

We Are 'Religious Beings'

What are your convictions about prayer? We develop 'belief systems' about many things in life.

They can be built on facts and tangible evidence or a mix of feelings, experiences, and things learned. At times, they're strictly based on faith in the Word.

Most often, our true beliefs are a combination of these. 'Our journey' is to be open to be refined by the Word. This includes having 'holes and gaps' filled in, inaccurate understandings corrected, and false doctrine ejected, while progressing in sound doctrine.

'Free will' enables us to put aside all 'forms of religious thinking' and replace it. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (|| Timothy 1:13)

Think on your prayer life & walk by faith in the Word!

Christian Life Coach Support Services

Writers/Editors: Brian & Deborah J. Johnson, Certified Christian Life Coaches
(804) 519-1210 — Look us up on Facebook - lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com
Website: Christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com

Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, numbered, or made bold for emphasis.



How We Pray... For Saints - Part 2

Prayer is communing with our Heavenly Father. Regular talk time with Him is essential, developing depth and trust in the relationship. When we pray, the Spirit intercedes instructing us in sound doctrine; this progresses us in effectual prayer. As Scripture is stirred, 'grace options' surface on how to apply the Word in a situation. As 'joint laborers' with God, we can respond positively to Him, as a 'love sacrifice!' (I Cor. 3:9)

A prayer example in Romans 1:11 shows that Paul saw 'the need' for saints in Rome to be edified in foundational doctrine: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established...". His heart and thoughts were moved; 'longing' in great love to help them, seeing their need for spiritual growth and comfort. The Apostle took the initiative. Paul wasn't detoured by obstacles. He couldn't get there in person, so prayerfully, he found another way, writing a letter to establish them.

This approach is to be a pattern for us to pray. Study to notice a common thread in Paul's prayers. He had a 'love motivated, take charge response' to meet needs seen in the Body of Christ. He didn't pray, then, just leave the problem to God. Scripture does not indicate Paul waited for a 'personal dispatch' from Christ, telling him 'what to do' to live out his faith. As a spiritual adult, he saw himself as God's 'instrument of righteousness.' Paul used discernment, taking responsibility to fulfill needs, ministering in Christ's stead. *Prayer & doctrine worked in his inner man.* (Romans 6-12)

God can produce powerful results, *enabling us also* to apply what's been learned to meet needs in the Body of Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) This prayer process helps mature us to be living sacrifices as we live here being Christ's representatives. (Cont. on P.4)

Family Bible Study In N. Chesterfield
Brian's Topic: How to Understand the Bible
Time: Fridays, 7-9 PM Call - (804) 519-1210



Romans 10: Student Study Insights

Romans 10 continues our understanding in the transition God made from 'the past dealings' with Israel as His special people, to 'what God is doing now' in us, as the Body of Christ.

This chapter teaches: a) Religious Israel produced 'self-righteousness.' b) They were accountable, having Scripture. c) God desired a 'heart of faith' response. d) Israel was rebellious to God's great love/mercy, not really 'hearing' His Word.

Search/seek a few of these suggestions:

- 1. Read to gain an overview:** Initially, read through Romans 10 to glean a general understanding of what is taught. Meditate upon it.
- 2. Notice Paul's attitude:** For example, why does he begin with a prayer for Israel? What does this accomplish in the student?
- 3. Focus on key words:** 'Faith' and 'righteousness' have been a theme in the book of Romans. a) Search out the term 'righteousness' in Romans 1-9, and notice how the term is regularly paired with 'faith.' Realize the context of



passages. b) Notice how 'righteousness & faith' in Romans 9:30-33 transitions us into Chapter 10.

4. Examine a repeated word: Define the word 'hearing;' it's used twice in Verse 17. God chose this wording for a reason, why?

5. Notice and define helping words: a) What is the meaning of 'for' and meditate upon why Paul used it so frequently in this chapter. What impact did it have on you? b) Paul also used the word 'but' several times. What is this word mean; does it help?

6. Read background on a subject: To learn more about God's Nation Israel, read passages like Deut. 4:5-10. Israel was blessed in many ways. Search to find out how. (i.e. God was 'high unto them.')

7. Clarify impressions: Understand God and man more fully by skimming a few books in the Old Testament to particularly observe character: Man is an ungodly sinner and God is merciful and gracious.

8. Sections within the chapter: Knowing the logical order of a chapter helps in your study. One way to section off the chapter: 10:1-5, 10:6-13, 10:14-21. How would you subdivide it differently?

*Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than learning study insights. When you're ready, do try one.



Ought We Ask For 'More' Blessings?



Many in the Church believe 'Israel's blessings' apply to the Body of Christ. Why? They're unaware that God changed His approach to man. In the past, He dealt with Israel 'under the Law,' but now, the Church is 'under grace.'

'Blessings' refer to a unique or extra benefit, advantage, or kindness: health, wealth, or prosperity. The children of Israel could avoid suffering *loss of blessings* 'if' they obeyed. 'Curses' resulted if the Nation did not obey. They had 'conditional blessings' under the Law.

To Do: Study Leviticus 26; notice 'to whom' it's written and the conditions of the blessings and curses.

In this time of Gentile grace, God already offers us *all things*, and "...hath blessed us with all

spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3) God's favor is free, not based on human effort, "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness..." (II Cor. 9:11)

Ought we ask God for more? Requesting 'more' blessings presumes He hasn't provided enough. This is 'walking by sight,' desiring 'an extra' blessing. It also keeps our focus on the flesh/physical issues, rather than trusting that God's Word/power is plentiful to endure any challenge. This whole doctrine negates, "...My grace is sufficient for thee: my strength is made perfect in weakness..." (II Cor. 12:9)

A 'child' seeks after God's quick fix; a 'spiritual adult' relies on God's perfect provision in us.



