



Immanuel Approach Intercessory Prayer

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I stumbled onto this beautiful, simple application of the Immanuel Approach at the end of a demonstration session I was doing for one of our mentoring groups. We had spent most of the session working with Jesus to resolve a number of painful memories involving various members of the recipient's family; and then as we were nearing the end of the session, she looked up at me and described several *current* issues that were worrying her on behalf of two of her siblings and one of her nephews. I was still totally in an Immanuel Approach mind-set, so I just popped out with what seemed like the only reasonable response: "Can you still perceive Jesus there with you?" And when she said "Oh,...yeah,...He's still right here in front of me," I responded with, "Well, instead of talking to me about your concerns, why don't you just talk directly to Jesus? You can tell him what you've just been telling me, and then ask Him for blessings, provision, and help for your siblings and your nephew." She replied with, "Yeah. . . Right. . . I can do that," and then went ahead and did it. And there we were – Immanuel Approach intercessory prayer.

Many of us, when we engage in intercessory prayer, focus mostly on the problem, and have only a vague sense that God is present and listening. (Or maybe we don't have any sense of God's presence, and only hope that he's present and listening?) However, with this Immanuel Approach intercessory prayer, the recipient was focusing her attention very intensely on Jesus, and engaging in intercessory prayer as part of an interactive conversation with Him – she perceived Jesus to be standing right in front of her, she was looking right at Him, she was talking directly to Him, and she was sharing her concerns and asking for blessings, provision, and help *as part of an intimate, relational, interactive, friendship conversation*.

The whole experience was poignant and profound, even just to watch. When the recipient finished her interactions with Jesus, the room was completely silent as we all just sat there staring at each other for a few moments. And then someone says, "Wow! That was amazing!" And the recipient says, "After experiencing that, why would I ever pray in any other way?!"

Well, there actually are good reasons to employ other forms of prayer in certain situations. For example, let's say you're in the middle of a quick errand driving to the grocery store when you remember that your friend is taking a big exam today. You don't have ten to fifteen minutes to connect with a positive memory, stir up appreciation, establish an interactive connection with God, and then engage in intercessory prayer in the context of an Immanuel encounter; and closing your eyes (in the middle of traffic) in order to help connect with your positive memory and with Jesus would be particularly problematic. But you can easily shoot up a five second, "Jesus, help Mary to be especially aware of Your presence with her today as she's taking her final exam today. Help her to stay calm, think clearly, and to feel the truth that she is safe in Your unconditional love. Amen!"

And there are certainly a variety of other forms of prayer appropriate for a variety of other situations. But this Immanuel Approach intercessory prayer is certainly a fun, sweet, simple, relational, poignant, meaningful prayer option.

I would also like to offer a few quick thoughts regarding the theology/theory of Immanuel Approach intercessory prayer.

Some of the most helpful teaching I have ever encountered regarding intercessory prayer comes from Dutch Sheets, in his book *Intercessory Prayer*.

My really short summary of what I perceive to be his most important point is that we don't need to *plead* with God to give us what we need – we don't need to convince God to give us what we need. Rather, [God already wants to give us what we need, he has already prepared what he wants to give us, God has given us the authority to release the blessings, provision, and help he has prepared for us, and the way we exercise this authority is to engage in intercessory prayer.](#) That is, the place and purpose of intercessory prayer is to release the blessings, provision, and help that God already wants to give us and has already prepared for us.

Another important point regarding intercessory prayer, that seems clear to me from my own study of scripture, is that God likes us to ask. It seems that God likes us to come to him with our needs and concerns, and then to ask him for blessings, provision, and help – all as part of an ongoing relationship.

So here's the very short summary of my theological/theoretical understanding regarding Immanuel Approach intercessory prayer: [One of the ways we can exercise our intercessory authority to release the blessings, provisions, and help that God already wants to give us and has already prepared, is by establishing a connection with the living, tangible presence of God; and then by talking to him and *asking* in the context of this relational, interactive, loving, friendship connection.](#)

2024 update note: The basic training video set includes a bonus segment on IA intercessory prayer. The teaching content is essentially the same as the above, but the bonus video segment also includes a live demonstration.