

PRAYING
WITH
God's
HEART

THE POWER AND PURPOSE OF
PROPHETIC INTERCESSION

JAMES W. GOLL



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I dedicate this book to the memory of my dear late wife, Michal Ann Goll, to whom I had the honor of being married for more than 32 years. Though she passed through the thin veil into heaven in the fall of 2008, she yet remains a source of inspiration to many around the world. A rare example of character and gifting brought together in one person, she helped pave the way for an entire generation of prophetic intercessors to arise. She was my best friend, closest confidante and greatest support in life and ministry. I still miss her every day and just wish we could have one more prayer time together.

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Foreword

Partnering in prayer with God is one of the greatest honors and privileges bestowed upon believers in Christ Jesus. Prayer changes things. Praying with God's heart moves mountains, calls forth the prophetic destiny upon a generation and brings you closer to the heart of God Himself!

Often when I arise in the morning, I go right into my prayer room. There is a little, old-fashioned couch in a corner of the room that is my "kneeling spot." I like to meet God in that quiet place. From that small spot on the floor I travel around the world praying, doing exactly what James Goll describes in this book. I am aware, however, that I am not alone in my travels in prayer. All over the world, voices are joining mine in many languages—the harmony of God's children calling out to Him in intercession.

The prayer movement grew throughout the 1980s and '90s and has now mushroomed into the 21st century. Whereas many churches did not have prayer rooms and ministries when we started teaching on intercession, they are numerous today. In fact, I know of nations that have prayer networks made up of radical, prophetic intercessors. That is why this book, *Praying*

with God's Heart: The Power and Purpose of Prophetic Intercession, is of such strategic importance. It deals with the power of prophetic intercession—praying God's Word, will and ways into the earth.

While some books, like my own *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*, touch on this subject, none covers it as well as this one. James Goll writes about intercession and prophetic intercession with humor, integrity and deep insight, plumbing deep wells of understanding from which others have given us only a light drink.

The Body of Christ needs this book. You will want to read some chapters more than once, because each time you do, you will receive fresh insight and understanding.

I invite you to take a new journey into the realm of prophetic intercession with my friend James Goll. Open the pages of this book and drink deeply of its revelation. You will come away refreshed, encouraged, challenged and nearer to God than you have ever been.

Cindy Jacobs, co-founder, Generals International

Acknowledgments

I have labored over this message for years. Greater intimacy with God and the purpose and power of prophetic intercession are my primary life messages. I was born to lean my head against the chest of the Messiah like John the beloved and hear the rumblings in God's heart. I was born for prophetic intercession! I trust that this message will have an impact on you.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge two of the main intercessory tutors the Lord put into my life. Thanks to Mahesh Chavda of All Nations Church for his relentless example of prayer and fasting. You were there for Michal Ann and me to call forth healing for her barren womb. You have been there to encourage me to continue when life got rough. You remain there for me today. Thank you, Mahesh, for blessing my life and family beyond measure.

I also wish to acknowledge my dear friend of years, the founder of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Mike Bickle. I was blessed to serve with this passionate lover of God in Kansas City for several years. What an example you have been to thousands to keep prayer central amidst the swirl of many good things to do. Thank you, Mike, for never giving up!

Acknowledgments

I also want to acknowledge some of the others who have had an impact on my journey as an intercessor over the years: Dick Simmons, for his model of reminding God of His Word; Dutch Sheets, for his governmental warrior anointing; Cindy Jacobs, for her precision in discernment; Beth Alves, for teaching us about the “prayer shield”; Lou Engle, for his relentless pursuit of God; and Pat Gastineau, for her wisdom from the trenches.

I also want to thank all the past and present staff and board of directors of God Encounters Ministries, formerly known as Encounters Network. You have lifted up my arms to aid me in my many endeavors. You have been a source of strength and blessing in many times of need. What a treasure you are! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge two highly skilled women who have assisted me over the years in my task of writing. Thanks go to Jane Campbell, editorial director of Chosen Books, and to Kathy Deering, my writing partner for many projects over many years. You both make this tedious process so much fun! You help me to b-r-e-a-t-h-e.

