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God, and helping others
do the same!**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet, and for studying the Word in order to please your Father.

If something in this booklet offends you, there are two options. One is to contact me (through the web site is easiest), let me know your concerns, and we can talk. That is, if you are truly seeking answers. The second option, if you are just whining because of my conclusions and you don't really want to discuss what the Bible says, is to learn to live with it. I will continue to attempt to show people that the yoke of Jesus (the whole Word of God) is easy and light. For all you Torah tyrants out there, look out. We are armed with the Word of our Father and dangerous, and we aren't going to take it anymore.

**From The Word of God
Whole Bible Christian Community**

Christian Faith & Practice Through Blessing & Prayer

“The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

Highlights of What's Inside

- What is the meaning of 'bless' and 'curse'?
- Why do good things happen to bad people?
- How can we bless each other?
- What is prayer?
- Are there biblical instructions for posture?
- How many times a day should I pray?

bor in prayer unceasingly remembering others (*mneia*) and making requests (*deomai*) with holy hands but without dissension or wrath. The cry of the righteous (*deesis*) is a prayer full of petitions or entreaties (*deesis*) that is in tune with the prayers (*deesis*) and supplications (*hiketeria*) of Jesus our Messiah.

Shalom

Bruce Scott Bertram

Doing everything we

Christian Faith and Practice Through...Blessing

“The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26)

This is another article, for those of us who are new to lifestyle of submission to the entire Word of God, on how to apply some of the teachings of the Word to everyday life. Though not intended as a complete guide on everything the Word has to say, these articles give you a pretty good start in the right direction. Blessing should be a fun subject, and would that blessing God and each other was a more common occurrence, both in prayer and in person.

The word bless (and related words blessing, blesses, blessed) is mentioned in the first five books of the Bible alone around 160 times. Without a doubt God desires to bless us and for us to bless each other. The Hebrew word is *barach* (bah-rock “bless”) or *barachah* (bah-rock-ah “blessed or blessing”). The “ch” is made in your throat and is called a guttural, for obvious reasons. Blessing isn’t a command, compared to what we normally think of as a command, but there are a few instructions for some occasions. For instance, in Deuteronomy 8:10 the Father tells us to bless Him after we eat.

half of others. In I Peter 3:12 *deesis* is translated as prayer, which cross references to Psalm 34:15 where it is equated to the cry of the righteous. In Philippians 4:6 it is translated as supplication; in I Timothy 2:1 as entreaties; and in Ephesians 6:18 it is translated as ‘petition’ twice (all three main words are mentioned together here).

With all prayer (4335) and petition (1162) pray (4336) at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition (1162) for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:18,19 NASB parenthesis added)

Some other words not used very often in the Apostolic Writings (NT) are *aitema* (155) translated request or demand in Philippians 4:6; *hiketeria* (2428) as supplications in Hebrews 5:5 where the prayers (1162) and supplications (2428) of Yahshua are mentioned; *euche* (2171) pray or vow which is from *euchomai* (2172) mentioned above and used in James 5:15; and *enteuxis* (1783) meaning petition or supplication in I Timothy 2:1 and 4:5.

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties (1162) and prayers (4335), petitions (1783) and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, I Timothy 2:1 NASB

Summary

So we can see that a lot of prayer is intervention on behalf of others (*palal*), consisting of supplications (*deesis*) or entreaties (*athar*). We also beseech God (*na*) to show us favor or grace (*techinnah*), and confess to Him (*yadah*) our unworthiness for such treatment. Our prayers (*proseuche*) can be made like or with alms (*eleemosune*), singing of hymns, or thanksgiving (*eucharisteo*). We la-

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. NASB95

Notice that we bless the Father, not the food. I don't know how it got changed around to where people bless the food, but maybe it's from a misunderstanding of what Jesus did before feeding the 5,000. It is recorded that He said a blessing (for instance in Matthew 14:19), but He was blessing the Father. I suppose it really doesn't matter if you bless Him before you eat in addition to after you eat, because we should bless Him all the time anyway. It's just that we tend to forget to bless Him after we have what we want. There is a subtle difference between blessing Him when we are hungry and blessing Him after our stomach is full. Sort of like we'll say anything to get what we want but totally forget Him after we got what we want. Do you understand?

