

Keys to Answered Prayer X

Fred R. Coulter—February 3, 2007

Today we're going to continue with the *Keys to Answered Prayer*. Let's look at the epitome of human nature, inspired of Satan the Devil, which is where human beings have to come from in order to establish a relationship with God, and it cannot be done by human beings themselves. It must be God Who does it.

Now let's come to 2-Thessalonians, the second chapter; I just want to cover a couple of verses here. Because this is the way human beings are; and it struck me the other night, I was watching the news, and you know if you watch the 'fair and balanced' it gets to be a shouting match and everything gets contentious. And so they were talking about different things, and obviously those who have the more satanic, political agenda are the ones who resist anything. For example: Everything that Bush does is wrong. Everything the Republicans do is wrong. Everything that Christians try and do is wrong. And they even interviewed an atheist and he was targeting teenagers to have them renounce Jesus and embrace Satan—that was his goal.

Now what this does, it shows the epitome of human nature under the influence of Satan the devil. And of course, we've all been out there in the world. So hold your place here in 2-Thessalonians and come to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let's see what we are in the world; because we need to begin with where we were and then understand where we need to go to, because this is all a part of answered prayer and our relationship with God and our attitude toward God.

Now Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins... [So the thing is this: carnal human beings are nothing but walking dead people—do they not have 'the law of sin and death' in them? *Yes, indeed!* God is merciful in that He gives them breath and life. And if you don't keep breathing, you're dead—just as simple as that, a few seconds.] ...In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [So there we are out in the world] ...according to the prince of the power of the air... [that is, Satan the devil. And you might have in your margin there, Rev. 12:9: who's deceiving the whole world. And of course, they're being deceived more and more and more. And even those who are deceived are being deceived by other deceptions. So it compounds itself.] ...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience..." (vs 1-20).

There are two categories of people: those who love God and keep His commandments, and are

obedient to God and Jesus Christ; those who do not love God, including even those who hate God, and are disobedient. Now, you have various Christian-professing religions, which have varying degrees of Truth, but which, in itself, is deceptive, because if you have good counterfeit, it's got to look real. So that's all part of it. "...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*" (vs 2-3).

Now most of the world, whom are what you might say are upstanding people, it's awfully hard for them to comprehend that they're sinners. Because they might say, as we'll see a little later on, 'I don't do this, I don't do that, I don't do the other thing. And why am I a sinner?' Well, you're a sinner by nature, as it says here, and sinner because of the whole environment that has been created by men and Satan the devil.

Now let's come to 2-Thessalonians, the second chapter, and let's the read *the epitome of human nature*. It's going to be personified in the one who, in Rev. 13, is called "the beast" who exalts himself above all that is called God, blasphemes God and so forth

2-Thessalonians:3: "Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first... [and this means the whole world rejecting God, not just an apostasy within the Church—that's a start. Not the beginnings of people leaving God—that's a start, but this the finishing. This is the apostasy in the full, where they worship the one, the man who is called here, 'the man of sin.'] ...and the man of sin shall be revealed... [Now, he epitomizes the whole of human nature under the influence of Satan the devil, in the most exalted form—and there are varying degrees of it. But most people don't realize the potential to which they can go.] ...The one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God... [Now that's something—isn't it? Because Satan is inspiring him; and Satan is what?—as we read in Eph. 2: '*Prince of the power of the air.*' And he's got a lot of helpers out there. A lot of people, a lot of technology: media, printed word, television, internet—whatever—musicians, and so forth. Combine all of that together.] ...who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God" (vs 3-4). Now, what was it

that Satan said to Adam and Eve? *To eat of this fruit*—you’ll what? *Become like God*. So here we have the epitome of it.

Now let’s come to the book of Psalms and let’s see some other things concerning what we need to do. So let’s say this—come to Psalm 12. One of the things that the Spirit of God does to us bit-by-bit is to reveal to us our nature. Because we can look at what we just read and we can say, ‘Oh yes, that’s right, I can look out in the world and I can see that.’ And then what happens? *We do the human thing!* We begin comparing ourselves with ourselves and others in the world—and that leads to problems—doesn’t it? Here’s another description of the world and why we need the help of God and why we need to pray, and why we need answered prayers, why we need to yield our hearts and minds and everything to God. Psalm 12:1 “Help, LORD... [That’s one thing you may say many times during the day. Because it says in another place, ‘pray without ceasing.’ So you need God’s help, what do you do? Even in the day time, you say, ‘Oh Lord, help me.’] ...Help, LORD for the Godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

As I’m reading the rest of this, I want you think about the current, two-year long, hideous presidential campaign that’s going on in America. And I want you to think about the big money-men behind them. Especially ones like the billionaire, George Soros. What do they say? *Follow the money!* We don’t know what’s going to happen, but this presidential campaign is going to be vicious, nasty, terrible—and right now, the money from Soros and Hollywood is going to whom? *Barack Obama*.

