

Session 4 Prayers to Strengthen Our Inner Man

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Now that we've considered aspects of intercessory prayer, we turn to a study of devotional prayer—prayer that is related to our own spiritual renewal, growth, and communion with God.

*We are on session four of part two. If you put parts one and two together, this is session fourteen. In session six of last semester my premise was that you would pray ten times more **if** you will schedule prayer time and **if** you will develop a few prayer lists. I guarantee you that this is true for most people. I have said this for over thirty years. You will pray ten times more in the next year if you will schedule prayer time and if you will develop a few prayer lists.*

When you schedule prayer times, you may not keep them all, and you may not always do the list, but a schedule gives you a focus on when to pray. Again you pray a lot outside of the schedule, but that schedule is an appointment that you show up for. When you have a prayer list, it gives you focus on what to pray. How many times I have sat in the prayer room—and I have had a prayer list for going on forty years now, and I have several prayer lists—I will go to the prayer meeting, and I will be tired or unfocused. Here I am the director of IHOPKC, and I do not know what to pray right now. I have a full Bible, yet I am just blank. I look at my prayer list and I think, “Oh, yeah, now I remember.” I start going down my prayer list, and I never do it all exactly. I get off on whatever I want to get off on, but that prayer list gives me a focus. Again, the goal is not to finish the prayer list, and the goal is not to stay true to it. I use it just as a launching pad and a point of focus when I need it. I need it a lot, and a lot of times I do not need it.

So I am going to give you my favorite, most used prayer list. These are prayers to strengthen our inner man. It is a list of ten requests under the acronym of FELLOWSHIP. F stands for the fear of God, E for endurance. We will use the ten letters of FELLOWSHIP; I wanted a word where I could sit there right there in the prayer room and just go right down it. I have done that over the years. The idea is these prayers are for your inner man, meaning these are not prayers for your external ministry, they are not prayers for your money, they are not prayers for revival in your city, etc. Those kinds of things are on another prayer list. This is a prayer list for you to enrich your heart before God using biblical promises and biblical prayers.

We have considered intercessory prayer the last number of weeks. Now we are turning to the subject of devotional prayer. When I say devotional prayer, I mean prayer for communion with God and spiritual renewal.

- B. In this type of prayer we focus on growing in intimacy with God, asking Him *to strength our inner man* as we meditate on the Word, fellowship with the Spirit, appropriate God's names, etc. Paul's prayer for the Spirit to strengthen the inner man of believers is one of the most important prayers recorded in Scripture, and it is vital that we understand it if we want to grow in prayer.

¹⁴I bow my knees to the Father...¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... (Eph. 3:14–16)

In this type of prayer we are focusing on intimacy with God. The core verses we are building this around is Ephesians 3:14-16, where Paul said, “I bow my knees to the Father”—here it is—“that He would grant to you to be strengthen with supernatural might in your inner man.” So Paul prayed for the saints in Ephesus. He prayed, “Lord, strengthen them in their inner man.” He prayed for their outer man, their physical body, to be

healed, and he prayed for their ministry and circumstances, but here he was locking into this idea of having might in the inner man. That is a powerful picture. Might, divine might, making my emotions fortified and strong. Divine might giving me clarity in my mind instead of confusion and fear and all the turmoil that is so normal in human experience. I believe that this prayer is one of the most important prayers in the whole Bible.

- C. The term *inner man* refers to a person's soul—one's mind, emotions, and will. It is where we are most aware of our interaction with the Holy Spirit. Our highest calling in life is our fellowship with God, and what happens in our inner man is an essential aspect of that fellowship.

The inner man speaks of your mind, emotions, and will. The inner man is the part of your human makeup where you are most aware of your interaction with the Holy Spirit. It is in your mind and emotions where you are mostly aware of the Lord touching you, visiting you, and speaking to you.

- D. Our inner man is the only part of our humanity that we will take into eternity. Thus praying to strengthen it should be one of our greatest priorities. Strengthening our inner man consists of renewing our minds and emotions by the grace of God. I think praying for strength in the inner man is one of the most neglected parts of many people's prayer life.

Your inner man—your mind, emotions, you could call it your soul; some people use that word, soul—your inner man is the only part of your humanity that you take to eternity. You are not going to take the CD that you made to eternity. You are not going to take your mailing list, you are not going to take your bank account, and you are not going to take your popular ratings or your lack of popular ratings to eternity. You are going to take your inner man; you will have that forever. That is the part of our life we should invest very intentionally into our inner man being strengthened.

I believe that praying for our inner man is one of the most neglected prayer focuses. I believe it is the most important prayer focus, but the most neglected one probably in the whole body of Christ. I want to encourage you to get a vision to pray regularly for your inner man. I am going to give you ten prayers. We will probably not cover them all, but they are all pretty straightforward and simple. I just want to give you a vision for the idea and give you some motivation to launch out and begin to do it.

1. When people think of prayer, they often think of praying for people or places, for justice issues, or to receive more things, such as money or more blessings in their circumstances.
2. Just as our physical strength can increase or decrease, so can our experience of spiritual strength. We cannot always discern the specific times when the Spirit strengthens us; He usually does so in small measures. I compare it to being strengthened by taking vitamins. We do not know the precise day when we realize they made a difference. However, we know that if we consistently take vitamins, they will strengthen us physically over time. It is the same with our inner man.

Just as your physical strength can increase or decrease, your spiritual strength can increase and decrease. The Holy Spirit is always the same, but I am talking about your experience of it. There are seasons where spiritually you are experiencing far less and other seasons you are spiritually experiencing more. We can affect how much we are experiencing in our spiritual strength. People will pay attention to their diet to get physical strength. They will do some exercise, and they will do some things externally. A lot of folks do not really put that kind of attention maintaining or gaining spiritual strength. My premise here is that this is the most important thing in our lives.

