

The **BATTLE PLAN for PRAYER**

FROM BASIC TRAINING TO TARGETED STRATEGIES

PART IV: STRATEGIES

7

The WAYS of God's Spirit

The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

(1 Corinthians 2:10)

Prayer is an admission that we are not in control, and yet at the same time completely and confidently under *God's* control (Ps. 103:19). God knows we often can forget to pray, and not know what to pray or how we should be praying (Rom. 8:26). We can ask for what we know, but still not address the heart of an issue or cover even half of what should be requested. And yet God urges us to keep entering into prayer anyway . . . knowing He can lead us through the One He has deposited into our hearts.

The Holy Spirit is the engine of the Christian life, guiding and empowering us to do what we cannot do on our own. He is the holy, rushing wind of God (John 3:8), breathing life through every part of our prayer lives.

Thanks to His indwelling presence and loving encouragement, our utter helplessness is stabilized by His faithful empowerment and utter provision. Our finite knowledge is surrounded by His infinite wisdom. We offer Him our best work of prayer but trust His Spirit to launch it into far greater works (John 14:12-17).

As you've seen in the last few chapters, God has given His people rich resources to help us strategically pray with power and precision. Having been granted access to His Word, His will, His wisdom, and the wonder of His names, we have an arsenal of weapons to hone our praying to a razor's edge and launch it with pinpoint accuracy.

But still we are inadequate without God's Spirit guiding us. He can guide us to pray for one verse rather than another. To call upon God as *Jehovah Jireh* for provision rather than merely God. To aim at the heart rather than the head of a person in authority. To deal with a sin we've forgotten to confess.

Paul said, "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18). This is powerful praying. In the Spirit. At all times. For all the saints.

Every believer in Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit within them (Eph. 1:13-14). But we must be filled with, submit to, and walk in the Spirit, as opposed to following our sinful flesh. The command to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) is not just for Christians in charismatic leaning congregations. It is an imperative for every follower of Jesus Christ to obey. The Greek tense used in Ephesians 5:18 is a command to *keep* being filled by God's Spirit. It's not a one-time experience but a moment by moment, daily way of living and submitting and walking in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-25)

Every morning we should be asking God to fill us with His Spirit as we worship Him and surrender all that we are and have to His loving lordship for the day. Anytime we sin, become bitter, or get in the flesh, we should quickly repent, humble ourselves, and resubmit ourselves to the Lord and to the leading of His Spirit.

When we are abiding in Christ, staying clean and close, and walking in surrendered obedience to Him, we will be much more in tune to the voice of God's Spirit within us. He will be giving us the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), convicting of sin (John 16:8), producing the fruit of the Spirit in our hearts (Gal. 5:22), leading our decisions (Gal. 5:16-18), and empowering us to be witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

"Don't get drunk with wine," Paul said, "which leads to reckless actions." But be similarly "filled by the Spirit" so that you're controlled by Him instead. Overflowing with His joy and hope. Enjoying His peace and contentment. "Singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for everything . . . in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:18-20 HCSB).

By understanding the Holy Spirit and how He operates, we take our prayers into the ever-flowing stream of God's activity.

He reveals God and His Word to us. Jesus, describing how the Holy Spirit would remain with His disciples after He'd left the earth, identified Him as the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17)-the "Helper" who "proceeds from the Father" and testifies about the nature of Christ (John 15:26)-the Guide who "will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you

what is to come" (John 16:13). Even those things which "eye has not seen and ear has not heard," the Spirit is able to reveal to us-what we need to know, *when* we need to know it-"not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:9-13). Through the avenue of humble, believing prayer, He illumines God's Word and makes God's true nature come alive to us, convincing us of spiritual realities-the hideousness of sin, the glories of righteousness, the realities of judgment (John 16:8-11). Reminding us who we are in Christ (Eph. 1:15-19). Comforting us in His love and care. *He prays for us*. The "Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). What we *can't pray*, His Spirit can. And therefore we are never without hope or help. It is refreshing to know that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are three in One. They each know the heart of the other and are in constant communication. While Jesus stands at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us (Heb. 7:24-25), the Holy Spirit within us is also interceding to the Father on our behalf. "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" (Rom. 8:27). No one can pray for us better than Jesus and the Holy Spirit. What a blessed privilege to have such perfect prayer partners lovingly interceding for us.

He guides our praying. The Holy Spirit inwardly reminds and leads believers to cry out to our Father in prayer. "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15). You hear people say sometimes how He "speaks" to them. But this speaking is not so much an audible hearing but an internal knowing-a good and timely thought accompanied by a holy burden and a desire to do something specific for the glory of God. It's the Spirit saying to you, "This is the way, walk in it" (Isa. 30:21).

Some people question whether He communicates so personally to us, but the testimony of Scripture seems to indicate otherwise. He alerted Ananias to pray for Saul (Acts 9:10-19), Philip to share with the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:29-30), and us if we will learn to obey Him (Rom. 8:14-16). Sometimes He may bring a person to mind from seemingly out of nowhere, encouraging you to pray for them or reach out to them in love according to their need and His will. Stay open to this kind of prompting, but be aware that the

Spirit will never act in contradiction to the Word of God but will always lead you to obey and live out the Word in your personal, real-world circumstances.

Because of the boundless reach, wisdom, and power of the Holy Spirit, He is able to create kingdom connections between you and others in what seem to be the most normal, coincidental happenings of life. So never think of yourself as being hemmed in at the spiritual shoreline, ankle-deep in figuring out His will and His ways on your own. Our prayers are not bound by our limitations because the Spirit has no limits, and He is living within us.

