

Message Four

Prayer to Absorb God and to Express God by Praying to God as a Friend So That We Can Co-work with God

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Psa. 27:4; Jer. 17:7-8;
Matt. 6:6; Col. 2:6-7, 19; Isa. 37:31; Gen. 18:1-22

- Psa. 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.
- Jer. 17:7 Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is.
- Jer. 17:8 And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit.
- Matt. 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Col. 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
- Col. 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- Col. 2:19 And...holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- Isa. 37:31 And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
- Gen. 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.
- Gen. 18:2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth
- Gen. 18:3 And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant.
- Gen. 18:4 Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
- Gen. 18:5 And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said.
- Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes.
- Gen. 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.
- Gen. 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
- Gen. 18:9 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent.
- Gen. 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.

- Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.
- Gen. 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?
- Gen. 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?
- Gen. 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
- Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.
- Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.
- Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
- Gen. 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?
- Gen. 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.
- Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!
- Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.
- Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

I. The meaning of prayer is to absorb God; the more we contact God, the more we will absorb Him, and the more we absorb Him, the more we will enjoy Him as our light and our salvation:

- A. In Psalm 27:1 David says, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation"; God's being our light and our salvation shows that God Himself is what we need; what God gives us is just Himself; light is God, salvation is God, power is God (1 Cor. 1:24), and grace is God (John 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Gal. 2:20); every spiritual need that we have is God Himself.

Psa. 27:1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation; / Whom shall I fear? / Jehovah is the strength of my life; / Whom shall I dread?

1 Cor. 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

1 Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- B. David contacted and absorbed God by beholding Him as beauty (Psa. 27:4); when he contacted God to absorb God, he was enlightened and received salvation within:

Psa. 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.

1. Beholding God as our beauty is a great key and a great secret to experiencing God for His heart's desire—2 Cor. 3:16-18.

2 Cor. 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2. By the divine dispensing through the washing of the water of life in the word of Christ, He beautifies us as the house of His beauty to be His beautiful bride for His beautification—Isa. 60:7, 9, 13, 19, 21; 59:21; Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 19:7.

Isa. 60:7 All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you; / The rams of Nebaioth will minister to you; / They will go up acceptably upon My altar, / And I will beautify the house of My beauty.

Isa. 60:9 Surely the coastlands will look eagerly for Me; / And the ships of Tarshish will come first, / To bring your children from afar, / Their silver and their gold with them, / Unto the name of Jehovah your God / And unto the Holy One of Israel; for He has beautified you.

Isa. 60:13 The glory of Lebanon will come to you, / The fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together, / To beautify the place of My sanctuary; / And I will make the place for My feet glorious.

Isa. 60:19 You will no longer have the sun for your light by day, / Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; / But Jehovah will be an eternal light to you, / And your God your beauty.

Isa. 60:21 Then all your people will be righteous; / They will possess the land forever, / The branch of My planting, / The work of My hands, / That I may be beautified.

Isa. 59:21 And as for Me, this is My covenant with them, says Jehovah: My Spirit which is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of your seed's seed, says Jehovah, from now and forever.

Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,

Eph. 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

C. There is a hymn that says, "Just as I am" (Hymns, #1048); this means that we should come to God just as we are without trying to improve or change our condition; we received Christ in this way, and we should walk in Christ in this way—Col. 2:6-7a.

Hymns, #1048 Just as I am

1. Just as I am, without one plea, And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,	But that Thy blood was shed for me, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!
2. Just as I am, and waiting not To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,	To rid my soul of one dark blot; O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
3. Just as I am, though tossed about Fightings within, and fears without,	With many a conflict, many a doubt; O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
4. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;	Sight, riches, healing of the mind;

Yes, all I need, in Thee to find,	O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
5. Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Because Thy promise I believe,	Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
6. Just as I am, Thy love unknown Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,	Has broken every barrier down; O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Col. 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
Col. 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

- D. To pray is to come to the Lord just as we are; when we come to the Lord, we should lay our inner condition before Him and tell Him that we are short in every matter; even if we are weak, confused, sad, and speechless, we can still come to God; no matter what our inner condition is, we should bring it to God.
- E. Instead of caring about our condition, we need to enter into God's presence to contact Him by looking to Him, beholding Him, praising Him, giving thanks to Him, worshipping Him, and absorbing Him; then we will enjoy God's riches, taste His sweetness, receive Him as light and power, and be inwardly peaceful, bright, strong, and empowered; we will then learn the lesson of staying connected to Him when we are ministering the word to the saints—1 Pet. 4:10-11; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3.

