

Keys to Answered Prayer XIV

Fred R. Coulter – April 21, 2007

Now let's continue on in 2-Corinthians 11—and one of the keys to answered prayer is:

1. Understanding that your relationship is *directly* to God the Father and Jesus Christ.
2. Your relationship with the ministry and with the brethren has to be *based upon* the **Word** of God, the **love** of Christ, the **knowledge** of the Truth.

And especially today, considering that there are so many false doctrines, dingy doctrines, weird ideas that have come out of the major Church of God. And one of the things, as I pointed out last time, is this: What God has destroyed, why are men in such a hurry to try and re-build? And they're doing that now: building buildings—one man, as I mentioned, has appointed himself apostle of all the Churches of God; and has even said since he's apostle over all the Churches of God because he had a vision from God, that even the two witnesses would be subject to him. Because an apostle is greater than prophets, if you read Eph. 4. Now this is self-exaltation! Where does that come from? And why do people fall for it?

Let's read what Paul says of the false apostles. 2-Corinthians 11:13: "For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers... [Now, you have to understand, if they 'do not speak according to this Word there's no light in them.' And what will they do? *They will deceitfully handle the Word of God.* And that's how so many false doctrines come down, because they use the Word of God and twist it and turn it.] (Notice where the power comes from): ...deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ."

Now, hold your place here and let's come back to Acts, the eighth chapter, and let's see the power from where this came—and it is from Satan the devil, as we will see. Because if you do not have a right relationship with God and you are in a church that is so carried away with every wind of doctrine and every idea that comes along, you couldn't possibly have a decent prayer-life with Christ, because you're—how shall we say—'tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine'—and you have no stability in your life. Now, if you don't believe that is so, go back and think about the time when you were going through the throws of the upheavals within the Church of God.

- How was your prayer life?
- How were your emotions?
- How did you feel?

—when they started bringing in these teachings of the world. So here we come clear back to Acts, the eighth chapter and a man called, in history, Simon Magus. Now, remember what Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria when she said, 'Our fathers worship in this mountain.' He says, 'You don't know what you're worshipping.' Let's see what they were worshipping. And here is actually some of the beginning seeds which later became the Roman Catholic Church. And out of which also came the Gnostic, the so-called 'Christian Gnostic' beliefs, from where you have all the Gnostic gospels.

All right, after Philip came and was casting out demons and so forth, let's come down here to Acts 8:8: "And there was great joy in that city. But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery... [Now, sorcery is witchcraft and that comes directly from Satan the devil.] ...practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one.... [Now compare that with Paul said of himself: 'that I'm less than the least of the saints.' And how many men today, even supposed to be ministers of Churches of God, are proclaiming themselves to be 'great ones.' And are demanding people follow them; and are demanding money so they can build buildings, have big schemes, do great things—*when the need is to serve the people.*] ...To him they had all given heed... [Now, when I'm reading this, I want you to think about how everyone gives heed to the Pope today, because the successor of Simon Magus is the Pope.] ...from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'" (vs 8-10)—meaning that *he has authority of God.*

Now this is why, in some of the commentary in the New Testament, I've got some quotes in there from the pope's themselves, as to whom they claim themselves to be. And even one pope—you can look it up and read it in the commentary—even one pope said, 'Considering all the powers that I have and how I'm over all the kings in the temporal bases, I'm over all bishops and all cardinals and I myself am the representative of God,

what can you say of me, but I'm God.'

"...Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the gospel—the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed..." (vs 11-13). It's like this: his belief was the way he wanted to believe. And it's kind of like sitting down with the Soviets and talking about human rights and democracy. In their minds they have a definition of it, so when you talk to them about it, they seem to agree with you. But they don't agree with you at all, because their definitions are different than your definitions. So here he also believed. He didn't believe unto repentance—*that's the key*. Now we'll see in a little bit *why* he believed; and after being baptized—so he was already baptized! Imagine! Can there be a false baptism? *Of course!* How can there be false baptisms? *Because there must be repentance first.*

Well, the question is: Was he able to dupe Philip? Philip probably thought, "Oh boy, isn't this great. This man is being baptized." That's why God didn't give His Holy Spirit to any of them, and we'll see what happened here as we go along.

