

Pray by the Rules

learning how to pray



Bruce R. Edwards

PRAY BY THE RULES

Understanding how to pray

By Pastor Bruce R. Edwards

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DEDICATION - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is dedicated in loving memory of Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty who went on to be with the Lord in 2009. I had the privilege of sitting under his ministry and serving as his Senior Associate Pastor for over 20 years. Victory Christian Center has touched the lives of thousands of people through the church, its Christian School, Bible College, and missions' outreaches. All to the glory of God.

Pastor Billy Joe was a mentor to me and a tremendous influence on my life and ministry. His unwavering faith, spirit of humility, and integrity were an inspiration to me as a pastor. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to him. He taught me much about the Word of God, leadership, pastoring, and living a life of faith.

Much of this book is a compilation of his teachings on prayer. I cotaught with him the Principles of Prayer at Victory College for many years. The chapters in this book are from the teachings, notes, and writings we shared in that course. Most of what is shared in this book is directly or indirectly from him.

I pray you will be inspired to a more effective life of prayer as you read and study the pages of this book.

Be blessed,
Pastor Bruce
Edwards

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever tried to play a game without knowing the rules? Maybe you picked up a basketball and started dribbling, only to have someone blow a whistle and call a foul. Or perhaps you tried to play a card game without understanding what each card could do—and you ended up frustrated, confused, and losing every hand. Playing without rules is not just difficult—it’s impossible. And here’s the truth: every game has its own rules. What works in one game can lead to failure in another. If you don’t know the rules, you can’t win. If you break the rules, you will be penalized. Victory is only possible when you play the game correctly.

I learned this lesson on the playing fields long before I understood it in the spiritual arena. Growing up, I loved sports. Football, basketball, baseball—you name it, I played it. After high school, I discovered the challenge of golf. Each game was different, each required skill, strategy, and focus—but more importantly, each had its own set of rules.

In football, you could run with the ball, tackle opponents, and even collide with defenders without penalty. In basketball, if you ran with the ball, it was a foul. If you struck someone intentionally, it was a violation, giving your opponent free throws. Baseball had its own rules entirely. In golf, there’s a fine line between a penalty stroke and a perfect swing. Every sport is governed by its own principles, and if you want to succeed, you must follow them. Break the rules, and you face consequences. Play by the rules, and you set yourself up for victory.

Prayer works the same way. Just as there are different kinds of sports, there are different kinds of prayer. And just as each sport has rules, each type of prayer has rules that govern it. Ephesians 6:18 instructs us:

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” (NIV)

Notice the phrase *“all kinds”*. The Amplified Bible says *“all manner of prayer”*, and another translation says *“with every kind of prayer.”* The Bible is very clear: there isn’t just one way to pray. There are many ways—and each has its own rules.

Here’s what many believers miss: **if you don’t pray according to the rules for the type of prayer you are praying, you will not see the results you desire.** You may pray faithfully, sincerely, and with emotion, but if your prayer doesn’t follow the spiritual principles that govern it, the breakthrough may never come. Like in sports, victory in prayer requires understanding, discipline, and strategy.

Let me give you an example. I’ve known people who pray for healing but approach it with the mindset of casual requests rather than faith-filled intercession. They are earnest, but they don’t apply the authority and expectation that the situation demands. The result? Frustration. Disappointment. Sometimes, they even give up on prayer altogether. But those who understand the “rules” of faith-filled prayer, persistence, and spiritual authority experience breakthroughs time and again.

Prayer is not random. It is purposeful. It is powerful. And it works—**but only when we understand how to pray correctly.** That’s what this book is about: teaching you how to pray by the rules so that your prayers are effective, your faith is strengthened, and your life begins to experience the victory God intends for you.

Consider this: what if your spiritual life could be transformed by simply applying the principles already revealed in Scripture? What if the answers you’ve been waiting for, the peace you’ve been longing for, the breakthroughs you’ve been praying for—were already within reach, simply waiting

for you to pray the right way? Every believer has access to this power, but you must learn to pray with precision, understanding, and obedience to the divine rules.

Think about sports again. If you played basketball without knowing what a foul is, you would constantly be penalized. If you played football without understanding the offside rule, you could lose every game. Yet, once you know the rules, you can play strategically, confidently, and successfully. Prayer is no different. There is a spiritual “playbook” that God has given us, and this book will guide you through it.

Praying by the rules is not about ritual or formula. It’s about alignment with God’s principles, understanding how heaven operates, and learning to move in agreement with the Spirit. It’s about knowing **what to pray, how to pray, and when to pray**. And when you pray according to these rules, watch how God moves. Watch doors open that seemed permanently closed. Watch burdens lift that you’ve carried for years. Watch the miraculous become part of your everyday life.

In the pages that follow, I will teach you not only the types of prayer but also the rules that govern each one. From intercession to supplication, from warfare to thanksgiving, you will learn how to engage with God in ways that bring results. Just like a champion athlete studies the playbook, practices diligently, and obeys the rules of the game, you too can become a prayer champion.

The question is simple: are you ready to learn the rules? Are you ready to stop guessing and start winning in prayer? If so, then this book is your guide. Step onto the field of spiritual battle fully equipped. Learn the strategies, apply the principles, and watch your prayer life transform. Victory is waiting—but you must play by the rules.

Because when you pray by the rules, nothing is impossible.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

John Wesley, the great English evangelist of the 1700s who sparked revival across England and founded the Methodist Church, once said:

“It seems God is limited by our prayer life—that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him.”

What a bold statement! But Wesley wasn’t exaggerating—he was describing a spiritual reality. Prayer moves the hand of God. Prayer releases heaven’s power into the earth. Prayer invites divine intervention into human circumstances. Wesley had seen this firsthand in his ministry. Entire cities were transformed because people prayed. Hearts were awakened, lives were changed, and nations were stirred—because believers cried out to God.

The Bible confirms it. James 5:16b declares,

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

If prayer is *that* powerful and *that* effective, then why do so many believers pray without results? Why do some pray and yet see no change, no breakthrough, no miracle?

The answer is simple but profound: **many believers don’t know how to pray effectively.** They love God, they have sincere hearts, but they have never learned the spiritual laws and principles that govern prayer. They pray out of emotion or desperation rather than revelation. They pray with hope, but not with faith. They pray *to* God, but not necessarily *according to His Word*.

And that makes all the difference.

Prayer Is Power Released

The power of prayer should never be underestimated. Prayer changes things. Prayer changes *people*. Prayer changes *situations*. It has the power to alter the course of nations, to heal the sick, to restore the broken, and to open doors that no man can shut.

The Apostle John wrote:

“If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him.” —1 John 5:14–15

That’s a divine guarantee! When we pray *according to His will*—which is His Word—God hears, and when God hears, answers come. Prayer is not wishful thinking or religious routine; it is spiritual partnership with God.

Prepare for the Rain

There’s a story that beautifully illustrates this principle:

Two farmers desperately needed rain for their crops. Both prayed for rain. But only one went out and plowed his fields, repaired his ditches, and prepared his land to receive the water.

Now, which farmer truly believed God would send the rain? Of course—the one who *prepared* for it!

That’s faith in action. Many of us pray like the first farmer—we ask for rain, but we never prepare our fields. We say we’re believing, but we’re not *acting* like it. We wait to see before we believe. But Jesus taught the exact opposite.

He said,

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”
—Mark 11:24

Faith is not waiting to see before believing—it's believing before you see! Faith gets the field ready while the sky is still blue. Faith builds the ark before a drop of rain has ever fallen. Faith digs ditches in a dry valley, expecting God to fill them with water.

As Dwight L. Moody once said,

“Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.”

The man or woman of faith *prays* and then *prepares*. That's what makes prayer powerful.

Faith: The Engine of Effective Prayer

Prayer requires faith. It's impossible to pray powerfully without faith. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us,

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Faith believes without seeing. Faith steps out of the boat while the waves are still crashing. Faith faces the giant with nothing but a sling and a stone. Faith says, “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.”

The late Pastor E.M. Bounds, one of the greatest writers on prayer, said,

“God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be.”

Faith doesn't ignore circumstances—it just refuses to be ruled by them. Faith doesn't deny reality—it declares God's higher reality. Faith looks at the problem and says, “You're big, but my God is bigger.”

Prayer connects faith to divine power. It's like plugging into heaven's electrical grid—nothing flows until the connection is made. Once you pray in faith, heaven's power starts to move.