I'll compare this to taking vitamins. When you take vitamins and exercise on a regular basis, you may not feel any difference in the short term. I have taken vitamins for years, and I do not feel any different than I did yesterday. You take vitamins over the years, the right ones, and it is going to make a difference over time. There is never a day, at least for me, when I feel the difference. My wife gives me these vitamins. The older I get, the bigger the handful of vitamins gets. I don't even know what they are; I just know it is a big handful. I sigh, "Oh, man!"

She replies, "Just do it." She asks, "Do you feel better?"

I answer, "No." I guarantee you after years of doing this that my health is a lot better because of it. She studies it and gives me the right ones.

Anyway, spiritually it is the same way. Not very often do you have a day where this is the day you can measure the spiritual increase of strength. Every now and then you will have a day like that where "Wow! This was a big day." Mostly the strength increases and you cannot measure it, you cannot even tell. You look back over a couple of years and you have gone from strength to strength, not that you never had a bad day in that season as well.

- E. If we ask regularly, the Spirit will release His might in our inner man (our mind, emotions, and will), and over time we will experience newfound strength. This divine strengthening of our hearts equips us to live in a godly way and enables us to stand against compromise, depression, fear, rejection, spiritual lethargy, and other negative emotions and behaviors.

This divine strengthening of our heart equips us to stand against compromise. This divine strengthening of the inner man equips us to stand against depression, fear, jealousy, anxiety, rejection, many of these normal human things we have to have strength to overcome. That strength is available in our inner man, but we need to cultivate that strength and not just leave it to, "Well, if God wants me strong, He will make me strong."

Paul says, "No, I pray for your inner man."

So this is something I pray for myself, and these are prayers I pray for people that I am interceding for. I go down this list and pray these things for my wife, for my sons and their wives, for our grandchildren, and for some of our leaders and different ministries I am connected to. I will pray these prayers for their heart.

- F. Even when we do not feel strength in our inner man in an overt way, the Spirit's power is working to influence our thoughts and emotions. A cancer patient who receives a radiation treatment may say to his doctor, "I didn't feel the power of the radiation during the treatment," but the doctor would assure the patient that it was nevertheless effective, even though he felt nothing.
- G. We must be intentional about praying for the strengthening and development of our hearts in God. We will experience more of God's grace renewing our minds and emotions if we ask for it on a regular basis. God releases much more blessing if we ask for it regularly with faith (Jas. 4:2)

II. F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P

Let's begin to look at this. We will just take a minute on each one. Again they are quite self-explanatory, so we don't really have to spend much time on them. This is right out one of the chapters in my book, *Growing in Prayer*. As a matter of fact this whole course is right out of that book.

- A. A prayer list is a simple tool that helps us to focus in our prayer times. I have identified ten prayers to pray daily to receive strength in my inner man using the acronym F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P.

Again the purpose of a prayer list is to focus your prayer time. I have several lists. This is a prayer list of how I focus on praying for me, for my internal life. I have another prayer list where I pray for external things, for my ministry and for cities and nations, etc. So I have identified ten prayers to receive strength in your inner man; I use the acronym FELLOWSHIP to list them. The reason I want to use an acronym—and with this acronym I am thinking of fellowship with God—I wanted something easy to remember to help me go down the list.

Of course I have done it for enough years where it is pretty automatic now, but still it is remarkable how even though I have done this many, many times, I will sit down in the prayer room and think, “Hmm, I know I need a lot of help now. Where? Oh yeah. F—fear of God. Yeah, yeah, that is it, okay.” It jump-starts my focus. Again I will get off the subject after a while and not finish the list. If I want to pray for my wife or pray for a friend this is the list I go down when I pray for their inner life.

B. **F: Fear of God**

1. The Lord promised to put the fear of God into the hearts of His people (Jer. 32:40). He will do this more as we ask the Spirit to unite our heart to His heart and fill it with awe (Ps. 86:11).

⁴⁰I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. (Jer. 32:40)

¹¹Unite my heart to fear Your name. (Ps. 86:11)

¹³The Lord...you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. (Isa. 8:13)

F: the Lord promised that He would put the fear of God in the hearts of His people. In Jeremiah 32:40, He says, “I will put My fear in their hearts,” that is, the hearts of His people. When God gives a promise that is not a guarantee, it is an invitation to experience more.

So I go before the Lord and say, “You promised You would do this.”

He answers, “Good! Ask Me now. Believe Me for it. Engage with Me on the promise.”

If you ask for the fear of God, you will grow in it over the months and years. Again, like vitamins or many other examples you could use, you might not feel any difference in a week or a month or even three months, but five or ten years later you will look back and you will fear the Lord substantially more if you stay with it, if you ask Him for it.

I have used Psalm 86:11 and prayed this verse for nearly forty years. “Unite my heart to fear Your name.” Unite my heart to Your heart, unite my heart to Your Word, so that I have the awe of God in my heart. I cannot make the awe of God happen in my heart. God has to do this for me, but He will do it more if I ask Him.

2. It is far easier to resist compromise when we feel even a small measure of the fear, or awe, of God in our hearts. Ask Him to cause you to delight in the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:3) and to strike your heart with the majesty and awesome dread of God (Isa. 8:13).

It is a lot easier to resist compromise if you even have a little bit of the fear of God in your heart, the awe of God. A little bit of that will go a long way in our ability to resist compromise. Isaiah 8:13 is where the Lord says, “The Lord you shall hallow.” Hallow means to treat Him as holy. Let Him be your fear; let Him be your dread.

That idea of letting the Lord be your fear and your dread means you would be awestruck, and the truth of His majesty would strike your heart. Where you feel, “Lord, You are amazing!” That is what the fear and dread means, that His awesomeness would touch you. Isaiah 8 invites us. The Lord says, “I want to be that to you, but I want you to ask Me. I want you to engage with Me on it and then you will grow more in the fear of the Lord.

