

## BIBLE STUDY LESSON ON

SUBJECT: “DISCOVERING WHO AND HOW TO STAND IN THE GAP”

SCRIPTURE TEXT: “EZEKIEL 22:23-31” AND “ROMANS 15:1-3”

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### INTRODUCTION:

An Editorial Cartoon appeared in a publication some time ago. It was An Unusual Cartoon and in the center of it was An Enormous Monument. On the monument, Arranged In Pyramid Form were written Some of The Expressions That Are So Popular Today. Beneath the monument, The People Were Shown Worshipping at this monument which was called “The Shrine For Selfishness”.

Selfishness is Often Contained In Acceptable Terms Like “Good Philosophies”.

Greece Philosophy said, “Be Wise, Know Yourself.”

Roman Philosophy said, “Be Strong, Discipline Yourself.”

Religious Philosophy says “Be Holy, Conform Yourself.”

Epicureanism Philosophy says, “Be Sensuous, Enjoy Yourself.”

Education Philosophy says, “Be Resourceful, Expand Yourself.”

Materialism Philosophy says, “Be Satisfied, Please Yourself.”

Psychology Philosophy says, “Be Confident, Fulfill Yourself.”

Pride Philosophy says, “Be Superior, Promote Yourself.”

Humanism Philosophy says, “Be Capable, Believe In Yourself.”

Philanthropy Philosophy says, “Be Generous, Give Yourself.”

It is interesting that All of The Philosophies end with the same word...YOURSELF.

Even more interesting is how each one differs from the philosophy of The Lord Jesus Christ; “Be A Servant, Think of Others.”

In St. Matthew 20:28, Our Lord said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Shortly after The Fall In The Garden in Genesis 3:7 we read “They Sewed Fig Leaves Together and made themselves Loin Coverings.” Here, for the First Time, “SELF” Is Mentioned In The Bible. They Now began to look out For Number One, “Themselves”, and It Hasn’t Stopped Since.

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**That's The Heart and Center of The Problem ... Then and Now. But not only did they lose something with themselves, they lost something with God. They heard God as He moved toward them. They heard His Voice as He called out to them. For The First Time, They Didn't Meet Him, They Didn't Keep Their Appointment With Him, Instead, They Hid Themselves.**

In Hebrews 4:13 we read "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

**We too try to hide in a variety of ways. We project our problems on those we live with, we ridicule and dominate. We pronounce the final word when we have no right or reason to. We cut a person down neatly with a word of criticism, to his face or behind his back, because we are self-centered. Justifying that it isn't our problem, it's theirs. We Are By Nature, Terribly, Thoroughly, Intractably, Infected and Obstinate, Obsessed With SELF.**

## I. STANDING IN THE GAP

**Compare The Farmer's Story with Jerusalem's Condition Recorded in Ezekiel 22.**

**Story of a farmer who one day went to his banker to tell him several bad news and one good news.**

**Bad news—because of drought and insects, the farmer could not pay the banker a penny on his loan for the farm. Not a penny on the principal, not a penny on the interest.**

**More bad news—the farmer could not pay a penny on the farm equipment's that he loaned from the banker. Not a penny on the principal, not a penny on the interest.**

**Still more bad news—the farmer could not pay the banker a penny on the fertilizers and seeds that he loaned from the banker. Not a penny on the principal, not a penny on the interest.**

**"What is the good news?" asked the banker. "The good news is," said the farmer, "I intend to continue doing business with you."**

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**Verses 23-31 show that corruption pervades the entire society. The Civil Rulers Use Their Positions for Harm and Personal Gain (verse 27). The Prophets and Priests—the Religious Preachers and Teachers—are Causing The People to Be Destroyed (verse 25-26). They violate God's law, setting an evil example.**

**Idolatry and Worshiping False Gods Is Referred To As Spiritual Adultery In The Old Testament.**

**1. Judah Turned Her Back on God and Worshipped Idols Like Backsliding Israel.**

**2. She failed to keep the Sabbaths, which were Tokens of The Covenant Made With God.**

**3. Judah no longer trusted God, but made alliances with foreign nations.**

**4. Ezekiel points out the sins of Jerusalem and her impending doom:**

**A. Prophets made merchandise of the people - Ezekiel 22:25, 28.**

**B. Priests were violating, instead of teaching the law - Ezekiel 22:26.**

**C. Civil rulers were like wolves after the sheep - Ezekiel 22:27.**

**D. People oppressed the poor and strangers - Ezekiel 22:29.**

**5. God sought for a man to stand in the gap - Ezekiel 22:30.**

**A. To rebuke God's people for their sins.**

**B. To stand against the tide of wickedness.**

**C. To teach the truth in the midst of error.**

**D. To prevent their destruction by a heathen nation.**

**6. But no one would stand in the gap, so the city would experience the wrath and indignation of God - Ezekiel 22:30, 31.**