Think of this, v 2: “They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with* flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak... [Basically, human nature is what? *Human nature is double-minded*—mixture of good and evil. That’s what it says in James: ‘purify your heart you double-minded’.... [So they’re really not telling you what they want to do.] ...The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things...” (vs 2-3).

And that’s in the final judgment. But just like God raised up Pharaoh and let Pharaoh become great and powerful, so God is going to let them prevail as part of the judgment against His people, because they don’t seek God. And always keep this in mind—I think of this when I watch the news and all the things that they want to do and lamenting that things are not getting better, and lamenting that the Islamic radical element are getting more resolute and more adamant in what they are doing. And I think about all the abortions that go on. And I think about the sermon that I gave: *The Biblical Truth About The Immigration Problem*, because we’re killing the most innocent to serve sin. And what is the final

agenda of those on the radical left in the American political scheme of things? *Socialism, abortion and taxing the rich and businesses so they can run the nation*.

Comment from audience: The religion of relativism. The thing is, all people are religious. Meaning that whatever their personal beliefs are *is their religion*. That’s why *God’s way is different*. We believe what God says. We follow what God says. So here’s the world we live in.

Now notice v 4—and I think this speaks eloquently as to what is happening today: “...Who have said, ‘With our tongue will we prevail... [Lie, lie, lie, lie: media, newspapers, television, political parties, schools, educational system, the colleges.] ...will we prevail, our lips *are* our own: who *is* lord over us?... [‘I’m free to choose.’ And when you watch the news—and for the very first time I saw it: someone sitting there and being interviewed and being confronted with some basic truths, and they held the opposite position. And it showed this woman in one case, and a man in another case, you could see an iron curtain come across their face and their necks would be stiffened up. And I said to myself, *stiff-necked!* I saw that, and it just got me because they have this attitude: ‘Who is lord over us? Who is going to tell us what to do?’ Now, I’m bringing this out because God has to bring us, when He calls us, from that point to a whole other attitude.] ...For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise,’ says the LORD. ‘I will set *him* in safety *from him* that puffs at him” (vs 4-5). So that’s God reaching down and calling us.

Now, let’s look and see what has to happen. We have to come from this point to where God begins to deal with us. Let’s come over here to John, the sixth chapter. So here’s what has to happen, this is a beginning point of God beginning to change that. And we’ve mentioned this before, but let’s put it into the equation here, because it’s important for us to understand.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him... [that’s the key. You can have all the religious beliefs in the world you want. You can belong to whatever church or religion you want. And you’re not going to find God or come to God unless the Father draws him. And you’re not going to come to the Father (John 14:6) unless you go through Jesus Christ. Now keep that in mind when you analyze any of the churches or their beliefs.] ...and I will raise him up at the last day.” So here’s how we progress from hostility and vanity and anger against God to desiring God. God has to give it to us. God has to deal in our lives. And everyone who’s a truly converted Christian can look back and there was a day when something changed

in your life. I can look back. I know the very day. I know the very place. I know what was said. Same way with everyone.

Now v 45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God’.... [This is important! Let’s understand something about God’s Word in relationship to that—that’s why it’s called the Word of God. I’ve been accused by some people, since I translated the New Testament and we published that *New Testament in Its Original Order*—one minister complained against me and said, ‘Well, Fred thinks he’s speaking for God.’ No! *God speaks for Himself*—in the Bible! And the truth is, anyone who reads the words of the Bible and teaches from it, and teaches—whether correctly or incorrectly—whenever they read the words of God, God is the one Who’s doing the speaking—is He not? So I don’t consider myself to be anything. I don’t consider myself some great mucky-muck or whatever. I’ll tell you one thing, that if we, individually and collectively, do not stand for the Truth, who is? So I’m not trying to speak for God. God is perfectly able to speak for Himself. And He has in His Word.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [that means you have to open your mind—God begins to open it; God begins to deal with you. Why is it that one day you wanted to know about God? *God is dealing with you*. It’s a spiritual operation.] ...and has learned, comes to Me.”

Now, let’s go on from there. Let’s see the next part of the operation that God does for us—which then is important in understanding about the *key to answered prayer*. Let’s come to Romans, the second chapter, please. Because the key of this is repentance, and repentance comes about when God leads you to see yourself and your nature as it really is. Now, God is merciful! He doesn’t reveal it all at once. And for the upcoming Feast, for the first Holy Day, I’m bringing a sermon, that you could say is *The Washing of the Water of the Word*. Because that’s how God changes us over time, and we become more converted and then we understand what human nature really is. Because if God revealed the complete evilness of our human nature all at once, we couldn’t stand it. So He does it a bit at a time. So there’s an initial part of God leading us to repentance.