1 Pet. 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

1 Pet. 4:11 If anyone speaks, as speaking oracles of God; if anyone ministers, as ministering out of the strength which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

2 Cor. 2:17 For we are not like the many, adulterating the word of God for profit; but as out of sincerity, but as out of God, before God we speak in Christ.

2 Cor. 13:3 Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.

II. Colossians 2:6-7 reveals that Christ as the good land is the rich soil in which we have been rooted so that we may grow with the elements that we absorb from the soil—cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:19:

Col. 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
Col. 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
1 Cor. 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.
Col. 2:19 And...holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

- A. By working together with God, Paul planted the believers as the living plants into Christ as the soil; God put us, the living plants, into Christ as the soil (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 6:4-5) so that we may grow in Christ as life (Eph. 4:15-16) and be transformed in life to become precious materials for God's building (1 Cor. 3:12).

1 Cor. 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
Rom. 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

- Rom. 6:5 For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Cor. 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

B. According to God's economy, the one who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13; 17:7-8); a tree grows beside a river by absorbing all the riches of the water; this is a picture of God's economy, which is carried out by His divine dispensing (cf. Isa. 57:20-21 with footnote 1 on v. 20; 55:7; 12:1-6; John 4:10, 14; 7:37-38; 1 Cor. 12:13).

- Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.
- Jer. 17:7 Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is.
- Jer. 17:8 And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit.
- Isa. 57:20 But the wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud.
- Isa. 57:21 There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.
- Isa. 57:20 footnote 1 "The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord (cf. 55:1-2). They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this. Cf. note 71 in ch. 55."
- Isa. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, / And the evildoer, his thoughts; / And let him return to Jehovah, and He will have compassion on him; / And to our God, for He will pardon abundantly.
- Isa. 12:1 And you will say in that day, / I will praise You, O Jehovah. You were angry with me, / But Your anger has turned and You have consoled me.
- Isa. 12:2 God is now my salvation; / I will trust and not dread; / For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, / And He has become my salvation.
- Isa. 12:3 Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation,
- Isa. 12:4 And you will say in that day, / Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name! / Make His deeds known among the peoples; / Remind them that His name is exalted.
- Isa. 12:5 Sing psalms to Jehovah, for He has done something majestic! / Let it be made known in all the earth!
- Isa. 12:6 Cry out and give a ringing shout, O inhabitant of Zion, / For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.
- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

- C. In order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the water (cf. 3:6); the riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the trees constitute us with God's divinity and cause us to grow with the growth of God (Col. 2:19); in this way we and God become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance (Rev. 4:3; 21:11).

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

Col. 2:19 And...holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

- D. If a plant does not absorb nutrients from the soil, the plant cannot grow; likewise, if we do not receive what comes out of Christ as the Head, the Body cannot grow; holding the Head is, therefore, equal to being rooted in Christ as the soil; to hold the Head is to remain in Christ, staying intimately connected to Him without any insulation between us and Him—Col. 2:19.

Col. 2:19 And...holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

- E. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us; God's building is "growing into a holy temple in the Lord" in whom we also "are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit" by our absorbing the riches of Christ; the actual building of the house of God is by the believers' growth in life—Eph. 2:21-22.

Eph. 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph. 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

- F. Individual growth becomes corporate growth; if all the members grow individually, the Body will be built up corporately—Hymns, #395 and #840.