**7. Today, there is a Gap Between God and His People, because of an increasing disregard for truth – 3<sup>rd</sup> John 1-4.**

**8. The question needs to be asked; “Who Will Stand In The Gap?”**

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Moreover, they fail to distinguish "Between The Holy and Unholy" or "Between The Unclean and The Clean." They do not teach the people about God's Holy Days or about His Holy Tithes. They do not teach what God declares Food Fit for Human Consumption and What He Forbids To Be Eaten.

God even says that they have "Hidden Their Eyes" from His Sabbaths—Refusing to even look into the possibility that they should be observed. How true all of this is today throughout the churches of the nations and of Israel!

Standing In The Gap is the mark of a Man and Woman of God. It involves trying to protect others through interceding for them in prayer and seeing to it that they are told what God really wants them to know.

Sadly, God says He cannot find anyone to fill this responsibility. Yet when Ezekiel wrote, did not he and Jeremiah both fit that description? And in the end time, will there not be true Christians with the proper mindset? Yes, but "a qualified leader is useless if the people refuse to be led". What God must be saying is that He is not able to find anyone to repair the society's Spiritual Gaps because anyone who might actually be able to would be rejected by the people.

So, God says He will pour out His fury on the nation (verse 31).

They make fun of that concept as backward and unenlightened. So many today see God as always gentle, always forgiving no matter what—never judging or punishing people for even the greatest crimes.

People have forgotten about the God who flooded the earth, rained destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah, slew the firstborn of Egypt and brought famines, diseases and military invasion on ancient Israel and Judah as punishment for sin.

The same God stands ready to justly punish our evil society today—not to punish for punishment's sake, but rather for the sake of turning the collective hearts and minds of people away from the sin that destroys them, to lead mankind into a lawful way of living that will bring rich and abundant blessings for all who will submit to Him.

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## A. What It Means To Stand In The Gap

A dictionary definition defines the term like this: **To expose one's self for the protection of something; to make defense against a fallen defender or supporter.**

When you read the context of [Ezekiel 22:30](#), it is a rather sobering and intense chapter of the Bible ([Ezekiel 22](#)) Indicating What "The Gap" Is.

### 1. God Is Listing The Sin of His People.

(a.) **Mistreating The Poor and The Needy: Bloodshed, all kinds of perverse sexual behavior, despising God's holy ordinances, making profit through extortion, the list goes on and on.**

(b.) **Deceiving Spiritual Leaders: On top of Mistreating The Poor and Needy, Their Prophets and Priests, Lead The Land In All This Sin, Speaking In The Name of The Lord, When It Actually Isn't God Speaking Through Them At All.**

(c.) **Forgetting God: God adds to the list saying, "You Have Forgotten Me". ([Ezekiel 22:12](#)) God is talking about His people sinning. They are turning away and letting it happen by not standing in the gap. This is like okay-ing the world's behavior, calling evil good and good evil.**

In Verse 30 God says He looks for someone of His people to plead with Him so that God would not destroy them.

Wow... How Hurt God Must Have Felt.

Again, Israel – God's people – is far, far away from the Lord. He asks them if they can stand and endure it when He will deal with their unrighteous and unfair behavior.

### 2. The Lord Sought Someone Who Would Rise Up On Behalf Of The Land To Stand In This Gap Between God and The People.

This Gap Is The spiritual and Figurative Gap Between God's People and The Lord Himself That Broke Open Because of Sin.

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## B. It Is A Gap In The Relationship With God.

God was Pushed Aside for Idol Worship, Demonic Practices, and Unrighteous Behavior.

We Can See Several Examples in The Bible Where Men of God actually Heed The Call of God To Stand In This Gap for Their People.

## C. How Moses Stands In The Gap

One of the examples of standing in the gap is Moses pleading with God because of Israel's sin of worshipping the golden calf. In this instance, He Stands In The Gap for Israel Three Times For The Same Issue.

