

Keys to Answered Prayer XIX

Fred R. Coulter—June 30, 2007

Let's just review a little bit before we get into it. What are the two keys of answered prayer—the two major keys? *Obedience, faith or belief*. You believe and you obey. This is why it's essential that we know and understand that we have proved God, His existence, His Word, that it is Truth, that God has the power and capacity of preserving His Word, which He has. With that then, we are to approach God in the way that He desires us to approach Him. But always remember this: ***In approaching God, we must approach Him the way that He tells us to.*** That's the whole story of the difference between Cain and Abel. God defined what the sacrifices would be, the way that they would be offered—same way when you come to Leviticus, the first chapter, and it talks about the burnt offering. We are to give it of our own voluntary will in obedience to what God says, but He defines the terms on how we approach Him. That's why we have the Word of God. And that's very important, because we are not to have our prayer life in a position that we are novices. We are to be growing in grace and knowledge and have developed a relationship with God so that we develop what Jesus spoke of here in Mark 11.

Now let's turn to Mark 11:20—and this becomes a very important thing for us to do. It's something that we grow in; it's something we develop. It's not something that you acquire all at once. So hold your place here in Mark 11 and go back just a few pages to Mark 9, and here's the account where the disciples could not cast out a demon out of a boy—the father brought him to them. And when Jesus finally came down off the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, He arrived there and...

Let's pick it up here in Mark 9:17: "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. 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'.... [v 23 is the key verse]: ...And Jesus said to him, '**If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes**'.... [Now, what if you don't have the belief? What do you do if you have some doubts? What do you do if you're up against circumstances that make you question that belief? Well, here's what the Father said—first of all, he admitted his lack of belief]: ...And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, 'Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief'" (vs 17-24).

So there's a beginning belief and there's a mature belief; there's a beginning faith, there's a mature faith—and when you start to believe, you still have some doubts, but you still have to go to God and say, 'Help me overcome these doubts.' And what you do in doing that, you don't say, 'Oh, I have some doubts, I'll just put it out of my mind.' You can't just put it out of your mind. You need God's help to get it out of your mind. And it is through prayer, and through God's Spirit, and through God's Word that then those doubts can be removed. And also, in God answering your prayers, that helps you grow in that belief—does it not?

All right, now let's notice what else He said: "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?'" (vs 25-28).

Now let's stop and think about that question for just a minute, because this will help us understand where we need to go in this one here concerning answered prayer. The disciples were with Him for a good period of time. We're not told how long—let's just say a year since we're not quite to the middle of it, we're a little past it. So let's just say a year and a half. They saw miracles; they saw healings; and they listened to Jesus, and so forth. But what was the problem that was there? They didn't believe all the way. Showing that it takes a period of time. And who were they? They were the ones that Jesus had personally selected—correct? *Yes!*

"'Why were we not able to cast it out?'.... [Or, you could put there, 'Why are my prayers not answered'?—whatever way you want to express it.] ...Then He said to them, 'This kind cannot *be made*

to go out by anything except prayer and fasting” (vs 28-29). Now, prayer and fasting go together—especially when there is a problem, a doubt. So what you do is, you take the doubt and you put it full center right on the middle of the table, if I could use that expression, and you look at it and you examine it with the Word of God and prayer. And **you remove the doubt by proof**. You don’t try and put it out of your mind because if you try and put it out of your mind without proving what is right—and getting rid of the doubt by knowing what is true—then it will always come back to haunt you sometime later.

Prayer and Fasting.

1. If you don’t have full belief you admit and confess your belief to God and Christ.
2. Then, through prayer and fasting you ask God to give you the understanding as to why you have the doubt, why you have the lack of belief and ask Him to help you with your unbelief.
3. That can apply to any circumstance in your life.

Now, let’s come to Mark 11—now we’re ready—because in here He tells us where we need to go as far as how we come to have the faith that we need to have. Mark 11:20: “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.... [That’s the one He cursed on the way out when He left the temple in the evening, when He was going out of town.] ...Then Peter remembered and said to Him, ‘Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith *from* God” (vs 20-22)—or IN God—and the literal Greek really means **the faith OF God**—which means that *it comes from God*. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now, as human beings, we have a certain amount of belief and faith in quite a few things. But human faith alone is not sufficient for answered prayer. You have to have the faith, which comes from God. Because God is not there just to answer a list of requests so that we can get up off our knees and, in pride say, ‘God, has to answer me.’ No! God doesn’t have to do anything. No man can command God! God will if we approach Him the way that He has said—that’s what’s important in everything.