I am deeply indebted to each of you. Thank You, Lord, for the privilege of walking with others.

James W. Goll

Part 1

A Heart for Intercession

One of the first things the disciples of Jesus requested from their Master was that He would teach them how to pray. As it was with the first disciples, so it seems that this desire is planted in the heart of every true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether we are new believers or older ones (like me), we want to learn how to pray—how to communicate with God in worship and supplication. Eventually, it becomes a lifestyle.

Where do we get this desire to pray for the needs of others? From Jesus Christ Himself, whose whole life consists of priestly intercession in our behalf:

God took an oath that Christ would always be a Priest, although he never said that of other priests. Only to Christ he said, “The Lord has sworn and will never change his mind: You are a Priest forever, with the rank of Melchizedek.” Because of God’s oath, Christ can guarantee forever the success of this new and better arrangement.

Under the old arrangement there had to be many priests so that when the older ones died off, the system could still be carried on by others who took their places.

But Jesus lives forever and continues to be a Priest so that no one else is needed.

Hebrews 7:20–24 TLB

Jesus Himself draws us into His work of continual high-priestly prayer: “He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since *He always lives to make intercession for them*” (Hebrews 7:25, emphasis added).

We can walk securely in our identity as His own chosen people, leaning hard on the fact that He wants the best for us:

Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? *Christ Jesus* is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, *who also intercedes for us*.

Romans 8:33–34, emphasis added

We need to be reminded all the time. We so easily become self-absorbed. Distractions pull us away from the sure knowledge of our position in and with our elder Brother, Jesus Christ. We forget that we belong to Him, body, soul and spirit, and that He wants us to remain close to Him all the days of our life. Not only will He take care of our needs, He will draw us into His work of intercession.

In the first four chapters of this book, I will lay the groundwork for our understanding of intercessory prayer, in particular the vital component of intercessory prayer as an expression of the heart of God. This is what it means to have a “heart for intercession.”

Later in the book, I will go into what it means to be both a priest and prophet in the Kingdom of God. Where a heart of intercession is concerned, the high priesthood of Jesus is the

summation of what it means for us to serve with Him, linking the needs of earth to heavenly provision.

Embracing a heart of intercession means having a heart of compassion like His, even sometimes to the point of tears. It means holding on to hope with unshakable faith. From time to time, it means participating in dramatic breakthroughs and spiritual encounters that are almost too wonderful for words. Believe me, this is why you were born!

We have received a grand invitation to a life-altering adventure. Let's get started on our journey together—a journey into the heart of God.

1

The Life of Intercession

Invitation to Enter In

*M*y beginnings were humble. I grew up in the tiny farming community of Cowgill, Missouri, where my family was part of the Cowgill Methodist Church. We were not well-to-do in any way except for one: a testimony of faith on my maternal side.

My mother, you see, had dedicated me to the Lord before I was born. She and my father were married at the end of World War II and they had two daughters before I came along. She was a prayer warrior and she had been praying for a son. When she miscarried a pregnancy on July 3, 1951, and found out that she had been carrying a boy, she felt she had lost her promised son, but that day she prayed and said, “Lord, if You will give me another son, I will dedicate him to Christ’s service.”

Guess what? A year to the day—July 3, 1952—I came out of my mama’s womb. Mama’s name, Amanda Elizabeth, means

“grace” and “consecrated one,” so I can say that by grace I came forth into consecration.

That makes my testimony a little different from other people’s, but we all have to start somewhere. God calls us and we say yes. Some people can tell you the exact moment in history when that happened. For me, I simply grew up walking with Jesus as my best friend. By grace, He has been close to me every day of my conscious awareness, and I learned to both talk to Him and listen to Him from the earliest age.

Prayer Walks and Prayer Talks

A little place like Cowgill does not have a lot going on. Consequently, I spent a lot of time as a boy entertaining myself—much of it outdoors. Our house was located right across from the railroad tracks. Even as a small child, I would go on walks along those tracks, talking to the Man Upstairs in the clouds. That is just what I did. I would talk to Him and it sure seemed that He talked back. This is when I learned to sing hymns with all my heart.