In [Exodus 32:11-14, 31-32; 34:9](#) you can see Moses Reminding God on His Promises for His people and Repenting on Their Behalf.

[Psalm 106:23](#) says, "(...) Moses, His Chosen One Stood Before Him In The Breach, To Turn Away His Wrath, (...)".

Because Israel Sinned there was a Relational Gap, a Breach Between God and His People. It was so Hurtful to God, that He wanted to Remove Them. But Moses realized Lip Service or Religious Practices Wouldn't Solve The Problem Because It Was About "A Relationship That Needed To Be Restored".

So, He Stepped Into This Gap In Prayer. He Repented and Pleaded with The Lord. That's Why God Forgave Israel in His Mercy and Even Renewed His Covenant With Them.

## D. How Jesus Stands In The Gap

Another Example of Standing In The Gap Between Sinful People and God Is Jesus. "Obviously", you might think. Yes, he did stand in the gap between God and Us for The Forgiveness of The Sin of The World, so that we would not die and Eternally Perish But Have Everlasting Life ([John 3:16](#)).

When He Was Hanging On The Cross barely breathing and half-dead, He Stepped Into The Breach Between God and Humanity Praying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." ([Luke 23:34](#)).

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He took all sin of the world upon Him. He became sin and became The Curse.  
([2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21](#), [Galatians 3:13](#))

He did it so that you and I could have the chance of coming back into a real relationship with Father-God in heaven. How Loving and Forgiving God's Heart Is that He Lets Us Plead With Him Through Jesus Christ.

#### E. How Are We To Stand In The Gap

When Standing In The Gap ... It Means You Are Praying for Someone Else.

This Person might have a Specific Need like **Needing To Be Saved** and Would Usually Not Pray On His/Her Behalf Like That.

This Type of Prayer Is Also Called Intercession. You Are Bridging The Gap In Prayer, Standing In The Breach Between God and The Person or People, But In The Authority of Jesus.

[1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1-4](#) says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; <sup>2</sup> For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. <sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; <sup>4</sup> Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

It Is So Vital to Intercede Because God Desires That All Men (and Women) Would Be Saved and Know The Truth of God.

So How Would We Do This?

#### 1. Repent and Ask For Forgiveness.

When Standing In The Gap for Someone, I Usually Pray Something Similar To This Out Loud Reminding Myself and God of [Ezekiel 22:30](#).

I Would Say, "I'm Standing In The Gap For ???????. Lord, I Ask Thee For Thy Forgiveness of Our Sin."

You might also want to mention **Specific Sins** as well.

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**Remember, It Is OUR Sin That You Are Repenting and Interceding For.**

**You Identify to some degree with that person, Acknowledging That You Are Not Better Than Them and, In This Thing, You Stand Together Before God.**

**It's About Pleading With God for The Forgiveness of Sin and The Salvation of The Person You Are Standing In The Gap For.**

**2. Do Spiritual Warfare: Binding, Breaking, And Losing**

**I Believe In The Gap You Have a Unique Authority In The Spirit Before God and The Person You Pray For.**

**For It Is Not By Your Own Might Nor By Your Power But By His Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). You are Entering Into a Powerful Spiritual Realm.**

**That's Why I Always do Spiritual Warfare for A Person. I Would Bind Demonic Spirits In The Name of Jesus That Either God Reveals To Me or Come To Mind, or I Know Of.**

**A Curse Without a Cause Cannot Come (Proverbs 26:2). Therefore, Breaking Curses and Any Other Demonic Activity Has a Powerful Effect.**

**You want this person Saved and Free, Right? So, Fight For Him/Her!**

**In Prayer Loose The Blessings that You Know God Wants to Pour Into This Person's Life.**

**You might also want to Specifically Pray for Healing and Deliverance if needed.**

**You want to Bind and Break any Oppression and Sickness and Cast it Out In The Name of Jesus.**

**3. Release God's Healing and Restoration.**

**Always Remember Prayer of Any Kind Moves The Hand of God.**

**So, Have Faith, Be Bold, Be Keen, and Stand In The Gap In The Confidence That There Is Forgiveness, Healing, Deliverance, and Restoration In Jesus Christ.**

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**Some Personal Thoughts: The world does what the world always did. But God is looking for His people to do something about it.**

**As of This Moment, We are In The Midst of The Historical COVID-19 Pandemic.**

**When I read the whole chapter of Ezekiel 22, I was moved to tears, because I felt like it describes the state of this world and Parts of The Church at This Very Moment.**

