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- Multiple lectures on a wide range of topics,
 - Recovering from sexual abuse,
 - The Mind God's design, overcoming guilt,
 - Healing a Broken Heart and many more.
 - All free for download and sharing
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- We invite you to take advantage of all these free resources

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 10 1Q 2012

The Promise of Prayer

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, quote from Steps to Christ, "Our heavenly Father waits..." thoughts?

What is God's attitude toward hearing our prayers?

What is prayer?

Dictionary definition:

a (1) : an address (as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought <said a *prayer* for the success of the voyage> (2) : a set order of words used in praying

b : an earnest request or wish

Thoughts?

Do you have a definition of your own?

Here is how one of the founders of our church described prayer:

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally.** Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

What do you think of the definition of prayer as conversation with a friend?

In order to have such an interaction what would be necessary? Can you have conversation as with a friend, with a stranger? Would it be necessary to get to know a person before we converse with them like a friend?

When we get to know a person, do we suddenly make an intentional choice to talk differently to them, or as we get to know them do we find our conversation becomes more open, intimate and interactive?

What happens in a relationship if you do all the talking but never stop to let the other respond?

I have many patients who pray daily, but they never stop to listen to God.

How do we listen to God?

- Reading His Word
- Meditating upon nature
- Listening to His Spirit, the still small voice
- Contemplating history, recent events, circumstances of life and God's character and principles
- Remaining open to truth
- Studying the Word with others

What do you find most helpful in getting to know God?

SUNDAY

The title is "The Power of Prayer"

During a recent US Presidential race, the candidates were in a debate and a reporter asked one if he believed in the power of prayer. His answer was, "No, but I pray every day."

Think about this answer – What was the point of this answer? To try and not offend anyone – to win the agnostics by saying he didn't believe in prayer, so don't believe in God, and to win those who do by saying, nevertheless, I pray.

If you were asked, do you believe in the power of prayer, what would you have said?

Does it depend upon to whom one is praying?

What is the power of prayer?

Read first and second paragraphs, “One day...” thoughts?

This is well said, - one of the powers, perhaps the primary power, prayer has is on the one praying. Prayer changes the person who prays. So, is it important to be sure to whom we are praying?

Do all Christians pray to the same God?

When Jesus said, “they will come to me in the last day and say, Lord Lord...” to whom is He referring? Is He referring to agnostics and atheists? No, He is referring to people who are claiming to be praying to Him, these are professed Christians, but He never knew them.

How can this be? How can a person pray to Jesus and yet not be a Christian?

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. **In trampling upon the law of God**, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. It is as easy to **make an idol of false doctrines and theories** as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. **By misrepresenting the attributes of God**, Satan leads men to **conceive of Him in a false character**. With many, **a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few**. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, **idolatry exists in the Christian world today** as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, **even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal**, the sun-god of Phoenicia. {GC 583.1}

Thoughts?

Do you believe it is possible to hold to false ideas about God, while using the right name for God, thus be worshipping a false god?

Notice, she states that it is by trampling upon God's law that one misrepresents God's character and creates a false picture of God.

What do you understand God's law to be?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**" Matt 22:37-40
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the **outworking of a principle** at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
 - An outworking of a principle, not a specific behavior!
- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the

commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {Reflecting Christ 46.5}

- Why is the law unchangeable?
 - Because life is constructed to operate upon it
 - Because it is not imposed, but an expression of the Creator
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21

What is God's law? The law of love, which is the template upon which God built His universe. How has this law been changed in the minds of men?

When Constantine converted Christianity changed its idea of God's law from the principle He built life to operate upon, to the Roman concept of law, a set of rules put upon people to govern their behavior and test their obedience. And just as EGW states above, when this change in God's law was accepted, the view of God's character was changed from a being of love, to a universal emperor who must inflict punishment for disobedience.

It was stated that if we change God's law, that we change who we worship and end up worshipping a false god like Baal.

Could modern Christianity, do exactly what Jesus predicted, exactly what the GC predicted and be infected with a distortion of God's law, which changes the character of God in such a way that it becomes Baal worship?

