

**Being a Spiritually Minded Christian**  
**Part Eleven**  
**The Purpose of Prayer**

- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*
- *The three areas that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians are our relationship to the Word of God, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.*
- *We spent a number of weeks studying how to become spiritually minded Christians in relationship to the Word of God.*
- *Two weeks ago, we began studying how to become spiritually minded Christians through our relationship with God in prayer and we looked at the delight of prayer.*
- *Last week we looked at the supernatural aspect of prayer in terms of speaking in tongues and how it assists us in becoming spiritually minded.*
- *This week we are going to address the purpose of prayer.*
- *Apostle Paul often requested prayer for himself, for his co-laborers, and for his ministry. Here are a few examples when Paul requested prayer: “Brethren, pray for us.” (1 Thessalonians 5:25).*
- *“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).*
- *“Continue earnestly in prayer...praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains.” (Colossians 4:2-3).*
- *Not only did Paul request prayer for himself, but he often referred to praying for others. “This also we pray, that you may be made complete.” (2 Corinthians 13:9); “do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” (Ephesians 1:15-16).*
- *Jesus Himself continually encouraged His disciples to pray and to pray about very specific things. For example, Jesus exhorts us: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38).*
- *The questions that arise are: “Why do we pray?” and “What is the actual purpose of prayer?” and “What happens if we fail to pray?”*
- *How we answer these questions will determine whether or not we actually pray and what form our prayers will take.*
- *Some people pray as if God doesn’t know their needs. Prayer then becomes merely reciting a list of needs to bring to God’s attention to ensure He doesn’t forget them. This will result in prayer becoming a mundane repetition of a list of needs and wants.*

- *It is obvious from Scripture that God is omniscient, so we do not pray to inform God of our needs or remind Him of our troubles as if He might forget. “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Matthew 6:8).*
- *God already knows our needs and every detail of our lives—ininitely better than we do.*
- *Some people pray as if God is uncaring and that they have to overcome God’s reluctance to help, or heal, or save, or bless. Their prayer sounds more like pleadings to an uncaring master than petitions to a loving generous Father. However, Jesus portrayed quite a different picture of our Heavenly Father. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32).*
- *Some people see prayer as a means of winning God’s favour so He will answer their requests. This is a works based concept of prayer where we earn God’s favour in order to have our petitions answered. Prayer becomes a meaningless religious ritual comprised of a mixture of superstition and hollow repetitive prayers that in many ways mimic the pagan concept of God. “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” (Matthew 6:7).*
- *Prayer is a place where we can share our deepest delights and heaviest burdens with God as our loving Father.*
- *Some mistakenly see prayer like going to a store to place an order, so they can receive their requests. They think they are responsible for deciding what they want and need and then simply place their order.*
- *These people see God as a divine vending machine, that if they press the wrong selection they are going to receive something other than what would be helpful or good. Such people say things like, “Be careful what you ask for,” as if God just mindlessly gives us anything we ask for. This causes prayer to become a place of uncertainty where instead of joyfully coming to God with our needs we are anxious that we may not be asking for the correct thing or may be overlooking something we need to pray for.*
- *However, Jesus taught us that God as our loving Father only gives good things to His children when they ask. “Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:10–11).*

- ***“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” (Ephesians 3:20). Paul’s words greatly encourage us that God is not limited by our ability to express our needs or even to fully recognize all that He wants to do in our lives. When we pray, He fills in the blanks and adds the extra lines so that His perfect will can be done in our lives.***
- ***God is not limited by how perfectly we pray or express ourselves or how completely we understand our own needs. While this truth is a source of great comfort and confidence in God, it actually reinforces the question, “Then why do we pray?”***
- ***The answer to our question as to why we pray begins in Genesis 1:26. “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.””***
- ***“let them have dominion over ... all the earth” When God created mankind, He gave him authority over all the earth. Therefore, authority over the earth does not lie with God or Satan, but with man and that has never changed! Our choices still matter!***
- ***However, we must understand what it means that man has authority over all the earth.***
- ***Although God gave man authority over the earth it does not mean that God created man with the freedom or ability to carry out all that he wishes.***
- ***Man is a limited, created being, meant to rely on God’s power and strength and the leading of the Holy Spirit.***
- ***There is a distinct difference between authority and ability. Authority means one has the freedom to choose what one wants to do. Ability means one has the strength, power, and resources to carry out one’s choices.***
- ***God has given each person the freedom to choose and those choices will affect the direction of our lives.***
- ***God judges a person not only by his actions, but even more by his choices and the intent of his heart. “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28).***

