



Praying for Others

Chapter 6

Lesson 6

Read Jesus' intercessory prayer in John 17, focusing on verses six through 26. List the Son's intercession requests to His Father on behalf of His disciples and then all believers.

1. Record your initial thoughts concerning this passage. How does the greatest intercessory prayer inform yours? How is God challenging you in your prayer life?

Tom Elliff in his book, *A Passion for Prayer*, writes, "Intercession is by nature, where an individual positions him or herself between two parties – one with a need and one with the answer – and seeks to bring the two parties together."

What is it exactly that we hope to accomplish by interceding for someone before God? What is it that we want to happen? Is intercessory prayer placing our burdens on God's heart or is it allowing God to place His burdens on our hearts?

True intercession desires to find the will of God.

Elliff makes a point about intercession that I believe most Christians miss – "The major focus of the intercessor is finding and cooperating with the will of God."

Sometimes, we Christians, when talking about intercession will say something like, "I am praying that Sally will receive physical healing." Or "I am praying that Joe will get this job he is applying for." Or perhaps the ultimate is when one prays for the prodigal child, "Lord, please bring them to their senses, and bring them home but don't let them get hurt." Although those prayers may express the desires of our heart (which we leave at the fit of Jesus) it may not be what God wants for that individual at that time. Sometimes unknowingly we try to push God into handling a situation in the way in which we wish to see it handled.

Elliff addresses how one should then intercede when he writes, "How should we pray for our friend who may be experiencing a grave physical illness? First, acknowledge the problem as specifically as possible, then request sufficient grace to enable the individual to maintain a close and useful relationship with God."

True intercession is the desire to see the object of our prayers come into a close fellowship with God by whatever means and circumstances He decides is best.

2. How do you distinguish praying for the desires of your heart for someone versus interceding for someone? When do the desires of your heart for another become intercession?

Read chapter six in *Experiencing Prayer with Jesus*, and then consider the following questions.

3. To each of us, God has entrusted other people in a variety of relationships—marriage partner, children, coworkers, friends, and a local church family. Are you seeking the Father in prayer to understand His activity in their lives?

4. Are those around you being strengthened against sin and temptation because of your prayers?

5. What do you learn from the example of Jesus about how to relate to those who oppose you? How can Christ's example help you when God places difficult people in your life?

Beyond the Book:

Read Colossians 1:9-11. What do you learn from the way Paul interceded for the Colossians? Where do you think Paul's burden originates? Why?