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**Part 3**

**Mentoring by  
Intercession:  
Our Heavenly  
Intercessors**

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**Series: Possessing the Land:  
The Process of Mentoring**

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## Part 3

# Mentoring by Intercession: Our Heavenly Intercessors

Imagine if you will, that you are out on a boat many miles from shore, and suddenly storm clouds begin forming overhead. Imagine that the sunlight is suddenly hidden by the ominous black billows that are closing in so fast that there's no place to hide. Suddenly, it begins to rain. Not a tender shower, mind you, but sheets of water pouring down as though there was a leak in the faucets of heaven. The distance between you and the shoreline seems like thousands of miles. Lightning bolts streak from the sky with what appears to be anger from the heart of God. The thunder that accompanies the lightning is deafening to say the least.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a boat pulls up alongside you and a stranger appears. You've never seen him before. You don't know who he is or where he came from. He has in his hand a huge umbrella, and as he places it over you, the sudden absence of rain upon your head seems almost eerie for the moment. Then he picks you up and begins to carry you, across the sea of water safely to your destination.

In a moment, you find yourself safely on the shore, dry and unharmed. You look about, but the stranger is gone. You know he was there, and you know that it was he who got you from there to here. You felt as though there was no hope. You were certain there was no way home. You longed to escape the storm, but the storm was so much bigger than you were. What happened? Someone interceded.

Was it an angel sent from God? Who else would do such a thing? That doesn't really matter. What matters is that you were in a virtually impossible situation, when suddenly, somehow, someone intervened. The storm for now is over. The sun is beginning to shine again. The dampness of the deluge has dissolved, and you are beginning to see life once more from the vantage point of light and life. What seemed impossible has passed.

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Had you not been in such a storm, would you have recognized the miracle? Of course not. Had there been a human solution, would you not have just assumed it was a coincidence? Of course you would. So God let you get caught in one of life's downpours, and then He sent an intercessor to set you free.

He does that, you know. He allows life's storms to overtake us; then He allows life's intercessors to cry out until they know that storms are either over, or those storms are accomplishing purposes that are yet to be fulfilled. In either case, they cried, God heard, and you were the recipient of their intercession.

That, Beloved, is part of the process of being formed into the likeness of God. Without those storms we, little by little, begin to trust in our own abilities or we begin to presume on God's grace until we think He owes us a storm-free environment in which to live out our days, because after all, we are Christians.

So, on occasion, we have to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings so we can be conformed to His image. Sometimes, we are only reaping what we have sown. Sometimes, there seems to be no human explanation. That doesn't matter. What matters is that:

- 1- God allowed the crisis.
- 2- God placed it into someone's heart to intercede.
- 3- God honored His own word when the intercessor called your name. You were blessed, the one who interceded was blessed, and God was able to see His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The end result is glory to God and a new chapter of victory for you to record in your journal of spiritual travels. And among the many lessons we should be learning from these experiences is the lesson that we, too, are called upon to take up the intercessor's role on behalf of those we love or those we are called to minister to.

Teaching is not enough. Living the life before them is not enough. Even having their name on a list of those you pray for is not enough. At some point in time, they will have a need that only God can meet, a heartache only God can heal. God will let you know what it is, and He will expect you to stand on the hillside of intercession and raise the rod of God into the heavens on behalf of that person. It won't be a three-minute prayer drill that you fulfill on your way to start the car. It won't be a casual addition

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to your prayer calendar. It will be war. Spiritual war. There will be opposition in the heavenlies. You will struggle in your spirit as you sense God hearing and Satan battling for the life or the testimony of that one for whom you pray.

You will be called upon to enter the intercessor's closet and pour your heart out to God. You will take His own word and His own nature and call it back to Him as your authority. You will plead for His will to be done in that life whatever it takes, but you will cry out for God to blend His righteousness with His mercy, to temper His wrath with His love. That other person may never know you prayed. They may never know the agony you felt on their behalf. No matter. They will know that somehow, somewhere, someone appeared out of nowhere and lifted them out of the seemingly hopeless storm they were in and carried them to safety. Their cry can only be, "To God be the glory". To God be the glory indeed.