Hymns, #395 O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me

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| 1. O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me,
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
Each day let Thy supporting might
My darkness vanish in Thy light, | And all things else recede;
From sin be daily freed.
My weakness still embrace;
Thy life my death efface. |
| 2. In Thy bright beams which on me fall,
That I am nothing, Thou art all, | Fade every evil thought;
I would be daily taught. |
| 3. More of Thy glory let me see,
I would Thy living image be, | Thou Holy, Wise, and True;
In joy and sorrow too. |
| 4. Fill me with gladness from above,
Lord, let the glow of Thy great love | Hold me by strength divine;
Through all my being shine. |
| 5. Make this poor self grow less and less,
Oh, make me daily through Thy grace | Be Thou my life and aim;
More meet to bear Thy name. |

Hymns, #840 The Church-Her Building

1. Freed from self and Adam's nature, Lord, I would be built by Thee

<p>With the saints into Thy temple, From peculiar traits deliver, That a dwelling place for Thee, Lord,</p> <p>2. By Thy life and by its flowing With the saints coordinated, Keep the order in the Body, Ever serving, helping others,</p> <p>3. In my knowledge and experience But submitting and accepting Holding fast the Head, and growing By the joints and bands supplying,</p> <p>4. By Thy Spirit daily strengthened I would know Thy love surpassing, Ever of Thy riches taking, Ever growing into manhood,</p> <p>5. In God's house and in Thy Body That within this corporate vessel That Thy Bride, the glorious city, As a lampstand brightly beaming</p>	<p>Where Thy glory we shall see. From my independent ways, We will be thru all our days. I can grow and be transformed, Buildded up, to Thee conformed; There to function in Thy will, All Thy purpose to fulfill. I would not exalted be, Let the Body balance me; With His increase, in His way, Knit together day by day. In the inner man with might, Know Thy breadth and length and height; Unto all Thy fulness filled, That Thy Body Thou may build. Buildded up I long to be, All shall then Thy glory see; May appear upon the earth, To express to all Thy worth.</p>
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- G. Colossians 2:7 puts being rooted and being built up together; this is because being rooted is for growing, and growing is genuine building (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:6, 9); the only way to become deeply rooted in Christ is to contact Him as the soil in order to daily absorb the water in the word (Eph. 5:26); in this way we "take root downward and bear fruit upward" (Isa. 37:31).

<p>Col. 2:7</p> <p>Eph. 4:15</p> <p>Eph. 4:16</p> <p>1 Cor. 3:6</p> <p>1 Cor. 3:9</p> <p>Eph. 5:26</p> <p>Isa. 37:31</p>	<p>Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.</p> <p>But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,</p> <p>Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.</p> <p>I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.</p> <p>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.</p> <p>That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,</p> <p>And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.</p>
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- H. We need to take time to absorb Christ day by day by having a personal and private time with Him (Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23; Mark 1:35) so that spontaneously we will walk in Christ and live out Christ for the corporate expression of Christ (Col. 2:6-7):

<p>Matt. 6:6</p> <p>Matt. 14:22</p> <p>Matt. 14:23</p> <p>Mark 1:35</p> <p>Col. 2:6</p> <p>Col. 2:7</p>	<p>But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.</p> <p>And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.</p> <p>And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.</p> <p>And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.</p> <p>As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,</p> <p>Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.</p>
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1. Our daily need is to allow adequate time for prayer, which will enable us to absorb more of

the riches of our God; in the morning many saints may spend time with the Lord, but they may not absorb much of His riches because they are in too much of a hurry; we cannot absorb the riches of Christ into us as our nourishment if we are in a hurry—cf. Psa. 119:48, 97.

Psa. 119:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes.

Psa. 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! / All day long it is my musing.

2. We must spend more personal and private time with the Lord in order to absorb Him; we must exercise our spirit to spend more time in our spirit to adore the Lord, to praise Him, to offer thanks to Him, and to speak to Him freely; then God will give us the growth as we enjoy Him as our banquet—Matt. 22:4; Rev. 3:20.

Matt. 22:4 Again, he sent other slaves, saying, Tell those who have been called, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatted cattle have been slain, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding feast.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

3. The addition of God into us by receiving Him as our new nourishment and fresh enjoyment through His words of spirit, life, gladness, and joy (John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16) is the growth that He gives (Josh. 1:8-9; Psa. 119:15, 48).

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Jer. 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

Josh. 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall muse upon it day and night so that you may be certain to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success.

Josh. 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.

Psa. 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Psa. 119:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes.

4. If we spend a considerable amount of personal and private time with the Lord daily in order to absorb God, the salvation of His countenance will become the salvation of our countenance—42:5, 11.

Psa. 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? / And why are you disquieted within me? / Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him / For the salvation of His countenance.

