

## How to Pray III

Fred R. Coulter—January 13, 2001

I was listening to a tape that Roger Kindel did, which is really good—where he showed how they are bringing the occult into everything; not only education, but into everything. And since he is a professor at a university he is well aware of all the policies they have in trying to instill the United Nations policies there. He gave a very good analysis of what has happened this last century—which was this: At the beginning of the century, in the United States, they basically believed in God. And as a matter of fact we were declared to be a Christian nation. Then this was challenged beginning with bringing evolution into the schools in the Scopes trial. So, you move from belief in God to doubt in God, and then the next step is to carry it further: you move to humanitarian things, human ways, human thinking. And then what happens after that, people begin to realize that humans are deficient. That is true because God made all human beings deficient. We're perfect in the flesh as far as functioning in the flesh, but we are deficient compared to God or living forever, or being just sufficient unto ourselves.

So, they transformed to this process unto this absolute of God, now it's over to the absolute of occultism—that's the final step. So, you go from God to doubting God, to humanism, to occultism. And then you have the absolutism of occultism, and it gets right down to earth-worship, Mary-worship and all of this. Now the 'new-agers' are worshipping Mary in droves, because God made us to need His Spirit. We are not sufficient unto ourselves, and if we don't go to God and we don't believe God then Satan is right there, 'Johnny-on-the-Spot,' to say, 'Here is the extra power you need. Here is the help that you need.'

So, instead of praying, people go to what? *They go to their astrologer* or they look at their sign in the newspaper to find out if they are going to a good day or a bad day. Now you can see the ad on television where you see this woman going through the tarot cards. All of these are Satan's substitute for God, and Satan's substitute for faith in God and prayer and trusting Him.

So when we have questions concerning prayer, which we all do, they are only answered by asking questions about God; because what you're doing, you're asking about God not just prayer. People can pray to demons and get answers. They can pray to Satan and get answers and fulfill evil—that is true.

I read the account of one 'new-ager'—and one of the things that the 'new-agers' do is that they

make their pilgrimage to India. When they're in India they get submerged into all of this demonic paganism of Hinduism, and its various branches. So there was this big, fat idol of some goddess that he was just ignoring. And after going through all the meditation and all the yoga—and all of those things, by the way, are designed to break you down mentally so that you accept the demonism—as he was leaving this temple, there was this idol of this goddess, so he prayed to it. And all of a sudden he was flushed with a great sense of power and serenity. So, you see, Satan *can* answer prayers. But the ultimate is that it's going to lead you to death. That's why he is called 'the god of this world.' And that's why he went over there, so he could go to the guru to get the proper transcendental meditation.

The comment was made that even companies today use transcendental meditation as a means of relieving stress. The problem is: Once you remove God, you're going to have a lot of stress, because you're either depending on your weak self—which you're going to find more and more sinful—or you're depending on other people who really can't help you, and you're not depending on God. So here comes Satan with the answer and says: 'Well, here's how to relieve stress: have transcendental meditation.' But the ultimate of that is for you to empty your mind of everything! And that's how the Hindus find god. And as Deepak Chopra said: 'Listen to the voice of nothing'—which is a contradictory statement in itself. How can you listen to the voice of emptiness?

Another comment was made that the company that he works for sent down a list of things on how to cope with stress in the workplace by the Dalai Lama. So all of those things are coming in. We need to understand the way that we're going to have proper prayer with God is

- to know God
- to love God
- to serve Him
- to understand His Word

Let's understand something about God: God delights in your prayer! He delights in your prayer whether you have sinned and you're repenting, or whether you haven't sinned and have confidence (as we covered last time), that 'if you're heart condemn you, God is greater than your heart.' And God knows that when you sin you are going to have a guilty conscience, because He gave the conscience so that it would become guilty, so you would go to

God and then have Him remove that guilt by forgiveness.

Let's come to Proverbs 15:29. One of the things that people encounter is that 'God won't hear me, I'm a sinner.' Well, that's why there's repentance. And also understand this: **God will answer anybody's prayer whether they are converted or not—if they truly pray to Him from the heart in a repentant attitude.** So that's why you have prayers that are answered, that God answers, by people who are 'in the Church of God'—because God made us deficient. So even at that level, when a person realizes how weak and deficient they are, God will answer! Now then, if you set your heart to sin, then the opposite happens, God is far away!

Proverbs 15:29: "The LORD is far from the wicked: but He hears the prayer of the righteous." And He delights in the prayer of the righteous. He delights to hear you pray. God has a very wonderful mechanism (that we'll see a little bit later on) that your prayers from your heart, that's what goes to God.

Another thing that is important, too: God is way off from the wicked, but **He is not way off from us.** Lot's of times we think that God won't hear us because He's so far away. Well, I'm inclined to believe, after reading the book of Revelation, what we call *heaven* and *God's throne* is not as far removed from the earth as we may think. The only thing is, we can't see it, because it's composed of spirit.