We have been observing Moses these past two studies do just that for Joshua, his minister or disciple. Joshua was sent into the midst of the battle to fight the dreaded Amalekites. Moses stayed behind, but not to avoid the battle. He, in fact, had a battle of his own to fight. Knowing he would need help, he took Aaron and Hur with him, and up to the top of the hill went these three intercessors. While Joshua was on the battlefield and Moses held up the rod of God, Josh and his army of unlikely victors proceeded to defeat Amalek and his angry aggressors. Whenever Moses' arms grew tired, however, and he let them fall to his side, the Amalekites began to make progress, and the Israelites began to retreat. It was then that Aaron and Hur, one on each side, held up Moses' arms and the three of them interceded together. Again, Joshua and his wrecking crew moved with God's power and the enemy retreated. By the end of the day the battle was over. Joshua and his army had prevailed, but it was Moses and his helpers who had availed themselves of the opportunity to intercede; and it was God, of course, who won the battle.

Before we move on to the other ways we mentor, it seemed appropriate to me for us to think through the issue of intercession one last time. It is so easy to approach a Scriptural precept, become informed and/or convicted, and then quickly move on to another area of conviction, secretly delighted that we didn't linger any longer than we did on that bit of previously uncomfortable sod.

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The truth is we may be digging into precious soil. We just might be nosing around in an area where divine gold dust resides, simply waiting for those with Biblical shovels and a willingness to undergo possible spiritual warfare to uncover riches that could transform their walk with God.

If so, we would not want to move along too quickly. Probably no issue in Scripture is more intimately tied to the Person of God or more beautifully depicted by illustration than intercession. And we must be sure we mine all of the precious ore from the revelations of those truths before we move on. Let's look at:

1- The incredible reality of how and why the Spirit of God intercedes for us as we pray.

2- The wonderful truth that the Son of God is in heaven continually making intercession to the Father on our behalf.

3- The beautiful picture Jesus painted in John 17 as He approached the Father on our behalf.

Let's learn what we can from these illustrations, and see how they can:

a) Further humble us and

b) Teach us how to more perfectly intercede for others.

Remember that illustration at the beginning of the lesson? We were trapped in a horrendous rain storm and had no way to reach safety. Suddenly, someone appeared on the horizon who had the capability to either cause the storm to cease or to weather the storm and not be overcome by it. That someone came at precisely the time we needed him the most, and he overcame the storm on our behalf. He interceded for us. He stood between us and certain hopelessness and his strength became our salvation. He carried us to safety.

Until we grasp that picture and then insert in the photograph the proper people, we will miss the full impact of mentoring by intercession. God, in eternity past, planned to place the Great Intercessor, His Holy Spirit, in His children one day. He also planned for His Precious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to one day come to earth, die for the sins of the world, be resurrected, and return to heaven to actually intercede for us whenever the tempter tries to test the validity of our salvation. I believe that for that reason, among others, God gave man the privilege of being on earth physical illustrations of those spiritual truths. I believe

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that every time we intercede for someone at God's throne, we not only serve as a vehicle of His grace to bless that person, but also, if we are willing to make the spiritual switch, we come closer and closer to understanding the very depths of the interceding work of God Himself.

What an incredible artist God is. He paints on the canvas of His word, with delicate strokes, physical pictures of deep, deep truths, knowing that if we ever truly get that photograph etched in our minds, His Spirit can call it to our remembrance at the appropriate time and we can begin to enter into the fullness of the spiritual truths that can change our lives.

Watch the Holy Spirit intercede for us. See the principles emerge as God lovingly draws living pictures of His role in changing us and leading us and then actually praying for us, and you will begin to see more clearly how crucial understanding God's concept of intercession is.

