

settings and allow them to help us define it. This will accomplish three things:

1. It will help you understand the concept of intercession so that you can understand intercessory prayer.
2. It will enable you to see Christ's role as THE intercessor. (Our intercessory *prayer* will always and only be an extension of His intercessory *work*. This is crucial and will become clearer as we progress.)
3. With that kind of knowledge, it will make you the most spiritual person in your prayer group!

Defining Intercession

Let's look first at the literal concept of intercession; then we'll think about it in the context of the Fall.

According to Webster, "intercede" means "to go or pass between; to act between parties with a view to reconcile those who differ or contend; to

interpose; to mediate or make intercession; mediation."¹

Using the same source, "mediate" means "between two extremes; to interpose between parties as the equal friend of each; to negotiate between persons at variance with a view to reconciliation; to mediate a peace; intercession."²

Please notice that these terms are largely synonymous with some of the same words used to define each—"between," "interpose" and "reconcile." Notice also that one is used to define the other: "mediation" defines "intercession" and "intercession" defines "mediation."

As can be clearly seen from these definitions, the concept of intercession can be summarized as mediating, going between, pleading for another, representing one party to another for, but not limited to, legal situations.

Intercession happens in our courts daily with lawyers interceding for clients.

Intercession happens in contractual meetings daily with attorneys representing one party to another.

Intercession happens in offices and business meetings daily as secretaries or other associates “go between,” representing one to another. Nothing spiritual about it.

It involves delegation.

It involves authority.

It boils down to representation. As we discussed in the previous chapter, to represent means to re-present, or present again.

Many years ago my dad hired an intercessor (we called him a lawyer) to represent him in court. Dad had been stopped by some policemen, beaten up quite badly and thrown in jail—all of this with my mother and then three-year-old sister watching. The policemen thought he was someone else! Dad was actually on his way home from a church service where he had preached that night, which added to the irony and injustice of the entire ordeal.

Our attorney went *between* Dad, the judge, the other lawyer and the policemen. He listened to the case, gathered proof, found out what Dad wanted and then *re-presented* it in court. He *mediated* well.

We won.

All intercession is not in the sense of an attorney. That’s only one example. Any work of representation or mediation between is intercession.

Now, let’s think about this concept in light of the Creation and the Fall. Adam was supposed to represent God on planet Earth—managing, governing or ruling for Him. God told Adam what He wanted and Adam re-presented Him to the rest of the earth. Adam was a go-between for God. Literally, Adam was God’s intercessor or mediator on the earth.

Christ, the Ultimate Intercessor

Adam, of course, failed and God had to send another human, called the “last Adam,” to do what the first Adam was supposed to do and fix what the first Adam messed up. So Christ came to re-present God on the earth. He became the intercessor or mediator, going between and re-presenting God to humanity.

According to John 1:18, Jesus exegeted God for us: “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” The Greek word translated “explained” is actually *exegeomai*, from which we get our English word “exegete.”³

You have probably heard of the small child who “was drawing a picture and his teacher said, ‘That’s an interesting picture. Tell me about it.’

‘It’s a picture of God.’

‘But nobody knows what God looks like.’

‘They will when I get done,’” said the young artist.⁴

Jesus came and drew us a picture of God! Now we know what He looks like.

But that’s not the only direction of His interceding. Great irony exists in the fact that Man who was meant to be God’s intercessor, mediator or representative on Earth now needed someone to mediate *for him*. He who was made to represent God on the earth now needed someone to represent him *to* God. Christ, of course, became that representative, intercessor or mediator. Not only did He represent God to man, but He also

represented man to God. This God-man was the attorney for both sides!

He is the ultimate, final and only go-between. He is “the Apostle [God to the human race] and High Priest [the human race to God] of our confession” (Heb. 3:1). He is Job’s great go-between, hanging between heaven and Earth, placing one hand on God and the other on humans (see Job 9:32–33).

Are you getting the picture? Christ’s intercession, in keeping with its literal meaning, was not a *prayer* He prayed, but a *work* of mediation He did.

And I hope you’re ready for this: I don’t believe the intercession attributed to Him now in heaven on our behalf is prayer either.

I’m certain it refers to His work of mediation (see 1 Tim. 2:5), to His being our Advocate with the Father (see 1 John 2:1). He is now functioning as our representative, guaranteeing our access to the Father and to our benefits of redemption.

In fact, He tells us in John 16:26 that He is not doing our asking or petitioning of the Father for us: “In that day you will ask in My name, and I

do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf.” So what is He doing as He makes intercession for us? He is mediating, or going between, not to clear us of charges against us as He did to redeem us from sin, but to present each of us to the Father as righteous and one of His own.

When I approach the throne, He is always there saying something such as: “Father, Dutch is here to speak with You. He isn’t coming on his own merits or righteousness; he is here based on Mine. He is here *in My name*. I am sure You remember that I’ve *gone between* You and Dutch and provided him with access to You. He has a few things to ask You.”

