

The Theological and Pedagogical Value of Prayer according to Apostle Paul

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Introduction – Prayer in Ancient Greek Literature, and in the Old and New Testaments

The concept of *prayer* is well-known in the ancient Greek world. The verb “to pray” («προσεύχομαι») appears in several ancient Greek writers, and is often used with the familiar meaning, as, for example, in Aeschylus («θεοῖς μὲν αὐθις, ... προσεύζομαι»)¹, in Plato («ἔπειτα ὄχρετ’ ἀπιὼν προσευξάμενος τῷ ἡλίῳ»)², in Aristophanes («νὼ δ’ εἰσίσωμεν, ἵνα προσεύξῃ τὸν θεόν»)³, and in Xenophon («Κῦρος δὲ ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε καὶ προσευξάμενος Ἑστία πατρῶα καὶ Διὶ πατρῶα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς ὠρμάτο ἐπὶ τὴν στρατείαν»)⁴. Sophocles writes: «μὴ νυν προσεύχου μηδέν ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ»⁵ and Herodotus: «τῶν μὲν δὴ οὐδὲν προσίετό μιν ὁ δὲ ὡς τὸ ἐκ Δελφῶν ἤκουσε, αὐτίκα προσεύχετό τε καὶ προσεδέξατο, νομίσας μόνον εἶναι μανήιον τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖσι, ὅτι οἱ ἐξευρήκεε τὰ αὐτὸς ἐποίησε»⁶. The prayers mentioned by Homer are characteristic, such as that of the priest

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1. Aeschylus *Ἀγαμέμνων* v. 317.

2. Plato *Συμπόσιον* 220d.

3. Aristophanes *Πλοῦτος* v. 958.

4. Xenophon *Κύρου Παιδεία* 1, 6, 1.

5. Sophocles *Ἀντιγόνη* 1337-38.

6. Herodotus *Ἱστορίαι* 1, 48, 1.

Chryses to Apollo⁷, Achilles to Zeus⁸, etc. Also well-known is the prayer of Cleanthes to Zeus, in which we find the phrase: «τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἔσμέν»⁹, that Saint Paul used at his speech in Areopagus¹⁰.

The place of prayer is also important in the Old Testament. Apart from the prayers of the people of Israel, great figures such as Moses¹¹, David¹², and Solomon¹³ also prayed. The prophets were men of prayer, such as Elijah¹⁴, Amos¹⁵, Jeremiah¹⁶ and others. Ezra and Nehemiah also prayed not only for themselves but also for the others¹⁷. The Maccabees do not go to war without first praying¹⁸. In the book of *Psalms*, God's wonders, commandments, wisdom, turn into prayer¹⁹.

In the New Testament, the «Πάτερ ἡμῶν»²⁰ lies at the heart of the teaching on prayer. Christ, as the unequalled teacher and educator, teaches his disciples the right way to pray. He himself often prays on the mountain "in private", alone even when the whole world is looking for him, at the Last Supper, in Gethsemane²¹, etc. Jesus's prayer concerns His mission or the teaching of his disciples. These two dimensions are mentioned four times by the Evangelist Luke in his narrative: At Christ's

7. Homer *Ἰλιάς* A, vv. 37-43.

8. Homer *Ἰλιάς* Π, vv. 233-248.

9. Stobaeus *Ἀνθολόγιο* (*Ἐκλογαί*), 1, 1, 12: «κύδιστ' ἀθανάτων, πολυῶνυμε παγκρατῆς αἰεὶ, Ζεῦ, φύσεως ἀρχηγέ, νόμου μετὰ πάντα κυβερνῶν, χαῖρε· σὲ γὰρ καὶ πᾶσι θέμις θνητοῖσι προσαιδᾶν. ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ τὸ γένος ἔσμέν...». Ioannes Stobaeus, *Anthologium, Eclogae Physicae et Ethicae, libri duo priores*, I-II, C. Wachsmuth (ed.), Weidmann, Berlin 1958. See also, Aratus *Φαινόμενα* v. 5 («Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν»), J. Martin (ed.), La nuova Italia Editrice, Florence 1956.

10. *Acts* 17, 28.

11. *Ex.* 32, 11 ff.

12. *2 Kings* 7, 25.

13. 8, 10 ff.

14. *3 Kings* 8, 36 ff.

15. 7, 1 ff.

16. 51, 1.

17. *Esra* 9, 6 ff., *Neh.* 1, 4 ff.

18. *1 Mac.* 5, 33; 11, 7; *2 Mac.* 8, 29; 15, 20-28.

19. *Psalms* 103; *Psalms* 14; 80; *Psalms* 36.

