

## When My People Pray!

Pastor S. James

[www.gracetabernaclehyd.org](http://www.gracetabernaclehyd.org)

*Father, this evening, once again, we thank You for every opportunity You give us to come together in Your Name to worship You, to praise You, to learn of You, to encourage one another, to stand firm, to stay the course as we literally see the events leading to Your coming. Help us to stay focused; help our hearts to be stayed on You, God; because Your Word says, "You keep him in perfect peace whose heart is stayed on You." Everything around us happens so that we would be distracted but we need You, Lord, even now, to keep our eyes fixed on You. Help us, Lord. For in Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.*

A few weeks back, we looked at the highest point in Israel's history – the day Solomon's temple was consecrated. We saw the glory of God filling the temple. The priests couldn't minister any more. We see, that night, what God spoke to Solomon – most strange words. That's not the kind of stuff you want to hear on the greatest day in your history. But God knows our hearts tend to wander, our feet will walk away, we will slip, we will fall, we will go into disobedience, rebellion and God will have to deal with His people. So, there, God will speak to him and He will say, "When these things happen, I will withhold My blessings; I will withhold My hand so that lack and famine will come in; I will send the destroyer and all kinds of things will happen." And then, He says, "*If My people who are called by My name...*" We know that. He says four things – "*If they humble themselves, if they pray, if they seek My face and if they turn from their wicked ways,*" He said, "*I will hear; I will forgive your sins.*" And He says, "*I will heal the land.*" Actually every person sitting here and every person in the world, every home and every nation need God to hear their prayers, God to forgive us and God to heal us. But we saw that man usually gets stuck at the first gate. What is the first gate? "*If My people who are called by My name humble...*" We get stuck at that gate – Humility.

Now, suppose one passes the first gate, we manage to make our way through and humbled ourselves. We believe we humbled ourselves and we get to gate two. What is gate two? "*My people pray.*" If you look in Scripture, in the first three chapters of *Genesis*, before the fall, we don't hear about sacrifices or prayers in the Bible. It was an incredible sweet time of fellowship with God, as God and man walked in unity and everything was being blessed and was prospering as a result of that. So, there is neither prayer nor sacrifice because it's not needed. A day will come when there will be, again, neither sacrifices nor prayer because we see Him face to face.

Then, comes the fall and we have Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices. And it is also written, at the time of Seth, the third son of Adam, who is mentioned by name, that prayer begins. People started calling upon the name of the Lord. So, sacrifices and prayer begin after the fall. But, like everything in the Kingdom of God, including sacrifices, worship, faith, fellowship – everything, even prayer is based on very specific Kingdom principles or laws. God does not respond to prayer by whim or fancy. We need to pray and we need God to hear our prayers. But it cannot be according to our whim or our fancy because there are fundamental principles by which prayer must be offered to be heard. Why is this so important? – Because, like a man of God said this way, "A time will come in everyone's life where God answering your prayer will be the most important thing ever." Nothing else will be more important than, "O God, please hear me." Therefore, we need to learn from Scripture how to pray.

One thing the disciple noted about Jesus was His prayer life. That's why they asked Him, "Please teach us to pray." We know that even after He gave them power, they were not able to handle certain cases of deliverance, and He said, the answer is, "You need more prayer. You need to pray more with fasting." If you look at the requests of the apostles in the four Gospels, when Jesus is alive and walking on earth, and then, in the *Book of Acts* after Pentecost, you will see such a complete paradigm shift in the way they ask or request or pray. In the Gospels, among their various requests include, "Send fire down on the people who reject the Gospel; send the people away who are hungry; can I sit on Your right or Your left?" You will never see them actually in sync with Christ and the Kingdom of God. So, their prayers are like that; most often, like ours. But the *Book of Acts* is an eye-opener, after Pentecost. There is no record in the *Book of Acts* of them having failed in their faith. As an answer to their prayers, God will save multitudes; there will be naturally signs and wonders following them; the places where they prayed were shaken; prison doors were opened. All kinds of things are happening. The question is: what changed between the Gospels and the *Book of Acts*? What changed is the coming of the Holy Spirit and their prayer life changed. They quit their agenda and started moving towards God's agenda. Their prayer life changed completely. Remember, the Day of Pentecost is followed by ten days of intense prayer which leads to the Day of Pentecost,

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and after that, everything changes. When persecution increased, all they did was to lift their prayer life to another level. And we will see when there are issues in the Church, one of the things the apostles say is, “We will not get distracted and move away from our two-fold ministry – our prayer life and our Word life. Nothing will affect that.” The greatest impact Pentecost did was on their prayer life.

So, tonight, we will look at some of the fundamental principles of prayer as we see in the New Covenant. As a primary text, we will look at *James 4:1-10*.

