

Session 2: Explaining Eternal Purpose Prayer

I. Foundations of Eternal Purpose Prayer

- a. The last session focused on the fact that in our day the end-time church is being summoned to the golden altar and that forerunners must lead the way in this effort. Also in the last session, we illustrated that prayer in accordance with God's eternal purpose is the type of prayer that will ascend to the heavenly golden altar.
- b. In this session, we will expand upon the topic of God's eternal purpose and eternal purpose prayer in order to lay a proper foundation for the church becoming an eternal purpose house of prayer. Let's begin by reviewing key aspects of God's eternal purpose, and then we will briefly explore the spiritual environment from which eternal purpose prayer will naturally emerge. These two areas of review from other Lifeschool classes will help us understand what it means to be an eternal purpose house of prayer. Once we have done this, we will define eternal purpose prayer.
- c. Let's begin by reviewing key aspects of God's eternal purpose.

1. God's eternal purpose establishes the prayer focus of an eternal purpose house of prayer.

- a. Because God's eternal purpose establishes the topics for prayer in an eternal purpose house of prayer, let's review the key subject matter of God's eternal purpose. Our Lifeschool class, *The Eternal Blueprint*, highlights five aspects of God's eternal purpose. we summarize them here.
- b. The first aspect of God's eternal purpose is that Jesus Christ is and forever will be at the center of everything. Before the foundation of the world, the heavenly Father established that His eternal purpose would revolve around the eternal Son, Christ. His eternal plan is and forever will be to bring all of creation under the headship of the eternal Son. God's ultimate intention, predetermined before creation, is for Christ to be at the center, to have preeminence in everything (Col. 1:18), and to bring the entire universe under His headship (Eph. 1:10).
- c. The second aspect of God's eternal purpose is for the Father to have a family of Christ-like sons. In the eternal council of the Godhead before creation, the Father determined His intent to have a family of sons patterned after His beloved Son (Eph. 1:5). In God's eternal plan, this group of Christ-like sons are to become a corporate son, comprised of millions of men and women, who will be conformed into an full representation of Christ. This corporate son made ready during the church age will become eternal representatives of the Godhead as the government of Christ is forever expanded throughout eternity.
- d. The third aspect of God's eternal purpose is for the eternal Son to have an equally yoked bride. In the council of the Godhead in eternity past, it was determined that the Son would have an eternal bride to be at His side as His wife forever. The Son would love the bride just like the Father loves Him and in return the bride would reciprocate love back to Him. She would love the Son just like the Father loves the Son. The plan includes the bride making herself ready for this wonderful love relationship by allowing the indwelling Spirit to live His life through her. Through this process, the Father will provide Jesus with a pure, spotless, holy, and worthy bride who loves Him just like the

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Father does. As the ages unfold, the prepared bride will be eternally at the side of her Bridegroom King and together they will ever expand the kingdom of God throughout the vastness of creation.

- e. The fourth aspect of God's eternal purpose is for the Holy Spirit to have a people in whom to dwell. Before time and creation, God purposed to place the Spirit of His Son into a unique creation. God's eternal purpose is to give the Holy Spirit a temple, house, body that He possesses and brings to full maturity. In the council of eternity past, the Trinity determined to make man a new creation who would have the indwelling life of Christ. This new creation was never meant to be isolated and independent. God's ultimate intention was to have a corporate son and a corporate bride (same people) comprised of Individuals filled with the life of Christ and then joined together as one new man. God's ageless purpose is to have a corporate new creation—living stones filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit fit together to form God's spiritual house. The Lord's ultimate intention is to have a people who've become a corporate dwelling place of the Spirit. God's aim is for this corporate expression of Christ's indwelling life to become a "mature man," which Paul said is "the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). God's eternal purpose is to give the Holy Spirit an inheritance—a people whom He can fill, possess, and bring to maturity.
- f. The fifth aspect of God's eternal purpose is that believers are invited to receive an inheritance of eternal intimacy with the Godhead, eternal authority throughout the ages, and eternal glory. God's ultimate intention is to place believers, as Christ-like sons, into Jesus' eternal inheritance. We are offered the same relationship of communion, fellowship, intimacy, and love that the Father and the Son have eternally shared. In addition, God's ultimate intention is to give His bride eternal authority. Prepared believers are destined for the throne and invited to exercise kingdom authority throughout the endless ages of eternity in partnership with the eternal Christ. The bride/sons are called to expand the kingdom of God into all creation forever, possessing the scepter of authority—to rule and reign with Jesus as His bride in the ages to come. We are invited to sit on the throne of God with Christ and to have judicial responsibility and kingly oversight. Throughout the endless ages of eternity, we are called to bring justice and righteousness into the sphere of authority entrusted to us. Furthermore, God's ultimate intention is to give His prepared bride/sons eternal glory. We are invited to experience the depths of God's glory for all eternity, and are to shine with God's glory like the sun in its strength.
- g. As you can easily recognize from this brief review, believers are invited into an almost unimaginable eternal existence. That is God's purpose for mankind from even before the first man was ever created.
- h. Now that we have briefly reviewed the five dimensions of God's eternal purpose, let's next briefly review a spiritual environment in a person's life and/or a local church from which these five aspects of eternal purpose can be fully realized in a people.