20. *Luke* 11, 1 ff.; *Matth.* 6, 9-13.

21. *Matth.* 14, 23; *Luke* 9, 18; *Mark* 14, 23; *Mark* 14, 23 ff.; *Mark* 14, 35-36; *Luke* 22, 39-44.

baptism²², before choosing His twelve disciples²³, at the Transfiguration, and before teaching the «Πάτερ ἡμῶν»²⁴. Jesus's high-priestly prayer also has great theological and pedagogical significance²⁵.

In the earliest Church, the apostles «ἦσαν διὰ παντός ... αἰνοῦντες καὶ εὐλογοῦντες τὸν Θεόν»²⁶. Peter prays at the sixth hour²⁷. Together with John, they go to the temple for the ninth hour prayer²⁸. All of Christ's disciples «ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ Μαρίᾳ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ»²⁹. This communal prayer, which prepares the ground for the Pentecost, is also found at other important moments in the life of the Church, such as the Judas's replacement and the institution of the seven deacons³⁰. From these indicative examples of prayer mentioned above, it is clear that prayer as communication with God is one of Christian life's essential features. Prayers in both the Old and New Testaments are expressions of thanksgiving, praise, and supplication³¹.

1. The Prayer in Apostle Paul

According to Apostle Paul, prayer was a characteristic element of his piety and his experience of the Holy Spirit. His life was filled with prayers. According to O. Cullmann, these prayers can be divided into spontaneous and liturgical ones³². Spontaneous prayers are addressed

22. 3, 21.

23. 6, 12.

24. 9, 29; 11, 1.

25. *John* 17, 1-26.

26. *Luke* 24, 53.

27. *Acts* 10, 9.

28. *Acts* 3, 1.

29. *Acts* 1, 14; *Acts* 6, 6.

30. *Acts* 1, 24-260; See P. Beauchamp, «Προσευχή», *Λεξικὸν Βιβλικῆς Θεολογίας*, transl. from the French under the supervision of S. Agouridis and S. Vartanian *et al.*, Vivliko Kentro "Artos Zois", Athens ³1980, vv. 858-863, where more details are available.

31. Io. Galanis, *Ἡ Πρώτη Ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Ἀπ. Παύλου πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1992, pp. 334-335.

32. O. Cullmann, «Ἡ προσευχὴ κατὰ τὶς ἐπιστολὰς τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου», *Deltion Vivlikon Meleton* 8 (1979), p. 86.

to God either through private³³, or individual prayer, or through the community of believers. Liturgical prayers are part of the Eucharist, as, for example, in *1 Cor.* 16, 22 ff., where we find the ancient invocation “*Maranatha*: (= Our Lord, Come!)”. In the same way, the Aramaic word “*Abba*” (father)³⁴, is preserved, which, according to the passage in *Luke* 11, 2, it is found at the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer. In general, liturgical prayers are sealing Paul’s letters³⁵. This was because he saw before him the community gathered “in Spirit” for the celebration of worship and the breaking of bread, and he knew that his letters would be read within this context of Eucharistic communion. Also, according to O. Cullmann, the blessing “may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” («*Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἀμήν*»)³⁶ was undoubtedly a liturgical blessing, even before Paul³⁷. The chanting “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”³⁸ with which the members of the Church have to express their gratitude to the Lord is also considered a special form of liturgical prayer.

In the *Acts of the Apostles*, we can observe many reasons for which Paul prayed — reasons as varied as his prayers, which were natural, spontaneous, and frequent. His first prayer, as it is recorded in the *Acts*, took place immediately after his conversion at the house of Judas in Damascus³⁹. This was followed by prayers with the prophets and teachers

33. According to Professor G. Mantzaridis, the term *individual* prayer is not correct. Christians never pray individually. Even when praying privately (what we call prayer “in private”), they pray as members of the Church, that is, as members of the Eucharistic community and the wider community of believers to which they belong. See G. Mantzaridis, *Χριστιανική Ἠθική*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1983, p. 215. Cf. Kallistos Ware, *Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία*, transl. Io. Roilidis, Akritas Publications, Athens 2001, pp. 478-479.

34. *Gal.* 4, 6; *Rom.* 8, 15.

35. Cf. Io. Karavidopoulos, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Ἐπιστολὲς πρὸς Ἐφεσίους, Φιλιππησίους, Κολοσσαεῖς, Φιλήμονα*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1981, p. 391. 36. *2 Cor.* 13, 14.

37. O. Cullmann, *op.cit.*

38. *Col.* 3, 16; *Eph.* 5, 19.