3. **Prayer:** Father, release the spirit of the fear of God into my heart. Strike my heart with greater understanding of Your majesty that I may live in awe before You. Unite my heart to Your heart and Word, and cause me to delight in the fear of God.

So here is just a simple prayer. I would just start with this and continue on from it. We have an electronic copy of this on the website. I encourage you to take the electronic copy, make your own list, break it down, write your own prayers, and add your own verses in, change it as you go. I love to have this stuff electronically so I can add and subtract to it really easily. Often, I will have a notepad, I will write the new sentence, and then I will go put it into my prayer list electronically.

Here are just a few prayers to start with. I encourage you to pray those prayers. When you pray a prayer related to this and you feel the Lord’s presence, add that prayer to your list. That is what I have done over the years. I will say something like, “Lord, just fill my heart with the majesty of Your beauty.” I think, “Ooh, I like how that sounds. So I write by the fear of God category: Fill me with the majesty of Your beauty. So when a prayer kind of touches you just a little bit, write it down and pray it again. The next I prayed it, it did not touch me, but a week later I prayed it and it did touch me. I think, “I am keeping that one.” You know if it touches me a couple times it stays on the list. If I prayed it, and a few months go by and it is always dull, I get rid of it. Okay, that is how it works. So my list is always kind of moving, meaning not the list itself, but the actual prayers. On the list I put prayers that, when I pray them and I feel the Lord, then I write that phrase down and use it again.

C. **E:** Endurance

1. In the Bible, the words *endurance*, *perseverance*, and *patience* are often interchangeable. These words speak of being faithful in our God-given assignments and refusing to quit even when facing great pressures. Holy-Spirit-empowered endurance enables us to seek and serve the Lord faithfully with all our strength for decades without drawing back.

¹¹Being strengthened with all power...so that you may have great endurance and patience. (Col. 1:11, NIV)

³May the Lord direct your hearts into ... the patience [endurance] of Christ. (2 Thes. 3:5)

Next in FELLOWSHIP is E: endurance. Now the words endurance, perseverance, and patience in the Bible are often interchangeable. For example, Paul says here in Colossians, “That you would be strengthened with all might, with all power, so that you would have great endurance and patience.” Patience and endurance are really interchangeable words for perseverance. In these verses the Bible is not talking about having patience as in you do not interrupt somebody when they are talking to you, but you are patient. That is not what it is talking about. It is talking about perseverance. It is talking about do not quit when it is hard; do not quit when it is small. Do not quit when you have obstacles. That is what patience means. It means fortification, being fortified, having endurance.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:5 Paul prayed that the Lord would direct our hearts into the patience, the perseverance, that Jesus walked in. That is a big prayer. I edited it down just to make it fit on the page better but it says, "... direct your heart into the love of God and into the patience of Christ Jesus." We often pray, "Lord, direct our hearts into the love of God"—that is a verse I use a lot—but often we do not go to the next part. Paul says to pray that God would lead you into the endurance, the resolve not to yield to the temptation to quit.

I have said for many years that the temptation to quit is a common temptation. The whole human race has the temptation to draw back and not press in to whatever is before you. Even unbelievers have that temptation in their goals. As believers, the enemy constantly accuses us and tries to get us not to press hard into God, saying it is not worth it anymore. That is the number one thing. If you think you are being picked on by the devil especially, you are not; the whole body of Christ is being tempted with that.

I want to encourage you to pray what I have prayed over the years, "Lord, lead my heart into the patience of Christ Jesus." I do not feel anything when I pray it, but it is like that vitamin, you know. You pray that over the years. I look back and forty years later I did not quit. I do not mean quit Christianity because a lot of people do not quit Christianity. I mean I am still pressing hard into God. I look back and I think, "Lord, how did I not at least take a year or two off here or there in the last forty years?"

I think one of the reasons is that the Lord says, "You asked Me, and I actually answered you."

Well, there was never a day I felt anything when I prayed. I felt like drawing back a lot of times, but I did not actually do it. How come I didn't draw back? I mean I am as weak and dorky as the next guy. I believe one of the answers is simply because I put this on the list many years ago. I pray it day after day and do not feel it, but it still works, it still works.

2. David and Jesus spoke of being consumed with zeal for God's house (Ps. 69:9; Jn. 2:17). Another way to ask for endurance is by asking God to impart zeal to your heart. Zeal and endurance are two sides of one coin. It takes God's power touching our heart and mind to keep us from drawing back in our zeal and wholeheartedness. Ask the Lord to give you endurance or zeal to be faithful, especially in the difficult and dry seasons of life.

⁹...for zeal for Your house consumes me [David]...(Ps. 69:9)

Another one I put on the list is praying for zeal for His house. King David said that, "Zeal for Your house consumes me." In John 2:17, this verse was said of Jesus, that zeal for God's house consumed Him.

Zeal and endurance are the same really. I said, "Lord, give me zeal for Your house." I put that on my prayer list when I was about nineteen years old and prayed it. I mean not every day because I skip my prayer list some days. It was something I was very serious about, and it was very boring to do the prayer list, to be honest. I mean after a little while I started liking it, but for a while it was like, "Ugh!" just to be really honest. It was like taking vitamins, but anyway I look back, and you know what part of the Psalm 69 "zeal for Your house" is about? It is about the house of prayer. Back when I hated prayer, I was praying to do the house of prayer. It's like, "Lord, You tricked me!" I didn't even know that was what was happening. I mean like about ten years ago I did the math. I thought, "You know, in Psalm 69 and John 2 it is talking about the temple and the house of prayer." I thought, "Wait a second, when I did not like prayer at all... oh my goodness! Well, anyway..."