**Please Stand In The Gap With Me... For The World and Their Sin to Plead With God That In His Wrath He Would Remember Mercy.**

**I Know This Season Too Shall Pass – and Maybe Already Has Been By The Time I Teach This Lesson.**

**But I Also Believe God Is Watching Very Closely on How His People (YOU) Are Reacting to This Crisis and To Any Crisis We Are Really Going Through.**

**There Are Only Two Ways To Go About It.**

**#1. Either We Chase God, To Stand In The Gap For Our Sin and The Sin of Our People. Or else, #2. We Are Going To Be Chased...By The Enemy, Sin and Satan.**

**Oh, I Pray That You Would Heed The Call of God Right Now and Rise Up To Stand In The Gap.**

## **II. STANDING ON THE SIDELINES**

**Too Many Are Content To Stand On The Sidelines, While Our Strongholds Are Being Bombarded.**

**A. The Essentiality of Baptism, Obedience, Bible Authority, Marriage-Divorce and Remarriage, Acappella Singing, Etc. are all facing bombardment from both within and without.**

**1. Many are pre-occupied with worldly concerns – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:10; St. Luke 8:14; Haggai. 1:2-6; St. Matthew 6:19-21; St. Luke 12:33.**

**2. Many are thinking our cry is much ado about nothing.**

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**2A. Legion** is the number that say, “Leave It Alone, It Will Die Out” (Acts 5:33-39)

**2B. Many say, “You Are Just Envious of Their Success”** - Romans. 1:16;  
St. Mark 16:15-16; Galatians 1:6-9; 2<sup>nd</sup> John 9-11; St. Matthew. 7:21-27.

**2C. Many Say, “Preach Jesus and Leave OUR Issues Alone.”**

**(a.) However, That Cannot Be Done Because To Preach Jesus is To Preach The  
“Issues” He Is Concerned With** - Hosea 4:6; Acts 20:20, 26-27; Titus 3:10-11

**3. Many Are Waiting For Someone Else To Stand For Them** - Ephesians 6:10-17;  
St. Matthew 16:24

**4. Many Are Inviting The Adversary To Have His Way, Thinking It Is For The Best.**

**4A. God's Way Is Best** - Prov. 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23; Prov. 3:5-7; Josh. 24:14-16.

### **III. WHO SHOULD BE STANDING IN THE GAP FOR OUR LAND?**

**Who Will Stand In The Gap On Behalf Of Our Land Today? GOD IS CALLING YOU!**

**Who Can or Why Should a man Learn How To Stand In The Gap For The Land,  
Someone, Others, and Make Up The Hedge?**

**Many Will Fall Apart When Disaster Comes Because They Will Be Distracted  
Disciples.**

**God Is Looking For Men-Women Who Can & Willing To Stand in The Gap!**

**A. Those Who Love God and His Word – 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:14-15; Jeremiah 20:8-9.**

**B. Those that have and hope to benefit from the truth.**

**1. Preachers – 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:14.**

**2. Christian Schools – 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17**

**C. All Who Have Obeyed The Truth – St. John 8:31-32; St. Luke 17:17, 18.**

**D. Elders - Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17.**

**E. Teachers and Professors - James 3:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim 4:16; 1:3.**

**F. Parents and Children – 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:3-5; 3:14-15; Ephesians 6:1-4**

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#### IV. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT STANDING IN THE GAP?

A. Compromise of The Truth – 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 4:1-3.

B. Abandonment of The Truth – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:1-3.

C. Increase of Ungodliness - Rom. 1:18-32.

D. Indignation and Wrath of Almighty God - Rom. 2:7-11

#### What Lessons Are There For Me In This Scripture?

There is Opportunity For Me to Intercede For Others. God, in this case, Looked For It and Reported Hearing Nothing. I Can Intercede For Family Members. I Can Intercede For friends. I Can Intercede for This Country. It is a job that I Must Take Seriously. Moses Did It For The Israelites. Disaster Can Be Averted.

Many Prayed For Me during my early years and certainly, as a result, Spared Me from some of the Calamities I Was Headed For. They also Prayed that I would Become a Believer, which I did. The Consequences of Not Standing In The Gap For Others are So Enormous. I Cannot Shirk This Responsibility.