Now notice v 23: “‘For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, “Be taken away and be cast into the sea,” and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say.” Now That’s the biggest blank check you could ever have, correct? But it’s provided, that it’s according to what? *To the will of God*. It’s not what we ask or demand of God. It’s what is according to the will of

God. So if we are yielding to God in our hearts and our minds, and our thoughts are becoming more Christ-like and having the Spirit of God, then we will have our prayers answered. And also we won’t be (how shall we say) presumptuous in asking for things to burn upon our own lusts either.

So He says, v 24: “For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you.... [Now, let’s read v 25 after that because this becomes important]: ...But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive**... [Do not come with vengeance in your heart. Know for sure you’ll never get an answer to a prayer.] ...so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses.... [And the reason that it’s important that we come God’s way, through Christ, is because He’s giving us permission to pray directly to God the Father in heaven above. That’s why there doesn’t need to be any priest along the way. But in order to do that, you have to do it God’s way, through Jesus Christ.] ...For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses” (vs 24-26).

So this is a, what you might say, a prayer contract—isn’t it?

- How do we approach God? *His way!*
- How do we approach God? *Repentant!*
- How do we approach God? *Humbly!*
- But also, we approach God with *belief*, with *faith*, and with *confidence*.
- So all of those combined.

Now let’s see some other things concerning how prayers are answered. Let’s come to John 14. We’ve already covered this, but since we’re getting close to the end of the series, it’s good to review sometimes where we have come from, to know where we’re headed. Here’s another promise. Always remember this: ***In an attitude of repentance and humility you can always claim the promises of God***. Because He committed Himself to it. ***He committed Himself!***

So here’s what Jesus said: John 14:12: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father.... [And you read the first part of the book of Acts and yes, they did greater works than Jesus did.] ...And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.... [Now, here comes the other part of the requirement]: ...If you love Me, keep the commandments... [That’s a literal translation from the Greek] ...—namely, My commandments” (vs 12-15). So we find belief, faith

and obedience. And this comes in with obeying the voice of God because Jesus said these words.

Now, let's come over here to John 15:7—here's another aspect of it, especially for us. Those who know, who believe, who have the Holy Spirit and so forth—and that our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is continually maintained and developed. So we grow in grace and knowledge. We grow in the mind of Christ. We grow in being able to love God and keep His commandments and understand His ways. John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me... [Now this is also part of the requirements—*dwelling in Christ.*] ...and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.”

So we need to place everything into God's hands. Now, this doesn't mean that you're going to get an answer immediately. And sometimes the way that God will answer it, since it's according to His will, He will answer it differently because maybe what you ask for specifically is going to cause you problems. Because lots of times we think very sincerely something is right. But the problem is we don't yet have all the facts. And the problem is there are other things we don't know. But God knows everything, right? So if we ask according to His will, He will provide according to His will whatever we desire. And then you may have a situation occur where you've prayed about something and God didn't answer it, God didn't answer it. Well, I wonder why God didn't answer. Then you find out later that He didn't answer the prayer because that was (#1) not His will, and (#2) it was going to be disastrous for you. And you didn't know. So all of those factors are involved.

So, let's look at another one. Let's come down here to John 16:23—and this is what really makes the prayers dynamic, humble, yielded, obedient, faithful, all of those things all together. Because here is something that is (how should we say) not given to the world to do so. It's given to us!

John 16:23: “And in that day... [that is the day that they would see Jesus resurrected from the dead—beginning in that day] ...you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you.”

Now think about this for a minute, all those who have been Catholics—and all who aren't Catholics today: Why did you think—or do you still think—that you need to pray to Mary and the saints? And I am sure that this is in the Catholic Bible. See, they couldn't change the whole thing to accommodate their traditions. That's why they have to say, ‘Well, in order to understand the Bible you have to have a priest present.’ And that's not because you couldn't understand the Bible if he

wasn't there—that is because if you read the Bible you will find that what the Catholic Church teaches is not according to the Bible. So they need to control you. The truth is: you need the Holy Spirit to lead you. You need to control yourself with the power of the Holy Spirit, through God the Father and Jesus Christ—because you're led by the Holy Spirit. We'll talk about that a little later on.

But notice: “...you shall ask the Father.... [Now how does the prayer in Matt. 6:12 start? *Our Father*—correct? It doesn't say ‘Mary.’ It doesn't say ‘saints.’ It doesn't say ‘Jesus.’ ‘Our Father’] ...Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in allegories; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will plainly disclose to you *the things* of the Father. In that day, you shall ask in My name...” (vs 23-26).

That's why every prayer we have, we say, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ.’ That's for several reasons:

1. Because of the Spirit of God that is in us—Christ in us is the hope of glory.
2. Because Jesus said to.
3. And we could add other things on there, but He says, ‘ask in My name.’