39. *Acts* 9, 11.

in Antioch, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, in the prison in Philippi, in Miletus with the elders of Ephesus, in Tyrus, in the temple in Jerusalem, and in Malta⁴⁰. He also frequently refers to his prayers in his letters⁴¹.

He prays for the faithful, for each member individually, as he does for Philemon, Timothy, and for each church separately⁴².

His prayer was “continuous”, day and night⁴³. He urges the faithful to do the same, that is, to pray «ἀδιαλείπτως»⁴⁴, «ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν Πνεύματι» to God⁴⁵. «Τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν Θεόν»⁴⁶. He often instructs them to pray for him⁴⁷, «περὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων»⁴⁸ and «ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων»⁴⁹.

Paul’s prayers to God include many blessings for those being taught in Christ, as can be seen in the following passages:

- «ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δώη ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν»⁵⁰.
- «Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεῦειν»⁵¹.
- «Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ’ ὑμῶν»⁵².

40. Acts 13, 1-4; Acts 14, 21-23; Acts 16, 25; Acts 20, 36; Acts 21, 5; Acts 22, 17; Acts 28, 7-8.

41. Rom. 1, 10-12; 10, 1; 2 Cor. 13, 7.9; Eph. 1, 18-19; 3, 16.19; Philip. 9, 11; Col. 1, 10; 1 Thess. 3, 10; 2 Thess. 1, 11-12; Philem. 6.

42. Philem. 4-7; 2 Tim. 1, 3; Rom. 1, 9-10; Eph. 1, 16; Philip. 1, 4-5; Col. 1, 3; 2 Tim. 1, 3; 1 Thess. 3, 10; 2 Thess. 1, 11; 2, 13; Eph. 1, 16.

43. Rom. 1, 9; 1 Thess. 3, 10; 2 Tim. 1, 3.

44. 1 Thess. 5, 17.

45. Eph. 6, 18; Rom. 12, 12; 15, 30; 1 Cor. 14.13; Col. 4, 2-3; 1 Tim. 2, 18.

46. Philip. 4, 6. Cf. Jac. 5, 16.

47. Rom. 15, 30-31; 2 Cor. 1, 11; Eph. 6, 19; Philip. 1, 19; Col. 4, 3; 1 Thess. 5, 25; 2 Thess. 3, 1-2; 2 Tim. 1, 16; Philip. 22; Hebr. 13, 18.

48. Eph. 6, 18.

49. 1 Tim. 2, 1.

50. Rom. 15, 5.

51. Rom. 15, 13.

52. 1 Cor. 16, 23. See also, Rom. 16, 20; 2 Cor. 13, 13; Gal. 6, 18; Eph. 6, 23-24; Philip. 4, 23; Col. 4, 18; 1 Thess. 5, 23; 2 Thess. 3, 18; 1 Tim. 6, 22; Tit. 3, 1; Philem. 25.

They also contained many thanks to God:

- «εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν»⁵³.
- «τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ»⁵⁴.

- «εἰ ἐγὼ χάριτι μετέχω, τί βλασφημοῦμαι ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εὐχαριστῶ;»⁵⁵.

In his letters, he expressed his thanksgivings to God on behalf of his pupils:

- «οὐ παύομαι εὐχαριστῶν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου»⁵⁶.

- «εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ»⁵⁷.

- «Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνεῖα ὑμῶν»⁵⁸.

He often encouraged his students to be grateful to God:

- «εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί»⁵⁹.

- «μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί»⁶⁰.

- «ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε»⁶¹.

In his letters, Paul emphasizes Eucharistic prayer in particular, which is the starting point for every kind of prayer⁶². There is a balance between supplication and thanksgiving: «μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν Θεόν»⁶³. Prayer in this verse includes elements

53. *Rom.* 7, 25.

54. *1 Cor.* 15, 57.

55. *1 Cor.* 10, 30. See also, *2 Cor.* 2, 14; 8, 16; 9, 15; *1 Tim.* 1, 12; *2 Tim.* 1, 3.

56. *Eph.* 1, 16.

57. *Rom.* 1, 8.

58. *Philip.* 1, 3. See also, *1 Cor.* 1, 4; *Col.* 1, 13; *1 Thess.* 1, 2; 2, 13; 3, 9; *2 Thess.* 1, 3; 2, 13; *Philem.* 4.

59. *Eph.* 5, 20.

60. *Col.* 11, 12.

61. *1 Thess.* 5, 18. See also, *Philip.* 4, 6; *Eph.* 5, 4; *Col.* 2, 7; 3, 15-17; 4, 2; *1 Tim.* 4, 4. See R. B. Zouck, *Teaching as Paul Taught*, Baker House Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1998, pp. 63-65 and 148. Cf. W. B. Hunter, "Prayer", in: G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, D. G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Leicester England 1993, pp. 725-726.