Why Prayer Works

Why does prayer work? Because prayer is God's chosen method of accomplishing His will on earth.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said,

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

—Matthew 6:10

That's what prayer does—it brings heaven down to earth. It's the bridge between divine purpose and human participation. Prayer doesn't change God's will; it enacts it. It aligns our hearts with His plan and positions us to receive His power.

John Wesley understood this truth when he said that God does nothing except in answer to prayer. That may sound shocking, but it's biblical. From Genesis to Revelation, you'll find that God always works *through* people who pray.

- God delivered Israel from Egypt because Moses prayed.
- He stopped the rain for three years because Elijah prayed—and sent it again when Elijah prayed.
- He spared Nineveh because the people repented and prayed.
- He released Peter from prison because the church prayed.

Prayer moves heaven to act on earth.

The Authority of the Believer

Now, here's why this is so important: **God has given authority to His people.**

In Genesis 1:26–27, God said,

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over all the earth.”

That word “dominion” means *authority, rule, or control*. God designed man to be His representative, His ambassador, on the earth. When we pray, we are exercising that God-given authority. Prayer is not begging—it’s *partnering*. It’s not pleading—it’s *legislating*.

Jesus confirmed this authority when He said,

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
—Matthew 16:19

Keys represent authority. When you have keys, you can open and close things. Through prayer, believers have the authority to open the door to God’s blessing and close the door to the enemy’s interference.

But that authority is released only when we *ask*. James 4:2 reminds us,

“You have not because you ask not.”

God is ready to move, but He’s waiting for His people to pray.

Prayer: Heaven’s Law of Permission

God established prayer as heaven’s law of permission. In other words, nothing happens in the spiritual realm without human agreement. God will not force His will into our lives—He waits for our invitation through prayer.

Charles Spurgeon, the “Prince of Preachers,” said it beautifully:

“Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence.”

Think about that! Prayer may seem small, but it pulls on the infinite strength of God. Prayer activates the supernatural. It’s how ordinary people become vessels of extraordinary power.

When you pray, heaven listens. Angels move. The Holy Spirit begins to orchestrate divine alignments. Things start shifting—sometimes visibly, sometimes invisibly—but always effectively.

Effective Prayer Is Word-Based Prayer

For prayer to be powerful, it must be grounded in God's Word. God always responds to His Word. He said in Isaiah 55:11,

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please.”

That's why praying God's Word is the highest form of prayer—it aligns our request with His revealed will. When we pray His promises, we're giving Him something to perform.

Smith Wigglesworth, the great apostle of faith, once said, “God rejoices when we act on His Word.”

If you want your prayers to be effective, find a scripture that backs up your request. Declare it. Stand on it. Pray it until it becomes reality. That's how you connect with divine power.

Prayer Is Work, But It Works

Prayer is not always easy. It takes discipline, focus, and persistence. The heroes of faith in the Bible were people who labored in prayer.

Jesus prayed all night before choosing His disciples. Daniel prayed three times a day even under threat of death. Hannah prayed until she gave birth to Samuel. Elijah prayed until the rain came.

Prayer requires perseverance. Sometimes you pray once and see instant results. Other times, you pray again and again, holding fast to your confession of faith until the breakthrough comes.

As Andrew Murray said,

“Prayer is not a monologue, but a dialogue. God’s voice in response to mine is its most essential part.”

Keep praying. Keep believing. Keep preparing your field for the rain.

Get Ready to Learn the Rules

There is power in prayer—but how are *you* praying? What are you believing? Are you preparing your field for the rain?

In this book, we will study the different kinds of prayer and the spiritual rules that govern each. You will learn how to pray effectively—how to pray prayers that *work*. You’ll discover how to move from weak, aimless prayers to bold, faith-filled petitions that bring results.

Prayer is not complicated once you understand its principles. When you learn the “rules of prayer,” you’ll begin to pray with confidence and authority. You’ll see answers, breakthroughs, and miracles—not someday, but now.

A Call to Prayer

John Wesley was right: God moves when His people pray. He has given us dominion, authority, and access to His throne of grace. Heaven is waiting for you to ask, to believe, and to act in faith.

So, as we begin this journey together, let’s make a fresh commitment to become people of prayer—people who move heaven through faith-filled words, who prepare the field for rain, and who see the power of God at work in our lives.

Let’s rediscover **the power of prayer**—the kind that shakes heaven, transforms the earth, and brings God’s will to pass.

START YOUR DAY RIGHT

Early Morning Prayer

In the natural, it's important to start your day with a good breakfast. The same is true spiritually. Early morning prayer is the breakfast you need for your spirit. We call it the "breakfast of champions." A consistent life of prayer is the basis for a life of continual victories. You can be born again and know Jesus personally, yet fail to have a disciplined, consistent life of prayer, which is key to experiencing the overcoming victorious life God wants for you every day.

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon understood this truth when he wrote: "The first fresh hour of every morning should be dedicated to the Lord, whose mercy gladdens it with golden light." He also wisely counseled, "It is a good rule never to look into the face of a man in the morning till you have looked into the face of God."

We read in the gospels how Jesus ministered to people late into the night, yet Scripture says He rose up a great while before day and found a quiet place where He could commune with His Father. Jesus knew that His personal victory was dependent upon communion with His Father.

At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him. Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. (Mark 1:32-35)

Why Early Morning Prayer?

Here are seven compelling reasons why you should pray at the start of your day.

1. Jesus Did It

Jesus set the example for us in prayer. He got up early in the morning and found a place where He could be alone to start His day with prayer. Scripture says that Jesus often went into a garden or into the mountains to pray. If Jesus needed to start His day with prayer, how much more do we need to start our days with prayer?

He taught us that we could go into our closet alone and pray—wherever our closet or solitary place might be—in an actual closet, under your bed, or in your apartment, house, backyard or neighborhood! The important thing is to find a place where you can communicate with the Lord.

As Lysa TerKeurst beautifully expressed: "We must exchange whispers with God before shouts with the world."

E.M. Bounds, one of the most powerful voices on prayer in Christian history, made this profound observation: "The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day."

Bounds practiced what he preached. He dedicated the hours of 4 AM to 7 AM each morning to prayer. His life demonstrates that great works for God flow from great times with God.

2. How You Start Your Day Effects How You Finish

If you start your day communing with the Lord, very likely you will be in communion with Him throughout your day.

Think about it. If you are going to paint a house white and you start with green paint, you are going to be in trouble! Big trouble! The way you start out can have a definite effect on the way it will look in the end!

You may have a great time of worship, prayer, fellowship, and hearing the Word, but you cannot live on one spiritual meal a week. Your physical strength is in direct proportion to the energy that you take in through the food that you eat. It's the same way with communion with God. We need more than one spiritual meal a week to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

I live in the state of Oklahoma in the USA. When you travel on one of our turnpikes, if you don't start out in the right direction, you could be in trouble. If you are going to Oklahoma City from Tulsa, Interstate 44 is the best road to take, but when you get on I-44 if you start out going northeast, you could end up in Joplin, Missouri, instead of Oklahoma City. You might make good time, the car might run smoothly, and you might enjoy the scenery, but you will end up in the wrong place if you start out wrong.

There are places along the turnpike where you can get off and make a turnaround. You may lose some time, but you can make some changes. Even though people may have some bad starts, the good news is that there is redemption and we can turn around and go the right direction. Each day is a new day. Why not start out right instead of having to turn around in the middle of the day?

Let's assume you are going to take a flight to New York City. If you get on the wrong airplane, you might end up in Los Angeles. There is no turning around at 35,000 feet in the air! Sometimes, people are unable to turn around because of circumstances and situations.

When a sailboat starts out, the way the sails are set determines the direction the boat will go. The way you set your sails at the start of your day determines the course you will follow during the day. The good news is, if you set your sails to catch the wind in the right way, you will head on the right course, and there is a good possibility if you keep adjusting the sails during the day, you will reach the right destination. If you start each day right with God, you can enjoy the trip and wind up at the right place.

Charles Spurgeon captured this truth powerfully when he said, "Prayer is never out of season: in summer and in winter its merchandise is precious. Prayer gains audience with heaven in the dead of night, in the midst of business, in the heat of noonday, in the shades of evening."

3. Fewer Chances for Interruptions and Distractions

It is important to start your day with prayer because many interruptions come in the middle of the day. Pray through your schedule each day. Pray through each thing that you know is going to happen. Ask the Lord for direction and ask Him to prioritize your activities.