Psa. 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul? / And why are you disquieted within me? / Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, / The salvation of my countenance and my God.

III. The meaning of prayer is also for us to express God; in Psalm 27:4 David says that he desired not only to behold the beauty of Jehovah but also "to inquire in His temple"; to inquire is to let God speak within us so that the words spoken to Him in prayer are actually God's speaking within us, God's expressions:

Psa. 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah

/ All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.

- A. Real prayer is our coming to God, letting God speak within us, and expressing to God what He has spoken back to Him—"When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek" (v. 8).

Psa. 27:8 When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.

- B. John 15:7 says, "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you"; this verse presents three crucial points:

John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

1. First, we must abide in the Lord, which is to remain in fellowship with the Lord.
2. Second, the Lord's words must abide in us; when we abide in the Lord and are in constant fellowship with Him, He speaks within us.
3. Third, our asking the Lord comes from the Lord's speaking within us; if we are in fellowship with the Lord, He will speak within us, and then we will have the words with which to ask Him, that is, to pray to Him.

- C. When we really touch, contact, and absorb God, He will speak within us; then we pray according to His inner speaking; to pray is to go to God, meet Him, draw near to Him, commune with Him, and absorb Him so that He can speak to us inwardly; when we pray to Him with His words to us, our prayer expresses God.

- D. In our contact with the Lord, we need to learn the following principles:

1. We should not direct the Lord in our prayer (cf. 2:4); instead, like Saul of Tarsus, we should ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" not "This is what I will do, Lord" (Acts 22:10).

John 2:4 And Jesus said to her, Woman, what do I have in this that concerns you? My hour has not yet come.

Acts 22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise up and go into Damascus, and there it will be told to you concerning all the things which have been appointed to you to do.

2. When we draw near to the Lord and contact Him, He causes us to see our needs and points out our problems, faults, stains, and sins; the way for us to take the living water is to confess these sins to the Lord—John 4:15-18.

John 4:15 The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst nor come here to draw.

John 4:16 He said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.

John 4:17 The woman answered and said, I do not have a husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I do not have a husband,

John 4:18 For you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.

3. When we draw near to the Lord to contact Him, we should seek the Lord Himself as the unseen spiritual matters, not the seen physical matters—6:27, 31-33; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:27.

John 6:27 Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for Him has the Father, even God, sealed.

- John 6:31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, "He gave them bread out of heaven to eat."
- John 6:32 Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Moses has not given you the bread out of heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread out of heaven.
- John 6:33 For the bread of God is He who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.
- 2 Cor. 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- Heb. 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.

4. Human opinions frustrate the Lord's power, so not until we are hopelessly weak, an utter failure, and completely dead, will the Lord manifest Himself in us and to us as resurrection power—John 11:3, 5-6, 17, 21, 25-26, 32-35, 38, 41-44; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.

- John 11:3 The sisters therefore sent to Him saying, Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.
- John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
- John 11:6 When therefore He heard that he was sick, He remained at that time in the place where He was for two days.
- John 11:17 Then when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.
- John 11:21 Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
- John 11:26 And everyone who lives and believes into Me shall by no means die forever. Do you believe this?
- John 11:32 Then Mary, when she came to where Jesus was, saw Him and fell at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.
- John 11:33 Then Jesus, when He saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, was moved with indignation in His spirit and was troubled,
- John 11:34 And He said, Where have you put him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see.
- John 11:35 Jesus wept.
- John 11:38 Jesus therefore, moved with indignation again in Himself, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.
- John 11:41 Then they took the stone away. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.
- John 11:42 And I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the crowd standing around, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me.
- John 11:43 And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out!
- John 11:44 And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with cloths, and his face was bound about with a handkerchief. Jesus said to them, Loose him and let him go.
- 2 Cor. 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.
- 2 Cor. 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

5. When we draw near to the Lord, we need to let Him do what He wills in us—John 13:6-9; Luke 1:37-38.

- John 13:6 He came then to Simon Peter. Peter said to Him, Lord, do You wash my feet?

John 13:7 Jesus answered and said to him, What I am doing you do not know now, but you will know after these things.

John 13:8 Peter said to Him, You shall by no means wash my feet forever. Jesus answered him, Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.

