

# The Spirit Maketh Intercession

by G.W. North

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*The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in interceding for us and making us true sons of God, and understanding this is essential for effective prayer and becoming an intercessor.*

**Scripture:** Romans 8:26

**Topics:** "Intercession", "Prayer"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in intercession, explaining that true prayer is a spiritual exercise that requires a deep connection with God. He highlights that many believers struggle with prayer due to a lack of understanding and often focus on their personal needs rather than aligning with God's will. North reassures that all things work together for good for those who love God, and that effective prayer is rooted in a yielded spirit. He illustrates that Jesus exemplified this through His own prayers, which were deeply personal and heartfelt, rather than formulaic. Ultimately, North encourages believers to be led by the Spirit into a deeper understanding of intercession, which is essential for spiritual growth and conformity to Christ's image.

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## Transcript

The Lord wants us to enjoy to the full that degree of inheritance which is possible to us down here on earth; joint-heirship with Christ in heaven entitles us to it. The fulness of it lies beyond the adoption, but, having the Spirit of adoption, we enter into a great measure of it here and now. This is why He is now interceding. He intercedes for us so that He may mediate to us the things for which He intercedes. At the beginning of our new life these things may be entirely different from the things for which we ask, because we do not understand very much about spiritual life and are entirely ignorant of how to pray. We are frankly told here that we know not what we should pray for as we ought; we know we ought to pray, but for what or about what we should pray nothing is said. Many voices press in upon us, giving us much advice or showing us many duties in this realm, but these are not always correct -- sometimes but not often. In view of obvious personal need, the tendency of beginners is to be self-centred in prayer, and the more so as realization of great discrepancies between ourselves and others, and what we are and what we ought to be, becomes apparent to us. This is why the kindly Lord tells us that, to them that love God and are called according to His purpose, all things work together for good. This does not always appear to be true; so often prayers go unanswered, many of the things and situations and people about which folk pray seem not to alter, although much prayer-effort be expended upon them. It is wonderfully comforting then to be cast back upon the thought that we do love God, and be assured that all things do work together for good

because of that. We all have to learn that our good does not depend upon our prayer success, but upon God's love and power and understanding and provision. This is not to suggest that God does not want us to be effective in prayer, He does; it really does matter that we pray, but in the Holy Spirit we must learn to pray according to the Spirit of intercession within.

Every child of God must believe and learn first of all that prayer is a spiritual exercise. Prayer must be of the spirit and mind of man in the Holy Spirit of God. When a man first prays he says prayers he has either learned from someone else or has made up himself. Such prayers, however good and beautiful, however nicely put together and reverently said and sincerely meant, are only words, they are not prayer. Everyone must learn prayer before they say prayers of any sort, whether these be extempore and spontaneous or ritualistic or repeated from a book, even if that book is the Bible; prayer does not consist in words, it is the engagement of the spirit of man with God. Prayer is communion, prayers are communication; that they may go together is both true and possible, even probable, but by no means certain. Prayer is exchange of feeling according to spiritual knowledge between man and God, it is based upon the relationship which exists between them and the sense of compulsion felt by that man -- he knows he ought to pray. If a man spontaneously responds to that urge and sense of duty within him, he will soon learn prayer, for these twin feelings or sensings of the soul are the conscious recognition of needs and abilities generated by the Spirit in his spirit. This feeling in the soul of God's child is a spiritual awareness which is one of the firstfruits of the Spirit, an indication of His presence and working in the life; it must be treasured and allowed to develop. It must also be obeyed, that is, responded to, or else prayer will never be learned or properly exercised. Paul, in his usual masterly way, has the right word for this, 'yield', 'yield yourselves', 'yield your members'; prayer can only be learned by the person who is yielded.

Yieldedness in an intelligent human is an attitude arising from the correct spiritual condition of that man's spirit. Between man and God it is a fixed attitude of love and trust; it presupposes total response, utter given-ness and eager spontaneous co-operation with Him for the sheer delight of it. Only as this is recognized and welcomed will the Spirit believe He is wanted, and feel free to continue His work of conforming us to the image of Christ. Prayer is absolutely essential to this; just saying prayers can hinder it. Who among us can tell what are the right requests to make, or what form of address should be used or what particular details ought to be mentioned concerning conformity to God's Son? Not the educated mind, but the feeling, groaning inner self brought to spiritual awareness, is the only source of prayer recognized by God in the human being; God's Son, the greatest of all human beings, is the perfect example of this. In the greatest prayer-battle of His life He said very few words at all, and none of them were learned from the writings or teachings of men. He did not despise the words or literary works of others, He read them and learned them and sometimes quoted them, but never in prayer; prayer, to be prayer, must be original to the person who is praying at the time he is praying.