Another place where blessing instructions are found is in the reference used at the head of this article, Numbers 6:24-27. This has been called the **Aaronic or Priestly Blessing** (or Benediction), and it was used to bless the people of Isra'el. Even though it was given to Aaron and his sons (the priests), I believe that we can use it to bless each other with because not only are we supposed to be kings and priests (I Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6, 5:10), but we are also descended from Isra'el, if for no other reason than by faith through the promise given to Abraham. Tim Hegg has an excellent article on this blessing on his website (www.torahresource.com), under the Articles in English heading on the left.

Our Father says that we will receive blessings if we

beseech as in Genesis 32:11 but is also translated many other ways. *Tsela* (6739) means pray as in Ezra 6:10; 'to confess' is from *yadah* (3034) used in places like Ezra 10:1.

In the **Apostolic Writings (NT)** the Greek has about 14 words for the various forms of pray used about 151 times in different ways. The general term 'to pray' (4336, *proseuchom*) is variously represented as make prayers or offer prayers. It is from *pros* (4314) meaning toward and *euchomai* (2172, prayer or wish). *Euchomai*, by itself, is used in places such as 2 Corinthians 13:7 and 9, and is used the most (87 times of the 151).

Other passages where this word is used are I Corinthians 14:10-15 where it is mentioned with tongues and singing; I Thessalonians 5:17 where it is suggested we pray without ceasing; and I Timothy 2:8 where we are to pray with holy hands and without wrath or dissension. *Proseuche* (4335), mostly translated prayer, seems to be used more of the prayer itself such as in Mark 9:29 and Matthew 21:22 or more specifically in Acts 10:4,31 where it is mentioned together with alms or charity (*eleemosune* 1654). In Acts 16:25 *proseuche* is listed together with singing hymns to God; in Romans 1:10 with making requests (1189a *deomai*); in Ephesians 1:16 with giving thanks (2168 *eucharisteo*) and remembering others (3417 *mneia*); and in Colossians 4:12 with the idea of laboring.

A supplication or entreaty (*deesis* 1162) is from the word *deomai* (1189a) to beseech or beg. This word is used by itself in Luke 2:37; Luke 5:33; Acts 8:22, 24; Romans 10:1; 2; and in context with 'helping' in 2 Corinthians 1:11, while in 2 Corinthians 9:14 entreaty is made on be-

look down? I guess that in the Church's desire to do everything backwards from the Jews they got a little over zealous, because Jews look up with their hands spread out when they pray.

I also couldn't find a **'prayer language'** anywhere. The usual text cited for some sort of supposed prayer language is in our Romans 8:25-27 reference above. But if you look closely (a practice that would avoid a great deal of false teaching), the Spirit intercedes with 'groanings too deep for words.' I don't know, what do you think? Does 'too deep for words' mean that there is a language, or there is no language? You be the judge.

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus the Messiah, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20,21 NASB95)

Words For Extended Study

In the **Tanach (OT)** all forms of the word pray (prays, prayed, prayer, prayers) appear about 329 times, and Hebrew has eight or nine words to describe various types of prayer. Intervene or interpose (6419 *palal*) has the highest usage and is first used in Genesis 20:7. Prayer (8605 *tephillah* from 6419) is used about 70 times. Supplication or entreaty (6279 *athar*) is first used in Genesis 25:2. A related word *techinnah* (8467, or 8469 *tachanun*) is a request for a favor or supplication from the word *channan* (2603a) to show favor or be gracious (Psalm 6:9, 55:1, 86:6). A short word, *na* (4994) is sometimes translated

obey His Word (Deuteronomy 28:1-15), and curses if we do not (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Notice that the list of curses is longer than the blessings. Notice also that I am using the corporate "we" here, including us with Isra'el, because we are descendants (or offspring) of Isra'el through adoption in the Messiah, and there is to be only one Law for all God's people (Isra'el). Besides, Torah is universal in nature; it is good instruction for holy living that apply everywhere.

