

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.  
MINISTRY SCHOOL 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION  
SESSION 77 – PRAYER PART 20  
THE SEVEN MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN PRAYER PART 3

We continue our study of the seven most important things in prayer. We continue on the second point and will learn the third point.

John 16:23,24

*“23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.  
24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”*

As we've discussed in earlier lessons, the first and most important thing we need to learn about prayer is that we are to pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus. The second most important thing about prayer is found in Mark 11:24.

MARK 11:24

*“24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”*

When you pray, believe that you receive your answer. You don't wait until after your answer is manifested to believe God heard you. No, you believe you receive your answer before you see it or get it.

We keep going over this because it is important. This is what faith, true Bible faith is; believing God and taking Him at His Word - **before** you actually see the answer. These truths about faith will gradually dawn on you if you hear them enough; they will eventually get through to you and down into your **heart**.

### **Head Faith vs. Heart Faith**

We need to constantly be reminded about spiritual things because everything around us in this natural world is trying to pull us back to walk by natural, human sense knowledge, or head faith, instead of by spiritual heart faith.

Many times, everything in your everyday life is so natural that it will pull you back into walking in the natural instead of walking by faith. If you're not careful, the church to which you go to can also try to do that. Some churches **take faith out of you**, instead of **putting faith into you**.

Some people will also try to make you doubt and try to make you walk by head knowledge or sense knowledge. But we must learn to walk by Bible faith, or heart faith; that is, by faith that is of the heart or spirit, not the head. We wouldn't tell you something that isn't scriptural. And we wouldn't encourage you to practice something that we haven't practiced and that doesn't work.

**We have practiced walking by faith for years**, and **Mark 11:24** has always been a mainstay. It says when you pray for the desires of your heart, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them. That's exactly the method we use.

Not only is it true of healing, but it is true in every other aspect of life. No matter what the need is - spiritual, physical, material, or financial - this is the way you receive from God. Faith is what pleases God (**Heb. 11:6**).

Some people say that they pray and pray, but things don't get any better in their lives. But when a young boy received healing for his body, at first, he had no evidence whatsoever of healing. He couldn't see it or feel it, but he began to say out loud in the room by himself, "I believe I received my healing." When he began to say that it wasn't very long until he had it.

Jesus said that if you believe you receive, then you'll have it. So, believing you receive before you see the answer with your physical eyes is the important thing. When you pray - not the next hour, the next day, or the next week - **but when you pray**, believe that you receive, and you shall have your petition. **Hebrews 11:1** says, "**... faith is ... the evidence of things NOT SEEN.**"

You won't become perfect in walking by faith overnight. Spiritual growth is very similar to physical growth. No one is born a full-grown human being, and no one is born a full-grown Christian. People are born babies, and they grow up. You did not learn everything you know overnight. Your teachers did not put you in the fifth grade when you started school; they put you in kindergarten. And after you got to the fifth grade, they did not put you in the twelfth grade. No, you grew gradually and learned.

Spiritually, it is the same way. People will work hard in the natural realm and finally earn certain degrees in areas of study where they want to work, but when it comes to spiritual things, if they do not reach their goals in a week, they think they might as well give up!

But let's not be ignorant! Paul himself said he did not count himself perfect, but that he was constantly pressing forward, as there was still more to be learned. (Phil. 3:12-14)

The person who thinks he is already perfect and that he already has everything there is to get, deceives himself. We have run into folks who think like that. We would just as soon hear a donkey bray at midnight in a tin barn, as to listen to people like that talk. Thank God, we can grow! And when it comes to this faith life, we should not expect to get there overnight.

Smith Wigglesworth said that some people are ready to give up if that which they claim to be believing for does not come overnight. But Wigglesworth says that this proves they never did believe God to begin with.

Many times, God will permit you to be tried and tested in faith right up to the end. But when you believe God, you can stand firm, even though you are tested right up to the last moment. We have been there and we understand. God will let you be tested right up to the end, when it looks as though the answer is not coming. But if you will stand firm in your faith in God's Word, the answer will come every time. It seems that we've been there more times than not!

When that young boy we learned about in previous lessons was deathly ill, he started his faith walk that way, because his healing was like that. He was supposed to die, but he read the words of Jesus and believed them. It seems that we always do our best when we are in difficult places. The boy learned just to laugh when the going gets rough and we should too. We do not always feel like laughing but make yourself laugh right in the face of the devil. Just smile and say that you believe God and His Word.

