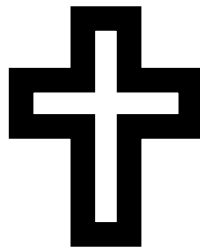


**Twelve Lessons**  
*on*  
***The Ministry of Prayer***

*Compiled and Written*  
*by*  
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**\*MESSAGES PREACHED BY DR. RONNIE SIMPSON**

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## THE LACK OF PRAYER – GOD SEEKS INTERCESSORS – LESSON 1

**Introduction:** As soon as I began preparing the lessons for this very important subject, the Holy Spirit began to deal with me personally in great conviction. I was reminded of a statement made by Leonard Ravenhill in his book “Why Revival Tarrys”, concerning the absence of prayer among the men of God. His statement went something like this, “Preachers who don’t pray two hours per day come a dime a dozen!” How many days the Holy Spirit has reprimanded me for lying down to sleep at night before even realizing I haven’t talked with God during the day. God help our self-righteous attitude of thinking we can perform the duties that will affect eternity without saturating our lives with prayer. In the lessons that follow, we will study and discuss the **Preaching, Promises, Provisions, Positions, and the Power of Prayer**. However, the most important element of this study is the **Practice of Prayer**. We preach about prayer, read about prayer, make requests of prayer, discuss prayer, admire great men of prayer, acknowledge its importance, and even its absence. If only we would put the same effort into the actual process of praying as we do those things mentioned above. Please, at the end of this course, and even now, determine to better yourself in the practice of supplication and intercessory prayer. If we are to have God’s anointing in our ministries, we must have a strong prayer-life, and it is just that, a life of prayer. The lack of answered prayer is caused by many reasons, but there is a remedy. My prayer is that through your study of this material, that remedy will be realized.

### Lesson Goals:

1. Review the areas of the believer’s life where prayers are often hindered.
2. Show how the Scriptures and Saviour promote and desire that we apply ourselves to fervent prayer.

### Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Prayer – Communication with God; Prayer is the expression of man's dependence upon God for all things. What habitual reverence is to praise, the habitual sense of dependence is to prayer. "Prayer, or communion with God, is not reckoned among the means of grace technically so called. It is regarded rather as the concomitant of the others. But, while it is undeniably true that prayer is a condition of the efficacy of other means, it is itself and alone a means of grace" (Pope, Systematic Theology, 3:298). It is a means of grace that has large value, for it affords the privilege of close communion with God, especially when one is alone with Him in its supplications. Although on the one hand there arises a deep sense of need, helplessness, and unworthiness, there also comes an assurance of the divine fullness and love, which enlarges our petitions and brings confidence of answers to our prayers.
2. Intercession – The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group. The sinful nature of this world separates human beings from God. It has always been necessary, therefore, for righteous individuals to go before God to seek reconciliation between Him and His fallen creation.

## I. PROBLEMS THAT INHIBIT PRAYER

### A. Problem of Sinfulness

1. Isa. 59:1-2 – *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*
2. How many times have we entered the prayer closet, prayed for an extensive period of time, and left with a sense of failure because most of our prayer time was exhausted with confession and repentance, not fellowship.
3. The Effect of Wrong Relations
  - a. Relationship with Spirit – Sins Against Our Comforter
    - 1) Grieve His Person – Concerns His feelings and our relationship with people  
Eph. 4:30 – *“...grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”* – The word grieve means to “make one sorrowful; to affect someone with sadness.”
    - 2) Quench His Power – Concerns His fire and our relationship with God  
I Thess. 5:19 – *“Quench not the Spirit.”* – The word quench means “to put out; dampen; to extinguish.”
    - 3) Despite His Purpose – Concerns His fight and our relationship with sin  
Hebrews 10:29 – *“...done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”* – The word despite means “to insult.” Willful sin insults the purpose of the Spirit to restrain us from ungodliness.