Now let’s pick it up here in Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness... [That is if you’re self-righteous and judging and condemning other people. Listen, everyone has varying degrees of human nature of good and evil. Unless God calls them and deals with them, don’t set yourself up in a self-righteous position to condemn them and put them down. Now you can point out the evil. You can say that that is wrong—and we do that—but who knows, in doing so, if it’s

done in the way that God desires, perhaps maybe a person would repent.] ...Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?”

Now sometimes that has to be rather dramatic, doesn’t it? Like in the case of the Apostle Paul, who was Saul. God dealt with him, knocked him down—BANG! He knew God was dealing with him. Now God doesn’t deal with all of us that way. But what I want to bring out is the graciousness of God. What did God do to the worst enemy in the Church? He called him, converted him, made him a friend. So you can get rid of your enemies by making them your friend—*in God*. Now God, essentially, is the only one Who can do that.

Now, on the other hand, v 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works... [So then, just like it says back there in Deut. 30:15 about ‘setting before you life and death’ we have the same thing here in the New Testament; only now on a spiritual level. Dealing with us individually.] (v 7): ...On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—[He’s going to give] eternal life... [That’s what God sets before us—His way.] ...On the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* [Gentile] Greek; But glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek, because there is no respect of persons with God” (vs 5-11). So God is the one Who has to start it. God is the one Who has to initiate it. And that’s why He does it through His Word, through His Spirit, through the drawing, and then, when we are converted, He begins to change us.

Now let’s look at some *false* repentance, because there’s a sorrow of the world—you know, like the killer who was finally cornered by the police and they have their guns out, they’ve got him trapped. What does he say? *Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot!* There’s no sorrow there. So let’s look at the kind of repentance that leads to life—but we have to compare that with the kind of repentance that does not lead to life. Now, there are a lot of people who, when the trouble gets to them, they feign God. Remember 9/11? Now look at it—that’s way past and forgotten!

Jeremiah 15:5 “‘For who shall have pity upon you, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan you?

or who shall go aside to ask how you do? You have forsaken Me,' says the LORD, you are gone backward: therefore will I stretch out My hand against you, and destroy you; I am weary with repenting'" (vs 5-6). Every time something comes along: 'Oh, I'm sorry.' Then you run back and just do the same thing that you always do. And that's exactly what the children of Israel did.

Now let's come to Psalm 78, and again, the reason I'm bringing out repentance is because we come from carnality to God dealing with us; and then we come to the place where God brings us to repentance and baptism and receiving of His Holy Spirit. And yet, we still have human nature to overcome, don't we? So what we have to do is ask God to give us the repentance that is from the heart—and it's amazing what'll happen when you do. After all that God did. You go back and read all the things that God had to do to them in the wilderness. And it's always amazed me that here they were in the wilderness and accused God, accused Moses, and yet, they saw all the miracles that God did to release them out of Egypt, and they could have had it a whole lot different if they would have said, 'Look we have a great God who can do anything. It doesn't matter if we're out here in the wilderness, God can provide for us. He can give us food, He can give us drink. Our clothes are not wearing out, this is tremendous.' They wouldn't have to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness. They would have gone into the promised land within two years.

Psalm 78:32: "For all this they sinned still, and believed not for His wondrous works.... [And where did we start with the *Keys to Answered Prayer*? **We must believe God!**—correct? *Yes!*] ...Therefore, their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and inquired early after God" (vs 32-34).

And that's what people do. Now, I don't know what they're saying with this current disaster down there in Florida, but there was tremendous tornado that went clear across the whole state—from east to west—and just devastated everything. I watched news a little bit yesterday afternoon and it showed this one church that was built to sustain 150 mile an hour winds, and it was kindling—gone! Then they turn to God. But when it's all done, what happens? They go back...and think about all of Florida. It is more like a community of the world filled with those from South and Central America and the Caribbean and other nations—they have drugs, they have voodoo, they have so many things going on it is just really filled with sin. And remember this: when God destroyed Sodom and

Gomorrah there were four other cities that were destroyed, too. Why were they destroyed? *Because they went along with it.* So why do these things happen on so-called "innocent" people? *Because they go along with all the things that are happening.* And they like it the way that it is.

So when something comes, they "inquired early after God. And they remembered that God *was* their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant.... [And this is the hardness of human nature. But even in spite of that, you think about this in relationship to our country, and the world.]: ...But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath. For He remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passes away, and comes not again" (vs 33-39).

