

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.
- B. In this type of prayer we focus on growing in intimacy with God, asking Him *to strengthen 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)***
- 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.
- 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.
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.
- 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.
- 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

- 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.
- 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)
 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).
 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.
- 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)
 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)

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.

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)

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

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)

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).

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)

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).

⁵¹*And 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)*

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).

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).

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

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).

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

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.

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.

¹¹*We 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)*

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)
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)
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)
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)
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)

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)
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)
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.
⁷The peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)
¹³Now 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.

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

- 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).