Notice here, Isaiah 55:6—this is to anybody: "Seek you the LORD while He may be found... [And that is anytime you're willing to repent and go to God, regardless as we covered—and I don't think any of us have committed the sin of Manasseh or Ahab, none of us!] ...call upon Him while He is near." Remember what Ahab did: Elijah came and said, 'You're going to die because of your sin.' So he repented, put on sackcloth and ashes and walked tenderly. God accepted that and told Elijah to go back and say, 'Ok, since you've done that I'm not going to bring this upon you in your lifetime.'

Now, here's the key, v 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way... [that's how you seek God] ...and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." And God will! God gives us:

- the way and the means of redemption
- of forgiveness
- of drawing close to Him

—because He made us to do that! So, I think we need to realize that; very important!

Now, whenever you think thoughts about God that are not right, understand this, v 8: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts... [For example: what if you have sinned or what if you have an attitude, or whatever it may be, and you think that God won't forgive you because you may hold something against someone or other. God will forgive you—you have to repent of it, that's all! You talk about clearing the mind and clearing the conscience and lifting the burden and cloud of darkness—that's how you do it! And God will do it.] ...neither are your ways My ways,' says the LORD."

1. You can't continue in your thoughts.
2. You can't continue in your ways.

You have to go God's way! That's just the way it has to be—there's no other way it can be!

Let's come to John, the fourth chapter, and let's see what we are doing. When we do this, we need to understand that God is also not only near—not only are His thoughts not our thoughts—but He is also seeking those to worship Him in the way that He desires. Maybe you've never thought about it. Have you ever thought about the fact that God desires you? You need to really think on that. He has not called the powerful of the world, the intelligent of the world, as we see there in 1-Cor. 1: 'You see your calling, brethren, not many mighty, not many wise, not many noble are called.' But He has called the things that 'are despised'; He has called the 'weak'; He has called the things that are nothing—so that He can do the impossible thing of taking all of those who think they are something and you are going to bring them to nothing! You can't have any greater calling. You can't have any greater thing in life that you can do than understand, by living God's ways, ultimately that is God's calling.

John 4:19: "The woman... [at the well in Samaria] ...said to Him [Jesus], 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews'" (vs 19-22). What Jesus is telling us here—two very important things:

1. The place where you worship or pray is not important.
2. The prayer is the important thing.

A little later

- we will see that you can *kneel*.
- we'll see that the Bible shows that they *fell*

*on their face*

- we'll see that they prayed *standing*

—and all of those. But *the place* is not important! It is the *prayer and the attitude* that is important—and who you worship. Notice, they claim that they worshipping the Father there, but Jesus said, 'You worship you know not what.' So therefore, you have to make sure that you have the right God' especially in today's world.

“We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers... [so this tells us that not only are there *true* worshipers but *there are false* worshipers: Those who worship God with idols or statues or through their own traditions. Those who depend on rosaries or beads or crucifixes or whatever, they are not worshipping God as true worshipers.] (The true worshiper): ...**shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth**... [That's why we have forsake our thoughts and forsake our ways, because they're not God's ways.] ...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner” (vs 22-23). God is seeking and God is in charge and control of the whole world, and He is seeking those who are seeking Him.

Hold your place here and come to Acts 17:27—after Paul says that God put us where we are on the earth, he says: “In order that they might seek the Lord... [If we're going to seek God and God is seeking us, we're bound to be found. There is no one on earth who cannot find God if they truly seek God and truly want to do His will—God will reveal Himself to them one way or the other. Now if, after He has revealed Himself to them, they turn from that, then that's another problem.] ...if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us.” Now, who's he talking to? *The pagan philosophers right there in Athens.*

**He's not far from us!** And part of the difficulty that we have as human beings is—that since God is spirit and we can't see Him, and since He is in heaven—we think that He's very far from us and we can't find Him. Well, that's not the case. We have to seek God, and God is seeking us.

Verse 28: “For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; for *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent” (vs 28-30). There's the same message. We see the

same message all the way through in everything that is done.

Now, let's come back here to John 4:24—here's why we do it: “God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” Just like we saw last time how that it's *obligatory* that you believe that He exists. It's also *obligatory* that you worship Him 'in spirit and in truth'—that's why He doesn't need any of the idols or the things that so many men have in their religions.

Question was asked: What about people who are seeking God? Well, that doesn't necessarily mean that God is going to call every one of them. What about the Churches of God? What about those who follow a man and they are sincere and they have the Spirit of God? Just remember, there are seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3 with their various sins and difficulties and problems which God has said to every one of them: *Repent!* So that's why it's so important in your relationship with God, through prayer, that you always remain in an attitude of repentance. To be called unto salvation is another whole thing that God does. God doesn't desert even carnal people in the world. It's good to have carnal people in the world to have some knowledge of God, to have some knowledge of Christ.