3. **Prayer:** Father, strengthen my heart with endurance, that I may faithfully do Your will with zeal and diligence and never draw back in any way in my pursuit of the deeper things of Your heart and will. Give me endurance to fast regularly. Direct my heart into the patience, or endurance, in which Jesus walked (2 Thes. 3:5). Give me strength to follow through in my commitments to You and to fulfill my ministry calling even when it is difficult or small.

So the prayer is that you would have endurance. Asking for that “Holy-Spirit help” not to quit but to follow through. I tell you, it takes Holy-Spirit help. I do not know of any big experience when that was the big one—the moment of “big help.” When I look back over it through the years, it is just that little bit of the Lord that keeps helping me sign up. I believe part of it is simply because I ask Him, without even feeling anything when I am asking Him. So I really believe in this is what I am trying to say.

D. L: Love

1. The Spirit’s first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in us that we will love Jesus with all our strength (Mt. 22:37). Jesus asked the Father to impart the very love that He has for Jesus into our hearts (Jn. 17:26). It “takes God to love God.” The grace to receive God’s love and to love Him back is the greatest gift the Spirit imparts to us (Rom. 5:5).

²⁶ *...that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me [Jesus] may be in them. (Jn. 17:26)*

⁵ *The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 5:5)*

Okay, the first L: love. The Holy Spirit’s first agenda is to make the first commandment first in the Body of Christ. The absolute first agenda of God for your life is that you would love God with all of your strength. That is the absolute number one thing. My question to you is—not to make you feel bad if you have a negative answer—do you actually ever pray for that number one agenda to happen in your life? Is that something you are actually intentional about or do you just think, “Well, you know, I know it is the number one thing, and, God, You know my address. If You want me to grow in love, here I am. Make me do it. I will talk to You in a few years about it and check in with You and see if I grew in love.” Now obviously that is a weird way to say it, but my point is that you want to go after this. You want to actually target this prayer and make it something you believe for. You say it to the Lord.

I spend thirty seconds on each of these requests on some days when I am in a hurry; I am not just flying through it. Other days I will spend a minute or two or three or four on each one of these, meaning I do not spend an hour on each one. Some day I spend two or three or four minutes, and some days I will spend thirty minutes on just one, but that is rare. Mostly it is two, three, four, five minutes. Some days it is thirty, forty, fifty seconds. I pray down over through this list when I drive home, coming to FCF, etc. When I am driving by myself I go down the list. If I’m not going far, I don’t make it all the way to P, the last one, so I jump in the middle sometimes, like I start at O, you know, by the time I get back to the Red Bridge Center, for example. I just want to just say them to the Lord when I am driving. I’ve got a five-minute drive, so why not take a few of these and just go through it. Sometimes I feel it when I am driving, and sometimes I do not feel anything. I think it is a great way to spend five minutes when you are by yourself driving somewhere, standing in line, or just those gaps of time where you have got five and ten minutes, to go down this list.

Well back to L: love. Jesus prayed—catch this in John 17:26. Look at this prayer—He prayed that the love with which the Father loved Him, “Father, the love with which You love Me, put it in them.” That is a prayer Jesus prayed for you. Now if Jesus prayed that for you, how much more should you pray that for you?

“Father, put the love in me that You have for Jesus.”

The Father says, “You really want Me to put in you how I feel about My Son?”

I say, “Yeah.”

I mean we are not talking about, you know, 220 volts in a 110 unit—phew, blow up! We are talking about a billion volts in a 110 unit. “You really want Me to put the love I have for Jesus in you?”

“Yes, Lord, but just a little bit at a time; just a little bit. You know I am a little guy.” Beloved, what an amazing verse! I mean Jesus prayed this. If He prayed it for you—because that is for whom He is praying, the saints through church history here—why shouldn’t you pray it for you?

Romans 5:5 is one I put on the list years ago. I said, “I love this one!” Romans 5:5, “The love of God is poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit.” That is the principle. What that means is, the Holy Spirit inspires love in your mind and emotions; that is what it means when He pours it into your heart.

2. In asking to abound in love, we are actually asking for the Spirit to inspire us in four ways—for greater understanding of God’s love for us; for the Spirit to tenderize our hearts so that we abound in love for Jesus; to cause love for others to abound in our hearts; to love ourselves in the grace of God. Jesus commanded us, “Love your neighbor *as yourself*” (Mt. 22:39).

⁹I pray, that your love may abound still more... (Phil. 1:9)

¹²May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another. (1 Thes. 3:12)

Number two, the prayer that we would abound in love. Paul prayed we would abound in love, he prays it a couple of times in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians, that your love would abound. Now that is a prayer you pray for others, but that is also a prayer you should pray for yourself, so I urge you to pray, “Lord, I want my love to abound.” What does that mean?

3. **Prayer:** Father, pour out Your love in my heart by the Spirit that I may overflow in love back to You and to others (Rom. 5:5). Impart Your own love for Jesus into my heart (Jn. 17:26). Allow me to comprehend Jesus’s love for me (Jn. 15:9; Eph. 3:18). Let me see myself through Your eyes so that I may love who You created me to be (Ps. 139:13-15).

There are four ways in which love abounds in you. First, your knowledge of God’s love for you, we want it to abound. I want to know that God loves me. I want that to grow. Second, I want to love God back, I want that to grow. Third, I want to love people; I want that to grow. Fourth, I want to love myself in the grace of God as I love my neighbor as myself. I want to see who I am in the grace of God and love what God loves in His design of who I am in the grace of God. So I want to abound in love in those four ways.

Well, we could go on and develop these points, but my point is not to explain every one of them; they are pretty self-explanatory and quite simple. So I am just going to move on and keep going through the list.