Who was Baal?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightening, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth. ⁱ

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the "husband and protector of Israel," the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth? What was wrong with this god? What made Baal worship false?

Here is what one Christian writer, and a founder of our church, identifies as the central distortion in Baal worship:

"Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;**"
PK 124.2.

And the Bible confirms this:

"So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, according to their custom, until blood flowed." 1 Kings 18:28 ¹

So what is Baal like? A god who must be appeased!

If you have a law, which is the law of love, the law upon which life is built, and that law gets broken what is the problem?

- Life cannot continue in such a state, breaking the law results in death.

Then what is needed needed?

- Restoration, recreation, renewal, rewriting the law in the heart and mind, putting the person back into harmony with the law of live – which is exactly what Jesus came to do.

If you have a law that is like Rome, imposed upon subjects to control behavior and test obedience, if this law is broken what is the problem?

- The ruling authority is offended, sovereignty is questioned

What is needed?

- Punishment, legal payment, appeasement of the ruling authority

What did Satan attempt to do in regard to how we understand the sacrifice of Christ? Here is what one of the founders of our church states:

¹ Some may attempt to argue that what made Baal worship false was its gross and hedonistic practices. We assert that all such degradation is the outgrowth of worshipping a god who must be appeased, assuaged or propitiated. In the Dark Ages these ugly practices of worshipping such a god were evidenced in the inquisition and burning people at the stake. The gross forms of their worship were the fruit of the real problem, which was accepting a god who had to be paid by sacrifice to grant blessings, a god who would inflict punishment if sacrifices were not brought. And Revelation tells us that those who hold to this view of God will again torture and kill in the name of their god.

- While God has desired to teach men that **from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself**, the **archenemy** of mankind has **endeavored to represent God** as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the **sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.** {PK 685.2}

Does it make a difference if we pray to Jesus or if we pray to Baal?

What if we pray to Baal but call him Jesus?

Does it make a difference if we pray to a God who loved us so much that He gave His life to heal us and save us from our terminal condition, or if we pray to a God who is angry and wrathful and sent His Son, and executed His Son in our place, but if we don't accept that propitiation of blood, then God will kill us?

Are we changed by how we conceive of God?

What is the final message of mercy to lighten the world? The truth about God's character of love! COL 415.

Read third paragraph, "As the person wrote..." thoughts?

Why ask God for something if He already knows we need it?

Why did God take the children of Israel out of Egypt to a dead end at the Red Sea where they could be trapped by Pharaoh's army?

To give them an opportunity to put their trust in Him, so that He could demonstrate His ability to deliver them from everything, even things which appear humanly impossible.

So, why do we pray if God already knows?

Why do you talk with your spouse about stuff your spouse already knows?

If your children win a ball game, and you were watching, on the way home do the kids replay the game with you. “Hey did you see me catch that fly ball? When I stole second I bet you thought they were going to get me didn’t you?” Why do you have such a conversation if you already saw it happen?

Does it do something for the relationship? Do we draw closer to each other by sharing the experience this way? Is there joy that comes when we rejoice together, or bonding that comes when we cry together?

Does God want us to pray (talk with Him) because He wants to share life with us? He wants to bond with us, to have unity with us? Is this why we come to Him even when He already knows?

What about the question of whether our prayers will change what God will do? Or perhaps, if we pray will God help us do something He has explicitly told us not to do or that He doesn’t want us to do?

Maybe – what food did God provide for the children of Israel in the desert? Manna, what did they beg for? Fleshpots of Egypt, what did God want them to eat? Who brought the quail? Why did God bring the quail?

Did God want them to have kings? Did He warn them specifically against it? Who chose their first two kings? God did. Why did God choose their first two kings?

Does this give us pause as we put our requests before God? How are we to bring our requests before God? What about making known our hearts desires, but also saying, “But God, I

know you know what is best, if this will be harmful, if this is outside your plan, then don't grant my request, even though I really really want it." "Oh, and if you don't grant it can you give me a clue to understand so I can be at peace?"