62. Io. Galanis, *op.cit.*, p. 335.

63. *Philip.* 4, 6. See also, *1 Thess.* 5, 17-18; *1 Tim.* 2, 1.

of thanksgiving and supplication, in an particularly intense way, as it can be seen from accumulated synonyms (supplication-requests, prayer-entreaty)⁶⁴. “Supplication” («δέησις») is a special kind of prayer, which contains a plea to God and intercession for fellow Christians⁶⁵, as it is clear in the *Letter to the Ephesians*, where he writes: «διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως, προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀγρυπνοῦντες ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει καὶ δεήσει περὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων»⁶⁶.

The apostle begins his letters (except for *Galatians* and *2 Corinthians*, for specific reasons) with thanksgiving to God for the progress of the recipients, while at the same time he prays as a supplicant «ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει»⁶⁷. The Eucharistic prayer attracts other types of prayer (supplication, doxology) as can be seen in the passage *2 Cor.* 9, 11-15: «ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι’ ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ· ὅτι ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐστὶ προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἁγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ· διὰ τῆς δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης δοξάζοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰς πάντας, καὶ αὐτῶν δεήσει ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἐπιποθούντων ὑμᾶς διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ’ ὑμῖν. χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ»⁶⁸.

2. Pedagogy and Prayer “in Christ”

As it can be inferred from the above, prayer occupies a prominent place both in Apostle Paul’s personal life and teachings. As a leading teacher and educator, he taught by example. Firstly through his way

64. Io. Karavidopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 372.

65. Io. Karavidopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

66. *Eph.* 6, 18.

67. *Philip.* 1, 9.

68. See P. Beauchamp, *op.cit.*, col. 864.

of life and secondly through his words (experiential teaching). This is also the reason why he calls on Christians to learn from his example and to imitate his life, actions, and overall behavior⁶⁹: «παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε»⁷⁰ and «Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας, καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς»⁷¹. This exhortation to imitation⁷² does not in any way imply selfish self-promotion. The apostle presents himself as an example to be imitated because he, in his turn, imitates Christ: «Μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ»⁷³. Imitation is related to specific actions and behaviors in the believers' lives. In this way, as an educator, he becomes an example of life for his pupils, applying this contemporary pedagogical principle for the teacher⁷⁴. In this case, therefore, imitation refers to prayer, and this fact gives it special value for the “in Christ” spiritual journey of the faithful.

From an educational point of view, Paul's prayers for Christians reflect his love, interest, and concern for their Christian upbringing and spiritual development. His goal is for «πᾶς ἄνθρωπος» to become «τέλειος ἐν Χριστῶ», to acquire «νοῦν Χριστοῦ», «καρδίαν Χριστοῦ» – to evolve into an «εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ»⁷⁵. According to St. John Chrysostom, Paul's unceasing prayer for his disciples is proof of his love for them: «ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου τοῦτο γνησίας ἀγάπης»⁷⁶. A true teacher educates his students not only with words but also with his prayers: «Καὶ γὰρ φιλόπαιδος καὶ φιλοθέου διδασκάλου τὸ μὴ μόνον

69. 1 Cor. 4, 6.

70. 1 Cor. 4, 16.

71. Philip. 3, 17.

72. For the notion of *mimesis* from a pedagogical point of view, see A. Danassis-Afentakis, *Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογία*, vol. Α', Μάθηση καὶ Ἀνάπτυξη, Grigoris Publications, Athens³1996, p. 201 ff.

73. 1 Cor. 11, 1. See S. Agouridis, «Ἡ μίμησις τοῦ Χριστοῦ», *Ἐκκλησία/Ecclesia* 41, 7 (1964), pp. 168-172.

74. See Io. V. Kogoulis, *Κατηχητική καὶ Χριστιανική Παιδαγωγική*, Kyriakidis Publications, Thessaloniki²2005, pp. 78-79.

75. Col. 1, 28; 1 Cor. 2, 16; Eph. 3, 13; Eph. 2, 19.

76. John Chrysostom, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Ἐπιστολήν*, Ὁμιλία Β', β', PG 60, 401.

λόγω παιδεύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' εὐχῶν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ συμμαχίαν τοῖς διδασκομένοις εἰσάγειν»⁷⁷. Furthermore, the holy Father does not fail to emphasize the benefit that comes from the teacher's prayer for his pupils: «Τοῦτο γὰρ μάλιστα διδασκάλου γενναίου, τὸ μὴ λόγῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ εὐχῇ ὠφελεῖν τοὺς μαθητευομένους»⁷⁸.

