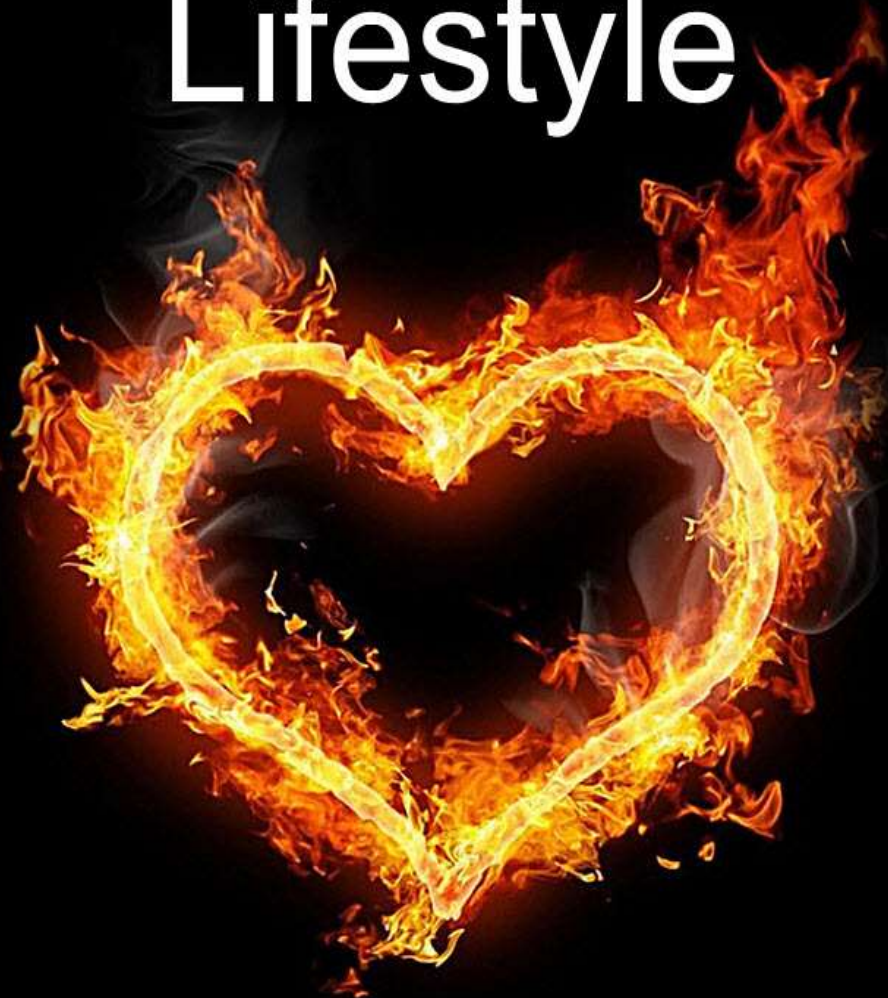


Prayer Altar Lifestyle



TIMOTHY JAMES GIBSON

“Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.”

1 Kings 18:30

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PREFACE

This booklet expands the last chapter of my first booklet entitled “Building Prayer Altars”. In that booklet I introduced the concept of Prayer Altars, discussing why we need them, what they are and their main strategies. Here I look in detail at the six activities of the Prayer Altar that form a daily lifestyle of ‘Altar Consciousness’.

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet follows on from my previous booklet and expands on the last chapter, “*The Prayer Altar Lifestyle*.” In the first booklet we saw that the Prayer Altar is a lifestyle where we draw the presence of God and push back the darkness to see transformation come into lives and lands.

The Altar is a place of adoring, listening, turning, agreeing, and reviving. It is a spiritual gateway where heaven comes to earth, angels ascend and descend, and miraculous transformations take place.

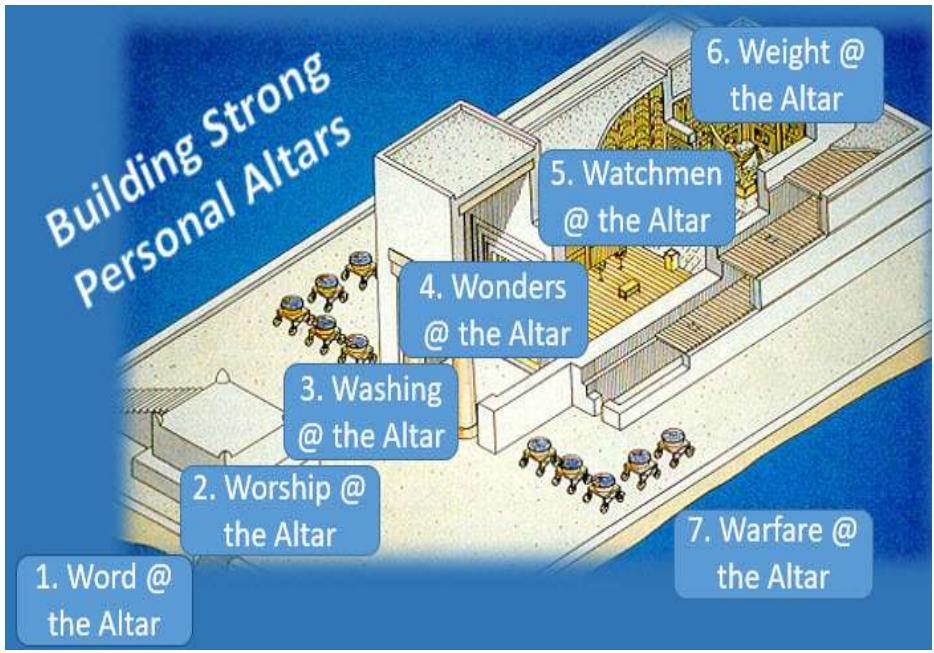
We saw that the culmination of the Altar revelation in Scripture is the Ark of the Covenant, the manifest glory of God. It is this that the priests carried on their shoulders into the promised land and wherever they carried it signs and wonders were seen. The Jordan dried up under their feet and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. They were living the Prayer Altar lifestyle just as we, as New Testament priests, are called to do.

This booklet helps us see how to do this in more detail.

The building of prayer altars is not a program but a lifestyle and is bigger than us, our church and even our nation. It is a necessity for Christians and for Christian communities to live victoriously and in the purposes of God. As we build altars there are six activities that we engage in that cause us to rise as warriors for His Kingdom.

Using Solomon's temple as a template of our Altar journey through the heavenly temple this booklet will follow that journey. It will apply it to our journey to build strong and effective personal prayer altars that are not just a time and place but an ongoing lifestyle of spiritual warfare that pushes back the darkness to draw the supernatural presence of God in power and glory in and through our lives.

We will follow the journey as depicted in the following picture. Notice that I have added a seventh point (Warfare @ the Altar) that was not in previous booklet. That is because, as we build strong and effective prayer altars in a particular place, we need to rise up, just as the children of Israel did, to claim the land from the enemy and wage the good warfare. This is the Altar Lifestyle.



PART 1

Word @
the Altar

The Word of God is the foundation of the prayer altar. Without the Word of God, we would not know about it or be able to build it. Jesus, the living Word, is the focus of the Altar and the one who empowers us, by His Spirit, to build it for us to live the Altar Lifestyle.

Starting with God's Word

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

It all starts with His Word. Jesus is the full revelation and fulfilment of God's Word (Matthew 5:17). He is the eternal Word of God, upholding all things by His Word (Hebrews 1:3), and we meet Him as we engage in reading and living in His Word, the Bible, on a daily basis.

Reading His Word leads to the Altar. In 2 Kings 22-23 we see King Josiah's reading of the Word (the book of the Law that was found in the Temple) led to a revival of God's people and led them to destroy all false altars and come to the true altar at the Temple. It all started with the Word.

“Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.” Psalm 43:3-4

We read the Bible to know God. As we daily read His Word He reveals more of His Holy Name to us. It is this revelation of Himself to us through His Word that leads us to hallow His

name, to praise Him and bow down in worship, going deeper into the Temple until we encounter His glory in the Holy of Holies.

Symbols of the transforming power of God's Word.

In God's Holy presence we are changed. The Word of God leads to transformation and there are many ways it changes us. That is why there are many symbols for the Word of God itself.

The following picture shows the ten main symbols of God's Word.



Reading and living out of chunks of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation every day (we recommend 10 chapters a day, reading the books in order) will have a work in our life that will transform us from glory to glory, faith to faith. Each

symbol speaks of a different work of God in our life through the Word daily:

Fire to refine.

“‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:29a.

God’s Word rages as a fire to refine our hearts and give us a passion for Him and His ways. The more You read and live out God’s Word the brighter His flame will burn on the altar of your heart.

Hammer to convict.

“And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:29b.

His Word hits us like a hammer! When we read the Bible daily there will be truths that smash down strongholds of the enemy in our lives (sinful patterns and ways of thinking – see 2 Corinthians 10:4-6). His word convicts us of sin and has power to renew our minds and bring deliverance.

Mirror to reflect.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it,

and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:22-25.

Daily reading of the Word of God is like looking into a mirror. It shows us our true condition before God and the need to be changed and made into His image. It shows us our sinful state that we can repent of, but it also shows us our true image in Christ that we can claim and walk more in.

Seed to multiply.

“Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.” 1 Peter 1:23-25.

God’s Word is everlasting and enduring and is like seed that keeps multiplying with no end. As we read His Word the seeds of His promises are sown into our hearts and causes us to be fruitful and multiply as we claim them and walk in them.

Rain to grow.

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth

from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:10-11.

His Word is not only the seed but also the water that makes that seed grow and multiply. His word is refreshing and causes us to grow in our daily Christian walk. The more we soak in His Word the more we will grow and mature in His ways, wisdom and will.

Sword to cut.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12.

His Word is like a Surgeon’s sword that cuts deep to bring healing. It will be painful sometimes to experience the incisions of God’s Word into our heart, but these words are to heal us and bind up our broken hearts. It is also like a warrior’s sword that cuts off thoughts and intents that are from the enemy (Ephesians 6:17).

Gold to enrich.

“More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold.” Psalm 19:10a

God’s word is like gold in that it is precious and enriches our lives. It leads us into true riches and away from false riches. As we read His Word daily, we will find glorious

treasures of revelation, leading us into the presence of the greatest treasure of all, the Lord Himself.

Food to nourish.

“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4.

The word of God is likened to food of all types - milk, bread, meat, and honey (1 Corinthians 3:2; Psalm 119:1-3). It nourishes and sustains us. As we read His word daily, we will be strengthened to do His work and will grow from spiritual babes to sons and daughters of the living God.

“The Bible is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions.” Anon.

Lamp to guide.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
Psalm 119:105.

Reading His Word daily will redirect us to His ways and keep us in His Will. We will learn more and more to align with His agenda and not ours.

