

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER



The Spirit...maketh intercession for the saints.

—Romans 8:27

Prayer is not our work, but God's work, which He works within us by His almighty power. As we consider this statement, our attitude should be one of silent expectation that as we pray, the Holy Spirit will help our weaknesses and will pray within us with "*groanings which cannot be uttered*" (v. 26).

What a thought! When I feel how defective my prayers are, when I have no strength of my own, I may bow in silence before God in the confidence that His Holy Spirit will teach me to pray. The Spirit is the Spirit of prayer. It is not my work, but God's work in me. My desire to pray is a sign that God will hear me.

When God moves to grant our requests, He first works the desire in our hearts, and the Spirit will perfect the work, even in our weakness. We see this in the story of Jacob. The same One who wrestled with him and seemed to withhold the blessing was in reality strengthening him to continue and to prevail in prayer. (See Genesis 32:24–30.) What a wondrous thought! Prayer is the work of the triune God: the Father, who wakens the desire and will give all we need; the Son, who through His intercession teaches us to pray in His name; and the Holy Spirit, who in secret will strengthen our feeble desires.

I have already told you about the Spirit of truth, who will glorify Christ in us, and of the Spirit of love, who will pour out this love in our hearts. Now we have the Spirit of prayer, through whom our lives may be ones of continual prayer. Thank God. The Spirit has been given from heaven to dwell in our hearts and to teach us to pray.

Christian, listen to the leading of the Spirit. Obey His voice in all things. He will make you a man or woman of prayer. You will then realize the glory of your calling as an intercessor, asking great things of God for those around you, for the church, and for the whole unsaved world.