2. The prayer focus of an eternal purpose house of prayer will most naturally emerge from a spiritual environment devoted to God's eternal purpose.

- a. In most churches and for most of us, the five aspects of God's eternal purpose are not emphasized in any significant way. In many instances, rather than Christ being the center and the preeminent one, man is at the center. In many churches very little emphasis is given to preparing a bride for Jesus, raising up mature sons for the Father, or preparing a house filled with the indwelling life of

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Christ. In addition, other than leading people to salvation, little emphasis is given to preparing a people for eternity and to receive the maximum inheritance possible.

- b. Our Lifeschool class, *The Eternal Purpose Church*, is designed to exhort us to build a spiritual environment in our lives, families, and churches for God's eternal purpose to be fulfilled. The premise of that class is that if the five aspects of eternal purpose are to be realized in a people, a radically different spiritual environment must be created in our churches to facilitate that happening. Different topics must be taught, people must be exhorted to pursue God's eternal purpose, and *prayer must be offered into these topics*. Drawing from that class, we list ten dimensions of emphasis that will help facilitate a people living in the fullness of God's eternal purpose. These same dimensions of spiritual environment when they are pursued will help true eternal purpose prayer to emerge.
- c. The first area of spiritual environment and by far the most important is the centrality and the preeminence of the Man Christ Jesus. In God's eternal purpose, Christ is to be supremely exalted and central to all the church does. In many lives and even churches, man is exalted more than Christ. In many churches, issues like healing, prophecy, provision, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are more central to the ministry than the Person of Christ. However, in God's eternal purpose, God is to be exalted. His eternal purpose is for the good pleasure of God much more than it is for the pleasure and comfort of man. Therefore, a spiritual environment must be created in individual lives and in churches in which Christ is exalted as preeminent, supreme, and central to all things, and that a personal relationship with Him of love, obedience, and surrender being the appropriate response to His supremacy.
- d. The second area of spiritual environment that must be created is for the bride to be made ready. The bride who is made ready will become the eternal wife of the Lamb, will be granted great intimacy forever with the eternal Son, and will be used in intimate partnership with Him as He forever expands His government throughout the creation. A major aspect of God's eternal purpose for the church age is to prepare a bride who lives in full union with Christ, made ready as an eternal partner for Him, and has taken on his nature in fullness. Of course, we all know that this is no easy task. The majority of the church is focused on virtually everything but this. However, as in all of these areas of spiritual environment, believers must radically pursue this goal and leaders must do all they can to create an environment in their churches so that this objective is accomplished.
- e. The third area of spiritual environment is one in which believers can grow in intimacy and union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Intimacy with God is an absolutely essential ingredient to the bride being made ready and is an attribute that must be regularly and repeatedly emphasized and focused on in order to accomplish God's eternal purpose.
- f. The fourth area of spiritual environment that must be created is for overcoming sons to be raised up as a corporate son. A significant part of God's eternal purpose is to raise up mature sons who can be trusted with the Father's inheritance so as to be his eternal representatives throughout the eternal ages. In a manner similar to the bride being made ready, sons must arise as overcomers and leaders must create an environment for this to happen.
- g. The fifth area of spiritual environment that must be created is for believers to take on the nature and character of Christ in fullness. Much of the church is devoted to issues other than raising up a people focused on being made into the image of Christ. The mature sons for the Father and the

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prepared bride for the Son will be a people transformed into the image of Christ in fullness so as to be prepared as a representation of Christ in the earth. Many no longer preach Christ or the cross; however, eternal purpose churches must prepare believers to take up their cross to follow Christ. For it is the way of the cross that will prepare a people for God's eternal purpose.