Water to cleanse.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27

that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:26-27.

Above all, the Word of God cleanses and washes us, so we rise to be His Warrior Bride in these end times. As we read His word daily it will challenge us and lead us to deeper and deeper repentance and consecration to Him, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1).



How God's Word Profits Us.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

All the ten symbols above help to accomplish the profitable effects of the Word which are:

- **Doctrine:** Having the right thinking and philosophy of life, which only comes by thinking with a biblical mindset.
- **Reproof:** Exposing and dealing with sins in our life that cause us to walk contrary to His will and weigh us down (Hebrews 12:1).
- **Correction:** Correcting doctrinal error and ways of thinking and acting that seem right but are off track when compared with the whole counsel of God's Word.
- **Training in Righteousness:** Trains us to walk in the right way through our day to day activities and interactions.

Soaking in the Word.

How do we practically soak in the Word of God so that it dwells in us richly (Colossians 3:16) and we abide in it (John 8:31)?

- ***Read 10 chapters of the Bible a day.***
 - Read 10 Chapters a day (you can do it altogether or in two parts of 5 chapters).
 - Read in order from Genesis to Revelation to see the whole story of redemption and His Kingdom in context.
 - Do not read headings and extras in Bible.
 - Do not stop to dwell on verses (jot down for later).

- Read aloud and engage in the reading (be dramatic and enter the narrative).
- Ask the three questions:
 - “*What do I learn about God so I can praise Him more?*”
 - “*What do I learn about myself so I can consecrate more?*”
 - “*What rhema word do I receive so I can meditate on it?*”

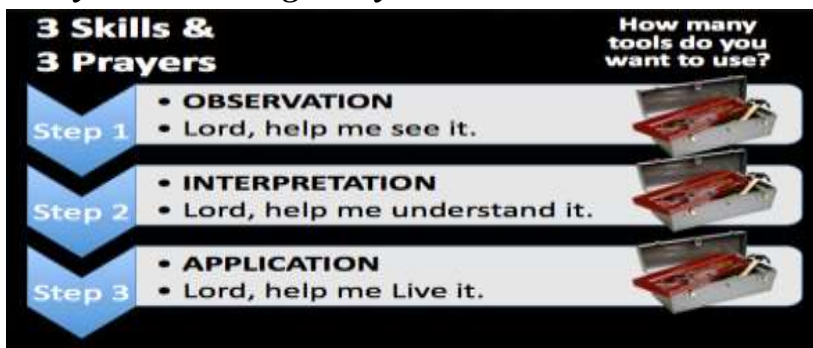
- ***Meditate on one verse/passage daily.***

There will often be one verse or passage the Lord highlights to you as you read your 10 chapters a day. Jot it down and after your altar time you can write it down and carry it around with you for the whole day. You can then memorize it and meditate on it through the day.

- Take one verse the Lord has highlighted in your reading.
- Write it where you can easily access it.
- Take the first part of day to memorize it.
- Take the next part of day to dwell on it as you walk, sit, work and rest (Deuteronomy 6:7; Joshua 1:8).
- Go through word by word, thought by thought asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you.
- Write down and live in that revelation.

Biblical meditation is not emptying ourselves but filling ourselves with God’s Word and dwelling on it through the day so that His word becomes flesh in us.

- *Study the Word regularly.*



Later in the day or week you can set aside time to study deeper into one book or passage you are presently reading so that you can get deeper insights. This is another topic all by itself (Hermeneutics) and will not be covered here.

Success from God’s Word (Joshua 1:7-9).

Overview (v7)

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.” Joshua 1:7

A new generation were about to enter the promised land and the advice from God was to keep His Word with strength and courage so they may prosper in His inheritance.

The word for strong (*chazaq*) means “to seize, take hold of” and the word for courageous (*amats*) means “to be alert”. So,

every day we need to be alert to God's ways and the devils' tactics by seizing hold of God's promises in His Word so we will live abundantly for Him (Hebrews 10:23; Proverbs 4:4). This we do by soaking in His Word.

What to do? (v8)

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
Joshua 1:8



Daily we are to **speak** His word (read it aloud as we read 10 chapters and meditate on it by muttering it under our breath). This will lead us to **serve** Him (observing to do) according to His will and agenda and not ours. This in turn will lead to good **success!**

Notice that it is good and not bad success that the Word brings. Bad success is where we prosper according to the world's

definition of success, but we are not moving in His way, will or wisdom. Good success is prospering according to the Word's definition.

The word for prosperous here (*tsalach*) means “to push forward, break out”. The word for success (*sakal*) means “to be wise”. So good success is to break out of sinful patterns and break out into His plans and purposes for us. True success is to be faithful and obedient to His Word and living in it day by day, living in His wisdom.

“Spending time with God and His Word is key to our strength and success in all areas of life. Be sure that you never try to work God into your schedule, but always work your schedule around Him.” Anon.

Enjoy the view. (v9)

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

The result of letting God's Word have its way in us day by day is that “*God is with you wherever you go*”! In His presence is joy inexpressible and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8) and real pleasure at His right hand, the place of His authority (Psalms 16:11).

It is a beautiful landscape to gaze upon daily as we continue our Altar journey through each day.

Word @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

1. Read Psalm 138:2. *What does this say about God's Word? What is the place of God's Word in Your life? Is it where it should be? What can you do to enhance your life in His Word?*
2. Read Joshua 1:7-9. *What does this passage say about God's Word? List the things you need to do concerning His Word and the benefits of doing them.*

Activity



Choose one of the symbols of God's word from above and look up the Bible verse. Take 15 minutes to memorize and meditate on the verse using the guidance on page 16. Share what the Lord reveals to you with a Christian friend.

PART 2

Worship @ the Altar

“**E**nter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name.” Psalm 100:4

After coming to the Temple because of the Word of God, and with the word of God on their lips, the Old Testament priests would have to enter through the gate into the courts of the temple to offer sacrifices at the Brazen Altar. One key sacrifice they would offer is the Peace Offering. This was a freewill offering of thanksgiving and praise to God for the peace He brings. This was their way of hallowing His name.

Hallowing His Name Brings His Presence

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” Matthew 6:9

The first thing we must do after reading chunks of God’s Word, and continue into the rest of the day, is to “*hallow His name*”. The word for hallow (*hagiazō*) means “*to be holy, set apart*”. At the Altar God records His Name (Exodus 20:24) and we need to declare it as holy and set apart, high above all other names. From the reading of His Word certain aspects of God (certain names) will be revealed. We need to immediately hallow Him using these names (His character and authority).

The aim of the Altar time is to come into deep worship of God that will continue throughout the day.

“Worship is the total adoring response of man to the one Eternal God, self-revealed in time.” Evelyn Underhill

Worship comes out of a response to the Name of God He reveals in His Word and records at the Altar of our hearts. This is *“calling on the Name of the Lord”* (Genesis 4:26). We come into worship only by entering His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise until we truly bless His name on our knees, entering humble worship and adoration. We praise Him until it leads to worship. We worship His Name:

There are thousands of names of God but below I present the 7 key names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hallowing His name does not mean just memorizing these and listing them out, but God will reveal Himself in many ways and reveal one name at a time for You to hallow deeply and be transformed.

The Seven Names of Each Member of the Trinity

God the Father

1. Jehovah Jireh – Our provider (Genesis 22:13).
2. Jehovah Rapha – Our healer (Exodus 15:26).
3. Jehovah Shammah – Our ever-present God (Ezekiel 48:35).
4. Jehovah Shalom – Our Peace (Judges 6:24).
5. Jehovah Nissi – Our banner (Exodus 17:8,15).
6. Jehovah Rohi – Our Shepherd (Psalm 23).
7. Jehovah Tsidkenu – Our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6);

He is also called El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty), El Elyon (Most High God), Adonai (Lord and Master), Yahweh (God of covenant) and much more.

Jesus the Son

The Seven “I Am” statements of Jesus:

1. The Bread of Life (John 6:35,48).
2. The Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).
3. The Gate of the Sheep (John 10:7).
4. The Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14).
5. The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).
6. The Way the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).
7. The True Vine (John 15:1,5).

He is also called the Lamb of God (John 1:29), Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5), Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16), Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8; 22:13) and so much more.

The Holy Spirit

1. Spirit of Holiness (Romans 1:4).
2. The Eternal Spirit (Hebrew 9:14).
3. The Comforter (John 14:16).
4. Spirit of Truth (John 16:13).

5. Spirit of His Son (Galatians 4:6).
6. Spirit of Power, Love and Sound Mind (2 Timothy 1:7).
7. The Anointing (1 John 2:27).

He is also called the Helper, Counselor, Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29), Spirit of the Lord, Fire, Oil, New Wine and so much more.

Sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise are offered.

*“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”* Psalm 100:4

As mentioned, for us to enter true worship and the go deeper in our Altar times (into the Holy Place), we need to start with Thanksgiving and Praise. At the Altar we offer these sacrifices:

Sacrifice of Thanksgiving (Psalm 116:17; Psalm 107:21-22)

After reading your 10 chapters spend time offering thanksgiving to God based on what you have read. We thank Him for what He has done both in what we have read in Scripture and in our lives. It is a sacrifice which means giving Him the best and it will often be painful as you will not feel like giving Him thanks. The gate of thanksgiving is our mouth and we need to open our mouth wide to thank Him until we move into deeper praise.

Sacrifice of Praise (Hebrews 13:15).

Our thanksgiving will lead to a sacrifice of praise where we praise Him for who He is (His Name). Praise means “*to express strong approval or admiration for someone or something, especially in public.*” (Macmillan Dictionary). Again, it is a sacrifice, meaning we give Him the best and even if we do not feel like it. Thanksgiving and Praise are a choice and as we do it with our whole being, He will answer with more of His presence as he inhabits the praises (*tehillah*) of His people (Psalm 22:3).

Seven aspects of praise (see picture below).



1. **Yadah** – Let your hands be raised in Thanksgiving (hands up as if holding all His blessings).
2. **Todah** – Sacrifice of Praise (hands out in surrender).
3. **Hallel** – Let your soul rejoice (abandoned praise, dance).

4. **Shabach** – Shout for Joy (shouting aloud in praise to God).
5. **Zamar** – To make music (playing an instrument or clapping your hands).
6. **Tehillah** – Singing a new song (spiritual songs – singing in tongues or a new song).
7. **Barouch** – With a quiet voice (bowing down to bless).

Notice how praise demands our whole body. In our Altar time, we must not lay in bed but arise to demonstrate all these postures according to the Name we are hallowing!

Your regular thanksgiving and praise at the Altar will spill over into your lifestyle through the day. You will be a more thankful and praising person, even towards others, especially the unlovable ones.

Practical Helps on Hallowing His Name.