"...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip... [Now remember this: Go back to the last Passover of Jesus. Who was there beside Jesus and the apostles? *Satan!* So Satan likes to get close to someone who's doing the will of God, to subvert them. So the only thing we can say is, that Philip—not having the experience—probably made not too good a judgment in this. It wasn't sin, but God caused this so we would know the wiles of Satan and how he wants to get into the Church, to control it.] (continuing now): ...and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them..." (vs 13-14). Two leading apostles—right? *Yes!* 'We better get down here and find out what's going on' because they probably also heard that Simon was baptized. And they probably said, 'What! Simon was baptized?!' It's like this, let's just use another extreme case today. Someone goes to Iran and Ahmadinejad is baptized. WHAT!

"Who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them... [That is all the others that Philip had baptized] ...that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them... [and the reason it didn't was God was holding it back because of the situation with Simon—but God wanted to teach the Church and everybody a lesson, that as soon as things start going the way God wants, Satan is there to try and turn it.] ...but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 15-17).

Now let's look at Simon's attitude: "Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, Saying, 'Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit'" (v 14-15). Now, let's analyze this for just a bit. He was leader of the religion in Samaria. He was practicing witchcraft and sorcery. And they obviously had their idols or statues and everything that they had there, just kind of picture walking into St. Peter's Basilica. And that's what you're dealing with. You're dealing with fear, with superstition. You're dealing with demons, because Philip came casting out demons. How did they get all the demons? *Probably through going and worshipping under auspices of Simon Magus.* So this will give you more of the realistic scene of what was happening.

Now, because he hadn't repented—let's look at it this way: If Simon had totally repented, what would he do? *He would completely renounced sorcery, witchcraft, idolatry, superstition, Satan.* It probably would have been recorded that Simon really repented and he got himself a big sledge hammer and went into his own church and destroyed every idol, tore down the altar, ripped down all the pictures, burned them and fell on the ground in great, weeping repentance and humility. ***Didn't happen!*** So what was he going to do?—which he did anyway. *He was going to use the name of Jesus Christ and continue doing what he was doing.* And developed one of the first Gnostic, satanic religions called 'Christian.' Now, if you want a real eye-opener on it, go to *McClintock and Strongs Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* and read about Simon Magus. Now even the Catholic Church condemns him, and they condemn him not only because he was wrong—which they could

see that he is wrong—but so they would not have any of their origin traced back to him. You would have to do it.

Now let's go on, let's see what Peter said: "...May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter... [and 'part nor lot' means *in the apostleship and preaching the Gospel.*] ...for **your heart is not right before God.**..." [Yet, what did he want? *He wanted authority, he wanted power, he was going to use money—and if he used money, what would he do? He would merchandise everybody who came along. Correct? Yes!*] (v 22—Peter continues): ...Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness... [And this is in the strongest terms possible in the Greek.] ...and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you... [So God gave Peter discernment of his heart and of his mind.] ...For I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness" (vs 20-23). Now that's describing a captive of Satan the devil. Now is this not Satan's attitude? *Yes, it is.*

Now notice Simon's answer—this is really something! "But Simon answered *and* said, 'You beseech the Lord on my behalf... [He didn't want to repent, he wanted someone else to do the repentance for him. And we have the same thing carried over today, don't we? You go to the priest, you confess your sins and he prays for you, while you do 'hail Marys and our fathers.'] ...so that none of *those* things which you have spoken may come upon me" (v 24). But they did come upon him. History records he went out, used the name of Jesus. He was one of the first ones to believe in the trinity. He picked up one of the local prostitutes there, made her the image of god—her name was Helen. And went on down into Egypt where there were plenty of Gnostics waiting for him. So see, whenever the Truth of God is really preached and those ministers and elders who teach and preach it, **they must watch themselves**—as Paul said.