- h. The sixth area of spiritual environment is to create an environment to motivate and empower believers to intercede before the heavenly golden altar. Actually, this topic is the subject of this class. Even so, to summarize, a different type of prayer must be offered by the church desiring to build an eternal purpose house of prayer---prayer that focuses on the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.
- i. The seventh area of spiritual environment is one in which people are equipped to understand the unique and difficult days of the end times, and, in addition, to be prepared to be a voice and to take a stand in prayer to resist the issues related to the rise of an antichristian government and a deteriorating culture. Trouble is coming to the earth in a much more widespread and intense way in the days and years ahead. Believers must be prepared for these days *and* to speak and pray fervently into the myriad of end-time issues.
- j. The eighth area of spiritual environment that must be created is to provide an accurate vision of the judgment seat of Christ, eternal rewards, and eternity. For the most part, people do not adequately understand how important it is to prepare now for the most important appointment of their life, and that is to stand before the Creator of the universe to give an account of how they lived their life. An accurate understanding of these issues will drive believers to make themselves ready and in addition, fuel an urgency to pray fervently into God's eternal purpose.
- k. The ninth area of spiritual environment is for a mighty end-time army to arise. An eternal purpose church must recruit, train, and deploy a mighty army. The current environment in many churches is that the "man of God" performs and the congregation comes and receives. This environment must be shifted so that leaders begin to equip an army and believers make themselves available to be equipped.
- l. The tenth area of spiritual environment that must be created is for believers and leaders to be prepared as faithful witnesses of truth in a culture of great moral compromise. Much of the world is experiencing great chaos and will only encounter it more intensely as we approach the second coming of Christ. Much of the church is attempting to reach people in the deteriorating culture and environment by compromising the message of the true gospel. God's eternal purpose demands that the church hold fast to the message of Jesus Christ as the way, truth, and life and the center of all things.
- m. These different dimensions of spiritual environment as they are preached and digested by individuals will give believers a solid foundation from which to pray into God's eternal purpose. With these foundational truths being highlighted, let' next define eternal purpose prayer.

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II. Eternal Purpose Prayer Defined

1. Eternal purpose prayer is prayer which focuses on the eternal purposes of God.

- a. We offer this definition of eternal purpose prayer: *Eternal purpose prayer is prayer which focuses on the eternal purposes of God, not on the needs or desires of man, and originates from a heavenly perspective.* It is this type of prayer that will ascend to the heavenly golden altar as we discussed in the last session and fill the heavenly incense bowls so as to help fulfill God's purpose for the church age and, thus, transition the earth from the church age to the age to come.
- b. As the church prays in accordance with the various aspects of God's eternal purpose and in agreement with the eternal purpose intercession taking place in heaven, God's eternal purpose will be fulfilled. It is incumbent upon the church to learn to pray this way so as to pray in agreement with the eternal purpose intercession taking place at the heavenly golden altar. As the prayers of the saints arise in such a way as a sweet fragrant incense according to this heavenly formula, great things will be activated.
- c. Therefore, eternal purpose intercession is not to be random; not to be focused on personal needs; not to be focused even on our own nation's national interests; rather, it is to be prayer according to a very precise plan—God's eternal purpose.

2. The approach most of us take in prayer is to pray for ourselves, family, friends and things with which we are involved.

