



BE THE BODY

INTERCESSION

When we look at great leaders in the Bible like David, Nehemiah, Paul we see men who prayed. We see people who weren't afraid to get on their knees before God, admit they don't have it all together and ask for guidance, intervention, rescue, healing, blessing, forgiveness, etc.

As we grow in our faith the same opportunity waits for us. We CAN be people who pray powerfully for ourselves, our loved ones, our neighborhoods, work places, city, country, and world. God hasn't changed. He is the same God that Paul said this of, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20). God is able to do more than we can "ask or imagine".

So, let's ask. Let's imagine.

That is all intercession is: Effectively engage the spiritual battle on behalf yourself, others, and the kingdom of God. The Battle is all around us. We see it in the brokenness all around us, and within us. But we CAN "effectively engage". "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds." (2 Cor. 10:4)

In this apply we are going to look at 3 powerful prayers from scripture and practice praying like we see in scripture for our lives and world.

First, we are going to look at Nehemiah 1. God's people were described like this, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach." (Neh 1:3). The people in Jerusalem were very vulnerable because their city was broken down and unprotected. Nehemiah saw this and cried out to God to do something about the distress and vulnerability of His people:

Nehemiah 1:4-11

⁵ Then I said: "LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love⁽¹⁾ with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. ⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I

will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.¹⁰ “They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.”¹¹ Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.” I was cupbearer to the king.

There are a couple of things happening here:

- 1.) Nehemiah sees the need of the people and cries out to God for them. He doesn't point fingers and cast blame for the situation they are in. Instead he confesses his sins and his family's sins and asks for God's help for his people.
- 2.) Nehemiah prays this before he goes into the pagan king to ask for permission for the Israelites to build back the wall around Jerusalem so they can protect themselves from attack.

Do you pray for your city, family, friend, church like this? Do you praise God, confess yours and others sins, and then ask for God to repair and restore or grant favor?

Nehemiah's prayer follows a format that looks like this:

- 1.) Recognition of who God is and what His promises are
- 2.) Asks for God to hear him
- 3.) Confesses his sin, family's sin, his people's sin
- 4.) Reminds God of his promises (to restore those who follow him)
- 5.) Asks for what he needs to help the people and for their situation to change

Use the space below to write out a prayer for someone/ place/ people. Follow the format of the prayer we see in Nehemiah.

Maybe you pray for a child who is far from God and getting involved in things that could hurt them. Maybe you lift up your city and ask for God to forgive the wrong things that have been done there and bring revival. Maybe you pray for people in an oppressed country to be given freedom and for justice to be served.

Let's look at another prayer from another powerful leader in scripture.

This is a prayer written by Paul to one of the churches that he has helped to establish. In this prayer he is praying for those who have come to faith in Jesus.

Ephesians 1:15-21

¹⁵ Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, ¹⁶ I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, ¹⁷ asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. ¹⁸ I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. ¹⁹ I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

Do you pray for those who know Jesus in your family, friends, city, and church like this?

Paul's prayer follows a format that looks like this:

- 1.) Thanksgiving for these people
- 2.) Asking for God to give wisdom
- 3.) Ask God to give Understanding & Hope
- 4.) That they would know God's power
- 5.) They would behold Jesus and His position of authority

Use the space below to write out a prayer for someone you know who follows Jesus. Follow the format of the prayer we see from Paul.

The last prayer to look at is from 1 Timothy. Timothy was a disciple of Paul who was charged with caring for the church at Ephesus. 1 Timothy is a letter written to Timothy from Paul. In this letter he is instructing Timothy about how to encourage the church to live.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Do you pray for those who in authority? Do you pray for their good and that they would know Jesus?

Paul's prayer follows a format that looks like this:

- 1.) Ask God to do things (intercession), Thank Him (praise)
- 2.) Pray for all people
- 3.) Pray for those in authority
- 4.) We do this because it pleases God
- 5.) We pray for others to come to know Jesus.

Use the space below to write out a prayer for those in authority (at work, school, church, city, state, country, etc). Follow the format of the prayer we see from Paul.

There are many other places in scripture where we see prayer and we have only looked at three.

This is an online resource where many prayers in scripture are listed along with the theme of those prayers (© 2013 truthaccordingtoscripture.com:

<http://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/prayers/prayers-old-testament.php#.WQCAOIPysdU>). As you think about next steps from this Intercession outcome you could use this list to prompt you to pray more scripture for yourself, those you interact with, and the world.

Next Steps: How will you take what you have learned/practiced through the Intercession outcome and be different going forward?

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