### **James 4:1-10**

**<sup>1</sup> Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup> Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? <sup>6</sup> But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” <sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**

This is our basic text. We may not be able to look through all 10 verses. James (not this James) is a very practical teacher. He is not a theologian; he is a very practical teacher. In *James 4:1*, he asks this question,

**<sup>1</sup> Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

Why do people fight with each other? The reason people fight with each other and cannot get along with each other is simply because they cannot get along with themselves. People fight outwardly because they fight inwardly. Because Jesus had perfect peace inside, He never fought with anybody. He just dealt with issues. That's what he is talking about.

**<sup>1</sup> Where do wars and fights come from among you?...**

Among. Because they,

**...come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

We have war going on; strife, lack of peace inside, and it manifests as fights among ourselves. So, he says, “Look to the root of issues.” In *James 4:2*,

### **James 4:2**

**<sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war...**

All kinds of things happen – lusting, killing, coveting, fighting, warring – all these happen because you do not have what you want. You want certain things in your life, in your home, in your job place, whatever. You want lot of stuff. Your fights arise inside and then, outside because you don't have what you want. This is all being written to believers; this has got nothing to do with the world. This is written technically to the twelve tribes spread around the world, basically saying the Church that is spread. There is so much strife in the lives of people because of lack. There is lack in everybody's life. But what is the primary cause of the lack in the lives of God's people, according to the text?

### **James 4:2**

**<sup>2</sup>...you do not have because you do not ask.**

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The answer is literally staring in our eyes. We may have read this passage a hundred times; yet, we miss it completely. What is it?

<sup>2</sup>...*you do not have because you do not ask.*

We forget to ask one person who is able to answer us; we don't ask Him. Instead we fight with ourselves and we fight with others, because we lack and we lack because we do not ask. In *John 16:24*, this is what Jesus said,

### **John 16:24**

<sup>24</sup> *Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

He said, "Ask and you will receive." The Father, through the Son, says, "Ask, and you shall receive." What God says happens in the Church are the struggles of prayerlessness. "Come," says the Father, "boldly, confidently to the throne room of grace." That is *Hebrews 4:16*, right? "Come boldly, confidently. Come, pray!" That's how do we go to God in prayer? But do people pray? Do we really pray? In *Matthew 7:7-8*, God says,

### **Matthew 7:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

In verses 9 to 11,

### **Matthew 7:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> 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!*

Interesting, right? Now, He is not talking about the Holy Spirit in this portion. He is talking about when you want things, you ask for those things. Why do you fight among yourselves for things? You actually end up fighting among yourselves for things because there is absolute lack of prayer in your life. You don't pray; you don't ask God; you ask man. Man doesn't have the power to give; then, you start getting upset with man; then, you start fighting with yourself; then, you start fighting with others. But you forget, actually in prayer, consistently to ask God. If you really need a thing, then go to God. He says "I will answer your prayer." And our Father doesn't give bad things; there is nothing bad from our Father. What does our Father give? - Good things. He only gives good things; He doesn't give bad things. Not only does He give us good things, *James 1:17* says,

### **James 1:17**

<sup>17</sup> *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...*

He not only gives you a good thing, He gives you a perfect thing that would be perfect for you.

*...and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

It's an incredible verse. There is no variation, no shadow of turning, absolutely. That's why the first block is pride. If you humble and pray...

Prayerlessness is the curse of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian. One man of God has put it this way – "prayerlessness is not weakness; it is wickedness." Don't say, "I am so weak, I cannot pray." He says, "No, it's not." We can do everything but we don't pray. We do not have. The first thing God mentioned is in *James 4* is that,

### **James 4:2**

<sup>2</sup>...*you do not have because you do not ask.*

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Look at this strife in homes – wives upset with their husbands. Why? “Because I asked and he didn’t give me.” God says, “Why didn’t you ask Me? I would have answered your prayer without you probably ever having to ask one word to your husband. I would have put it into his heart saying, ‘Go and get this thing for your wife’. It would have been an incredible experience for you saying, ‘I did not ask and you brought this for me? You really thought about me?’ How wonderful it would have been. But you don’t ask Me; you go to him and you ask. He doesn’t give and you start fighting. You don’t ask Me.”

It is the same with children. “You don’t ask Me.” It’s the same with employees. “You don’t ask Me.” You get upset with your manager because he did not grade you or don’t give you a promotion. But God says, “Why didn’t you ask Me?” First is the curse of prayerlessness. “Prayerlessness,” as a man as God said, “is not weakness; but wickedness.” Listen to *1 Samuel 12:23*, what Samuel will say.

### **1 Samuel 12:23**

***<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.***

He says, “If I cease to pray, I am actually sinning against the Lord.” That’s what Samuel is saying – lack of prayer is sin. In *Luke 18:1*,

### **Luke 18:1**

***<sup>1</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,***

Meaning – don’t give up. “I prayed for one day, two days, three days,” and we give up.