We read an example in Acts 27 of someone believing God even though he was severely tested and tried. Paul was on board a ship heading for Rome when a treacherous storm arose on the sea. To lighten the ship and keep it from sinking, the people threw off all the merchandise and cargo overboard. But the storm raged on, and eventually the men on the ship lost all hope that they would be saved (Acts 27:20).

But one night an angel of God stood before Paul and told him there was hope. The angel said that the Lord would deliver all those aboard the ship. So, the next day, right in the midst of the storm and the chaos, Paul stood up and said he believed God that it would be even as it was told him. (Acts 27:25).

The storm that Paul was experiencing on that ship can be compared to the storms we face in life. We might not be in a storm out in the sea, but we all face storms in life in the form of tests and trials.

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You and I can stand on God's Word in the storms of life, just as Paul stood on the Word of the Lord that was given him in that storm at sea. We can say, with Paul, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me!" Many times, when it seemed like all hope was gone, we have said to the devil and to God and to ourselves and to others, "I believe God! God told me in His Word that when I pray, I am to believe that I receive my petition. Then I will have it."

We need to be just as definite and specific about spiritual things as we are about natural things. How many of you can believe what your mother tells you? How many of you would believe what your father told you? How many of you husbands would believe what your wives told you? How many of you wives believe what your husbands tell you? You usually believe them, don't you? Well, you may or may not believe what others say, but we'll tell you, you can believe what Jesus said in His Word.

You **can** believe God's Word! Thank God, we can believe it. Jesus would not tell us to do something we can't do, and He said we are to believe Him and take Him at His Word. If He asked us to do something we could not actually do, we would have a right to challenge His justice. He would be unjust. But thank God, we can believe His Word: "... **when ye pray, believe that ye receive...**" (Mark 11:24).

### **Stir Yourself Up in Faith**

We know from experience that we need to be continually reminded and stirred up along this line. As we said before, everything in this world in this natural realm will try to pull us back into the natural, sense realm. We need to be stirred up in the faith and in the things of God. ***We need to stir ourselves up.***

A Pastor invited a friend of his to come and conduct some revival services for him. They had been friends since childhood.

They were eating one day in the parsonage, and the visiting friend told the pastor that he was slipping spiritually. No one likes to hear that, even though it may be the truth. The pastor did not even answer him at first, but he later told him that he wasn't slipping.

He told the pastor, however, that he was not where he used to be with God. He told him that he was not exercising the faith that he had had at one time. He had known him very well because they had lived within two blocks of each other when we were younger and had played together as children. The pastor had preached to his friend way back then. The visiting preacher said that through the years, he doubted he would have gotten saved if it had not been for him, for he was always preaching the Word to him.

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His friend told him that he remembered some of the times in the Pastor's life when no matter what the circumstances were, he would just laugh about them and say he believed God. The Pastor asked him what this had to do with his having slipped spiritually. He said he knew the pastor when he would get on his knees in the church and pray for the Lord to send a revival. Then he would stand up and say I had it, and that it was on the way.

He thought the pastor was not doing much of that anymore. (In reality, the pastor of the church **had gotten busy** with church work and with pastoring the church. If we are not careful, we can get to the place where we're praying, but we're not really believing and claiming the answer and the promises of God.)

If you believe you receive, then you claim that you have received it. You say that you receive your answer. You receive your answer by faith.

The Pastor's spiritual pride rose up when his friend said he was slipping spiritually, and he denied it. They went ahead with their meal, but the Pastor began thinking about what his friend had said, and it dawned on him that he was right.

So, the Pastor went out to the church and got on his knees and told the Lord that he believed that he received revival in their church. He told God he knew revival was there and that he had it now. While that friend of his was there, they had one of the best revival meetings they had ever had. We do not have to be defeated, if we'll say what the Word says.

### **Believing Is Not Hoping Or Struggling in Prayer**

We have expressions we use about praying that are not in the Bible. These are expressions man has made up. For example, we do not have to "fight" our way through to the answer. We believe our way through. Prayer is not the struggle that many people would have you believe it is. Prayer is a matter of acting on God's Word.

It is a matter of believing God's Word. Certainly, we must stand our ground against the devil. But we call that the **". . . good fight of faith . . ."** (1 Tim. 6:12). It is not a fleshly struggle. It is a good fight of faith because if we're standing on God's Word, we win!

That young boy that was sick and became a preacher later in life lay on his bed of sickness where he struggled and "fought" for a long time, but it was in the flesh. You see, he was trying at first to do it in the natural, struggling in his own strength, to be healed. When he just stopped struggling and began resting on God's Word, saying that he believed he received his healing, it was the easiest thing in the world to get healed. Within ten minutes

his paralysis had disappeared, and he was on his feet. God's Word is just as true today as it ever was.