- Focus on one main Name of God (or characteristic) revealed in your reading of scripture for that day.
- Speak out that Name and relate its power and effects as revealed in your reading and as seen in your life. Thank Him for what He has done and praise Him for who he is.
- Use the seven expressions of praise as listed above.

- Keep on until His presence shows up and you enter worship.
- Apply it in your own life during your day. Living in His Name through the day, you will see transformation.

What is Transformational worship?

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:24

The process described above leads us daily into transformational worship, which is a lifestyle. This worship is in *“spirit”* and in *“truth”*.

To worship God in spirit means to worship God...

- *with the spiritual drive and ability of one's soul, seeking the most intimate communion and fellowship with God.*
- *with the spiritual core of one's life and being, trusting and resting in God's acceptance and love and care.*
- *by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.*

To worship God in truth means...

- *to worship according the truth – The Word of God. Allow it to speak to us and convict us of sins.*
- *to approach God in the right or true way. There is only one way, through His Son Jesus Christ (see John 4:21; John 14:6).*

- *to worship God sincerely and truthfully, not coming half-heartedly with a wandering mind and sleepy eyes.*

“All Word and no Spirit, we dry up; all Spirit and no Word, we blow up; both Word and Spirit, we grow up.” David Watson

True worship is “*worth-ship*” – ascribing worth to God in our thinking, speaking, and doing throughout the day (Colossians 3:23). Only He is worthy (Psalm 145:3) so we offer up our bodies to God as an acceptable act of worship (Romans 12:1). This is all helped by daily thanking and praising His name as I have described, particularly after having read large portions of God’s word. Indeed, all these activities ARE worship!

Worship is not just a slow song but a daily lifestyle that is facilitated by the Prayer Altar lifestyle we are talking about.

Worship that transforms*

Worship that transforms is worship that is *prayerful, truthful, and beautiful*.

Prayerful with songs that are somewhat repetitive, allowing the words to wash over us and speak deeply to our hearts. We worship the Lord wholeheartedly, with joy and thanksgiving.

Truthful with words we read and sing not only expressing biblical truth, but also the truth about our journey deeper into relationship with God. Our worship allows us to be honest,

vulnerable, and transparent with each other and with God and to allow God to meet us right where we are in ways that could not be humanly orchestrated.

Beautiful. Our worship seeks to reflect the beauty of the Lord — His holiness, majesty, and love — as well as the beauty of God’s people dwelling together in unity.

We are hungry for worship that moves us deeply, touches us completely, and ultimately transforms us. Our worship experience opens us to life-changing encounters with Christ.

*From “*Transformational Worship*” by Rory Noland

The blessed results of transformational worship.

There are at least three blessed results of true worship that I have been describing above.

1. Presence

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8

Praise and worship opens us up to the presence of God. In Bible times if someone left their door open it was an open invitation into their presence. Praise and worship opens the door into the intimate presence of God (Revelation 3:8). As we live the worship lifestyle in ascribing worth to God in all we think, say, and do then we’ll live in His intimate presence. This

intimacy leads to all the blessings of His manifest presence such as love, peace, joy, pleasure and so forth (Psalm 16:11).

2. Purification

“He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness.”

Malachi 3:3

As we bring the offerings of thanksgiving and praise and worship Him in His presence He will sit as a refiner in our hearts!

Like Isaiah, as we worship in His awesome presence, He will expose the sins of our hearts so that we may be cleansed and commissioned for His glory (Isaiah 6:5-6).

3. Prophecy.

“And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10

As we live the worship lifestyle we will live in the spirit of prophecy, meaning our lives will align with His prophetic purposes. As we behold Jesus more and more by hallowing His name, we will understand His heart and have glimpses into His

plans and purposes and the move of His Spirit over the nations so we can align our lives accordingly.

In conclusion:

His Word will lead us to hallow His name and hallowing His name will lead to true worship where His presence comes to convict us of sin and transform us.

His name is His nature, authority, manifestation and empowering. At the Prayer Altar He has authority to manifest His very nature so that it transforms us more into His image and empowers us to shine forth that image to touch others' lives for Him.



Worship @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

1. Read Matthew 6:9 and Psalm 100:4. *What does it mean to hallow His name? What practically do you need to do daily after reading His word?*
2. Look at pages 26-27. *What are the seven Hebrew words for praise? Look at each one and reflect on what attitude of the heart it physically represents? How many of these expressions do you use in praise and worship? If there are expressions you do not use why do you not use them?*
3. *What is transformational worship and how do you enter it? What are its results? How can you enter this more?*



Activity

Choose one of the names of God the Father (Page 23) given to the left and read the given verse in context (read the whole chapter). Take 15 minutes to hallow this name (thanking Him and praising Him for this aspect of who He is) until you enter worship before Him and sense His presence.

Share this experience with a friend.

*“I will worship before
Your holy temple and
praise Your name for
Your lovingkindness and
Your truth; For You have
magnified Your word
above all Your name.”*

Psalm 138:2

PART 3

Washing @ the Altar

*‘Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place? He who
has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not
lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.’ Psalm
24:3-4*

Before the Priests in the Old Testament could enter the Holy Place, they had to offer sacrifices for sin and then cleanse themselves at the Brazen Laver.

Likewise, we cannot ascend to the prayer altar goal without cleansing from sins. The goal is for the presence of God to come and push back the darkness to bring transformation in our lives and lands. Reading and living in the Word and praising and worshipping Him (hallowing His name) will usher in His presence to a certain extent, but for the fullness of His glory we must have pure hands and clean hearts.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
Matthew 5:8*

We are righteous only by faith in Christ and not by any works (Romans 4:24). We are never asked to *“be righteous”* in Scripture. However, many times we see in Scripture that we must *“be holy”* (1 Peter 1:16). Righteousness is right standing with God, but holiness is right living in right relationship with Him.

Before we can be a qualified priest that intercedes on behalf of others, we need to offer sin (sins against God) and guilt (sins against others) offerings for ourselves. Yes, Jesus has been offered once and for all for the forgiveness of our sins, but we need to appropriate it, so our condition matches our position in Christ. This is done through repentance and consecration – the process called Sanctification (being made holy).

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1

This means that in our daily times at the Altar the Lord will call us to deepen our consecration to Him through deep repentance. As we saw in my previous book, *Building Prayer Altars*, the Lord will deal with external in internal sins in our life like He did with Abraham, going deeper and deeper as we mature to become sons and daughters of the Living God. The more consecrated we are the more power and authority we will have in our Altar Lifestyle.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”
Philippians 2:12-13

The more we **work out** (not work for) our salvation by becoming more and more holy then the more the Lord will **work in** and through us, doing His good pleasure, which is to work transformation in lives and lands!

God’s Presence Leads us to Repentance.

As we hallow His name, praising and worshipping, He will let us glimpse His presence. In His Presence He convicts us of sins. This, in turn, will lead us to repentance and cleansing.

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” Romans 2:4

“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

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.... ⁵ So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips.” Isaiah 6:1,5a

In His Presence He will convict us of sin in our lives and areas we need to consecrate to the Lord (for Isaiah he had to consecrate his lips, his words, to God). He will especially highlight things you read in His Word that convicted you (Psalm 119:11), as His Word will expose sin (a light) and then crush it (a hammer) and cleanse us (water) and purify us (fire).

This needs repentance.

What is Repentance?

The New Testament word used for repentance (*metanoia*) means “*change of mind*”, but taking the whole counsel of Scripture, we see much more than just a change of thought processes is needed.

Repentance involves a change of heart and a desire to forsake sin and serve God. It involves humbly yielding to the Spirit and submitting to God’s will. It requires that people increase their commitment to live in agreement with God’s will. Repentance requires a sincere and lasting change of thoughts, desires, habits, and actions.

“Repentance is as much a mark of a Christian, as faith is. A very little sin, as the world calls it, is a very great sin to a true Christian.” Charles Spurgeon.

Repentance does not mean feeling sorry for doing something and then turning around and continuing to do it again and again (this is why King Saul's repentance was rejected as he had no desire to change his ways but simply to be vindicated – 1 Samuel 15:24-26). It is a complete transformation.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

We are transformed by the renewing of our minds as we offer our lives in consecration as burnt offerings, as living sacrifices, daily at the Altar.

The Elements of Repentance (in order).

1. Godly sorrow.

“Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.

Godly sorrow is not being sorry for ourselves being caught out (which was King Saul's response), but genuinely sorry for transgressing the Law of God and sinning. This takes us deeper in our salvation journey on the path of life, deeper into the altar lifestyle.

2. Confession

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

Confession means verbally speaking out before the Lord that you have sinned and asking Him to forgive you. If it is a sin only against God, then that is sufficient. If it involves others you may need to release forgiveness to them and, if necessary, make restitution. Confession before others can also be helpful (James 5:16), not so they can pronounce that your sins are forgiven (only God can do that), but so that you may have witnesses that you have been forgiven, cleansed and healed by God.

3. Leave behind sin (180 degrees turn).

You must then turn your back on the sin and pronounce yourself dead to it through the blood of Christ and the new creation life we have in Him (Galatians 2:20).

4. Will not do it again (holy lifestyle).

True repentance will not lead to a sinless life but a life that will sin less and less and live more of a holy lifestyle. Bad habits will be broken, and people will see the change in your lifestyle for God’s glory.

5. Replacing with a godly action.

“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.” Ephesians 4:28.

After confessing our sins at the altar, we are cleansed but need to put off the old action and put on the opposite spirit. If we do not do this, then we can present a clean and empty house for seven more demons to come and occupy it (Matthew 12:43-45) and the end will be worse than the beginning!

Repentance is Needed Today.

The church today has largely forgotten how to repent. We need to come back to this much-needed discipline. It’s through deep personal repentance that we are cleansed and have access into the realm of the Spirit where He will reveal His will to us so we can intercede and declare and move in our destinies with power and authority.

Jesus told five of the seven churches in Revelation to repent. The two that He did not ask to repent (Smyrna and Philadelphia) were suffering persecution and would have already come to the Lord in repentance.

Practical Helps for Repenting

- Take time after hallowing God’s name to repent of sins God has revealed in your reading and praise.

- Use *'forgive me'* not *'forgive us'*.
- Make sure you are truly sorry for breaking God's law and are determined to walk in transformation. Ask for the Lord's help and strategies to do so.

Deep Repentance Leads to Consecration.

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." 2 Timothy 2:20-21

Cleansing ourselves through repentance makes us a vessel of honour that is sanctified (consecrated) for His Kingdom work.

The word consecration means:

1. Dedicated to a sacred purpose.
2. Complete devotion to God.

Every day as we come to the altar we need to go deeper and deeper in our consecration to Him so that we can walk the altar lifestyle during the day. We will be more dedicated to His agenda, not ours. Our devotion will be to Him and His will.