Do you remember Elijah on Mount Carmel? After the fire had come down, after the prophets of Baal have been destroyed and Ahab had gone to eat and drink, he climbs back again to the mountain and continues his prayer. Now, he is praying. He is on his knees with his head between his knees and he is praying. What is he praying now for? – For rain. He tells his servant, “Go and see,” and the servant says, “I see nothing.” “Go again and see.” He will not lose heart. He says, “You promised us rain. I know, Lord, that You promised. You said in Your word, ‘if My people humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn away from your wickedness things’. Lord, all these four have happened. One thing I know – these people do not have the power to pray but I have. I’m not going to faint in this situation. Now, I’m not going rise from this place until I have seen the rain come.”

Then, at the eighth or seventh time – whichever you want to count – the servant comes and says, “I see a cloud like a hand rising in the horizon.” He said, “That’s it. It’s coming.” That’s what he is saying, “Do not faint in praying. Do not give up in praying and stop praying.”

In *1 Thessalonians 5:17*, we are called to,

### **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

***<sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing,***

“Don’t stop,” God says. Don’t stop. There are certain prayers which can never stop. John Bunyan said this in *The Pilgrim’s progress*; it is very interesting – ‘Prayer will make a man cease from sin. But sin will make a man cease from prayer’. It’s true. It is absolutely true for all of us. Never in my life have I prayed and sinned; but I have sinned when I haven’t prayed. Prayer will make a man cease from sin. But sin will make a man cease from prayer. There is no sin in my life, your life or our lives. Prayer or dependence on God would not have prevented. No sin. Why? Because before sin comes temptation. What are we called to tackle? Not sin; but we are called to tackle temptation. In *Mark 14:38*, Jesus said,

### **Mark 14:38**

***<sup>38</sup> Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation...***

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You don't have to worry about sin if you handle temptation. In English medical terms we use the phrase – 'Prevention is better than cure'. He says, "Don't worry about sin. Handle temptation." How do you handle temptation? – In prayer. *Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation.* Why do we sin? – Because we fall into temptation. Why do we fall into temptation? – Because we are not watchful in prayer. We know by now, here, we should know *Hebrews 5:7* very well. What does it say about Jesus? The secret of Jesus total victory over sin while in the flesh. What is the reason?

### **Hebrews 5:7**

***<sup>7</sup> who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death (Death is the result of sin. Sin is the result of giving in to), and was heard because of His godly fear,***

How did he overcome sin? – By praying. Simple. That's how He overcame temptation. Because He overcame temptation, He overcame sin. *Hebrews 4:15* is very clear, the next one.

### **Hebrews 4:15**

***<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.***

So, was He tempted? Yes. But did He fall in His temptation? No. Why? – Because of His prayer life. If the Father gave Him something which we are not or we do not have access to, then we can say, "He was without sin and He overcame sin but we cannot." God says, "No." He overcame; He came in the flesh; just like us, He overcame sin because of His prayer life; He was absolutely watchful in His prayer life. He prayed. Therefore, when He entered into temptation, He did not sin. Temptations will come. You cannot stop temptations from coming but He says, "You can overcome every temptation if you are watchful in prayer." That's why God says,

### **James 4:2**

***<sup>2</sup>...you do not have because you do not ask.***

All our struggles and our failures are because we do not ask.

A little boy was trying to push a big stone. It didn't budge. His father, who was watching, asked him, "Have you use all that you have?" He said, "Yes." And the father said, "No, you haven't asked me yet." We try everything except asking God. Often, we are so burdened and we have no peace or no joy and the answer could be as simple as –

### **James 4:2**

***<sup>2</sup>...you do not have because you do not ask.***

That's why we sing that song, an old hymn – that's the second hymn that I learned in my life. First was – 'Oh, what a wonderful'. Remember, I came to Christianity with absolutely no Christian sings. I had a very strange life. An absolutely strange life. I have disconnected from Church completely because I grew up in a land where there was no Church. So, there was no Christianity at all. I didn't know a single Christian song until I got saved. That was when, I think I was 19 years old when I got saved in college, in the Bible study group. The first song I learned was, 'Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful day'. The second song is 'What a friend we have in Jesus!' What peace we often forfeit; what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

### **James 4:2**

***<sup>2</sup>...you do not have because you do not ask.***

The men and women who struggle but won't pray, the Bible, unfortunately, calls them 'the proud' and 'the self-sufficient'. First category – the curse of prayerlessness in our lives.

### **James 4:2**

***<sup>2</sup>...you do not have because you do not ask.***

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Second – the second category is those who pray but their prayers don't go much anywhere; maybe till the ceiling. *James 4:3-4*. This is not the prayer of the proud man; this is the prayer of the selfish man. You ask, you do not have because you do not ask,

### **James 4:2-4**

<sup>2</sup>...***Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*** (The first category – you do not ask. Second – those who ask.) <sup>3</sup>***You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*** <sup>4</sup>***Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

Proud people may think they pray but they don't pray; they proclaim. Do you remember the prayer of the Pharisee? He went into the temple; he thought he was praying. But he was not praying; he was making a proclamation. "Look at how cool I am." And he went home dignified. Proud people pray but they don't realise that they are not praying but are actually making a proclamation. The selfish man prays but his prayers may never be answered. To the proud man, God says,