John 13:9 Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Luke 1:37 Because no word will be impossible with God.

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

6. Even when we are cold and indifferent toward the Lord or have fallen into the world, He will manifest Himself to us; we may fail and change, but the Lord never fails or changes— John 21:1-25; Isa. 49:15-16; Jer. 31:3.

John 21:1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. And He manifested Himself in this way:

John 21:2 Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee and the sons of Zebedee and two others of His disciples were there together.

John 21:3 Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We also are coming with you. They went forth and got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4 Now as soon as the morning broke, Jesus stood on the shore; however the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

John 21:5 Then Jesus said to them, Little children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you? They answered Him, No.

John 21:6 And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. They cast therefore, and they were no longer able to haul it in because of the abundance of fish.

John 21:7 Then that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord! Therefore when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment around himself, for he was naked; and he threw himself into the sea.

John 21:8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net of fish.

John 21:9 Then when they got out onto the land, they saw a fire of coals laid there, and fish lying on it and bread.

John 21:10 Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish that you have just now caught.

John 21:11 Simon Peter therefore went up and hauled the net to the land full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

John 21:12 Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. But none of the disciples dared to inquire of Him, Who are you? knowing that it was the Lord.

John 21:13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise.

John 21:14 This was now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples after He had been raised from the dead.

John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

- John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
- John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.
- John 21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined on His breast at the supper and said, Lord, who is the one betraying You?
- John 21:21 Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man?
- John 21:22 Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.
- John 21:23 This word therefore went out among the brothers, that that disciple would not die, yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?
- John 21:24 This is the disciple who testifies concerning these things, and the one who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true.
- John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the world itself could contain the books written.
- Isa. 49:15 Can a woman forget her nursing child, / That she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? / Even though they may forget, / Yet I will not forget you.
- Isa. 49:16 Indeed, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; / Your walls are continually before Me.
- Jer. 31:3 Jehovah appeared to me from afar, saying, / Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love, / Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

E. Inquiring prayers honor God; David knew how to pray because he often inquired of Jehovah (1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1; 5:19, 23); after God spoke to David through Nathan the prophet, David "sat before Jehovah" (7:18) and told the Lord, "Do as You have spoken" (v. 25b); he then told the Lord that because of His speaking, "Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You" (v. 27).

- 1 Sam. 23:2 And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go and strike these Philistines? And Jehovah said to David, Go and strike the Philistines, and save Keilah.
- 1 Sam. 23:4 So David inquired yet again of Jehovah. And Jehovah answered him and said, Rise up; go down to Keilah, for I have delivered the Philistines into your hand.
- 1 Sam. 30:8 And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I pursue after this band? Will I overtake them? And He said to him, Pursue, for you will certainly overtake them, and you will certainly deliver them.
- 2 Sam. 2:1 And after this David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said to him, Go up. And David said, Where shall I go up? And He said, To Hebron.
- 2 Sam. 5:19 Then David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand? And Jehovah said to David, Go up, for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand.
- 2 Sam. 5:23 And David inquired of Jehovah, and He said, You shall not go up; go around behind them and come upon them opposite the balsam trees.
- 2 Sam. 7:18 Then King David went and sat before Jehovah; and he said, Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house that You have brought me this far?
- 2 Sam. 7:25 And now, O Jehovah God, confirm forever the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, and do as You have spoken.
- 2 Sam. 7:27 For You, O Jehovah of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed to Your servant, saying, I will build you a house; therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

IV. The best prayer is to pray to God as a friend; Abraham was the friend of God; in Genesis 18 the God of heaven humbled Himself in order to befriend Abraham:

- Gen. 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.
- Gen. 18:2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth
- Gen. 18:3 And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant.
- Gen. 18:4 Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
- Gen. 18:5 And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said.
- Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes.
- Gen. 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.
- Gen. 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
- Gen. 18:9 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent.
- Gen. 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.
- Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.
- Gen. 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?
- Gen. 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?
- Gen. 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
- Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.
- Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.
- Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
- Gen. 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?
- Gen. 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.
- Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!
- Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.
- Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

- Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?
- Gen. 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?
- Gen. 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?
- Gen. 18:26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.
- Gen. 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.
- Gen. 18:28 Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.
- Gen. 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty.
- Gen. 18:30 And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
- Gen. 18:31 And he said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the twenty.
- Gen. 18:32 And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the ten.
- Gen. 18:33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

A. After he was circumcised and his natural strength was terminated, Abraham lived in intimate fellowship with God and became God's friend—13:3-4, 18; 17:1-16; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23.