So, after He gave them relief then they went right back and did the same thing again. And v 41 [transcriber's correction] says: "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not His hand, *nor* the day when He delivered them from the enemy" (vs 41-42). And this happened over and over again. ***This is the cycle of human nature, and this is the cycle of Israel and God.***

Now let's see what God says here—let's come to Joel, the second chapter. This is the kind of repentance that God wants. And if we come to this point, God will truly lead us into true repentance. And of course, this is necessary, is it not, for answered prayer? What is it there in the model prayer: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' And in order to have forgiveness, you need to have repentance, correct? *Yes!* Now here's the kind of repentance that God wants.

Joel 2:12: "'Therefore also now,' says the LORD, 'turn you *even* to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents Him of the evil. Who knows *if* He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him...'" (vs 12-14). So this is the kind of repentance that God wants. Now notice, this ties right in with loving God—doesn't it?—with all your heart That's what God wants from us. That's essential in prayer—***very essential in prayer.***

Now let's come here to Ezekiel 20:43—when God finally deals with you, you will come to this point. This is the epitome of deep repentance.

This is what God is going to do to Israel when He finally gathers them when Christ returns: “And there shall you remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.” Now that’s New Testament doctrine. Part of repentance is coming to really see how evil human nature is, though you may not have committed horrible sins, such as murder, such as robbing banks. But now we’re dealing with a society and people coming who have been involved in drugs, fornication, adultery, addictions of various kinds. So, if you haven’t gone over those sermons recently on the *Addicted Society*, it might be a good thing to do. But there’s another place that’s important with this. And this is what we have to do in our relationship with God, in everything that we do.

Let’s come to Luke 15—let’s see what we need to do. We’ve mentioned this before, but what we’re talking about in *The Keys to Answered Prayer* is:

- What is your attitude when you’re on your knees and you’re praying to God and you’re asking Him for this or for that?
- Or you’re praying for this or for that?
- What is your heart?
- What is your mind?
- What is your attitude?

All right, let’s come here to Luke 15:7; let’s see what God is interested in, and let’s see how God will look to us when we have those kinds of attitudes. He talks about going after the one lost sheep and leaving the 99: “I tell you that likewise, *there* shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents... [Really, truly repents! God is looking for those who repent—and that’s the key. If you want to establish a relationship with God, you have to yield to the repentance that God is graciously leading you to—because you can resist it if you desire, but you have to choose to yield to God] ...Or what woman who has ten coins, if she should lose one, does not light a lamp and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds *it*? And after finding *it*, she calls together *her* friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I lost.’ I tell you *that* in like manner, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (vs 7-10). That’s why it’s so precious. Now you see why God will honor those who are His with these kinds of attitudes. And how that we can look and see because of that, that God is holding back the heavy-hand of correction, that we know is going to come.

Then He gives the parable of the prodigal son and how that he asked for his inheritance. He took it; he left; he went into a far country; he squandered it in high living; ended up feeding

swine—which would be absolutely the worst job that any Jew could do, if you think about it—out there in the manure and all of the muck and mud and everything. And he was starving, didn’t have anything to eat.

Now this is where every person has to come, not only once, but all the time in repentance. Because, repentance is a daily thing and repentance is something that deepens day-by-day; week-by-week; month-by-month; year-by-year—not only in your relationship with God but through all the experiences that you’re experiencing in your life, so that we can draw closer to God. And this is a key: **“And when he came to himself...”** (v 17).

When you really understand the magnitude of what God is doing, and what you are, what I am, just as a human being without God, we come to ourselves and we ask God to forgive us. Now lots of times Satan will like to come along as the ‘prince of the power of the air’ and put in something in your mind that seems so good. Well, that’s hard to repent of. We’ll talk about this a little later as we get into the prayers here. This is important. Now, ‘come to yourself’—then he began to think correctly. What did he say?

“...‘How many of my father’s hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; And I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants’” (vs 17-19). You come to God and accept whatever that God gives. And then, as I mentioned before, you begin to understand how your sins have crucified Christ. And so then, here comes the grace.

“But the father said to his servant, ‘Bring out a robe, the best robe, and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet; And bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead... [and isn’t that where we started? You are dead in your sins and trespasses—correct? *Yes!*] ...but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found.’... [or is found again. Or as we could say in other New Testament terminology: ‘saved.’] ...And they began to be merry” (vs 22-24).

Now we’ll talk about this attitude a little bit. The son who didn’t sin said, ‘Well, what are you doing with this one who has squandered everything?’ We’ll talk about that attitude a little bit later, but let’s concentrate on the attitude that God wants. Let’s come here to Isaiah 57. Now, if you haven’t gone over the sermon that we did: *The Holy Spirit of God, the Seven Spirits of God* and so forth, go over that one again because that will help you to understand that God is doing lots in this world—way

beyond what we may know. Have to be because our perspective is very small and narrow—isn't it.

