

# Session 9: Growing in Effectiveness and Authority

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## I. More than Just Words

1. In this session, our focus will be on the life of the believer who will minister before the golden altar.

- a. Much of the class to this point has been focused on the words we pray. Our emphasis has been on the type of prayer that will ascend to the heavenly golden altar and fulfill God's eternal purpose. We have devoted the majority of our attention to appropriate prayer themes for an eternal purpose house of prayer and how to be led by the Holy Spirit in order to pray effectively into these four prayer themes.
- b. Even though the prayer themes and proper techniques are very important, there is more to effective eternal purpose prayer than just offering the correct words in prayer. In addition to the words we pray, the life of those who pray is very important. As we come into greater union with Christ and in greater agreement with His ministry at the heavenly golden altar, our effectiveness and authority in an eternal purpose house of prayer is greatly enhanced. Therefore, in this session, we will shift our focus from praying the appropriate words to the life of the believer who will be praying in an eternal purpose house of prayer.

2. As we begin, let's once again remind ourselves of our foundational scripture passage for eternal purpose prayer.

- a. The apostle John wrote these words that are now so familiar to us,

When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake (Rev. 8:1-5).

- b. Note several key components of this passage. We see that "much incense" was given to the angel; that the incense was *mixed* with "the prayers of the saints"; that this took place "before the throne"; and that "the smoke of the incense" went up to God. For the purpose of our study, in a New Testament house of prayer, believers are to be all of these things. We are the temple; we are the priests who minister at a spiritual golden altar; we are the altar; we are the incense itself; we are the fire that ignites the incense; and we are the smoke that arises as a sweet aroma to God.
- c. The objective of this session is to show the importance of the life of the believer in order to become these things so as to offer effective and authoritative prayers in an eternal purpose house of prayer.

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## II. Believers as the Altar of Incense

### 1. We will first explore the idea of the believer as the altar of incense ministering in a spiritual temple.

- a. You will remember from Session 1 that the Old Testament priests ministered at the altar of incense twice a day at the hours of prayer. In these times, the priests would take fiery coals from the altar of sacrifice into the holy place and mix the fire with the incense, incense that was totally dedicated as an offering unto God. Once getting the fire from the altar of sacrifice but before entering the holy place where the altar of incense stood, the priests would stop at the brazen laver to cleanse themselves through repentance and recommitment. They would then enter the holy place to minister at the lampstand, table of showbread, and finally at the altar of incense.
- b. As they stood before the golden altar of incense, they would not only ignite the incense with the fire from the altar of sacrifice, they would also say specifically designated prayers and then recite certain preassigned scriptures. The entire ministry of the priests at the tabernacle was a holy service unto the Lord. Everything was set apart unto God. Even the different vessels that were used in the tabernacle service had to be cleansed and dedicated fully unto the Lord and His purposes.
- c. Also as a reminder, the New Testament altar of incense was no longer in the Holy Place but in the Holy of Holies.
- d. As we apply the above pattern to our lives, on this side of the cross believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit and believers are the altar of incense. Noted in several New Testament passages, Peter describes believers as the house (tabernacle or temple) of God,

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5).

### 2. God confirmed the truth at our home church that we must become an altar of incense to effectively offer prayers that ascend to the heavenly golden altar.

- a. In 2019, the Lord spoke to me that one significant aspect of our effectiveness as an eternal purpose house of prayer was that we had to *become* an altar of incense, not just offer the correct words in our prayers. In other words, our words alone would not be enough for our prayers to contribute to the incense bowls being filled and God's eternal purpose being accomplished. The implication of this word to me was that our lives must become the incense that we offer and our lives set apart for God must become the fire that we bring to mix with the incense. These things are necessary in order for our words to have a significant impact.
- b. When God spoke this word, He did so in relation to both our worship and prayer ministries. As it relates to worship, the Lord was saying that it is not sufficient to sing songs of praise and adoration if our hearts are not connected to Him as worshipers. Being a worshiper first and foremost is the only way to sing or speak words of worship, that is, if we want our worship to ascend as incense before the throne. As it relates to prayer, a similar idea applies; that is, it is not enough to say the right

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words as we offer our prayers. We can memorize words that state the correct objectives for God's eternal purpose to be fulfilled; however, for us to be effective we must become priests whose lives arise as sweet incense unto the Lord. Therefore, there is a call for those who desire to be effective in a house of prayer to become priests whose life is a fragrant aroma unto the Lord.