Blessings are associated with life in several places, such as Deuteronomy 30:19,20.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." NASB

To be blessed does not always mean that we receive an object, like a gift or a prize. It is more like we experience an increase and fullness of life and fruit. This is directly connected to the Presence of God. The Hebrew word *kalal* (kah-lahl) is translated into English as 'curse,' but the meaning is 'withdraw.' So to **be blessed is to have the presence of God** (and the life or increase that comes with It), while **to be cursed is to have Him withdraw** (a terrible thought), which eventually causes decay and death. When we fill ourselves with His Words by hearing and obeying, He "draws near" and we experience the fullness of His presence, which is Life.

When we disobey, He “withdraws” and we experience decay and death. Jesus says in John 10:10.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. NASB95

Fortunately, death is not an instantaneous process, and we are given plenty of time to repent in most cases. He seems reluctant to withdraw (sort of like the picture of the Shekinah (glory) leaving the Temple starting at about Ezekiel 9) and returns instantly if we repent. But if we don’t repent the process continues.

“From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ (Malachi 3:7 NASB)

We return to Him by returning to His statutes (the Law), and when we obey them we receive the blessing of the Father returning to us. This is the meaning James tries to get across:

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:8 NASB)

When the Father blesses us He is granting His presence wherein there is abundant life and fruitfulness.

When we bless God, we are actually acknowledging to Him and to any others listening that His Word has not returned void and that It has accomplished (or will accomplish) that which He sent It to do, that is, bear fruit. In this sense Jesus is a blessing from God, His Abundant Life. When we bless each other we are in essence asking

with great profit. Joel 2:32 (quoted in Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13) tells us that all who ‘call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

³²*“And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls. (Joel 2:32 NASB95)*

But Revelation 6:15-17 says people call on the rocks to fall on them. How tragic they call on the rocks instead of the Rock!

¹⁵*Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:15-17 NASB95)*

Incidentally, none of the verses listed below (and I looked closely at most of them), had any prescribed formula for a **praying position**. Sometimes the text mentions looking towards heaven with hands spread out. There was some kneeling that Jesus did (Luke 22:41) and some in Acts (7:60, 9:40, 20:36, 21:5) and a few other places, but it doesn’t seem prescribed. Closing eyes, looking down, or clasping hands is not suggested or commanded. Prostration is mentioned (although not commanded) along with kneeling, but I have no idea where the classic Christian posture came from. If God is in heaven or inside of us, why do we close the eyes and

gether frequently in verses that show they are the same word, such as Psalm 6:9, 55:1, and 86:6. Believers are also exhorted to pray for Jerusalem.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good. (Psalm 122:6-9 NASB)

The meaning of Paul's suggestion in Thessalonians 5:17 to **'pray without ceasing'** is not necessarily 'all the time' in the sense of every second of the day (although not such a bad idea) but rather formally and habitually. By formally I don't mean impersonally but with a format. Psalm 55 (verse 17) tells us that David prayed three times a day. I'm sure he prayed more than that, especially when on the run from his enemies, but my guess is he (like Daniel in Daniel 6:10) made it a regular practice to stop and clear some space to pray formally three times each day. Even though prayer isn't limited to time or place in the Word it's good to establish a habit of regularity as Paul suggests. Fortunately God is always open to talk with His people at anytime, but we are, after all, creatures of habit.