Now notice, here's the key. This is why prayer becomes so important—and you grow in that relationship with God, and grow in that relationship with Jesus Christ, because He's at the right hand of God as our High Priest and Intercessor—correct? *Yes!* “In that day, you shall ask in My name and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, For the Father Himself loves you...” (vs 26-27).

That's why, I think the first sermon that starts out the Love Series is *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You*. Because everyone is going to come to a point in his or her life that he or she is going to feel completely alone. And there is nothing! They feel left, deserted, abandoned, rejected. There's nothing left. But remember, God loves you. Even if there are sins or problems, God can forgive those and intervene. Always remember that. And sometimes we have situations that continually remain with us—not because we are sinning, especially in husband and wife problems and in other problems—because the husband or wife does not understand or believe the way that you do or whatever [the] circumstances may be. However, never look upon those kinds of trials as God being against you and not answering your prayers. Use that as something to draw closer to God and beseech Him to help you; to strengthen you; to see things the way that God does. And, ask God to give you the love to show to that individual, whoever it may be,

that they would give you grace and favor—minimum. And that perhaps through circumstances, God may even call them. Now, that's up to God to do; and that's up to the individual who's involved. But this is how we need to approach it. Otherwise, what happens, you can get into a big BA—which is a bad attitude! And that's how people who are supposed to be converted, begin acting carnally and teacherously toward other people.

So remember, *the Father Himself loves you!* "...because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father" (vs 27-28). So always remember that. *Christ is there. The Father is there.*

Now let's look at the kind of help we have available to us. Let's come to Hebrews, the fourth chapter. Let's see what Christ is doing. Is it wrong in your prayer to also address Jesus Christ? *No, of course not!* Because we find in Acts 4 that they prayed to the Lord. But here in Hebrews 4, we find what Christ is doing. And this is important for us to realize. So important for us to realize and understand because this helps us overcome any discouragement that comes along. And all of us are going to have discouragement. All of us are going to have trials. All of us are going to have things that come along, which people in the world do not have in the same way. And the reason is, is because they are *of the world* and we're not. God has called us out of the world. So we'll have a certain set of trials and circumstances that other people wouldn't have that way.

But nevertheless, here's what we need to understand—Hebrews 4:12—this is why you can believe Christ, believe the Word of God. And this is how you can grow in faith, and grow in strength. And it doesn't come as one shwooooo and you have everything all at once. No, it comes as God grants it and gives it to us.

Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God... [That's referring to the Scriptures of God. But also, in John 1, what is Jesus called? *The Word of God*. So we have a duality here with us.] ...*is* living and powerful... [And that's why when you read and study the Bible, the Bible does things for you spiritually that no other book will do. Now, all of us read other books. But you will never have the experience spiritually, mentally or emotionally, and even intellectually, that you have from reading the Bible. And that's because it's living.] ...and sharper than any two-edged sword..." It is one of the few books in the world that will expose your sins. And also, God—to show that He's no respecter of persons, even of those that He has used—what does

it show of all of the patriarchs and all of the apostles? It what? *It reveals their weaknesses and sins!* Correct?

Now I read the Koran years and years ago. But I wonder if anyone has read it recently. And if you could tell me. Does the Koran point out any faults of Mohammad, the prophet of God? *I doubt it!* Does the New Testament point out the weaknesses and sins of the Apostle Peter—whom the Catholic Church claims is the first Pope, who is supposed to be perfect? *Yes, indeed!* So you find no other book in the world that does it that way.

Now notice how meaningful this is to our lives: "...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.... [No other book can do that, because when you read and study the Word of God, with the Spirit of God, it will do that for you. It reaches right into the very heart and core of your being.] (That's why the next verse says): ...And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet *He* was without sin" (vs 12-15).

So we have full confidence. Upon repentance there is no condemnation—remember that. Through Jesus Christ, all sins are forgiven—except the unpardonable sin. And if a person commits the unpardonable sin, he or she doesn't care whether there's forgiveness or not because they have rejected Jesus Christ. That's why in the series in Hebrews, I did two sermons on the unpardonable sin. And every once in a while I get an e-mail or I get a letter or someone calls and says, 'I believe I've committed the unpardonable sin and I'm in great turmoil and I don't know what to do.' And I say: 'Okay, if you're in great turmoil you haven't committed the unpardonable sin. You've recognized that you have sinned. So what you need to do is repent. Because if you committed the unpardonable sin, you're going to reject Christ; you're going to reject everything; and you won't care. You will be haughty in your satisfaction that you can defy God'—if I could put it that way.

Now, here's why in prayer it's important: "Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (v 16). So all of those things are the very basis and foundation of it.

God is at the center of it all. And we come to God on His terms.