Many people jump out of bed, run for breakfast, go to work, and sometimes in the middle of the day, they might think about God. But they might not, because the schedule is so demanding, there are so many people wanting their time and so many things that have to be done.

It's possible to go all through your day and not think about God until you pop your Bible open and have a word of prayer right before going to bed. I believe the crises people face can be solved if they will meet Jesus first thing in the morning.

Spurgeon warned of this danger: "Do we not miss very much of the sweetness and efficacy of prayer by lack of careful meditation before it and of hopeful expectation after it? We

too often rush into the presence of God without forethought or humility."

E.M. Bounds emphasized the cost of neglecting morning prayer: "To be too busy with God's work to commune with God is the highway to backsliding." He also noted, "He who is too busy to pray will be too busy to live a holy life. Satan had rather we let the grass grow on the path to our prayer chamber than anything else."

4. Early Morning Prayer Fills Your Spiritual Tank So You Don't Run Out of Gas Before the End of the Day

Just as you would fill your gas tank before you start out on a trip, you need to fill your mind with God's Word and prayer before you start your day. Then you are prepared for the reversals, emotional situations, and bad attitudes that you may encounter during the day.

One of the reasons for a lack of control over appetite, anger and wrong thoughts could be because those things aren't set in order at the start of the day. All the frustrations and hassles we face could be because we haven't won the battle in prayer before we started the day. Problems arise and demands come up, and sometimes there is more demand than there is of you! You can only go so long with your exports exceeding your imports. If you don't fuel up on the Word and prayer before you start your day, you could reach a trade deficit! Some Christians are in that deficit. They know Christ, but there is more demanded of them than is being put back into their lives.

You can deplete a soil by continually growing the same crop on it year after year. I remember talking with a farmer who planted beans one year and then planted wheat on the same ground the following year for the replenishing of the soil. Just as the soil must be properly nourished, you need to build yourself back up. Too many people are running on empty.

Though God may be in your thoughts all the time and dwell on the inside of you through the Holy Spirit, there is just something about setting aside time to be alone with Him.

Spurgeon wrote: "He who lives without prayer, he who lives with little prayer, he who seldom reads the Word, and he who seldom looks up to heaven for a fresh influence from on high—he will be the man whose heart will become dry and barren."

E.M. Bounds expressed it this way: "No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack."

5. It Gives You the Fresh Spiritual Nutrition You Need

You can't live on yesterday's spiritual food. In Exodus 16, the Lord told the children of Israel to get their manna before the sun got hot on the ground. Manna is Living Bread—Jesus Christ. That means to get a fresh word from heaven from the Word of God before you start your day. There's just something about getting up early to gather your manna at the start of the day.

People who don't set their sails on God early in the day many times forget about Him during the day, and they go in the power of their own flesh.

When I recommitted my life to the Lord and truly desired to grow in the Lord, I started beginning my day with prayer. At that time, I was in the Air Force and worked different shifts every two days. It wasn't the best situation, but I knew it was important for my spiritual well-being and growth to start the day with prayer. So, I had to make time for prayer.

No matter what your situation is, starting the day with prayer can help you prepare to face whatever the day brings. Prayer builds protection in our lives so that we do not become

demoralized, depressed, or intimidated by what happens around us.

Over the years and in different stages of my life, I remember the times of prayer when I took time to be alone with the Lord before beginning the day's activities. The power of early morning prayer will be evident in our lives.

Real-Life Testimonies of Morning Prayer Power

We had two businessmen in our church who were brothers. They had a very successful company in the medical device industry. They have a huge company with many employees and many responsibilities that require their attention. Their testimony is that early morning prayer is the key to their success. They get up at 5:00 AM or earlier to seek God in prayer. One said, "There is no way I can make it through my day unless I meet God and spend time with Him the first part of the day." They have even incorporated prayer into their business. They start the day with prayer with their staff.

As a result, God has used their business to be a witness to the entire community. When you, as a businessperson, will seek God first thing in the morning, then God will permeate your work and your business with His presence. If God's presence permeates your life, it will go right through into your workers and into your business, and there will be honesty, integrity, faithfulness, loyalty, and commitment.

Busyness Is No Excuse

Sometimes people tend to think that they are too busy to have early morning prayer. I believe it's just the opposite. The more demanding your schedule, the greater the need for early morning prayer.

One great preacher said that because the morning is the gate of the entire day, it should be well guarded with prayer. Starting your day with prayer anchors your whole day in God.

Spurgeon captured this truth: "It is not a matter of time so much as a matter of heart; if you have the heart to pray, you will find the time."

E.M. Bounds added: "No man can do a great and enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer, and no man can be a man of prayer who does not give much time to praying."

You don't have to look very far, even in Christian circles, to see that it looks like some people have all their moorings cut, their anchors severed and they are simply drifting on the sea of life with no purpose. They are unable to handle the daily challenges that come.

As a single parent, you need to be in prayer every day for God's wisdom in training your children. As a single person, you need to be in prayer every day to overcome the temptations you face. If you are married, you need to be in prayer every day to keep your marriage strong. Whatever your age or vocation, prayer is vital to success.

Guard the Gate of Your Day

When the gate of your day is guarded with prayer, the devil won't be able to gain entrance into your life because you will be alert to his tactics. Without early morning prayer, however, people's minds and spirits aren't alert to the voice of God. But when you get up in the morning and God speaks to you at the start of your day, it will carry you, guard you and keep you on course with the Spirit of God.

To start your day without prayer is comparable to starting your day without washing and dressing. You wouldn't dare go to the job, the office, the business, or the plant without preparing yourself physically. Yet, how many people put more emphasis on the outer man than they do on the inner man? They are all dressed up on the outside, but on the inside, their soul is not guarded against the devil's attacks.

With what is happening in the world, unless we have our lives anchored in prayer on a daily basis, we will not be able to stand. Too many people have already been blown completely out of the water. They are shipwrecked in their faith because they have neglected prayer. They have neglected to spend time alone with God in His Word, in hearing from Him, and in fellowshiping with Him.

E.M. Bounds wrote powerfully about this: "Prayer is our most formidable weapon, the thing which makes all else we do efficient." He also said, "Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains, opens all prisons, and widens all straits by which God's saints have been held."

Spurgeon added his voice to this chorus: "Neglect of private prayer is the locust which devours the strength of the church."

Seeking God's Direction

If you don't start your day with God, the devil will come before you ever get out of bed and bombard you with negative, defeating thoughts. Before you get out of bed, you will have a schedule that ten people couldn't accomplish, and it is a weight on you all day long, trying to get through things that God didn't design or direct. But when you wait on the Lord early in the morning, God will clarify your priorities.

Too many people major in the minors and minor in the majors, spending their lives in things that are fruitless because they never got God's priorities. Managing our lives is one of the greatest needs we have in this hour.

Morning time of prayer and fellowship with the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit has meant everything to me. My ministry would be weak, powerless, and ineffective without it.

Is your Christian life powerful and full of the fruit of the Spirit? Is there success and blessing in your life that's spilling out

onto the lives of other people? Or is it merely a treadmill that's going faster and faster and the incline is getting steeper and steeper and there seems to be no end?

To give God the first part of your day in prayer is part of the price of spiritual power and prosperity. It costs you nothing but an earnest desire for God's best. Why not give the best part of your day to God? If you give God your best and commit it totally to Him, you can expect God's best to come back to you.

6. You Will Get Instructions and Directions for Your Day— Orders from Headquarters

If you start your day with prayer and praising the Lord, you will receive revelation, instruction, wisdom, inspiration, strength, peace, and deliverance from temptation, refreshing, and restoration.

Psalm 63:1, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You...."

Psalm 100:4 says, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name."

The prophet Isaiah, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said: *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.* (Isaiah 40:28-31)

People faint and become weary when they do not wait upon the Lord in a time dedicated to prayer. When people talk about how weary they are and how difficult their spiritual life

is, they are giving evidence that their prayer life has ebbed away, because Scripture says that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will exchange their weakness for God's strength. They will mount up with wings as eagles. Thank God that we can move from being turkeys to becoming eagles!

Spurgeon expressed this truth beautifully: "The goal of prayer is the ear of God, a goal that can only be reached by patient and continued and continuous waiting upon Him, pouring out our heart to Him and permitting Him to speak to us. Only by so doing can we expect to know Him, and as we come to know Him better we shall spend more time in His presence and find that presence a constant and ever-increasing delight."