"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but present yourselves to God as being

alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13

We need to consecrate every part of our body to Him. The priests in the Old Testament were not to approach the Holy Place with any physical defect in their body (Leviticus 21:17-21). As New testament priests, we must present our body parts without spiritual defect.

The following picture shows us the members of our body we need to daily consecrate to Him. For each member we need to renew our covenant with Him.

Some of the key members of our body we need to present for consecration are:

Consecrating every part.



Ears (hearing):

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.”
Acts 7:51.

To have circumcised ears means having covenant ears, as circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant in the Old Testament. Covenant ears means hearing only what is truth and cutting off all fleshly hearing. It is having pierced ears (Exodus 21:1-6) that only hear what our Lord and Master is saying and calling us to do. It is listening so we will hear His rhema words of life: His high, holy, and heavenly calling.

Hearing that is not consecrated is due to:

1. Trusting in our own might (Micah 7:16).
2. Not exercising our spiritual senses (Hebrews 5:11-14).
3. Ignoring the promptings of God (Isaiah 65:12).
4. Have itching (infected) ears (2 Timothy 4:3-4).
5. Not being in the place to hear (Romans 10:14).

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your ears (Leviticus 14:14) and covenant with God to hear and do only what He wants You to hear and do.

Eyes (seeing):

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?” Job 31:1

Job had covenant eyes to only look upon the visions God wanted him to see. He consecrated his eyes to look only upon that which pleased the Lord. This is what we must do so that our eyes will see His glory and His heavenly revelations.

Seeing that is not consecrated is due to:

1. Hatred in our hearts (1 John 2:11).
2. The lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16).
3. A Judgmental and critical spirit (Matthew 7:3).
4. False doctrine and teaching (Micah 3:5-6).

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your eyes and covenant with God to see only what He wants You to see.

Mouth (speech):

“My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.” Psalm 89:34

Our mouths are to be like the Lord’s mouth, always speaking out Covenant truth and destiny.

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your mouth (Songs 4:3) and covenant with God to speak only what pleases Him.

Heart (Mind, will and emotions):

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28-29

Like our ears, our heart is to be circumcised. This means having covenant hearts that are ready to obey, declare and walk in His covenant destiny for us. Our mind is to be the mind of

Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Our will is to align with the will of the Father (Luke 22:42). Our emotions are to be the emotions of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your heart (Psalm 51:10) and covenant with God to think, do and feel only that which pleases Him.

Hands (service):

“He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.” Psalm 24:4.

We must not have hands that show a deceitful covenant with God. Our hands must be covenant hands that do His will in our service to others. Hands that heal not hurt. Hands that build and not destroy (Proverbs 14:1). Holy hands (1 Timothy 2:8).

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your hands (Leviticus 14:14) and covenant with God to serve Him with your hands, healing and not hurting, building His Kingdom, and not tearing it down.

Feet (walk):

“And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Ephesians 6:15.

We are to take off our shoes that are coated in the dust of this world and put on gospel shoes that clad our feet in the good news (Gospel) of His New Covenant. Our feet are to walk upon holy ground (Exodus 3:5), they are to be covenant feet that walk in God’s covenant ways and into His destiny so that every

place our foot treads upon can be claimed as holy for Him (Joshua 1:3) as we crush the enemy's head (Romans 16:20).

Every day take time to apply the blood of Christ to your feet (Leviticus 14:14) and covenant with God to walk so as to further the Gospel of the New Covenant. To walk worthily of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (Colossians 1:10).

Offering our All.

On top of these six parts of the body, we need to offer all we are, have and ever will be to Him.

1. Our Positions (All we are).

Offer all our accomplishments, social background, talents, and skills to Him.

2. Our Possessions (All we have).

Offer all our money, possessions, and all other kinds of wealth to Him.

3. Our Purposes (All we ever will be).

Offer all our dreams, desires, ambitions, and goals to Him.

Daily we need to pour out these things to the Lord so we can be a vessel he can fill with His love.

As we consecrate all these to Him on a daily basis, with a time of deep repentance, we will find our supernatural altar lifestyle

will increase in power and authority and we will see more and more wonders day by day (Joshua 3:5). It is this consecration that will take us deeper into the Holy Place, into the wonderland of His Spirit.

Practical Helps for Consecration

- In the context of your repentance you can say and mean a prayer like, *“I promise God that what I know to be right I will do it”* (based on James 4:17), or like the following model prayer:

“Lord, I am not my own. Lord Jesus, I belong to You because You bought me with such a price. Oh Lord, thank You for paying the highest price of Your own precious blood to purchase me! I am Yours. All I have and all I am and ever will be are Yours. So, Lord, I give you my body, my soul, and my spirit. I give you my very life. Lord, I give you my time, my energy, my education, my family, my job.” (based on 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

- Then you can offer each part of your body to the Lord by touching your ears, eyes, mouth, heart, hands, and feet and promise to use each part to glorify His name. Also, offer up all you are (positions), have (possessions) and ever will be (purposes) to Him.

- As you do the above the Lord may highlight areas you have used these parts wrongly and you can repent of specific sins as we learnt above.

Blessed benefits of Consecration

1. **Presence** (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1; James 4:8).
Consecration (cleansing our hands, purifying our hearts) draws His presence and brings us into the full fatherhood of God as His sons and daughters.
2. **Preparation** (2 Timothy 2:20-21).
Consecration prepares us to be useful for the Lord, prepared for every good work.
3. **Power** (Joshua 3:5).
Consecration enables us to walk in His power and authority where He does mighty things in our midst.

How does this work in practice?

I have found it useful to go through the following process daily after hallowing the name of the Lord and entering worship...

1. Consecration.

Consecrate every part of your body to the Lord as shown above. You can touch each part as you do so. Offer Him your all – your dreams, ambitions, work, possessions, qualifications, titles and family and ministry. Lay them all down at the foot of the cross.

2. *Confession.*

As you go through the consecration process the Lord may highlight sins you have committed. For example, as you touch your eyes and offer them to God, He may remind you of a lustful look! You can the repent of that sin with true repentance as described above.

3. *Cleansing.*

This part is vitally important. After offering the sacrifices for sin the priest would proceed to the brazen laver to be cleansed before entering the Holy Place. If we repent without receiving cleansing, we are just sin conscious and not spirit conscious.

Here I like to lift my arms and imagine the waterfall of the Holy Spirit's cleansing, crystal clear, waters washing over my soul and bringing forgiveness and healing.

It is here I also declare aloud who I am in Him – a qualified priest, an able minister of the new covenant, an effective ambassador of the Kingdom, a new creation, no more in condemnation, His masterpiece created for good works.

Washing @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 and Philippians 2:12-13. *Who does the cleansing? How do we work together with God in this?*
2. Read Psalm 119:11 and Romans 2:4. *How do the Word and Worship lead you to repentance and consecration? How can you apply this in your own life?*
3. *What is true repentance and how can we daily practice it? What is the relationship between repentance and consecration? Why do we daily need to do these things?*



Activity

Spend 15 minutes laying down your all before the Lord. Use the picture to the left to consecrate every part to Him – as you go through each one, apply the blood of Christ to it in faith. As the Lord highlights sins, take time to repent. Then stand with hands up to receive a fresh cleansing from head to toe from the Spirit of God.

You can use the model prayer on Page 105.

*“Sanctify yourselves,
for tomorrow the
Lord will do wonders
among you.”*

Joshua 3:5

PART 4

Wonders

@ the

Altar

‘‘Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.’’ Acts 10:10-11

Being caught up in the Spirit (entering the realm of the Spirit).

The Apostle Peter lived the supernatural altar lifestyle. He used the times of the temple sacrifice (morning (3rd hour, 9am), noon (6th hour, 12 noon) and evening (9th hour, 3pm)), where animals were sacrificed daily at the altar, to set aside for his altar time where he prayed and worshiped, and he lived out of these times throughout the day (e.g. Acts 3:1). In Acts 10 we see he is physically hungry, but he is hungrier for God and, at the noon sacrifice, he goes onto the roof of Simon the Tanner’s house for his prayer altar time. It says that he *“fell into a trance”* and the heavens opened to bring him revelation. We see him here crossing over into the realm of the spirit, the realm of the supernatural. The word used for trance in the Greek is *ekstasis*, literally meaning *“out of a standing”* or even *“out of a covenant”*.

Being *“caught up in the spirit”* simply means that, out of a covenant standing with the Lord, you are granted access to the spiritual realm and can see heavenly visions and walk in the power and anointing of the Spirit.

Other saints who experience such things were John (Revelation 1:10; 4:1-2) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 31:1), Paul's friend (2 Corinthians 12:2) and many others. These times of being caught up in the Spirit should contribute to a lifestyle of "walking in the Spirit":

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16

Gateway to the Third Heaven (true wonderland).



"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven." 2 Corinthians 12:2

Paul's friend (some scholars believe it was Paul himself who did not want to boast) was literally caught up to something called the "*third heaven*".

What we see with our natural eyes as we look to the skies is the "*first heaven*" (Genesis 1:1), the natural created order. The "*second heaven*" is the realm where fallen angels (evil spirits) operate and is that which contributes to the covering of darkness upon the nations (Isaiah 60:2; Ephesians 6:12). The "*third heaven*" is where the Throne room of God is. Indeed, the Apostle John sees the heavenly temple here with the real altar of Incense (Revelation 8:3) and the real ark of the covenant (Revelation 11:19) in heaven.

Our hearts are the brazen altars (made of brass which speaks of God's judgment and can only reside on earth). However, when we are caught up in the Spirit we come before His heavenly altar, the altar of Incense, which is wood covered in gold (humanity clothed in God's nature). At the prayer altar we are caught up in the spirit into the heavenly temple so we can intercede for those under the covering of darkness. At the altar, the darkness is punctured, and God's light comes flooding from heaven to earth – His Kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Spiritual Light (The Menorah - Exodus 25:31-40, Exodus 37:17-29).

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

Immediately on entering the Holy Place, the priest would be bathed in light from the Menorah, the seven-branched candle stick made entirely of one piece of Gold. This speaks of spiritual illumination.

In the outer court the lighting would have been a mixture of natural lighting, with only the fire from God from the altar and the fire by night from the pillar over the Holy of Holies lighting it at night. However, in the Holy Place, the lighting becomes wholly from the Menorah, representing the supernatural illumination of God. We are not to walk by sight, meaning by the natural light of this world, but by faith, that is by the light that comes from His Word and His Spirit.

The Menorah and the Shewbread, which it illuminates, both speak about the Spirit and the Word coming together. His word is a lamp (Psalm 119:105) but these lamps in the heavenly temple are called the “*seven spirits of God*” (Revelation 4:5). The oil that was to be daily replenished to keep the lamp burning represents the Holy Spirit.