Now, let's see some other things that we need to do. Let's come to Psalms 62—here's how we are to pray. Now, we've covered this before, but we'll just review it and add it in here. Because sometimes if you take the same Scriptures, you combine them with other Scriptures, you get a broader, more clear picture here. Let's pick it up in Psalm 62:5: "My soul, wait you only upon God; for my expectation *is* from Him [Because what we do in the process of conversion, we all realize that ***we have nothing that we didn't receive***—nothing physically, nothing spiritually, nothing at all—it all comes from God. So we're totally reliant on God. This does not make you weak—this makes you strong.] ...He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *He is* my defence; I shall not be moved.... [steadfast with God] ...In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God" (vs 5-7). So This is the approach we need to have—we'll see this a little later as we continue on.

Now v 8 is the key. Here is the sum of what we have just read: "Trust in Him at all times *you* people,... [ALL times, not some of the time, part of the time, only when you're in trouble—***ALL TIMES!*** And if you have received a tremendous blessing, do not get lifted up in your own importance. Be thankful to God and trust Him for it.] (now notice): ...pour out your heart before Him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah." That becomes important, that's a key to answered prayer. That also helps you understand things when you are done praying because of the exercise of your prayer and God's Spirit in you. You begin to understand things in a proper way and a proper perspective from God's point of view. "...pour out your heart before Him: God *is* a refuge for us..."

Now notice how he finishes this: "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.... [And of course, God holds all the nations as drop in the bucket. So the comparison: trust in God, Who loves you, Who's for you, Who is your refuge, Who is your salvation, Who is your rock—or trust in man of low degree—or high degree—what's the comparison?] ...Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*" (vs 9-10)—because they can go away. They can be gone, especially in our digital society. A delete button eliminates you, your identity and all that you have—which will be the ultimate coercion if you go against the government and have the *mark of the beast*. 'We will delete you' and you will become an enemy of the state. You cannot buy. You cannot sell. You cannot protect yourself. No one will talk to you. You

will have no protection of anything. So if riches increase don't set your heart on it.

"God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongs* unto God. Also unto You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy: for You renders to every man according to his work" (vs 11-12). So that's why if your works are loving God, serving Him, believing Him, praying to Him, living by every Word of God as much as you can, God is for you.

Psalm 31:23—since God loves us, we are to love God. "O love the LORD, all you His saints: *for* the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer.... [So if you've got something that's a really big problem, put it in God's hands. ***Let Him handle it!*** And He will handle it in a way that is going to keep you from trying to get involved and exercise your own will and get yourself in trouble.] (v 24): ...Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the LORD."

- So God is there to help
- He's there to answer
- He loves us
- He'll strengthen us, and so forth

Now, here is a key thing—Psalm 32:1—which goes right there into Matt. 6, does it not?—'Forgive us our debts [or sins] as we forgive those who sin against us—or are debtors' Here's why: Psalm 32:1: "Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven... [And it puts you in a right standing with God.] ...*whose* sin *is* covered. Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile" (vs 1-2). This is our relationship with God. And we renew it every day, don't we? *Yes! Yes, we do! That's tremendous!*

Now, let's look at some Psalms which we will sort of categorize them. Now, you may want to go ahead and study through the Psalms on your own this way. Categorize the different Psalms. Now, in the coming new Bible, in it's original order, we're going to have an appendix showing the structure of the Psalms and so forth—that we're going to have permission to reproduce from Dr. Martin's book: *Restoring the Original Bible*. Let's come to Psalm 38—becomes a real key. Now here's when you're really deep in trouble and deep in sin. God is still able to help and forgive.

Psalm 38:1: "O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath: neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure.... [Now notice how low he sunk. We do not know the physical circumstances in it, but he got plenty ill and sick.] ...For Your arrows stick fast in me, and Your hand presses me sore. *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my

sin.... [I wonder if Mohammad ever prayed that?] ...For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.... [We're all going to confront things that are too heavy for us to take.] ...My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*: and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.... [Now notice how absolutely miserable condition that he was in.] ...I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart" (vs 1-8). Well, you can read all the rest of it, but let's come down here and see the conclusion of it.

Verse 21: "Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation" (vs 21-22). See, this is why the Psalms are there: ***To teach us how to pray.*** This is why it is good as you're growing in prayer and grace and knowledge, to begin your prayers with some Psalms. And what you will find is this when you do: then those words will connect with your circumstances and then you will have your own words to then pray to God, because you've been inspired with what you have read.