- b. Relationship with Saints – Sins against our church
  - 1) Lack of Decision – “...choose you this day whom ye will serve” – Joshua 24:15  
The word decide or decision means “to bring to a definite end; the act or result of deciding.” We hurt our church by not being decisive in our service.
  - 2) Lack of Denial – The term denial means “the restriction on one’s own activities or desires.” We need to allow Christ to crucify our flesh daily – not my will, but thine.
  - 3) Lack of Devotion – Devotion means “religious fervor; strong love or affection.”  
Fervor = “intensity of expression” A life wholly given to God.
  - 4) Lack of Dedication – To be dedicated is to be “set apart for a definite purpose.”  
So much of our life is wasted because we become too involved with the world.
  - 5) Lack of Discipline – Discipline = “training that corrects, molds, or perfects; control gained by obedience; orderly conduct; to bring under control”
  - 6) Lack of Determination – Determination can be defined as “a firm or fixed purpose”  
These are six areas where we need to improve in the church. They are all marks of discipleship, and if we follow Christ they will be produced in our lives.
- c. Relationship with Spouse – Sins against our companion
  - 1) The Woman – The Wife’s Responsibility – I Peter 3:1-6
    - a) Her Actions – Life of Godliness – vs. 1-2
    - b) Her Appearance – Inward Beauty – vs. 3-4
    - c) Her Acceptance – Of God’s Will – In Subjection – vs. 5
    - d) Her Appreciation – Of a Godly husband – vs. 6
  - 2) The Man – The Husband’s Responsibility – I Peter 3:7
    - a) Duty Of Communication – “*dwelt ... according to knowledge*”
      - 1) Dwell = “domestic association”
      - 2) According to Knowledge = “*in understanding*” – In other words, the husband needs to understand the needs of his wife. He accomplishes this by communication.
    - b) Duty Of Commendation -- “*give honour*” = “to bestow honour on one” , compliment
    - c) Duty Of Cooperation – “*all of one mind*” = Speaks of agreement and partnership
  - 3) The Reason – vs. 7 – “*that your prayers be not hindered*”

### **B. Problem of Self-reliance**

- 1. The Nature Of Effective Prayer – Prayer is dependent upon Christ
  - a. In John 15 we see the relationship of the Vine and the Branch. Without the life connection between the two there is only death.
  - b. No wonder our prayers are dry and dead. We are not relying on the life of the Son of God.
- 2. The Necessity Of Effective Prayer – Prayer is dead without Christ.
  - a. Jesus stated, “without me ye can do nothing”. Prayer is vitally connected with Christ.
  - b. The branch that doesn’t produce is purged and burned. We must get our flesh out of the way, and learn to rely on Christ and the Spirit alone.

### **C. Problem of Slothfulness**

- 1. Commitment – Laziness is probably the greatest reason why we do not pray. Fervent prayer is hard work, and our flesh doesn’t like the sacrifice involved. We have this same problem in witnessing, reading, and studying God’s Word. It can be overcome through commitment.
- 2. Consistency – Discipline is another problem we have in prayer. We don’t stay at it long enough to reap the benefits. The Bible speaks of the believer many times as being a tree, or as bearing fruit. It takes time to bear fruit. We don’t live consistently long enough for the fruit to be produced in prayer. We must consistently live holy and prayerfully.

## **II. PLEAS THAT INVOKE PRAYER**

### **A. Plea From The Saviour**

- 1. Pray for the Sinner – Matthew 5:44
- 2. Pray Concerning Temptation – Matthew 26:41
- 3. Pray Continually – Luke 18:1; Luke 21:36
- 4. Pray for the Harvest – Matthew 9:38
- 5. Pray in Secret – Matthew 6:6
- 6. Pray Believing – Mark 11:24

**B. Plea From The Scripture**

1. Isaiah 62:6 – *“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence.”*
2. Isaiah 63:5 – *“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold...”*
3. Isaiah 64:7 – *“And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee...”*
4. Isaiah 59:16 – *“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor...”*
5. Ezekiel 22:30 – *“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”*

**Conclusion:** Are you interceding? God is looking for someone to call upon His name. It is the only hope for revival in our nation, and it must start with the men of God. Be one that God can find!