- c. With that directive, let's next explore the priesthood who will effectively minister at a spiritual golden altar.

## III. A New Priesthood

### 1. New Testament believers are called as priests according to the order of Melchizedek.

- a. As the passage from 1 Peter that we mentioned earlier conveys, we are the priests who minister in this spiritual house. In fact, as Peter states a few verses later, we are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) who minister as priests with a kingly effectiveness and authority at the spiritual altar of incense located within our heart.
- b. However, the New Testament priesthood is not of the old order. With the resurrection of Christ, a new order of priesthood came into being. As the book of Hebrews states, Christ is now the high priest of the New Testament priesthood, "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:9-10).
- c. As Peter recorded, believers are part of this new priesthood, that is, of the order of Melchizedek. No longer is the priesthood of the Levitical order. A new order of priests has emerged—the order of Melchizedek—with Christ as the high priest. New Testament believers are to be joined together to become a spiritual house of living stones in which they minister as a holy priesthood in a spiritual house (temple) at a spiritual golden altar according to the order of Melchizedek.

### 2. As priests and kings, we also are called to minister in the authority of Christ.

- a. Under the law, Levitical priests could not be kings, and kings could not be priests. The two orders were to be totally separate. However, Melchizedek was not only a priest but also the king of Salem, later to become Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18). In fact, Melchizedek in Hebrew is the word "malki-zedeq" which means righteous king. The Zadok priesthood which we will discuss in a moment comes from the latter of these words meaning righteous. Therefore, when Christ became high priest of the order of Melchizedek, this requirement that priests could not be kings was changed. Christ who is King of kings is also the high priest of this new order of priests. As such, New Testament believers are now a *royal priesthood* (1 Peter 2:9), that is, kings and priests. The book of Revelation confirms this idea stating, "and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6, NKJV).
- b. Therefore, as priests we minister unto God and as kings, we exercise the authority of God as His royal priesthood. We get a glimpse of this concept in Jesus' message to Thyatira when He said, "He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER

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THE NATIONS” (Rev. 2:26). Jesus makes the statement that as believers overcome Jezebel and her works, He will grant authority over the nations. Whereas this promise is primarily for the age to come and beyond, there is a measure of authority which is granted to believers in the church age.

- c. Thus far, we have established that believers are a royal priesthood; that believers are a temple of the Holy Spirit; and that believers are the altar of incense itself. Let’s next delve into the incense that is offered from a spiritual altar of incense.

## IV. Much Incense Was Given

1. For effective prayer, our lives must become a sweet aroma that ascends to the throne as incense.

- a. Revelation 8:3 states that *much incense* was given to the angel before the heavenly golden altar to be mixed with the prayers of the saints. For our purposes, the incense that must ascend so as to be mixed with the fire that ignites the incense and with our prayers is our life set apart for God.
- b. In the tabernacle of Moses, the incense that ascended unto God was comprised of ingredients that produced a fragrant aroma. Notice what is written about burning incense on the altar of incense in the Book of Exodus, “Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it” (Ex. 30:7). The incense offered by Old Testament priests from the altar of incense produced a fragrant aroma to the Lord.
- c. Applying the idea of a fragrant incense to the New Testament, the apostle Paul wrote these words,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma (Eph. 5:1-2).

And,

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing (2 Cor. 2:14-15).

- d. Summarizing, by giving Himself on the cross, Jesus became an offering unto God, and His life became a fragrant aroma unto the Father. Moreover, as Christ lives in us and increasingly through us, we become vessels of Christ’s life from which sweet incense arises unto the Lord.
- e. We see this principle played out in two Old Testament books as well. This session concludes with an illustration from the book of Esther about her authoritative intercession that flowed from her surrendered life. But for now, notice that before she interceded for her people against Haman and his evil plot, she had to undergo myrrh baths and cosmetic treatments. As a type and shadow of her embracing the cross, these treatments produced in her a sweet fragrance to the king that pleased him.
- f. Likewise, in the Song of Songs, we see a similar idea expressed. As an allegory of the individual believer’s journey to bridal maturity, the Shulamite maiden after initially refusing to embrace the cross finally did so. As the scriptures record, it was only after she said “yes” to go to the mountain of myrrh that it is said of her that she emanated a fragrant aroma to the king, “How beautiful is your

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love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of spices!” (Song 4:10).