Remember: The Holy Spirit is mentoring us. Let's read Romans 8 one more time:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but

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the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

—Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the



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Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:1-28)

The picture here is one of a special intercessor who has been called alongside to give aid to someone in the process of sailing life's seas, but is suddenly caught up in one of life's storms. He or she needs an intercessor. Several things are true:

- 1- He is not under condemnation. (vs 1)
- 2- The reason is: He has been repurchased and is now inhabited by God Himself. (vs 9)
- 3- That indwelling Spirit is capable not only of keeping but also of leading and guiding. (vs 14)
- 4- As He leads, He assures. (vs 16)
- 5- It is all part of our inheritance. (vs 17)
- 6- Part of the proof of that inheritance is the privilege of suffering. (vs 17)
- 7- Those sufferings seem overpowering, but in the light of eternity, they are nothing. (vs 18)
- 8- Life on this planet is painful. (vs 22)
- 9- This is part of the plan. It helps us long for our final redemption. (vs 23)
- 10- It is good that we cannot see it, for that would require no faith. (vs 25)

Then, in verse 26, God wraps it all in a mantle of comfort and gives us this incredible promise:

Look at the truths that are coupled with that promise:

1- "Likewise"... (vs 26). That means in the same manner, the same Spirit also does the following. Everything that has gone before is a part of everything that follows. Don't ignore the words like "likewise" in God's word. They are links that reach back to what has gone before and tie them to what follows. It literally says:

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“Likewise, that very same Spirit who does not condemn you, who indwells you, who leads you, who assures you, who comforts you in your necessary sufferings, also intercedes for you. He actually prays for you to the Father when you are out on one of life’s oceans, caught up in one of life’s storms, and don’t know how to pray.”

2- “The Spirit ‘helpeth’.” The Greek word *συναντιλαμβανομαι* {soon-an-tee-lam-ban’-om-ahee} means:

- 1) to lay hold along with, to strive to obtain with others, help in obtaining
- 2) to take hold with another

The picture is one of someone struggling, drifting out to sea, when someone else comes along and helps them grab hold of the anchor, lest they get so far from shore they cannot make it back. It isn’t that casual word “help” that we often use that means, “I’ll be around if you need me”. Here is someone whose need is obvious, and whose plight is dangerous, when someone comes alongside and lays hold of the problem with them, holding life together until a solution arises. It’s slightly more intense than “sunergeo”, the word that is used in Romans 8:28 where all things “work together”. It is a word that implies a partnership in times of trouble.

3- What does the Spirit come alongside and help to anchor? It comes alongside when we are dealing with life’s “infirmities”. That word is:

*astheneia* {αστηνεια, as-then’-I-ah} It is translated: “infirmity”, “weakness”, “disease”, and “sickness”. Your concordance defines it as:

- 1) want of strength, weakness, infirmity
  - 1a) of the body
    - 1a-1) its native weakness and frailty
    - 1a-2) feebleness of health or sickness
  - 1b) of the soul
    - 1b-1a) want of strength and capacity requisite
    - 1b-1b) to understand a thing
    - 1b-1c) to do things great and glorious
    - 1b-1d) to restrain corrupt desires
    - 1b-1e) to bear trials and troubles

It means, then, that when we are under the pressure of

physical, emotional or spiritual attacks, God understands our dilemma. He knows we sometimes don't think clearly or objectively. Sometimes it is a physical attack—weakness or sickness of the body or simply feebleness of health, general physical weariness or illness. Other times it is not physical at all. It is being placed in the midst of a situation where we do not have the capacity spiritually to understand or restrain or bear the load assigned to us. We need help. At that very time, when the storms are raging, God always comes alongside, not only to help us, but even to pray for us because...

4- We don't know how to pray at times like that; God knows we don't and God understands. Be careful when people throw spiritual clichés at you in the midst of your deepest trials. It usually means they just don't understand. God's answers are often simple, but they are not usually harsh or condemning or judgmental. There is no condemnation in Christ. There is sowing and reaping, and there are often consequences we attribute to other things that are nothing more than the logical fruit of disobedience. But even at times like that, God does not condemn you, He loves you and He prays for you, for He understand you can't even pray at times like that. You just can't.

5- So the Spirit makes intercession for us. He comes alongside and begins to pray in our place. Is He teaching us how to pray? Not always. It says He prays "with groanings that cannot be uttered". That word "groaning" used here (στεναγμοῦς {sten-ag-mos}) simply means "to sigh". It is a special kind of sighing. "Groanings that cannot be uttered" ἀλαλήτοζ {al-al'-ay-tos}. It means: "not expressed or expressible in words". I believe, then, that what God is doing is lovingly bypassing that troubled heart of yours and mine and the Spirit is praying to the Father in the name of the Son in your place, because, at this moment, you cannot even find the words to pray.