Let's come over here to Psalm 39—let's see what this led to. What happens when you've got yourself in heap, big trouble; or you've really been down and out; or you've escaped a terrible circumstance. And I know since I drive down to Monrovia every other month, I always remember the spot on Highway 5 where I rolled my car. I know within two miles where it is, because I was doing something foolish. I was trying to put something up to keep the sun from blaring on me, and the front edge of the front wheel went off the edge of the pavement and rolled. If it would have gone ten feet further, I would have gone head-on into the south-bound traffic and been killed instantly. And in driving, I did not have my seatbelt on, and I remember the car rolling—and I can still see it to this day. It doesn't frighten me because I've put it in perspective. Fred learned that lesson! Don't do stupid things! And I remember when it landed upright and I wasn't hurt, I opened up the car door and got out, and the first thing I said was, 'Oh God, thank You for saving me from my stupidity!' It makes me much more cautious, would you say? *Yes!*

Psalm 39:1: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: [see!] I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." Then it goes through everything that is there.

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Which also is God intervening. Let's pick it up here in Psalm 39:13. Here's the end. Sometimes

it's interesting, read the first couple of verses and then the last couple of verse and you will see that all of these prayers have an opening, they have a closing, they address God—particular needs. Psalm 39:13: "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Lots of times you just need to ask God to spare you from things—there we go.

Now, Psalm 40:1: "I waited patiently for the LORD... [That's hard in this day and age with everything instant—instant this, instant that, instant the other thing.] ...and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.... [So when there is relief, when there is help, when there is repentance involved.] ...And He has put a new song in my mouth... [There's happiness, there's joy—the joy comes *after* the correction, The joy comes *after* learning the lesson.] ...*even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD" (vs 1-3). Now then, it blends into a part of the situation referring to Christ.

Verse 4: "Blessed *is* that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.... [Remember this: Every time you stick with the Truth, you're going to be blessed. That doesn't mean materially blessed. You're going to be blessed in your standing before God. You're going to be kept out of sin and out of trouble.] (now v 5): ...Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works *which* You have done, and Your thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto You: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered." So there's another thing. Stop and think about all that God has given you. How God has dealt with you. How God has intervened in your life. All of those things are very, very important to rehearse and declare to God—to acknowledge that He has done it. And I think what will happen in your prayer life is this: That you will begin to see and understand more and more

- that God is there
- that God hears you
- that God loves you
- that God is for you

And therefore, then, you can have more trust and confidence in God. So this grows and it multiplies and it increases. Here's what part of what Christ quoted back there in Heb. 10.

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; mine ears have You opened: burnt offering and sin offering have You not required" (v 6). So isn't that interesting. Even right here in the book of Psalms, here is a prelude to what? *The kind of relationship*

that we have with God. The kind of relationship that Jesus had. Which also tells us what? I'll just bring this out—you'll have to wait for the Feast for the whole sermon about what kind of temple and sacrifices.

Since sacrifices are not required today, because Christ has come, and His sacrifice has fulfilled all sacrifices. When Christ is on the earth and the saints are ruling during the Millennium—the Kingdom of God—what need would there be for any sacrifices? Since God didn't delight in them in the first place? Didn't desire them in a spiritual relationship with God.

Now, let's continue: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, I delight to do Your will, O my God: yea, Your law *is* within my heart.... [So all of these things then, what you might say, are steps of conversion; steps of belief and faith and conviction.] (Then here's of Christ): ...I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation... [this is about the ministry of Christ] ...I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your Truth from the great congregation" (vs 7-10). What is the 'great congregation'? *The 'great congregation' are the saints of God down through all history.* And at the resurrection, when they are resurrected and we're all presented to God the Father, then He's going to declare us as His brethren to God the Father. So that's amazing! I get excited about that! You think about being on the 'sea of glass' and all the saints are there and Christ presents us to the Father; and we're going to sing songs. Christ is going to sing a song. Hey! It's going to be amazing!

Verse 11: "Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O LORD: let Your lovingkindness and Your Truth continually preserve me.... [Another study: How much does Truth impact our prayers? **Well, Truth is the very heart and core of our prayers.** Not only the Truth of God, but the Truth of our relationship with God.] (Then He says here, again): ...For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me... [Now this is getting back into David. So lot's of times you have a blending of the words or what Christ would say—and then blending back to David. But, think on this: Who bore the sins of the world? **Christ!** Are those innumerable? **Yes!** So we can see that there.] ...so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart fails me.... [Now obviously, with Christ that didn't happen.] ...Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me" (vs 11-13). Then it says let those be ashamed and so forth.

