

Theme: God uses the trials of this life to bring us to maturity in Him. As we grow in wisdom and grace our prayers are sanctified as they are aligned with the prayers of the Savior, through the work of the Spirit in us. These prayers, united with those of our perfect intercessor, have great power in God's kingdom.

Background: How do we know our prayers are heard and answered? The question is still before us.

Introduction: When are we called to stand in the breach?

I. The Path of Maturity

A. Picturing maturity

1. The end result of trials (James 4:2-4)
 - a. This is not how you "encourage" someone in trial
 - b. It is how our hearts are strengthened
2. Maturity in Christ (Romans 8:29)
 - a. Seen in Jesus. Exhibited in...
 - Humility and Obedience (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8)
 - Single-minded (John 4:34 & 6:38)
 - Communion with the Father (John 17:11&24)
 - Full of Power
 - Full of Compassion
 - Full of Peace
 - b. Revealed in us
 - Humility (Philippians 2:5&8)
 - Obedience (John 14:15)
 - Heavenly focus (Philippians 3:14&15)
 - Communion with Him (1 John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9)
 - Discernment (Hebrews 5:14)
 - Stability (Ephesians 4:2&3 & 4:13&14)

B. Producing maturity

1. The goal
 - Steadfast
 - Mature
 - Complete
2. Trials are normal (John 16:33)
 - And nearly unending
 - They drive us to prayer

II. Maturity in Prayer

A. We must ask

1. For wisdom
 - Asking is the rule in God's kingdom
2. Without doubting
 - Echoing Matthew 21:21&22
 - James is hard on doubters
 - ASIDE: A brief look at doubt in the Bible
3. We don't ask (James 4:2&3)
 - Selfish desires don't make bring humble prayers
4. We ask wrongly
 - For things of the world, not things of the Word

- B. When God answers:
 - 1. He gives generously - He is a giving God
 - 2. To all who ask - no playing favorites
 - 3. Without reproach
- C. We can ask boldly (James 5:13-18)

III. Praying in the Spirit

- A. Christ's Intercession
 - 1. Interceding on our behalf (Romans 8:34)
 - 2. Seeking that which is best
- B. The Spirit's intercession
 - 1. Praying in the Spirit
 - a. Praying for us (Romans 8:26)
 - b. Dwelling in us (John 14:26; 2 Timothy 1:14; Romans 8:9)
NOTE: We have two perfect intercessors - working in perfect union.
 - 2. Sanctifying our prayers
- C. Asking anything
 - When we ask "in the Spirit"

IV. The Prayers of the Mature

- A. Working in us
 - Doing great things in us
 - Changing us to be conformed to the image of Christ
- B. Working through us
 - Learning to pray boldly?
 - Ready to stand in the breach
 - To plead for the souls of men and women
 - To plead for the soul of a nation