That, Beloved, is what an intercessor does. He comes alongside when you are too weary or too burdened or too troubled to even know how to pray. Oh, you may be trying and you may be crying, but the words just don't make sense. In your heart of hearts, you know what to say. "All things work together for good". In your heart of hearts you understand the reason for it all: "As joint-heirs with Christ, we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together". We know all that, but so burdened down are we, that even the words sound hollow, and because we are hurting so

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badly, we dare not utter our feelings, yet we do not grasp the fullness of our hope, so we simply cannot pray aright.

Then comes the intercessor: God's sweet, sweet Spirit. He is the Comforter. He understands. He is the Assurance. He reminds us of our hope. And He is the Intercessor. He now moves in and actually prays in our place, and He can do it because "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because He maketh intercession according to the will of God" (vs 27).

Knowing that, we can't lose hope, because "all things (God and our troubles) really do work together (συνεργεο, sunergeo) for good (to accomplish God's higher purposes, which are spiritual). That, then, is what an intercessor does, and that, then, is what we are to come to picture, when we are on that ocean, waves tossing, lightning flashing, not even knowing how to pray.

More than that, however, that is the picture we need to ask God to paint in the foreground of our vision when we sense a need to intercede for those we love or those for whom we are responsible.

The picture is one of someone in a storm with no hope apart from a miracle. They may be in that storm because they did not follow the laws of God. But if they are believers, they are still there without condemnation. Others are there because, as a result of their seeking to walk faithfully in Christ, they have experienced Satan's wrath, allowed by God to help them grow into His likeness. Still others are there because, as the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike, physical and emotional traumas and tests are the norm of the believer's life.

What are we to do? Judge them? Not hardly. Ignore them? Hopefully not. We are to intercede for them. That means that we, understanding they are overwhelmed, or might be, by the storm they are in, are to come alongside and begin to pray for them, asking God's Spirit to continue His intercessory work, and crying out to God for His will to be done. His Spirit is praying, remember, according to the will of God. We need to ask His Spirit to help us (like Aaron and Hur) to intercede as He would, and to teach us, in the process, just how to intercede aright.

There is a second painting in the archives of spiritual art that helps us to complete the concept. It is the picture of the Lord Jesus, having borne our sins on that dreadful cross, having been buried, and having risen again on the third day, and now

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having ascended to His rightful place in Glory, who even this very moment is ever living to make intercession for us. What does that mean? And what does it mean to us? It is in verses 33 and 34 of the Romans chapter 8 that we read:

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

(Romans 8:33,34)

Here, then, is the second aspect of intercession. Instead of the believer under attack, seeking the Mind of God to know how to pray, we have a picture of the Christian's eternal security being challenged by Satan in the heavenlies, continually bringing to God your sins and mine, as though there is no way anyone as vile as we are could possibly be saved. Ah, but "it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy hath He saved us." As Paul repeated in in the following verses:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:35-39)

This, remember, is all one passage. Paul is explaining from verse one to verse 39 just how incredible our God is. Satan is continually harassing us on earth, and Satan is continually challenging our relationship with God in heaven. He never stops. But, praise God, neither does our God. Jesus Christ, the Savior, has become Jesus Christ, the intercessor, and from this moment until that glorious day when death is swallowed up in victory, He will not for one moment cease, day and night, standing before the Father as our advocate, stating every time Satan challenges our right to be God's sons and daughters, "This child is perfectly

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whole and perfectly holy. He or she is covered by My blood.” The writer of Hebrews said it clearly:

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

As Lewis Chafer wrote in his classic book, “Major Bible Themes”:

*“The ascended Christ as Priest ever lives to make intercession for His own. This ministry began before He left the earth (John 17:1-26), is for the saved rather than the unsaved (John 17:9) and will be continued in heaven as long as His own are in the world. His work of intercession has to do with the weakness, the helplessness, and the immaturity of the saints who are on the earth—things concerning which they are in no way guilty. He who knows the limitations of His own, and the power and strategy of the foe with whom they have to contend, is to them as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.”*

Jesus, then, stands between Satan and the Father, and every time Satan challenges our eternal security He points to the blood He shed and cries once more, “It is finished”. And Beloved, it is. His Spirit, meanwhile, indwelling us and guiding us and comforting us, stands between us and the hopelessness of life’s trials and prays for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. He who knows the mind of the Spirit prays according to the Father’s will, and He hears Him and we receive power and comfort and hope.