### **James 4:2**

<sup>2</sup>...***you do not have because you do not ask.***

To the selfish man, God says,

### **James 4:3**

<sup>3</sup>***You ask and do not receive...***

Why? Why don't you receive? "I pray but I don't receive," why? Because,

***...that you may spend it on your pleasures.***

KJV will use the term 'Lust', On your lust or on your pleasures. Your motive is absolutely wrong. And *James 4:4* will say,

### **James 4:4**

<sup>4</sup>***Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

Once again, since the young children are here, let me clarify about 'the world'. The world here is not so much people; it can be people if they are extremely worldly people. World is so much people; it is not the earth, the world of nature; but the ungodly system in which we live that is set against Jesus Christ and it's coming Kingdom. So, Scripture says, "*Friendship with that world is enmity with God.*" There are different kinds of enmity. All enmity is not the same; there are different kinds of enmity. Like the little one last night told me this; I didn't understand what she was saying. She said, "I am kacchi (not in good terms) with Sammy." I said, "Why?" "He took my computer." That is also enmity. Enmity comes through different ways but this is a very innocent enmity. What is this enmity God is talking about, the most vicious form of enmity? It is caused through, what is called, 'adultery'.

I'll explain why God doesn't answer many prayers. The Church is the Bride to be married to Jesus Christ. The purpose of the ministry in the Church is to prepare the Bride for the marriage. *2 Corinthians 11:2*

### **2 Corinthians 11:2**

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***<sup>2</sup>For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.***

Now, before we got saved, let's use blunt words – we were all harlots in the world. We got saved, redeemed and now, He's cleansing us and wants to bring us to a point where we are a chaste virgin and offer us, spiritually, to Christ. That is the purpose of the ministry in the Church – for the marriage. How does it happen? –Primarily, through the ministry of the Word.

### **Ephesians 5:25-28**

***<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.***

So, first, Scripture says over there in verse 25,

***<sup>25</sup> ...and gave Himself for her,***

...to redeem her, for the penalty of sin; to save her from the world and then, constantly cleanse her from every worldly influence. What is He doing through the washing of the water of the Word? – Cleansing her from every worldly influence – spirit, soul and body.

### **Thessalonians 5:23**

***<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

And she can be presented as chaste virgin from every influence of the world. Pure, spotless bride, unspotted by sin or the world.

But the prayers of a selfish carnal Christian is not answered because it is to consume or spend on our pleasures. What does it mean? Let me explain it to you. So, today, I hope you get it very clearly. In this illustration, I cannot use any person because you'll get offended. Imagine a woman coming to her husband and tells him, "I want to take your car today and also, give me ten thousand rupees." And He asks, "For what?" "My boyfriend and I are going out and we'll be back Sunday morning." What do you think the husband will say? Usually, no woman would dare to ask something like that but God's people, brazenly, ask God, "Give me this so that I can go to the world and spend it with my boyfriend." The world is the enemy of Christ. The world is the one who is after your affections. "God, I want that dress." "For what?" "To go to the party because everyone is wearing it; that's the latest." "God, I want more strength." "For what?" "Because I want to go." "God, I want healing." "For what?" "So that I can go to serve the world, to spend it on my own pleasures." Just think for a minute and ask – the things that I have asked from God, where was it to be spent? What is it got to do with Christ? What is that got to do with the Kingdom? Anything? Nothing is neutral. Absolutely nothing is neutral. It takes one tinge or the other. If it is for Christ, it becomes holy. If it is not for Christ, it is called adultery. Whatever. What was it for? And when we got it, where did we spend it? Healing is a good thing but where are all those who got healed? Did they take their healing and come and say, "Lord, you healed me?" That's what Jesus said, "Ten of you were healed, right? Where are the remaining nine?" They took it; they went; they never came back. All ten were healed. One came back, he fell at his feet and said, "Lord, You healed me. I want to worship You." He asks Bartimaeus, "What do you want?" "I want to see." How many were healed of their blindness by Jesus? What does Scripture say? *Bartimaeus received his sight and he followed Jesus to Jerusalem.* Did he receive healing? Yes. Where did healing take him? Did you receive strength? Where did strength take you? Did you receive more money? Where has it taken you? Has it led to more commitment, more consecration to the King and the Kingdom or did you spend it on your own pleasures? You received more wisdom, to those who are in academia. When you received more wisdom, (I have seen in my own personal life) nine out of ten believers when they got more wisdom, they use their wisdom against the Kingdom of God, start justifying everything and make truth relative instead of using the wisdom like Daniel and standing there alone and say, "I will use the wisdom of God." Like Ravi Zacharias and all of them do, to use the

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wisdom of God as to contend against powers of darkness and show that the Kingdom of God is real but people do exactly the opposite. What did you use it for? One,

### **James 4:3**

**<sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

Let me ask you this question to that illustration about that woman, after the woman has said that, “Give me your car and give me your money,” is her husband now her friend or her enemy? – Enemy. After you have prayed a prayer similar, is God your friend or your enemy? That’s what God says,