As it is well-known, Paul, apart from being an apostle to the nations and a supreme theologian of the Church, was also a true spiritual father⁷⁹. He was a charismatic personality, entrusted with the difficult and laborious task of spiritual guidance of people. The command he received from Jesus on the road to Damascus was unequivocal: «... ἐγὼ σε ἀποστέλλω ἀνοιξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτῶν εἰς φῶς»⁸⁰. The birth of spiritual children requires sacrifices, great effort, and a lot of pain. This is precisely what the apostle means when he writes to the Galatians: «τεκνία μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω, ἄχρισ οὐ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν!»⁸¹. Again, to the Corinthians, he recalls the spiritual birth «διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου» and their father-son relationship, which had developed during the course of his missionary work: «Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ. εἰ γὰρ μυρίου παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀλλ' οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα. Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε»⁸². As a spiritual father, he prays and

77. John Chrysostom, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Ἐπιστολήν*, Ὁμιλία ΚΖ', α', PG 60, 643.

78. John Chrysostom, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Ἐπιστολήν*, Ὁμιλία ΛΒ', β', PG 60, 678.

79. On this see V. Kalliakmanis, «Ἡ πνευματικὴ πατρότητα κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Παῦλο», in: *Καιρὸς. Τόμος τιμητικὸς στὸν ὁμότιμο καθηγητὴ Δ. Δόικο*, vol. Α', ΕΕΘΣΘ/Επιστημονικὴ Ἐπετιρὶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς Θεσσαλονίκης 4 (1994-Νέα σειρὰ), pp. 669-676; G. Kroustalakis, «Ἡ παιδαγωγικὴ τοῦ πνευματικοῦ πατέρα κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Παῦλο», *Ἡ Παύλεια. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Παῦλο, Πρακτικὰ Διεθνoῦς Ἐπιστημονικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, Veria 2002, pp. 143-158; A. Bitsakis, *Ἡ διαπαιδαγώγηση τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Παῦλο, Ἱστορικὴ Παιδαγωγικὴ Ἔρευνα*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2005, pp. 415-431; P. Gutierrez, *La paternité spirituelle selon Saint Paul*, [Études bibliques], J. Gabalda et Cie, Paris 1968.

80. *Acts* 26, 17-18.

81. *Gal.* 4, 19.

82. *1 Cor.* 4, 14-16.

intercedes with God for his spiritual children: «οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ»⁸³. As it has already been observed⁸⁴, prayer is one of the spiritual leaders' fundamental duties. Just as a teacher is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge and a guide for following an as yet unknown path, so too the mediation of the spiritual father is necessary for man's journey toward God. The example was set by Christ himself, who is the mediator between God and man. At the same time, Paul calls on believers to⁸⁵. At the same time, Paul calls on believers to «περιπατοῦν ἀξίως τοῦ Κυρίου»⁸⁶, and be filled «ἐν πνεύματι, ... εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ»⁸⁷. As we shall see below, this reference to the Holy Spirit is of particular importance. After all, he himself teaches and guides his spiritual children, having received the charismatic donation of the Holy Spirit: «ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου ἐλάβομεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν ἃ καὶ λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνους σοφίας λόγους, ἀλλ' ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος ἁγίου, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες»⁸⁸.

Paul considers prayer to be a struggle; that is why he writes in his *Epistle to the Romans*: «συναγωνίσασθαί μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν»⁸⁹. It is a struggle that it cannot be distinguished from his ministry. «Θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ἡλίχον ἀγῶνα ἔχω περὶ ὑμῶν»⁹⁰. He prays «ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ» to see again the Thessalonians and supply what is lacking in their faith⁹¹. He uses the same superlative

83. *Col.* 1, 9.

84. Archim. Elias Mastrogiannopoulos, *Τὸ πολίτευμα τῶν Χριστιανῶν. Δοκίμια θεολογικὰ καὶ ὁδηγητικὰ*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1975, p. 107.

85. *1 Tim.* 2, 5; *Hebr.* 8, 6; 9, 15; 12, 24.

86. *Col.* 1, 10.

87. *Eph.* 5, 18-20.

88. *1 Cor.* 2, 12-13. See also, 2, 10: «ἡμῖν δὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἀπεκάλυψε διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ».

89. *Rom.* 15, 30.

90. *Col.* 2, 1.

91. *1 Thess.* 3, 10.

degree to describe the way in which God hears our prayers: «Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν, κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν»⁹². He pleads «ὑπὲρ τούτου τρεῖς τὸν Κύριον ... ἵνα ἀποστῇ... σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί»⁹³.