Now, let's carry this a little bit further. Let's first of all go to Revelation, the fifth chapter, and let's see how God does this. God has seven spirits which are His eyes, and they do the work for Him in seeking out those who are seeking Him. Notice, Christ is the One Who directs them. This is in addition to the Holy Spirit, which is a begetting from God the Father.

Revelation 5:6: “Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns [seven churches] and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God that are sent into all the earth.” So God is in close communication to what's going on on the earth. God knows what's going on on the earth. And as we pointed out last time, the will of God is constantly, always being done, whether in righteousness or punishment for sin—one way or the other.

- No one is exempt from the will of God.
- No one is exempt from the laws of God.
- No one is exempt from what God has placed in motion any more than they are exempt from their own being.

Since God has given choice, rather than force us, then it seems as though God is way off and God is far away, and God won't hear—especially if you have a really heavy burden; guilty conscience. You may think God won't hear you at all. But it is your

conscience that is telling you that, rather than God.

Now, let's come to 2-Chronicles 15 and let's see how this works. And the greatest way that we seek God is: Seek God in prayer, and also seek God through His Word. Just like we are not to carry out our own will in the name of God, neither are we to carry out our own understanding of the Word of God, but rather we are to let the Word of God interpret the Word of God and be as God would have it be for us.

2-Chronicles 15:1: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa... [Apparently Azariah was one of the prophets of God.] ...and said unto him, 'Hear you me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; **the LORD is with you, while you be with Him; and if you seek Him, He will be found of you...** [In other words, you will find Him. And that's the very reason for our creation, that we may seek Him.] ...but... [because there's choice involved] ...if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (vs 1-2). That's where people really get themselves into trouble.

Verse 3—this was a time when Israel apostatized and left God: "Now for a long season Israel has been without the true God... [Because they went after Baal and Ashtoreth] ...and without a teaching priest... [And, of course, if there's no one to teach then how can they learn?] ...and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them" (vs 3-4). That goes right back to where we first started.

"And in those times there was no peace to him that went out... [That's why people have lives in distress, anxiety, frustration and upset; because they're not seeking God, and they are not turning to Him, and they are not asking God for the help. That is a natural result of really not seeking God. You seek God through prayer.] ...nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.... [Just look at our nation today. Look at all the trouble and vexation and crime and all of that.] ... And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. Be you strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded" (vs 5-7). So we also have works, which we are to do, which shall be rewarded—the main one is **seeking God!**

"And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the

LORD. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.... [and here's the key]: **...And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul"** (vs 8-12). That's the important thing. Those that God has called and received the Holy Spirit have entered into that covenant. And this is what we also are to do.

Now then, the prophet said, 'All right, you're going to have peace.' God gave them peace from all the enemies round about. In our lives we will have peace—mentally—because we have the Holy Spirit of God. We let God bear all the burdens because that's why Christ died and was crucified—that He will take the burden. He says, 'You take My burden, which is life; and My way, which is simple.' Put it all on Christ. You don't have to have those things that plague you all the time.

2-Chronicles 16:9—Asa backslid. Instead of relying on God, after God had blessed him, he began to rely on the kingdom of Syria. So therefore, here is the message that came to him: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro... [those are those seven spirits that we saw, the seven eyes of God] ...throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.... [A perfect heart is a *repentant* heart.] ...Herein you have done foolishly: therefore, from henceforth you shalt have wars."

Let's show an example here in the book of Daniel concerning Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was not called to salvation, but did God deal with him? *Yes, He did!* Did God correct him? *Yes, He did!* Did Nebuchadnezzar repent as a result of what he went through? *Yes, he did!* Does that mean that he's going to be in the Kingdom of God? *No!* The whole lesson that God wanted men to know, and Nebuchadnezzar to know, we find in:

Daniel 4:32—that these things would come upon him "...until you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will." Now, this has to show that God is actively involved in the world—doesn't it? God is involved in different things that take place. Was He involved with the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar? *Yes!* Was He involved with His people there? *Yes!* Was He involved with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego? *Yes! All at*

*different levels. All in different degrees.*

Verse 34—when he came to his senses: “And at the end of the days... [the seven years where he was driven from men, to eat grass as an ox and he ended up looking like the worst ‘hippy’ in the world.] ...I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that lives for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.... [So, here God dealt with him. He’s praying to God—isn’t he? *Yes, he is!*] ...And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing... [Did he learn his lesson? *Yes, he did!*] ...and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, ‘What do You?’” (vs 34-35). That’s quite a thing—isn’t it?

So God does deal with people at different levels. God is dealing with us at the level of calling us unto salvation. That’s what we need to understand.