E. **L:** Light of glory

1. On the day of Paul’s conversion he saw Jesus and His glory in a great light (Acts 22:6-11).
⁶“...suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me...¹¹And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand...I came into Damascus.” (Acts 22:6, 11)

L: the light of His glory. I was going to say I love this one. I love the other one too, I just love this: the light of His glory. You know when Paul the apostle described the day was converted in Acts 22 he said, “Suddenly a great light”—the light of God’s glory. Jesus spoke to Him in the glory of that light, and Jesus’ light touched him.

2. Moses prayed to see God’s glory, and afterward his face shone with the light of God’s glory (Ex. 33:18; 34:29). We also can ask to encounter the realm of God’s glory. Jesus spoke of an open heaven in which His disciples would see angels (Jn. 1:51). Ask Him to shine the light of His countenance (Ps. 4:6) on your heart in such a way that you experience the supernatural realm of His glory, including receiving dreams and visions and seeing angels, etc. (Acts 2:17).

⁵¹And He [Jesus] said to him, “Most assuredly..., hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” (Jn. 1:51)

¹⁷... in the last days...I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)

Moses said, “O, I want to see Your glory.” We do not know exactly what he saw, but after he saw it—it says right there in Exodus 34—Moses’ face shone bright. His face was so bright after he had that encounter that he put a veil on. I mean, could you imagine having an encounter with God, and you come away, and your face is so bright that you had to put a veil on? I mean that is like a whole other level!

I am saying, “Lord, I want to see Your glory. I want to encounter that realm of Your glory. I want that supernatural dimension of the glory of God, the light of Your glory to touch me.”

Of this whole dimension of the light of God—for God is light—in John 1:51, Jesus said, “Most assuredly you will see the heavens open.” That is, “I am telling you there will be those among you who will see the heavenly realm, the glory realm. You will see it; you will encounter it.”

I said, “Lord, You said ‘most assuredly.’ I do not know who else is going for this, but I am going for this one. I want to see more. I don’t want just to feel the love of God; I want to encounter the glory of God, that realm.”

The Lord says, “Well, ask Me. Ask Me about it.”

I have had a few encounters over the years, and I have asked Him, you know, I want a lot more. I have had a couple of them, and they are dramatic. I do not know that it is just because you ask. I think asking is part of it and God’s sovereignty is part of it, God’s timing is part of it. I do not know how it all works. I do not have to know. All I know is I ask for it all the time. I say, “Lord, I want to see that light, that realm of Your glory. I want to see it more.”

Acts 2 promises us, “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.” That means on the body of Christ in all the nations, not just in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when this verse was initially fulfilled. God told the prophet Joel that a day is coming where believers in all the nations would operate in the realm of the prophetic in visions and dreams. I say, “I want them. Lord, it is in the Bible, I want this dimension.”

The Lord says, “Ask Me more.” I do not know how much we will get by asking, but I think we will get more.

3. **Prayer:** Father, let me see the light of Your glory and give me supernatural encounters—dreams, visions, angelic visitations, manifestations of Your glory and light—even as You gave to Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, John, and the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Ex. 33-34; Isa. 6; Ezek. 1; Acts 2; Acts 9; Rev. 1).

Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, John—I gave some verses about them encountering that supernatural realm. God said, “all flesh,” meaning all the believers in the nations.

F. **O:** One thing

1. It is essential to spend time with the Lord—to be a person of “one thing” as King David was. David revealed his primary life focus when he prayed that the “one thing” he desired all the days of his life was to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple (Ps. 27:4).

⁴One thing I have desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord... (Ps. 27:4)

O: One thing. I want to be a man of one thing. I want to have a one-thing lifestyle. That is one of the reasons why, right when IHOPKC first started, of course it was the Lord who spoke Psalm 27:4 years ago. He spoke it audibly. That is the real reason that we have used that verse from day one of IHOPKC because it was thirty-two years ago that the Lord spoke audibly Psalm 27:4. I did not even understand what it meant. He was talking about having a context where people would lock in to encounter the Lord, and He was talking about the house of prayer. That did not happen for sixteen more years, but it was that verse.

It is this idea from that verse: King David was praying in essence, “I want to be a person of one thing.” What he meant by a person of one thing, it is not the only thing, but it was the first thing, the primary thing. He said, “I want to behold God.” You know he was king, he was ruling a nation, and he was the head of the military and the head of the nation. I am sure his days were full. He would have said, “Yeah, my days are full.” I mean he was the most powerful, most popular man in the nation, the wealthiest man in the nation. He prayed, “Lord, this one thing, do not let me lose track of and do not let me lose focus of having that encounter with You. I want to continually realign to this.”

2. Mary of Bethany “sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word” (Lk 10:39). Jesus explained to her sister Martha, “One thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part” (Lk. 10:42).

⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part. (Lk. 10:42)

Jesus said about Mary of Bethany a similar thing to what David said about himself. The Lord told her older sister Martha about Mary, “Your sister has chosen the one thing.” It is not the only thing that Mary chose, but it was the primary focus.

3. We must intentionally set our hearts to be a “person of one thing.” We ask the Spirit to help us not to lose this focus by intervening to speak to our heart when drifting from a “one thing lifestyle.” Ask Him to speak to you using Scripture, others, dreams, or His still, small voice.
4. **Prayer:** Father, I commit to live as a “person of one thing.” Help me to sit regularly at Your feet to behold Your beauty as David and Mary of Bethany did. Strengthen my desire in this, and help me to maintain a lifestyle of regular time with You in Your Word. When I lose this focus, get my attention and send Your Word to deliver me of a divided heart.

What I have found over the years is that because I asked the Lord, saying, “Lord, I am intentional about this. I want to be a man of one thing, a person of one thing. When I lose the focus, pull me back.” I do lose the focus at times. I don’t mean like every week or every month, but in a course of a year or two—you know it is not like it is on the calendar, but it is not like it is every ten years—every year or two in there, the Holy Spirit will draw my attention: you are drifting in your busyness from that focus. It is like, “Ugh! How does this keep happening again?” I mean you would think forty years later I would have this one down.

It is on my prayer list. I say, “Lord, interrupt me when I am drifting. Do not let me drift five steps out. When I start drifting, give me a dream. Lift the Word off the pages of the Bible to touch me. Have a person come and say, ‘Hey Mike!’ Just somehow get my attention.” If you pray that prayer on a regular basis, I’ve got good news for you. When you start drifting, you will be alerted. Beloved, it is a lot easier to correct the drift in the early stages of the drift than when you are way down the path in a ditch.

So I said, “Lord, I do not have the ability to keep myself focused. I have the commitment to, but I get unfocused and drift without knowing it.” It is like three or four or five or six weeks into this thing, I realize, “Wait, I am not doing what I am called to do.” I don’t mean called by God just as a believer. I am called to have interaction with God, not just as an IHOPKC guy, but as a believer. We are called to be people of one thing, to have that the primary thing of our life. So I tell the Lord, “Get my attention, Lord. I want to sit at Your feet. I want that to be a part of my life, no matter how many opportunities come my way.” What I get from Him all the time is that I have to turn away good opportunities, because I cannot do all the good opportunities I get and I cannot meet all the cool people I want to meet. I love interacting with people that love Jesus. But I cannot interact in all the social engagements and take all the big ministry opportunities and still do this.

I say, “Lord, I do not know how to figure all this out.” I say, “Make me a man of one thing, I commit to this. Interrupt me. Alert me. Help me. Give me resolve.” I look back over the years and again about every year or two somewhere in there I start drifting—there you go! I am just a step or two into the drift, and I get it. I think, “Oh my goodness, I did it again! I am so resolved not to do this, but I keep doing it.”

I think that praying it actually is part of the recovery, because the Lord says, “I will help you, if you are serious. I will help you with that. I will talk to you. I will interrupt you even when you do not think you need to be interrupted.”

G. **W:** Worthy

1. Paul prayed that God would count the saints worthy to fulfill all of His will (2 Thess. 1:11). He emphasized that he *always* prayed this for the saints—he understood how important it was. Walking worthy is *not the same as seeking to be worthy by earning our forgiveness*. Rather, it is about experiencing grace in such a consistent way that we walk with a *worthy response* to God that prepares us to walk in the fullness of our calling, thus fulfilling all His goodness.

¹¹We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power. (2 Thes. 1:11)

W: worthy. Worthy, this is a much neglected, misunderstood prayer of Paul. I mean you never hear it referenced, but it is a really important one. I really take this prayer very, very seriously, and I encourage you to as well. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 1:11, “We pray always for you that God would count you worthy of the calling on your life.”

You think, “What?” Because that sounds like opposite of the grace of God. Paul the apostle understood the grace of God. He was not contradicting it. I mean he was the apostle of grace. He understood this was not a contradiction.

He goes on, “I pray that He would fulfill all the good pleasure of God in your life.” That you would fulfill all the work of faith with power, which means you would fulfill your entire divine assignment. That is the idea.

Let’s look at the first word that really alerts us, in verse 11. He says, “We pray always.” It is the word **always**.

I have said to the Lord, “Paul prayed that prayer always.” In my forty years of ministry, I do not think I have ever heard anybody say it once ever. He prayed it always. This is a very important prayer to Paul, but almost completely absent in the minds of people that I have interacted with over the years. I do not talk about it much. This is something though that when I talk to the Lord I say, “Lord, this is something I really care about.”

2. Too many believers come up short of what God has invited them to walk in because of their halfhearted responses and choices. Jesus exhorted us to pray that we may be counted worthy to *escape the snare of stumbling* (Lk 21:34-36). Walking worthy of our calling includes being strengthened to escape the snare of compromise so that we stand in victory before God.

³⁴“Take heed...lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the earth. ³⁶Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things...to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lk. 21:34-36)

Now walking worthy of your calling is not the same thing as being worthy to earn your forgiveness. That is not at all what Paul is talking about. Paul is not contradicting his own revelation of the grace of God. He is not talking about earning anything. He is talking about asking God for grace that you would have a worthy response, that you would respond in such a way to God that, when it was all said and done, you would walk in the fullness of your calling. Many people love God and God loves them, but because of their half-hearted response—they still are born again, they go to heaven when they die—they do not at all enter into the fullness of their calling, not even close. The Bible is really clear about that. Many believers never enter into all that God wanted them to enter into because of their half-hearted responses. They do not think about it.

I say, “Lord, I want on the last day for You to say to me, ‘You did all the will of God.’ I want You to say that.”

The Lord says, “Well, how is that going to happen? You think it is going to just happen out of nowhere?”

I say, “I am going to talk to You about that through my life, Lord. I want You to touch me with grace so that I could walk worthy, so that I could have the kind of response that would keep me in that trajectory where I enter into the fullness of what I am called to be.”

Now when I say the fullness of your calling I do not mean that how powerful and famous you will be. Some people when they think of the fullness of their calling, they think of how big their calling is. That is not what I mean. I do not care if it is big or small, I want it just to be the full calling. When I stand before the Lord, He is not going to say, “Wow, that was big” or “Wow, poor thing, that was awful small.” He is not going to say any of that. He is going to say, “Did you do what I assigned you to do?”

I say, “Lord, if You do not give me grace so that I have a worthy response—I mean this is day in and day out, not that you do not have some bad days, that is not what I am saying. There are failures, there is stumbling, but there are recoveries and there is this responding back to God.

He says, “Well, Paul prayed always for this. Do you ever pray about it?”

So I put this on my list some years ago. I said, “I want You to touch me.” I break it down a little bit more under number 3 with the prayer.

Jesus talked about this as well in Luke 21. Look at Luke 21:36. He said, “Pray that you would be counted worthy to escape.” What He means is the snare that is rising up in the earth. Watch that you would not be trapped by the snare that is trapping so many believers who are weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and anxiety. They are caught in the snare. Jesus said to pray. The same thing Paul said. Pray you would escape that snare. It is coming on the whole earth. The whole of culture is being ensnared—look what it says in verse 34—with carousing, that is that whole realm of sexuality, of immorality, drunkenness, cares of the life, anxieties, fears. Verse 35, Jesus said that it is going to come like a snare on the whole earth, like a trap to get you to where you cannot get free of it. He says, “Pray you would be found worthy.” In other words, it is not that God arbitrarily just says that you are in, and you are out. He says, “No, pray that God would touch you in a way that gives you living understanding so you are aware of what is going on so you can respond in a wholehearted way.”

I said, “Lord, shock me now. Do not shock me then. I do not want to stand before You and have You say, ‘You know what? You loved Me, but you were blind in five areas of your life. You did not see it. You never even talked to Me about it. You would have walked very differently if you would have just asked Me to give you this and touch you in a way where you could see your life in a complete, comprehensive way and respond in a way worthy of who I am.’” This is a really big one; I mean a very, very important prayer.

3. **Prayer:** Father, strengthen my heart so that I walk in a measure of faith and obedience that is worthy of who You are and of Your calling on my life. Help me to walk worthy of You by escaping all compromise. Prepare me to walk in the highest things You have called me to. Help me to live free of the snare of compromise so that I will walk blamelessly so to stand before You victoriously with the testimony that I sought to obey You with all my heart.

H. **S:** Speech

1. Speech is a significant issue in our lives. When our speech comes under the leadership of the Spirit, our entire inner man will also come under His leadership.

²If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (Jas 3:2)

S: Speech. This is obviously a very significant area of our lives. James said in essence, if your speech comes under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, your inner man will come under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In the way James said it, “If you do not stumble in your words, you are going to bridle your whole body.” Your whole person will come under the leadership of God. You get your words lined up rightly and your inner man and your outer man will line up rightly. This is really a big statement, and it is a true statement.

2. Paul spoke about not grieving the Holy Spirit by our speech (Eph. 4:29-30).

²⁹Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification... ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit... (Eph. 4:29-30)

Paul spoke of not speaking words that end up grieving the Spirit's leadership in your life. You need the Spirit's leadership if you are going to walk in fullness. You cannot grieve the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. The Spirit still loves us, but if He is grieved, He is not leading us. Our words are really connected. In our culture there is this liberty in the culture to say anything you want because everyone is saying it. The Holy Spirit is saying, "If you are under My leadership, your words need to be under My leadership."

"Well, the other people's words are not."

The Lord says, "That is between Me and them. You want your words under My leadership and your whole person will be under it." Meaning you will find grace in the larger dimensions of your life.

3. The subject of speech was on David's "prayer list"—he asked the Lord to help him control his speech so that his words would be pleasing to God (Ps. 19:14).

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight. (Ps. 19:14)

Look at what David prayed in Psalm 19:16. He said, "Let the words of my mouth"—this is one of my prayers I have put on there on my list and kept there over the years—"Let the words of my mouth be pleasing."

4. David purposed that he would not sin with his speech, so he asked the Lord to set a guard over his mouth (Ps. 17:3; 141:3).

³...I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. (Ps. 17:3)

³Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Ps. 141:3)

¹I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle. (Ps. 39:1)

He also prayed Psalm 141:3, "Set a guard over my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips." Beloved, I encourage you, this is a prayer most important. This is the most needy area in my life. When I look over forty years, it still is, and while I do not know that I prayed this prayer every day, I pray it most days. I say, or I certainly try to say each day, "Lord, I need You to set guard over my lips." What that means is to check me when I am about to say something not pleasing. Stop me. Let me see it before it gets all the way out. That is what it means to put a guard over our mouths. Like check me, or even if it does get out, let me see it right away so I can take it back and say, "No, that was not right. I am taking that back." That is what David is talking about there.

5. **Prayer:** Father, set a guard over my lips and help me to speak words that are pleasing to You. Free me from defensive, angry, foolish, sensual, or impure speech. Keep me from quenching the Spirit with my words. I set my heart not to sin with my speech.

I. **H:** Humility

1. Jesus called us to *learn from Him* about walking in humility or lowliness (Mt. 11:29).

²⁹Take My yoke...and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart. (Mt. 11:29)

In Matthew 11:29, Jesus said to learn lowliness of heart from Him. The only time Jesus ever described His character is Matthew 11:29. He said, in essence, “I am humble,” just using the generic word, because gentle and lowly of heart come down to humble. Some translations use the word, humble. Jesus did not say, “I am loving.” He is loving; God is love. He did not say, “I am wise.” He is wise. He never said, “I am powerful.” He is very powerful. He said, “I am humble.” That is the only characteristic He ever described. He said, in effect, “I will teach you if you ask Me. I will teach you how to carry your heart this way. This is how I have lived in a human body in a fallen world. I can teach you.” Beloved, you really want to ask Him. He will teach us more if we ask Him. I encourage you to put that on your prayer list.

2. Paul called us to let the “mind of Christ” or His mindset of humility be in us (Phil. 2:3-5).

³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ... (Phil. 2:3-5)

3. ***Prayer:*** Jesus, teach me how to walk in Your yoke of humility (lowliness of heart). I set my heart to learn humility from You, gaining insight that will result in the transformation of my attitudes, speech, and actions. Give me wisdom about how to carry my heart in humility.