E.M. Bounds added: "Those who know God the best are the richest and most powerful in prayer. Little acquaintance with God, and strangeness and coldness to Him, make prayer a rare and feeble thing."

7. Giving God the First Part of Your Day Is a Spiritual Law of Giving the First Fruits

If you give God the first part of your day, He will multiply time back to you.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

God will guide the path you take if you pray over it. But if you don't acknowledge God and ask for His wisdom, He could be standing right in front of you with the answers to every problem you are facing, but you are too busy trying to solve your own problems and trying to make things happen in the flesh.

Scripture says, "God resists the proud..." (James 4:6). When you think you can handle your day without God, that is pride. God will resist you, and you won't have His blessings and His answers. Whatever you can do in your own ability is what will be done. But if you will say, "Lord, I humble myself, I need Your help today," He will give you grace.

James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...."

The Wisdom of Corporate Leaders

There is a teaching among secular corporate leaders that their most productive time is at the start of the day. They are encouraged to take time to be quiet and listen before they start their obligations.

The natural human spirit, when it is tranquil, will think of things that need to be done and will set things in order. How much more productive we will be with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Word of God, a tranquil human spirit and a mind that says, "Lord, I want Your divine direction today."

Is there a glow on your face and victory in your step when you hit your work? Or is there a growl? If someone speaks to you, is it like hitting the neighbor's dog with a stick or biting their head off?

Hearing God's Voice

God wants to speak to you in early morning prayer. If you take time to listen, you will hear God speak. Many people have said, "I haven't heard from God." I ask, "Have you listened? Have you given God an opportunity to speak to you?"

As you read your Bible and pray for God's will to be done, confess God's promises and listen, write down the things God is speaking to you. In this way, you will begin to manage your life every day. No one cares more about you than Jesus

Christ, and if you will let Him direct your steps, the pathway He leads you on will cause you to prosper.

E.M. Bounds wrote: "The central significance of prayer is not in the things that happen as results, but in the deepening intimacy and unhurried communion with God at His central throne of control in order to discover a sense of God's need in order to call on God's help to meet that need."

Spurgeon reminds us: "True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that—it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth."

The Power of Persistent Prayer

Spurgeon taught: "Prayer sometimes tarrieth, like a petitioner at the gate, until the King cometh forth to fill her bosom with the blessings which she seeketh. The Lord, when he hath given great faith, has been known to try it by long delayings."

E.M. Bounds echoed this truth: "I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God. They just drop down and say a few words, and then jump up and forget it and expect God to answer them. Such praying always reminds me of the small boy ringing his neighbor's door-bell, and then running away as fast as he can go."

He also wrote: "Our praying needs to be pressed and pursued with an energy that never tires, a persistency which will not be denied, and a courage that never fails."

Making Prayer a Priority

Spurgeon said it plainly: "I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach."

Bounds added: "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well

and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men."

The power of early morning prayer cannot be overstated. It is the foundation upon which a victorious Christian life is built. When we begin our day in God's presence, we position ourselves to walk in His power, wisdom, and grace throughout every circumstance we face.

As Spurgeon beautifully stated: "As well could you expect a plant to grow without air and water as to expect your heart to grow without prayer and faith."

Conclusion: Start Your Day Right

The evidence is overwhelming. From the example of Jesus Christ Himself to the testimonies of great men and women of faith throughout church history, the message is clear: how you begin your day determines how you will finish it.

Early morning prayer is not just a good idea—it is essential for spiritual survival and victory in the Christian life. It is the breakfast of champions, the fuel that powers us through the challenges and opportunities of each day.

Will you make the commitment today to start your day right? Will you dedicate the first fresh hour of your morning to the Lord? The investment is small, but the dividends are eternal.

As E.M. Bounds concluded: "God shapes the world by prayer. Prayers are deathless. The lips that uttered them may be closed to death, the heart that felt them may have ceased to beat, but the prayers live before God, and God's heart is set on them and prayers outlive the lives of those who uttered them; they outlive a generation, outlive an age, outlive a world."

Start your day right. Start it with prayer. Start it with God.

FOLLOW A PLAN

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools a believer possesses, yet too often, people approach it haphazardly, without direction or strategy. The truth is, having a plan for prayer can make a profound difference in your spiritual life. It keeps you focused, ensures your prayers are purposeful, and aligns your heart with God's will. Throughout my ministry, I have learned invaluable lessons about prayer from my mentors, particularly Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty, under whom I served as Senior Associate for nearly twenty years. His guidance shaped my understanding of prayer in ways that cannot be overstated. Another significant influence on my prayer life was Pastor Larry Lea, whose book *Could You Not Tarry* (1980s) challenged me to take prayer seriously and make it a central part of my life.

Yet, the ultimate example of prayer is Jesus Himself. His life provides a blueprint for how we should approach God—intimately, sincerely, and strategically. In Matthew 6:5, He instructs:

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

The word “hypocrite” literally refers to an actor—a person putting on a performance, something insincere. Jesus warns us not to pray for the approval or admiration of men. On the other hand, He also warns against going to the extreme of paranoia, avoiding prayer out of fear that someone might see you. The balance is found in sincerity and purpose.

Many people ask, “Why pray corporately in church if private prayer is so important?” The answer is rooted in Scripture. Corporate prayer is not about showing off but about power in

agreement. As Deuteronomy 32:30 says, *“How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight...”* In Acts 4, after Peter and John were arrested and released for preaching in Jesus’ name, they returned to the company of believers and “raised their voice to God with one accord” (Acts 4:24). This example illustrates that corporate prayer magnifies spiritual power without being showy or hypocritical.

Jesus also instructed His followers to find private moments with God:

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

The point is not that prayer must happen in a closet but that private, focused prayer allows for genuine intimacy with God. Public or corporate prayer has its place, but your private life of prayer is where God will cultivate and strengthen your faith.

Jesus warned against vain repetitions, too:

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” (Matthew 6:7)

Prayer is not a mechanical recital of words or memorized formulas. John 4:23-24 reminds us:

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

True prayer comes from the heart and spirit. Empty repetitions impress no one but ourselves. The goal is to pray

with sincerity, in alignment with God's Word, and with the expectation that He will act.

You may ask, "If God knows my needs before I ask, why pray at all?" This question cuts to the heart of authority in prayer. When God created man, He gave him dominion over the earth. Adam and Eve's sin transferred that authority temporarily into the hands of the enemy. At Calvary, Jesus restored that authority. Matthew 28:18 confirms, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."*

As believers, we have the legal authority to release God's will into the earth. Prayer is the vehicle through which we enforce His will, binding and loosing according to His Word (Matthew 18:18). John Wesley famously said, *"It seems that God will do nothing except someone prays."* God's sovereignty is absolute, but He has chosen to work through our prayers to accomplish His purposes. 2 Chronicles 7:14 illustrates this principle:

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Prayer is active, not passive. God's will is constant (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8), but He calls us to participate in bringing His purposes to earth. This is why speaking God's Word in faith is critical. Jesus reinforced this truth:

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."
(Mark 11:24)

Our prayers are to be directed to the Father, in Jesus' name (John 14:13-14), with confident expectation that He will honor them.

The ACTS Prayer Pattern

One practical way to structure your prayer is the ACTS pattern, originating with the Navigators:

- **A = Adoration** – Begin by worshipping God, acknowledging His greatness, goodness, and sovereignty.
- **C = Confession** – Confess your sins and ask for cleansing.
- **T = Thanksgiving** – Express gratitude for answered prayers and His blessings.
- **S = Supplication** – Present your requests before the Lord, both for yourself and others.

Pastor Larry Lea emphasized this approach as a way to cover all aspects of prayer, ensuring it is balanced, thorough, and effective.

The Lord's Prayer as a Model

Jesus also gave the disciples the Lord's Prayer as a model (Matthew 6:9-13). It begins with praise: "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name*". When entering the presence of God, like entering the presence of a king, protocol matters. This prayer also incorporates petitions for God's will, daily provision, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation. Each section aligns our hearts with God's priorities and demonstrates the importance of planning what we pray for.

In addition to the Lord's Prayer, incorporating the Hebrew names of God can deepen your prayer life. Each name reveals His character and power:

- **Jehovah-Jireh** – Provider
- **Jehovah-Rapha** – Healer

- **Jehovah-Nissi** – Banner of victory
- **Jehovah-M’Kaddesh** – Sanctifier
- **Jehovah-Rohi** – Shepherd and guide
- **Jehovah-Shalom** – Peace
- **Jehovah-Shammah** – Ever-present friend
- **Jehovah-Tsidkenu** – Righteousness

Addressing God by these names reminds us of His multifaceted nature and strengthens our faith as we pray.