- a. Before continuing, we want to make clear that the scriptures call for many prayer topics other than what we are categorizing as eternal purpose, or another term we are using, golden altar prayer.
- b. This is an important point to recognize as our experience has been that when people begin to learn about eternal purpose prayer, they naturally wonder if they should pray any longer for their own issues. When we first began to learn about praying before the golden altar, people began questioning if they had to change completely the way they were praying. A common question was "can I still pray like I used to pray". My answer was that most definitely we can still pray for personal, family and local church issues. The scriptures tell us to do so; however, I also told them that eternal purpose prayer will add an additional and crucial dimension to our individual and most definitely our corporate prayer lives.
- c. We all desire health, comfort, peace, pleasure, and provision. We all want purpose in our life and to fulfill our God given destiny. In other words, every believer desires physical, material, and spiritual blessings in their life. This is normal and good. God is a good God who desires the best for us. Even when He leads us into hard times, His best for us is in His heart. Remember, the scriptures tell us to pray in the Lord's prayer for God's will for our lives, the meeting of our daily needs, for forgiveness of sin, and to not be led into temptation (Mt. 6:9-13). The Bible also calls on us to pray for healing (James 5:16), deliverance (Mark 9:28-29), help in times of need (Heb. 4:16), and for our own personal needs (Phil. 4:6). In addition to these topics of prayer, we note in the scriptures that Paul prayed for his thorn in the flesh to be removed (2 Cor.12:8), and Jesus prayed asking the Father to remove the cup of the cross from Him if it were possible (Mt. 26:39). God wants good things for us

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and the scriptures tell us to pray for these things. So, to be perfectly clear, we wholeheartedly encourage you to pray as needed for spiritual and natural blessings.

3. Even though we are to pray for personal needs, eternal purpose prayer which will fill the heavenly incense bowls is different.

- a. The prophet Isaiah wrote about the Lord, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55:8-9).
- b. God's ways are not our ways. They are higher and different. Therefore, if we are to partner with the Lord for His eternal purposes to be fulfilled, we must learn to pray in a different way—a higher way. Again, it does not mean that we have to stop praying for our needs, but it does mean that we must add a new and extremely important dimension to our prayer lives and ministries—praying into issues that will fill the incense bowls at the heavenly golden altar.
- c. *Like we stated in the last session, the type of prayer we are speaking about cannot be an add-on to our prayer ministries; instead it must become the central and major aspect of our churches' prayer life. We cannot push it to the corner and rarely engage in this type of prayer. If we are to build our lives and/or our church based on God's eternal purpose, we must make prayer into God's eternal purpose central to who we are and what we do.*

III. Prayer Focused on Eternal Purpose

1. The goal of eternal purpose prayer is to produce a mature corporate son and a worthy bride for the Son.

- a. In the context of God's eternal purpose, the heavenly Father has an eternal inheritance in the saints; likewise, the Son has an inheritance in the saints. The Father's inheritance is a corporate son who has matured fully into the image of Christ—one to which He can entrust His kingdom to throughout the ages. In a similar manner, the Son's inheritance is an equally yoked bride who will be His eternal partner as He expands His kingdom throughout the creation.. Of course, the Father and Son's inheritance in the saints are the same people—ones who have allowed Christ to fill them unto fullness by pursuing Christ with passion and fervency and by embracing the cross life of surrender.
- b. When the corporate son—also called the man-child—is fully prepared, the transition to the age to come will commence and when the bride is fully made ready, Christ will return. These two very connected events are the catalyst for the end of the church age and the transition to the age to come. As we noted in the last session, eternal purpose prayer is an essential component to making ready this mature group of people.
- c. Therefore, the overarching objective of eternal purpose prayer is to help produce what the book of Ephesians refers to as "a mature man" (Eph. 4:13).

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2. To accomplish the goal of a mature corporate man, the kingdom of God must be produced internally within a people in fullness.

a. When Jesus walked the earth, He spoke these words about the kingdom of God,

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, *the kingdom of God is within you*" (Lk. 17:20-21, NKJV).

b. Some translations translate the phrase "within you" as "in your midst". As you read the above verse in various translations, you will note both phrases used. In fact, both are correct translations! To the Pharisees gathered on that day to quiz Jesus, He was saying that with His coming the kingdom was in their midst. He was telling them that because He had come to earth, the kingdom was right before them—in their midst. To his disciples, He was telling them the kingdom was not some external thing; rather, it was within them. In so stating, He is telling us all that the kingdom of God during the church age is primarily an internal work of God produced within man. Certainly Jesus demonstrated the kingdom externally with signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, but the goal was and still is to produce the kingdom within man.

c. Likewise, in the context of God's eternal purpose, the apostle Paul wrote a lot about the goal of an internal kingdom. Remember, he was a man given revelation of God's eternal purpose. Two of the references to this in his writings are listed below,

Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, *which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. *For this purpose also I labor*, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me (Col. 1:25-29).