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Now before we go to Isaiah 57, let's go to Hosea 5—the very last verse. We're going to see the operation of repentance and what God does in bringing people back to Him, and this will help you understand the operation of what God does with us. Now this is talking about when Israel *finally* repents, but this can also apply to anyone at any time who returns to God. Now this sounds an awful lot like the prodigal son—doesn't it?

Hosea 5:15: "I will go *and* return... [Isn't that what the prodigal son said, 'I'll go and return to my father.'] ...to My place [God says], till they acknowledge their offence... [So God abandons them for a while.] ...**and seek My face**... [and that's exactly what happens] ...in their affliction... [We'll talk about trials a little later—but we're all going to have trials, and they're going to come. We don't know the degree of what they're going to be, we don't know what they will be. And I've gone through them, you've gone through them, and in every case it is so that God can do us good in the end-run. That's what they're all for.] ...in their affliction they will seek Me early."

So after God went and returned to His place, notice Hosea 6:1 and what they do: [Israel says]: "Come, and let us return unto the LORD... [Now also we know this applies to the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude. And I truly believe that's going to be the greatest work of God in the shortest period of time.] ...let us return unto the LORD for He has torn... [We've gone through our afflictions. They're in bondage, they're in captivity.] ...and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up.... [God only does it until we come to the point of repentance. And God wants us to repent with a true heart, as we have seen.] (Notice v 2): ...After two days will He revive us... [and if a day is a year in prophecy, then this is after two years. Notice: '**He will revive us**'—meaning they were to the point of physical death, but also realize—back in Eph. 2—that we are dead in our sins and our trespasses. When God begins to deal with us, what does He do? *He revives us!* From our sins—right? *Yes!*] ...in the third day He will raise us up..." And the Hebrew can also mean *to make us stand up*—stand up before God.

And what is that we do every Holy Day? God says you are to come before the Lord—in other words you are to come and stand before the Lord. Same way with the Sabbath: You come before the Lord. And one of the things you'll come to understand is this: Is that then the Sabbath becomes the most important day of the week, because, as we will see, especially during this coming Feast of

Unleavened Bread, God is dealing with us and molding us and He is using this time to increase His work *in us*. That's why it's important. That's why when the Sabbath day comes along, what does it do? *We stand before God and He what? He revives us!* That's why the Sabbath and Holy Days become so important, because not only is it just the physical observing of it—which we need to do—but it is the spiritual aspect

- reviving us
- of lifting us up
- of teaching us
- of helping us
- of working with us

And all of this is connected to prayer. You don't have a religious life over here, on the one hand; and a civil life over here on the other hand. And you come every Sunday or Sabbath to your religious life, and you're one kind of person. And then you go to your civil life and you're another kind of person six days of the week. Now that's what we called earlier 'double-minded.' God wants all of you all the time.] ...He will raise us up and **we shall live in His sight**.... [Instead of being punished and on the verge of death.] ...Then shall we know... [that is understand everything that God wants us to understand] ... **if we follow on to know the LORD**..." (vs 1-3). That's important to understand. You must follow on to **know the Lord**.

Now let's come to Isaiah 57—because God desires a spiritual relationship with us, through His Holy Spirit. And it's something that the world cannot see, the world does not understand; but you understand because you have experienced it. You understand because you have the Spirit of God. It's like it says: 'We will come to know IF we follow on.'

Isaiah 57:15—here's what God says: "For so says the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity... [God is near, He's not a God far off, though He inhabits eternity. That is His level of living. Now our level of living is we inhabit the flesh—correct? *Yes*. And God has given us the 'spirit in man' so we can have intelligence. Then He's given us His Holy Spirit so we can have a relationship with Him. And key to that relationship is prayer. That's why this is key to *The Keys to Answered Prayer*.] (Now notice what God delights in): ...'I dwell in the high and Holy place, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit... [Compared to what? *What we started: the epitome of human nature as brought out by the 'man of sin, the son of perdition.'* Who exalts himself. Here, contrite and humble and spirit. Not uplifted.] ...to **revive** the spirit of the humble, and to **revive** the heart of the contrite ones.'" Now that ties right in with what we read there in Hosea, the sixth chapter.

Now let's come over here to Isaiah 55. As far as following on to know—and you could say, what we read there in Hosea, the sixth chapter, following on to know is:

- growing in grace and knowledge
- growing in the Spirit of God
- growing in the understanding of God
- growing in our relationship with God.

To where then prayer become the vital aspect of your life. That you come to God every day because you love Him, because you *desire* to pray to God. You *desire* to have that relationship with God.