Praying God’s Will

When you pray, declare His Kingdom, righteousness, and purposes: *“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”* (Matthew 6:10). As believers, we have authority to enforce His Word through our prayers. God works in response to aligned, faith-filled prayer. You are exercising your authority when you declare His promises over your life, family, and nation.

Paul’s exhortation to Timothy confirms this:

“I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...for kings and all who are in authority...” (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Prayer is both personal and strategic. By praying for leaders, for our communities, and for nations, we help create the conditions for God’s Kingdom to advance.

Praying Over Life Areas

1. **Self:** Pray over your spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Speak the Word over your mind (Philippians 4:8), your body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and your spirit.
2. **Family:** Pray protection, provision, and spiritual growth over each family member. Include extended family, covering them with God’s will.

3. **Church and Ministry:** Pray for leaders, vision, provision, and the expansion of God’s Kingdom through your church or ministry.
4. **Government:** Pray for leaders and authorities to establish peace and justice, creating an environment for the Gospel to flourish.
5. **Daily Provision:** Pray for both spiritual and natural needs—“*Give us this day our daily bread*” (Matthew 6:11).

Jesus taught that provision comes both from God’s Word (spiritual bread) and His natural blessings (food, shelter, finances). Participate in early morning prayer to receive fresh manna from heaven, just as the Israelites gathered daily.

Forgiveness and Deliverance

Prayer includes forgiveness: “*Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*” (Matthew 6:12). Bitterness and resentment block spiritual growth and joy. Choose forgiveness, and you unlock God’s blessings.

Pray against temptation and for deliverance from evil: “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*” (Matthew 6:13). Temptation can be physical, emotional, mental, or financial. As a child of God, you have authority to exercise faith for protection and deliverance.

Finally, exalt the Lord: “*For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever*” (Matthew 6:13). The Kingdom belongs to God, but He invites us to participate in it through prayer.

Conclusion

Having a plan for prayer transforms your relationship with God. It keeps your prayers organized, intentional, and powerful. Whether you use ACTS, the Lord’s Prayer, or a

personal pattern inspired by Scripture, the principle remains: plan your prayer. Declare God's Word, worship Him, intercede for others, and speak His promises over your life and the world around you.

As Pastor Billy Graham once said, "*Prayer is simply talking to God like a friend—and He's listening.*" But friends also plan their conversations when there's something important to accomplish. Likewise, plan your prayers to maximize your spiritual impact, grow in intimacy with God, and enforce His will in your life and the lives of others.

Prayer is not passive. It is a powerful, active expression of faith. You are not only communicating with God; you are exercising authority, releasing the Word of God, and partnering with Him to bring heaven to earth.

When you pray with a plan, your faith is strengthened, your focus sharpened, and your life aligned with God's purposes. The authority He has given you will not remain dormant; it will be activated through your prayers.

Plan your prayer. Pray with purpose. Watch God move.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD

THE FOUNDATION OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

This is probably the biggest key to prayer I can give you: The prayer of faith based upon God's Word will bring results in your life, because the Word of God is the will of God.

Before we can pray powerfully, before we can move mountains or see miracles, before we can touch heaven and change earth, we must first establish something foundational in our hearts—the absolute integrity and authority of God's Word. This is not just a theological concept to mentally agree with; it's the bedrock upon which everything else in the Christian life is built.

The integrity of God's Word must be established in your heart. This is how you get to the point where you can trust God and pray according to His Word with faith. You must believe that God said what He meant and meant what He said. You must believe Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

Think about the magnitude of that promise. Jesus is declaring that His words are more permanent, more reliable, more enduring than the physical universe itself. The mountains will crumble, the oceans will dry up, the stars will fall from the sky, but not one word that proceeds from the mouth of God will ever fail. Not one promise will go unfulfilled. Not one declaration will prove false.

Establishing the Word as Final Authority

You must get to the point where you believe God's Word more than you believe the things you see or feel, more than what you hear on the 6:00 news, or the symptoms in your body, or what the educational process of the world and all the world's facts and figures say. You must believe God as the final authority in the earth.

This is where many believers struggle. We live in a culture that constantly challenges the authority of Scripture. The postmodern culture and secular humanism continue to attack the integrity of the Word of God. The public school systems hammer at it day after day with evolution, which totally rejects God and the Bible account of creation.

Let me be clear: It is true that there was a big bang, but it wasn't an accident! It was God's plan. He said, "'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). He spoke the earth, the firmament, vegetation, the sea creatures, animals and man into existence with the words of His mouth.

The enemy has sown seeds into people's minds that the creation story in Genesis isn't true, that man simply started as a one-celled being in a swamp and gradually crawled out—from "goo to you," as some have said. That is monkey business!

Man does not have an animal nature, but that's the way people behave if they believe they came from monkeys instead of being God-inspired creations who walk and talk with God on a daily basis. We are built to love, care and share the gospel. It makes sense to believe in God, and all the more when you see the emptiness of people without Him.

The Unchanging Nature of God's Promises

Numbers 23:19 declares with crystal clarity:

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

First Kings 8:56 adds this powerful testimony: "There has not failed one word of all His good promise...." Not one word of God will ever fail, yet most of men's predictions fail. Some people say the Bible is irrelevant today, but they spend an hour a day reading the newspaper which is so irrelevant it has

to be reprinted every day! The things of the world are temporal, but God is eternal. He never changes.

Second Corinthians 1:20 says: "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

All the religions of the world, except Christianity, have a big "no" on life. But Jesus Christ says "yes" to life, to freedom and liberty, to being everything you are intended to be, to your health, to your needs being met, and to going to heaven! All of God's promises are "yes"!

When we settle that God's Word is true and it is the final authority, it isn't hard to pray according to the will of God. But if that is never settled inside of you, you will always be wishy-washy in your prayer life.

Why Pray God's Word?

Jeremiah 1:12 (KJV) says, "I will hasten my word to perform it." God is committed to fulfilling what He already has promised. Second Chronicles 16:9 says: "For the eyes of the Lord run throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him...."

God is waiting for us to believe and speak the Word. He is actively searching for someone who will take Him at His Word, who will dare to believe His promises and pray them back to Him with confidence.

Hebrews 4:12-16 (KJV) says:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest,

that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We must establish everything we pray with the Word of God. Second Corinthians 13:1 (KJV) says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." If people would take the time to find a promise in God's Word before they offered a petition, they would have a lot more faith when they prayed.

Let me say this plainly: One prayer based on the Word of God is more valuable than 10,000 prayers based on your own ideas!

We are to come to the Father in prayer with the promises of His Word. Since the Word is alive and powerful, since Jesus has already gone to heaven and made a way for us, and since His blood is on the altar, we can now obtain mercy and grace when we come to the Father in Jesus' name with the Word.

Discovering God's Will Through His Word

Psalms 37:4 says, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." He will grant the desires of your heart, but He will also implant His desires into your heart.

You can know the will of God! How? Second Timothy 2:15 (KJV) says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." As you study God's Word, you will have a revelation of His will for your life.

John 15:7 says: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

When the Word abides in you and you delight yourself in the Lord, you will pray according to His will. If you need God's wisdom to know which person to marry, you can pray James 1:5, 1 Corinthians 1:30, and John 10:3,27: "Jesus, You are made unto me wisdom, and Your sheep hear Your voice. I am Your sheep, and I pray, and I believe that I receive Your wisdom."

As you pray, God will speak His wisdom inside of your heart. When you pray in line with God's Word, you pray with accuracy.

Sometimes people have said to me, "Would you agree with me in prayer?" Often, I ask, "What scripture promise are you agreeing with?" Many people aren't aware of the value of praying the promises of God.

Once you have established the integrity of God's Word, you can have confidence that God will fulfill His Word. Some people don't have confidence in their prayer life because they don't have confidence in the Word of God. It's time to clear the doubt and unbelief completely out of your life.

First John 5:14-15 says:

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

In John 15, Jesus teaches on abiding in the Vine. He says, "For without Me you can do nothing" (v. 5). That goes for prayer. Apart from the Word of God, apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, praying for prayer's sake will accomplish nothing.

Pray the Answer, Not the Problem

How can you pray the answer? Pray God's Word! When you pray God's Word, you are praying the answer at the start.