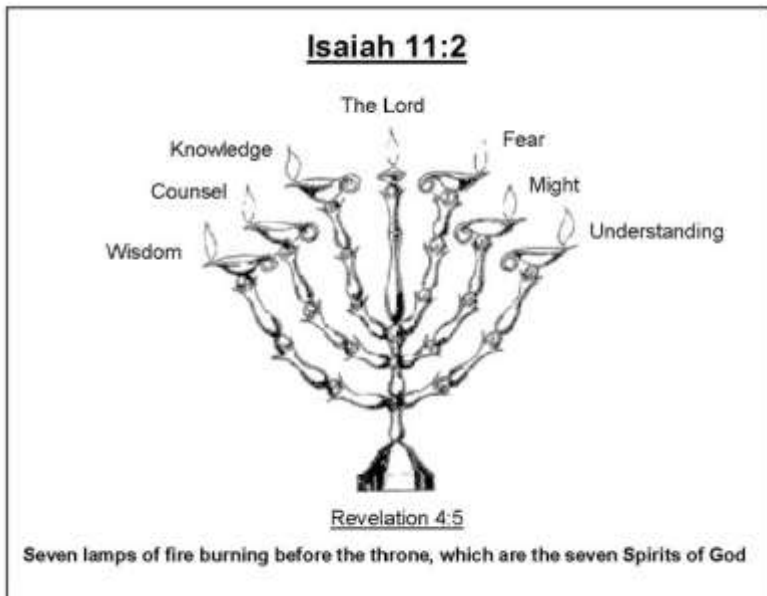
“All Word and no Spirit, we dry up; all Spirit and no Word, we blow up; both Word and Spirit, we grow up.” David Watson

You see this same balance if you compare Colossians 3:16 with Ephesians 5:17-19.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:18-19

The Sevenfold Spirit of God.



*“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,*

The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
Isaiah 11:2

The Same Spirit that came upon Jesus (Luke 3:22) comes upon us.

Each one of the seven aspects of the Spirit of God correspond to one branch of the Menorah. The central unifying branch speaks of the overall description of the Spirit being the “*Spirit of the Lord*”. The Spirit is not a force but is God Himself, the third person of the Trinity.

Then there are three pairs, corresponding to the joined branches of the Menorah. Each of these pairings speaks of the unique ministries of the Holy Spirit.

The Ministry of Revelation (Ephesians 1:17).

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Ephesians 1:17

The Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.

After the acquiring of knowledge by the reading of God’s Word comes the apprehending of what that knowledge means through spiritual understanding and then applying that knowledge and understanding through God-given wisdom. The Spirit gives us supernatural understanding and wisdom to know how to pray, how to go about our day in His will and how to see His Kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Ministry of Relevance (2 Corinthians 1:3-4; John 14:26).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name.”

John 14:26

The Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of Counsel and Might.

The Holy Spirit is named the Helper and in other versions the same word is correctly translated as comforter or counselor. He enables us to counsel, comfort, help others in the power and strength of His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6).

This means our altar lifestyles should be relevant, comforting, healing, delivering others, praying, and ministering in His will and in His power with signs and wonders.

The Ministry of Relationship (Romans 8:15).

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”” Romans 8:15

The Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.

Knowledge, as used in Scripture concerning God, does not mean knowing facts about Him but knowing Him in

relationship. The fear of the Lord is not an unhealthy, condemning fear but a healthy reverential fear of our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit brings us into Sonship, into a dynamic relationship with God where we are close to His heart and understand the Father's good pleasure. We enter into the wondrous inheritance of the Father in the nations (Psalms 2:8) as heirs with His Son, Jesus (Romans 8:17).

Indeed, these three ministries of the Holy Spirit are summed up in 2 Timothy 1:7, which says *“for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

As we progress into the Holy Place the spirit of fear is cast away and He fills us with His Spirit of power (counsel and might), love (knowledge and of the fear of the Lord) and a sound mind (wisdom and understanding).

Hindrances to Seeing in the Spirit.

- Hatred in our hearts (1 John 2:11).
- The lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16).
- A Judgmental and critical spirit (Matthew 7:3).
- False doctrine and teaching (Micah 3:5-6).

Spiritual bread (Table of Showbread – Exodus 25:23-30).

“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4

On the other side from the Menorah was the Table of Showbread, literally the Table of His Presence. The Hebrew word for Showbread is “*Lechem HaPanim*”, meaning “*bread of the Face*”. This is bread that is to reveal the very face of God! Ultimately this bread represents Jesus Himself who is the “*Bread of Life*” (John 6:35).

There were twelve loaves of Showbread on the table, one for each tribe. Together these tribes represent God’s people, the Body of Christ, who are to be filled with His presence through the Spirit of Christ, through the quickening of the Word of God to us so it becomes flesh and reality in and through our lives by faith.

Thus, the bread represents the *rhema* word of God. There are two main words for “*word*” in the New Testament. One is “*logos*” meaning the written word of God and the other is “*rhema*” meaning the spoken, quickened word of God (that will come from the *logos* and not contradict it).

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.” Romans 10:17

So, after our time of reading His Word, hallowing His name and then going through deep repentance and consecration we will be caught up in the Spirit to hear His *rhema* words that will speak to us about how to pray and what we should do during the day and even further into the future. This will lead us into His agenda for our altar times and not our own.

God's Voice	Satan's Voice
Stills you	Rushes you
Leads you	Pushes you
Reassures you	Frightens you
Enlightens you	Confuses you
Encourages you	Discourages you
Comforts you	Worries you
Calms you	Obsesses you
Convicts you	Condemns you

Hindrances to Hearing His Voice.

- Trusting in our own might (Micah 7:16).
- Not exercising our spiritual senses (Hebrews 5:11-14).
- Ignoring the promptings of God (Isaiah 65:12).
- Have itching (infected) ears (2 Timothy 4:3-4).
- Not being in the place to hear (Romans 10:14).

How to Hear His Voice?

What do we need to do to hear His quickened word? We must incline our spiritual ears to Him.

“So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift

up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.” Proverbs 2:2-9

We need to ‘*tune in*’ to hear what the Lord is saying by His Spirit. There are many voices clamouring for our attention, the voices of fear, doubt, reason, hatred, materialism, comfort and so forth, but we need to actively incline our spiritual ears to hear God’s words. How do we do this? Proverbs 2:2-9 gives us active words that show us what we should practically do to incline our ears to hear his voice...

- (i) Apply your heart.
- (ii) Cry out.
- (iii) Lift up your voice.
- (iv) Seek and search as for treasure.

All these words describe the condition of an intense desire to hear the truth. It is possible to be ‘*listening*’ but not really hearing. Sometimes when I am working on my computer my wife will say something to me and will think that I have heard it. But the reality is that it is gone in one ear and straight out of the other!

For me to really hear and take in what she is saying I must stop my work, turn my back on the computer, look firmly in her eyes and concentrate. It is the same with hearing the Lord. We need to stop what we are doing for a moment, turn our back on all other sources of information (other voices) and concentrate intently on what God is saying to us.

“Yet they did not obey or incline their ear but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts and went backward and not forward.” Jeremiah 7:24

The above verse shows clearly what happens to us if we fail to incline our ears to God’s voice – we will backslide!

Praying in the Spirit

What I am really talking about here is that, after a daily time of repentance and consecration we are cleansed and filled afresh with the Holy Spirit. He brings fresh revelation and speaks to us so we can pray according to His will, which is *‘Praying in the Holy Spirit’* (Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20). This can be praying in Tongues or in understanding but comes from revelation by the Spirit of God.

This will lead us into a time of deep prayer and intercession before the Altar of Incense, which brings us to the next section.

Wonders @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

- 1. How do reading His Word, Praising, and worshipping Him and then repentance and consecration help us to hear the voice of God's Spirit?*
- 2. Read Ephesians 5:18-19. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? How can we live more in the realm of His Spirit? What do we need to do?*
- 3. What does the golden menorah and the table of shewbread represent spiritually? How can you walk more in the Spirit's wisdom and revelation and hear more of His voice?*

God's Voice	Satan's Voice
Stills you	Rushes you
Leads you	Pushes you
Reassures you	Frightens you
Enlightens you	Confuses you
Encourages you	Discourages you
Comforts you	Worries you
Calms you	Obsesses you
Convicts you	Condemns you

Activity

Spend 15 minutes asking for a fresh outpouring of His Spirit. Cry out for Him to speak to you then wait on Him for a word or revelation. Write down what you see or hear in the spirit. Is it Biblical? Use the chart to the left to make sure it is of the Lord. If it is, respond to it in faith.

PART 5

Watchmen

@ the

Altar

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”

Revelation 8:3

The Altar of Incense Speaks of Intercession.

As we stand in the spiritual holy place, caught up by the Spirit, we come before the heavenly Altar of Incense, which is where we go into prayer, especially intercession. This is only possible in the Spirit as it is He who intercedes in and through us in the will of God by the illumination of the sevenfold Spirit of God (the Menorah) and the living, *rhema* word of God as He shows His face (the Showbread).

As the Spirit fills us, He gives us His revelation and quickens words to us that will come from, complement, and confirm the Word of God. This revelation will lead us as to what we are to pray for, what is His agenda. It will especially be revelation as to what is God’s will in terms of who to intercede for (people, situations, and people groups), what to intercede and how to do it.

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who

desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*” 1 Timothy 2:1-5

Paul exhorted us to make supplications (requests), prayers, intercessions, and the thanksgiving for all people as the Spirit leads us. He may lead us to pray for all kinds of people (“*everyone*”) or for “*kings and those in authority*”. This is His prerogative and we should be sensitive to His prompting.

This passage reveals a special order in prayer. Firstly, we are to have a request. In Greek, this is “*deesis*” meaning “*a wanting, an asking or a need*”. This is not our agenda but comes from the revelation of the Spirit as He places a burden on our hearts. Then comes prayer which is the Greek word “*proseuche*” meaning “*to pray earnestly*”. As we receive a burden then we must take it into deep and earnest prayer. This prayer will often be simply to ask God to lead you deeper into the place of intercession for that person, group of people or situation. Next comes the intercession proper which we will look at in more details in this session. Finally comes the thanksgiving which is the Greek word “*eucharista*” which means “*good grace, gratitude, grateful language*”. This is thanking God for answering your intercession when you have come to the place of authority and certainty (we will cover this later in this session).

It is the Spirit interceding for us and through us.

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26-27

It is important to realize that Jesus models true intercession but the Spirit is the one that intercedes in and through us, sometimes even without words. As we cross over into the spiritual realm the Spirit will lead us in our intercession according to God’s will (1 John 5:14).

“Jesus Christ carries on intercession for us in heaven; the Holy Ghost carries on intercession in us on earth; and we the saints have to carry on intercession for all men.” Oswald Chambers

What is intercession?