### **James 4:4**

**<sup>4</sup> ...friendship with the world is enmity with God...**

You have made God your enemy. That’s what *verse 4* says,

### **James 4:4**

**<sup>4</sup> ...Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

And we don’t even realize, by our own very prayers, we have made ourselves enemies of God. That’s why one of the reasons the world has replace Christ with Santa. – Because, for so many Christians, God is just a glorified Santa who answers their wish list. In modern language, 21st century modern language, our prayers are basically, “Lord, will You subsidize my lust.” We love subsidies, right? “Will you subsidize my lusts, my pleasures? I have these lusts; I have these pleasures, and I’m looking at You to subsidize it.” So many prayers which may even look good outwardly are just carnal and worldly at the core. In *Philippians 4:19-20*,

### **Philippians 4:19-20**

**<sup>19</sup> And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

He says, “My God shall supply all your needs. You don’t have to worry,” he says. But the question is: when I ask, I pray and I receive, does it bring glory to God? How does it bring glory to God? How can the prayer of a selfish man ever bring glory to God? That’s why we need to look, not just the outward prayer; outward prayer can be couched in KJV language and sound so wonderful to human ears but God looks at the heart, at the motive. That’s why God says, “I first look in the heart; I don’t look at your prayer.”

If you had been at Shiloh, every year when Hannah came and she prayed, her prayer was the same. Every year, “Lord, give me a child.” People also say, “Oh, poor lady, crying out for a baby. Lord, touch her womb.” But why is she crying for a baby? – Because she wants a baby? No, because her co-wife of her husband. We have this ‘co’ usage in India. Husband has two wives. The other one has child after child after child and that one is making faces at her. “You? What are you? You are good for nothing. I have so many children. You are barren.” Now, why does she want a child? Because the other one has children. Just out of Jealousy, just out of envy, “Lord, give me a child as well.” Does God answer her? No, but if you were also going to Shiloh that day and were offering and you happened to be there the same time, you would feel sorry and say, “Lord, please answer this sister’s prayer.” God doesn’t answer. But finally, she’s broken; her heart and her prayers are align now to the will of God; and then, she prays, “Lord, if You touch my womb and You give me a child, I promise You – I will give that child back to you.” God said, “Answered. Now, that’s for My glory. You understood. That’s for My glory.”

The prayer of a proud man, prayer of a selfish man but God answers prayer. He loves answering prayer. Don’t ever think, “I’m sitting with a check-list,” He loves answering prayer because He’s a Father but He says, “My Kingdom is not according to your whim and fancy; everything in My kingdom has rules, principles and order set in. So, there is no variation with Me.” So, *verse 5* says,

### **James 4:5**

**<sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?**

Who is this Spirit? It is the Holy Spirit. So, we are talking about believer's prayer only. We are not talking about gentiles, unbelievers, nothing. *Romans 8:9* is very clear.

### **Romans 8:9**

***<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***

Simple. You cannot be clearer than that. If you don't have the Spirit of God, it doesn't matter how much theology you know, you don't belong to Him. You are just like some of my professors who knew the Bible very well but were literal sons of Belial, because they didn't have the Spirit of God. So, it doesn't matter how much theology we know, this is what makes us His because we are born of by the Spirit of God and we are His. So, *James 5* says, "*Don't you know, the Spirit who dwells in us yearns?*" For children who don't understand, this is more of an old English word, 'yearn' means to intensely long – "I'm yearning to go home." It's not just a simple longing; it's a very strong powerful feeling. He yearns. For what? For the complete possession of our heart, for loyalty to Christ; not the world. For Christ. Because it is through the world that the devil gets us to cheat on Jesus. Otherwise, the devil cannot. The devil gets us to cheat on Jesus through the world. So, the world is his mechanism. On the other hand, the Spirit of God who is in us is yearning intensely to bring us completely surrendered to Christ. First, note about the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we actually don't know how to pray. *Ephesians 3:18* says about praying in the Spirit,

### **Ephesians 6:18**

***<sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,***

Without the Spirit, we don't know how to pray. In all our prayer life, we need to, first of all, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you – often, for the Christian, prayer is a struggle; the study of the Word is a struggle; obedience to God is a struggle. Why? – Because there is very little of the Holy Spirit. What should be a pleasure... Tabitha, you're just married for two months. I don't know whether it is still a pleasure serving your husband. Is it still a pleasure? Why? It's not a struggle; even though there is struggle in it because, culturally, they are different. So, what he likes and what she likes are so different. Though there is struggle, there is enormous joy in their struggle. So, praying should be a pleasure, though there is struggle; studying the Word is a struggle but there is enormous pleasure; obeying God is a struggle but there is enormous pleasure. Simply because of the reason – you love Jesus. But is it a pleasure or is it a burden? Why? Because there is very little of the Holy Spirit; because the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched because He sees our open infatuation and flirting with the world and He's quenched; He's grieved and He withdraws. So, we end up coming to Church and we are miserable Christians. Think of a young teenager, who comes to his father and says, "Can I have five hundred rupees?" "Why?" "I want to go out with my friends." "No." Now, he's miserable; he's sulking; he's banging the door. Remember, he's banging the door. Yet, if you look into his life, he has everything. The father has given him everything but he's miserable. Why? – Because he didn't get that five hundred rupees to go out with his friends for a movie and party afterwards. That's how so many Christians are walking – miserable; but listen to Scripture.