Most people's prayer focus is on the problem. They rehearse the problem with all of its difficulties. They describe it in detail to God as if He doesn't know, and by the time they finish they have eroded all of their faith, like letting air out of a balloon.

While it is good to commune with the Lord, what really pleases Him is talking about who He is and what He has promised to do. "Lord, thank You that You are committed to me. You are El Shaddai, the God Who is more than enough. You are the God of abundance, Jehovah-Jireh. Thank You that You meet all of my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Doesn't that sound better and more pleasing to God than, "God, this is a bum deal. Where have You been? I can't believe You've left me hanging out on a limb like this. I'm broke, in debt, and can't pay my bills. Where are You, God?"

When people talk that way, they ignore what God has done and provided. Listen, God has already given His Son and raised Him from the dead. He has already committed all that He has to you.

Sometimes people think, *I'm going to be real honest. I'm just going to tell it like it is.* This is a huge problem in the church today. I hear things like, "we need to be transparent" or "people need to be more real." Obviously, we should not put on airs or pretend to be something we are not, and there are times to get things out of our heart, but the most honest, real thing we can lift up to God is His Word, because it is full of integrity. It will never change. Our thoughts and feelings may change before the sun rises tomorrow, but God never changes, so we can bring the Word in prayer to Him.

God's Thoughts vs. Our Thoughts

Isaiah 55:8-9 says:

"'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

If you stopped right there, you could say, "There is no way that we can know the will of God," but Isaiah goes on:

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10-11)

We know God's will by His Word and by His Spirit. Colossians 1:9 says, "That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

Isaiah was saying, "The moisture that is in the clouds comes down to the earth in the form of rain. My ways and My thoughts that are in heaven come down upon the earth in the form of My Word. As the rain waters the earth and causes it to bring forth, bud, reproduce, and multiply, so My Word, when it rains down in your heart, will bring forth My ways, My thoughts and My ideas. I will cause My words and My ways to bud in your life."

The Seed Principle in God's Word

Genesis 1 says that every living thing has a seed within itself that will reproduce after its own kind. We see this in the animal kingdom, in the plant kingdom, and in humanity. Each reproduces after its own kind. Likewise, God's Word reproduces after its own kind.

The Word of God on salvation will reproduce salvation. The Word of God on healing will reproduce healing. The Word of God on peace will reproduce peace. Begin to pray the

promises of God's Word and believe that He is answering and fulfilling His Word on your behalf and on behalf of those for whom you are praying.

God is going to fulfill His will in the earth. That's why we should pray, "Lord, Your will be done," when we don't know what the will of God is. Jesus prayed it in the Garden of Gethsemane:

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." (Luke 22:42)

Jesus would be our Substitute, and He would be made a curse for us. He would die in our place, so He prayed that it would be removed from Him, but He added, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." We see the humanity and the divinity of Jesus come together when His spirit yielded to the Father's will. Because Jesus was submitted to the divine call, He submitted His body and mind to the Holy Spirit and basically said, "I will do it."

If you know the will of God for your life, then you can pray with authority. For instance, when Jesus came to minister to the sick, you never find one time in Scripture where He lifted His eyes to the Father and said, "Father, if it be Thy will, let this blind man be healed." Why? Because Jesus already knew the Father's will was to heal, and He was committed to being an instrument of healing.

The leper questioned God's willingness to heal. He said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" (Matthew 8:2). He was saying, "I know You've got the ability to heal me, Lord, but are You willing?" Jesus answered, "I am willing; be cleansed" (v. 3). The will of God was established in the area of healing. You can know the will of God in every area of life from His Word.

Shifting from Problem-Focused to Answer-Focused Prayer

If you want your prayers to be effective, pray the answer. However, most of the time people pray the problem. They say, "Oh, Lord, I've got this terrible problem. I just can't get over it. It's too much." When you pray the problem and the difficulties, that's all you are going to see. You won't be able to see the answer because the problem will block you from seeing anything else.

But if you will begin to pray, "Lord, I thank You for sending the answer. Thank You for providing for me. Thank You for Your abundance," the problem will be overshadowed by faith because you have put the answer right before you. When you pray God's Word, you are praying His will and you are praying the answer. As you pray the answer from God's Word, the problems you face will be swallowed up in victory!

The Example of Blind Bartimaeus

As blind Bartimaeus sat by the road begging and he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47). When Jesus asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (v. 51), Bartimaeus didn't spend thirty minutes describing how long he had been blind. He didn't take the time to go into all the details of how he lost his sight. He simply responded to Jesus, "That I may receive my sight" (v. 51). Jesus said, "Go your way; your faith has made you well" (v. 52).

If you will pray the answer by praying—by speaking the promises of God from His Word—you will see answers manifest more quickly.

Practical Applications: Praying Scripture for Every Need

If you are praying for finances, start with Jehovah-Jireh, the God Who sees ahead and makes provision: "My God

supplies all of my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

You can pray the promise of Luke 6:38: "Because I give, it will be given unto me, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into my bosom. For with the same measure I use, it will be measured back to me."

Pray the promise of Psalm 37:25 and Psalm 23:5: "Lord, thank You that I will not be begging bread. Thank You for Your provision. You are the God of abundance. You are El Shaddai, the God Who is more than enough. Thank You that You provide a table for me in the presence of my enemies."

Every time you think about sickness or disease, a problem, or an answer that you need, you can say, "Father, thank You for sending Your answer. Thank You for the provision of it. Thank You that I have it."

How do you handle worry and anxiety? Think about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Philippians 4:8).

Testimony: The Tulsa Dream Center

Many of the things we have received and accomplished as a family and in our church have come about by praying the Word. One time our church was believing for a piece of land to build an outreach center on in the poorer area of our community. As Pastor Billy Joe began sharing the vision, we began to pray and call that land forth. Through a series of divine connections and miracles, two ladies who were not a part of our church called and gave us the land right where we were believing.

Today we have an outreach center called the Tulsa Dream Center that shares the gospel of Jesus Christ and provides education for children, clothing, food, after-school care, and other services to families of the community.

Testimony: The Camp Facility

Another time our church received land—over 100 acres—and provision for buildings for a camp facility where hundreds of boys and girls are ministered to every year. We believed for the camp a long time, but the manifestation finally came by praying. God will give you the desires of your heart when you delight yourself in Him!

The Power of Your Words in Prayer

Proverbs 18:20-21 says:

"A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; from the produce of his lips he shall be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Believing that you receive according to what you speak works for life or for death, for positive or for negative, for good or for bad. What are you speaking?

Jesus had something to say about our words, too:

"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:34-37)

The Lesson from the Wilderness

The law of receiving what you speak worked with the children of Israel in Numbers 13 and 14. Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan God had promised the Israelites.

Ten of the twelve men came back with an evil report of inability to take the land. Only two of the twelve, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a good report: "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it"

(Numbers 13:30). The ten men said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we" (v. 31).

Though majority opinion in this case was wrong, the Lord said, "Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you" (Numbers 14:28).

Be sure you are speaking what God says! God is not obligated to perform your word—He is obligated to perform His Word!

Hold Fast the Confession of Your Faith

Hebrews 10:35-36 (KJV) says:

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

What the writer of Hebrews is saying is, "Your confident faith will have a great return, but you have need of patience." Some people have a negative connotation of the word patience, but Scripture talks about it as "perseverance, endurance, or steadfastness."

Patience undergirds your faith just as columns strengthen a long beam across a building, so it won't collapse. Patience and endurance undergird your faith in the time you are standing on the Word, waiting to see the manifestation of your prayers.

Verse 36 in the New King James Version says, "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise."

The key to answered prayer is to do the will of God, then have patience because you will receive the promise. Don't collapse, don't cave in or become double-minded, but hold fast the confession of your faith, and you will receive God's promises.

God's provision will intersect your obedience. If you stop short in your faith, the provision will be there, but it will be out of your reach. But if you obey, after you have done the will of God, you will receive the promise!

What is it you are believing God for? What is it that you need? Don't give up. Don't quit. Find God's promise for it, because it's the promise that God will fulfill. After you have done the will of God, you will receive the promise. So, what do you do from prayer to manifestation? Hold fast the confession of your faith!

The Practice of Confession (*speaking God's Word*)

Your profession (or confession) should go something like this:

"Father, I thank You that Your Word is working. Thank You that You meet my every need. Thank You for the manifestation of healing in my body. Thank You, Lord, for all my family being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank You, Lord, for strength. Thank You for tuition money. Thank You, Father, that I have the mind of Christ. Thank You for redeeming my life from destruction. Thank You, Lord, for giving me a new heart. Thank You for an abundance of Your mercy and grace. I praise You, Lord Jesus. I exalt and magnify You."