Now carnal praying is this: mumbling like the Catholics do—hail Mary, our Father, etc. Or, some people saying: ‘Well, how long do I pray?’ *Well, you must pray an hour a day.* You get a clock! You put the clock up, and you get there and you're praying and praying and praying—you think: man, this must be a long time. So you open your eyes and you look at the clock and it's 15 minutes! Key important thing: It's *not* the length of prayer, *it's the quality and attitude* that's important to God. Because what did Jesus say of the scribes and Pharisees—they what? *They liked to give long prayers.* And the heathen, they repeat *vain repetitions.*

Isaiah 55:6—this is what we are to do to know the Lord even more: “Seek you the LORD while He may be found... [and that's today. And remember what it says back there in Psa. 95: ‘today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.’] ...call you upon Him while He is near... [Because God is not a God afar off. He's near.] ...Let the wicked forsake his way... [That's repentance.] ...and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [Because there needs to be a change of heart and mind and thought and attitude. And we'll talk about this during the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread.] ...and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for **He will abundantly pardon**” (vs 6-7).

That's why repentance is so important, and forgiving others is so important—they go hand-in-hand. Repentance and forgiveness—let's put it this way: as I said last time, *the nature of God is forgiveness.* What has to be is this: *The nature of the children of God is repentance.* So they can grow and change and overcome, because *God is doing something great in us*—which is very humbling, indeed! And this is why we still look through a glass darkly, even though we understand what we understand. And this is how I'm going to begin the epilogue in the new Holy Day book, after we've gone through all of this, what are we: we are looking through a glass darkly, because there's still so much more that God has for us in His Word and His Truth

and what He's doing for us—because of v 8: “**For My thoughts are not Your thoughts...**” So that's why if we have the law of God, the Spirit of God, the commandments of God, everything that God says, make that a part of our being, then we begin to have more and more of the thoughts of God, because the Bible contains the thoughts of God—does it not? *Yes!*

And I might mention something else here concerning those who exalt themselves, which is this: Any minister or elder who exalts himself, to put himself between God and the people—because God wants a direct connection between each one that He calls, not being filtered through a man. What the elder or minister is to do, is to teach the Word of God, because these are the words of God and that's what God wants them to know—not the vain thoughts of some man who exalts himself and says: ‘I am Elijah.’ *or* ‘I am Elisha.’ *or* ‘I am the prophet.’ And ‘I tell you, you can't talk to anyone in your family unless they belong to this church.’ That's exalting yourself above God! You're to follow no man, you're to trust no man. But you find one who is trustworthy in the Word of God, one who teaches the Word of God. Now, there are probably, I'm sure there are many who do preach the Word of God...just like a lot of the Protestants, they don't preach the Word of God, they USE the Word of God to their own advantage, which is a spirit of anti-Christ, when you understand it.

Bring them to God—let them have the thoughts of God: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 8-9).

So that's what I'm going to bring out—instead of a conclusion; I'm calling it an *epilogue*, because, instead of an introduction, I'm calling it The Prologue and the reason I'm doing that is because I have one sermon that I entitled *The Introduction—The Beginning and the End.* So I didn't want to get that confused so I have it in the epilogue. And that the whole purpose of everything is so that you can come to God in a personal relationship, through prayer, through study, through fellowshiping with the brethren. That there is:

- the love of God
- the joy of God
- the help of God
- the encouragement of God
- the comfort of the Holy Spirit in spite of all circumstances

Now notice how God does this, it's quite a thing: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the

earth... [And what is the Holy Spirit likened? *Water*. And what is the thing that is going to help us overcome? *The washing of the water of the Word*. Correct? *In our minds, yes.*] ...and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater... [Now what does it say about the Parable of the Sower? *When he sows it in the good ground, some bring forth 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold*. You can put in your margin there: 2-Tim. 4:1-4, because where he said, ‘preach the Word’ that’s what it is to be preached.] ...So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth... [And where do you find it? *In the Bible*. How many times does it say: ‘the mouth of the Lord has spoken it’? ‘The Lord said to Moses.’ ‘The Word of God came to Isaiah.’ ‘Word of God came to Jeremiah’ and Ezekiel and all the prophets.] ...So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth it shall not return unto Me void... [It’s going to accomplish two things:

- 1) nourish and help and cause to grow all of those who have the Spirit of God
- 2) judge and bring punishment upon all of the wicked.

...and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace...” (vs 10-12).

So now, what I want you to think about is this: Regardless of the trial or difficulty—because we’ll get into trials here in just a minute—***God is with you in it all; and God will lift you up!*** And so, if you have great difficulties, take it to God.

- Ask Him to help you understand it.
- Ask Him to help you cope with it.
- Ask God to help you see the result of it, the end of it.

And remember, let’s see what the end of it will be. Let’s just continue on: “...the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.... [Now that’s at the beginning of the Millennium when they return.] ...Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree...” (vs 12-13).

