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The Art of Prayer

20. Groanings in the Spirit

This chapter explains how the Holy Spirit helps us pray through wordless groanings. It reads Romans 8:26-27 in its full context (starting at verse 22), arguing that just as creation groans, and we groan, the Spirit also intercedes through us with groanings.

Key takeaways

- Romans 8:26-27 should not be read alone; verses 22-25 set it up. Creation groans, believers groan, and 'likewise' the Spirit intercedes with groanings.
- These groanings come from your spirit but must escape your lips to be effective. They are uttered, just not in ordinary, articulate speech.
- We often don't know what or how to pray; the Spirit moves us past our own words to pray according to God's will, and God always understands and responds.
- Groanings tend to rise up especially in adverse circumstances. You yield to the Spirit in prayer and He uses you this way.
- Praying in tongues is named as another way the Spirit helps us pray.

Passages worth keeping

> *"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

The core text; Greek scholar P. C. Nelson renders it 'groanings that cannot be uttered in articulate speech.'

How it connects

The word 'likewise' ties three groanings together — creation's, ours, and the Spirit's — all reaching toward the day everything comes into harmony with God's will.

Scripture referenced

- **Romans 8:22-27** -- The whole passage the chapter is built on: creation, believers, and the Spirit all groan
- **Romans 8:26** -- 'Likewise' — the Spirit helps our weakness and intercedes with wordless groanings
- **John 15:5** -- Our union with Christ, which deepens our sense of creation's suffering