### **1 Timothy 6:6-8**

***<sup>6</sup> Now godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. <sup>8</sup> And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.***

Now, let me ask you – is there anybody who hasn't eaten? Hasn't God given us enough clothing? How many of us are truly happy and grateful? I don't think there's one person here who has missed a meal because of lack, in almost three months of this year which has gone by; I don't think there's any person here who has gone one day because you didn't have clothes to wear; yet, we are miserable because we did not receive what we wanted to spend on our pleasures and our joy was not in a Person and a relationship with a Person. Our joy was actually in things. Did we eat? Yes. Are we dressed? Quite well. The question is then: why are we miserable? Are we sensitive to the Holy Spirit? Why? Are we still enamored with this world, the same world that crucified Christ? The Spirit that He has given us yearns intensely; intensely craves. How does the Spirit yearn? Jealously. Like I said, anger is good; anger is bad. *Be angry but do not sin.* Use it positively. Hatred is good; hatred is bad. Jealousy – yearns how? Jealously. Do you remember what God said when He gave the Ten Commandments?

## When My People Pray!

### Exodus 20:1-5

***And God spoke all these words, saying: <sup>2</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before Me. <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,***

I cannot be a jealous preacher. Why? Because there are plenty of preachers – better, worse than me. I'm not the only one; there are plenty of others. Peter, Abel, Raj – you cannot be jealous singers. Why? You are not the only one; there are plenty of others. You look into anything you are; you cannot be jealous because there are plenty of others; but God is the only One. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one." There's only one God and He says, "Therefore, I am a Jealous God if you try to make something or somebody into God because I'm the only One."

Nothing can take His place in our lives. One – He's the only one; two, He's married to Israel. Christ is to be married to us. So, there is a jealousy that is right in a marriage relationship. The one who is competing for our love for God or for Christ is the world. Who is the one who is competing for our love for Christ? It is the world. The devil doesn't come with his horns and says, "Love me." We will all run from him. No, he never does it. He comes through the world. That is why *1 John 2:15* says,

### 1 John 2:15

***<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world.***

Why? – Because they are directly in competition with the love of God in your hearts. Directly in competition. The question is: how sensitive are we to the Holy Spirit? We are still slaves of things. Look at *Hebrews 11:4*,

### Hebrews 11:4

***<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice...***

How did Abel offer a better sacrifice, a more excellent sacrifice? How did he offer it? – Because he was sensitive to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit said, "You want to offer a sacrifice?" "Yes." "Who do you want to offer it to?" "To God." He said, "Do you want to please God? This is the way to offer." He said, "Okay, Lord." Cain never asked. He said, "I want to offer a sacrifice and I'm going to do it the way I like it. You take it or you leave it." Abel was sensitive to the Holy Spirit. That's how he offered the sacrifice. He was sensitive to the ways of God.

### Hebrews 11:5-6

***<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.***

How did he please God? He was sensitive to the Holy Spirit. How? What is the only thing we know about Enoch? He walked with God. What does *Amos 3:3* say? "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Can they? He was extremely sensitive to the words of God he had heard. He didn't have a written Scripture but he had heard from God and everything that you hear from God is Scripture. He was extremely sensitive to the Word of God and he obeyed. He didn't grieve the Holy Spirit; he didn't quench the Holy Spirit. He obeyed and therefore, he walked with God. Question is: how sensitive are we to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit has said so many things. How sensitive are we? *Hebrews 11:7* says,

### Hebrews 11:7

***<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household,***

He worked; he made an ark in the middle of nowhere. How? He was extremely sensitive to the work of God. He was extremely sensitive to the work of God and the Holy Spirit. *Genesis 6:22* says,

### Genesis 6:22

***<sup>22</sup> Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.***

## When My People Pray!

In the next verse,

### **Genesis 7:5**

**<sup>5</sup> And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.**

He was extremely sensitive in his walk. Question is: how sensitive are we? Actually for me, *Hebrews 11* – Abel, Enoch and Noah – is actually the sum total of a marriage. Next wedding, you will hear from *Hebrews 11*.