Can’t you just hear the Father say in response, *Of course I remember, Son. You’ve made him one of Ours. Because he came through You, Dutch is always welcome here.* He then looks at me and says, *Come boldly to My throne of grace, Son, and make your request known.*

Jesus isn’t *praying* for us; He is *interceding* for us so that we can pray. This is what is meant by asking “in His name.”

Let’s look at one more aspect of Christ’s intercession in the context of the Fall. Basically, humanity needed two things after the Fall. They needed someone to “go between” themselves and God to *reconcile* themselves to God; they also needed someone to “go between” themselves and Satan to *separate* themselves from him. One was a uniting, the other a disuniting. One reestablished headship, the other broke headship. It was a twofold work of intercession.

We needed both. Jesus did both. As the intercessor-mediator, He went between God and humanity, reconciling us to the Father; and between Satan and humanity, breaking Satan’s hold. This was the redemptive *work* of intercession and it is complete. Therefore, in the legal sense of humanity’s redemption, Christ is the *one and only* intercessor. This is why the Scriptures say, “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The verse could just as easily read, “one intercessor.”

This revelation is critical. It means our *prayers* of intercession are always and only an extension

of His *work* of intercession.

Why is this so important? Because God won't honor any intercession except Christ's, and also because this understanding will make our *prayers* of intercession infinitely more powerful.

Let's return to our conversation in the throne room. I am there asking the Father to extend mercy and bring salvation to the people of Tibet. The Father could reply, "How can I do this? They are sinners. They worship false gods, which is really worshiping Satan. And besides, they don't even want Me to do this. They themselves have never asked."

I answer, "Because Jesus *interceded* or *mediated* for them, Father. I am asking based on what He did. And He needs a human on Earth to ask for Him because He is in heaven now. So, as He taught me, I'm asking for Your Kingdom to come and Your will to be done in Tibet. I'm asking for some laborers to be sent there. I'm asking these things for Christ and through Christ. And I am asking You to do it based entirely on the redemptive work He has already done."

The Father replies, "RIGHT ANSWER! You heard the man, Gabriel. What are you waiting for?"

Distributors for God

When I say our *prayers* of intercession are an extension of His *work* of intercession, the difference is in distributing versus producing. We don't have to produce anything—reconciliation, deliverance, victory, etc.—but rather we distribute, as the disciples did with the loaves and fishes (see Matt. 14:17–19). *Our calling and function is not to replace God, but to release Him.*⁵ It liberates us from intimidation and emboldens us to know that:

- The Producer simply wants to distribute through us.
- The Intercessor wants to intercede through us.
- The Mediator wants to mediate through us.

- The Representative wants to represent through us.
- The Go-between wants to go between through us.
- The Victor wants His victory enforced⁶ through us.
- The Minister of reconciliation has given to us the ministry of reconciliation (see 2 Cor. 5:18–19). We now represent Him in His representation ministry. *God continues to incarnate His redemptive purposes in human lives.*⁷

We don't deliver anyone, we don't reconcile anyone to God, we don't defeat the enemy. The work is already done. Reconciliation is complete. Deliverance and victory are complete. Salvation is complete. Intercession is complete! Finished! Done! WOW! What a relief. And yet . . .

We must ask for the release and application of these things. So, let me offer the following as a biblical definition of intercessory prayer: *Intercessory prayer is an extension of the ministry of*

Jesus through His Body, the Church, whereby we mediate between God and humanity for the purpose of reconciling the world to Him, or between Satan and humanity for the purpose of enforcing the victory of Calvary.

Christ needs a human on the earth to represent Himself through just as the Father did. The Father's human was Jesus; Jesus' humans are us, the Church. He said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21).

The concept of being sent is important and embodies the truths of which we have been speaking. A representative is a "sent" one. Sent ones have authority, as long as they represent the sender. And the importance or emphasis is not on the sent one but on the sender. The setting of conditions and the ability to carry out or enforce them is all the responsibility of the sender, not the sent one. For example, an ambassador representing one nation to another is a sent one. He has no authority of his own, but he is authorized to represent the authority of the nation sending him.

Jesus was a sent one. That is why He had authority. He received it from the Father who sent

Him. Forty times in John's Gospel alone He mentions the important fact of being sent by the Father. The result of this arrangement was that, in essence, He wasn't doing the works, but the Father who sent Him (see John 14:10).

The same is true with us. Our authority comes from being sent ones, representing Jesus. As long as we function in that capacity, we function in Christ's authority. And, in essence, we're not really doing the works; He is.

Let me illustrate. In 1977, while praying about an upcoming journey to Guatemala, I heard the words: *On this trip, represent Jesus to the people.*

At first I rebuked the voice, thinking it was an evil spirit trying to deceive me. But the voice came again, this time adding the words: *Be His voice, be His hands, be His feet. Do what you know He would do if He were there in the flesh. Represent Him.*

Suddenly I understood. I was not going to represent myself or the ministry with which I was working. In the same way that Jesus represented the Father—speaking His words and doing His works—I was to represent Jesus. And if I really

believed I was functioning as an ambassador or a sent one, then I could believe it wasn't my authority or ability that was an issue but Christ's—I was simply representing Him *and what He had already done.*

A Galilee Jesus Became a Guatemala Jesus

Once in Guatemala I traveled with a team to a remote village far from any modern city. There was no electrical power, no plumbing, no phones. Our purpose in being there was to build shelters for the villagers whose adobe homes had been destroyed in the devastating earthquake of 1976. It had killed 30,000 people and left 1,000,000 homeless. We had trucked in materials and were building small, one-room homes for them during the daylight hours. In the evenings we would hold services in the center of the village, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to them, explaining that His love was motivating us to spend our time, money and energies helping them.