For the apostle of the nations, prayer is clearly linked to the work of divine Economy, within which his mission is carried out, as well as with the promotion of the Kingdom of God⁹⁴. You know well, he writes to the Thessalonians, that we treated each one of you as a father treats his children, «παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρόμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατῆσαι ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν»⁹⁵. The prayer requests, both his own and those of the faithful⁹⁶, have as their aim the fulfillment of this goal. This fact means that prayer to the Apostle Paul appears as a sign of unity within the body of Christ that is being built up⁹⁷. Paul presents in detail the unity of the body of the Church in chapter 12 of his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*⁹⁸. As a teacher, he uses the image of the human body, which is composed of the harmonious union of many members, emphasizing that in the same way all Christians are «σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους»⁹⁹. One prays for the other(s), and all together offer up a prayer to God as a doxology, thanksgiving, supplication or entreaty.

3. Holy Trinity and Prayer

According to Apostle Paul, the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer is particularly important, since It unites us with the Holy Trinity. True prayer presupposes the presence of the Holy Spirit. No one can confess

92. *Eph.* 3, 20.

93. *2 Cor.* 12, 7-8.

94. *Rom.* 14, 17; *1 Cor.* 4, 20; 6, 9; 15; 50; *Gal.* 5, 21; *Col.* 4, 11; *2 Thess.* 1, 5. See also «βασιλεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (*Col.* 1, 13; *2 Tim.* 4, 1; 18; *Hebr.* 1, 8. Cf. *2 Petr.* 1, 11).

95. *1 Thess.* 2, 11-12.

96. *Rom.* 15, 30 ff.; *2 Cor.* 1, 11; *Philem.* 22; *Φιλ.* 1, 19; *1 Thess.* 5, 25; *Col.* 4, 24.

97. *Eph.* 2, 21; 4, 12. See P. Beauchamp, op.cit., p. 864.

98. See also, *Rom.* 12, 4 ff.

99. *1 Cor.* 12, 27.

faith in «Κύριον Ἰησοῦν»¹⁰⁰ –a special type of doxological prayer– except «ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ» (“in the Holy Spirit”). In the same way, there is no real prayer when the Holy Spirit is absent¹⁰¹. Paul addresses his prayers to the Father through Christ¹⁰². He rarely addresses the “Lord”, that is, Jesus¹⁰³. What makes us pray through Christ (i.e., in His name) is precisely the «πνεῦμα τῆς υἰοθεσίας»: «οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλ’ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας, ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν ἄββᾶ ὁ πατήρ. αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ. εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν»¹⁰⁴. Through Jesus, we also call God “Father”, and indeed with the word “Abba”, which indicates intimacy. The Jews reserved this word for their earthly fathers and would never use it for their heavenly Father. This donation and favor toward man can only come from above. As Paul characteristically writes, «ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, κράζον ἄββᾶ ὁ πατήρ. ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος, ἀλλ’ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος Θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ»¹⁰⁵.

It follows from the above that a father-son relationship lies at the center of our prayer. This means that man is a son of God by grace. The Holy Spirit comes to assist us in our weaknesses. Paul writes: «τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξόμεθα καθὼ δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις· ὁ δὲ ἐρευνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδε τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων. Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν»¹⁰⁶. In other words, despite all our weaknesses, the Holy Spirit which prays

100. *Rom.* 10, 9; 13, 14; *1 Cor.* 5, 4; 9, 1; *2 Cor.* 4, 14; *Philip.* 2, 11; *Philem.* 5, and elsewhere.

101. See O. Cullmann, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

102. *Rom.* 1, 8; *1 Cor.* 1, 4, and elsewhere.

103. *2 Cor.* 12, 8; *Eph.* 5, 19.

104. *Rom.* 8, 15-17.

105. *Gal.* 4, 4-7. Cf. *Mark* 14, 36.

106. *Rom.* 8, 26-28.

in us gives our prayer the certainty¹⁰⁷ that we are approaching the depths of God's love; that love of God which «ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν»¹⁰⁸. «Ἐν τῷ πνεύματι» asking for a new world the world of God. Outside this context, we pray «as the Gentiles do»¹⁰⁹.

The pedagogy of the Spirit is thus a spiritual function of justification, benediction¹¹⁰ and adoption: «ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοί εἰσιν υἱοὶ θεοῦ»¹¹¹. Those who are taught «ἐν ἀγίῳ πνεύματι» long to become children of God *in aeternitatem*: «οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι»¹¹². Therefore, the life of the believer is a life guided by the Spirit, with constantly fruitful and transformative¹¹³.

