

“How to Pray about Problems”

Text: Romans 10:17

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We are continuing the series, “Prayer Can Change Your Life”. Last week I said that there are five things God says you must do in order to have an answer to prayer.

- One of the conditions for answered prayer is you have to have faith. You must believe. Faith is the key that unlocks the door through prayer.

Romans 10:17 tells us where faith comes from. *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*

- The word “word” here is “*rhema*” in the Greek. It says we get faith by listening to the word or “*rhema*” of God. If you want to build faith fill your life with the Bible. The more Bible knowledge you have, the more faith you’re going to have.
- There are over 7,000 promises of God in the Bible. If you want to have a dynamic prayer life, you get a promise to claim and you can have your answer to prayer. There is a verse for every need in the Bible. The more promises you know, the more powerful your prayers.

The question is why don’t the promises always work?

- I was reading about a man who was a diabetic and he read the verse, *“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”* John 14:14. So he said, “God I’m going to ask You to cure me of diabetes,” and he threw away his insulin and three days later he died. What happened? God promised. Why didn’t it work?
- The fact of the matter is there’s a misconception people have about the promises of God. It’s this: You cannot automatically claim a promise that’s been given to somebody else in the Bible unless the Holy Spirit gives it to you.

To understand what we’re going to talk about today, you must understand that God speaks to people two different ways. The New Testament was originally written in Greek and the two terms used for the term “word” are “*logos*” and “*rhema*”.

- “*Logos*” is the word of God universally, to everybody. That’s the Bible – everything from Genesis to Revelation, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the 23rd Psalm. It’s the foundation for the second type of word of God which is “*rhema*”.
- “*Rhema*” is the word of God to you personally, a specific word, a promise, to a specific person in a specific period of time for that time only. We can

only claim a promise when it is a “*rhema*” to us, when it’s a specific word to us. I’m going to share with you how you get that.

Remember the story of Peter walking on water? Peter’s out in the boat with all of the disciples. It’s night. Jesus comes walking across the water and Peter says, ‘Lord, call me and I’ll come!’ Jesus gives Peter a “*rhema*”, a specific word for one man in a specific situation. He says, ‘Peter, come on!’ Peter gets out of the boat and starts walking across the water. Notice that no one else was anxious to get out of the boat besides Peter. Why? Because it wasn’t a word to everybody. It was a word to Peter in a specific time. It wasn’t a universal word, either. The next day, Peter didn’t get up and say, “Let’s go fishing, but we don’t need a boat today. Let’s just walk on water and catch fish.” No, it was a one-time thing.

- Getting a personal promise from God is the key to miracles and answered prayer. When God speaks to you personally, then you can act on it. Not when he uses it for everyone.

How does God speak to me personally? The principle I am going to share with you today is such a powerful process and the key to having faith in a hopeless situation.

The Bible says it’s the Holy Spirit’s duty to take the Bible and make it apply to us personally, make it come alive.

- John 14:26, *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*
- John 16:13, *“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.”*
- So in these two verses, God, Jesus Christ says the Holy Spirit is to do three things in our life: teach us, remind us, and guide us. It is the Holy Spirit’s responsibility to make the scriptures apply to our lives personally in a dramatic way. He takes the “*logos*” and turns it into “*rhema*”. It’s called *illumination*.
- Have you ever been in a church service where the pastor is speaking and all of a sudden you feel like he’s speaking directly to you? You feel like there’s nobody else in the room. You wonder, “How does He know I have that problem? How did he know that was exactly what I needed?” The fact is, God takes a general word that I say to everybody and makes it specifically apply to you. He gave you a “*rhema*”. The Holy Spirit illuminated it.

How do you know when it’s God giving you those impressions?

1. It will always agree with the Bible. God never contradicts what He’s already said.
 - “I believe it’s God’s will for me to have an affair.”

2. All of a sudden the Scripture becomes alive. It takes on new meaning. It becomes dynamic, exciting.
 - “I love you” illustration.

A personal promise of God, a personal “*rhema*” builds tremendous faith in your life. It always produces faith. Faith comes from hearing God speak to me personally. All of a sudden I’ve got confidence.

- Illustration of devotional or quiet time in the word (see, apply)

How to Pray about A Problem? You’ve got to get a “*rhema*”.

1. Confess any known sin in your life.

- A. You say, “God, I don’t want anything to be blocking our relationship. Is there something I’ve said or done or not done that I need to confess to you as wrong? You stop and get your life all cleaned up, a kind of spiritual washing.
- B. 1 John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us.”*

2. Commit the decision to Christ.

- A. Proverbs 3:5-6, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will bring it to pass.”* You don’t go out and try to figure it out yourself.
- B. Put yourself in neutral gear and keep praying until you can pray, “Lord, whatever You want is fine with me. If You want it, I want it. If You don’t want it, I don’t want it.” Commit it to the Lord.

3. Ask God to reveal His will by giving you a desire.

- A. After you’ve got your desire out of the way the third thing you do is say, “God, help me to know what You want by giving me a desire one way or the other.”
- B. Psalm 37:4, *“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* Your saying, “God You give me the right desire.”
- C. How do you know if the desire is from God? One good test of a desire is time, to sit on it for a while and say, “God, if this desire is from You, make it stronger. If this desire is not from You, take it away.”

4. Compare your desires with scripture.

- A. Now that you have a clear desire, start reading the Bible and see if it’s in tune with what the Bible says. If you don’t know the scriptures well, check it out with one of the pastors in the church. “What does the scripture say about this?”

- B. Eight tests you can apply to see if the idea is from God or not:
James 3:17, *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive [to God’s will], full of mercy, full of good fruit. It is impartial and it’s sincere.”*

5. Listen for God to give you a personal promise, a “*rhema*”.

- A. Listen for God to speak to you. Prayerfully read the word of God and wait for God to speak to you.
1. Mark 2:11
- B. It may come in a church service, a Bible study group, a tape, a friend. Are you willing to wait, to listen? Wait until God speaks to you and gives you a personal word. Don’t get impatient.

6. Claim the promise with confidence.

- A. Claim it, believe it, know it’s going to happen. You can pray specifically. You can start thanking God in prayer because the promise is the answer. Often God will send little confirmations.
- B. Jeremiah 24:6-7 & UCLA

7. You move into action when God says, “Go.”

- A. Not when you think so, but when God says, “Go.” When God gives an idea, He gives it in three parts. First He says what He’s going to do, then he says how He’s going to do it, then he gives you the timing – when? The biggest mistake that people make is we get the first part of the idea and forget the other two.
- B. How do you know God’s timing? Things start falling into place. It’s obvious. Wait for God’s timing.
- C. Other church
- D. God says wait on Him and when He says “Go”, you move into action. At that point you have to take a step of faith.

God wants to work in every one of our lives. That’s a “*logos*”. He wants to work in your life with a “*rhema*”.

Pray!

Father, thank You for Your word; that it’s practical and relevant. I thank You that even on a beautiful day like today you brought us here for a purpose and that You had something in mind for us that we might learn how You might speak to us. Help us to become intimately acquainted with Your Spirit that we become best friends, and are sensitive so we can know Your will with clarity and with ease. Thank You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.