Sometimes in the Word we see the phrase **call on the Name of the Lord** to indicate contact with the Father either through sacrifice or prayer (Genesis 12:8, 13:4, 21:33; I Kings 18:24-26; Psalm 99:6; Isaiah 12:4, 64:4, 65:1; Zephaniah 3:9; Zechariah 13:9; Acts 9:21, 22:16; I Corinthians 1:2.) Look up these references, because sacrifice and prayer are very closely related subjects that I don't have space to delve into here but may be studied

for the Father to bless with His presence and fruitfulness. All blessings come from God, and cannot be imparted without His presence and submission to Him. But some blessings are bestowed simply because of processes the Father already set up (like natural laws of growth). For instance, a farmer can plant seed and harvest a crop even if he does not acknowledge or obey God. If this same farmer were to skip sowing in a Sabbath year he might even be blessed somewhat because he has followed the Word. But **true abundant life and blessings only occur in a relationship with God.**

I do not mean to imply that being blessed by God means that everything always goes well for those of us who follow Him. But appearances can be deceiving even in apparently negative circumstances. For instance, the farmer may suffer a severe setback (like a hailstorm), but that does not mean God abandoned him. It could be that He moved in a way that was momentarily uncomfortable, but produced long term gain that can't be seen right away. One of the most obvious examples I can think of to illustrate this principle is the death of our Messiah. He suffered and died a most agonizing death, but that death meant life everlasting for those of us who hear and obey. There are also many blessings that belong to Jesus because of His obedience to the Father in this matter.

The age-old question of **'why do bad things happen to good people;'** or the corollary "why do good things happen to bad people?" might pop up here. But there are at least two things on which to inquire further: are we sure of our definitions of good and bad? God measures good and bad differently than people do. For instance,

having a lot of money might seem like a blessing (good), but in my experience it is not a good thing in most cases. Good and bad things from our perception don't necessarily mean the same thing from God's. Blessings mean far more than just a good event, while curses are far worse than just a bad event.

Another Hebrew word for blessing is *esher* (eh-share, happiness). This word means a blessing that is received for doing something, like the happiness that comes from doing a good deed. If the word "blessed" in Matthew 5 were to be translated into Hebrew, it would be the word *esher* (or *asherei*). It essentially means that happiness is gained for the characteristics displayed. When we please our Father by right behavior, He blesses us by increasing our fruit (as in the fruit of the Spirit).

Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:3-12 that happiness comes from being the type of person that is poor in spirit (humble), mourns, is gentle, hungers and thirsts for God (righteousness), is merciful, pure, a peacemaker, and persecuted for doing right. This happiness is the result of being in right standing with God, and the person who displays these qualities has that happiness. People can be blessed in the sense of *esher*, but not God, because He does not stop being "happy" like we do. He does not change (Malachi 3:6). Without doing a huge word study I think this is also the same as having *shalom*, which is not the absence of hardship or suffering but the presence of God.

Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; revive me, O LORD, according to Your ordinances. Those who follow after wickedness draw near; they are far from Your law. You are near, O LORD, and

In addition to the prayers of Jesus found in the Apostolic Writings (NT), which have in my opinion been over analyzed, over emphasized, and under utilized (we love to talk about the Word but actually doing it is a different matter), there are several other recorded prayers that might help us with examples of what's involved with praying. One of these is Hezekiah's prayer in Isaiah 37:15-20.

Hezekiah prayed to the LORD saying, "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God."

You can see that this is roughly the same format as Matthew 6. Many of the Psalms are prayers, and many blessings and songs are prayers. As a matter of fact, using His Words in prayer is a good thing. We can remind ourselves of His promises, glorify His name because He did what He said He would do, or comfort ourselves and each other with them. Prayers are generally short and frequent, consisting mainly of blessings, thanks, recognition, and requests for others. Prayer (8605) and supplication (8467, to show favor or be gracious) are used to-

sides the verse at the top of this article, there are other 'in His will' verses such as that of James 5:16 (below), or those in James chapter four which list impediments to prayer like asking with wrong motives or simply failure to ask.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Speaking of doing His Will (Torah), in Matthew 6:8-13 we have what has been termed the '**Lord's Prayer.**' It's not actually His prayer but a pattern or template for prayer that He gave to us, so it's really Our Prayer Template. He laid it out pretty simply, beginning with acknowledging the Father and agreement with His will. Then He speaks of requesting a day's providence, resting our forgiveness on forgiving others, and finally reminding ourselves of His protection.