#### V. BEARING THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” (Romans 15:1)

We live in a very Competitive Society where The Strong are Revered and Feared, while The Weak are Discredited and Disregarded. At an early age, most children are Taught to Value Winning and Covet Success. People that are Successful and Powerful are not always Mindful of The Impact of Their Influence on The Weak. Some of them use Their Power to Manipulate The Less Powerful and To Subjugate (Make Them Subject) To Them To a Life of Oppression.

But the Word of God Teaches Us The Strong Ought To Bear The Infirmities of The Weak. What Does That Mean In Particular?

The word ‘Bear’ comes from the Greek word Bastazo which means “To Pick Up and Carry Weight. In other words, The Stronger Believer Ought To Carry The Weight of The Weaker Believer or Non-Believer.

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That means The Stronger Believer cannot react with 'Bitterness' when they are The Victim of Hostility. The Stronger Spouse cannot respond with Vindictiveness when The Other Spouse Has Expressed Anger and Said Things That Are Hurtful.

Bearing The Infirmities of The Weak means Developing a Thick Skin so we can Endure The Pressure that comes from Those Who Antagonize Us. It means Not Using Our Strength (Physical, Material, Economic, Political) to Overpower Another, But Instead Listen To Their Concern, Be Sympathetic to Their Plight and Respond in a way that is Corresponding With Their Weakness. The Important Thing to Remember is That The Strong has a Moral and Spiritual Responsibility To Empower and Not Overpower The Weak.

The Irony is that, in many cases, those that are weak Don't Consider Themselves As Weak. They can easily be Aggressive, Oppressive and Self-Destructive. The Stronger Believer should not be Influenced by The Weaker. They should Raise The Standard of Their Interaction with The Weak to Reflect The Love and Mercy of God. The actions of the strong should not be harsh in responding to the weak.

Jesus Christ bore our infirmities at the cross. He died for the very people that were crucifying him. Throughout his experience of torture, He did not say a word or expressed hostility towards those who brutalized him. Instead, He asked the Father To Forgive Them, for they knew not what they were doing.

There will be times when you or I will be confronted with those that will revile us or try to harm us physically. We have to pray for the grace to respond as Christ would have us to respond. It is because Christ bore our infirmities, we are to bear the infirmities of others. Doing so not only makes us godly but is also a testament to our mental fortitude and Visible Sign of Spiritual Maturity.

#### A. Not Pleasing Ourselves (Romans 15:1)

The word "Infirmities" is not used in the sense of our normal meaning, which generally speaks of illness. The Greek word is *As-then-ema*, meaning, Conscience. In other words, we, who are strong spiritually, are to support the weak conscience of our brethren. It goes right back to chapter 14, dealing with those who were still following many of the restrictions from the Old Testament.

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Paul said in the last part of vs. 1, We Are "Not To Please Ourselves." In other words, Let's Not Push Our Beliefs Upon The Weaker Brethren (Even though we may be right). In time, if demonstrated with love, We Can Teach Them The Truth. They will come to Understand the Scriptures. Too many people want to Prove Their Superior Knowledge by Overpowering The Immature Believer. The Lord said We Are Not to Please Ourselves.

### B. Pleasing Our Neighbor (vv. 2, 3)

1. The whole reason for this discussion is for The Purpose of Edifying The Believer. When we Lovingly and Gradually bring the New Christian into a Better Understanding of The Truth, Then We Please Christ and We Edify The Believer.

This Takes Time; Maturing a babe in Christ does not happen Overnight. This is a problem area for many of our conservative churches, expecting a new Christians to change overnight - New Values, New Dress, New Music, and So On.

If we had our way, we would build this model person just the way we wanted him to be (in most cases, just like us); however, Jesus wants us to allow him time to grow into His image.

2. So then, again, we are not to please ourselves, but rather we are to edify the believer by Bearing His Infirmities. In the last part of vs. 3, Jesus said, "The Reproaches of Them that Reproached Thee Fell on Me." This means Everything Negative that was Directed at God From The Sinner, Including His Sin, Fell on Christ. He Chose Not to Please Himself, but to Please God and Take on Himself The Sins of Man. In Like Manner, we are to Take on The Infirmities of the weak.

### C. Watching What You Do Or Say

1. There can be things we do or say that would destroy a weaker brother or sister.

2. The things I'm talking about aren't sin, necessarily, but appear so to the uninformed. Rom. 14:14-23.

3. We can destroy the weak with our liberty.

(Cont. 14)

## DISCUSSION:

### D. The Weak May Be A New Christian Coming Out Of Denominationalism

1. It may harm a Conscience to Do Something that appears to be a Denominational Practice, such as the Eating of Meat in Paul's Illustration.