- Gen. 13:3 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,
- Gen. 13:4 To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.
- Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.
- Gen. 17:1 And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, I am the All-sufficient God; / Walk before Me, and be perfect.
- Gen. 17:2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, / And I will multiply you exceedingly.
- Gen. 17:3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,
- Gen. 17:4 As for Me, this is My covenant with you, / And you shall become the father of a multitude of nations.
- Gen. 17:5 Your name shall no longer be called Abram, / But your name shall be Abraham; / For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.
- Gen. 17:6 And I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.
- Gen. 17:7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you.
- Gen. 17:8 And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
- Gen. 17:9 And God said to Abraham, And as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations.

- Gen. 17:10 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
- Gen. 17:11 And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of a covenant between Me and you.
- Gen. 17:12 And he who is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he who is born in the house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not of your seed.
- Gen. 17:13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised; thus My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
- Gen. 17:14 But as for the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.
- Gen. 17:15 And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah.
- Gen. 17:16 And I will bless her, and I will also give you a son by her. Indeed, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come forth from her.
- 2 Chron. 20:7 Did You not, O our God, dispossess the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the seed of Abraham Your friend?
- Isa. 41:8 But you, Israel, My servant, / Jacob, whom I have chosen, / The seed of Abraham My friend;
- James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God.

B. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God's heart's desire—Gen. 18:1-33.

- Gen. 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.
- Gen. 18:2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth
- Gen. 18:3 And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant.
- Gen. 18:4 Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
- Gen. 18:5 And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said.
- Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes.
- Gen. 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.
- Gen. 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
- Gen. 18:9 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent.
- Gen. 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.
- Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.
- Gen. 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?
- Gen. 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?

Gen. 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.

Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

Gen. 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?

Gen. 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.

Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!

Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Gen. 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?

Gen. 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?

Gen. 18:26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Gen. 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.

Gen. 18:28 Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.

Gen. 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty.

Gen. 18:30 And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.

Gen. 18:31 And he said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the twenty.

Gen. 18:32 And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the ten.

Gen. 18:33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

C. Even before the incarnation (John 1:14) Jehovah as Christ appeared to Abraham in a human form, with a human body, and communed with him on a human level (Gen. 13:18; 18:1-22); as Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

Gen. 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.

Gen. 18:2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth

Gen. 18:3 And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant.

Gen. 18:4 Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

Gen. 18:5 And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said.

Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes.

Gen. 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.

Gen. 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Gen. 18:9 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent.

Gen. 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.

Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.

Gen. 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Gen. 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?

Gen. 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.

Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

Gen. 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?

Gen. 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.

Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!

Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

- D. The birth of Isaac is related to the coming of Christ as grace, and the destruction of Sodom is related to God's judgment upon sin; this means that Christ must come in and sin must go out.
- E. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor to intercede for Lot (vv. 16-22; 19:1; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30); God wanted to save Lot in order to protect Christ's genealogy through Ruth, a Moabitess and a descendant of Lot (Gen. 19:37; Ruth 1:4; Matt. 1:5).

Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.

Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
 Gen. 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?
 Gen. 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.
 Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!
 Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.
 Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.
 Gen. 19:1 And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. And when Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground.
 Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.
 Isa. 59:16 And He saw that there was no man, / And He was appalled that there was no intercessor. / Therefore His arm accomplished salvation for Him, / And His righteousness sustained Him.
 Ezek. 22:30 And I sought a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the breach before Me for the sake of the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.
 Gen. 19:37 And the firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day.
 Ruth 1:4 And they took wives for themselves from among the Moabite women. One's name was Orpah, and the second's name was Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years.
 Matt. 1:5 And Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab, and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse,

F. Thus, in God's intimate fellowship with Abraham, in a mysterious way, without mentioning Lot's name, God revealed His heart's desire; the proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God's revelation; thus, it expresses God's desire and carries out God's will—Gen. 18:17, 20-23; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25; James 5:17.