So let’s take it this way in a personal application to us, because a lot of our trials feel like thorns and briars and all of that sort of thing. ***God will turn that around.*** And I know in our lifetime, within the Church, what we have gone through has been just like that, because everyone is going to come to a trial that he or she will go through, where you’ll feel like you’re ***totally, absolutely alone!*** Now why does God want you to come to this point? So that you turn to Him and realize that in Him is your help—that’s why prayer and study.

Now notice the end of it: “...and it shall be to the LORD for a name, **for an everlasting sign...** [God is going to give you eternal life.] ...*that* shall not be cut off” (v 13).

All right now, let’s continue on: Let’s come back here to Matthew 6, because we’ll look at the model prayer again. We’re just about at the end of it. And I don’t know if I can finish it this time, or there’ll be one more, but let’s come back to Matthew, the sixth chapter, and let’s read a Scripture that for some people it’s difficult to understand, and even for those who have the Spirit of God it may be difficult to understand. So let’s see if we can make some sense out of it this time.

Now we’ve covered Matthew 6:12: “forgive us our sins as we also forgive our debtors.” That’s through forgiveness and repentance—and we’ve covered that. Now v 13: “And lead us not into temptation... [Now what does that mean? Does God lead people into temptation?] ...but rescue us from the evil one....”

Now, it means this in reality: Lead us not into temptation that it could also be trials. Even though trials are good for us, it is better if you yield to God so that you don’t have to go through a trial. That’s easier, isn’t it? And of course, that’s easier said than done! Oh isn’t it? Does that mean you don’t have to go through a trial or that we brought it upon ourselves? Probably both, because we’ll have trials and tribulations and things like this—we’re promised that. But it can also mean this—which is probably a better interpretation of it, because it has to be interpreted rather than find it in the language. So here’s what I wrote down: ***‘Do not give us over to our own temptations.’*** And then it says: “...but rescue [deliver] us from the evil one...” So that gives us a little better interpretation of it. ‘Do not give us over to our own temptations’—in other words, when you come to God and you say, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” you’re asking God to perform ***His will, not yours.***

Too many people go to God and pray, in an attempt to get their will or their way, rather than asking God to work out His will in His way. And if you do that, you’re giving yourself over to your own temptations, to your own covetousness because that’s what you want. Give me this, give me that, give me the other thing.’ No, it should be this:

- Oh Lord, help me to know You
 - Help me to yield to You
 - Grant me an attitude of repentance
 - Help me to see myself
 - Help me to love You with all my heart and mind and soul and being
- that’s how our prayers need to be.

Now, let's come to James, the first chapter, and let's see how that fits in with being given over to our own temptations, or our own way. Because it says right here—let's come to James 1:1—this tells us an awful lot and this ties right in with the attitude of prayer and *The Keys to Answered Prayer*, and as you can see, I'm talking about prayer in the long-haul. I'm talking about prayer day-by-day, many times daily; even while you're up doing the things that you normally do. Or, and especially the time when you pray on your knees before God—which should be every day. And then the times you think about God while you're going to sleep, because that'll happen many times. James 1:1, just as an interesting sideline: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!”

Question: If you write a letter to someone, which an epistle is, and you send it to them—you know where they are so you can send it to them—right? *Yes!* So this is like an address. What does this tell us? The ten tribes were never lost, they knew where they were. And this was sent to them—right? *Yes.* And where did the apostles go? *They went to the 'lost ten tribes.'* So it shows the height of presumptuousness of Judaism today, which claims that they are wholly the 12 tribes of Israel. But they are not!

Verse 2: “Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials... [now, as it says in another place, it's not joyous when you're going through it, but 'afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.'] ...Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.... [So there is the temptation, which is testing. So when you go back to Gen. 22 and it says that God tempted Abraham; no, it means He *tested* or *proved* Abraham. So the testing or the proving of your faith produces endurance. And you can put in your margin there: Mark 4, about the Sower of the Seed. Some people, they give up earlier, give easily.] ...But let endurance have *its* perfect work...” (vs 2-4). In other words, there's going to be a time when you come out the other end of the trial and you will understand. And, as we've said many times, when you understand and you have perfect 20/20 hindsight, then you know.