What about such a prayer?

Read last paragraph, "No question..." thoughts?

How does prayer work?

- How does conversation work?
- How do relationships work?
- Is this not how prayer works?
- Is prayer not a vehicle of communication within a relationship and it works based on the quality of the relationship – thus the prayer of a righteous man avails much – why?
 - Because the righteous man has a close relationship with God and knows God, which will, 1) affect the quality of the prayer and 2) have a greater resonance with God's methods, principles, cause, goals, purposes and thus God rejoices in such prayers.
 - The prayers of the selfish man, limit God's actions, like a child who begs their parent to give them something the parent knows will harm the child – the parent loves the child, but such a request limits what the parent can do.

If we understand something do we lose faith? Is it that the more ignorant we are the more faith we have, but the more knowledge and experience of God we have the less our faith?

Turn to TUESDAY's lesson – read last paragraph, "To a great degree..." thoughts?

What do you think about this idea? Because we cant see God and cant see our prayers extend to heaven then we have faith? Does that mean when Christ returns and we get to see Him

face to face, and have conversation with Him face to face we will say, “Jesus before you came and I couldn’t see you or hear you, I had great faith, but now that I can see you and hear you I don’t have faith any more.”?

Is our faith based on ignorance and lack of understanding or is it just the opposite, the more understanding and evidence the stronger our faith?

MONDAY

The lesson points out that Jesus needed prayer – why?

What does it tell us about Jesus that He needed prayer?

What does it tell us about how Jesus accomplished what He did on earth?

Upon whose power did He rely to overcome temptation?

Was Jesus victorious on earth by the exercise of His own inherent divine power, or by exercising His human brain in a trust relationship with His Father?

Is there a lesson for us?

WEDNESDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs, “Notice, however...” thoughts?

What do you hear? What is it the lesson is trying to say?

Is it true that if we don’t confess we aren’t forgiven, or is it more clear to say if we don’t confess we don’t experience forgiveness?

Does God wait until we confess before He forgives? Or does He forgive first and then we confess and repent in response to His forgiveness?

What evidence from Scripture?

- While we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8) – which came first God’s forgiving love or our repentance
- The kindness of God leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4)
- Those who crucified Christ, Christ forgave, did they ever confess or repent?
- Do heathen gods forgive first or wait until the worshipper confesses with offerings to propitiate the wrath of the offended god and then forgive
- If we say God doesn’t forgive until we confess are we making God out to be like Baal?
- Is asking for forgiveness and repenting from sin the same?
- Pagans ask for forgiveness, do they necessarily repent?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Someone sits in...” thoughts?

What is wrong with this picture or process?

How does this type of prayer enter religion?

How about someone praying for legal pardon for their sins while they continue to live a sinful life?

Read third paragraph, “If we regard...” thoughts?

What does it mean that “the Lord will not hear us”?

Does it mean He doesn’t actually know what we prayed? Or does it mean when we regard iniquity in our hearts we really don’t want God in our lives or His plan to be actualized in our lives? Thus God reads our hearts intentions and not our words, so He doesn’t listen to what we say, but listens to what our hearts cling to or genuinely choose?

A man who beats his wife and while hitting her tells his wife he only does it because he loves her, does she hear his love? Why not is she deaf? What does she hear? He doesn't love her for his behavior overrules his words.

What this passage means if we cling to known sin, we are saying we don't want freedom from it, no matter what our words say, and God listens to our hearts intents, not our words.

What do you hear in this sentence, "Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have to a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance."

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

ⁱ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.)* (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. Carthage, a history, Serge Lancel, p194
 Miller, Patrick (2000), *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays*, Continuum International Publishing Group, p. 32. [ISBN 184127142X](#)
 Moscati, Sabatino (2001). *The Phoenicians*, Tauris, p. 132. [ISBN 1850435332](#)
 Walbank, Frank William (1979). *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, p. 47
Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary (1976) [ISBN 0-310-23560-X](#).
 In 1899, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article *Baal* by W. Robertson Smith and George F. Moore states: