

Prayer: Study #2

I Thessalonians 5:17

It's always a joy sharing with you the Word of God. Thank you for joining me today, and we're going to continue our study on supernatural contact—prayer. Going to God in prayer is certainly supernatural because we reach into the heavens when we talk to the Lord. We reach His throne and we're able to commune as friend with friend, according to the Word of God. Today, we want to look at the subject of confession.

Last week, we looked into the subject of praise. I believe that we need to begin our prayer life with praise. In other words, we need to let God know who He is. In other words, we need to let God know that we know who He is. We need to praise Him for his goodness, for His love, for His kindness, and the many attributes that He has. We need to praise Him for those things.

In Psalm 66:18, it says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* And this week, as we look into this, confession, I believe the second thing we need to do is to confess to the Lord and let Him know that we are a sinful people, that I am a sinful person, and there are things in my life that shouldn't be there, things that I may have done not even realizing that I've done them. But most of the time, I believe that we know because the Holy Spirit will convict our hearts and let us know that we've done something as a saved person that should not be there.

And let me quickly add that sinless perfection will not take place until we get to Heaven. Sinless perfection for the body will not take place until this old body is changed. Now, the real person, the real me, cannot sin. You say, well, that doesn't sound right. It sounds like you've just now said you had to sin or whatever. No, what I'm saying is this. The real person, the person that is going to

be with the Lord in Heaven is that person, that soul of mine that has been saved, that innermost being of myself that has been saved and on its way to Heaven. This body is going to be changed. I'm going to receive a new body because old things are going to pass away. Behold, all things are going to become new in God. When I receive Him as my Savior, I am saved. I'm on my way to Heaven. The real person is on his way to heaven, my way, God's way. I'm on my way to Heaven.

Psalm 66:18 says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 139:23-24 says, *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Now this was David praying these prayers. This was David, a man who was after God's own heart. And some would have you to say that you can live a sinless, perfect life. Well, not according to David. David was a man who realized that there was a problem, and in order to approach God, he had to have a clean heart.

Now, we need to remember how to approach God in prayer. We need to first approach God with the praise He deserves, our Father, my Father. Praise God for His attributes. We need to approach God, once again, first by praising Him.

In I John 4:8, it says, *He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.* Praise Him for His love. Praise Him for his patience. Praise Him for His power. Praise Him for those things that we know that God is known for. Praise Him because we know that He first loved us and He gave His only begotten Son for us that we could be saved and on our way to Heaven.

Now, let's look at some things here. We need to confess sin to God that's in our lives as we approach Him in prayer. Now, who are we to confess to? All prayer should come from the heart and be addressed to God. Romans 10:10 says, *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Matthew 6:9b says, *Our Father, which art in Heaven.* We need to go to God and confess to Him, not to a man, not to anyone else in this world. We need to confess sin to God, not to another person. Prayer should never be addressed to an audience.

In Luke chapter 18, verse 11, *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* Now, there's nothing wrong with us if we're in church and someone calls on us to lead in prayer and we pray. But we need to keep in mind, we're not praying for those people in that church in the sense that we want them to hear us for our many words of exhortation. We need to be praying to God. We need to pray and go directly to Him and not concern ourselves with those people around us and not do it for a show. That's what this person was doing here, the Pharisee in Luke 18:11.

But then we see Luke 18:13. We see the publican. *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

Prayer should be offered in the name of Jesus. In John 16:24, the Bible says, *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name...* This is Jesus speaking. *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* Ephesians 5:20, *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* We need to confess sin to God. We need to confess sin to God in the name of Jesus. We need to confess sin through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, what are we to confess? First John 1:9 says, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* What are we to confess? We are to confess sins. To confess means to come clean with God. Proverbs 28:13 says this: *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Some Christians have very little success....what I would call success in the Christian life. They are always wringing their hands and moaning and groaning because it doesn't seem that they can grow or they can't get close to God. I wonder if they've ever thought they need to confess their sin to God. Get rid of that sin, because the Bible says there in Proverbs 28:13, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.*

And then in Psalm 139:23-24, it says, *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* To confess means to come clean with God. He knows your sin, and we just need to confess and say, "God, I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

Did you know that sin is the greatest roadblock to prayer? We are to confess. We are to agree with God about sin. Psalm 66:18 says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Now, that's not me speaking. That's the Word of God speaking. That's God speaking to each of us today. He says, "If you regard iniquity in your heart, I'm not going to listen to you. I'm not going to hear you. So, therefore, what are we to do? We're to confess that sin and get rid of it.

First John, chapter 2 and verse 1....now let me say this before I go any further. I made mention earlier that there's no such thing as sinless perfection for a human being. Nowhere does it tell us that we are going to live this life without sin. Now, I'm not telling you to go out and sin. I'm not telling you to purposely look to sin. What I'm

saying is this, that we get dirty as we walk through this life. And how do we know that God tells the Christian to confess sin? Well, in I John 2:1, that answers the question. It answers the question: Who is the "we" spoken of in I John 1:9? Remember, it says, "if we confess our sins" First John 2:1 says, *My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

And those verses teach me that there's going to be problems that come up into my life. There's going to be sin that creeps in or whatever takes place there that is not right. And I need to confess that sin as a child of God. Remember, it says, *My little children*, in I John 2:1. He would not call the unsaved world, *My little children*.

Well, the big picture is this. In II Chronicles chapter 7 in verse 14, the Bible says, *If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.* You say, "Well, He's speaking to the Israelites there." He's speaking to us today, as well.

He says, "If my people." I consider myself a child of God. I'm part of His people. That verse talks about being humble. To be humble is to bow the heart before God. To pray is to speak directly to God, make supplication. To "seek my face" means to search for, to strive after, to ask. To "turn from wicked ways" means to do an about-face from good-for-nothing ways. To "turn from wicked ways" means to do something different.

And He says, *Then will I hear from heaven.* "Then will I hear from heaven" means God's ready to listen. God is now ready to forgive sin. God is also ready to heal as a physician, to make whole thoroughly the common country. "I will heal my land. He says, "I will heal their land." Our country's in bad shape, and we as Christians need

to fall on our faces and get serious with God. Now, this healing process for our country starts first when we praise God and then we confess our sin.

Now, next week, the Lord's will, I want to speak to you about the subject of waiting. Supernatural contact, prayer, the third step, waiting.

And let me say that God wants to hear your prayer today if you've never trusted Him. How can he hear your prayer? The first prayer He will hear from you as an unsaved person, as a person who does not know for sure that he or she is on the way to Heaven is to say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior today. Forgive me of my sin." If you'll pray that prayer, God will save you because He sent His Son to die for you. He loved the world so much that He sent His Son, and if you were the only person living on this earth, He came to die for you.

Why not bow your head and say, "Lord, come into my heart. Forgive me of my sin. I want to go to Heaven." If you'll pray that prayer, the Bible says that you will be saved. You can know for sure that you are on your way to Heaven. If you are saved and you've gotten away from the Lord, let me encourage you to get back. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Ask His forgiveness today so that He can bless you.

Well, it's been good being with you today. Let me encourage you to look at our website, that's www.LRWM.org. On the website, you can leave prayer requests and we'll pray with you about whatever's on your heart. Go on that website and request a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." Write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731.

Well, it's been good being with you today, and until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.