- g. Therefore, our lives are the sweet aroma that arises from a life which has embraced the cross; but also, the life of the believer is the incense that is mixed with our prayers so as to produce results in a house of prayer. It is not our life apart from Christ that is the sweet aroma unto the Father. It is the measure of Christ’s life in us that becomes incense unto the Lord. Therefore, words alone are not enough. Our words are to come from a priesthood who has allowed Christ to come forth within so as to manifest Christ through us. This is an essential ingredient to effective intercession before the heavenly golden altar.
- h. Therefore, there is a call for those who desire to be effective in a house of prayer to become priests whose life is a fragrant aroma unto the Lord. Let’s look a little deeper as to how our lives can become a sweet incense unto the Lord by highlighting four foundational pursuits of the believer who desires to become an incense unto the Lord.

## 2. First, we must completely surrender unto the Lordship of Christ.

- a. To get an idea of how the priest must be completely surrendered to God, let’s look at the initial setting apart of the Old Testament priesthood. When Old Testament priests were ordained into their new role, they went through a seven-day process of being set apart for their assignment. You can read about it in Leviticus 8:22-36. A ram of ordination was slaughtered (Lev. 8:22-23) and the blood of the ram was then applied to the candidate’s right ear, thumb, and big toe (Lev. 8:23).
- b. For us as New Testament priests, the blood signifies the sanctifying work of Christ applied to the life of the priest by His grace. The reason for applying the blood to the ear was to require that the priest hear and obey all that God had said in the past or speaks as we go through life. To be effective in ministry before the golden altar, there is an expectation that the believer commit to obey the scriptures and the Spirit to spirit communication from God.
- c. The application of the blood to the thumb suggests full obedience as it relates to ministry and service unto the Lord (the work of our hands), and the blood on the toe represents obedience in the entirety of the walk of the priest. Because the number seven suggests completion, the seven days of ordination symbolizes the complete commitment to sanctification of the priesthood unto God and His purposes. In other words, the one called into the priesthood was to be totally set apart unto God in heart, soul, actions, and ministry—a pure vessel useful to the Master, fulfilling Paul’s message to Timothy,

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a [temple] vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:21-22).

- d. We all know that no one in this life is completely set apart for the Lord and His purpose. No matter how long we have been walking with the Lord, the Holy Spirit is always leading us onward. Therefore, we are not at all speaking of perfection; rather, we are referring to the priest making the initial commitment to being set apart for God and His purposes and then being forever on a journey of sanctification. Just like the Old Testament priest had to journey from the outer court to the altar

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of incense, New Testament priests must be on a journey to the holy of holies through progressive sanctification.

## 3. Second, as a New Testament priest, we are to be on a journey toward close union with Christ.

- a. As we are aware, Christ as high priest of the Melchizedek priesthood ministers at the heavenly golden altar which is no longer located in the holy place, but in the holy of holies (Heb. 9:3-4). There, He forever lives to make intercession for God's people according to God's eternal purpose (Heb. 7:25).
- b. In Old Testament days, priests could not enter the holy of holies; only the high priest could do so. The implication for us as a house of prayer is that because the golden altar is now in the holy of holies only Christ can stand at the heavenly golden altar to intercede according to God's eternal purpose. There is no doubt that we are invited to join Christ there partnering with Him in intercession. But to do so, we must be in Christ and, more specifically, growing in union with Him.
- c. We see God's goal of drawing believers close to Christ in full union in this familiar passage from the book of Ephesians, "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31-32). God's desire is for the church—His bride—to be one in full union with Him.
- d. We define union with Christ as: 1) one who draws close to the Man Christ through an intimate love relationship and 2) one who progressively takes on the character and nature of Christ being progressively conformed into His image.
- e. A great illustration of how both traits are necessary to draw close to Christ is seen in the sons of Zadok referenced in Ezekiel 44. Ezekiel 44 depicts the priesthood in the future kingdom age and describes two priesthoods present in that day. The first is the priesthood who ministers in the outer court, that is, priests not in close union with God, and the second is the intimate Zadok priesthood who ministers in the holy of holies. The Zadok priesthood illustrates the type of priests who draw close to God.
- f. To gain a full understanding of this, it would be helpful for you to read all of Ezekiel 44; however, for the purpose of space, let's list a small portion of the chapter that highlights those who can minister in the holy of holies. We will look first at an unrighteous priesthood who will not be allowed to minister to the Lord,