In John, chapter 17, that intercessory work began. Jesus began, even before He returned to the Father to ask the Father to keep us and to keep us in the midst of the battle from faltering. We read:

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. (John 17:9,11)

Jesus went on to pray that “we might be one as He and the Father are one”. And so the Living Son of God demonstrated how He was and would always be our intercessor, standing before the Father, seeking that He would keep us no matter what. The

Father agreed, and the seal will never be broken.

The pattern, then, seems to emerge with rich clarity. As Jesus and His Spirit now spend the bulk of their time interceding for us, because He lives in us through His Spirit, we, then, have the privilege and the responsibility to let Him in us use even us to intercede for others. And because of the intensity and the priority He places upon His work of intercession, we cannot treat it with any less importance. Therefore, we must reevaluate the time and the energy we give to standing in the gap between those who are our “Joshuas” and the onslaughts and assaults of the enemy.

Our prayer room, then, becomes a lighthouse. From there, we should be looking through the binoculars of the Spirit, asking God to cast a reflection upon the sea of life that we might see those who are drifting on life’s vast oceans, or those who are crying for help, but no one is near enough to hear. From that lighthouse, we must be peering into the darkness of Satanic intrusions, constantly seeking out the hearts of those who are struggling and suffering, rather than running the other way.

And when we find them (and we will, if we seek them), our task is to cry out to God to let us be Aaron or Hur or Moses, lifting up the arms of our hearts to the heavens, crying out to God to pray through us for them, even with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Yet still another calling beckons, as well. It is the portrait that cries out for us to take the initiative to pray for those we claim to be responsible for: our children, our friends, our disciples, those we mentor or those who claim to be following after us, whether we sought them out or not. An awesome responsibility? Indeed. No more awesome, however, than the one Jesus has assumed for you. No more awesome than the one the Holy Spirit has agreed to take on when the storms invade your heart. And no more responsibility than Scripture indicates we naturally and normally are called upon to assume.

Intercession as a part of mentoring, then, is not some noble calling that few receive and even fewer accept. It is the natural role of every parent and every disciple-maker until God calls them home. It is the role every Moses assumes by simply giving his heart to a Joshua. It goes with the territory. It is a part of the job description. It is part of the joy of mentoring. Yes, the ocean is vast. Yes, the waves are tossing. And, yes, the clouds overhead

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are ominous indeed. But praise God, we will make it safely to shore. The intercessor guarantees it. And, yes, we must stand in the gap for others who are sinking amidst the turbulent waves. The intercessor demands it.

### For Further Study and Application

1- If you were out on the sea in a boat, and saw someone in another ship facing a dreadful storm with no way to get back to shore, what would you do? If you faced that same situation *spiritually*, what would you do? What *do* you do?

2- Try to imagine the sense of responsibility Moses felt at the top of that hill when every time his arms came down, Joshua, his beloved minister, and his troops began to retreat in defeat. Can you make the “spiritual switch”? Why do you think he took Aaron and Hur with him? Do you have an Aaron or Hur in your life who can help you stand in the gap for others?

3- Read Romans 8:1-28 again. Use a concordance when necessary to understand the key words. Ask yourself:

What does it mean when it says “no condemnation”? (vs 1)

Explain verse 9 in your own words.

What is the relationship between being a “joint-heir with Christ” and “suffering together with Him”?

Memorize verse 18.

Memorize verse 26.

Explain the meaning of the words: “helpeth”, “infirmities”, “intercession”, “groanings”

How do verses 26 and 27 relate to verse 28?

4- Can you envision Christ “interceding” for you at the right hand of God? What do you think He is doing? What do you think He is saying? What can you learn from that about intercession?

5- What does “save to the uttermost” mean in Hebrews 7:25?

6- Has God spoken to you concerning your responsibility and opportunity where intercession is concerned? Have you made a list of those He is calling you to intercede for? Will you do it?

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