

6/15-21#1 “Steadfastly in Prayer and in the Ministry of the Word”: I. “Steadfastly in prayer” (Acts 6:4):

A To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and that we can do nothing; this implies that prayer is the real denial of the self. **B** A man of prayer must be one who seeks God and God’s will. **C** The real significance of prayer is to contact God in our spirit and to absorb God Himself: **1** Prayer is the contact of the human spirit with the divine Spirit, during which we inhale God. **2** Genuine prayers are prayers that are mingled with God the Spirit in our spirit: **a** Prayer must be a joint prayer in which God is mingled with our spirit. **b** True prayers—prayers that involve God and man—are the issue of the Spirit of God being mingled with man’s spirit and man’s spirit being mingled with the Spirit of God. Rom. 8:26 ...In like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God. **c** In this prayer God and man mingle together, and God is the Initiator and the Motivator; God prays in man, and man prays in God. James 5:17 Elijah was a man of like feeling with us, and he earnestly prayed that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. **3** If we would have genuine prayers, prayers that are initiated by God and that touch God, we must pray in the Holy Spirit; praying in the Holy Spirit means that we and the Holy Spirit pray together in the fellowship of the two spirits. Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. **4** Prayers in which we contact God, inhale God, absorb God, and are filled with God are genuine prayers; only prayers of this kind should be offered to God. **D** The Bible contains a most lofty and spiritual prayer—the prayer of authority: Dan. 9:19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! Do not delay, for Your own sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are called by Your own name. Matt. 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will. **1** If we want to be a man of prayer, we have to learn to pray with authority; this is the kind of prayer described by the Lord in Matthew 18:18. **2** In Matthew 18:18 there is

a prayer that is called binding prayer and a prayer that is called loosing prayer; to bind and to loose—this is to pray with authority. **E** Praying with authority is praying the prayer in Mark 11:23-24: 23 Truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says happens, he will have it. 24 For this reason I say to you, All things that you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and you will have them. **1** Faith is believing that we have received what we have asked for: **a** According to the Lord’s word, we should believe that we have received, not that we will receive. **b** To hope means to expect something in the future; to believe means to consider something as having been done. **c** Faith is not only believing that God can or will do a certain thing but also believing that God has done that thing already. **2** The prayer in Mark 11:20-24 is a prayer with authority: **a** prayer with authority does not ask God to do something; instead, it exercises God’s authority and applies this authority to deal with problems and things that ought to be removed. **b** God has commissioned us to command what He has commanded and give orders to what He has given orders to. **c** The church can have such a prayer with authority by having full faith, being without doubt, and being clear that what we do is fully according to God’s will. **d** Prayer with authority has much to do with the overcomers; every overcomer must learn to speak to “this mountain”. **II. “Steadfastly...in the ministry of the word” (Act.6:4): A** Prayer should precede the ministry of the word, just as the apostles practiced. **B** An example of the ministry of the word is Ephesians 3:17a: “That Christ may make His home in your hearts”: Eph.3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, **1** When Christ spreads into our hearts, He becomes our person: **a** We need to take Christ not only as life in our spirit but also as the person in our hearts. **b** The only way for Christ to be our person is for Him to make His home in our hearts. **c** If we take Christ as our person in our hearts, the person living in our hearts will not be the self but Christ. **2** The Christ who is making His home in our hearts is an unlimited, immeasurable Christ: Eph.3:17 ..., that you,...18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are 19 And to know the

knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. **a** As Christ makes His home in our hearts, we apprehend with all the saints the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth; these are the dimensions of the universe, the dimensions of the immeasurable Christ. **b** Although Christ is immeasurable, He is nevertheless making His home in our hearts. **c** Christ is the universal cube, and our experience of Him in the Body must be “cubical,” three-dimensional. **3** When Christ makes His home in our hearts, we will be filled unto all the fullness of God: **a** The fullness of God is the Body of Christ as the expression of the Triune God to the uttermost, the ultimate consummation of the corporate expression of the Triune God. **b** The Body of Christ is the unlimited expression of the unlimited Christ. **c** If we let Christ make His home in our hearts, we will be filled with the Triune God to such an extent that we will become His full expression. **4** The genuine church life is the issue of the unlimited and immeasurable Christ personally making His home in our hearts: **a** The content of the church is the Christ whom we take as our person, the Christ who is wrought into our being. **b** If we would have the reality of the Body of Christ, we must allow Christ to make His home in our hearts. **c** In order for Christ’s word in Matthew 16:18 concerning the building up of the church to be fulfilled, the church must enter into a state where saints allow Christ to make His home in their hearts, possessing, occupying, and saturating their entire inner being. **d** The more Christ occupies our inner being, the more we will be able to be built up with others in the Body.

Testimony According to the revelation in the Bible, the four pillars of a local church are truth, life, the church, and the gospel. The beginning of these four pillars is truth. When we receive the truth through prayer, it becomes life within us. Then, when people receive this life, they become members of Christ, and the church is formed. Furthermore, for its increase and spread, the church preaches the gospel. Considering this, I believe that steadfastly continuing in prayer and the ministry of the word is foundational and absolutely essential.

I would like to testify concerning prayer. Not long after I was saved as a first-year university student, I began to learn how to pray. Whenever I prayed with the words of the Bible, there was an anointing within me, and words of prayer flowed one after another.

After praying, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and with joy. However, I would often return to myself and habitually pray out of self-love, saying things such as, “Help me barely pass the exam with little effort,” or “May the parts I studied appear on the test.” There was no joy in such prayers. At that time, I did not really understand why. Then, when I was preparing for the graduate school entrance examination, my studies were not progressing very well, and I became anxious. So I prayed: “Lord, no matter what, please make sure that I pass the graduate school entrance exam. Otherwise, the job-hunting season is already over, I will have nowhere to go, and it will be far too embarrassing.” After I prayed in this way, the Lord said to me: **“Do you love being admitted to graduate school, or do you love Me?”** I immediately replied: “Please do not be so strict. If You just let me pass, then afterward I will be able to love You as much as You want.” This same exchange occurred three times. Then I immediately lost the Lord’s presence. At that point I said, **“I cannot change the Lord. I must change myself and submit to Him.”** Then I continued: **“Lord, I love You. Even if I do not pass the examination, I still love You.”** After I prayed in this way, the Lord’s presence returned to me. I sensed that the Lord was pleased. And I felt that going on to graduate school was the Lord’s leading and that the Lord would surely cause me to pass the entrance examination. From that point onward, I was able to study diligently and peacefully during the final month before the examination. As a result, I was able to pass, just barely. John 4:24 says: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.” Second Corinthians 3:15–17 says: “Indeed unto this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” I have often remembered this experience and considered it in prayer. Gradually, I came to realize that whenever I fellowship with the Lord, I need to: **①** Turn completely from self-love to the Lord. **②** Open myself to the Lord **③** Fellowship with the Lord honestly and truthfully. **④** Fellowship with the Lord by using His word. **⑤** Love the Lord purely as my Husband. **⑥** Take the Lord as the Head and submit to Him. **⑦** Seek God’s will first.