

# Intercession

by Richard E. Bieber

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*Richard E. Bieber emphasizes the vital role of intercessory prayer in the life of a believer, highlighting its power and necessity in ministry.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 67:5, Matthew 18:18, Luke 22:31, John 17:20, Romans 8:26, Romans 8:33, Ephesians 1:16, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 1:3, Colossians 4:3, Hebrews 7:25

**Topics:** "Intercessory Prayer", "Christian Ministry"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber emphasizes the importance of intercession in our ministry, highlighting that our true calling and ministry began the moment we started walking with Jesus. He stresses that our primary ministry is hidden before the eyes of God, consisting of service to God in worship and service to man in intercession. Bieber urges believers to prioritize intercession, as it is the foundation upon which all other outward ministries rest, drawing examples from Jesus' prayer life and the apostle Paul's relentless intercession for others.

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## Transcript

Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:18-20

If the enemy can't get us off on a wild tangent in our ministries, trying to build some flashy kingdom of our own that will have to come down again, then he will try to put our lives in suspension so that we go on and on marking time, waiting for our "ministry" to really begin. It's surprising how many of us secretly feel that our real calling hasn't come yet. We think we're still in the marketplace waiting to be hired into God's Vineyard, when in fact we're in the vineyard and have fallen asleep in the shadow of the vines.

Our ministry, if we are followers of Jesus, began the minute we left our old life to walk with Him.

"Wait a minute!", you say. "I'm only a disciple, a pupil. I'm trying to learn what the Kingdom of God is all about and you want to shove me out into a ministry untrained, unseasoned, and ill prepared!"

But if you are a disciple of Jesus, He's teaching you by giving you work to do. You learn as you labor.

- Not by taking copious notes and stuffing them away in a filing cabinet,

but by doing!

And the basic ministry each of us is given to do, which affects everything that goes on in our daily life and our labors out among men and women, is a ministry which is hidden from every human eye. A ministry which goes on only before the eye of God.

It is twofold:

1. Service to God in worship.
2. Service to man in intercession.

Nothing we do out among men will accomplish anything redemptive if this hidden ministry, this interior ministry, is sick. But if this ministry before the eye of God is,

flourishing,

strong,

passionate,

consistent,

true,

our walk in this world will open rivers of living water everywhere we go, bring healing to everything we touch. It will be good news!

Of our ministry to God in worship, much has been said among believers these days. And we continue to pray...

"Let all the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee."

Psalm 67:5

And we need to give ourselves to it more and more.

But, of the other aspect of our interior ministry, intercession, very little has been said. And much needs to be done.

There needs to be a radical change in our own thinking about the value of intercession, praying for people.

The reason we give so little of our time and strength to it is because it doesn't seem to be that important. In fact, it seems like a cop out. If someone comes to us in need of food, and we say, "I'll pray for you," we know in our hearts we're copping out.

Many times, people have doors shut in their faces by pious believers who smugly say, "I'll pray for you." And yet, if these people kept their promise, and really prayed they would soon be involved with those needy lives and mighty things would be happening on every level, because the most effective thing we can do, the starting point of every service we can render our fellow man, is intercession prayer for them. The basic ministry we perform on behalf of others is not preaching, or teaching, or even feeding and clothing.

It is intercession!

- Our preaching and teaching will always be shallow,
- our deeds of mercy will never even begin to scratch the surface of people's needs,
- until these outward ministries begin to ride on a torrent of intercession.

You think I'm exaggerating? Look at Jesus. We see glimpses of this vast subterranean prayer life for others in John seventeen.

"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me..." John 17: 20-21.

Or, when Jesus says to Peter,

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you (all) like wheat, but I have prayed for, you, (Peter) that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren. Luke 22:31-32

Do you think those hours Jesus spent with the Father were only spent on Himself? When Jesus spent all night in prayer to God and the next day chose His twelve apostles, do you not think names were rising from His heart to the Father? How could he not have been praying by name for many as He sought to arrive at the ones who were to share the load as apostles.

