

The disciples witnessed every miracle that Jesus worked
They heard every message that He ever preached
They witnessed every deliverance and observed every prayer

- Yet, they never asked Him to teach them to heal, prophecy, or do miracles
- They asked Him, *“Lord, teach us to pray”* (Luke 11:1)

Leonard Ravenhill said,

“No man is greater than his prayer life.”

- In this series, we will see that this statement is indeed true

“So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” (Luke 11:2, NKJV)

- We would think that if an all-knowing, all-seeing God wanted His will to come forth on the earth then it would happen
- But if that were true then Jesus would have never started His instruction on prayer in this manner
- God Needs Our Help!

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“God does nothing on the earth save in answer to believing prayer” – John Wesley

- If we believe this then we will be willing to lose a little sleep, turn off the TV, or skip a meal or two – and pray!

The answer to why you and I need to pray lies in the very creation of man

- Adam – “*man; human being.*”
- God made man and called him “Man”
- Adam represents all of us – Man or human-kind

What was God’s original intention in creating Adam?

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26–28, NKJV)

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;

*You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, And the fish of
the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.”*

(Psalm 8:3–8, NKJV)

- Have Dominion, Rule – *indicates that Adam and his descendants were to be God’s manager, steward, or governor*
- Adam was God’s mediator, go-between, or representative

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15, NKJV)

- Keep – to guard or protect
- The primary word translated as “*Watchman*” in Scripture
- What does it mean to actually mean to represent someone?
- Representation – “*to present again.*”
- To “*re-present*” someone
- Someone who represents the will of another

“to exhibit the image and counterpart of; to speak and act with authority on the part of; to be a substitute or agent for.”

- Ambassadors if you will

“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20, NKJV)

It is no small task to represent God

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

(Genesis 1:27, NKJV)

- Image – *“shadow, phantom, or illusion”*
- When the rest of creation saw Adam they thought they were seeing God, until they took a double take
- Adam was similar or *“comparable”* to God
- **Genesis 1:26** – *“likeness”* – to compare
- God even gave us the ability to create living spirits
- *“Glory”* – *“Heavy or weighty”* – **Psalm 8:5**
- Adam carried a lot of weight or clout

When creation saw Adam they were supposed to see God – and they did until Adam fell

- God was no longer recognized in fallen human-kind
- We must be changed back into God’s image – In Christ!

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

(2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV)

- If the earth remained a paradise it would be because of human-kind
- If things became messed up, it was because of human-kind

The truth is that human-kind was in charge of God's creation

- Why would God do it this way?
- Why take the risk?
- I believe it is because God wanted a family
- Sons and daughters who could personally relate to Him
- He put His very life and Spirit into human-kind and placed them in a beautiful home that had everything they needed
- He then sat down and said, *"it is good."*

So complete was Adam's authority that not only God but he had the authority to give it away to another

"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." (Luke 4:6–7, NKJV)

- Jesus knew that Satan's statement was true
- He even referred to Satan as *"the ruler of this world"*
– **John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11**

God's decision to do things on earth through humans was so complete that it cost Him the incarnation to regain what Adam had given away

- This is the reason for the necessity of prayer
- Humans were and always will be God's link to authority and activity on the earth
- Even though God is sovereign and all-powerful He limited Himself concerning the affairs of the earth

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”

(James 5:17–18, NKJV)

- Here we see that God requires the prayers of a man to accomplish His will on the earth
- Elijah’s prayers not only brought a drought but also released rain three and a half years later
- God has asked us to pray that His Kingdom come
– **Matthew 6:10**
- He has asked us to pray for daily bread, and yet knows our needs before we ask – **Matthew 6:11**
- He tells us to ask for laborers into the harvest
– **Matthew 9:38**

Paul asked,

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,”

(2 Thessalonians 3:1, NKJV)

- Wouldn’t God even want this more than Paul?
- Wasn’t He already planning on doing this?

If we are supposed to ask for something that is already God’s will to do then our asking must be important!

“And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.”

(1 Kings 18:1, NKJV)

After several events in this chapter, Elijah prays seven times, and finally, the rain comes

- Who’s idea was it to send rain?
- Whose will?
- Whose initiation?
- God’s not Elijah's

“So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees,” (1 Kings 18:42, NKJV)

- Here we see Elijah in a birthing position
- Symbolizing the concept of traveling prayer

Why would it take human prayers to “*birth*” the rain?

- Why did he have to pray seven times?
- Seven is the biblical number of completion
- We must pray until we see the task completed
- Keep asking, and asking, and asking
 - **Luke 18:1-8** (*The widow and the unjust judge*)

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (James 5:16, NKJV)

Our Asking and God's Giving are Inseparable

“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.”
(Daniel 9:3, NKJV)

- In 606 BC Israel had been taken captive by another nation because of its sin

Years later, while reading the prophet Jeremiah, Daniel discovered that it was time for Israel's captivity to end

Jeremiah had not only prophesied the captivity but the duration as well – 70 years

- Most of us passively wait for the promises of revival, deliverance, healing, restoration, etc
- Daniel knew better
- He turned his face toward God with prayer and fasting

“Then he (Gabriel) said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.” (Daniel 10:12, NKJV)

- It took 21 days for Gabriel to penetrate the warfare in heaven from the time Daniel began to pray
- How many promises of God have gone unfulfilled because He can't find the human involvement that He needs?

Daniel evidently realized that intercession had a part to play in bringing the prophecy to pass

“When it was time for its fulfillment He did not fulfill it arbitrarily outside of His program of prayer. He sought for a man upon whose heart He could lay a burden of intercession. . . . As always, God made the decision in heaven. A man was called upon to enforce that decision on earth through intercession and faith.” – Paul E. Bilheimer

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 22:30–31, NKJV)

- Because of God’s integrity and holiness, He cannot simply excuse sin
- It must be judged
- He is also love
- His love always desires to redeem, restore, and show mercy
- He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked
– Ezekiel 33:11
- His justice demands judgment, His love wants forgiveness

Because God could not find a Man to ask Him to spare these people He had to destroy them

We may not like the weight of the responsibility that God has chosen to limit Himself to you and I

In light of these passages and others, as well as the condition of the world, there is no other conclusion

“We must understand that our sovereign God has for His own reasons so designed this world that much of what is truly His will He makes contingent on the attitudes and actions of human beings. He allows humans to make decisions that can influence history. . . . Human inaction does not nullify the atonement, but human inaction can make the atonement ineffective for lost people.” – C. Peter Wagner

- Either God wants the earth in the condition it is in, or He doesn't
- If He doesn't, which I believe true we must assume one of two things
- Either He is powerless to do anything about it
- Or He is waiting on something from us to bring about change
- This may intimidate us, or cause us to feel condemned because of our lack of prayer
- Or we can see this responsibility as a privilege

“Prayer is essentially a partnership of the redeemed child of God working hand in hand with God toward the realization of His redemptive purposes on earth.” – Pastor Jack Hayford