Some other instructions related to this template are to avoid using meaningless repetition (verse seven), pray in private (verse six), and not like the hypocrites (verse five). Many, many people like to repeat syllables such as the name 'Jesus' over and over in a public prayer (or music), both of which are in direct contradiction to these instructions. Recent examples of this type of practice were brought into congregational meetings by the flower children of the '60's. They mixed Transcendental Meditation (remember the mantra, "ohm-man-ah-pahd-me-ohm?") with their new-found belief in Jesus. They just switched the mantra around a little and added some hal-lujahs.

all Your commandments are truth. Of old I have known from Your testimonies that You have founded them forever. (Psalm 119:149-152)

When God blesses, His blessings are all one way, from Him to us. We can bless Him by obedience to His Word, which is the meaning of not letting His word return void (literally means without life or fruit or increase). So go ahead and bless the socks off of yourself and everybody else by obedience to His Word and by desiring the same for the entire world. On the next page are some blessing phrases you can learn and say as the occasion warrants.

First is a transliteration of the Hebrew to help you pronounce it, then the English translation.

Blessing for food (or bread)

Baruch ha tah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha olam, ha-
motzi lechem min ho-o-retz
Blessed are you O Lord our God, king of the universe,
who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessing for drink (wine)

Baruch ha tah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha olam, bo-ray
p'ri ha-go-fen
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

The Aaronic (or Priestly) Blessing

Y'va-reh-ch'cha ADONAI v'yish-m'reh-cha
The LORD bless you, and keep you
Ya-eir ADONAI pa-nav ei-leh-cha vi-chu-neh-cha
The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious
to you
Yi-sa ADONAI pa-nav ei-leh-cha
The LORD lift up His face upon you
V'ya-saym l'cha sha-lom
and give you peace.

**He who has the Son has the life; he who does not
have the Son of God does not have the life. I John
5:12 NASB**

May the Father bless you and keep you.

the designs of His plan. He is not some cosmic sugar-daddy who responds to the rantings of a spoiled debutante or mistress. He desires intimacy, a relationship of kindred spirits, the sharing of joy and peace and perfection.

When I tune my guitar I use something called “harmonics.” If I press on each of two different strings in a certain way at a certain place on the neck, and pluck each string as I press, then they will vibrate and make tones I compare together. If both strings are ‘in tune’ then both of them sound like one note. If one is out of tune with the other (and it doesn’t take much), there is a wavering sound because they are out of balance. I change the length of the string that is out of tune so that it will vibrate at the same pitch as the other string.

When we pray, ideally we harmonize with God in such a way that we vibrate together with one tone. He is already at the correct pitch, and it is our job to match His vibrations, to change and fit His tone. Some try to force God to do the changing and match their tone, which is why some prayers don’t produce fruit. We are not in tune with our Maker.

“So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.” (Isaiah 1:15 NASB)

Being in tune with our Father means doing His will. If we are outside of His will we couldn’t very well expect Him to approve our requests. We acknowledge His will both by recognition (holy be Your Name) and by obedience (Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven). Be-

Christian Faith and Practice Through...Prayer

*He who turns away his ear from listening to the law,
even his prayer is an abomination.* Proverbs 28:9
NASB

*But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, at an
acceptable time; O God, in the greatness of Your
lovingkindness, answer me with Your saving truth.*
Psalm 69:13 NASB

Oh boy what a loaded subject! I could write a book, but I want to focus on just a few aspects of prayer. I hope to help the “rookie” who is shedding the crippling doctrines of men and returning to practices based on the whole teaching of God given to us in the Bible. Prayer in particular has been used and abused and disconnected so much from what He specifically teaches in His Word that it has mostly become cold, ineffective, and whiny. There is a large amount of material in the Word about prayer, but there is not a great deal of specific commands for how to do it. This does not mean that there couldn’t be new forms of expression or living out of His Will, but these new expressions (if indeed they are new) shouldn’t be taught as Scripture. Since God told us not to add to or subtract from His Word, let’s dig in and get back to His basics.