Many times, we have asked people what they believe when they ask for prayer. Some look at us with a strange look and ask what we mean by that. We ask them again what they believe. Many times, they answer, saying they hope God heard them. We tell them that He didn't because Jesus said, "believe you receive," not "hope you will receive." He did not say to keep keeping on until you get the answer. He said when you pray you should believe you receive.

When you believe you receive, you do not have to pray all night long. You can go to bed and go to sleep. I do believe in praying all night long if you have enough to pray about and if you are inspired by the Holy Spirit to do so.

One time the Spirit of God told a minister, "It is natural human reasoning that defeats people. Men in their own minds think that if they tediously and successfully seek long enough, eventually they can change the mind of God." But the Lord will never change His mind. He is ever the same. He stands ready at every moment to make His Word good in your life.

The Master said that when you pray, believe that you receive your desires, and you shall have them (Mark 11:24). And if you believe you have received, then you can go to bed and go to sleep.

Even if the situation looks contrary to what God's Word says, all you really have to do is pray and believe God. Then go to bed at night and sleep peacefully because you know God heard you, and you know you have received your answer.

You will be able to do this if you believe God's Word. Jesus said you could. We have done it many times, even when insurmountable obstacles were facing us in life.

The young boy with the heart disease had severe heart symptoms that disappeared when he first received his healing. Later on, some of those same symptoms came back on him and he had some of the most alarming symptoms in his body. But he went to God and prayed and believed that he received healing and then told God that he was going to believe His Word and go to sleep.

The devil kept telling him he would die, and he warned him not to go to sleep because he would probably die in his sleep. But he told the devil he believed that he received and that he was going to go to sleep. He was not going to bother about his symptoms anymore. It

was not the young boy that said he was healed - Jesus said it in His Word! We do not have to make God's Word good; God makes it good!

We need to quit trying to help God's Word. Many times, that is what's wrong to begin with. We are trying to make God's Word good. Take your hands off of trying to make the Word work. You do not have to make God's Word good. He will tend to His own Word. You do not have to perform God's Word. All you have to do is the believing part. He did not tell you to do a thing about getting His Word to work for you. He said you are to believe you receive, and He's the one who will watch over His own Word to perform it (Jer. 1:12). Then you will have your petition!

It is the most wonderful thing in the world to be able to place your head on the promises of God [like a pillow] at night without a care in the world. It is wonderful to be able to sleep like a baby. Everything around you might be in turmoil but, bless God, right in the midst of it, if you just take God at His Word, you will have peace.

### **A Table of Blessings for Us In the Presence of Our Enemies**

Someone once said to a preacher that he would be happy if he could just get away from Satan so he would not be bothered by him anymore. The preacher asked the man if he wanted him to pray that he would die and go to heaven! He told him that if he could do that, he would have already done it for himself! We do not know anyone who has been free from trouble with the devil.

That is the only way we'll ever get away from our enemies. The world is an enemy and the devil is an enemy, and the devil is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). The flesh, or the carnal nature, is an enemy (Rom. 8:7) and we are living in the flesh. We must contend with all these things while we live on this earth. The only way to get away from them is to die and get out of this world.

It is not scriptural to pray that you'll never have any more trouble with the devil. But you can learn to take authority over the devil. The Bible says, ". . . **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**" (James 4:7). You can learn to do something about the devil - exercise your authority over him in Jesus' Name.

The Bible also says that God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies (Ps. 23:5). That means right in the presence of the devil God prepares a table of blessing for us! In other words, the devil is always present in this world we live in, but he does not have dominion over us as believers.



You cannot get away from the devil without dying and going on to heaven. Also, the flesh, or the carnal nature, is an enemy (Rom. 8:7). Jesus said that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38). The flesh has not yet been sanctified or redeemed. Therefore, you must daily keep your flesh under the dominion of your spirit (1 Cor. 9:27). Keeping the flesh under the dominion of your spirit is an ongoing process. In other words, we never get to the place as long as we are in our bodies, where our flesh doesn't need to be put under subjection to our spirit. Just when we think we are about sanctified something will happen that will knock our head right where our feet were a few minutes earlier! We have come to find out that we are not nearly as sanctified as we thought we were. About the time we think the flesh is dead, we find out it is not nearly as dead as we thought it was!

We all have the same trouble because we are all human. Your old flesh is not any better than ours is. You know that just as well as we do. You might as well "fess" up and admit it.

