



BE THE BODY

INTERCESSION

Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Effectively engage the spiritual battle on behalf yourself, others, and the kingdom of God.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

We are tired of living in a twisted and broken world, and we long to see lasting authentic transformation. But how does real change happen? What can we do to truly and powerfully make a difference? Is praying about problems and hardships simply a churchie substitute for real action? Or is prayer something to do when nothing else can be done?

*"Is prayer your steering
wheel or your spare
tire?"*
-- Corrie Ten Boon

When considering the true nature of the problems we face, to be confused on the role prayer plays is not surprising. If we face a physical problem, physical solutions often work. But at the heart of humanity's problem is not a physical problem but a spiritual one. Though it is difficult at times to see, we live in a physical world with a spiritual war being waged all around us making intercession not only necessary but critical.

If we are honest, prayer can be difficult and feel like work. Scripture acknowledges this tension and encourages us still to roll up our sleeves and pray on! We are told to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" and to "be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." (Ephesians 6:18)

When writing to the Colossians, Paul describes Epaphras as one that is "working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis." (Colossians 4:13) Taken alone, one might quickly assume that Epaphras is doing something physical. Maybe he's raising money for them or counseling those in distress. But Paul identifies the work of Epaphras: "He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." (Colossians 4:12) So the intercession of Epaphras is referred to as *work* and as *wrestling*. It is this same type of work that God invites us into.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Has prayed thoughtfully—not rote prayers—for yourself and another person in the past 24 hours.
- Has actively asked others to pray for you in the past 3 weeks.

- Can identify a recent time where prayer was engaged with perseverance and as 'work'.
- Consistently prays for the spiritual journey and faith of others and not just when there is a health or financial crisis.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Luke 18:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you pray do you expect God to answer you? How easy is it for you to persevere in pray until you get an answer, whether yes or no? Write about a time that you felt like you did get an answer when you prayed.

Romans 8:26-27, 34

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you do not know what to pray, how could you lean into God's Spirit to help you?

Isaiah 55:6-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: What keeps you from praying to God for guidance for yourself or for others? In verse 8 it says 'my thoughts are not your thoughts', and verse 9 says "my thoughts are higher than your thoughts". How could seeking God's thoughts and ways through prayer affect your life?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: In what sense is prayer equivalent with doing battle? How could you use the power of prayer to “demolish strongholds and arguments”?

1 Chronicles 16: 8-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you come to God in prayer do you spend time first praising and acknowledging who he is? What would it do for your heart and head to start there?

Genesis 18:20-33

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently praying for the welfare of your city? How could you increasingly do so? What do you or could you talk with God about regarding where you live?

Matthew 5:43-44

Observations:

Discernment Question: What relationships or people are most challenging for you to love? Could you consider consistently pray for their wellbeing?

Philippians 1:3-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are your prayers an expression of your heart and passion? What are the people and situations in your heart that you could pray for?

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How fervently and frequently do you pray for the advancement of the gospel in the world? Why a lot? Why a little?

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: What motivates you to pray for leaders and government?

James 5:13-18

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you pray for the sick to be made well? Do you pray Big prayers asking God to move (like Elijah praying for no rain)? If not, how could you cultivate these two areas?

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Observations:

Discernment Question: What has encouraged you or intimidated you to ask for prayer? How could asking for prayer develop you as a prayer warrior?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on confession? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-

Memorize:

Ephesians 6:18 NIV

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

James 5:16 NIV

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.