Let’s continue on with this, that you need to seek God. Let’s come here to Psalm 119:151, and there’s a blessing in doing it. This also tells us something very important: “**You are near, O LORD...** [that is the thing I want us to really grasp today in understanding about prayer: *that God is near!* So therefore, whatever you pray, wherever you pray, *God will hear!*] ...and all Your commandments are Truth.” Gets right back to commandment-keeping—doesn’t it?

Not only do we have to realize that He is near, but we also have to realize that God delights in hearing our prayers. But also, this has to be our attitude toward God while we’re seeking Him and discovering His will. As you begin to understand the commandments of God, always understand this: Please, when you study the Bible, *go to the simple to the complex*. Most people go from the complex to the simple and they get derailed, because they can’t understand the complex until they can understand the simple. You cannot understand high school material if you’re just entering kindergarten. You have to come to certain levels of understanding. That’s why you seek God and keep doing it. Once you understand what you need to do, then you continue that.

Psalm 40:8—here’s the attitude of Christ when He was here on the earth: “I delight to do Your will, O my God... [We delight in doing God’s will. We delight in understanding God’s Truth.] ...yea, Your law is within my heart.” That’s what we need to do also. If we do that, that’s going to restore an awful lot of joy to your life. Give you greater

confidence that your prayers are going to be answered, and also keep you in a situation then where you’re going to be relying on God in everything that you do. And that’s the whole purpose of why we do what we do, and pray, and everything else.

Proverbs 15:8: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD... [You might put down there, *Cain.*] ...but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but He loves him that follows after righteousness” (vs 8-9). That’s really the difference between Cain and Abel, right there. So therefore, when you’re coming to God just understand that. As we started out, prayer is a relationship between you and God. But, as we’ll see a little later on, it also develops into a relationship between you and others, because you just don’t pray for yourself. It’s not a ‘shopping list.’ We need to understand that when we come to pray, through Jesus Christ in His name, that He is God; the Father is God; and He has revealed the Father to us. That’s what we need to understand. That’s why it’s so important to have that belief (as we covered last time). ***We need to believe.*** Now what do you do when your belief sort of wanes a little bit? There are times when you have more faith than at other times.

Let’s come to Mark, the ninth chapter. This happened to the disciples and they were right there with Christ. They also went out and they had the tour that they went on, preaching, casting out the demons, healing the sick, and so forth. When Christ came back from the Mt. of Transfiguration, there was this huge crowd gathered around:

Mark 9:14: “And after returning to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and the scribes disputing with them. And all the people who saw Him ran to *Him* at once in great amazement and saluted Him. And He asked the scribes, ‘What are you disputing with them?’ Then one from the multitude said, ‘Master, I brought my son who has a dumb spirit to You; for wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and gnashes his teeth, and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples, in order that they might cast it out, but they did not have *the power.*’ And He answered him, saying, ‘O faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.’ Then they brought him to Him. But when the spirit saw Him, *it* immediately threw him into convulsions; and he fell down on the ground *and* began rolling about *and* foaming *at the mouth.* And He asked his father, ‘How long a time has this *demon* been with him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood’” (vs 14-21).

Now how can demon spirits come upon a

child or children? *By parents who live in disobedience to God, break the commandments of God, delve into the occult, delve into the spirit world and things like that.* I don't know what the father did. Obviously, this happened to him when he was a child. Could it be that the child goes out and gets involved with other people who are involved in it? However it comes about, children can be demon-possessed.] “For it often throws him both into the fire and into the water, that it might destroy him. But if You have the power *to do* anything, have compassion on us *and* help us.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes’” (vs 22-23). And that is the key in everything.

- your relationship with God
  - your prayers to Him
  - your study of His Word
  - the way that you live
- and so forth.

Notice, there's no restriction. If you *believe*—and that means: *with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul* the same way that you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. Now let's just stop here and ask the question: What do you do when you have a doubt? What do you do when something comes along and makes you doubt God?

- First of all, it could be your carnal nature just trying to trip you up.
- Next, it could be you're not close enough to God so you begin to doubt.

Like Peter when he was walking on the water. And Peter says, *Is it You, Lord?* and He says, ‘Yes.’ *Well, bid me to come.* He says, ‘Come.’ So he started walking on the water, and he began to doubt because he looked at the circumstances, and the circumstances were more than he could handle. So what do you do what you have a doubt? You grab it and you put it right smack in the middle of the table (figuratively speaking) and you begin to eat away at that doubt by the Word of God.

I remember in my first year at Ambassador College I had to do a paper against evolution. So I got this book about evolution. You start reading along and after a while it sounds real plausible. And it said that when there was a drought the monkeys came down out of the trees and started gardening and started eating the things on the ground. Well, I said, all right, I'm going prove this. So I got another book and I was reading about drought in Africa. And what happened with the drought in Africa, rather than the monkeys coming down and becoming farmers, they died. So his whole supposition was wrong! That's what you need to do. If there are

some parts of God's Word you don't understand, well then, don't disbelieve God, find out how to understand it. If the circumstances around you are so horrendous that you just feel like you're in a great sinkhole and falling down, God is still greater than that. You still must believe in God!