Inner Voices... Are They to be Trusted?

Some believers listen for an 'inner voice' to give direction, but caution is needed. This 'voice' is really your emotions, wrapped around other things, like religious ideas, hopes/expectations, and a limited understanding of Scripture. Without knowing, a Christian may exalt 'this voice' to the level of Scripture. Many are misled by this 'quiet voice,' confused when a decision didn't work, trying to understand or explain why God 'let them down.' Of course, He never did, you simply made a choice that didn't work well. As you apply Scripture growth takes place and there may be glitches; you're 'a work in progress.' "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, *that ye may prove* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2)

God has finished writing His Word; He is not 'adding' to it by directly talking to you. God expects you to read, meditate, and think about decisions to wisely apply what He has **already** said through His Word and placed into your inner man. Be careful and accurate; don't assign God responsibility, when it is actually you, learning and trying to apply Truth to make decisions.

Scripture says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9) We are *not* to rely on 'heart feelings,' but walk by faith, trusting the Word. This brings growth/new insight. Spiritual maturity parallels developmental growth. A toddler first stands, then walks, and eventually is able to run. So too, as spiritual children growing to adulthood, we learn to 'stand,' 'walk,' and 'run,' living Scripture. (To Do: Study these 'growth terms' in Rom.-Phile.)

'Walk' in wisdom to apply sound doctrine. Be in the Bible, reading regularly in prayer and meditation; the Spirit will lead. Since you are still growing, you will make errors in application, as you are being refined, living life the best you can unto God. In grace, expect imperfection with yourself & others. As you walk in faith, you'll be "...conformed to the image of His Son...". (Rom. 8:29)

Do You Search Scripture Daily, Before Believing?



Today, it's easy to be overcome with information, even in just the Christian realm. So many, say so much; a candy dish of teachers and input. Is all of it true? Things you hear and then accept, can make a huge impact, even on the topic of prayer. (In a week you may hear/observe, sermons, studies, TV, publications, friend's counsel, etc.) Many believe they're able to discern Truth, but Satan's ways are subtle. A warning: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Bereans "...received **the word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11) Scripture is to be your *only* authority. Since beliefs are based on what's taken into your mind, it can be the Word infused by corrupted Truth. One small thing added to Truth could affect sound thinking. Study and be in prayer about this issue.

Evaluate various viewpoints and practices about prayer; compare it to sound doctrine. Believers stand alone before the Lord... your wife, husband, friends, Bible teachers & writers are not going to be there with you. "Every man's work shall be made manifest..." (1 Corinthians 3:13) Some work done in this mortal body will abide, for which you will receive a reward. Other work will burn and you will suffer loss. (Read more in 1 Corinthians 3.) The issue is sobering to prompt reflection.

To Do: Consider finding a wise study partner. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17) A friend can encourage study and lovingly prompt you to 'prove all things,' thinking and seeing new facets of the Word from new perspectives. **Keep Scripture as the Authority!**



'On A Personal Side'

Forward feedback or questions about this newsletter. We will address all we can.

From Our Readers...

"Please add me to your newsletter mailing list. I'll also forward this newsletter to our Bible study email list...I am thankful for our Lord's blessings in your ministry." (Alabama)

"The September newsletter was good reading for me!" (Virginia)

"Thank-you for you and Brian's ministry. I have truly grown spiritually and challenged myself because of your ministry." (Illinois)



How We Pray... For Saints (continued)

Read and think about how Paul prayed for believers in Romans 1, Ephesians 1 & 3, Philippians 1, and Colossians 1.

Practical insights from evaluating verses:

1. Specifics: Pray about individuals on your heart and what you know about their precise challenges: Talk to God about all these things.

2. Reflection: The Spirit stirs doctrine within so you know 'how' you can help; confident and not discouraged by obstacles. Think on the love you have for this member of Christ, 'where' the saint is spiritually, and what support is needed. Now, options often surface so you can minister.

3. Communicate: Tell them of your 'love motivated desire' to support and comfort them and 'what' you desire to do. (In a way, it is obtaining consent, sharing how you would like to help.) Paul began his letters in this way.

4. Action: 'Do' the labor God has stirred in you to do; don't wait for Him to do it. God powerfully works in your inward man. You are a co-laborer with God; His arms and hands. The Spirit and Word motivate/teach you 'how' to respond.

5. Support: Prayerfully, continue interactions with this individual, keeping verses stirred. As the situation adjusts, purpose to see new needs and be their resource. Act on God's behalf, pointing to the Lord/Word, giving Him the glory.

As you mature through Paul's epistles, you will know better 'how' to pray and 'what to do,' as a result. Why? Prayer is progressively effectual, producing clearer 'action' and 'options' as you grow and see new facets of Scripture. Examine Pauline prayer for yourself, looking for new insights. **Seek & Search**

Women's Bible Studies in Chesterfield VA

1. **Wed. Study:** 10:30am-12 pm
 2. **Friday Home Study:** 2-4 pm
 Call for locations and information
(804) 519-1210



Planning For Eternal Retirement

Many wisely make time to plan for their earthly retirement, but how about eternity? Should we just 'pray' about it? Is it all up to God or do we play a role?

What Scripture says: (Look at context)

Awake and be wise, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16)

Fleshly effort (Bodily exercise) profits little, "...but godliness is profitable unto all things..." (1 Tim. 4:8), having an impact now and into eternity.

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6:19) How? Read/live the Word!

Scripture In Us Is Our Retirement

Christian Life Coach Support Services

Individual, Couple or Group Coaching - In person or phone Presentations - Women's Retreats - Call (804) 519-1210