2. Former SDA (Seventh-Day Adventist), SUNDAY Worship.

3. Former Muslim, The Eating of Pork.

### E. May Be Your Own Child

1. Lack of teaching and lack of reason can cause strange understanding

2. For Example, a small child receives environmentalist training at school and now believes it is wrong to kill bugs.

### F. Could Be The Elderly

**\*\* What A Loss If The Elderly Became Weak and Caused To Stumble.**

### G. Are There Limits?

1. This only applies to those areas where we have liberty.

2. Duties to God are first, Matthew 6:33; Acts 5:29.

3. One must know of a problem to be charged with bearing infirmities.

There may have been those that bore your infirmities while you were weak. We can bear the infirmities of others by reining in our liberty where necessary and by teaching, strengthening the weak.

## VI. HOW TO STAND IN THE GAP IN PRAYER

How to pray effectively for others who are in need of help but who are unable or unwilling to pray for themselves Is Called Standing In The Gap.

Standing In The Gap is a form of Intercessory Prayer where Our Prayers bridge the gap between God and People who are cut off From God's Helping Presence.

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**When We Stand in The Gap In Prayer, we pray for God's help, mercy, intervention and/or forgiveness on the behalf of Individuals, Groups of People or Nations.**

**A. Examples of the kinds of situations where you might need to stand in the gap In Prayer Include:**

- Praying for those in a crisis situation who don't know God and/or who may not know how to pray or who don't believe in prayer.**
- Praying for those who are living in opposition to God through their unhealthy lifestyle, pride or rebellion.**
- Praying for communities, institutions, churches or workplaces where factions are battling for control.**
- Praying against unjust circumstances, governments and laws.**
- Praying for those who don't believe in God, or are angry at God or who are actively denouncing faith/religion**
- Praying against cultural and social conditions that are corrupt, evil or destructive.**
- Praying for the weak, ill, downtrodden or oppressed who cannot pray for themselves.**
- Praying against evil and for the coming of God's Kingdom.**
- Praying for those going through the stress of a major life crisis whose mental energy may be drained where they are unable to pray for themselves.**

**Here are some ways to stand in the gap in prayer for others.**

### **1. Answer God's Call To Intercede**

**We usually receive an inner calling To Stand In The Gap In Prayer When:**

- God opens our eyes to a situation where prayer needs to be made to bring God's help and intervention and...**

(Cont. 16)

– Those who should be praying – the ones who could change their behavior, repent, serve justice etc. – can't or won't pray.

## 2. Picture a broken wall

The term standing in the gap comes from the Bible verse in Ezekiel 22:30 that says, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." In Bible times, cities had walls around them to help defend them from attack. Broken parts of the wall created a physical gap in the city's ability to protect itself from invading armies. In this Bible verse, because there is a gap in the wall, God is looking for someone to step in and guard the broken, vulnerable territory. I picture a well-armed warrior standing fearlessly in the breach, forcefully repelling any enemy soldiers who try to enter through the gap in the wall. This is a visual picture of Your Role when you Prayerfully Stand In The Gap Through Intercessory Prayer.

## 3. Ask God to help you identify why the wall is broken

In order to pray specifically first ask yourself, "What Graces and Spiritual Strengths are missing here? What negative forces have created this gap?"

A reading of the prophets will give you an idea of the types of things that have created gaps in earlier times. (Ezek. 13:5, "Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord." In this case: Neglect, Lack of Action, Prioritizing, and A False Sense of Security.

## 4. Pray with authority

Once God has helped you identify the gap or the underlying spiritual need, obstacle or lack, you are in a position to pray with authority. One of the prime ways to do this is to choose Bible verses that speak to the specific issues. Pray and claim these scriptures as part of your prayer.

Scriptures about the redemptive power of Christ are especially useful in all situations when standing in the gap in prayer.

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Here are some verses about Christ's Power to bridge the ultimate gap Between Humanity and God Our Father. John 3:16; Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7-10; Eph. 2:13; Colossians 1:13,14.

#### 5. Be vigilant and persistent

Standing in the gap in prayer is often something you do more than a single time. Usually, intercessors continue to pray at regular intervals figuratively standing in prayer in the same spiritual gap. Isaiah 62:6,7 says, "I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth."