“And Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, **all things are possible to the one who believes.**’.... [Because He knew the lack of belief with this man. Notice, this is unqualified. It doesn't say all things some of the time, or some things all of the time; but these are *all things*.] ...And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, ‘Lord, I believe. **Help my unbelief.**’.... [and that's where most of us get ourselves in trouble, we don't go to God and ask Him to help us with our unbelief. We don't go to God and say, ‘God, I've had such a rotten attitude here that I've actually disbelieved You.’ I've gone contrary to Your Word. Forgive me. Help me to draw close to You.] ...Then Jesus, seeing that the multitude was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you *to* come out of him, and you are not allowed to go into him any more!’ And after crying out and throwing him into severe convulsions, it came out; and he became as dead, so much so that many said, ‘He is dead!’” But Jesus took him by the hand *and* lifted him up, and he arose. And when He came into a house, His disciples asked Him apart, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’.... [v 29 is the key]: ...Then He said to them, ‘This kind cannot *be made to* go out by anything except **prayer and fasting**’” (vs 23-29). So the two go together.

(go to the next track)

So there are times when you need to just set aside that time and to do so in exactly that way. When you are coming to God in that way, you need to really just grow in your belief and comprehension that God loves you. Part of the problem that we have in many of the things that we do that we don't believe God, that we don't come to God, *is because we don't believe He loves us.* So when you pray and you come to God, you have *to understand that God is love.* That's the very reason why He called you. That's the very reason why He even deals with carnal people in the world, because He loves the world. What does it say? *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believes on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.*

This is all a part of your prayer; that you know that God loves you. You can't pray to God if you think that He hates you. You can't pray to God if you think He's your enemy. No! You have to know that He loves you.

1-John 4:8: “The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.... [Now this also tells us that if we are deficient in our knowledge of God, then we don’t understand the love of God as we ought to. And then you cannot love others, you cannot love God and your prayers then will become very mechanical.] (But here’s the whole thing): ...In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (vs 8-9). Now, in praying, when you’re praying to the Father, it’s perfectly all right to pray to Jesus Christ, as well, too.

- Thank Him for what He did
- Thank Him for His lov
- Thank Him for His goodness and the things that He did to call us

“In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [so it doesn’t come from us, it comes from God.] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.... [meaning that you constantly go to Him; constantly come to Christ. God made you to need Him. God made you to be deficient. God made you so that you, by nature, have sin. So therefore, He is the ‘propitiation,’ *the continually atoning mercy from God*. This is what we need to realize.] ...Beloved... [this shows what we need to do] ... if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another” (vs 10-11). Now, there are many relationships you can have with people: professional, friendships—but to have a loving relationship is entirely different! This is why, in your prayers, that you need to have a loving relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Hold your place here and let’s come to the Gospel of John, chapter 1. The very fact that He made us this way; the very fact that He created us this way and has given us the choice to seek Him; when we seek Him this is what’s so important. Jesus Christ knows and understands completely what it’s like to live in the flesh. He knows and understands completely what it is like to fight sin. He knows and understands completely what it is like to fight and resist Satan the devil. That’s why this verse is here:

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us... [meaning He lived just a short, temporary life] ...(and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth.... [That’s why when we come to God the Father and Christ in prayer—full of grace, full of Truth, full of love, full of faith, which They impart to us.] ...John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, “He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before [existed] me.”’ And of His fullness **we have all received, and**

**grace upon grace**” (vs 14-16). Now, when you come to God in prayer and receive of God, receive of His Spirit, receive of His grace, receive of His love, His faith and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Now, understand this: Christ never runs out of fullness.

Let’s also understand of this ‘fullness.’ Let’s come to Colossians, the second chapter. This adds to our faith. This adds to our understanding. This adds to our belief. And when we come to God then we can have much more confidence. Now, all of the things that I’m talking about here today is to build that confidence that you can have toward God, so that your heart does not condemn you; so that you have boldness toward the throne of God, that we come boldly before the throne of grace and mercy and truth.

Colossians 2:6: “Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (vs 6-8). And when you start doing that, then you start being taken away from God—step-by-step.

Notice v 9: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily... [Is Christ eternal? *Yes!* Is He spirit? *Yes!* Will He ever run out of fullness? *No!*] (That’s why): ...and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power” (vs 9-10). So these are the things then which give us confidence. These are the things then which bring us close to God:

- that we know that He will hear us
- that He will answer our prayers
- that He will be with us
- that He loves us
- that He cares for us
- that He has called us
- that we seek Him and He seeks us
- and He’s near

Let’s come back to 1-John 4:12: “No one has seen God at any time.... [No one’s going to go up to heaven and see Him. Remember what Paul wrote? He said, ‘What we’re talking about with Christ, you don’t have to say *well, who’s going to go across the ocean to find Him for us and bring Him to us. Who’s going to descend into hell and bring Him up to us, or who’s going to ascend up into the heavens to bring Him to us—no, He’s near!*] ...Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.” And this is what we need:

- We need the love of God, which then will give us the right perspective concerning His laws.
- We need the love of God, which will give us the right perspective of faith.
- We need the love of God, which will give us the right perspective in believing and understanding of God's way.