So, these are our enemies - the world, the flesh, and the devil. But thank God, that God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies (Ps. 23:5). Right in the presence of these enemies, we can sit at the table of victory and deliverance with Jesus!

Look at the second most important thing about prayer in relation to our enemies: ***When you pray, believe that you receive your desires, and you shall have them.*** Right in the face of adverse circumstances, you can believe God's Word. You can believe you receive according to Mark 11:24.

We have prayed for loved ones and Mark 11:24 has worked for us. A person has authority in their own house. God deals with households (Acts 16:15,31). For example, that centurion in Matthew chapter 8 had authority in his house and came to Jesus on behalf of his servant (Matt. 8:5-13). The man in his household was just a servant, but the centurion had authority over him.

The centurion came and told Jesus that his servant was lying at home sick. Jesus said He would come to the centurion's house, but the centurion said he was not worthy for Jesus to come to his home. The centurion asked Jesus to speak the Word only and his servant would be healed. Jesus told the centurion to go his way and as he had believed, so it would be done unto him.

I've believed that I've received, and then afterwards I've seen conflicting conditions come up. Many have seen kinfolk in their own household get worse.

For example, a preacher's niece lived with him and his family for a time. Before she came to live with them, she got into trouble because she had gotten in with the wrong crowd. At first, she was not open to the gospel, but the preacher just stood his ground in faith, and

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eventually she was saved. So, when you have prayed for your family and it seems like they're getting worse instead of getting better, don't ever say your faith isn't working. Just laugh, no matter what the circumstances are. Just keep saying you believe you received. Then the answer will always come.

### **Don't Take Sides Against the Word**

If you're going to keep saying your faith isn't working, you're taking sides against the Word; you're not walking by faith. You're not believing you have received. You're believing you didn't receive and that is what undoes your prayer.

Hold fast to your confession and say that you believe you have received your petition. Once I do that, I never go back on it. Hold fast to God's Word and stand fast on it, and God will stand by you. You're going to have to side in with God's Word if you're going to get the Word to work for you. You can't take sides against the Word and expect it to work for you. Many people unconsciously take sides against God's Word.

One minister who was holding a meeting in Arkansas went with the pastor of the church to call on a businessman who had had two heart attacks. The man had been home in bed because of his heart condition, and then he'd had another attack. The man was unconscious, and the doctor said he would never regain consciousness but would die.

So, the evangelist and the pastor laid hands on him and prayed over him. Instantly, he regained consciousness. He sat up in bed, and all his symptoms were gone. He got up and went down to the living room and visited his friends.

When the pastor and the evangelist left, the wife of this man followed them out while her husband stayed at the door. The wife told the pastor and the evangelist to be sure and keep on praying for her husband. The evangelist asked her what for. She said the devil would come right back and put an attack on her husband. The minister told her that she had more faith in the devil than she did in God!

Certainly, the devil may try to bring back symptoms on a person to see if he really believes what he says he believes about God's Word. But many Christians are believing the devil more than they are believing God. They magnify the devil's works more than they do the works of God. You always hear them talking about what the *devil* is doing.

This evangelist told this woman to confess and believe that the devil wasn't going to come back with his symptoms, and that he wasn't going to put that heart trouble back on her husband. He told her to stand on the promises of God. She replied, "Why, I wouldn't say that for anything in the world because the devil might hear me say it." Some Christians have

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more respect for the devil and fear of the devil than they do for God. **We believe that God is bigger than the devil!**

We have even seen Full Gospel preachers get upset when we talk like this because they are worried that the devil is going to hear them. But we always tell them that we want the devil to hear us! We say it out loud for his benefit! We want the devil to know that we know the Bible is true! We want the devil to know that we have authority over him in the Name of Jesus.

Jesus told us that as believers we have authority over the devil (**Luke 10:19**). We want the devil to know that we are not afraid of him. We want the devil to know that we are not going to shake in our boots every time he comes around, and we're not going to run and hide every time he sticks his head up. It's practicing God's Word and practicing faith that gets the job done!

It's amazing how much faith believers can have in the **wrong thing**. They are always saying they can't believe. What they are really saying is they can't believe the right thing which is the Word of God, because they are believing something. **They are believing the wrong thing.**

For instance, that woman believed that the devil would come back and put another heart attack on her husband. That's why she said it. Her own words had her located. She wasn't in faith at all. People should take the faith they exercise in the devil and use it instead to believe in the right thing - what God has said in His Word. Then they'll get positive results.

We've had people ask us to pray for them because they believed they were getting the flu. They had already made the statement that they believed they were getting the flu. Why don't they take that belief and put it on the positive side and believe that they won't get the flu?