Now, let's come back to 2-Corinthians 11:13 [transcriber's correction]. See, they are 'transforming themselves,' claiming it's a work of God. They're doing for themselves. And I'll tell you one thing, if you want a sure route to disaster and it doesn't tell you how long it will take, you start using the tithe money from the people of God, and using it for

yourself to build your own empire and to up-build yourself, know for sure the judgment of God is going to come. So all those who have been through the Church of God where these things have happened, you need to look back and understand why God destroyed it. And don't ever get yourself in a situation where you're helping to build up that kind of empire again.

Now let's understand something very important which needs to be brought out here: Do not try and re-build what God has destroyed. You need to build on the foundation of Christ. And there are too many ministers and members who want to go back to the 'good old days.' But those were the *bad old days* when you really understand it. And let's see what else happens when all of these false ministers—supposedly being the ministers of God—what happens to them. Let's understand a couple of other things here. Before the infiltration really took place and the Worldwide Church of God started to go bad, when they were preaching the Truth, following the Gospel, living by the Word of God, it was good—and they were growing in grace and knowledge, and God was blessing them. But there came a time BAM! when it began to change—and it probably began with the death of Herbert Armstrong's wife, Loma. And everything else went down from there.

Now, let's also understand something—the comment was made: look at the destruction of Jerusalem and how many times people tried to rebuild it—and it has failed. Finally, God let it be rebuilt by the Muslims—Gentiles. And the Jews are still at it. God will let them build the temple in the end-time to show them for sure, animal sacrifices never make you right with God, period!

Now, let's go on here, v 13: "...transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.... [Always there is a benefit; always there is something good. That's how Satan entraps people. Now when we get to overcoming the wiles of the devil and being rescued from the evil one, we'll cover that.] ...Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works. Again I say, no one should consider me a fool; but if otherwise, receive me even as a fool, that I also may boast a little" (vs 13-16). So we'll

go through some of the things that the Apostle Paul went through. And I don't think there's any of us today who has gone through what he's gone through. But I'll tell you this: every true minister of God who has remained faithful, has had to go through a lot of things—they, their wives and their families—to remain faithful to God because people went on with their foolishness.

So he says: “What I am *now* saying, I do not speak according to *the* Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.... [So he's saying, but it's here in the Word of God, so it now is of God to teach us a lesson. And let's look at what he went through.] ...Since many boast according to *the* flesh, I also will boast. For since you are *so* intelligent... [And again, I bring up the *Journal*. 'Since you're so smart'...that's what he's saying.] ...you gladly bear with fools.... ['Every wind of doctrine,' every slight of hand.] ...For you bear *it* if anyone brings you into bondage, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*, if anyone exalts himself... [that is over you] ...if anyone beats you on the face” (vs 14-20).

And look at all the abuse that people took. And so this is what happens. And there's even one man who was so arrogant, and yet, so fearful in his controlling the people in the Church, that he's absolutely gone against God by **forbidding**—under pain of disfellowshippment and lost of salvation (which no man can do) that if you even talk to your father and mother, if they belong to a different Church of God, you are sinning against God. Well no, he's causing them to break the commandment: ‘honor your father and your mother.’ And know that his day of judgment for doing so **is not to far down the road**. Because if we haven't learned anything from our experiences with the turmoil in the Church, then there's a very short space.

Now, let's pick it up here beginning in v 21: “I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever *way* anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold.” Now let's look at their qualifications. And this is why it was so deceptive. And remember, they didn't have rapid communications like we have. No one could pick up a phone and say, ‘Hey, watch out for this guy, he came to our congregation and just about blew everybody away.’ And since it was so close to how the original church

was, and what happened—the original church what? All the apostles came from where? *They were considered Jews, but they were actually from the tribe of Benjamin and Levi*. So here come these false prophets. Now let's think of it this way: I want you to go back and just kind of, in mind, keep this: How many people followed Jesus around when He was preaching and teaching and doing miracles? *Thousands and thousands and thousands*, didn't they? They saw Him. They heard Him. And He fed what? *The 4,000 and the 5,000*. And as Peter said, ‘This thing was not done in a corner.’ This was well known everywhere.

