

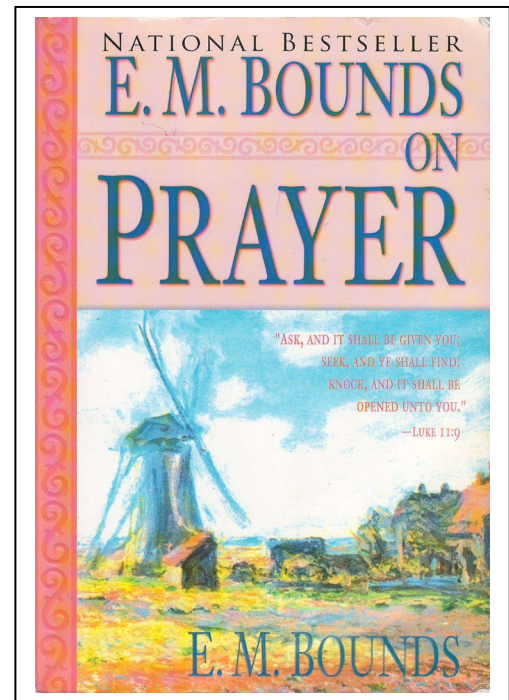
## PRAYER – THE FORCE THAT SHAPES THE WORLD

I find myself “consumed” these days with the concept of prayer.

- What is it?
- How does it “work”?
- Is it a necessary part of a believer’s life?
- What benefits are derived by it?
- Is there a specific way of praying?

A friend recently gave a book to me written by E. M. Bounds called ***On Prayer***. It’s an anthology of seven of his books on prayer and is 622 pages long (yikes! right?). I thought it might be helpful for you if I took the time as I study this to write a few summary pages for each of the book in this anthology. Here are the books included:

- Book One: Purpose in Prayer
- Book Two: The Necessity of Prayer
- Book Three: The Possibilities of Prayer
- Book Four: Essentials of Prayer
- Book Five: Obtaining Answers to Prayer
- Book Six: Power Through Prayer
- Book Seven: The Weapon of Prayer



Rather than make my comments on the various things written, you will find simply quotes from the book(s) and the page number these quotes may be found in the anthology book. If you chose to read the original text, you may find other statements of greater interest or value. I encourage you to do just that!

So, let’s begin:

### **Book One: Purpose in Prayer – Part 1 of 3 of this book**

[11] **The prayers of God’s saints are the capital stock in heaven** by which Christ carries on His great work upon the earth. Great throes and mighty convulsions in the world have come about as a result of these prayers. The earth is changed, revolutionized; angels move on more powerful, more rapid wings; and God’s policy is shaped when the prayers of His people are more numerous and more efficient.

[11] **The most important lesson we can learn is how to pray.** Indeed, we must pray so that our prayers take hold of God. The man who has done the most and the best praying is the most immortal, because prayers do not die.

[11] The mightiest successes that come to God’s cause are created and carried on by prayer in God’s day of power. When God’s church comes into its mightiest inheritance of the mightiest faith and mightiest prayer, the angelic days of powerful activity occur. **God’s conquering days are when the saints have given themselves to mightiest prayer.**

[12] **God shapes the world by prayer.** The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be and the mightiest the forces against evil everywhere.

[12] The very life and prosperity of God's cause – even its very existence – depend on prayer. And the advance and triumph of His cause depend on one thing: That **we ask of Him.**

[13] ***“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”*** (Matthew 7:7). The strongest one in Christ's kingdom is he who can knock the best, the secret of success in Christ's kingdom is the ability to pray.

[14] **Prayer has an incredible power to arrest and change the purposes of God.**

[14] *“So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.”* Genesis 20:17-18

[15] *“Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ... And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.”* Job 42: 8, 10

[15] *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. ...Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. ...And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.* Jonah 1:17-2:2, 10

Jonah prayed while imprisoned in the great fish; and when the disobedient prophet lifted up his voice in prayer, God heard him and sent deliverance.

[15-16] The blasphemy and idolatry of Israel, in making the golden calf and declaring their devotion to it, were fearful crimes. The anger of God waxed hot, and He declared that He would destroy the offending people. The Lord was also extremely angry with Aaron. He said to Moses, *“Let me alone, that I may destroy them”* (Deuteronomy 9:14). Undaunted, Moses prayed, and he kept on praying for forty days and nights. He recorded his prayer struggle in Deuteronomy 9:18-20.

(More examples are shown in the text)

[17] **Everything is possible to the men and women who knew how to pray, and it is still possible today.**

[17] And yet, strange as it seems when we contemplate the wonders of which God's people who had been witnesses, they became slack in prayer. The mighty hold upon God, which had so often struck awe and terror into the hearts of their enemies, lost its grip. The people, backslidden and apostate, had gone off from their praying – IF the bulk of them had every truly prayed.