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20).

d. The theme of Christ in you in fullness permeates Paul's writings. Thus, Christ in believers in fullness is the goal of the church age in God's eternal purpose. It is the hope of becoming the glorious bride and a mature son. It is the primary pursuit for every believer to grow into the mature man that God so desires.

3. Christ in a people in fullness as the goal of God's eternal purpose leads to prayer for this to be accomplished.

a. John wrote these words concerning the birth of the man-child,

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; *and she cried out, being in labor and*

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in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne (Rev. 12:1-5).

- b. The King James Version uses the phrase “travailing in birth” to describe the painful labor in which the woman birthed the man-child. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* illustrates the Greek word used here with the phrase “striving with intense effort and anguish to conform to the mind of Christ”.¹
- c. In the above passage, the woman speaks of the faithful saints throughout history but for our purposes suggests believers who desire to see the man-child—that is, the mature corporate man—birthed at the end of the age. As the passage suggests, those with such a desire must fervently pray even to the point of travail to birth the man-child.
- d. Along similar lines, Paul used the same Greek word translated “labor” or “travail” when he wrote these words to the Galatian church, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). In Paul’s case, his labor included teaching, preaching, and missions, but also involved intense intercession for the church to have Christ formed in them in fullness. He labored in prayer, even travailing at times for the corporate man to come forth in the fullness of God’s design. Thus, we see that prayer is an essential ingredient for the internal kingdom to emerge within a believer and within the corporate church.
- e. From the above discussions, we see that the primary goal of eternal purpose prayer is for the corporate son/bride to come forth with Christ formed within them in fullness.

4. Eternal purpose prayer also includes prayer for the nations.

- a. In addition to prayer for Christ to be formed within a people in fullness, eternal purpose prayer also includes prayer for the nations. Paul wrote, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4). Paul exhorted Timothy to pray for many things including “kings and all who are in authority”. Of course, in so doing, one is praying for the nations.
- b. The apostle John wrote these words,

When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:8-9).
- c. In the context of prayer, the above passage includes the nations saying that Christ purchased men from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Jesus shed His blood that people from every people group, every group with a similar culture, and every nation would come into God’s kingdom. God desires a bride for the Son from every race, nation, and culture. Therefore, praying into God’s

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eternal purpose will lead us to pray for the nation in which we live to come into God's purpose and to pray for those in false religions to come to Christ in fullness.

- d. In addition to praying for the nation in which we live and other nations as God leads, there is a special mandate to pray for Israel in the pressures it will face in the end times. Isaiah records these words about the call to pray for Israel, "On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62:6-7). Therefore, an eternal purpose house of prayer must also pray for the many issues Israel will face in the end times.
- e. With these mandates, an eternal purpose house of prayer is to pray for the nation in which we live, for Israel, for other nations, people groups, and cultural communities as the Lord so leads to come into the fullness of God's eternal purpose.

5. Eternal purpose prayer also requires prayer to restrain and resist the work of the enemy that would hinder the coming forth of God's eternal purpose.

- a. Eternal purpose prayer will also include spiritual warfare to oppose the works of the enemy. Paul wrote these familiar words, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:10-12). Remember that the book of Ephesians is the primary text for the revelation of eternal purpose. In this context, Paul wrote that spiritual warfare is to be an essential component of eternal purpose prayer. Eternal purpose prayer will include spiritual warfare to resist the works of the enemy in the lives of people and throughout the global community.
- b. At the conference during which we received the summons to the golden altar, Terry Bennett made several points about the spiritual warfare element to prayer that ascends to the golden altar. He spoke prophetically the following,

Can I be prophetic for a moment? God would move you (speaking directly to RLC) into the establishment of an altar—a warriors' altar. So that this demonic power over Atlanta and others like it can be directly resisted in their operation and in their purpose by the offering of prayers upon an altar that is in accordance with the will of God for Atlanta...I want to stir up a warring spirit tonight. Take hold of the promises of God for the city. It has not gone too far. It still can be changed. It does not matter whether we win or not but we will meet them in battle none the less. Carry the burden for the city. Is there sufficiency to get a people out in Atlanta for a remnant to awake? Is there enough in the room tonight who realize that our purpose is greater than what we are experiencing but for bringing in the kingdom of God?²

- c. He also spoke a few other words about the call to spiritual warfare. The following are a few quotes specifically directed toward the spiritual warfare element to prayer that will arise to the golden altar,

There is praying needed in this time that is a warriors praying. All I am saying is that God wants to establish men and women, young and old who know how to pray. But know how to pray very specific prayers.