All right, here we come years later to the church that Paul established in Corinth. And here comes some false preachers. And they present their credentials. Since all the apostles were Jews or Hebrews, what did they say they were? Let's read it, v 22: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? So am I.... [So you look at all the physical qualifications and they say, ‘Hey, I've heard Jesus. I saw Jesus.’ I wonder how many were Levites saying, ‘Well, hey, I'm a Levite. Since I'm a Levite you can tithe to me.’ I mean, just think about what was going on here.] ...Are they servants of Christ?.... [Notice his next statement here] ...**(I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.)...**” (vs 22-23). *No!*

So if you want to know the servants of Christ, they are the ones who truly teach the Word of God and serve the people of God. It's that simple. If you go on Trinity Television Broadcasting and watch that, you're looking at them—look at them and ask the question: Have any of them gone through anything here? Now, none of us has gone through anything that Paul went through. However, anyone who's going to really preach the Truth is not going to get on television and compromise it. Because they have one little requirement for the Trinity Television Broadcasting—they don't state it this way, but I will: You must believe in the false doctrine of the trinity or you're not allowed to speak on this television station. They don't say false doctrine, but they say you must believe in the trinity. All right, that eliminates any minister who's going to speak the Truth of God that there are two: God the Father and Jesus Christ, Who was God before He became human. Eliminates all of them.

So you already have those there who

believe in false doctrine. Watch what they do. Watch what they say. How much is it to build themselves up? Look at the way they dress themselves in slick suits. Look at the stage setting that they have: with gold, I've seen some of it. Gold mirrors and very expensive furniture and all of this sort of thing. And they're talking about God and they pet and curry each other how good they are. And 'if you send in this offering, we'll send you this.' So, they're merchandising people.

So Paul, in order to show his true credentials as compared to them, and what he had to go through in order to come and preach to them. Now notice what he experienced. And none of us can say we've experienced any of this. "Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) So am I, above *and beyond measure*—in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in imprisonments more frequent, in deaths often.... [That is death watches] ...Five times from *the Jews* I received forty *stripes* less one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned... [and he was left for dead—you can read that in Acts 14.] ...three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I spent in the deep.... [Holding on, clinging to some part of a wrecked ship.] ...*I have been* in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from *my own race*, in perils from *the Gentiles*, in perils in *the city*, in perils in *the desert*, in perils on *the sea*, in perils among false brethren..." (vs 23-26).

So there are false brethren, too. Now you see, he did all of this to preach the Truth. He did all of this to serve the brethren. And he's making a point, that look, you have all this that was given to you on a golden platter and what do you do? You run off and follow false doctrines, false ministers and have turned dingy! So there's a great application for us today.

Now let's continue v 27 ^[transcriber's correction]: "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides *all* these things from the *world* outside, pressing on me daily is the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I do not burn? If it is necessary for me to boast, I will boast *in* the things concerning my weakness.... [not how great I am] ...The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is blessed into the

ages of *eternity*, knows that **I do not lie**" (vs 27-31). So that's quite something—isn't it? *Yes!*

Now let's come to—I know this is going a little astray from the *keys to answered prayer*, but it's really not from the point of view when we understand that if you're attending a church where there are all kinds of strange things being taught and preached, weird ideas that are coming from many different corners, how do you feel while you're sitting in that congregation? Then let me ask you this: How can you really go home and pray and study unless you're being fed and built up in the World of God? Because the truth is this: ***the key for any of us in answered prayer is to be inspired from the Word of God to want to do the will of God.*** To be inspired by the love and truth of God that we may repent, because God loves us, and He wants us to be His children. But men come in and create the religions and create their way of doing things and have their own brand of Christianity, and it takes away from the real Truth. Now we can look out and see this in the world. But how is it in the Church of God? And it does affect everyone's prayer life, who is concerned in it. How do you pray? How do you have a clear conscience when someone is putting fear into you, being preached from the pulpit? *Of course it does.* And then how does it affect your prayer life when you understand the hypocritical nature of what is being done and God finally exposed them for their hypocrisy? Some people give up on God! So that's why it's very, very important that your relationship—as I have covered over and over again—that your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is so important.

Now let's see what they were battling. Let's come to the Epistle of 1-John, second chapter. Let's see how this developed. Let's also understand this: What we're talking about concerning churches and religion, you also see it in politics. Little different scale, little different way of doing things, but you're dealing in it; because what do they do? *They tax and take money*—right? They lie and cheat to you. Tell you wonderful things they're going to do and it never happens.