“By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us” (v 13).

Nothing increases the awareness of God's Spirit in you than prayer. Prayer is the key, fundamental, important thing in our relationship with God. That's how then you know that you have His Spirit in you. You know that He loves you and cares for you—and all of those things. When you don't pray and you go on without praying, these things come as big doubts in your mind. Then in some ways you can say, 'I've sinned. I deserve it. So therefore...' Then you try and become your own savior. You try and bury your own sins. Maybe you haven't thought of it that way, but I know I've talked to many people that get real down and depressed that way and think, 'Well, I've left God so I deserve this.'

It's kind of like this movie that I saw on television, *Les Miserables*—the miserable ones. And it was a pretty good movie to watch and they had some good points. So anyway, in order to escape from the police the Jean Valjean and the little girl that he purchased from these people to save her, and the only way to escape from the police was to go in this convent. So they hired as a gardener for five or eight years. Just before he left as the gardener for the convent the detective, who was the chief of police, who was 'law and order' and after him—no compassion, no mercy, no understanding. He was justice and law! So came to talk to the Mother Superior. So the Mother Superior was questioned: 'Did you hire a gardener?' *Yes*. 'Can I see him?' *No, because you'd have to go through our area where the nuns are and that's forbidden*. 'Well, could you bring him to us?' *No*. 'Did he have a little girl with him when he came?' *No*. And so, he left; wasn't satisfied, but as soon as the detective went out the door, the Mother Superior said, 'Sister, come here. I've lied. I've sinned.' So, she had this little whip and she says, 'Beat me with 30 lashes and don't spare.'

Now, that's what happens when you're really not trusting in God! You then take your own punishment and you become your own sin-bearer. That's why we are told in the model prayer, which we'll get to a little later, 'forgive us our sins'—and it's a daily prayer—right? Do we need forgiveness

every day? *Yes!* That's another key, as we've already covered.

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world.” And He is your Savior; your personal Savior. So personal, that with His Spirit in you—Christ in you—is the hope of glory that you have. Now, this ought to really help us just draw close to God. I know I talked to a woman on the phone the other day and she said, 'I was thinking about prayer a couple of weeks ago...'—in other words, she had some difficulties in praying. And all of sudden, here comes the tape on *How to Pray*. So she was really happy to get it because it really helped her. One of the things we need to understand is this: The way that you keep up the seeking, the believing, the loving, and your zeal and all of these things is to understand that this is a continuous, growing, ongoing thing.

Now let's also understand that when you sin there are consequences. And the more seriously you sin the consequences are there even though you may repent to God, as David did with the situation with Bathsheba and killing Uriah the Hittite, the consequences remain. God said, 'You will have trouble in your household the remainder of your life.' So sometimes the consequences remain. We just need to be thankful that God has forgiven our sins.

I know of a case of a woman who read the Scripture where if 'right hand offend you, cut it off'—she went out and cut it off! Laid it on the chopping block and took a hatchet and cut it off. Well, she later realized that was sin, but the consequences of cutting off the hand was still there. She's thankful that she didn't go out and use a guillotine and take off her head. So even in that, God is merciful. We need to understand that.

Now, this becomes so important in our attitude toward God and how we come before the throne of God. This way then we can have trust. God knows even the most wicked thought in your mind—He knows it! God is there to save you from your sins. Sometimes He'll let the consequences stay there; as it was for David that he'd never do it again—though He forgave the sin.

Verse 15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.” And that's what you want to keep growing—Christ in you! Remember, if you leave Him, He will leave you. If you seek Him you will find Him and He won't leave you and He will always be with you. Now then, there will come a time, if you leave Him to a certain extent, that He's going to create circumstances to bring you back. So, in that case



then, you become like the prodigal son or the prodigal daughter. If He is in you and dwelling in you, that will happen because He's not going to lose anyone.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed... [That's what's so important in everything—**believe!** 'If you believe all things are possible,' that's what Jesus said. We'll look at some of those a little later on.] ...the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him." And this is what it needs to come to. We come. We're called out of the world—carnal, miserable and sinful—and we're called to become the very son or daughter of God. And that whole process of conversion and growing is a continuous thing. It is the greatest work that can be done on earth. It's the greatest thing that can be possible for anyone.