J. ***I:*** Insight

1. The Spirit came to teach us all things—to give us insight or wisdom as He fills us with the knowledge of His will for each area of our life so we are able to walk in partnership with His heart (Col. 1:9-10). The Lord’s desire is to give His people wisdom so that they are fruitful in every endeavor to obey Him and that they grow in or experience the knowledge of His heart in the process. The insight that He gives His people is intended to lead and teach them how to walk in agreement with His heart so that they enjoy friendship and partnership with Him. He gives wisdom on how to steward time, money, careers, ministry, health, relationships, etc. He will give us insight into what is on His heart for cities and nations and for our generation.

⁹...to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will [insight] in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.... (Col. 1:9-10)

²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...He will teach you all things... (Jn. 14:26)

I is for insight; it is insight that leads us to intimacy with God. What I am really saying here is wisdom, but I had to make the acronym fit. Insight is the same idea of wisdom. “Fill us”—and here is the idea of Colossians 1:9—“fill us with the knowledge of Your will. Give us this living understanding that we would be fruitful.” Look at that in verse 10, that we would walk worthy to be fruitful. Here is the phrase, “increasing in the knowledge of God.” That is key. Here is what Paul is saying, “Lord, give them wisdom.” That is, give them insight in every area of their life in a way, wisdom about their money, their time, their body, their marriage, their relationships, their enemies, their future, their fears, their phobias. Give them insight in all those areas. Let them see what You see so they can partner with Your heart.

What will happen? At the end of verse 10 here, it is God saying, “They will increase in the knowledge of Me. They will have partnership with Me. I will partner with them in their money, their body, their diet.”

One of my favorite prayers I have said over the years is, “Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about”—by the way that is a prayer for wisdom—Let me see what You see and feel what You feel about...put any one of a thousand subjects in there. So I pray, “Lord, let me see what You see and feel about my health. Let me see what You see about my money. Let me see what You see about my enemies. Let me see what You see and feel what You feel about my fears, about my future, about my relationships, about my grandchildren, about IHOPKC.”

The Lord says, “I will tell you lots of stuff.” I mean the Holy Spirit knows everything about everything. He says, “Talk to me about the knowledge of God. You will have this interaction with Me.” So it really is insight into intimacy. It is a partnership, not just raw information, but information that we are partnering with His heart.

Ask Him about your body, ask Him about your health, ask Him about your relationships, ask Him about your fears, ask Him about your addictions if you have any. Ask Him about your struggles, ask Him about your future, ask Him about your enemies, ask Him about your frustrations. Ask Him about everything. Paul prays, “Fill them with the knowledge of what You are thinking about everything pertaining to them.” Ask Him about your city, about your nation, about your generation.

2. **Prayer:** Father, give me insight into Your Word, will, and ways. Give me wisdom about how to walk in intimacy with You in every area of my life, including my finances, schedule, emotions, physical body (diet, health), relationships (home, office, ministry), future, fears, etc. What are You thinking and feeling about me and my life, city, nation, and generation?

K. **P:** Peace and joy

1. The Spirit desires to guard our hearts and minds with supernatural peace. In Philippians 4:7, the “heart” speaks of our emotions. We do not have to live troubled by jealousy, rejection, anxiety, or fear, or with minds that are filled with turmoil, confusion, and indecision. If we regularly ask for peace and joy in specific areas of our lives, we will receive more of them.

⁷*The peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)*

¹³*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing... (Rom. 15:13)*

2. **Prayer:** Father, strengthen my heart with supernatural peace in areas in which I feel rejection, fear, or anxiety; strengthen my mind so I may overcome turmoil, confusion, and indecision.

Finally then we have P for the peace of God, Philippians 4:7. Now notice, the peace of God guards the heart; that is emotions. It guards the mind. Beloved, we need supernatural guarding of our thinking. Many believers have so much turmoil, fear, and indecision. They are just constantly stuck in a quandary of confusion. The Holy Spirit says, “I would actually guard your mind, but you never ask Me. You ask others, and you complain about being in confusion, but you do not actually ask Me. I would actually give you peace that would guard your thinking and I would give you peace that would guard your emotions, your heart, your fears, jealousies, angers, and rejections. I will guard you. Talk to Me. I will give you more if you ask Me.”

III. SUMMARY: F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P

So let's look at the summary. Fear of God, endurance, love, the glory of God, realigning to be a man or woman of one thing, to walk with a worthy responses, a comprehensive response of the wholeheartedness to God, speech, humility, wisdom, and the peace of God.

- F — Fear of God: Father, release the spirit of the fear of God into my heart (Ps. 86:11).
- E — Endurance: Strengthen my spirit with endurance to do Your will (Col. 1:11).
- L — Love: Father, pour out Your love in my heart in a greater measure (Phil. 1:9).
- L — Light of glory: Father, let me see more of the light of Your glory (Acts 22:6–11; Ex. 33:18; Ps. 4:6).
- O — One thing: I set my heart to be a “person of one thing” who regularly sits before You (Ps. 27:4).
- W — Count me worthy: Strengthen me to have a worthy response to You in my life (2 Thes. 1:11).
- S — Speech: Set a guard over my lips that I may walk free from unclean speech (Eph. 4:29; Ps. 141:3).
- H — Humility: Jesus, I want to learn from You how to walk with a lowly heart (Mt. 11:29).
- I — Insight (wisdom): Give me insight into Your Word, will, and ways (Col. 1:9–10).
- P — Peace and joy: Strengthen my heart with peace and joy that overpower fear (Phil. 4:7).

Amen and amen, let's stand. Oh, I beg you to do this, even two minutes a day, and it will inch out. Before you know, it will be twenty minutes, and it will be an hour before you know that.

Lord, I ask You for a holy resolve to do this, even when they drive somewhere for five minutes, to just go down a few of these. Lord, I ask You to let them see the potential of where this could take them, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.