In the Old Testament, the main word for intercession is “*paga*” which means “*to meet together, entreat*” (Isaiah 53:12; 59:16). In the New Testament, the main word is “*huperentegchano*” which means to “*intercede on behalf of*” from the root “*enteuxis*” meaning “*a lighting upon, meeting with*”. It is a place of both meeting God to entreat His favour on behalf of others and meeting others in the Spirit and identifying and

crying out on their behalf. Intercession is much more than simply praying for others. Broadly speaking, intercession is the prayer we make on behalf of others: individuals, families, churches, assemblies, and nations.

It is Standing in the Gap.

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” Ezekiel 22:30

Intercession is a standing in the gap on behalf of lives and the land. The gap speaks of a gap between the people and God because of their sin and is a gap where the darkness of the enemy has seeped in and defiled the people and the land.

The English word “*intercession*” comes from the Latin word “*intracedre*” meaning “*to stand between*”. Hence intercession means to mediate, negotiate, arbitrate, intervene, plead between God and His creation – it is a legal mandate.

It is to see the need and pain in God’s heart, take responsibility in repentance and confession for the cause and boldly plead that His wrath be averted.

It is a taking on the mind of Christ and seeing a situation as Christ sees it and then acting accordingly.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

Intercession is standing in the gap on behalf of others to see transformation. The gap is a gap separating them from the Good, Acceptable and Perfect (GAP) will of God. It is pleading for God to change His mind (Exodus 32:14) and for the people we are praying for to change theirs and embrace God’s will that will bring transformation.

Examples of Intercession in Scripture.

The following chart shows five examples of intercession and some of the key points present in true intercession:

Abraham	Moses	Aaron	David	Daniel
Genesis 18:16-33	Exodus 32:12-14; 30-35	Numbers 16:44-50	2 Samuel 24:15-25	Daniel 9: 1-23
REMINDS GOD OF HIS COVENANT	READY TO TAKE BURDEN	REMAINS UNTIL GOD RELENTS	REBUILDS THE ALTAR FOR THE PEOPLE	REPENTS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE
<i>“Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” v35</i>	<i>“Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” v32</i>	<i>“Then Aaron put in the incense and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.” v47-48</i>	<i>“And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.” v25</i>	<i>“Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God.” v20</i>

Jesus Demonstrated What Intercession is.

*“Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.”*
Isaiah 53:12

“The identification of the intercessor with the ones for whom he intercedes is perfectly seen in the Saviour. Of Him it was said that He poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. As the Divine Intercessor, interceding for a lost world, He drained the cup of our lost condition to its last drop, He “tasted death for every man”. To do that, in the fullest possible sense, He sat where we sit. By taking our nature upon Himself, by learning obedience through the things which He suffered, by being tempted in all points like as we are, by becoming poor for our sakes, and finally by being made sin for us, He gained the position in which, with the fullest authority as the captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings, and the fullest understanding of all we go through, He can ever live to make intercession for us, and by effective pleadings with the Father “is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” Norman Grubb, “Rees Howells, Intercessor”.

This intercession by Jesus is vividly seen in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39-46). The word “*gethsemane*” means “*oil press*” and the oil press is a fantastic illustration of the process of intercession. Olives were shaken off the tree and gathered to be pressed. Jesus went through a personal shaking and was tempted in every way yet without sin so that He could identify with us. Then He was pressed (squashed) and suffered, bearing the weight of our sin even to the point of His sweat being like drops of blood. Of course, the pinnacle of this was at the Cross. Then, after the resurrection, He shone forth with the anointing oil of an intercessor who has gained the authority and the place of breakthrough. The following picture shows this process:



This is the process we are to go through so we can be like the five wise virgins in Jesus' parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The five wise virgins were wise as they had extra oil. Where did they get this extra oil from? They got it from having been at gethsemane – the place of intercession!

The Three Elements of Intercession.

To put together all that has been said above we can say there are three main elements of intercession. In order, these elements are Association, Agony and Authority.

Association.

This is the entry point into true intercession. It is associating or identifying with those whom we are interceding for. There are three aspects to this identification:

1. Identificational Replacement.

This is putting ourselves in the shoes of the people we are interceding for. It may even mean identifying with them by changing our lifestyle – replacing our way of living for a season to live like those we are praying for (without sinning of course).

2. Identificational Realization.

This is seeing the people we are interceding for through the eyes of Jesus. It is realizing the pain and suffering they have gone through and are going through.

3. Identificational Repentance.

This is humbling ourselves to identify with the people we are interceding for through identifying with them in repentance. We see this in Nehemiah's prayer:

“Please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.” Nehemiah 1:6-7

It is not praying “*forgive them*” but “*forgive us*”. This softens our hearts for the people we pray for, so we are not critical and judgmental, and it leads us into a life full of grace towards others.

This kind of prayer bears an attitude of extreme humility - one that does not judge or criticize others for their sins but instead recognizes that if we were in a similar situation, we might have committed the same sins, and even accepts that the root of such sins also exists in us, and even admits that we are directly or indirectly responsible for the presence of such sins in our society.

Identificational repentance prayer is similar to Jesus' crucifixion on the cross for our sins; He did not commit the sins, but He bore the penalty for our sins, so that we could receive salvation. God starts to move when such a humble prayer is made. This does not mean that we can provide salvation, because it is a gift that Jesus has already paid for, but we act as an agent of repentance through whom God can reveal his grace to those in sin. Sinners, today, rarely call out to God for forgiveness. They need intercessors, who are humble and not proud, condemning, or judgmental.

Agony.

As we cry out and plead the Lord to forgive us and avert His wrath, we will agonize over the situation just as Jesus did at Gethsemane. This agonizing is done through the Spirit.

“There is another Intercessor, and in Him we see the agony of this ministry; for He; the Holy Spirit. “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”. This one, the only present intercessor on earth, has no hearts upon which He can lay His burdens, and no bodies through which He can suffer and work, except the hearts and bodies of those who are His dwelling place. Through them He does His intercessory work on earth, and they become intercessors by reason of the intercessor within them. It is real life to which He calls them, the very same kind of life, in lesser measure, which the Saviour

Himself lived on earth.” Norman Grubb, “Rees Howells, Intercessor.”

This is the Agony of soul Moses went through when he cried out “*Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.*” (Exodus 32:32). It is the agony of the Apostle Paul as he cried out on behalf of His people, the Jews, “*For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh*” (Romans 9:3).

This is the point where we “*fill up in our flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ*” (Colossians 1:24). There is nothing lacking in Christ’s sufferings concerning His completed work of atonement, but this is talking about the suffering we need to bear on behalf of others by interceding for them. It is bearing their burdens (Galatians 6:2) by allowing the Spirit to groan and agonize through us.

Authority.

“But intercession is more than the Spirit sharing His groanings with us, and living His life of sacrifice for the world through us. It is the Spirit gaining His ends of abundant grace. If the intercessor knows identification and agony, he also knows authority. It is the law of the corn of wheat and the harvest: “if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit”. Intercession is not substitution for sin. There has only ever been one substitute for a world of sinners, Jesus the Son of God. But

intercession so identifies the intercessor with the sufferer that it gives him a prevailing place with God. He moves God. He even causes Him to change His mind.” Norman Grubb, “Rees Howells, Intercessor”.

After association and agony there will be a time when the Lord brings you to the gained position of intercession. This is where the golden censer, carrying our prayers, is moved from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies.

“and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.” Hebrews 9:4

This brings us to the place of authority as kings of God before His throne. The pot of manna speaks of divine provision. Aaron’s budded rod speaks of divine authority and the tablets of the law speak of divine promises. All these are ours when we gain the place of intercession.

Watchmen @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

Abraham	Moses	Aaron	David	Daniel
Genesis 18:16-33	Exodus 32:12-14; 30-35	Numbers 16:44-50	2 Samuel 24:15-25	Daniel 9: 1-23
REMINDS GOD OF HIS COVENANT	READY TO TAKE BURDEN	REMAINS UNTIL GOD RELENTS	REBUILDS THE ALTAR FOR THE PEOPLE	REPENTS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE
<i>"Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" v35</i>	<i>"Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." v32</i>	<i>"Then Aaron put in the incense and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped." v47-48</i>	<i>"And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel." v25</i>	<i>"Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God." v20</i>

1. Look at the above chart and read the activities of a watchman and the related verses. *How does this show the three A's of Intercession we are to have at the Altar (association, agony, and authority)?*
2. *How do you normally pray for others? Is this true intercession or not? Do you need to change the way you pray for others? If so, how?*

Activity

Ask the Lord to show you one person He wants you to intercede for (a name or the image of the person's face). Take 15 minutes to intercede for them using what you have learnt in this chapter. Pray until you gain breakthrough.

PART 6

Weight
@ the
Altar

‘When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord’s house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: “For He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

The ultimate aim of the Prayer Altar is for the glory of God to fall. This glory is evident from the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant but fills the whole temple (us individually and the church). It is the fourth level of God’s Presence.

The four levels of the presence of God are the:

1. Omni-presence (Universal)
2. Indwelling presence (New Birth)
3. Manifest presence (Anointing).
4. Evidential presence (Glory).

Omni-presence (Universal Presence).

The omni-presence of God simply means that God is everywhere whether we perceive Him or not. The prefix, “*omni*,” is a Latin term meaning, all or universal. So you could call this the universal presence of God, or say that God is all-

present. God is everywhere always because “... *all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*” (Colossians 1:16-17). King David summarized it well when He wrote, “*Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?*” (Psalm 139:7). See also Jeremiah 23:23-34.

Indwelling Presence (New Birth).

The indwelling presence is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27). As Jesus told Nicodemus, we must be born again to enter into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). We were born sinful because we were born of Adam (Romans 5:12, 17), but by grace through faith God raises us to new life in Christ (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 8:11). He makes us a new creation in Christ, transforming our lives through the seed of life He plants within us: His own Spirit (1John 4:13 and 1Corinthians 6:19).

It is because of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God that we know that God abides in us (1John 3:24). It is God’s Spirit that gives us eternal life and seals us for the day of our final redemption. He is the guarantee of the fullness of all that Jesus purchased for us with His life (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Manifest Presence (The Anointing).

The manifest presence differs from the indwelling presence in that it falls upon (Ezekiel 11:5), rushes upon (Judges 14:6, 15:14; 1Samuel 10:10, 11:6), or is smeared upon you instead

of dwelling within you. This is what the Bible refers to as the anointing. The word, “*anoint*,” is a Hebrew word which means, “*to smear on, to rub with oil*”.