Notice, v 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected... [mature; complete] ...within us, so that we may have [boldness] confidence in the day of judgment... [We want boldness in the day of judgment, and we want boldness even now.] ...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God... [this is where it needs to come to in our relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ and us, through prayer, we understand as we grow in love; we diminish the fear.] ...rather, perfect love casts out fear... [constantly casting out fear] ...because fear has torment... [Whenever you have a fear of something that it starts tormenting you, then you know it's a fear that you've taken too far. Don't let it obsess you. Don't let it torment you.] ...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (vs 17-18). So, it's just like putting a log-jam. It's stopping. You can't let it do it.

And always remember this: **We love Him because He loved us first.** And we're going to see in every one of these things, every one of the things that we go through, it is God *first* and then neighbor! That's fundamental with everything that God does. You have the commandments—how are they? *First four to God; last six toward man.* You have the model prayer, which we will see a little bit later on—what do we do? *We pray to the Father, we glorify His name, ask His will be done, ask that our sins be forgiven—as we forgive other sins. Then it has to do with our neighbor and our brother.*

Now, let's come to Psalm 56—this also shows us how we approach God when we are in trouble; when we are afraid. Too many times when trouble comes we don't go to God. Too many times when we get afraid we don't trust and believe God—we doubt Him.

Psalm 56:1: "Be merciful unto me, O God... [I believe a lot of these are the words of Christ—just see how it fits Christ.] ...for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresses me.... [no one was ever after David in quite that way. Were they after Christ that way all the time? *Yes!*] ...Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O You Most High. **What time I am afraid, I will trust in You**.... [that is a key, and that is going to be a key as we get closer to the end-time. Do not be afraid! Do not have fear!] ...In God I will praise His Word, in God I have put my trust... [Notice all of these things go together: **belief, faith, mercy, love, deliverance**—all of those things, all are a part of what God does.] ...I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (vs 1-4). That's got to be directly referring to Christ. But then again, can be referring to David or any of us. Why should we fear what man can do? What did Jesus say? He said, 'Don't fear men who are able to take the life, and after that able to kill you, and after that can do no more. But fear he who is able to kill the body and the life.'

Notice, v 5: "Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.... [and I can just see the priests and the Pharisees there at the temple hiding behind the pillars and watching and waiting for Christ to come in, that they may get Him. Or, sending out some of their spies, wherever they were, to try and catch Him in His preaching and so forth.] ...Shall they escape by iniquity? In Your anger cast down the people, O God.... [Did that happen with the destruction of Jerusalem? *Yes!*] ...You tell my wanderings: put Your tears into Your bottle: are they not in Your book?" (vs 5-8). That has to be figuratively of Christ.

Now, hold your place here and come back to Hebrews, the fifth chapter. Let's see something about how Christ prayed earnestly, with tears! I imagine that there were a lot of times that Jesus really cried, because He knew what He gave up. He knew what He did! He knew what He relinquished to come and save human beings.

Hebrews 5:7: "Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because *He* feared God.... [this is the right kind of fear. What we were talking about in 1-John 4 is the wrong kind of fear. This is the right kind; to hold God in awe!] ...Although He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience from the things that He suffered... [So what we're reading there in Psa. 56 about what Christ was going

through—and I think that applies directly to Him—that’s how He was being perfected.] ...and having been perfected... [those are some of the things that made Him perfect and to give perfect understanding to every human being] ...He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him” (vs 7-9).

Now, let’s come back to Psalm 56:8: “... You my tears into Your bottle... [of course not; that’s only figuratively speaking.] ...are they not in Your book? When I cry unto You, then shall mine enemies turn back: **this I know; for God is for me**.... [that can be the greatest confidence that you can have; this is totally the opposite of the world. The world has self-esteem. You get more esteem when you know that God is for you. You have more confidence when you understand that God is near you.] ...In God will I praise His Word: in the LORD will I praise His Word. In God will I praise His Word: in the LORD will I praise His Word. In God have I put my trust...” (vs 10-11).

If you know that God is for you, then you will put your trust in Him—and that is the whole purpose of prayer:

- that you believe Him
- that you trust Him
- that you love Him
- that you have faith in Him

“...**I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.** Your vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto You. For You have delivered my soul from death...” (vs 11-13). Remember this: ***If you have the Spirit of God you have passed from death to life!*** Because even though you die in Adam, God counts you as living forever! That’s why when Jesus was confronted by the scribes and Pharisees, and He said, ‘Before Abraham was, I AM.’ Having that trust! They said to Him, ‘How can you know Abraham, you’re less than 50-years-old?’ And He said, ‘God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’ So He counts Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as though they are living, ***because the resurrection is sure!*** So you need to have that kind of attitude, too.

“For You have delivered my soul from death; will not You deliver my feet from falling... [That’s all part of the prayer: ‘deliver me from evil.’] ...that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (vs 12-13). Quite a Psalm! And in reading it, you can just see the life and the attitude and the attitude of Jesus Christ all the way through.