We had been ministering for one week with very few people coming to Christ. The people were listening, but not responding.

I was to preach on the final night of our trip. Just as the service was about to begin, a team member told me about something he and others had found on the far side of the village—a little girl, six or seven years old, tied to a tree.

Not believing what they were seeing, they asked the family that lived there, “Why is this small girl tied to that tree?” It was obvious she lived there, much like a dog, in the back yard—nasty, filthy, helpless and alone.

“She is crazy,” the parents replied. “We can’t control her. She hurts herself and others and runs away if we turn her loose. There is nothing else we can do for her, so we just have to tie her up.”

My heart broke as the member shared what he had seen. It was on my mind as we began the service. A few minutes into my message, standing on a folding table under the stars, the same voice that had spoken to me before the trip began speaking to me again.

Tell them you are going to pray for the little insane girl across the village tied to the tree. Tell them you are going to do it in the name of this Jesus you’ve been preaching about. Tell them that through Him you are going to break the evil powers controlling her—that when she is free and normal, they can then know that what you are preaching is true. They can believe that the Jesus you are preaching about is who you say He is.

I responded to the voice in my heart with fear and trembling. I believe the words were something like, *WHAT DID YOU SAY???*

Same instructions.

Being the man of faith that I am, I replied, *What is plan B?*

Rebellion and failure, came the response. *Remember what I said to you before the trip began? Represent Jesus.*

Faith began to rise. *The emphasis is not on me in this situation, I thought, but on the One who sent me. I am simply His spokesman. I merely release what He has already done. He has finished the work of delivering this little girl; my prayers release the work. I’m only a distributor*

of what He has already produced. Be bold, sent one. Enforce the victory!

With new assurance I began informing the people about what I was planning to do. They nodded in recognition as I mentioned the girl. Expressions of intrigue turned to astonishment as they listened to my plans.

Then I prayed.

On a moonlit night in a tiny, remote village of Guatemala with a handful of people as my audience, my life changed forever.

Jesus came out of hiding. He became alive: relevant . . . sufficient . . . available! A “hidden” Jesus emerged from the cobwebs of theology. A yesterday Jesus became a today and forever Jesus. A Galilee Jesus became a Guatemala Jesus.

And a new plan unfolded to me. A new concept emerged—Jesus and me.

The Heavenly Pattern

For the first time I understood the heavenly pattern: Jesus is the Victor—we’re the enforcers;

Jesus is the Redeemer—we’re the releasers; Jesus is the Head—we’re the Body.

Yes, He set the little girl free.

Yes, the village turned to Christ.

Yes, Jesus prevailed through a sent one.

So the partnership goes on—God and humans. But the correct pattern is critical: My *prayers* of intercession release Christ’s finished *work* of intercession.

His work empowers my prayers—my prayers release His work.

Mine extends His—His effectuates mine.

Mine activates His—His validates mine.

In Kingdom Enterprises we’re not in the production department. We’re in distribution . . . BIG difference. He’s the generator. We’re the distributors.

Awesomites Re-Presenting His Awesomeness

I think this makes us His co-laborers. What do you think? I think Christ is awesome and wants

us to be “awesomites.” Humble awesomites representing His awesomeness, but awesome nonetheless. More than conquerors! Christ and His Christians, changing things on the earth.

There are many wounded and hurting individuals “tied to trees” around the world. You work with some, others live across the street. One of them probably just served you in a check-out line, seated you in a restaurant or served you food. Their chains are alcohol, drugs, abuse, broken dreams, rejection, money, lust . . . well, you get the point.

Plan A is for supernatural but ordinary people like you and me to: (1) wholeheartedly believe in the victory of Calvary—to be convinced that it was complete and final, and (2) to rise up in our role as sent ones, ambassadors, authorized representatives of the Victor. Our challenge is not so much to liberate as to believe in the Liberator; to heal as to believe in the Healer.

Plan B is to waste the Cross; to leave the tormented in their torment; to scream with our silence, “There is no hope!”; to hear the Father say again, “I looked, but found no one”; to hear

the Son cry once more, “The laborers! Where are the laborers?”

Come on, Church! Let’s untie some folks. Let’s tell them there is a God who cares. Let’s represent—let’s mediate—let’s intercede!

“Can anyone find the present participator?”

Questions for Reflection

1. Define intercession and intercessory prayer. What is the difference? Why is this important?
2. How are intercession and mediation related?
3. Can you explain what I meant when I said Christ was THE intercessor and that our *prayers* are an extension of His *work*?
4. Explain the two aspects of Christ’s intercession—reconciling and separating—relating it to humankind’s twofold need created by the Fall.