Gen. 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
 Gen. 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!
 Gen. 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.
 Gen. 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.
 Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?
 Gen. 19:27 And Abraham rose up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before Jehovah.
 Gen. 19:28 And he looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the plain. And as he looked, there it was: the smoke of the land was going up like the smoke of a furnace.
 Gen. 19:29 And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities among which Lot dwelt.
 Psa. 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.

- Psa. 27:5 For He will conceal me in His shelter / In the day of trouble; / He will hide me in the hiding place of His tent; / He will raise me up upon a rock.
- Psa. 27:6 And now my head is lifted up / Above my enemies who surround me. / And I will offer in His tent / Sacrifices of shouts of joy: / I will sing and psalm to Jehovah.
- Psa. 27:7 Hear, O Jehovah, when I call with my voice, / And be gracious to me and answer me.
- Psa. 27:8 When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.
- Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.
- James 5:17 Elijah was a man of like feeling with us, and he earnestly prayed that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.
- G. Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 14:12; 18:23; 19:1, 27-29), showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.
- Gen. 14:12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his possessions and departed, for he was dwelling in Sodom.
- Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?
- Gen. 19:1 And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. And when Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground.
- Gen. 19:27 And Abraham rose up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before Jehovah.
- Gen. 19:28 And he looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the plain. And as he looked, there it was: the smoke of the land was going up like the smoke of a furnace.
- Gen. 19:29 And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities among which Lot dwelt.
- H. In Abraham's intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace; he challenged God according to His righteous way; God's righteousness binds Him much more than His love and grace do—18:23-25; Rom. 1:17.
- Gen. 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?
- Gen. 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?
- Gen. 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?
- Rom. 1:17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, "But the righteous shall have life and live by faith."
- I. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God—Gen. 18:25-32.
- Gen. 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?
- Gen. 18:26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.

- Gen. 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.
- Gen. 18:28 Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.
- Gen. 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty.
- Gen. 18:30 And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
- Gen. 18:31 And he said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the twenty.
- Gen. 18:32 And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the ten.
- J. Abraham's intercession did not terminate with Abraham's speaking but with God's, showing that genuine intercession is God's speaking in our speaking—v. 33; John 15:7; Rom. 8:26-27.**
- Gen. 18:33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
- Rom. 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
- Rom. 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.
- K. In our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ—Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-8; Luke 18:27.**
- Gen. 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.
- Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.
- Gen. 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?
- Gen. 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?
- Gen. 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
- Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.
- Gen. 21:1 And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah did to Sarah as He had promised.
- Gen. 21:2 And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.
- Gen. 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.
- Gen. 21:4 And Abraham circumcised Isaac his son when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.
- Gen. 21:5 And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him.
- Gen. 21:6 And Sarah said, God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me.
- Gen. 21:7 And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.

Gen. 21:8 And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

Luke 18:27 But He said, The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.

V. During the first aspect of our prayer, we enter into fellowship with God, who then anoints us with His burden for the work and reveals His intention to us; the second aspect of our prayer is then to inquire of the Lord by petitioning Him concerning His will and His burden for the work; then we carry out the purpose of prayer by coordinating with God to co-work with God—Isa. 62:6-7; 45:11; Ezek. 22:30; Dan. 9:2-4; 1 Sam. 12:23; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1a.

Isa. 62:6 Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, / I have appointed watchmen; / All day and all night / They will never keep silent. / You who remind Jehovah, / Do not be dumb;

Isa. 62:7 And do not give Him quiet / Until He establishes / And until He makes Jerusalem / A praise in the earth.

Isa. 45:11 Thus says Jehovah, / The Holy One of Israel and the One who formed him, / Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, / And concerning the work of My hands, command Me.

Ezek. 22:30 And I sought a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the breach before Me for the sake of the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.

Dan. 9:2 In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by means of the Scriptures the number of the years, which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, that is, seventy years.

Dan. 9:3 So I set my face toward the Lord God to seek Him in prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Dan. 9:4 And I prayed to Jehovah my God and confessed; and I said, Ah, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments,

1 Sam. 12:23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray for you, but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

1 Cor. 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

2 Cor. 6:1 And working together with Him, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;