

04 – THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION 01

1 Timothy 2:1-2 – “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, **intercessions**, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ...”

General Observations

A.) What Is an Intercessor?

- ✓ An intercessor is “one who takes the place of another”. One who “stands in the gap”, or “pleads the case” of another. One study Bible defines intercession as, “Holy, believing, persevering prayer whereby someone **pleads with God on the behalf of another** who desperately needs God’s intervention”.

B.) Intercession is Scriptural

- ✓ When you intercede, you’re in good company. Jesus Intercedes. “Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come o God through him, since **he always lives to intercede for them**.” (Heb. 7:25 – CSB)
- ✓ The Holy Spirit Intercedes. “... **the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us**” (Rom. 8:26). There’s a long list of Biblical characters who interceded: Abraham for Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20-33), Moses for Israel (Ex. 32:11-13), Daniel for his people (Dan. 9:4-19). And, as the church, we intercede (1 Tim. 2:1).

C.) There Are Two Ways to Intercede – in English and in Tongues

- ✓ The Bible gives us instructions for both. Since everyone may not be familiar with speaking in tongues, let’s talk about that first.

The Biggest Questions About Praying in Tongues

1.) What Good Is It?

a.) When You Pray in Tongues, You Bypass Your Limited Mind

1 Cor. 14:14 – “If I pray in tongues, **my spirit is praying**, but **my mind does nothing**. (ERV)

Int – “For when I pray in a language that I don’t understand, **my human spirit is praying** by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, **but my mind isn’t participating**.”

- ✓ When you pray in tongues, **your spirit is praying** (as the Holy Spirit gives you the words). In that process, you’re **completely bypassing your mind**. Now, why is that a good thing? It’s good because your mind is limited, but the Holy Spirit is unlimited.

b.) When You Pray in Tongues, You Can Pray About Situations You Know Little or Nothing About

Romans 8:26 – “The Spirit of God helps us in our **limitations**.” (Notice, Paul says that we’re limited in our prayer lives. How are we limited?) “**We don’t know what to pray for as we ought**” (NTFE).

- ✓ Sometimes, we don’t have enough *information* to pray an effective prayer. Suppose you have a loved one in the hospital, and the nurse is about to give them a lethal dose of the wrong medication. How would you ever know to pray for that? You wouldn’t. And that’s where tongues can come in. As you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit can pray *through you* exactly what needs to be prayed.

1 Cor. 14:2 – (Moffatt) – “For he who speaks in an unknown tongue is speaking **DIVINE SECRETS** in the Spirit...”

- ✓ The word “Divine” refers to Deity (God). **Praying in tongues allows us to pray according to God’s knowledge of the situation**. (You’re praying details about the situation that only God knows!) Look at the next verse.

Ro. 8:27 – “**He who searches the hearts**, knows what the Spirit is saying.”

- ✓ Pay attention to that first phrase. **As we pray in tongues, God searches every heart involved in the situation**. If an individual has a

wrong motive, God knows that! If someone is working behind the scenes, or talking behind your back ... God knows that, too. And you can *pray* about those things, even though they're hidden from your understanding.

c.) When You Pray in Tongues, You're Not Praying Alone

Romans 8:26 – “Likewise the Spirit also **helps** our infirmities ...”

- ✓ The word “helps” is significant. It’s the Greek word “sunantilamban-omai”. It’s made up of three smaller words. “Sun”, which means “together with”. “Anti”, which means “against”. And “lambano”, meaning “to take hold of”. When you put them together, the word means “**to take hold of together with against**”.
- ✓ Let me illustrate it this way. Suppose I have a baby grand piano that I need to move. There’s no way that I can move it by myself. So, what am I going to do? I’m going to get six of my strongest friends and ask them to “**take hold**” with me, “against” the weight of that piano. I can’t move it by myself. But, together, we can get it moved! **When you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit “takes hold with you against” the problem**, and together, you’ll get it moved.

d.) When You Pray in Tongues, You Pray a Perfect Prayer, in the Perfect Will of God

Romans 8:27 – “He who searches the hearts, knows what the Spirit is saying **as he pleads for us in harmony with God’s own will.**”

- ✓ Since the Holy Spirit is in complete control of the words you’re saying (as you pray in tongues), **it’s impossible for you to pray anything that’s outside of God’s Will**. And what does John tell us about prayers prayed in line with God’s will? They get answered! (1 John 5:1-15) Speaking in tongues really *is* an effective way to pray!

2.) Doesn’t the Bible Say That Tongues Passed Away?

1 Cor. 13:8 – “Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to

an end; **as for tongues, they will cease ...**”

- ✓ Well, that’s plain enough, isn’t it? Paul clearly says there’s coming a day when will tongues will cease. But has that happened yet? Paul doesn’t leave us guessing. He tells us *exactly* when they’ll cease in verse 10.

v. 10 – “As for tongues, they will cease ... **When that which is perfect is come, then the imperfect will vanish away.**”

- ✓ So, when will tongues cease? When the “perfect thing” comes. What’s the “perfect thing” that Paul is referring to? Really, there are two theories.
 - i.) Some say the “perfect thing” is the Bible. When the last book of the New Testament was written, and we received the Bible in its completed form ... at that moment, tongues passed away. (That’s the first theory.)
 - ii.) Others say the “perfect thing” is the Millennial Reign of Christ. When Jesus returns, and we receive our resurrection bodies (and minds that aren’t limited) – *that’s* when we won’t need tongues anymore.
- ✓ Those are the two theories. Which is correct? Let’s see if we can find a clue in the rest of the passage.

Verse 12 – “For **now** [in this time of imperfection] we see through a glass darkly ... **Now** all we see is a cloudy picture in a mirror, but **when the perfect thing comes**, **then** I will have complete knowledge. **My knowledge [of everything] will be just as complete as God’s knowledge is of me.**”

- ✓ Let me ask you this: When the Bible came, did we receive perfect knowledge of everything? Do we know *everything* as completely as God knows us? Definitely not. Then the perfect thing couldn’t have come yet, and tongues haven’t passed away.

3.) Doesn't the Bible Say That Not Everyone Speaks in Tongues?

1 Cor. 12:30 – “Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues?:

- ✓ The understood answer (to both of those questions) is “No!”. Not everyone has the Gift of Tongues. “Well then, why do you encourage the entire church to speak in tongues?” Because there are two kinds of tongues. One is for everyone, and the other isn’t.
- ✓ The verse we just read says that not everyone speaks in tongues. But in another place Paul writes: “I want you all to speak in tongues ...” (1 Cor. 14:5). Is that a contradiction? No. As I said, there are two kinds of tongues.
 - a.) The Prayer Language (where we bypass our limited mind) – That’s for everyone.
 - b.) The Spiritual Gift of Tongues (where God speaks through an individual to the congregation) – That’s *not* for everyone.