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Begin to rejoice in the Word of God. You have believed that you receive, so begin praising the name of Jesus for His answers!

People who don't understand the confession of faith say, "What am I going to do?" You are going to hold fast to the confession of your faith. That means you are going to keep your words—all of them—aligned with what God promises you in His Word. Then you are going to praise Him!

When Pressure Comes Against Your Faith

Pressure comes to get you off of your confession, and it comes against you in your mind. That's why Jesus said men ought always to pray, and not to faint or lose heart (Luke 18:1). When the circumstances are bad, the problems have been evident for so long, or the difficulties seem so complex, the mind begins to dwell on how tall the giant is instead of how big God is!

With Saul and David, one meditated on the problem and the other meditated on the solution. One hid in fear, and the other went out and whipped the giant! Saul had fainted, but when David came on the scene, the Word inside of him was greater than the words outside of him!

Which report are you going to believe? The report of the Lord Jesus, or the report of the world? The eternal report of the Lord written in His Word is greater than any temporal report of the world!

Illustration: Choosing the Right Report

There are reports every day coming at us through the television, social media, and newspaper. They share their stories and paint pictures of all kinds of problems, troubles, and disasters. They sensationalize and exaggerate practically any and every event. Often people who read and listen to these reports are gripped with fear and worry.

My wife and I have had to work at not allowing ourselves to become focused on the negative reports and news. Instead, we have determined to keep our focus on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

This does not mean we stick our heads in the sand and ignore what is going on in the world around us. We just choose to believe that God is bigger than any problem or situation and put our trust in Him. We need to choose to believe the report of the Lord. Whose report will you believe?

The Transforming Power of Praying Scripture

When you consistently pray God's Word, something supernatural begins to happen. The Word doesn't just inform your mind—it transforms your heart. It doesn't just give you information—it imparts revelation. The promises you speak begin to shape your perspective, renew your thinking, and align your will with God's will.

Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher, taught his congregation: "In order and argument in prayer, we lay our case before God and fill our mouth with arguments." He was teaching believers to pray like a lawyer presents a case—with evidence, with precedent, with reasoning based on established truth. And what is our evidence? The Word of God. What is our precedent? The promises of God. What is our established truth? The unchanging nature of God.

When You Don't Know How to Pray

There will be times when you face situations so complex, so overwhelming, or so confusing that you don't know what to pray. In those moments, praying God's Word becomes your anchor. You may not know the specific solution, but you can pray the character of God. You may not see the way forward, but you can declare His promises.

Romans 8:26 reminds us: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Even in those moments of weakness and uncertainty, the Holy Spirit is helping you. And when you pray God's Word, you give the Spirit material to work with. You align yourself with heaven's agenda. You position yourself for breakthrough.

Illustration:

The Persistent Widow and the Power of Not Giving Up

Jesus told a parable in Luke 18 about a persistent widow who kept coming to an unjust judge, asking for justice against her adversary. The judge didn't fear God or respect man, but because of her persistence, he finally said, "Because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me" (Luke 18:5).

Jesus then made this powerful application: "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:6-8).

If an unjust judge will respond to persistence, how much more will our loving Heavenly Father respond to our persistent, Word-based prayers? The key is not to faint, not to give up, not to stop believing. When you're praying God's Word, you're not trying to convince God to do something He doesn't want to do. You're aligning yourself with what He has already promised to do.

I've seen this principle work in countless lives. People who held fast to the promises, who refused to let go of God's Word, who kept declaring truth even when circumstances screamed the opposite—these are the people who see miracles. These are the people who experience breakthroughs. These are the people who inherit the promises.

The Danger of Limiting God

We have a tendency to pray small prayers because we have small expectations. We ask for little because we believe for little. We settle for crumbs when God wants to give us the whole loaf. Why? Because we've allowed our past

experiences, our natural reasoning, and our limited perspective to define what God can do.

But when you pray God's Word, you're praying what God has already declared He wants to do. You're not asking Him to bend to your will—you're aligning your will with His. You're not trying to talk Him into something—you're agreeing with what He's already said.

Ephesians 3:20 says God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." Notice it says "according to the power that works in us." The power is already there. The question is: are we accessing it through prayer based on His Word?

Practical Steps to Praying God's Word

Let me give you some practical steps to help you develop a lifestyle of praying God's Word:

1. Build a Promise Library

Start collecting scriptures that speak to different areas of your life. Organize them by topic: healing, provision, protection, wisdom, family, relationships, purpose, etc. When you face a need in any area, you'll have God's promises at your fingertips.

2. Personalize the Promises

Don't just read the promises—make them personal. Instead of "The Lord is my shepherd," pray "Lord, You are MY shepherd. You shepherd ME." This transforms scripture from a general truth to a personal promise.

3. Declare Them Daily

Make it a practice to declare God's promises over your life every day. Start your morning by speaking the Word. End your evening by rehearsing His faithfulness. Keep His promises before your eyes and on your lips.

4. Write Them Down

There's something powerful about writing out God's promises. Keep a prayer journal where you write out scriptures, personalize them, and date them. Then record when you see the answer manifest. This becomes a testimony of God's faithfulness.

5. Pray Them with Others

Get together with other believers and pray God's Word corporately. When two or three agree on a promise, there's exponential power released.

Illustration:

George Müller and the Power of Praying Scripture

George Müller, the great man of faith who cared for over 10,000 orphans in 19th century England, never asked anyone for money. Instead, he asked God, basing his prayers entirely on Scripture. He would pray promises like Philippians 4:19: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Müller kept detailed records of every answer to prayer. By the end of his life, he had documented over 50,000 specific answers to prayer. What was his secret? He prayed God's Word. He found a promise, claimed it, believed it, and watched God fulfill it.

Once, the orphanage was completely out of food. The children sat at the table with empty plates. Müller led them in thanksgiving for the food—before any food arrived. Why? Because he had prayed God's promise, and he believed the answer was on the way. Before they finished praying, a baker knocked on the door with fresh bread, and a milkman's cart broke down outside, and he asked if they could use the milk before it spoiled. God honored faith based on His Word.

The Relationship Between the Word and the Spirit

It's crucial to understand that praying God's Word doesn't mean the Holy Spirit isn't involved. In fact, the opposite is true. The Word and the Spirit work together.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Word, so when you pray the Word, you're praying in harmony with the Spirit. The Spirit uses the Word to guide you, teach you, correct you, and empower you. Don't separate what God has joined together.

Moving from Petition to Possession

There's a progression in prayer that many believers miss. We start with petition—asking God for something. But we shouldn't stay there. We need to move to faith—believing we have received. Then we move to thanksgiving—praising God for the answer before we see it manifest. Finally, we experience possession—the physical manifestation of what we believed for.

Mark 11:24 lays out this progression: "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Notice the order:

1. Ask (petition)
2. Believe you receive (faith)
3. You will have them (possession)

The key is in that middle step—believing you receive BEFORE you see the physical manifestation. This is where praying God's Word becomes absolutely crucial. How can you believe you receive something you can't yet see? By standing on the promise of God's Word. The Word becomes the evidence of things not yet seen.

When you pray, "Father, according to Philippians 4:19, You supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory," and then you believe that promise, you've moved from petition to

faith. Now you begin to thank Him for the provision before it shows up in your bank account. You're not being presumptuous—you're being obedient to His Word. And that thanksgiving leads to the manifestation.

The Confession That Holds Fast

The writer of Hebrews uses a powerful phrase that every believer needs to understand: "Hold fast the confession of your faith" (Hebrews 4:14). In the original Greek, the word for "confession" is *homologia*, which means "to say the same thing as" or "to speak in agreement with."

When you hold fast your confession, you're continuously speaking in agreement with what God has already said. You're not changing your words based on circumstances. You're not wavering based on feelings. You're anchoring your words to God's eternal Word.

This is why people who truly understand praying God's Word sound different. When someone asks, "How are you?" and they're facing a health crisis, they don't deny the symptoms, but they declare the truth: "By His stripes I am healed" (Isaiah 53:5). When they're facing financial pressure, they don't ignore the bills, but they declare, "My God supplies all my needs according to His riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19).

Some people call this "positive confession" or "name it and claim it" and mock it. But it's simply believing what God said more than what circumstances are saying. It's choosing to agree with heaven's report rather than earth's report.