*"But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares the Lord God, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear*

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their shame and their abominations which they have committed. Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service and of all that shall be done in it" (Ezek. 44:10-14).

- g. Referring to the priesthood during the kingdom age, the above passage illustrates how priests who did not pursue a lifestyle of intimate union and righteousness with God will be assigned to the outer court. They will not be allowed to minister in the holy of holies—the place where the heavenly golden altar is now located.

- h. In contrast, the Zadok priesthood is a righteous priesthood who draws near to the Lord,

"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, *shall come near to Me to minister to Me*; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord God. "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge" (Ezek. 44:15-16).

- i. The implication is that it is those who pursue a close relationship with Christ and a lifestyle of righteousness will be those priests who minister before the Lord in the holy of holies both in this age and in the ages to come.

### 4. Third, the idea of a priesthood growing in union with Christ leads to the expectation of the believer being progressively conformed into the image of Christ.

- a. Speaking again about the Zadok priesthood, the name Zadok means "righteous."<sup>i</sup> This is more than the imputed righteousness through the finished work of the cross. This is also experiential righteousness established internally by the indwelling life of Christ and worked out in the soul and body. It is a righteousness that flows from the inside out, exemplified by a lifestyle of sanctification and obedience.

- b. Continuing with the next verse in the passage we just looked at from Ezekiel, he records this about the sons of Zadok,

It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house (Ezek. 44:17).

- c. In type and shadow, wool refers to the works of the flesh and linen to the Spirit. With the above scripture in mind, we know that the altar of incense is now in the holy of holies. Therefore, no flesh can enter the holy of holies—only Christ and those in Him. As the above passage conveys, those who would minister to the Lord in the holy of holies and pray at the golden altar must be righteous. But not just imputed righteousness; in addition, righteousness that comes as one who is being progressively conformed into the image of Christ. Again, the Lord is not looking for perfection, but rather one on the ongoing pursuit of righteousness.

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5. Fourth, now that we have established the need for priests being progressively conformed into the image of Christ, let's look next at the call to an intimate love relationship with Christ.
  - a. As we have mentioned numerous times, the book of Hebrews relays the truth that the golden altar is now in the holy of holies. In Old Testament days only the high priest could enter the holy of holies. The implication is that only Christ can stand at the golden altar to intercede according to God's eternal purpose. We can join Him there and are strongly exhorted to do so as the scriptures clearly indicate. But to do so, we must first be in Christ through justification. Moreover, we must also be pursuing intimacy with Christ through a growing relationship with Him.
  - b. We will never fully arrive at the place of being fully intimate with Christ for the Holy Spirit will always be working on us in some fashion. Even so, our goal must be to grow in an intimate relationship with Him. As we continue on this journey toward intimacy and sanctification, we can come before the golden altar to intercede for God's eternal purpose and, thereby, do our part to fill the incense bowls that will ultimately transition the earth from the church age to the kingdom age.
  - c. Now that we have taken a brief look at the need and the process for becoming incense, let's next look at mixing the incense with fire.