Now let's pick it up here 1-John 2:18: "Little children, it is *the* last time; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up... [Now what is an antichrist? *Someone who*

speaks against the Word of God and someone who twists and turns the teachings of Jesus. That's who an antichrist is. Now the personification of the final antichrist, that's going to lead the world, does every one of those things.] ...by which we know that it is *the last time.*" Let's understand: That applied then because they were coming to the close of what age? *The close of the apostolic age and the destruction of the temple*—which was a prophetic fore-type of the end-time. So this is not only a statement in fact of then, but it's a prophecy for our time, today. Question: Do we have a lot of antichrists today? *Everywhere!*

Verse 19: "They went out from among us, but they were not of us because if they were of us, they would have remained with us; nevertheless, *they left* that they might be exposed to *show* that *they* all were not of us." So that's where it got to. It was really quite a thing that was going on.

Now since we're here in the General Epistles, let's come to 1-Peter, the fifth chapter, and let's see a warning by Peter. Now he's talking directly to elders. And this reflects that Peter learned some lessons, too, from the things that he had done.

1-Peter 5:1: "*The elders who are among you* I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God *that is among you...*" (vs 1-2) Now, how do you feed them? *With the Truth, with the Word of God*—that's how you do it. That's why every minister or elder has got to study and preach and study and put together, let the Word of God **rule** in his mind. Ask God for inspiration in the teaching. And in every sermon, whatever is given or teaching, there needs to be preparation. People ask me: How do you prepare for sermons? My answer is: *all the time.* But I have to sit down and put my sermons together. And I have to make them so it's going to feed the flock. The worst kind of sermon that anyone can give is to give a sermon to impress people of how good you are, because your vanity's going to come out. And we've seen enough of that. So you have to understand the brethren. You have to know the needs of the brethren. And feed the flock because why—as we started out in Acts 20, what? *God has made you overseers to feed the flock of God.* So it's a great and awesome responsibility.

Now notice, continuing, v 2: ...exercising oversight not by compulsion... [just because it's been pushed upon you to do it.] ...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude...* [Now, this also shows—I think the *King James* says 'not greedy for filthy lucre'—why? This shows that the churches and the elders handled the tithes and offerings. That's what it's showing.] ...Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions..." (vs 2-3)—because the brethren of God and the flock of God belong to God. They're not the minister's; they're not the elder's. Don't belong to them. A minister and elder is a steward to help and to teach and to uplift:

- so that the brethren can study and pray and have their lives changed
- and have their prayers answered
- and have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

That's where it is! That's what it's all about!

"...but *by* being examples to the flock of God.... [The worst thing in the world is to have a hypocritical minister who says: 'Do as I tell you, but not as I do. You are not to live in sin, but don't question me living in sin.' Being examples! Because the day of reckoning is coming.] ...And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory.... [Now, let's notice what he gets into, because if these are not the right attitudes in the eldership and within the fellowship groups and the congregations, what happens? *You open the door to Satan.* And that affects everything.] ...In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all of *you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time" (vs 3-6). And when is the 'due time' and the 'exaltation'? *The resurrection!*

"Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [Now, what you can do is say this, because if you are not doing everything—verses 1-7—notice]: Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, **seeking anyone he may devour**.... [So when we pray 'deliver us from the evil one' there's a whole lot to that little phrase in the prayer in Matt. 6, is there not? *Yes, indeed!*] (Now, let's just

finish with this): ...Whom resist, steadfast in the faith... [You can't combat Satan the devil with your own devices, because he's smarter than you.] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world" (vs 7-9).

So that's why being rescued and delivered from the evil one is an important part of our prayer life every single day. Now, we'll continue on and get into the way that Satan likes to come into individual lives.

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) 2 Corinthians 11:13
- 2) Acts 8:8-24
- 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-31
- 4) 1 John 2:18-19
- 5) 1 Peter 5:1-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 4
- Acts 14
- Matthew 6

Also referenced: *McIntock & Strongs Encyclopedia of religion and Ethics*

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