I remember one trial that Delores and I went through—our whole family went through—was when we were absolutely left alone, just Delores and I and four children in our home. No money, no nothing, no retirement, no severance, NOTHING! ***Absolutely nothing!*** And ***we could not see the end.*** However, God saw us through it, day-by-day. And only after—***only after***—I went through what I call 'my valley of the shadow of death' at that time; and I know some of you here knew me at that time when

I went through it. And I remember that I was so low—and everyone is going to come to that—the lowest point in your life—that all I could do, and I was doing loans at that time, loan brokering, and I was out driving around looking for places where I might see a house for sale or something like this and see if I could find someone who needs a loan. So I was out doing that and I was driving on a back road in Hollister and there was these hills, because the valley floor in Hollister comes and rises a little bit and all of sudden there's this hill, and so, I was so despondent that time, didn't know what to do, where to go or anything like that. And I just got out of the car and walked up the hill and got to the top of it and the only thing I could do is just fall on my knees and ask God to heal my soul. And with tears streaming down my face and everything, not knowing what God wanted me to do, where to go, what He wanted with what we had with our small group—and you will remember that we had eight or ten at that time. And I just finally had to say, 'God, if that's what you want me to do, just serve these people until you come, so be it. Let everything else just go. Let me heal my soul, let me serve You in a way that is right and serve the brethren that you have given that we can obtain to Your Kingdom.' That was it! I was so discouraged, I quit writing. I didn't write for eight years. I just said, “I'm not going to write.” God wants me to write, I'll write. If He doesn't want me to write, I won't write. I'm not going to go out and say, “I'm doing a Work of God when I'm only doing it for myself.”

So you have to 'let endurance have its perfect work.' It wasn't until about five years later that I understood why I went through that. And I can look back and see that's what God wanted. He wanted to cut me off from any other minister, to see whether I would study His Word, know His Word, be faithful to Him, serve the brethren—whether small or great—and when we started out we had three on a cassette mailing list. And we had our small little group. And we didn't go out and advertise or do anything like that. We just let God add to it and make it become evident, as He opened the door. And I didn't begin writing until about—I quit in '83 and I didn't start writing again until '89 or '90. And what I started writing then became what is the *Passover* book today. And I can look back and say “this is true.”

“Let endurance... [or the trial you're going through] ...have its perfect work.... [Because God is involved in it. And it's our choices that are necessary and our yieldedness to God and our prayers and everything, and the repentance that we need to have on a continual basis.] (Here's why): ...so that you may be perfect and complete... [Now, I'm going to talk about this a little more during the Feast of Unleavened Bread] ...not lacking in anything...”

[that is spiritually. Doesn't matter what you have physically. Whether you have much or you have little.] ...However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God... [What is wisdom, then? *Wisdom is understanding your circumstances*. And that's what God does after the trial. He let's you understand.] ...Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him" (vs 4-5).

Now, here's the key—let's follow this on in relationship to prayer; relationship to how we're living before God. "But let him ask in faith... [***You come to the point you believe God!*** You believe what He says—and that's where we started, isn't it? When you come to God you must believe that He exists. You must believe that He is, and a 'rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'] ...**not doubting** at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*" (v 6). Always remember this: If you pray and get up off your knees and say, 'I wonder if God is going to answer this.' Or if you say, 'Well, I don't think God is going to answer.' Just cancel out everything that you've said.

Rather, what you need to do is like the man who needed his son healed from being possessed of the demon that threw him in the fire and the water and the disciples couldn't cast him out. And Jesus came and the father said to Jesus, 'Help me if you can.' He said, 'If you **believe** all things are possible.' And the man said, 'Lord, help my unbelief.' So that's the key in what is necessary in prayer, because we have to **ask** and **believe**. So ask God to help you in your unbelief so you are not "tossed to and fro."

Notice, v 7: "Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (vs 7-8). And that's what happens—vacillate back and forth, you're up and down, you're faithful one day, unfaithful another day, etc., etc. Then he talks about how God deals with those who are humble and we're all just like flower and grass and we perish.

Now, let's come down here to v 12—here's the trying of your faith: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved... [That's what God is doing. He wants to know: 'Do you love Me. Will you obey Me. Do you believe Me. Do you have a relationship with God.' and so forth.] ...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Now let's go ahead and finish it here and we'll pick it up next time in v 13 about being tempted.

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) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- 3) Psalm 12:1-5
- 4) John 6:44-45
- 5) Romans 2:4-11
- 6) Jeremiah 15:5-6
- 7) Psalm 78:32-39, 41-42
- 8) Joel 2:12-14
- 9) Ezekiel 20:43
- 10) Luke 15:7-10, 17-19, 22-24
- 11) Hosea 5:15
- 12) Hosea 6:1-3
- 13) Isaiah 57:15
- 14) Isaiah 55:6-13
- 15) Matthew 6:12-13
- 16) James 1:1-8, 12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12:9
- Revelation 13
- John 14:6
- Deuteronomy 30:15
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- Genesis 22
- Mark 4

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *The Biblical Truth about the Immigration Problem*
- *The Washing of the Water by the Word*
- *Addicted Society*
- *The Holy Spirit of God, the Seven Spirits of God*
- *The Beginning and the End*

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