People can pray with them and believe they are healed. But they'll still have the flu if they keep on believing they'll have it. Jesus said you can have what you believe for. (**Mark 11:24**). You can **believe right**, so do it. It's **right believing and right confessing** in this area of prayer that get results. We can believe God hears us and that we receive when we pray.

### **Number Three: Forgive If You Have Ought Against Any**

**MARK 11:25**

***“25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”***

Point number three. The third most important thing in prayer is ***to forgive if you have ought against any.***

Prayer won't work unless you have a forgiving heart. Mark 11:25 says, ***“When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.”***

**MARK 11:26**

***“26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”***

A person told a preacher one time that he had some prayers answered, but that he still had some things in his heart against people. The preacher told him that he was a liar. He told him that if he could pray and get results with unforgiveness in his heart, then Jesus lied. But that he would believe that this man lied before I'd believe that Jesus lied.

He told him that some good things may have happened, but it wasn't his praying that caused them to happen. They were probably natural things that might have happened anyway.

No one can have an effective prayer life and have any unforgiveness in their heart toward another. You can't have revenge in your heart, and you can't have hatred in your heart. You can't have that old "get even" spirit and continue to prosper.

You are not responsible for that other person's life; you're responsible ***for your life***. In other words, another person's heart and what is in it can't hinder you, but what you have in your heart against another can and will hinder you. That means any grudge or ill will at all will hinder your faith.

You must guard your heart. You must watch your inward man with all diligence (Prov. 4:23). Do not allow a root of bitterness, a bit of envy, or a bit of revenge to get into your heart. It will wreck your spiritual life. It will stall your prayer life. It will mar your faith. It will eventually shipwreck you.

There have been preachers whom we've tried to help who let bitterness get into their heart. Sometimes it was toward a fellow minister, and it cost them their ministry. For some of them, it costs them their life. There's no doubt in my mind at all that they would be alive today if they had not let bitterness get into their heart.

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We cannot let any ill will get into us; We must not let anything evil get into our heart.

I have known men and preachers who were afflicted because they would not forgive, and they became bitter. Some of them were Full Gospel preachers who couldn't carry on their own ministry successfully because of unforgiveness. Some of them suffered greatly physically and have never received healing because of bitterness and unforgiveness.

These ministers became physically ill when they became bitter. And if they don't forgive, they'll live and die without being able to receive their healing, and yet it isn't God who afflicted them. It's God's perfect will that they be healed. So, keep your eyes on Jesus. He's the Healer.

A preacher talked to a fellow minister along this line, and he knew in his heart what was wrong with him. After a division in his church, the minister left, and another man took over his pastorate. After a year or so the new pastor left, and the minister wanted to come back to pastor the church. About half of the people wanted him back and half didn't. Finally, the half that didn't want him to return as pastor went across town, rented a store building, and started another church.

This pastor was talking to his preacher friend and was very bitter because these people had left and started another church. He was even mad at the leaders of that denomination because they permitted these people to do it, although the new church was several miles away from his church, and a new work was really needed there.

This minister just ranted and raved about all of this. He was much older than the preacher was at the time, and the preacher wanted to tell him that he was going to bring sickness on himself, but he didn't feel at liberty to talk to him about this because of their age difference.

That minister became very sick after this happened. The Spirit of God told the preacher that unless his minister friend got that bitterness out of him, he would continue to be sick. The minister developed an ulcerated stomach and has had it ever since, as well as other illnesses. His friend, the preacher, knew it was the bitterness in his spirit that caused all of this, and he knew it would mar his life.

This minister was upset because some of the people in his former church didn't want him to be their pastor. His bitterness hurt him spiritually and physically.

During the years that the preacher pastored, it never bothered him if folks didn't want him to be the pastor and didn't vote for him. What is an election for in the first place?

Every man is bound to obey his own conscience and to vote according to what he feels God is telling him. The preacher always determined that he would never permit the least bit of ill will or animosity in his heart toward anyone because one step out of love is a step into sin. He would not allow himself to be sidetracked in his ministry by bitterness and resentment.

It costs much more to be out of the will of God than it does to be in the will of God. Being out of the will of God will cost you your health. It will cause sickness and sometimes premature death. It'll cost you money and rest.

Never let bitterness get into your heart toward a brother, a sister, a pastor, or anyone else. Don't ever let a root of bitterness grow in your heart because you have refused to forgive someone who has offended you. Follow the Bible's command to **"forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32). As you do, you will keep the channels open for your prayers to be answered and the blessings of God to come into your life.