Come down here to v 16: "Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You ... [And that's where we need to come in our relationship with God and our relationship with each other.] ...be glad in Christ." Now living in the world is tough enough. We don't need to make it tough to get along in the Church of God. We don't need to make obstacles of hierarchical, Hitlarianism over the brethren within the Church, to make it a dirge and fear to come to church. Always remember this: ***You can never inspire the love of God with intimidating threats of fear.*** The love of God comes from

1. your relationship with God
2. it comes through loving each other, as well

"Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love Your salvation say continually, 'The LORD be magnified.'.... [Because everything comes from God.] ...But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinks upon me..." (vs 16-17). Now, let's contemplate that thought. God the Father, the greatest Being in the universe ***thinks on us.*** Isn't that amazing? That's very inspiring to me. I don't know about you. But you see, you may not count to the world; ***you may not account to anything to other people, but you sure enough do to God!*** And He thinks on you! And you sure enough do to God because He's what?

- He has called you!
- And He has forgiven your sins!
- And He gives you the understanding of His Word!
- And He wants you to have the mind of Christ.

So therefore, let us rejoice. 'The Lord *thinks upon me.*' So, whenever you get down and out and you think the whole world is against me—which it very will may be—and nothing seems to be working out right—which sometimes it works out that way—remember, ***God thinks on you.*** And then you can claim this: "...You *are* my help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (v 17). And go through and do some of the studying of the Psalms that way.

Let's come here to a ***victory*** Psalm—let's come to Psalm 18:1—a deliverance or victory Psalm. Now, when you read up here in the fine print, if you have it, just before verse one: "To the chief Musician." Oh, isn't it very interesting? Even though David wrote many of the Psalms, he gave them to the priests, and they had to be entered in to the official record with their approval. So it's the priests who did the compiling of all of these.

"To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD

delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said... [quite a Psalm] ...I will love You, O LORD, my strength” (v 1).

So, in praying to God, let God know you love Him. Because loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and being is the key to the relationship with God. And the second key to the relationship that you have with God is to love the brethren. And if you love the brethren, you know they're not perfect because you're not. So don't be in a judgmental, condemning attitude even though you see problems and difficulties. Trust me and understand this: If you can see difficulties, does God know them? *Yes!* Is God giving them space to grow and change and overcome and receive mercy and forgiveness, which you desire? *Yes!* See, that's the whole lesson of the parable there in Matt. 18. You're forgiven your sins and then you get up and you go out and beat other people over the head because of their sins. Well, God is going to say, 'Hey, why should I forgive you your sins if you're going to beat up other people over the head when you see their sins.' No!

“I will love You, O LORD, my strength” (v 1). See now, you can tell this Psalm was way before the incident with Bathsheba. After the incidents with Bathsheba, David was under perpetual trouble, as part of the punishment. That, 'I made you king, I gave you everything, and furthermore, in receiving the kingdom if that wasn't enough, I would have given you so-and-so and thus-and-such. But you've given cause for the enemy to blaspheme because of what you did.' So this is way before that.

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.... [Whooo, what a deliverance! And always remember this: God is there! God is there!] ...I will call upon the LORD, *Who is worthy* to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies” (vs 2-3). Then he reiterates what happens and how God intervened to help. And how God intervened to knockout the enemy. He moved heaven and earth. What did we start out reading there in Mark 11? *That He would move mountains, correct? Yes, that's what He did here.*

Let's read it—v 6: “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, *even* into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled... [What an answer to prayer! Here you're out here fighting, say, 'Oh Lord, help me!'] There's an earthquake. What do you think the enemy's going to do? 'Whoooo!' Get all afraid and scatter.] ...the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken,

because He was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under His feet” (vs 6-9). Hey, you think about when Christ returns what it's going to be like. Awesome! Magnificent! You can go through and read the rest of it.

Now, let's come over here to v 30: “*As for* God, His way *is* perfect... [Always remember that, even though there are some things you don't understand; and even though some things are hard at first—remember, **God's way is perfect!**] ...the word of the LORD is tried... [It says there in Psa. 12 that it's like silver refined seven times.] ... He *is* a buckler to all those that trust in Him. For who *is* God save the LORD? or who *is* a rock save our God? *It is* God that girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect” (vs 30-32). When you walk in the way of the Lord, then you're walking in the perfect way because His way is perfect. And He gives us that perfection. Now, we're going to have varying degrees of this. And I've also experienced this: Whenever something has been really been very good and wonderful and fine and great and marvelous and you're happy about it—a couple of days later you're going to do a blooper! And that'll kind of bring you back down to earth and let you know that whatever was done God did.

“...makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like hinds' *feet*, and sets me upon my high places. He teaches my hands to war... [And of course, then he was a warring man, but that kept him from being the builder of the temple—didn't it? *Yes.*] (Now, let's take this—v 34) ...He teaches my hands to war so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms....” Let's look at it this way:

- Spiritually, we have a spiritual battle to fight
- We have spiritual things to overcome
- We have human nature to overcome
- We have carnal self to overcome.