PRAYER: Lord , thank You for sending Your Spirit to lead me and guide me and fill me with Your wisdom and insight. Just as You've sent Him here to testify to Christ through Your people on the earth, I pray that my heart will desire Him for that very reason-that my life will bear living witness to Jesus. Fill me with Your Spirit. Teach me to walk in Your Spirit and pray in the Spirit. Everywhere I go. With everyone I encounter. In every place be glorified in me.

HOMEWORK:

1. PRAYER IS AN _____
☞ that you are _____ in the control,
☝ yet at the same time completely and confidently under whose control? _____
2. **Y N NS:** Are you admitting often forget to pray?
3. **Y N NS:** Do you know what to pray or how you should be praying?
4. God urges you to keep entering into your prayer anyway... knowing God can lead you through the One God has deposited in your heart. Who is the One God deposited in your life?
5. **Y N NS:** Is the Holy Spirit the ENGINE of your Christian life?
6. The Holy Spirit _____ and _____ you to do what you cannot do on your own. He is the _____, _____ of God, _____ through every part of your prayer lives.

7. You should _____ to the Holy Spirit--His dwelling presence and loving encouragement, your utter (total) helplessness is stabilized by His _____ empowerment and utter provision.

8. **T F:** Your infinite knowledge is surrounded by His finite wisdom.

9. **T F:** You still adequate without God's Spirit guiding you.

10. Two important things:

☞ To _____ at the heart rather than the head of a person in authority.

☞ To _____ with a sin you've forgotten to confess.

"With all prayer and petition pray at ALL TIMES in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for ALL THE SAINT". (Eph. 6:18)

"Pray passionately in the Spirit, as you constantly intercede with every form of prayer at all times. Pray the blessings of God upon all His believers." (Eph. 6:18 TPT)

11. **Y N NS:** Are you believer in Jesus Christ?

12. **Y N NS:** Do you have the Holy Spirit within you?

✓ You must be _____ with the Holy Spirit,

✓ You must _____ to the Holy Spirit,

✓ You must _____ in the (Holy) Spirit,

○ as opposed to following your what?

13. The command to " _____ "
(Ephesians 5:18)

☞ It is an imperative [absolute necessary or required; unavoidable] for every follower of Jesus Christ to _____.

☞ Its commands you to _____ being filled by God's Spirit.

○ It's not one time experience but a moment by moment,

○ _____ way of living,

- _____ submitting to the Spirit, and
- _____ walking in the Spirit.

14. Every morning you should be asking God to fill you with His Spirit

- ☞ as you _____ Him and _____ all that you are and have to His loving lordship for the day.
- ☞ Anytime you sin, you become bitter, or get in the flesh, you should _____ repent, humble yourself, and resubmit yourself to the Lord and to the leading of His Spirit.
- ☞ When you are abiding in Christ, you are staying clean and close and walking in surrendered obedience to Him, you will much more in _____ to the voice of God's Spirit within you.
 - His Spirit will be giving you what?
 - His Spirit will be _____ of sin
 - His Spirit will be _____ His fruit [_____] in your heart
 - His Spirit will be _____ your decisions
 - His Spirit will be _____ you to be witness.

15. You being "filled by the Spirit" means you're controlled by who? _____

- ✓ You also being overflowing with His _____ and _____.
- ✓ You also being enjoying His _____ and _____.

BY UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HOW HE OPERATES, YOU TAKE YOUR PRAYERS INTO THE EVER-FLOWING STREAM OF GOD'S ACTIVITY.

16. The Holy Spirit reveals _____ and His _____ to you.

- ☞ Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as _____

and _____ who

- proceeds from the Father and
 - also _____ about the nature of Christ

☞ Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as the _____ who "will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come".

- Even those things which 'eye has not seen and ear has not heard', the Spirit is _____ to reveal to you—_____ you need to know, _____ you need to know it—"not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words".
- Through the avenue [a line of approach] of humble, believing prayer,
 - He _____ God's Word and
 - He makes God's true nature come _____ to you,
 - He _____ us of spiritual realities—
 - _____,
 - _____,
 - _____.

17. **T F:** Reminding you who are in Christ, He condemns you in His love and care.

18. **Y N NS:** The Holy Spirit pray for you?

19. In where Jesus, the High Priest, intercedes for you?

20. In where the Holy Spirit intercedes for you?

21. The Holy Spirit guides your what? _____

22. **T F:** The Holy Spirit outwardly reminds and leads believers to cry out to our Father in prayer.

23. By understanding the Holy Spirit and **HOW HE OPERATES,**

whether He communicates so _____ to you, but the testimony of Scripture seems to indicate [to point out] otherwise:

- ✘ The Holy Spirit alerted Ananias to pray for Saul.
- ✘ The Holy Spirit alerted Philip to share with the Ethiopian official.
- ✘ The Holy Spirit alerts you if you will learn to _____ Him.
- ✘ Sometimes the Holy Spirit will bring a _____ to [your] mind from seemingly out of nowhere, encouraging you to pray for them or reach out to them in love according to their need and His will.
 - You stay open to this kind of _____, but be aware the Spirit will _____ act in contradiction to the Word of God but will always lead you to _____ and _____ out the Word in your personal, real-world circumstances.

24. Because of the boundless reach, wisdom, and power of the Holy Spirit, He is able to create _____ connections between you and others in what seem to be the most normal, coincidental (by chance) happenings of life.

25. Your prayers are not bound by your limitations because the Spirit has _____ limits, and He is living within you.