Let me ask you this question: do you want a relationship with God? Can you have a relationship with God if you don't communicate with God at set hours? Can you build a relationship with one another unless you communicate at set hours? The ones with which you are very close are those with whom you communicate with at set hours, right? The first thing you see is worship. Human terms equal to fellowship. To all those who are married, let me ask you this question: do you have set hours where you talk? One of the reasons marriages never grow beyond a point is because there is no communication because there is no set hours. One of the reasons people don't grow in their relationship with God is because God can never depend upon them that they will turn up. God comes; they are not there. They are not there and the thing is that in every relationship it is this – if I want a relationship with God, then He sets the time and I adhere to it. I don't set the time. That's why the Psalmist says, "*Early in the morning or late in the night.*" Whatever it is where there is no distraction, He sets the time and I adhere to it. To those who are married, do you want a real relationship in your family? Your husband sets the time and you adhere to it. Otherwise, it will never happen. Some of you have to pursue your husband and say, "Set a time." And he says, "This is my time." Change your entire schedule. Otherwise, your marriage will be a sham. "This is my time; this is my best time I have for you." Say, "I'll take it and I'll change my entire schedule to fit it." That's how it works. Otherwise, it will not work. That's why the emptiness people feel is because there's no genuine relationship with God. You can have an incredible genuine relationship with God even if you don't experience one miracle in your life. Is it written that when Enoch walked, sparks flew? His shadow fell, people got healed? There's no miracle mentioned in Enoch's life at all of those three hundred years but he walked with God. Get this, young people. Get these things right in the beginning because if you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, that's the key in prayer. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit; it will lead to the next step in *James 4:6*,

### **James 4:6-8**

**<sup>6</sup> But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

Because if you and I are actually sensitive to the Holy Spirit, it will lead to increasing submission to God. That's the sign. How do you and I know that we're sensitive to the Holy Spirit? Simply look at your submission to God. Jesus was so sensitive to the Holy Spirit. "Arise, go to Galilee and get baptized." He went. Seventy miles. He got baptized, arose and Scripture says, "The Spirit led Him to go to the wilderness." He went to the wilderness. His disciples are baptizing; ministry has begun; ministry is flourishing; the Holy Spirit says go to Samaria. He gets up and goes to Samaria. Sensitivity leads to submission or obedience. See the order in which James has written it,

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God...**

There is a Holy Spirit who yearns for you jealously and if you are actually surrendering to that yearning, it will show in your submission to God. You'll submit to God because God resists the proud. Why? Because prayer is not some formula by which you can bend God's will to fit your own agenda. That's what all religions do and every religion, it is a mantra. What is the purpose of the mantra? You are using that to bend God to do your will. It is not bending your will to do God's purpose. It is bending God to do your will. Understand the difference. Prayer is ultimately submitting to the will of God. Trouble began in Eden when man said; what did man say? Or he didn't say; but he meant it. "Not Thy will but mine be done." Our example is not Adam; our example is Jesus. In *Matthew 6:9-10*, He says,

### **Matthew 6:9-10**

**<sup>9</sup> In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Whose will? His will. Continuously, this was His life. When He ends,

**Luke 22:42**

<sup>42</sup> **saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."**

This is all prayer. What is prayer? – Submitting to the will of God. Then, Scripture says, "When our lives starts being defined by submission to the will of God," He says, "we have confidence of our prayers being answered."

**1 John 5:14**

<sup>14</sup> **Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

We have the confidence that He hears us. That is why go back to *James 4:6-7*,

**James 4:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> **...gives grace to the humble."** <sup>7</sup> **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

The humble submit and obey. Everyone's growing older, I look at some of old video clips that I have of the GSS children, they were all chinna papas (little babies). Now, when I look at them, they all have grown. But the question is: yes, we have grown; but have you increased in your obedience? As young people, as children, can you say, "I have increased in my obedience to my parents or guardians"? Wives, sitting over here, have you increased in obedience to your husbands? The men sitting here, have you increased in obedience to Christ? That's the order – men to God; wives to your man; children to your parents or to your guardians – have you increased in your obedience?

Ask. It is all part of prayer. You are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, you submit to God and it doesn't stop there. Then, you have to resist the devil in your prayer. The problem is – without doing any of this, we all are resisting the devil. "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, I bind you," and he just sits there. Because he says, "You don't know the order; I know the order. I know Scripture very well. I was there when it was written and when it was spoken. I know; I have a memory which doesn't fade. He says, "I know the order in *James 4*. You are trying to skirt *verses 1-6* and then, say, 'I resist the devil'." He says, "It doesn't work." I don't have to resist the devil; I flee from the world. "*Resist the devil*," Scripture says. In prayer, do we resist the devil? Simple think about it when we are praying on our own and the phone rings; we are gone! How do you think the phone rings when you pray? It's the devil who rings. He will tell somebody, "Call now." Finished! Our prayer is gone. Children fight, milk boils over, all kinds of things happen when we are in prayer. Question is: do we resist the devil? Ultimately, what happens? We are praying now; we are talking on one level, thinking on another level. Has that happen to you? We are praying, talking on one level; but we are thinking on something else; how did that happen? It is the devil really. Can he do that? Oh, yes, he can." Do you remember the Parable of the Sower? The seeds that were thrown on the street, who took it away? – Birds of the air. Do you know it has happened today, this evening, when I was preaching, I could see the seeds being taken away? Do you know that, even when you are thinking, he is able to see that you don't hear what your ears are receiving and takes it away as soon as it falls? Do you think he can't do that? Scripture says that he can do that. He can not only take the thought away, he can also put thought into your mind. Do you know that? Read Scripture *John 13:2*,