“...You have also given me the shield of Your salvation... [Just put in your margin there: Heb. 6:10-18—take the shield of God, the helmet and so forth—here's part of it] ...and Your right hand has held me up, and Your gentleness has made me great” (vs 32-35). Quite a Psalm—Psalm of deliverance.

Let's come over here to v 46—I'll let you read all the rest of it in between. “The LORD lives; and blessed *be* my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.... [You know something, one of the best things that can happen in our lives, is this: When God does something for us, and when we know that God has done it for us, and we haven't done it ourselves, and all the praise goes to God—what does that do? *That gives you love. That gives*

you joy. But also it takes away vanity and pride and egotism, and all of this sort of thing that comes along with the exaltation of self.] (v 47): ...*It is God that avenges me, and subdues the people under me. He delivers me from mine enemies: yea, You lifted me up above those that rise up against me. You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore, will I give thanks unto You, O LORD...* [And that's why many times during the day you need to be praying. Even while you're on your feet. While you're driving, whatever it is may be.] ...among the heathen, and sing praises unto Your name. Great deliverance gives He to his king; and shows mercy to His anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore" (vs 46-50).

Now, remember the sermon that I gave recently on the *Tabernacle of David*? So in a sense this is the prophecy for the Church. Does He not deliver the Church? Does He not deliver us? Does He not forgive us our sins? *Yes!* And He fights against our enemies. Listen, we need to understand this: Part of the Church being scattered is that ***God is fighting the enemies for us***. Another part of scattering the Church—because we all look around and we'd love to have great numbers of people, but stop and consider what did we have when we had great numbers of people? He's also perfecting His Church. And it helps us also to get to know each other and love each other more—right?

I've been where I've been in the congregation—well, the biggest one I was in was up at the Feast of Tabernacles one year up in Lake Tahoe—we had 12,000 up there. What happens in a big congregation like that? *Well, you find those that you know and you get together with a smaller group. Why? Because things function better in a smaller group*—correct? So that's another reason why God has scattered the Church. So all of these things come together. So I think this: I think there's going to be a great disappointment for those who think that they're going to rebuild what God has put down and let go and scattered. So we'll just have to see how they do it.

However, if they all—in prayer and fasting—got together and really prayed to God, repented of their sins and put everything in His hands, that would be a different story. But that requires an awful lot. So the only thing you can say is you hope that it would.

Let's come to Psalm 27—there's even a wonderful solo song that is taken from this Psalm. What all of these Psalms do is also this: They help show us a converted attitude, converted spirit toward God in our approach to God and in our prayers. Now notice this one. This is really a prayer of deliverance. He's really elated here.

Psalm 27:1: "The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?... [We can have the greatest confidence, faith and belief.] ...the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell" (vs 1-2). Dropped dead right at his feet. Go back and read the account of what happened with Jehoshaphat and the army of the 180,000 of the Assyrians that could have come at any time and just taken over Jerusalem and taken all the Jews off into captivity. Hezekiah went to God and prayed and said, 'Oh God, this is more than we can do.' He said, 'I'll deliver you. This is My fight.' So what happened? They got up in the morning, went out there, they're all dead—all 180,000 killed each other! And the armies had all the loot and all the spoil and all the plunder that they had taken down on their encounter in Carchemish and into Egypt and they were carrying this back with them on the way back to Assyria. So they were three days carrying away all the spoil: the gold, the silver, everything that they had. Yet, here is the enemy standing right there and the representatives telling Hezekiah and the people, 'Hey, look at what the king of Assyria has done.' And telling the people, 'Don't trust in what Hezekiah has to say.' So they walk out there and [God] delivered them. So here's the thing, whenever you're delivered from a great problem, thank God.

Verse 3: "Though a host should encamp against me... [Now, think about this: What did God tell Jeremiah? *He said, 'Now, don't be afraid of the people because they're going to make your forehead like flint; like bars of iron.* And he needed that just to have the mental strength to go through what he went through.] ...my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident. One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple" (vs 3-4).

Key—which is this: Always keep the goal in mind. Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed that we can look at the problems at hand and we get our mind off the goal. What is the goal? *Conversion, Kingdom of God, eternal life.* And then you evaluate everything else from that perspective. When you do, it will give you a focus on what you need to do here, because you realize where you need to go ultimately. So this verse four is quite a thing.

Now notice, v 5: "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.... [God will be there] ...And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore, will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices

of joy... [The sacrifices we make today are not the sacrifices of animals, but

- of love
- of prayer
- of thanksgiving
- of joy, of praise
- of repentance

—all of those are the sacrifices and even in the prayer of repentance David said, ‘What God desires is a broken spirit and a contrite heart.’ Those are the true sacrifices of God.