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We must understand the hour we are living in and understand what God wants to do in our nation [and the nations]. We can fight for God's original intent or we can live constantly praying for our own needs. Or we can fight for the will of God in our nation.

Prayer is not everything I want to say about this. Prayer comes down to me asking God for what our needs are. I am talking about a warring for God's purposes in the nation.

What were we made for? What does God want? For such a time as this, we have been brought in. For the kingdom, for the kingdom of God. For enforcing the victory of Christ right down on their heads. Through prayer. Through intercession.

We must recognize we are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against powers of darkness. The church has been called to deal with them through prayer.

We must respond in war. There is a peace on the other side of war. These beings must be subdued.

- d. Just like Esther partnered with the king to defeat Haman and his 10 sons, the church will partner with Christ in spiritual warfare to restrain the antichrist kingdom and to subdue the great harlot. We will do this in prayer, but not just any type of prayer. We must include in our eternal purpose praying an aggressive form of warring prayer. God is looking not for passive resisters, but mighty warriors to enforce Christ's victory on the enemy.
- e. *One important caution. We exhort you to be very careful in participating in spiritual warfare prayer. It can be very dangerous and should be approached only when led by the Holy Spirit and then with great wisdom.*
- f. Now that we have explored what it means to pray into God's eternal purposes, let's now look at the second part of our definition--what it means to pray from a heavenly perspective.

IV. Prayer from a Heavenly Perspective

1. Prayer that will fill the heavenly incense bowls must be prayer from a heavenly perspective.
 - a. Remember that our definition of eternal purpose prayer is: *Eternal purpose prayer is prayer which focuses on the eternal purposes of God, not on the needs or desires of man, and originates from a heavenly perspective.*
 - b. Simply put, praying from a heavenly perspective is praying from the viewpoint of heaven rather than the viewpoint from earth. Over my life, I have flown a lot of miles. One thing I know is that the ground looks a lot different from 37,000 feet than it does from ground level. When you are in the air, you get a totally different perspective. The same is true when we get a heavenly perspective from which we are to pray.
 - c. Like we said a moment ago, God's thoughts and ways are most definitely very different from our ways, and, in the context of praying into the eternal purposes of God, they are also very different. Consider for a moment the Lord's Prayer. When we think of the Lord's Prayer and praying "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven", our thoughts often flow to things like "let healing come", "let salvation come", "let deliverance come", "let provision come", and "let my family get saved".

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- d. Most of us rarely think of God's kingdom coming in the context of the book of Revelation being fulfilled. A passage in Revelation reads, "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever'" (Rev. 11:15). This is the ultimate fulfillment of the prayer for God's kingdom to come and is exciting to read until we think that the angel makes this proclamation following the completion of the seven trumpet judgments—judgments which bring about major destruction in the earth.
- e. Even though none of us want to experience the negative events preceding the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ, the world will not become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ until the earth experiences judgment. *Let me be very clear, we are not saying that we should pray for judgment.* We are making the point that we must be willing to pray for God's eternal purposes to come forth no matter what it takes. We must be willing to pray from the perspective of heaven rather than to pray from the perspective of our own will, desires, comfort, and pleasure.