In the Old Testament, men were anointed with oil to designate, authorize, and commission them for a special purpose. God anoints us with His Spirit for the same reasons, by which He also empowers us to fulfill His purpose. Therefore, the anointing is the presence of God’s power for a purpose. The presence is manifest in the sense that it is tangible, or made known, to you. It is not a feeling, but feeling accompanies it. It is perceivable grace to perform God’s will.

Jesus began His public ministry by reading out of Isaiah 61, declaring that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him because He was anointed, and revealing that God’s anointing is for a purpose (Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38).

The manifest presence of God is for a purpose: to empower us to touch the world around us with the power of God. In short, you receive power to do God’s will when the Holy Spirit falls upon you (Acts 1:8).

Evidential Presence (The Glory of God).

The evidential presence is a term that Jeremy Charis coined to describe what the Bible refers to as the glory of the Lord. The glory is when the presence of God is not only evident to you, but perceivable to those around you as well. It is the presence

of God on display. The ultimate example of the glory of the Lord is the incarnation of Jesus. His name is Emmanuel, meaning, “*God is with us.*” He is the radiant and glorious presence of God. In Him, all the fullness of God was made evident to us all (John 1:14; Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Adam and Eve “*heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden,*” and because they sinned they “*hid themselves from the presence of the Lord*” (Genesis 3:8). Since they tried to hide themselves physically, this indicates that they experienced the presence of God physically as well (Genesis 3:7). Even after this, God continued to make His presence evident to mankind in various ways. The Bible says that He had shown His glory to all of Israel through His voice, booming out of the midst of fire (Deuteronomy 5:24).

In Hebrew the word referring to the glory of God is, “*kabod,*” which figuratively means, “*weighty*”. It’s the weighty splendour of God, the substance or evidence of His presence. When you are in the glory presence of God, you may not physically see or hear anything, but you will often feel the tangible, heavy, weighty substance of God all over you. In the Old Testament, we find that when the glory of the Lord filled the house of God with a cloud, the priests could not stand to minister (Exodus 40:34; 2Chronicles 5:13-14).

The glory of God is the atmosphere of Heaven, the very substance of the Kingdom — the evidential presence of God

Himself. The moments that I've experienced the glory of God have ruined me and reshaped me at the same time. There is nothing like His presence.

What is this Weight?

The weight of God's glory (Kabod) was so heavy that the priests in Solomon's temple could not continue ministering (2 Chronicles 5:14). It is the very heaviness of who He is in a tangible presence before a community. It will literally be felt as a wonderful heaviness but also comes with a weight of responsibility.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

The weight of His glory is actually Him putting His burdens on us that we are to carry that accumulate to form a weight of glory for us in eternity. These burdens or 'yokes' are light and easy in comparison to those of the world (Matthew 11:30), even if they seem so much heavier in the natural.

In the Old Testament the priests were to carry the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders (Deuteronomy 31:9). The box alone would have weighed up to 200kg but with the contents

of the tablets, pot and rod plus the mercy seat (solid gold with the Cherubim) it would have been almost impossible to carry. They needed the supernatural strengthening of the Lord. So do we, to carry the Covenant responsibilities God places on us as we encounter His glory.

Ultimately the glory of God is the weight of His covenant – His plan and destiny for us.

What is covenant?

The term ‘*covenant*’ is used 285 times in the Old Testament (*berith*) and 33 times in the New Testament (*diatheke*). Covenants were not contracts.

Contract	Covenant
Obligation: "I have to."	Opportunity: "I want to."
Impersonal: "Involves something I have or do."	Personal: "Involves all that I am."
Conditional: " <i>If you do your part, I'll do mine.</i> "	Unconditional: " <i>I'll do my part whether you do yours or not.</i> "
Leverage: "I look out for my own best interest."	Loyalty: "I am looking out for your best interest."
Suspicion: "I want assurance that you will do your part."	Trust: "I will certainly do my part."
Business: "What will it take?"	Relational: "Whatever it takes!"
Compromise: " <i>I'll meet you halfway.</i> "	Sacrifice: " <i>I'll give 100%.</i> "
Temporary: "Once all stipulations have been met, the contract is over."	Permanent: "I will continue to do this as long as I draw breath."

In a Biblical covenant there are six key elements:

1. We are bound together with God by sacrifice (Psalm 50:5).
2. He exchanges His life for ours (1 John 4:17).
3. He exchanges His weapons for ours (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).
4. We come under the promises of the Covenant (2 Peter 1:4).
5. To obtain the blessings we need to walk in faith and obedience.
6. He fights our battles (1 Samuel 17:47).

Jesus Fulfilled the Three Main Covenants of the Old Testament.

The Adamic (His covenant to Adam – Genesis 1:26-28) and Noahide (His covenant to Noah – Genesis 9:8-17) covenants are really summaries of what God would do through one nation, Israel, with the intent of reaching all nations. God's covenants to Israel are fulfilled in Christ and to be carried out by the Church.

Jesus fulfilled the Abrahamic (His covenant to Abraham – Genesis 12:1-3), Mosaic (His covenant to Moses – Exodus 19-20) and Davidic (His covenant to David – 2 Samuel 7) covenants in Himself.

He fulfilled the covenant to Abraham in that He fulfilled all the priestly promises to Abraham in becoming the promised

son who is the ultimate offering for sins, The Lamb of God (typified in the life of Isaac). He also has become the great High Priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1-3). He fulfilled the Mosaic covenant in becoming that prophet who is greater than Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-20), fulfilling the Law in Himself. He fulfilled the Davidic Covenant in becoming the promised Messiah, the Son of David (Luke 18:38), the King of kings. Hence Jesus is Priest, Prophet and King!

These three covenants speak of what Jesus has done for us:

Abrahamic covenant = Salvation of Man (made righteous).

Mosaic Covenant = Sanctification of Man (be holy).

Davidic Covenant = Glorification of Man (overcome).

Living in the Covenants.

Jesus has fulfilled these three covenants to make them one new covenant that we are to live by. All these covenants were made and renewed at the altar of the Lord. For us, as we daily come to the Altar, the Lord wants to renew and strengthen these three aspects of the Covenant with us.

Through repentance and consecration we renew our covenant of salvation and act as priests before the Lord. Through revelation and intercession we come into our prophetic role

and through declaration and decree in the most holy place we enter our role as kings.



Hence, this final part of our prayer altar journey is the pinnacle of all the previous experiences in His word, in worship, in washing, in wonder and in watching for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is here that God pours out His glory on us and clothes us in His authority, in His robes of kingly anointing. It is here that He will cause covenant declarations and decrees to come forth in power that will bring transformation into lives and lands.

“The word declare comes from the Hebrew achvah, meaning “to make known” or “to set forth an accounting.” It is commonly used by customs agents who ask international travelers, “Do you have anything to declare?” The agents are asking for specifics of what you have, what you are carrying.

As it pertains to us spiritually, declarations are what we speak into the atmosphere, making known what we already have possession of. We can declare our righteousness, our salvation, our eternal victory and our friendship with God.

*By contrast, decrees are a tool by which we cause the truths of the **heavenly realm** to be manifest into the **natural realm**, so they become our daily reality. We decree healing when we are sick. We decree provision and abundance when we are lacking. We decree peace when there is turmoil. Decrees are a tool to fulfill Matthew 6:10: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (KJV). Decrees manifest heaven on earth.*

The biblical context of decrees is that they are the same as the will and purposes of God. Given that serious weight in the spirit, I use only Scriptures as the basis for decrees. Often, we can get our own idea of how things could or should be, but it is not uncommon for the way God unfolds His plans to look different than what we expect.

In Hebrew, decree means "to divide, separate and destroy." This definition reveals more of what happens in the spiritual realm. When we decree, “I am blessed” (inspired by Psalm 112:1), we establish the blessing while separating ourselves from anything purposed against it and destroying the plans of the enemy. When we decree, “My children are strong and full of integrity” (inspired by Psalm 112:2), we divide our

children's strength from their weakness and separate dishonesty and unrighteousness from within their midst and in their hearts.

The German diktat is the equivalent of our decree and means "a harsh judgment imposed on a defeated enemy that cannot be opposed."

The spiritual ramifications are stunning. We see here that when we decree, we:

- 1. speak God's blessings upon our lives,*
- 2. institute the very will and purposes of God,*
- 3. separate and destroy the plans of the enemy,*
- 4. impose a judgment the enemy cannot oppose"*

Elizabeth A. Nixon (From the book *"Psalms: Decrees That Renew Your Heart and Mind"*).

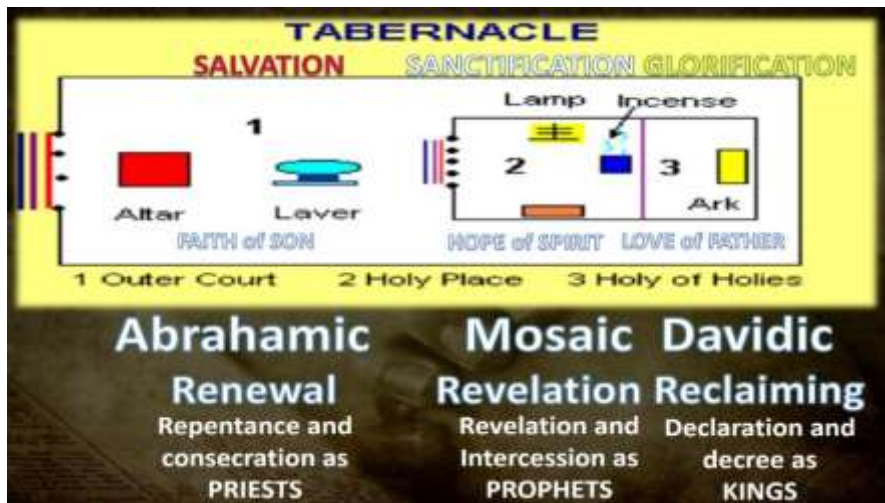
In the above quote, we see that the author is talking about declaring and decreeing over yourself and family, but it goes much further than that. When you have reached the *"place of intercession"* for those you are standing in the gap for, you can then declare and decree into their situation in faith.

We will not automatically get to this place when we first start our prayer altar journey. Indeed, at the start we will find we hardly get through the gates into the courtyard! God will lead us deeper and deeper into the heavenly temple until one day in

our intercessions we will find we are translated into the heavenly throne room where the weight of His glory falls on us. When this happens, He will lead us in powerful declarations and decrees for ourselves and others and, corporately, for nations.

In conclusion.

The following picture summarizes what we have seen in this section, adding one final insight – In the outercourt at the altar of our hearts we meet Christ and are infused with the faith of the Son, Jesus. In the heavenly holy place before the Altar of Incense we are overflowing with the the Holy Spirit, full of hope, and in the Most Holy Place before His throne, the heavenly Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat, we are overwhelmed with the Love of the Father, our King. It is here we reclaim His covenant promises over us, our families, our churches, our work places, our nation and the nations.