[18] ***The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*** *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the*

*space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. James 5:16-18*

[18] How wide is the provision of the grace of praying, as administered in that marvelous dispensation! The saints of old prayed wondrously. Why could their praying not save the era from decay and death? Was it not because they had lost the fire without which all praying degenerates into a lifeless form? It takes effort and toil and care to prepare the incense. **Prayer is no laggard's work.**

[18] **The casual, intermittent prayer is never bathed in this divine fire.** This haphazard way of praying lacks the earnestness that lays hold of God and is determined not to let Him go until the blessing comes. (See Genesis 32:25). *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thessalonians 5:17), counseled the great apostle.

[18-19] Alexander Whyte wrote,

**The greatest and best talent that God give to any man or woman in this world is the talent of prayer. And the best payment of interest than any man or woman bring back to God when He comes to reckon with them at the end of this world, is a life of prayer.**

[19] When once asked what his plans for the following day were, Martin Luther answered, "Work, work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

[19] **It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends, for none but the earnest man get access to the ear of God; and that is the purpose of prayer.**

[20] **"We must remember that the goal of prayer is the ear of God.** Unless that is gained, the prayer has utterly failed. The uttering of it may have kindled devotional feeling in our minds, the hearing of it may have comforted and strengthened the hearts of those with whom we have prayed, but **if the prayer has not gained the heart of God, it has failed in its essential purpose.**" Charles Spurgeon

[20] **All things are available to man through prayer. Man is given the privilege to command God, who has all this authority and power, in accordance with the demands of God's earthly kingdom.**

[20] Sin reigns, Satan reigns, sighing marks the lives of many; all tears are fresh and full.

[21] Why is all this so? **Because we have not prayed to bring the evil to an end; we have not prayed as we must pray. We have not met the conditions of prayer.**

[21] **More praying, and better praying, is the key to the whole matter.** The more time we spend in prayer, and the more preparations we make to meet God, the more we will commune with God through Christ. **But our manner of praying, and the things about which we pray, are not entirely pleasing to God.**

[21] John Foster: "More and better praying will bring the surest and readiest triumph to God's cause; **feeble, formal, listless praying brings decay and death.**"

[21] **We must prepare ourselves to pray, to be like Christ, and to pray like Christ. We must meet the conditions of prayer.**

[21] *Ask of Me.* Ask of God. We have not rested on prayer. **We have not made prayer the sole condition.** There has been a violation of the primary condition of prayer. **We have not prayed correctly. We have not prayed at all. God is willing to give, but we are slow to ask.**

[22] **The Gospel, in its success and power, depends on our ability to pray.** And yet, conscious as we are of the importance of prayer, of its vital importance, **we let the hours pass away as a blank.**

[22] Fénelon: **“Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity, none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer.** Most people consider the exercise a fatiguing ceremony, which they are justified in abridging as much as possible. Even those whose profession or fears lead them to pray, pray with such languor and wanderings of mind that their prayers, far from drawing down blessings, only increase their condemnation.”

[22] When we calmly reflect upon the fact that the progress of our Lord’s kingdom is dependent upon prayer, it is sad to think that we give so little time to the holy exercise. **Everything depends on prayer, and yet we neglect it – not only to our own spiritual hurt, but also to the delay and injury of our Lord’s cause upon the earth.**

[23] Prayer is the one prime, eternal condition by which the Father is pledged to put the Son in possession of the world. Christ prays through His people. **If there has been importunate, universal, and continuous prayer by God’s people, the earth would have been possessed for Christ long before this.** The delay is not to be accounted for by the inveterate obstacles but by the lack of right asking.

[24] We do more of everything than of praying. **As poor as our giving is, our contributions of money exceed our offerings of prayer.**

[24] We often say prayers according to a certain prescription, but we do not have the world in the grasp of our faith. **We are not praying in a way that moves God** and brings all divine influences to help us. **The world needs more true praying to save it from the reign and ruin of Satan.**

[24] **But not all praying is true praying. The diving power, the conquering force in God’s cause, must be God Himself.** *“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3),* is God’s challenge to pray/

[24] **Prayer puts God in full force into His own work.** *“Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me” (Isaiah 45:11),* is God’s carte blanche to prayer. **Faith is only omnipotent when on its knees;** and when its outstretched hands take hold of God, then it draws upon the utmost of God’s capacity, for only a praying faith can get God’s *“all things whatsoever.”*

[25] Why do we not obtain results by our praying? Why are our prayers not answered? Our lack of results, and the cause of all our feebleness in faith, was explained by the apostle James in these words: **“Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” James 4:2-3**

[25] Oneness with Christ is the glorious climax of spiritual attainment, because we can then *“ask what [we] will, and it shall be done unto [us] John 15:7.* Therefore, we must be one with Him. **We must pray in His name, for prayer in Jesus’ name puts the crowing crown on God; it glorifies Him through the Son and pledges the Son to give to men “whatsoever and anything they ask.** That is the whole truth in a nutshell.

*Continued in a following BOB Blog page.*

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