2. Prayer from a heavenly perspective is prayer for the good pleasure of the Godhead.

- a. Like we stated earlier, eternal purpose prayer is not focused primarily on the blessings and pleasure of our own life. Rather it is prayer directed toward the good pleasure of the Godhead. In the translation of the Bible I use, two places in the first chapter of Ephesians (Eph. 1:5, 9, NAS) employ the phrase "according to the kind intention of His will". A cursory reading of this chapter suggests that God is doing the things required to fulfill His eternal purpose because of His kindness motivated by the pleasure and needs of man; in other words, from the perspective that man is the head and God exists to fulfill the needs of man. However, this phrase is better translated "according to His good pleasure". Whereas God is kind, wants the best for all of us, blesses us immensely in this life, and His eternal purpose is an almost unimaginable blessing to us—*praying from a heavenly perspective is primarily for the good pleasure of the Godhead.*
- b. In eternity past when there was no creation, no heaven, no throne, and no created being of any sort, the heavenly Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit lived in an intimate union characterized by a passionate love relationship. In the heart of the Father was the desire for a large family to share in the intimate love relationship of the Godhead. God desired a family of sons who would be like the Son in nature and character, a bride for His Son, and a temple for the Holy Spirit in which they could all dwell. This group of believers so prepared would become God's eternal representative to the creation.
- c. Thus, eternal purpose is centered in the heart of the Father for His beloved Son and for a family for Himself and the Godhead. Therefore, God's good pleasure is the controlling and ultimate factor which determines His eternal purpose and plan for man, not man's need due to the fall. This distinction changes everything. God's purpose is rooted in the desire of the heavenly Father for a family of likeminded sons who will also become a wife for His Son.
- d. Therefore, if God's eternal purpose is rooted in the good pleasure of the Godhead rather than the needs of man, our eternal purpose intercession must come from the viewpoint of the good pleasure of the Godhead not our personal agendas, plans, thoughts, and needs—in other words, from a heavenly perspective. At first, we might think that all of our prayers are rooted in God's good

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pleasure. However, when we take a step back and think how we pray, we can quickly come to the realization that much of our prayer ministry is not established based on His good pleasure but on the good pleasure of man. These two objectives are not always the same. Eternal purpose intercession must be grounded in fulfilling God's objectives for His good pleasure.

- e. Therefore, if we are to define praying from "a heavenly perspective", we could say it is prayer that requires us to lay down our self-life and our personal desires for comfort and provision so as to pray for the ultimate eternal purposes of God to come forth regardless of what this means for me and my family.

3. Praying from a heavenly perspective also dictates that we pray for the nations from the viewpoint of heaven.

- a. We are to pray for the nations to be godly and open to Christ and His purposes. I know that I have been guilty of what follows, and I believe many in the church have prayed in similar ways. I will use prayer for America as an example. Our prayers for America are normally prayed from an earthly perspective. For several decades America has been progressively becoming more Babylonian and antichristian and is progressively pushing Christianity out of the mainstream of the American culture. Even though most American Christians know this to be true, the prayers of most Americans are primarily focused on sustaining the nation as it is. We would like to see change culturally for sure and we pray for that; however, we also pray against major disruptions to our lifestyle. We pray this way because keeping our nation running smoothly is more advantageous to our nation's economy and our way of life. Quite likely, it will require major disruptions to see our nation return to God's original intent for America. Our motivation is our own wellbeing rather than God's eternal purpose to be fulfilled.
- b. We pray for mercy upon us when, in fact, God's purposes might be for judgment. America is a nation which aborts over a million babies a year. We are a nation which has sanctioned same sex marriage and we honor extreme sexual perversion. We are doing these things even after our forefathers made a covenant dedicating our nation to God.
- c. Even though we may be a nation needing judgment in order to return to God, we pray for mercy because we don't want to live in a land in which our lifestyles are being significantly disrupted. We certainly need wisdom in determining how to pray for these types of things. In fact, we must have the mind of Christ to pray effectively with God's eternal purposes in mind. However, at the same time we must realize that to arrive at the ultimate eternal purpose of God for America and those living in it, there quite possibly will require a time of deep humbling of our nation, our government, and those who influence our culture.
- d. This leads me to the primary point for this section. Eternal purpose prayers for the nations *must* be prayed from a heavenly perspective, not an earthly one. In the crucial days in which we live—times in which we were born for such a time as this—we must take our prayer for the nations to heavenly ground. We must pray for God's eternal purpose to be fulfilled in the lives of individuals and nations to the maximum degree. Because of the fall, only a remnant will come into His ultimate purpose; however, we must pray with the attitude of whatever it takes. We must pray for the nations to be open to the true gospel and many things like this. No longer can we pray to sustain our Babylonian

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cultures just because we want comfort and prosperity in our godless lands. We must come into agreement with heaven and pray according to God's thought and plan.

- e. Now that we have defined eternal purpose prayer, let's move on to the next session in which we will discuss the first of four major themes for eternal purpose prayer.

¹ Strongs NT 5605, *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, PC Study Bible formatted Electronic Database. Copyright © 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved

² Prophetic word given by Terry Bennett to Restoration Life Church, July 17, 2015 while ministering at the church.