### V. Mixed with Fire

1. For the sweet aroma of the incense to arise to heaven, the incense was mixed with fire taken from the altar of sacrifice.
  - a. Revelation 8:4 reads, "And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand." In the days in which the Old Testament priests ministered at the golden altar, they mixed the incense with the fiery coals which they had taken in a firepan from the altar of sacrifice into the holy place and mixed it with the specifically prepared incense. The ignited incense created a sweet smelling smoke—a pleasing aroma—that arose unto the heavenly throne.
  - b. This picture from the Old Testament ministry at the golden altar highlights another important ingredient to effective eternal purpose prayer, that is, the fire from the altar of sacrifice. As we said, the fire that ignites the incense came from the altar of sacrifice where the animals were sacrificed. Even though we have emphasized aspects of this point in previous sections, we summarize it here. Romans 12:1 reads, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."
  - c. As the above passage reminds us, we are the New Testament sacrifice offered at the altar of sacrifice and the fire that must be mixed with the incense comes from a life totally surrendered to Christ and His purposes. We have spoken much about aspects of surrender in previous sections so we will not repeat it here other than to say that out of a surrendered life must come the fire that will ignite the incense so that the sweet smelling smoke arises to the throne and moves heaven to action.



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- d. The fire about which we are speaking is the heart attitudes of the believer that flow from a surrendered life unto the Lord. Let's briefly mention four important attitudes that will connect a fiery heart with the proper words and a surrendered life so as to become effective in our eternal purpose prayers.
2. First, effective prayer comes from a believer whose heart burns with desire for Christ to have a prepared bride.
    - a. In our years of praying into God's eternal purpose, we have experienced many people (including ourselves) who are praying the correct words without being connected at a heart level with the desire for Christ's to have a bride made ready as His inheritance. The Lord spoke this phrase to me a while ago. I heard that *as a believer, my desire is to be prepared as His bride, but as a forerunner my desire is for Christ to have His bride in fullness as His inheritance*. For forerunners, both aspects are important. We must ourselves have a fiery passion to be made ready as a bride for Christ, but also we must have great desire to see Christ have a bride prepared as His eternal inheritance.
    - b. We will grow in effectiveness and authority in our eternal purpose prayers as we develop a passionate heart for Christ to have His bride.
  3. Second, effective prayer comes from a believer who burns with a Holy Spirit inspired *burden* for the state of the church and the world.
    - a. A heart with fiery desire for Christ to have His worthy bride naturally leads to a burden for the current state of the global church and the conditions in the world. I think we would agree that the world is rapidly being prepared for the end times and Christ's second coming. Likewise, we would agree that the global church is not ready for what appears to be right on the horizon, and we know that the church is not being prepared as a bride for Christ in any significant numbers. This distinction between what God has shown us and what the reality is in the church burdens us.
    - b. The one comment I have heard from those in the Forerunner School and others as well is that the church is not being prepared for either the end times or for eternity. The bride is not ready for what is coming. As people express this attitude in a variety of ways, I have sensed the deep burden in their heart for people they know and love, for pastors to wake up to the urgency of the times in which we live, and for the church in general to get ready.
    - c. A burden for the condition of the church and the world will increase our effectiveness and authority in praying into God's eternal purpose.
  4. Third, effective prayer comes from a believer who has faith that his or her prayers will help fill the bowls of incense before the heavenly golden altar.
    - a. Hebrews 11:6 reads, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." We are all well aware of the importance of faith in every aspect of the Christian life; most definitely, this includes our prayer life. It is of utmost importance that we believe God hears our prayers and will answer according to His will.

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- b. Believing in such a way is difficult at times for us all, but it most definitely a challenge when we are praying for issues that are intended to impact the church and the world on a global level. It is one thing to pray in faith that we will have a good day and a totally different issue to believe when we pray for the global church to have Christ formed in them. Even so, it is very important that we develop a heart of faith that we are called to pray so as to fill the golden bowls of incense and because we are called in such a manner, our prayers are accomplishing much.
- c. Therefore, faith that our prayers are accomplishing much even though we might not see results will increase our effectiveness and authority in praying into God's eternal purposes.

### 5. Fourth, effective prayer comes from a believer who has knowledge of the topics and issues affecting God's eternal purpose.

