prayer time. The prayer is not going where it best go. Had she spent all that time praying for Donna, she would have wasted prayer. She though following the leading of the Holy Spirit prayed for the family so that when God took Donna home, which God is going to do because that is his choice, now her prayer has a chance to be effective.

When you come to the scripture, you do pray in the Spirit which means you pray two things. Right? What are the two ways that the Spirit speaks to us? What are they? Objective and subjective. We have got things in here. 1 Timothy 2. Paul says pray for those in authority that

you may lead a quiet life so the gospel can go out. I have this clear directive in 1 Timothy. We are going to look on Sunday morning at Paul saying now that I know who you are in Christ, I am praying for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in your life. I have a prayer there I can pray. When it comes to specificity of life, I have got to have his Spirit tell me what he wants to do in a particular situation. Then, when I pray what he wants. He hears. He answers.

God does respond to my prayers. Part of the reason the church has become powerless is because we have lived off this premise and this goofy belief that God says 'yes', 'no', 'wait', 'maybe'. No he does not. He always says yes if you pray what he tells you to pray. That is the only option.

Now. This is an easy thing to see from the scriptures. It is incredibly difficult. There are two reasons. I generally want what I want. To really sit back and listen is hard to do. Generally, what we do if we are honest, we go into our prayer time when we do and have our list instead of waiting for him to give us his list. Our list is quicker and easier. It does not really require any spiritual effort. I just go in and tell him what I want. I thank him and then I am gone. Sometimes I hit it right, so I get a 'yes'. Sometimes I hit it wrong, and I get a 'no'. It is imperative that I come to a place where I say God, I will not pray what I want. I want your list for me which is why we are going to learn how to hear God's voice over the next couple of weeks. We are going to see what the scripture says about that.

One of the things it says in Ecclesiastes is to guard your steps when you go near to the house of God. You come to listen rather than a lot of speak. I need to hear his list not mine. The difficulty is that I have to pray what he wants. If you love your wife and she turns up with cancer, which is the scariest word in the English language, it is a little hard to say that you want God's decision on how to pray for this. In fact, it is critical to do it right. If he decides to heal her and uses your prayer to do that, it is great. If he does decide to take her home and your prayer has been to beg to please keep her, you have missed the chance to pray for your children and even yourself to get through it. It is imperative that you pray his will. Again, I think this is the easiest thing to understand in scripture, but it is going to be the hardest to implement in your life. Most people wind up quitting and going back to what I call the Facebook approach. I am just going to pray what I want because it is easier. I do not want to wait. It is difficult.

John Maurer and I went to the hospital yesterday to visit a guy who has stage four cancer. Now. We walked in the room. I do not know how to pray, so I pray before I leave the house. I pray the only thing I know to pray when I do not know how to pray which is to pray that I trust him to God's heart, his care, his direction, and leave him with you. The other thing I think you need to understand is that someone is going to ask if they can just pray 'God, let your will be done'. I think this negates that. He says that he has done all of these things at your word. He prayed specificity. He prayed the pulling down of fire. He prayed for the return of rain. Prior to that he prayed to stop the rain. I think you do have to pray with specificity. I do think if we are going to pray in the Holy Spirit then he will lead us either objectively or spiritually in our prayer life so that our prayer life then begins to take on power as we utter something that he wants, he hears, and he responds.