So it was with Jesus in Gethsemane; He had one thing on His heart, He was under compulsion and had no illusions about it. He expressed it in words, but it would not have mattered if He had not; His prayer was His entire involvement in and identity with the will of God. The proof of this was the total presentation and prostration of Himself to the Father, and His concentration of self without distraction upon the inward awareness of God's will for Him. The feelings of His soul, combining with that knowledge, culminated in groanings and agonisings that affected His whole body, so that sweat dropped from Him like blood falling to the ground; this was so exhausting that, at the end, angels had to come and minister to Him. His prayers were uttered with the barest minimum of words, thrice repeated into the ground. But He prayed! O how He prayed. His spirit prayed, His soul prayed, His body was taken over for prayer - HE prayed. God

said that of Paul - 'Behold he prayeth'. Paul knew prayer right from the beginning of his spiritual life, and what he learned then became fundamental to everything in his life and ministry. When he wrote much later to those Ephesians who were faithful in Christ, he included two prayers in his epistle; both are gems. They are also almost the briefest examples of prayer possible to imagine: undoubtedly ensamples of his method, as well as marvellous utterances of truth. They could not be better described than by some of his own words to the Romans: 'My heart's desire and prayer ...'. They are certainly that. All his prayers are the desires of his earnest heart, mightily affected by and wrought upon by the Spirit.

Paul was such a mighty intercessor because he felt with God for men. To be a pray-er, the man must be the prayer. He, his whole self, must be in the Spirit waiting upon God, for prayer is God in a man praying to God in heaven. Surprising as this may seem, this is precisely true. Until this is understood, the right conditions of prayer have never been established in the life of a man, and he can never be an intercessor. Prayer, intercessory prayer, is intensely spiritual, it is wholly of spirit. The Spirit maketh intercession for us -- that is, He intercedes as in our name as well as for our needs, and does so by identifying with our spirit. Christ completes the work by making intercession at the right hand of God for us. These two intercessors in the Godhead engage with each other in the joint business of making us true sons of God according to the pattern Son, that we may be presented at last to the Father, perfectly conformed to the image in His heart. That image He holds there is of ideal sons, dearly beloved and longed for, and it was for these that He sacrificed His only begotten and well beloved Son. Now these many sons are sons of His love, of His own Spirit begotten, and every one of them is born of the agonies of God in the Son, which actual agonies we cannot enter into -- they were exclusively His. Yet, for the birth and perfecting of His other sons, it seems that God wishes to share something of His pains with those who will bear with Him.

Not every one who is born of God understands this, or believes this is possible; these further reaches of prayer are unknown to them. They want the joys of salvation, the pleasures and praises of grace; they enjoy being in the kingdom of heaven, and exult in the benefits and luxuries which abound in God's realm, but they do not enter into the more private experiences of God, or know the purposes and exercises of His Spirit. This is a great tragedy, and an utterly irreplaceable loss, both in the individual and to the Church. Such persons can never become intercessors unless they become aware of this and take steps to remedy their mistake. Every one must allow himself or herself to be led by the Spirit into this truth of intercession in the Spirit; they must discover what this is and what it is for. Before we examine this, it will be of great use, even if it is not an absolute necessity, to trace the steps whereby a man or a woman is led to intercession, remembering that intercession is a purely voluntary ministry. No person will ever be forced into it. Even though it is the will of God for all His children, unless a person wholeheartedly co-operated with the Spirit of it, God cannot and does not make him an intercessor. Intercession has to be made, it does not automatically take place; it will spring up spontaneously though, in the heart of every one who will yield to God for the purpose. That settled, everything else will follow as of law; the important thing to remember is that we must be led by the Spirit, otherwise it is unattainable. He will lead us into intercession as truly as He led Christ all the way to the place of intercession, which place He has filled to this day.

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