Even later in my life when I went off to college, I thought that was normal Christianity: You talk to God and He talks back to you. When He talks, you listen and respond. By then I had run into people who did not believe that, but I knew it was a real relationship with real back-and-forth communication.

Somehow, those prayer walks and prayer talks imprinted upon my heart three simple but profound prayers. I prayed them throughout my youth and I still pray them today. The three prayers are as follows:

1. “Give me wisdom beyond my years, like Solomon.”
2. “Raise up modern-day Josephs with the spirit of counsel upon their lives to speak to those in authority.”
3. “Give me a heart of purity and keep me from the evil way.”

The Spirit of God must have given me those specific prayers, because they were far beyond my understanding. I do not think I even knew who Solomon was, to be honest, although I may have picked up his name from a Sunday school lesson.

Those prayers have lasting significance. I still pray them. I am convinced that I need that level of help more today than when I was ten years old. They are the foundational prayers of my heart to this day.

People know me as a prophetic author or speaker or as a seer, but where the prophetic waters run deepest in my life is at the convergence of the prophetic, revelatory dimensions of the Holy Spirit (from God down to earth) mixed together with prayer (from earth back to God). That is what we will be exploring together in this book.

Starting with Worship

Besides walking and talking with God, I grew up singing to Him. I sang to Him in church, of course, practically learning the old Methodist hymnal by heart, but I also sang everywhere else. Day and night. And I sang *loudly*, to the point that some people might not have necessarily appreciated it. I worshiped in song with all of my heart.

Scripture says, “Whatever you do, do it heartily [with all your heart], as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23 NKJV). That may be one of my life mottoes.

Worship is the act of giving ourselves to God wholeheartedly. It is about the heart. It is about giving our entire being—spirit, soul and body—to God. Twelve different Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible are translated *worship*. All four of the Hebrew words, and especially the primary word, *shachah*, mean “to depress, prostrate (in homage to royalty or God)—bow down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make)

obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.”¹ One Greek word for “worship” is *proskuneo*, which means: to kiss (as a dog licks his master’s hand); to prostrate oneself in homage; to do reverence; to adore.²

In the Bible, the first mention of the word *worship* is found in Genesis 22, after the Lord asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac before Him on Mount Moriah. Abraham rose early the next morning, summoned the young men who served under him, saddled his donkey and launched out in obedience to present his son before God. After three days of travel, Abraham’s eyes rested on the site of sacrifice. “Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will *worship* and return to you’” (verse 5, emphasis added).

We often connect worship with music and sometimes make them synonymous. But there is no mention of music here. The only instruments listed are wood, fire and a knife, and I do not think Abraham had in mind to whittle a flute and play a tune. The scriptural account does not mention stringed instruments, drums or lutes. All he offered was sacrifice, obedience and faith. This is worship in its highest form—played on the instrument of a pure human heart.

Abraham is now known as a father of faith (see Hebrews 11:8–19) and he is the first person mentioned in the Bible as a prophet (see Genesis 20:7). He is also called the “friend of God” (see 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23). He models both worship and prayer for us. I am not trying to say that worship does *not* include music and singing, because it does. But I am pointing out that true worship is heartfelt and that true prayer comes from the heart, as well.

Scripture continually emphasizes expressions of worship and prayer (see 2 Chronicles 7:14; Ezekiel 22:30; John 4:23; 1 Timothy 2:1, 8). The Bible mentions both prayer and expressions of worship as integral elements in the early Church (see Acts

13:1–3; 16:25; Philippians 4:4–6; 1 Timothy 2:1–2, 8; 2 Timothy 1:3–4; Philemon 1:4–6). Let’s briefly consider three New Testament accounts of how people approached the Master. We quickly find a trend: *Worship precedes petition*.

First, in Matthew 8:2–3, we are given the account of the leper whom Jesus cleansed:

A leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Before the man brought forth his petition in tremendous desperation, he bowed before the Lord. No wonder the healing virtue of God came forth so quickly!

In another awesome demonstration of the mercy of God, we find prostration once again coming before petitioning. I do not believe this was just cultural protocol. I am convinced that resurrection power proceeded in response to faith, humility and true worship:

A synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.” Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples. . . .

