I. Introduction.
   A. Prayer is an important part of our lives. Our Christian life cannot be divorced from our prayer life.
   B. Text: Romans 8:26-27.
   C. There is no spiritual birth without spiritual travail.
   D. We cannot pray effectively apart from the Spirit.

II. Only God's children can pray.
   A. The first prayer the Spirit gives us is for God's mercy. (Zechariah 12:10)
   B. When one has entrusted Christ as savior, the Spirit puts in a second prayer: Abba!

III. God's children cannot prayer in their own power.
   A. Our weakness: we do not know how to pray, and we do not know what to pray for.
   B. We are to beware of false praying. (Psalm 141, Exodus 30:9, Leviticus 10:1)
   C. We must not manufacture our own emotion or devotion in prayer.
   D. When the Spirit takes control in prayer, he gives us the power and desire to pray.
   E. Spend time meditating on the goodness of God before prayer. (Psalm 10:17)

IV. God's children often do not know what to pray for.
   A. Paul did not know how to pray always. (2 Corinthians 12, Acts 16)
   B. Evidence of spiritual maturity is acknowledgment that we do not always know what to pray for.
   C. Praying must be done in the will of God. (1 John 5:14-15)
      1. Searching.
         a. The mind and heart. (Ephesians 6, Revelation 2:23, Psalm 133)
         b. The Word of God through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2)
         c. The mind of the Spirit by the Father. The Spirit filters our prayers.
      2. Groaning.
         a. This means groaning in a way that there is no word to express.
b. These are intense feelings that the Spirit stirs within us. (Psalm 38:9)

3. Interceding.
   a. The Spirit pleads for us on earth while Jesus intercedes for us in heaven.
   b. Nothing can go wrong in the will of God.

V. Prayer is a costly, demanding experience.
   A. We must walk in the Spirit to pray in the Spirit.
   B. We must not grieve the Spirit. (Ephesians 4)

Application questions:

1. How would you defend or refute the claim that only God's children can pray?
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2. What does it look like practically to lean on the Spirit in prayer? Why is this necessary?
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3. What does it mean to pray in the will of God in 1 John 5:14-15? Explain.
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