- *The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is a story about the choices people made and how their choices shaped their lives. Some chose to submit to the will of God while others chose to act contrary to His will. The Bible is filled with examples of the consequences of those whose choices opposed God's will and the blessings received by those who chose to submit to God's will.*
- *The first choice that man made is recorded in the Bible in Genesis, Chapter 3, when Adam and Eve were confronted by the serpent. They had to choose whom they would believe and whose words they would act upon.*
- *God had given Adam His commandments pointing to the abundance of His generosity, provision, and blessings. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat." (Genesis 2:16).*
- *Following God's instructions for Adam to enjoy all of God's blessings, came one simple warning. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17).*
- *Then Satan appeared in the form of a serpent with words that both maligned God's character and contradicted His words. "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5).*
- *One may ask, "Why did God allow Satan into the garden to tempt Adam and Eve?" The answer is simple. One cannot freely choose unless there is a choice to be made between two or more options. They had God's Word and they had Satan's word and they had to choose whom they would believe and obey.*
- *Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to agree with Satan's words and gave him "building rights" to establish his kingdom on this earth. Without Adam's choice to believe and act upon Satan's words, Satan would have been powerless to do anything on the earth.*
- *We can see the importance of agreement and how that one choice changed the course of history for mankind with devastating consequences.*
- *Every day, even as believers, we are confronted with the choice of whom we will believe, either God and His Word or the lies that fill this world.*
- *The primary battle is for truth and our willingness to choose to believe and embrace the truth. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).*
- *When we choose to believe and act upon the truth, it results in freedom and puts us on the path of living a life that is eternally fruitful. "I am the vine, you*

are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (*John 15:5*).

- *God in His sovereignty, omniscience, omnipotence, and love spoke the first Messianic prophecy recorded in the Bible to Adam and Eve, just as they came face to face with the horrible consequence of their choices. He spoke these words to them in order to give them hope. God pointed to Jesus’ sacrificial death at Calvary that would result in redeeming mankind from the curse of sin. “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” (*Genesis 3:15*).*

**Isaiah 1:18–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup>“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

<sup>19</sup>If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;

<sup>20</sup>But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- *One of the central themes of the Bible is God asking, appealing, and even pleading with people to choose to agree with Him so His will can be done in their lives and they can be redeemed and blessed. “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow ... “If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land.”*
- *Joshua, a great man of God, who God used to lead Israel into the Promised Land and conquer the enemies of God, was a man who not only chose to agree with God, but also challenged all of Israel to do the same. “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (*Joshua 24:15*).*
- *God has given each of us the authority to decide whom we will submit to and whose will is going to be manifest in our lives—whether it is the flesh, the devil, or God. “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”*
- *Joshua was powerfully used by God because he chose to submit fully to the will of God. “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*
- *Prayer is one of the central ways in which we come into agreement with the will of God. Before we embark on any course of action, the first thing we should do is submit our will to God’s will and come to Him in prayer and ask for His*

*guidance and blessings. Jesus is our good Shepherd, and if invited to, He will lead us.*

- *To experience the power of God in our lives we must make clear consistent decisions to yield to God and agree with Him in prayer.*
- *Since God gave man dominion over the earth, He is always seeking those men and women who are willing to come into agreement with His will so that His will can be done on earth.*
- *An incredible thought to contemplate when it comes to prayer is that if we fail to agree with God in prayer it will hinder God's will from being done, not only in our lives, but in the lives of others and even in the nations.*
- *When Jesus pointed out that "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few," His first instructions were not to go out to the different nations and preach the Gospel but to pray, "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38). This not only points out the importance of prayer but underlines that without prayer the Lord of the harvest will not send out labourers!*