I am going to start including word studies whenever I can in these articles, but I’m not all that wild about word studies for two reasons. First, I shouldn’t be doing your

from the Source of Life and Love. The fruit from the tree of knowledge promotes self-centeredness, but prayer is about God-centeredness. It is not something external that those of us who follow Him use as a tool to get our own way. It is not separate from us but part of us, a natural extension of communion with Him.

*May my prayer be counted as incense before You;
the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.*
(Psalm 141:2 NASB95)

A long time ago (no jokes about how long) I thought, “**Why pray?**” since God already knows everything and takes steps to insure His plan continues. Later I realized that God has ordained that some things will only happen through prayer (sometimes specifically my prayer), so it is my responsibility to pray. Now, it’s just natural for me to pray all the time (or commune) with God on a multitude of subjects and issues. Prayer is to the soul as breathing is to the body. I can go weeks without eating and days without drinking, but only moments without breathing. So it is with prayer and my soul.

Those of us with an active prayer relationship could no more stop praying than we could stop breathing. Part of this breathing comes through obedience to His ways (Torah). Minute by minute I marvel at the blessings the Father bestows (also Torah) and find constant reason to thank Him and bless Him. Some walk this world without such a relationship but they are like the living dead, zombies to be pitied who long for life but suffer in a formless, dreary, waking death. We do not ‘have’ to pray. The Father does not force us to come to Him for discussion and permission. We delight in asking His will for specific circumstances, and humbly submit to

work for you. You need to get out there and ‘study to show yourself approved.’ What, do I look like the last word in whatever it is I’m writing about? Don’t take my opinions at face value, check ‘em out. I’m not trying to tell you what to think, I’m trying to teach you how to think.

The second reason I don’t like to include word studies in an article is that it usually makes for dry reading and it’s hard to dress up. How many different intros for a word can one person write anyway? But there are also a couple of good reasons for including them. One is that you can tell if I’ve done my homework, and didn’t just put together some schlock opinions off the cuff. Another is that it can give you a boost in the right direction and suggest starting points for your own studies. But I don’t want to bog you down with details you may not need right now, so for those of you who would like help there is the beginnings of some information at the end of the article.

We don’t need to get all wrapped up in word definitions from Hebrew and Greek to understand prayer, but getting a feel for how the words are used might help us refine our practice and broaden our understanding. **A simple definition of prayer is** ‘communication with God’ which might involve some or all of the elements listed at the end of this article. This communication can be as plain as “God have mercy on me a sinner” (Luke 18:13) or as involved as the intercessory prayer of Daniel (9:1-19). Sometimes, even the Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we don’t know what to say.

But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the

Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:25-27 NASB95)

Ever since we departed from direct fellowship with Him in the Garden He has been working on rectifying that situation. This has involved a great deal of communication back and forth, and both sides of some of the conversations have been preserved for us to study in the written record. If you have swallowed evolutionary theories you may think that life a long time ago was primitive and marked by ignorance, while modern life is progressive and we now enjoy the benefits of ‘learning.’ If you believe this I have some oceanfront property in Arizona you might also be interested in. One of the many lies from evolution is that it leads you to think that life started out bad and has been getting better and better, which in turn affects how we see and apply Scripture.

The truth revealed for us in the Word is that life started out ‘very good’ (Genesis chapter one) and has been sliding into the proverbial toilet ever since our first disobedience. But God in His mercy has been consistently interfering with our slide by reminding us of His Word and Ways (also called Torah). Some people used to know how to talk with God, but in these last days many of us have lost much of the ability and understanding that we started out with some 6,000 years ago. We have almost ‘educated’ ourselves into permanent separation