The divine grace, as the Triune God's uncreated energy, the granting of which is theologically identified with the sending of the Holy Spirit¹¹⁴, is that which gives life to those who are being taught «ἐν Χριστῷ», the «υἱοὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ», whom it sanctifies «ὀλοτελῶς»¹¹⁵. It is the grace that «παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς»¹¹⁶. Without the assistance of divine grace, man cannot achieve anything. This is why he is called to cooperate with God's grace and through prayer, in the work of his education and renewal in Christ. «Θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμὲν συνεργοί», Paul emphasizes¹¹⁷. Without the cooperation of divine grace, God's grace is fruitless and useless for man¹¹⁸. God's «παιδαγωγοῦσα χάρις» never abandons man. It is always. "sufficient": even in the most difficult circumstances, in which its power

107. *Hebr.* 4, 14 ff.

108. *Rom.* 5,5.

109. See P. Beauchamp, *op.cit.*, pp. 864-865.

110. *1 Cor.* 6, 11; *Rom.* 1, 4; 15, 16.

111. *Rom.* 8, 14.

112. *Rom.* 8, 23.

113. R. Bultmann, *Υπαρξη και Πίστη. Δοκίμια Ἑρμηνευτικῆς Θεολογίας*, transl. F. Terzakis, Artos Zois Publications, Athens 1995, p. 362.

114. Io. Tselegidis, «Θεία Χάρις», *Παιδαγωγικὴ Ψυχολογικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια – Λεξικό*, vol. 4, Hellinika Grammata Publications, Athens 1989, p. 2323.

115. *1 Thess.* 5, 22.

116. *Tit.* 2, 11-12.

117. *1 Cor.* 3, 9.

118. G. Mantzaridis, *Χριστιανικὴ Ἠθική*, *op.cit.*, pp. 179-180.

shines forth: «ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται»¹¹⁹.

Prayer as a dialogue with God keeps man in communication with Him and allows divine grace to enter his heart in order to lead him to the “new life in Christ”¹²⁰ and to salvation¹²¹. When man finds himself wrapped with God’s grace and under its guidance, he manages to be his true self.

4. Features of the True Prayer

Apostle Paul desires that the prayers of the faithful should come out of pure motives, not with anger and abrasiveness, but with modesty and prudence: «Βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, ἐπαίροντας ὀσίους χεῖρας χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμοῦ. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ, μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης»¹²². Anger as an intense emotional state, manifested by aggressive behavior and a desire for revenge, as well as «πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ... κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ... σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ» should be removed from the lives of the faithful¹²³. It is worth noting here Gregory of Nazianzos’s distinction between anger and wrath: «θυμὸς μὲν ἀθρόος ζέσις φρενός, ὀργὴ δὲ θυμὸς ἐμμένων»¹²⁴. Christians should get rid of not only by vices such as those mentioned above; they should also acquire qualities defining the “new man in Christ”: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, long-suffering, patience, forgiveness, etc.¹²⁵ Prayer should also be characterized by joy. He himself writes to the Philippians that his prayer is accompanied by joy: «πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου

119. 2 Cor. 12, 9.

120. 2 Cor. 5, 17; Rom. 6, 4; Gal. 6, 15; Col. 2, 11 ff.

121. Tit. 2, 12-13.

122. 1 Tim. 2, 8-9.

123. Eph. 4, 31

124. See P. Trempelas, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὰς ἐπιστολὰς τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*, vol. 2, Adelfotis Theologon “Ho Sotir” Publications, Athens 1979, p. 136.

125. Col. 3, 12-13.

ὕπερ πάντων ὑμῶν μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος»¹²⁶. Oscar Cullmann observes that it is wrong for men to consider sadness or a gloomy disposition as a more pious attitude¹²⁷. The joy to which Paul refers here is one of the central themes of the epistle and is not simply a human emotion of mental elation, but the fruit of the Holy Spirit¹²⁸. In the same letter, joy is more precisely defined as joy «ἐν Κυρίῳ». Rejoice «ἐν Κυρίῳ», «χαίρετε ἐν Κυρίῳ πάντοτε καὶ πάλιν ἐρῶ χαίρετε», «ἐχάραγν δὲ ἐν Κυρίῳ μεγάλως...»¹²⁹. The phrase «ἐν Κυρίῳ» attributes joy with a special quality: it refers to redeemed humanity, and its source is the crucified and resurrected Lord. It should be noted that the apostle speaks of joy while he is imprisoned and therefore in a state of sorrow and oppression¹³⁰. Joy, therefore, like the fruits of the Holy Spirit in general, expresses “the ‘manifestation’ of the Spirit, the invasion of the Last Days into the present, which is certainly not limited to spiritual manifestations alone, but extends to the whole life and activity of the faithful in the Church”¹³¹.