**Genesis 22:16–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—

<sup>17</sup>blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

<sup>18</sup>In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

- *An example of the critical importance of us coming into agreement with God's will and specifically coming into agreement with God's will in prayer can be seen in the life of Abraham.*
- *When Abraham took Isaac, his only son by his wife Sarah, and offered him up on Mount Moriah as a whole offering unto God, this was not only an act of faith and obedience. It was truly an act of worship and prayer unto God.*
- *To fully comprehend the significance of what Abraham did we must understand that God did not just say, "because you believed me all the nations shall be blessed" but "because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son."*
- ***"In your seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Abraham in his act of worship and prayer, gave up not only his son Isaac, but dedicated all his descendants to the will of God which would*

*ultimately result in the birth of God's Son, Jesus, in the lineage of Abraham to be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

- *Jesus is identified clearly as the Son of Abraham. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1).*
- *The person referred to by God as "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" is not Isaac but Jesus, even as Paul stated in Galatians 3:16. "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ."*
- *Unless Abraham agreed with God's will, Jesus could not have come into the world as the Son of Man through the offspring of Abraham. God would have had to find another person who would believe and agree with Him to surrender his descendants to the will of God.*
- *Throughout the Bible we read of men and women who surrendered to the will of God and came into agreement with God so His will could be done on earth. We read the stories of faithful men and women such as Rahab, Ruth, David, and many others in the lineage of Jesus, who came into agreement with God. Their obedient surrender resulted in the birth of the Son of Abraham, the Son of David—the Son of God.*
- *Why did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have to be incarnated as a man to be the Saviour of all mankind? Why couldn't He have just appeared as God in all His glory or in the form of an angel?*
- *Jesus came incarnate as a man for many reasons but one very important reason is only a man could exercise the authority that God had given man when He pronounced "let them have dominion over all the earth."*
- *Through one man's disobedience sin and death came into the world and so it had to be through one man's complete obedience and agreement with the will of God that salvation and redemption could come into the world. "For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ)" "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:17, 19).*
- *When Jesus Christ came as a human being in the form of a descendant of Abraham, he could then exercise the authority God had given to man.*
- *When Jesus Christ came as the Son of Man, it was the first time in human history that a man came into full agreement with the will of God. Only then*

*could the Father's will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven and His kingdom could come upon the earth. As a result, Satan was defeated and the way of salvation was opened to all mankind.*

- *Jesus Christ exercised full power as the Son of God and full authority as the Son of Man. The gates of Hell were not able to prevail and the results were the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.*
- *If God has given mankind authority on the earth and our agreement with the will of God is so essential then how can God be sovereign?*
- *Man exercises authority through his ability to choose and specifically to choose who or what they will agree.*
- *Man does not have free will but free choice. There is a great difference between having the freedom to choose to do something and the ability and power to actually carry out one's choices.*
- *Each person has the freedom to choose who or what they will agree with.*
- *One can choose to agree with the devil and reap destruction in their lives and the lives of those around them. An example is that of Hitler who chose to use his position of leadership to advance a world war that brought horrendously cruel deaths to countless millions of innocent people. But when the time came, his regime crumbled. He was powerless to stop it.*
- *One can choose to agree with the flesh and be driven by sinful passions and lusts that will devastate our lives.*
- *One can choose to agree with God in prayer resulting in His redemptive work being manifest in their lives and in the lives of those around them.*
- *God is so sovereign that He can give each person free choice and still be sovereign.*
- *The question is not if God is sovereign but how He is sovereign.*
- *God is sovereign through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, whose redemptive sacrifice was predestined and punctuates all of time—past, present, and future.*

**Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

- *Through His suffering, death and resurrection all authority was regained by Jesus. As believers, we need to simply choose to live in the reality of His sovereignty.*
- *There is no question as to the ultimate outcome because Jesus Christ was totally victorious at Calvary over the world, the devil, and sin, “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Colossians 2:14-15).*
- *Now through Jesus Christ we can agree with God to see His kingdom come and His will be done.*
- *The kingdoms of this world will be fully restored to their rightful owner, Jesus Christ, for He is fully victorious and sovereign. “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”” (Revelation 11:15).*
- *Through Jesus’ victory at Calvary His sovereignty has been established everywhere even in the depths of Hell, “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:8-11).*
- *Therefore the question is not “Is God sovereign?” but how His sovereignty will be manifest in our lives and what part we will play in terms of seeing God’s will done on earth.*
- *God’s sovereignty is seen in Pharaoh’s life as God raised him up for the very purpose to show His power and bring glory to His name. “For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”” (Romans 9:17).*
- *What some people fail to recognize is that Pharaoh still had a choice on how his life would be used to declare God’s power and glory. If Pharaoh had chosen to submit to the will of God and obey Him and release Israel, then all the world would have heard about how Pharaoh, this great king, acknowledged God’s greatness. Israel would have left Egypt with Pharaoh’s blessing and Pharaoh and his kingdom would have been blessed by God.*

- *Jesus “is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 4:10). However, only those who “call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13). Jesus died for every person, but only those who respond to God and put their faith in Christ will be saved. Therefore our choices will determine how God’s sovereignty will be manifest in each of our lives.*

**Luke 2:36–38 (NKJV)**

<sup>36</sup>Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

<sup>37</sup>and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

<sup>38</sup>And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

- *In these verses we observe that the birth of Jesus Christ didn’t simply happen. God revealed His will to godly men and women, like Simeon and Anna, who dedicated their lives to pray and interceded in agreement with the will of God for the birth of the Messiah.*
- *How many untold others were also praying in agreement with the will of God to see the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Messiah? We don’t know their names, but their names are well known in Heaven!*
- *Prayer is the first and most important thing we can do to see the fulfillment of God’s will done on earth as it is in Heaven.*
- *Prayer is the difference between seeing God’s will done in our lives and failing to see the fulfillment of God’s will in our lives.*
- *Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10).*
- *In the prayer, “Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven,” we can learn at least three things from this petition:*
  - *God’s will is being fully done in Heaven.*
  - *God’s will is not being fully done on earth.*
  - *Through our prayers God’s will can be done on earth.*
- *When we pray “Your kingdom come” we are praying that the present day Lordship of Jesus Christ will invade our lives now.*

- *The connection between earth and heaven is our prayers. This is how the present reality of God in Heaven becomes a present reality in our lives on the earth.*
- *Authority over this earth is not in the hands of Satan or the rulers of the nations, but over Christians who are willing to pray for God's will to be done.*
- *The primary way God is sovereign in our lives is through prayer.*
- *Why does God speak to us prophetically about His will for our lives and for the lives of others? So that we will pray in agreement with His will.*
- *Praying in agreement to see His will done on earth looks less like reciting a list of needs and more like interweaving prayer with worship and praise. This type of prayer is an expression of complete trust in God.*
- *Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane closely relates to "Your will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven" as He prayed, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42).*
- *However, when we pray "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," prayer becomes a surrender of our will and our lives for His purposes and His plans to be fulfilled.*
- *Some Christians are afraid if they surrender fully to God and say, "Your will be done," then God will ask them to do things which will be painful or very difficult. However, by surrendering they will enter into the most wonderful and beautiful thing in the Universe—the will of God! His will is "good, acceptable, and perfect." (Romans 12:2).*
- *The naturally minded person doesn't pray much because he sees little value in prayer and would rather be engaged in activities that appear to be more practical.*
- *The carnally minded person does not continue in prayer because he quickly tires when he does not see immediate results. But the Bible exhorts us that by faith and patience we inherit the promises. (Hebrew 6:12). Paul exhorts us, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer." (Romans 12:12).*
- *The spiritually minded Christian sees the value in prayer and is able to patiently wait on God in agreement whether it takes a few minutes or a few decades until the fulfillment of God's promises and purposes are manifest.*

- *The spiritually minded Christian is confident that God is hearing and acting upon their prayers even when nothing may be apparent, “Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.”” (Daniel 10:12).*
- *Jesus Christ’s message, the message throughout the Bible, and the message of the gospel is about agreement, “repent and believe.”*
- *Repent—turn away from sin and stop agreeing with the sin nature and the lies of Satan.*
- *Believe—turn to God and come into agreement with Him and His Word.*
- *Prayer is where we turn away from all the distractions of this life and focus our attention on seeing His will fulfilled on earth.*