

The Ministry of Intercessory Prayer Part 2

For the JOY Class

October 23, 2019

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Colossians 4:12 (ESV)

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always **struggling*** on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

* Laboring earnestly, wrestling, striving, laboring fervently

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.



Today: How to Wrestle in Intercessory Prayer

For the Lost

For the Sick

For Christians in sin

For Faithful Christians

For Rulers

For Enemies

Praying for the Lost

- Some Calvinists object, citing predestination.
- Others emphasize that intercessory prayer must respect free will.
- To what extent can we or should we pray for the lost?

Praying God's Will for the Lost (1 of 4)

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**



Praying God's Will for the Lost (2 of 4)

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (ESV)

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.



Praying God's Will for the Lost (3 of 4)

John 3:16-17 (ESV)

- 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.



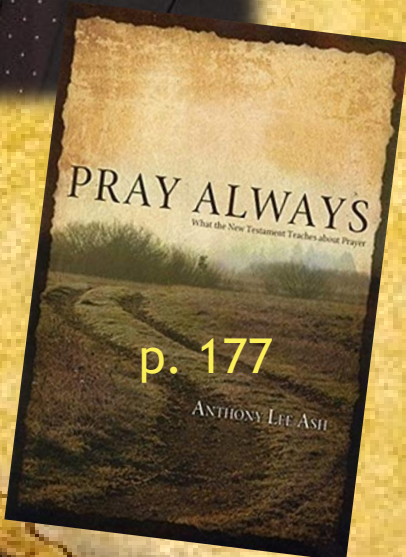
Praying God's Will for the Lost (4 of 4)

Ezekiel 18:23 (NIV)

Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?
declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not
pleased when they turn from their ways and live?



Anthony Lee Ash



“Christians, if they are like their Lord, earnestly desire all people to be saved.”

Praying for the Lost: Stephen

Acts 7:59-8:1 (ESV)

- ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”
- ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
- ¹ And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.



How to Pray for the Lost

Some Practical Ideas...

Being Lost = Spiritual Death

1

Ephesians 2:1 (NIV)
...you were dead in your transgressions and sins...

2

Compare the lost person's spiritual death to Lazarus' physical death.



3

John 11

- Lazarus' situation seems hopeless
- Jesus arrives "late"
- Jesus pours compassion on Mary & Martha
- Jesus weeps and shows deep emotion
- Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb by name.
- "Unbind him, set him free!"

Intercession for the Spiritually Dead

Pray that God will...

- Have compassion on you and others who grieve this spiritual death.
- Have compassion on this spiritually dead person who is on a path to destruction he/she will regret.
- Go to the place where this person is entombed:
 - Show up in the middle of their sin
 - Interrupt their day, disrupt their misguided plans
 - Ambush them in their thoughts and ideas
 - Put people, situations, and messages in their path to get their attention, prick their heart.
- Remove what binds this person.
- Open their eyes, mind, heart to the convicting power of the Word.



Intercession for the Spiritually Dead



Never stop praying!

As long as this person is breathing, there is still hope.

We know from experience: Answers to these prayers sometimes take many years!

Sometimes they are answered long after the intercessor is (physically) dead!

Commit Like Isaiah...

Isaiah 6:8 (ESV)

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, **“Here I am! Send me.”**



Examples of what to pray for...

- An open door of opportunity
 - **Colossians 4:3 (ESV)** - “...pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word...”
- Ability to communicate effectively
 - **Acts 4:29 (ESV)** - “And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness”
- God to cultivate a receptive, understanding heart
 - **Matthew 13:23 (ESV)** - As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit...”

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NOTE: These same verses apply to our intercessory prayers for missionaries, preachers, teachers, fellow Christians...

Praying for the Sick

James 5:14 (ESV)

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.



Rest Assured of Jesus' Compassion!

- 23 of his 36 miracles were healings.
- 3 more involved raising the dead.
- 1 involved restoring a severed ear.

For Christians caught up in sin

- Acts 8:24 - [Simon the Sorcerer] - And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”
- An example from Moses in the OT...

Exodus 32:11-13

- ¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?
- ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.
- ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ”

Praying for other Christians (1 or many)

Colossians 1:9-12 (ESV)

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;

¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Praying for Other Christians (continued)

Ephesians 3:14-19 (ESV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

15 ...,

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1. Inner strength from the Spirit
2. Jesus dwelling in their heart
3. Grounded in Love
4. Comprehend the LOVE of God
5. Filled with the fullness of God

Praying for Rulers

- Secular Rulers
 - Praying for their salvation is fair game.
 - Praying for their actions to allow Christians to live in peace is also warranted (1 Tim 2:2)
- Elders
 - No scriptural authority for individual confrontation or attacking.
 - Here we have authority for praying for them, individually and collectively that God give them wisdom and hearts like Jesus'.

Praying for Enemies

Pray for...

- Their eyes to be opened
- Their salvation
- Their wellbeing
- God to be glorified through their transformation.
- God's mercy on them (like Jesus did).
- Their evil to be restrained—for the sake of the innocent.
- Deliverance from their evil deeds.

- Matt 5:44 “...pray for those who persecute you,”

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