What did He tell the Pharisees when they came to Him? He says, ‘*I know you.* If you would have listened to the words of Moses, you would believe Me. I know that you do not have the love of God in you.’ Satan and the demons and those men

after Him all the time—Psa. 56 really brings that out.

Now let’s come back to Psalm 40:1—this is all a part of trust. We don’t want in ourselves. We don’t want to trust in other people. We don’t want to trust in the flesh. And we don’t want to trust in our own imaginations because those things will deceive us.

Psalm 40:1: “I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.... [All of these things are how you have your prayers answered.] ...He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay... [God delivers us from many, many difficult problems. And sometimes you feel like you have been sucked into a problem just like you’re stepping in miry clay; and that won’t let you go. If you really get stuck in that miry clay, there’s no way you’re going to get out of it. That’s why it’s here.] ...and set my feet upon a Rock... [which is Christ] ...and established my goings.... [That’s all a part of answered prayer.] ...And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies” (vs 1-4). So all these things are there to really deliver us.

Let’s continue on with *trusting in the Lord*. Last time was *to believe*. This time it is *to trust*. Let’s come to Psalm 141. Know and understand this: ***You can trust in God at all times.*** Here, if you have had a difficult time, Psalm 141 is a good Psalm for you to use. If you run out of words and say, ‘I don’t know what to say.’ Then open the book of Psalms.

Psalm 141:1 “LORD, I cry unto You: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto You. Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (vs 1-3). He was having a hard time with himself—wasn’t he? He was like Ann Richards said of George Bush Sr.: ‘He was born with a silver foot in his mouth.’ Lots of times we go around and we say things, and we do things, and finally when we get to the point of disgust, we go to God and we just ask Him: *Put a guard on my mouth. Give me some understanding, wisdom—God, I’m stupid!* I know all of us have said that many times.

“Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties. Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their

calamities” (vs 4-5).

Psalms 142:1: “I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble... [Now, that’s what to do when you have great problems.] ...When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me” (vs 1-3). Verse 6: “Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors... [that is from whatever troubles you may have] ...for they are stronger than I.

Psalms 143:1: “Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in Your sight shall no man living be justified” (vs 1-2). No, the only way you can be justified is through Jesus Christ.

All of these things are so powerful in giving you understanding of *how to pray*, because it is all with your spirit, with you mind, with your heart and everything that is part of your being.

Let’s go to Psalm 62:8—It’s interesting in going through and learning about *how to pray* and all of this, we are going through so many of the Psalms. “Trust in Him at all times... [When you trust in your own self and your own devices, you know you’re going to trick yourself into sinning—no doubt about it!] ...you people, pour out your heart before Him... [That’s how you should pray. And God knows your heart and God wants your heart to be pure. And how does He purify your heart?

- Through repentance!
- Through forgiveness!
- Through His Word!
- Through His Spirit!
- Through His love!

...God is a refuge for us. Selah. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.... [In other words, don’t trust in politics!] ...Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongs unto God.... [So if riches do increase, God is the One Who gives it to you—it’s not of your own might.] ...Also unto You, O Lord, belongs mercy: for You renders to every man according to his work” (vs 8-12).

Psalms 52—this is another good Psalm: “Why boast you yourself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually. Your tongue

devises mischief; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.... [That’s why James said if you can control the tongue, if you can bridle the tongue, you can bridle the whole body.] ...You love evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. You love all devouring words, O you deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy you forever, He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, and root you out of the land of the living. Selah. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength... [he trusted in other things; not in God] ...but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness” (vs 1-7).

You can apply that to all the rich of the world and their day is coming in the day of the judgment of the great Babylon.

“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God... [that’s what we need to be] ...I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise You forever, because You have done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before Your saints” (vs 8-9).

Old Testament Scriptures from the *King James Version*  
New Testament Scriptures from *The New Testament in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 15:29
- 2) Isaiah 55:6-8
- 3) John 4:19-23
- 4) Acts 17:27-30
- 5) John 4:24
- 6) Revelation 5:6
- 7) 2 Chronicles 15:1-12
- 8) 2 Chronicles 16:9
- 9) Daniel 4:32, 34-35
- 10) Psalm 119:151
- 11) Psalm 40:8
- 12) Proverbs 15:8-9
- 13) Mark 9:14-29
- 14) 1 John 4:8-11
- 15) John 1:14-16
- 16) Colossians 2:6-10
- 17) 1 John 4:12-18
- 18) Psalm 56:1-8
- 19) Hebrews 5:7-9
- 20) Psalm 56:8-13
- 21) Psalm 40:1-4
- 22) Psalm 141:1-5
- 23) Psalm 142:1-3, 6
- 24) Psalm 143:1-2
- 25) Psalm 62:8-12
- 26) Psalm 52:1-9

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- 1 Corinthians 1
- Revelation 2 & 3

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