Verse 7: “...Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. *When You said*, ‘Seek you My face’; my heart said unto you, ‘Your face, LORD, will I seek.’.... [Because this is what we’re doing in prayer. The key...you can lay down keys to prayer, but unless you have your heart in your prayers and unless you have a developed relationship with God, it’s going to be more difficult. ***Really knowing how to pray does not come by a set of rules***, though we can do so and we’re into 19 on *The Keys to Answered Prayer*, that is true. But ***it comes from the heart***. And it comes from within. So that’s why in going through the keys to answered prayer, it’s got to come from within, with God’s Spirit.] ...Hide not Your face *far* from me; put not Your servant away in anger: You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation” (vs 7-9).

So let’s read the last verse. I’ll let you fill in all the rest. Verse 14—here’s the conclusion of it: “**Wait on the LORD**: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart... [Does that sound a lot like what we read there in Mark 9 to begin with—‘help my unbelief.’] ...wait, I say, on the LORD.”

Now let’s look at some other things concerning courage. Let’s come back here to Joshua, the first chapter. What else gives us courage? See, they go hand-in-hand. You can’t have belief without obedience; you can’t have love without obedience. Joshua 1:5—and here’s what God told Joshua: “There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life...” You can put in there anything you want:

- There shall be no sin take me away from God.
- There shall be no trouble that will take me away from God.
- There shall be no difficulty or circumstances that will take me away from God.

So He tells Joshua: “...as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you: **I will not fail you, nor forsake you**.... [Remember that!] ...**Be strong and of a good**

courage... [and this kind of courage is not from self-pride and vaunting self, but of faith and confidence in God.] ...for unto this people shalt you divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be you strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded you... [It takes courage to keep the laws and commandments of God. It takes faith to keep the laws and commandments of God. There’s no fight between commandment-keeping and faith—they go hand-in-hand.] ...turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that you may prosper whithersoever you goest. This book of the law... [And what we can do today is say the Word of God—the whole Bible.] ...shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have not I commanded you?.... [Now notice, He said this three times.] ...**Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you whithersoever you go**” (vs 5-9). And isn’t that true? If you have the Spirit of God, He’s with you.

Let’s come to the book of Hebrews and we’ll end here. Hebrews 13:5—and all of this comes with the Spirit of God, the love of God, the power of God—through prayer. Prayer is the key. Now I want you to notice the unity—and, in going through and doing the Old Testament it has given me another thing that I want to do in the future and that is show the unity of Scripture: Old Testament and New Testament, because it’s not one *vs* the other. You can’t have one without the other. You must have both.

Hebrews 13:5: “*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior*... [Hey, every elder, minister, evangelist listen up!] ...*but be satisfied with what you have; for He has said, ‘**In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.**’*.... [So we have here a trilogy again. Just like it was three times there:

- ‘be strong and of good courage,’
- we have ‘No, I won’t leave you.’
- ‘No, I will never leave you. No, I will never forsake you.’]

...So then, let us boldly say, ‘*The Lord is my helper*... [And you can have confidence in that. If you need to, start your prayer with that. Claim this promise. Always remember this: ***Every Word of God is a promise because it is true!***] ...‘*The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. **What can man do to me?**’” (vs 5-6).*

Well, as Jesus said, ‘Don’t fear him who can kill the body, but can’t kill the life.’ That’s the ultimate that they can do to you, but what does it do? ***It seals the victory of God in your life***—does it not? And isn’t that what overcoming unto death is all about? *Yes!* And we’re going to face times down the road when we’re going to face people who are going to be killing the saints. Jesus promised that it would be. But that doesn’t mean that God has gone far off some place.

We can have this confidence; and this kind of faith; and this kind of understanding. And this comes by prayer and loving and serving God through His Spirit.

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) Mark 9:17-29
- 2) Mark 11:20-26
- 3) John 14:12-15
- 4) John 15:7
- 5) John 16:23-28
- 6) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 7) Psalm 62:5-12
- 8) Psalm 31:23-24
- 9) Psalm 32:1-2
- 10) Psalm 38:1-8, 21-22
- 11) Psalm 39:1, 13
- 12) Psalm 40:1-13, 16-17
- 13) Psalm 18:1-3, 6-9, 30-35, 46-50
- 14) Psalm 27:1-9, 14
- 15) Joshua 1:5-9
- 16) Hebrews 13:5-6

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- Matthew 6:12
- Acts 4
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- Matthew 18
- Psalm 12
- Hebrews 6:10-18

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- Sermon Series: Love Series (#1 specifically)
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FRC:bo
Transcribed: 4-1-08
Reformatted: 12-01-09