According to the above, joy is also harmoniously combined with prayer in *1 Thessalonians* 5, 16-18: «Πάντοτε χαίρετε, ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε, ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς».

Conclusion

In order to summarize, we would say that, for Paul the Apostle, prayer is of special theological and pedagogical value. It is part of the

126. *Philip.* 1, 4.

127. O. Cullmann, *op.cit.*

128. *Gal.* 5, 22-23.

129. *Philip.* 3, 1; 4, 4; 4, 10.

130. Io. Karavidopoulos, *op.cit.*, pp. 264, 336-337. Cf. J. Weiss, *Ὁ ἀρχέγονος Χριστιανισμός. Ἡ ἱστορία τῆς περιόδου 30-150 μ.Χ.*, transl. S. Agouridis, Artos Zois Publications, Athens 2001, p. 385: “The letter is heartfelt and imbued with a transparent joy; a man who is half-buried does not write like this”.

131. V. Stogiannos, «Ἡ περὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος διδασκαλία τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης», in: *Ἐρμηνευτικὰ Μελετήματα*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1988, p. 149.

Christians' spiritual armour. He himself prays «ἀδιαλείπτως», urging the believers to do the same «ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι»¹³². The exhortation to constant prayer is one of the elements that characterize St. Paul's teaching¹³³. His prayers to God include praise, thanksgiving, and supplication. Through prayer, he communicates with the Triune God. He addresses his prayers through Christ to the Father «ἐν Ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι». Prayer as communication between man and God takes on the character of a child's conversation with his father. This is due, according to Paul, to the «πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας» that Christians have received through their faith in Christ¹³⁴. The Holy Spirit and divine grace have an extremely important educational role in both Paul's theology and pedagogy. The Holy Spirit is the fundamental force of the Christians' religious and moral life, the source of faith: «γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ... δύναται εἰπεῖν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ»¹³⁵. As J. Holzner has pointed out, the primary thing in Christianity is to be filled with the Holy Spirit¹³⁶. St. Paul perceives the Holy Spirit as the defining rule in the faithful's life¹³⁷. Moreover, Christ's redemptive work cannot be considered separately from the work of the Holy Spirit¹³⁸. This results to the fact that this work and life "in the Spirit" are identical¹³⁹. In this context, prayer is a fundamental element of Christian life. Paul's education «κατὰ Χριστόν» aims at the participation in the divine incarnated life. Those who are educated «ἐν Χριστῷ» "participate in Christ" («μέτοχοι Χριστοῦ») and "in the Holy

132. *Rom.* 1, 9; *Eph.* 6, 18. *1 Thess.* 5, 17. P. Trempelas, *op.cit.*, p. 161, commenting on "all occasions", writes: "this should not be understood to mean that we should do anything else but pray, but in the sense that we should always maintain a willingness to pray and combine our heartfelt and inner invocation of God with our other external and physical activities..."

133. P. Trempelas, *op.cit.*, p. 312.

134. Io. Galanis, *op.cit.*, p. 335.

135. *1 Cor.* 12, 3.

136. J. Holzner, *Παῦλος*, transl. Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Hieronymos I, Hi Damaskos Publications, Athens ¹⁴1996, p. 329.

137. E. Lohse, *Ἐπίτομη Θεολογία τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*, transl. S. Agouridis, Artos Zois Publications, Athens ³1993, p. 142.

138. S. Agouridis, «Παῦλος», *Θ.Η.Ε./Thriskeutiki kai Ithiki Engyclopaideia*, vol. 10, col. 205.

139. S. Agouridis, «Ὁ Παῦλος καὶ ἡ ἐποχὴ μας», in: *Ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρόν. Μελέτες – ἄρθρα – ὁμιλίες*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1965, p. 205.

Spirit” «Πνεύματος Ἁγίου»¹⁴⁰.

St. Paul, as a teacher and spiritual father, prays for his spiritual children, so that they may continually progress in their «κατὰ Χριστόν» life, building up¹⁴¹ the Church-Christ’s body. In this way, he shows his interest and love for the faithful. He himself urges them to «πληροῦνται ἐν πνεύματι»¹⁴² and to always pray to God with pure motives, joy, modesty, and prudence.

140. *Hebr.* 3, 1; 3, 14; *Hebr.* 6, 4.

141. *1 Cor.* 3, 9.

142. *Gal.* 6, 1.