But the central event of our Lord's life among us, indeed, the pivotal event of all history was His death on the cross. And what was that death if not an act of intercession? In fact, the act of intercession on which all intercession rests:

The Lamb of God interceding for the human race with his very blood.

Interposing His blood between our sins and the Father's glory.

That's intercession, "Behold, the Lamb of God; who takes away the sins of the world"!

"Father, take the guilt away from them and put it on me."

"Father, forgive! Forgive! Forgive."

And by the power of that mysterious and awesome and holy and glorious blood sacrifice, His intercessions continue.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Romans 8:33-34

Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25

From the Father's right hand the Lamb sends the Spirit into our midst. And what does the Spirit do? The same thing the Son does --- he prays for us!

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-27

The Son intercedes.

The Spirit intercedes and those who have entered into the Son, and have opened their hearts to the Spirit are brought into this same ministry.

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. Matthew 18:18-19

On whose behalf do we bind and loose? And for what purpose do two of us agree on earth for something to be done for us by the Father, if not especially for other people?

Intercession!

Prayer on behalf of others!

And if you are willing to admit that one of the most fruitful ministries ever exercised by a human being on this earth was that of Saul of Tarsus, you will also have to admit that his epistles are loaded with intercession.

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers..."

Ephesians 1:16

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy..." Philippians 1:3-4

"Pray for me that I may have a door of utterance." Colossians 4:3

Paul admitted that he wasn't an eloquent preacher. But somehow more happened through this man's labors than through the work of men a thousand times more eloquent... because Paul's main ministry, clearly, was intercession. And here he was relentless! The mountains moved. The gates of brass yielded. The bars of iron broke.

And everywhere that man went the captives were set free.

So what happens in intercession? We simply join our hearts to the Intercession of the Lamb at Calvary, and lift people, by name, before the throne of God, and plead His mercy on them, and sometimes ask for specific help for them. Perhaps we picture divine light from the Father's face streaming down into their inmost hearts. And as we do, things happen in the unseen realm of heaven which, sooner or later, turn up in the visible realm of the earth.

"Oh, but I just don't have the driving motivation to intercede for people!"

You have the motivation to criticize people: No sweat at all! Criticism seems to be our second nature. So now we turn our criticism into intercession.

The things we see wrong or lacking, in others, instead of shaking our head and gossiping about them, we pray for them. Every time you catch yourself criticizing, turn it into prayer.

There are people we worry about; we fear what lies ahead on that road they have chosen. Instead of wasting our strength on anxiety, we turn it into prayer. Keep turning that worry for your child into prayer until you're not worrying, but praying, trusting God to reach out and intervene with His merciful hand.

And once we start praying for people with zeal, we persist!

Like the widow pestering the unjust Judge, day after day after day.

Like the woman begging Jesus on behalf of her poor demon tortured daughter.

We take no rest, and give God no rest, until He establishes Jerusalem and makes her a praise in the earth, even if the prayer goes on for years.

And, as we persist in this ministry of intercession, we also set it in some kind of order, specifically we name names before God.

Our families - by name.

Our enemies - by name.

Our brothers and sisters in the fellowship - by name.

People we work with, people in our apartment house or neighborhood by name.

Other fellowships.

Those who have gone out to serve in other places.

And as we pray, we picture the answer of God, we expect it, we know it's coming. We rejoice with all the angels of heaven that those believers we're praying for are being strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man and that Christ dwells in their hearts by faith, that they are being rooted and grounded in love.

And we praise God that those who have not yet seen His mercy are being breathed upon by the breath of heaven.

Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:18-20

This is our ministry. God has already given it to us. And as we enter into it with our whole heart we will begin to see things happen we never expected to see --- this side of heaven.

Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a right spirit within me! Do whatever you have to do to deliver me from vanity and fear! Raise up laborers for your harvest, and make me one of them.

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