When Jesus came into the official’s house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder, He said, “Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep.” And they began laughing at Him. But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

Matthew 9:18–19, 23–25

The third example is the story of the Syrophenician woman whose daughter was cruelly demon-possessed. The woman came to Jesus with persistence, shouting and crying out, “Have

mercy on me, Lord, Son of David” (Matthew 15:22). The Lord did not answer her in response, I believe in order to test her and see how desperate she really was. Thus she continued in her urgency and would not take no for an answer:

She came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” . . . Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.

Matthew 15:25, 28

This woman had suffered a lot, but she never lost her bearings. She surrendered herself to the Lord and would not give up. She knew where her help would come from.

When you find yourself in a desperate situation, remember how prayer works. Start by offering a sacrifice of praise. Worship your way out of a victim mindset and into the presence of the Lord. “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise” (Psalm 100:4).

Do not be like the people who undertake a task without putting oil on their machinery. Get the oil of His anointing from its primary source—God Himself, personally. Cultivate your relationship with Him and your faith-filled prayers will flow like streams of living water.

Defining Intercession

Latin is one of the primary languages into which the Bible was translated hundreds of years ago, and it is from the Latin that we get the word “intercede,” which comes from *inter* (“between, among”) and *cedere* (“to go, to yield or to move and to pay a price”)—in other words, “to go between.” Someone who intercedes is an intercessor, and an intercessor goes between, steps

into the gap when needed, gets involved in solving a problem. That is intercessory prayer in a nutshell.

A prayer intercessor does that in behalf of someone else, yielding him- or herself to coming alongside in prayer those who are weak or in need of assistance, standing in the gap between someone and the enemy. An intercessor moves in the direction of involvement rather than self-interest, as portrayed in the story of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:33).

An intercessor's heart is moved by God's heart with compassion, which makes a person willing to pay a personal price in the course of intervening in a situation.

I found a useful definition of "intercede" in the dictionary: "to act between parties with a view to reconciling differences; . . . to beg or plead in behalf of another; to mediate."³ Is this not what Jesus has done for us? He is our model intercessor. While we were yet sinners in extreme need of redemption, Jesus Christ died for us on the cross, reconciling us to the Father.

As intercessors, we are co-laborers and partners with Jesus.

Four Biblical Definitions of the Intercessory Task

As intercessors, we have a role to play in shaping history, and in Scripture I can see four overlapping yet distinct definitions of the task of priestly intercession.

1. Being a Secretary for God

Like a good secretary—or personal assistant, if you prefer—intercessors are the ones who remind the Lord of promises and appointments yet to be met and fulfilled. Why does God need reminding? Did He get amnesia all of a sudden?

No, but He has invited us to participate in the working out of His plan. He wants us to be like watchmen, as we read in the book of Isaiah:

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Isaiah 62:6–7

An intercessor is one who reminds the Lord of promises and appointments not yet fulfilled.

A secretary is an assistant who keeps track of the appointments on the boss's calendar. This capable assistant lays out the calendar, reminds the boss of his or her appointments and prepares the needed material so the job can be completed properly.

The intercessor, like the secretary, does the same type of work. The person of prayer searches through the divine calendar, the Bible, and finds the promises and appointments that have not yet been completed. After locating these, he reminds his Boss, the Lord of Hosts, that it is time for Him to fulfill His Word.

2. Taking Up the Cause of Justice

In addition, *an intercessor is one who takes up the cause of justice before God in behalf of another.* Here is God's perspective on the need for intercessors:

Yes, truth is lacking; and he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey. Now the Lord saw, and it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice. And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede.

Isaiah 59:15–16

As intercessors, we stand in the gap before the Lord for those who are in great need or distress, lifting a cry to Him. He is looking for those who will do this vital duty. Join yourself to

others in the Body of Christ who do not want to let God down. He is looking for people who will take up the cause. Injustices are rampant in people's personal lives, in their families, in our cities, in whole nations and in people groups. By linking your heart to God's heart, you can call for justice to come forth.

3. Building Up the Wall

Intercessors get to lay bricks of prayer and proclamation in order to build walls of protection around families, churches and cities. Ezekiel paints this word picture:

O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins. You have not gone up into the breaches ["breaches in the wall," NIV], nor did you build the wall ["hedge," KJV] around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD.