#### 6. Join with others standing in the gap

The verse from Isaiah 62:6,7 uses the plural form "Watchmen" that tells us that God often provides other like-minded intercessors to join us in our vigil. Just like different shifts taken by watchmen throughout the night, intercessors can help share the prayer load by taking turns praying for the same issue or gap.

#### 7. Praise God for His mercy and compassion

When we stand in the gap praying for others, we are praying God's heart for the world. Isaiah 63:9 says, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

Even though the situations for which we are praying may seem like lost causes, Christ assures us that he came to seek and find the lost in the parable of the lost sheep in [Luke 15:1-7](#). Before circumstances change, we can offer praise and thanksgiving to God for calling us to intercede and for Him to restore the lost.

#### B. My Personal Experiences

I pray for many people daily but occasionally I feel led to pray more intently and forcefully by standing in the gap in prayer.

(Cont. 18)

I pray for many people daily but occasionally I feel led to pray more fervently by standing in the gap in prayer. Recently I felt overcome with the need to pray for a few people going through serious life difficulties and God seemed to call me to stand in the gap in prayer for them.

That morning I set aside time to pray, I also skipped breakfast as a partial fast so I could devote myself to prayer. I went to my office & study where I could be alone away from interruptions. I began reading Psalm 28 (Testimony of Answered Prayer). Reading the Psalm, pausing to write down the verses that seemed to speak to the situation I was praying about. Then after each verse 'I spoke a prayerful response', claiming the scripture for my family and friends.

Although I found this process helpful, the actual technique of prayer used will vary by according to the individual. Other ways of praying may include Prayer Postures, such as physically standing to pray or kneeling or lying on the floor. Some prefer praying out loud in a private place while others silently pray while walking in an area that is significant to the prayer subject, such as walking around your front or back yard or through the home or bedroom of a family member, church member, or friend.

### C. Other Helpful Prayers

Standing In The Gap Prayer based on Psalm 28-30 for those in bad situations who do not know how to seek God's help for themselves.

### Prayer by Proxy When the Person You're Praying for Isn't Present

Here are my thoughts, ideas and experiences with prayer using a proxy.

What is Prayer By Proxy? Someone who stands or sits in for the person who is the subject of the prayers while others lay hands on them and pray. This person sitting in for someone else can be a member of their family or someone who feels close to the person for whom prayer is being lifted. You might encounter this prayer practice in churches and in other Christian prayer groups, especially during times when strong prayers are needed for someone's deliverance or healing.

(Cont. 19)

## The Concept of Using a Proxy In The Bible

Since I'm not a Theologian, I will leave it to others with more depth of knowledge to fully explore the Biblical and traditional roots of prayer by proxy. Instead, I will note that the general idea of using a proxy is in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the Old Testament, on the Day of Atonement, a "scapegoat" was used as a proxy to stand in the people's place to take away their sin. (Lev. 16:7-10, 20-22)

In this ritual, Aaron, the High Priest, laid hands on the scapegoat and Confessed the sins of Israel and then drove the goat out into the wilderness to symbolize the sins of the people being removed.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ took our place on the cross and acted as a proxy or a stand-in for us so that we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God through the work of Jesus. (See 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21)

Prayer by proxy does not override the free will of the person you're standing in for.

Please note that in these Biblical instances, these proxies were determined by God. More importantly, this divine proxy system only works if individuals who need to be forgiven and need to connect to God make their own decision to personally accept the work of the proxy on their behalf. This is called free will.

Therefore, I think we can say that prayer by proxy is not a legally binding process where we have complete authority to act on the behalf of someone as a prayerful stand-in, especially in situations where they need deliverance and salvation. In essence a prayer by proxy is the same as all acts of intercessory prayer: Coming before God as inspired by the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love, longings, hopes and desires for others that by their own free will they might embrace God and his plan for their life.

If you're using prayer by proxy for someone's physical healing, the person, though not physically present, typically wants and accepts the prayers on their behalf. Therefore, the free will issue is not usually a barrier.

(Cont. 20)

On the other hand, in my own personal prayer experiences, I have found that actually being present with someone as you pray for their healing adds extra benefits for the ill person. Praying with them often brings them feelings of peace, comfort and a sense that God is with them.

### My Personal Experiences With Prayer by Proxy

I have felt God's presence and power in a very real way. It's extremely comforting and empowering to those of us participating in the prayer. As an example, at Church during altar call, on occasion one person with a family member in deep distress might sit in a chair as we lay hands on her or him and pray for that family member. We didn't do this thinking, "We need to do prayer by proxy." We didn't even have a name for it. Instead, we did it as a natural way to pray given the circumstances.