**John 13:2**

<sup>2</sup> **And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,**

Who put that into his heart? The devil put that thought – 'Go out and betray Him.' That not his original thought but when he acted on it, it became his original thought. The devil can take a godly thought away and he can replace it with another thought, if we are not watchful in prayer. That's why God says, "Resist the devil in prayer; watch and pray because he is not afraid of anything else but prayer." He can take a thought away. That's why, after years of preaching of the Word in the ministry for one and a half hours on Sundays and Wednesdays, we see very little because it's just being taken away. Because we never truly come prepared for the Word. We don't fight this in prayer, realizing how important it is, eternally. That's why God says, "*Resist the devil. He will flee.*" Why? Because prayer is warfare. Someone truly said, "The devil laughs at our organizations, our crowd, our schemes but trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees." He's not worried by all these organizations, schemes, plans and programs; he is not bothered. But when he sees the weakest saint on his knees, he trembles because he knows, "Trouble starts now."

## When My People Pray!

It's very beautiful how James put it, if you come to *verse 8* (we are not looking at *verse 8* today but I will just show you what *verse 8* says),

### **James 4:8**

**<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God** (How do you draw near to God? Do you just walk? No, you draw near to God in prayer,) **and He will draw near to you.** (He says, "That will demand separation from the world, from you.") **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

What does it mean? He says, "When you come closer to God in prayer, you will suddenly realize that you have dirty hands, defiled hearts and split minds." That is why Thessalonians says, "He can make you blameless in the spirit, in the soul and in the body – 'I present you blameless at the hour of Jesus' Coming. Don't take it lightly.'" Prayer is serious. It is much more than asking something and getting something.

As I close today, I want to read something incredible. I have my daily devotions which I get from different sources in the world. This is a North Korean Christian who managed to escape. When he was told by an American missionary that, "We pray for you," he said, "You pray for us? We pray for you!" He said, "The problem with American and South Korean (the free side) Christians is that you have so much. You put your faith in your money and in your freedom. In North Korea, we neither have money nor freedom but we have Christ and we have found that He is sufficient." He said, "In North Korea, Christians don't pray for the freedoms American have." What is the "freedoms" we pray for? "Lord, I want a job." "I want money." "I want a raise." "I want help." "I want strength." "I want this." These are freedoms. He says, "In North Korea, we don't pray for the freedoms America has because freedom in Christ is something that can't be granted or taken away by the government." He says, "We do not pray for a regime change." Can you imagine it? He said, "We do not pray to God by saying, 'change the government in North Korea'. We don't pray for a regime change. We don't pray for more freedoms; we don't pray for money; we only pray for more of Christ and to mirror more and more of Christ in our lives; that's what we pray for." Are you understanding why those Churches are so strong, absolutely strong? But look at our prayer and their prayer. Our prayer is all for more freedoms; their prayer is for more of Christ. That's what prayer is. That's what God is talking about – "If My people who are called by My Name would humble themselves, pray, seek My face and turn away from their wicked ways, I will forgive you and I will heal your land." Amen? Shall we pray?

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, this evening, we just come to You, Father. Help us to see. Open our eyes, O God, that our real need is only You. More of You each day; less of us. This is told that man called the 'rich fool', he could gain the whole world and lose our soul. He could have everything the world has to offer and die miserable and lonely; yet, have Christ, have nothing and be content and have a song in the darkest night. That's the story of Your Church. The story of Your Church, triumphant Church has never been about more things, more freedoms; but more joy, more peace, more of Christ. I pray, Father, that as we are studying what true prayer is, we will learn to ask so that we will cease from fighting because You are the One who gives His own Son, who gives us everything that we need; that we will ask right that we will not spend it on our pleasures and on our lusts; that we will be truly sensitive to the Holy Spirit, constantly submitting to the Father, resisting the powers of darkness. Help us, Lord. Let this not just be mere theology. When servants of Yours, in the ancients paths, said, "There were kings; yet, they said, 'one day, in Your presence is worth a thousand elsewhere'." One day. Help us to love You, long for You, yearn for You as Your Spirit yearns for us. Then, when we are sent out, we go rejoicing because we know and we experience Your presence as we go out and as we serve You. Help us to know You are really what You say You are. We have no substituted one religion for another but we have left religion for a genuine relationship with a Living God, a relationship that keeps growing each day, Lord. Because of You, because You yearned intensely for us, we also, Lord, help us to yearn intensely for You so that, one day, we, too, can say, like Apostle Paul, for us, to live or to die is gain. Thank You, Father. As we go back to our homes, help us to meditate on Your Word. Thank You, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*