Ezekiel 13:4-5

From this Scripture, we see that *an intercessor is one who builds up the wall of protection in a time of battle, who makes up the hedge of protection.*

The time of battle is not long ago or far distant. Today and every day is a day of battle. Satan is "like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Spirits of darkness want *you* for their next meal!

Ezekiel's correction was directed against the prophets of his day who were not doing their jobs, which meant the enemy could do his. Prophetic intercessors are always needed to build up the walls of protection against the enemy so that the people of God (and the Church) can stand in that day of battle.

Part of our problem is that we have not had watchmen on the walls, surveying the schemes of the devil. Satan and his cohorts have had free rein in many of our cities to do as they please. Having no guards results in no protection.

But that does not mean that things cannot change! In our day, guards, like Nehemiah and Ezra of old, are taking a stand for righteousness and rebuilding the walls of protection around our cities. This is an act of intercession. The powers of darkness are being confronted and commanded to vacate the premises they have entered deceitfully, and the rebuilt walls are being guarded once again.

4. Standing in the Gap

Ezekiel goes on to make it clear that unless God's appointed prophetic intercessors not only rebuild the walls but also stand on them as watchmen, our precious families and cities will suffer great losses:

“I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,” declares the Lord God.

Ezekiel 22:30–31

Look closely at this definition of prophetic prayer warriors, or you will miss its impact. Ezekiel is revealing that the prayer warrior has another distinct task: to fend off God's wrath. As intercessors, we are to take our position between God and His people and between God and the world. People of prayer are called to build up a different kind of wall here—this time the wall is between us and Him.

We are given good news, though: God is waiting for someone to persuade Him not to pour out His indignation. Perhaps the incense of our prayers (see Exodus 30:34–36; Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3–5) will cause God's judgment to be averted or postponed. Our prayers can cut short, lessen or delay God's

righteous judgments. We can use our intercessory capital to purchase seasons of mercy, to hold His judgments at bay. It can be like a holy wrestling match with God Himself.

Thus, here is a fourth definition of the intercessory calling: *An intercessor is one who stands in the gap between God's righteous judgments and the people's need for mercy.*

Invitation to Join with Christ in Intercession

The Holy Spirit is looking for worshiping intercessors and interceding worshipers. We must learn both in order to be victorious.

Did you know that, when you have God's heart, you can be that man or that woman for your city, for your family, for your nation? God is not looking only for the one or two exceptionally zealous men or women out there, He is looking for His whole Bride, the Body of Christ, to respond to His invitation. He wants you and me to be His image-bearers. He wants our hearts to reflect His own. "Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13), and that is the goal of our intercession.

It is a wonderful privilege to partner with God as an intercessor. Sometimes we think of it as a difficult assignment or a spiritual discipline, but God is not our taskmaster and prayer is not really a spiritual discipline. (Which makes me think of a corrective word the Lord spoke to me once. He said, "Discipline? You don't even have enough discipline to have a spiritual discipline. They're not spiritual disciplines anyway. They are spiritual privileges.")

Our job description turns out to be one of the greatest privileges of all. You and I (and every believer in Christ) have been invited to participate in the making and writing of history. Before the throne of Almighty God, we stand as worshiping intercessors and interceding worshipers. Here's the proof:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4–6 NKJV

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:1

But you will be called the priests of the LORD; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

Isaiah 61:6

You do not have to have a clerical collar to be a priest of the Lord. The well-targeted prayers of ordinary believers release glorious lightning flashes of God's glory.

After all, we are participating with Jesus Himself as we intercede. According to respected prayer teacher Wesley Duewel: "Christ is not sitting passively in blissful royal dignity, unmoved, while you intercede. No! Never! You intercede because He intercedes. The Holy Spirit conveys to you the heartbeat of Jesus."⁴

Answering the Call

Father, in Jesus' great name, I present myself to You to be a minister and priest of prayer and worship. The goal of my life is to know God and enjoy Him forever. Now I choose to lean into Your heart and listen, to come before Your throne by entering into the intercession of Christ. Amen and Amen!