Having been in the chair myself being prayed over for one of my family members, I can tell you that it's very moving to feel the outpouring of prayers for my loved one. If I try to analyze a bit of what I experienced, I felt like God was filling me (the person standing in) with new power and encouragement and insights into how to stay in relationship with my son in healthy ways. I also felt that the intercessors around me were able to speak out in prayer more specifically about the person who was not present.

### The Elements of Prayer by Proxy that Make it Feel Powerful

One unspoken question in our minds on the subject of prayer by proxy is this: Is this a more effective way of praying for someone than other means of intercessory prayer? I can't speak to what goes on in the spiritual realm, but I can speak to the elements that tend to heighten the feeling of God's presence.

First and Foremost is the power of praying together with others in agreement.

Jesus says in Matthew 18:19 "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

(Cont. 21)

A Second Source of Power of this prayer mode is **Posture**. Posture helps us communicate with our whole being body, mind and spirit. The Posture of others gathered around in prayer and the person standing in proxy of kneeling or sitting in a receptive posture help us pray with more focus.

Of course, these elements aren't unique to prayer by proxy. They're also present in other forms of intercessory prayer where believers gather to pray for each other and for our world.

Here's the problem Ezekiel saw in Ezekiel 13:5, "You have not gone up to the breaks in the wall to repair it for the house of Israel so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the Lord."

Again, as I mentioned earlier, In this case, the gap was there because of neglect, lack of action, lack of priority and a false sense of security. Other sample reasons gaps exist include:

- Pride, ego, depending on things such as money, education, military power and not on God
- Following false gods, such as fame, power, riches
- Occult practices, false religions
- Unbelief, lack of faith
- Neglect of personal faith, misusing religion for your own purposes
- Oppressing others, anger, resentment, being unforgiving
- Victimization by others, oppression, personal calamity, illness
- Lack of access to help, education, opportunity
- Prejudice, injustice
- Addictions, lust, moral failure, sinful habits

Identifying the "Gap" that exists that you will be bridging in prayer will enable you to pray very specifically against it.

As an example, a hospital chaplain shared with me that she met a woman who was overwhelmed by the serious illness of her husband.

(Cont. 22)

The Chaplain told the woman that he would take on the prayer burden about her husband's illness for the woman. The chaplain was standing in the gap for the woman. The specific gap was between the huge amount of energy needed to cope with her husband's illness and the woman's lack of time and mental reserves.

### CONCLUSION:

Our life is not just about us. We are called to be part of the family of God and when you are adopted into that family you not only get all the benefits but all the responsibility. You have a new family and you need to be the best brother or sister you can be. When we talk about embracing the responsibility to lead others to New Life and New possibilities, we are not just talking about people who don't know Christ, but also our brothers and sisters.

God does nothing by accident. People with needs do not just show up around you in the middle of your gap by accident. He has given you the resources to meet needs, to stand in the gap for others. Remember it is not either-or, it's both-and. Your responsibility is to move forward in your gap and reach out to others on your way through. Come, imitate me as I imitate Christ and reach out to others who are struggling in their gap. Remember their gap is part of mine and mine is part of theirs. The success of our endeavors depends upon our interdependence. Let us embrace the gap!

Finally, We see the importance of intercession; it is a command, and there are consequences if we don't. All of us need to learn to apply this lesson, we need to be praying and interceding for our Government, Teachers, Parents or Pastors, for everyone that has authority over us; as 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1-2 brings out. We should learn a lesson from Israel, have the courage to "make up the hedge, and stand in the gap". God listens to prayer; we need to pray that God would have mercy on Our Nation, On Our Leaders, and On Fellow Christian Brothers and Sisters. I'm going to end by reading verse 30 again "....." Be That Person That Stands In The Gap. Amen.

## BIBLE STUDY LESSON ON

SUBJECT: "DISCOVERING WHO AND HOW TO STAND IN THE GAP"

### SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

#### "EZEKIEL 22:23-31"

<sup>23</sup>And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, <sup>24</sup>Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

<sup>25</sup>There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

<sup>26</sup>Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. <sup>27</sup>Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

<sup>28</sup>And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. <sup>29</sup>The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

<sup>30</sup>And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. <sup>31</sup>Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

#### "ROMANS 15:1-3"

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. <sup>3</sup>For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.