Weight @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

- 1. What does the “weight of His glory” mean? Have you ever experienced this? What is the result of such an encounter?*
- 2. Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. What is the “weight of glory” referring to here? How can we experience this weight and what is the outworking of it?*
- 3. What are the main differences between a contract and a covenant and how is the prayer altar to be the place of covenant in practice?*
- 4. Read the quote by Elizabeth Nixon on pages 91-93 again. What are declaring and decreeing and how do we get to the place to do these activities?*

Activity

Use Psalm 103:1-5 to declare and decree over your life and over those God reveals to you. Go through the first five activities by reading this passage of Scripture, then hallowing His name until you enter worship and His presence comes. Then consecrate yourself and repent as needed and declare and decree this scripture over your life and your family. Ask the Lord to show you who else to declare and decree this over and enter intercession that will lead to weighty declarations and decrees.

PART 7

Warfare @ the Altar

“**T**he prayer Altar lifestyle is all about possessing lives and land for God’s glory. This possession, as we have seen, requires legal authority. Gaining legal authority over darkness in your life and your land requires wielding all six weapons that we have looked at.

Let us review each activity and see how it is used as a spiritual weapon in God’s arsenal to tear down strongholds of darkness in our life and in the land.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 1 Corinthians 10:4-6

Part of ancient near east covenants between a king and his people was that there was an exchange of weapons and the king would fight on behalf of his covenant people. This is true also of our covenant relationship with God (see Exodus 14:14; 2 Chronicles 20:17). We must lay down our carnal weapons (self-pity, self-defense, insecurity, manipulation, human reasoning, cold love, money, position, influence etc.) at the foot of the cross and use His weapons.

His weapons bring life and not death and will seem weak and insignificant in the eyes of the world. It is only as we daily commit ourselves to use these weapons that we will see their transformation power in our lives and beyond.

The weapons of our warfare.

1. *The Word as a weapon.*

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

As we soak in God’s Word daily, we will cut away the deep darkness in us and be able to wield the Word against the darkness in others and in the land.

2. *Praise and Worship as a weapon.*

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.” Psalm 149:6-8

“Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.” 2 Chronicles 20:22

As we learn daily to hallow God’s name, praising and worshipping Him, we will see His presence come,

powers of darkness fleeing and captives (including ourselves) will be set free.

3. *Repentance and consecration as a weapon.*

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:19

“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.” Matthew 5:25).

Humble repentance is a powerful weapon as it applies the blood of Christ, the most potent weapon against the plans of the enemy to keep us from God’s plans and purposes as revealed in the Garden of Eden.

If the enemy accuses you, agree with him that you are a sinner but declare that you are forgiven by the blood of the lamb with deep repentance and consecration. This will silence the enemy and allow us to live as an overcomer (Revelation 12:11), living a fruitful, multiplying, and subduing life (Genesis 1:28).

4. *Praying in the Spirit as a weapon.*

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” Jude 1:20

Praying Spirit empowered prayers is praying according to God's perfect will and is a strong weapon to build you up and intercede for others in spiritual warfare.

5. *Intercession as warfare.*

“Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.” Daniel 10:12-13

Intercession for others with identificational repentance is a powerful weapon, releasing angelic activity that counters the work of the enemy to cover others and the land in deep darkness. Intercession sets lives and lands free of the coverings and effects of spiritual darkness.

6. *Covenant warfare.*

“As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, ¹⁸ then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.’” 2 Chronicles 7:17-18

Standing in covenant position and declaring and decreeing in our kingly authority is one of the key roles we have at the prayer altar.

Having wielded all the other weapons, we are able to stand as kings before God's throne under the mighty weight of His glory and, as His covenant partner, declare and decree kingdom works that the enemy will have no power to resist.

Then we will truly see His Kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven to the glory of the Father.

Amen.

Warfare @ the Altar

Questions for discussion and reflection.

- 1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:4-6. What do you learn from these verses? Where is the battlefield? What do God's mighty weapons do?*
- 2. What are the six weapons we wield at the prayer altar? In what way are they weapons and how can you wield them daily?*
- 3. What carnal weapons (self-pity, self-preservation, insecurity, manipulation, human reasoning, cold love, money, position, influence etc.) do you tend to use? How can you stop using these and use God's ones instead?*

Activity

Take one of the carnal weapons you identified in yourself and identify the stronghold it comes from. If for example you realize you use rebellion against others to get your way, this is a form of witchcraft (1 Samuel 5:23). Use the six weapons to come against this stronghold and cast it out of your life

(e.g. Read 1 Corinthians 10:4-6 aloud. Praise and worship Him that He is a mighty God above all, lifting His name. Repent of this sin and consecrate your all to Him, pleading the blood of Jesus and receive cleansing. Cry out for the outpouring of the Spirit repent on behalf of your generations, praying for breakthrough. Pray in the Spirit until you know You are standing in authority and then you can declare and decree this stronghold is broken and you are set free.)



How to Build a Personal Prayer Altar – A practical guide.



Arise and shine.

Get up early (to have at least one-hour Prayer Altar time before going into your day's activities). This may require a change in lifestyle (going to bed earlier, giving up certain activities).



Read the Word.

Read about 10 chapters of God's Word (from Genesis to Revelation) for 30 to 40 minutes. Read aloud without stopping – ask “*What do I learn about God that I can praise Him more?*”, “*What do I learn about myself that I need to repent of?*” and “*What verse do I need to memorize and meditate on today?*”.



Hallow His Name.

Straight after reading God's word, lift your hands and loudly proclaim His praise (using the Word you have read). Praise until you enter worship and His presence comes. You may worship God with songs available on YouTube.



Personal Repentance and Consecration

In His presence, ask the Holy Spirit to deal with your sins by going into deep repentance. As you repent, consecrate every part of your body to Him and receive cleansing from the Lord.



Praying in the Spirit

Pray for a fresh infilling of the Spirit and, in whatever way you know, pray fervently for His revelation and wisdom. Wait on Him for His guidance as to what and who to pray for.



Intercession

As the Lord leads, pray for people – your family, friends, colleagues, leaders, people groups etc. Pray using identificational repentance, praying “*forgive us*” prayers, bearing their burdens.



Declaring and Decreeing

As you repent on behalf of others and identify with them you will find His authority rising in you to declare and decree His covenant destiny into lives and situations, your own and others.



Go into the world.

Select a verse and write it down to memorize and meditate on throughout the day. Live out of that revelation – grab times during the day to do any of the above as He leads. Walk in your destiny as revealed at the altar.

A Prayer Guide for Daily Consecration and Repentance.

Lord prepare me to be a living sanctuary for You. My body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, so I offer it as a living sacrifice. I lay down all I am and have and ever will be at the foot of Your cross. I consecrate body, soul, and spirit to You and covenant my ears, eyes, mouth, heart, hands, and feet to You.

Forgive me that my ears have been hearing the wrong voices. Cover my ears with Your blood to be circumcised and pierced to hear your voice only. Forgive me for having wandering eyes, lusting after the wrong things. Take every plank out of my eyes and forgive me for judging others hypocritically. Cover my eyes with your blood to see You and fix my eyes on Your visions alone. Forgive me for speaking wrong things. Cover my lips with your blood so no corrupt word comes forth but only that which is necessary for edification.

Give me a pure heart. Forgive me that my mind is full of wrong thoughts, wash my mind with Your blood and give me the mind of Christ. Forgive me for a stubborn and rebellious will. Align me with the Father's will. Forgive me for emotions controlled by the flesh. Holy Spirit come and control my emotions and release Your love, joy, peace, kindness, longsuffering, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in me.

Cover my hands with your blood. Give me clean hands to heal and not hurt, build, and not destroy, give, and not take, embrace, and not push away, serve, and not be served. Cover my feet with your blood. Wash them from the filthiness of this world and put Your gospel shoes on them. Forgive me for walking in wrong ways and help me have a walk worthy of Your calling so that wherever the soul of my foot treads I can claim it for Your Kingdom and tread upon the works of the enemy.

Cleanse my whole body, soul and my bloodline on my father and mother's side. Forgive us our iniquities of idolatry, bitterness, pride, lust, anger, rebellion, bloodshed, sorcery, witchcraft and so forth that have defiled us. We renounce and condemn them. Flush them all out by Your precious blood. We command all iniquities and related infirmities and sicknesses to be gone right now and ask You to command Your blessing over us and all our future generations and release us into our identity and destiny in Christ.

I lift my hands under Your cleansing flow and declare I am clean by Your Word, Blood and Spirit. I am a new creation, no more in condemnation, here in the grace of God I stand. I am forgiven, accepted and precious in You. I am a qualified priest and an able minister of the new covenant. Spirit of the living God come and fill me afresh and lift me up into Your heavenly throne room, so I can live and walk in Your presence today.

In the name of Jesus Amen.

A word about the different types of Prayer Altars.

Types of Prayer Altars



PERSONAL ALTAR



FAMILY ALTAR



CORPORATE ALTAR
(Church altar etc..)



MARKETPLACE ALTAR



REGIONAL and NATIONAL ALTAR

The process I have just described will be the same for all prayer altar types. Each will consist of reading chunks of Scripture, hallowing His name, personal repentance, interceding with identificational repentance and declaring His covenant destiny over your life, family, church, workplace, and nation. All this done hungrily and humbly before the Lord.

The personal prayer altar is a daily time you have on your own with God that will transform your life and daily walk. Family altars are regular (often weekly) times you have as a family that will transform your family's spiritual atmosphere. Corporate prayer altars (weekly church prayer time or weekly cell groups) will transform your church into His Bride. Marketplace altars (weekly gatherings in your workplace) will transform your work place, seeing salvations and moral uprightness abound and regional and national prayer altars (every quarter, half or full year) will transform your nation to move in its redemptive gifting and destiny.

SUMMARY

“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.” Ezekiel 22:30

Building prayer altars throughout the land is about laying claim to the land, adopting the land, praying, and blessing the land, establishing God’s presence in the land. It is about possessing the land so that forces of darkness cannot take over the spiritual atmosphere of that land. At the altar God is looking for partners in covenant who can do this with Him and others He is raising up. God’s aim is still to show mercy and bring restoration and revival to our land. So, God looks for a man or a woman who will walk not just in communion but also in covenant with Him.

Therefore, we need to build altars in our homes and neighbourhoods, our workplaces, our schools and, above all, our churches. We need to turn the house of God into the very throne of God. Then His kingdom will come, His will be done in our land as it is in heaven, even as He has promised.

Building prayer altars is not a program, it is bigger than us or our church, it is a lifestyle of God’s holy priesthood. It requires commitment, love, and devotion. It requires time. It requires sacrifice. May God use you to ignite the fire of transformational revival in the land by building prayer altars. Amen.