- a. Knowledge of God's eternal purpose and knowledge of the work of the enemy in the world are also very important to the ability to pray appropriately with a fiery intensity. When our church gathers for group prayer, I have noticed a big difference between our prayer intensity when we pray for an issue close to our church. For example, when we are praying for an individual need in the church or church wide issue that affects our local body, the prayer intensity is great. Yet, when we are praying into a topic related to God's eternal purpose, often the intensity is not the same. I am noticing this changing as we have been studying eternal purpose and this class of an eternal purpose house of prayer.
- b. Because of our experience, I have observed the importance of knowledge of the subject matter and of current events that are affecting the fulfillment of God's purposes. Therefore, knowledge of the topics involved increase our effectiveness and authority in praying into God's eternal purposes.
- c. Incorporating these four principles into our heart will most definitely increase the fire we bring into the prayer room and help us grow in effectiveness and authority in our eternal purpose prayer. Now that we have covered the topics, let's close the session with a brief illustration from the book of Esther of how all this works.

## VI. Esther as an Illustration

1. Queen Esther was granted great authority to defeat the evil Haman and to save her people from destruction.
  - a. You are familiar with the story of Esther. In an hour of great crisis, she was used by God to defeat the enemy and to bring salvation to her people. As a crisis arose in the land, Esther was made aware of the plot against her people and arose in the hour of crisis to intercede in the dire situation the Jews faced. Her action completely turned the tables on the enemy. The gallows that were planned for Mordecai (a leader of the Jews) were used to hang Haman and his ten sons.
  - b. Esther was used in great authority. In fact, when she began to take action, she did not know if she would live or die. She said, "If I perish, I perish" (Est. 4:16). With that attitude she came boldly into the king's inner court asking the king to act on her behalf.

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- c. Thankfully, he extended to her the golden scepter—a picture of his authority being granted to her. Further, even before she made her request, the king seeing her burdened heart said to her “Even to half of the kingdom it will be given to you” (Est. 5:3). Esther was granted great authority by the king as she interceded in the eminent destruction of her people.

## 2. Esther’s authority in the crisis was the result of her transformed life and relationship with the king.

- a. Again, you are aware of the story. King Ahasuerus was looking for a queen to replace the insubordinate Vashti. He sent out overseers to gather many young virgins to the king’s palace looking for that special one to be his queen. To be sure, as we look at this story, we must take it out of the physical realm and look at it from a spiritual standpoint.
- b. Some of the young ladies eagerly desired to escape poverty so as to live in the king’s palace. Some had their hearts set on marrying another and fought the invitation. But Esther eagerly said “yes” to the king’s invitation and all that it represented. Once in the king’s harem, she wholeheartedly submitted to the preparation fully obeying the eunuchs.
- c. The preparation process for each of the young ladies was six months of oil of myrrh treatments and six months of spices and cosmetics. Esther willingly submitted to them. When it was her turn to go into the king, she only did what the eunuchs advised. In other words, she cooperated fully with the preparation process. As a result, she pleased the king and was selected to be his queen.
- d. You can see the amazing picture that Esther presents to us. The myrrh treatments cleansed her from the dirt and grim of her prior life and transformed her inwardly. Then as the spices and cosmetics suggest, she carried with her a fragrant aroma into the king’s quarters.
- e. Esther was granted the authority she received because of her submission to the king’s regimen of preparation and the fact that, as a result of that, her life was beautiful inwardly and outwardly and carried with her a fragrant aroma into the king’s inner court.

## 3. The story of Esther illustrates how we grow in authority and effectiveness to partner in eternal purpose intercession.

- a. The myrrh treatments are a picture of the Holy Spirit taking the betrothed bride to the cross to crucify her self-life so that only Christ remains. As a result, the bride becomes a fragrant aroma of Christ to God.
- b. As a result, the bride is willingly and eagerly accepted in the King’s inner court and granted authority to partner with Him (up to half His kingdom) for God’s purposes to be fulfilled.
- c. With Haman and his ten sons a type of the antichrist and his kingdom, the prepared bride is granted the authority to engage in the restraint of the antichrist forces now emerging in new ways in the earth.
- d. As we conclude, the primary point for this session is that God will use a people who are allowing Him to transform them and draw them into full union with Him in intimacy and image. It is those

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who eagerly participate in the preparation process that become an altar of incense, carry the fire of God, and are used in great measure in an eternal purpose house of prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> The Online Bible Thayer's Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs' Hebrew Lexicon (Ontario, Canada: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1993), s.v. "tsadowq," referenced from OneTouch OB-2 (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, 2016).