The Battle for Your Words

Understand this: there is a very real battle for what comes out of your mouth. The enemy knows that your words have creative power. He knows that if he can get you speaking doubt, fear, and unbelief, he can keep you from receiving God's promises.

That's why the pressure comes. That's why when you start praying God's Word and making faith confessions, suddenly things seem to get worse. The symptoms intensify. The problems multiply. The opposition increases. Why? Because the enemy is trying to get you to change your confession.

This is where most people fail. They start strong. They find the promise. They pray it with faith. They make declarations. But then when the pressure comes, they fold. They start speaking what they see instead of what God said. They begin to rehearse the problem instead of declaring the promise. And the moment they change their words, they forfeit the power.

Jesus addressed this in Mark 11:23: "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."

Notice Jesus says "whoever SAYS" three times in one verse! Your words matter. What you say about your mountain matters. And the key is to not doubt in your heart—to stay anchored to what God's Word says regardless of what you see or feel.

The Principle of Seedtime and Harvest in Prayer

Genesis 8:22 establishes a powerful principle: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease."

This principle applies to prayer. When you pray God's Word, you're planting seed. The Word is the seed (Luke 8:11). Your faith is the soil. Your consistent confession is the watering. And just like a farmer doesn't dig up his seed every day to see if it's growing, you don't keep questioning whether God heard you or whether His Word is working.

The farmer plants the seed and then goes about his business, confident that the seed contains life and will produce a harvest in due season. He doesn't see anything for weeks, but he knows something is happening beneath the surface. Roots are going down. Life is stirring. Growth is occurring.

The same is true when you pray God's Word. You may not see immediate results, but trust that God's Word "shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Illustration: **The Delayed Harvest That Came**

I remember a couple in our church who were believing for a child. They had tried for years with no success. Medical tests showed significant obstacles. Doctors offered little hope. But this couple found God's promises about children and families. They prayed scriptures like Psalm 113:9: "He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children."

They prayed those promises for two years. Two years of monthly disappointments. Two years of well-meaning friends suggesting they "just accept reality." Two years of pressure to give up their confession. But they refused to change their words. They kept declaring God's Word. They kept thanking Him for the child they couldn't yet see.

And then it happened. She got pregnant—naturally, against all medical odds. Today they have three children. But here's what that couple told me: "The real miracle wasn't just the children. It was what happened in us during those two years of standing on the Word. We learned to trust God's promises more than our circumstances. We learned that His Word is more reliable than any doctor's report. We learned to hold fast our confession. And that has impacted every area of our lives since then."

That's the power of praying God's Word with persistence. The breakthrough matters, but the transformation that occurs while you're standing on the Word matters even more.

Praying God's Word for Different Life Situations

Let me give you some practical examples of how to pray God's Word in different situations:

For Healing: "Father, Your Word says in 1 Peter 2:24 that by Jesus' stripes I was healed. Not I will be healed, but I WAS healed 2,000 years ago at the cross. I receive that healing now. I thank You that Your healing power is flowing through my body, driving out every sickness and disease. I declare Psalm 103:3—You forgive all my iniquities and heal all my diseases. Thank You for making me whole in Jesus' name."

For Financial Breakthrough: "Lord, Your Word declares in Philippians 4:19 that You supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I am a tither and giver, and Luke 6:38 promises that when I give, it shall be given unto me—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. I declare that I am blessed in the city and blessed in the field, blessed when I come in and blessed when I go out (Deuteronomy 28:3, 6). Thank You that the windows of heaven are open over my life and You are rebuking the devourer for my sake (Malachi 3:10-11)."

For Protection: "Father, Psalm 91 says that he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I dwell in You. I am hidden in the secret place. You are my refuge and my fortress. I will not be afraid of the terror by night or the arrow that flies by day. A thousand may fall at my side and ten thousand at my right hand, but it shall not come near me. You have given Your angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways. Thank You for Your divine protection over me and my family."

For Wisdom and Direction: "Lord Jesus, Your Word says in James 1:5 that if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of You, and You give liberally and without reproach. I ask for wisdom. First Corinthians 1:30 says You are made unto me wisdom. John 10:27 says Your sheep hear Your voice. I am Your sheep, and I hear Your voice. Thank You for speaking to me clearly. Thank You for ordering my steps according to Your Word (Psalm 119:133). I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), and I make decisions according to Your wisdom."

For Family Salvation: "Father, Acts 16:31 promises that I and my household will be saved. I stand on that promise for my family. I pray that You would open their eyes to see You (Luke 24:31), that the god of this world would not blind their minds (2 Corinthians 4:4), and that You would draw them with cords of love (Hosea 11:4). I bind the spirit of unbelief and loose the spirit of revelation. I pray laborers across their path (Matthew 9:38) and that they would come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Thank You that my seed is delivered (Proverbs 11:21)."

The Discipline of Staying with the Word

Smith Wigglesworth, the great healing evangelist, was once asked what he did when he woke up in the morning. He replied, "I don't often open my eyes before I get my heart on the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately I wake, I will always speak to the Lord. If you give Him the first moments of the day, He will bless you."

Wigglesworth understood that starting the day with God's Word and prayer sets the spiritual trajectory for everything else. He also said, "I don't read the newspaper; I read the Bible. It tells me what the world is coming to."

This is the discipline we need—making God's Word so central to our thinking that it becomes our default language in prayer. When you're saturated in Scripture, when you've meditated on the promises until they're written on your heart,

you won't have to scramble for a verse when trouble comes. The Word will be there, ready to be spoken in faith.

From Milk to Meat: Growing in Word-Based Prayer

Hebrews 5:12-14 talks about believers who should be teachers but still need someone to teach them the basic principles of God's Word. It says they need milk, not solid food, because they're unskilled in the word of righteousness.

Many believers never progress beyond basic prayers because they never grow in their knowledge of God's Word. They pray general prayers: "Bless me, help me, guide me." There's nothing wrong with those prayers, but they're spiritual milk. God wants to bring you to the place where you can pray specific, targeted, Word-based prayers that hit the mark every time.

This growth comes through study and application. Second Timothy 2:15 exhorts us to "study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (KJV).

When you study the Word, you discover the depth and breadth of God's promises. You find scriptures you never knew existed. You gain understanding of covenant promises that belong to you as a child of God. And this knowledge equips you to pray with precision and power.

The Authority of a Word-Based Prayer Life

When you pray God's Word, you're not praying as a beggar hoping God might respond. You're praying as a son or daughter with legal rights to the promises. You're praying as an ambassador with the authority of the King backing your words. You're praying as a joint-heir with Christ, accessing the inheritance that belongs to you.

This is the confidence John talks about in 1 John 5:14-15: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we

ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

Notice the progression:

1. We ask according to His will (His Word)
2. We know He hears us
3. We know we have what we asked for

That's not arrogance—that's faith. That's not presumption—that's confidence in God's integrity. He cannot lie. His Word cannot fail. What He has promised, He is able to perform.

Romans 4:20-21 describes Abraham's faith: "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

Abraham's body was dead. Sarah's womb was dead. Circumstances said it was impossible. But Abraham staggered not at the promise. He didn't focus on the impossibility—he focused on the integrity of God. And that same faith is available to you when you pray God's Word.

The Partnership Between Faith and Patience

James 1:3-4 says, "Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

When you pray God's Word, you're exercising faith. But often there's a gap between the prayer and the manifestation. That gap is where patience (or endurance) is developed. This isn't passive waiting—it's active, confident expectation while you continue to declare the Word.

Hebrews 6:12 tells us to "not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Notice: faith AND patience. Both are required. You need faith

to believe the promise and patience to wait for the manifestation without wavering.

This is where the confession of your faith becomes crucial. During the waiting period, keep declaring the Word. Keep speaking the promise. Keep thanking God for the answer. Don't let contradictory words come out of your mouth.

When the Answer Seems Delayed

Sometimes you pray God's Word faithfully, you believe you receive, you hold fast your confession, and yet the answer seems delayed. What do you do then?

First, don't assume God didn't hear you. First John 5:14-15 settles that: if you pray according to His will (His Word), He hears you. Period.

Second, understand that timing is part of God's perfect will. Habakkuk 2:3 says, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

There's an appointed time for the fulfillment of every promise. Your job is not to figure out the timing—your job is to keep believing and keep confessing until the manifestation comes.

Third, check your heart for any unbelief, unforgiveness, or disobedience that might be hindering your prayers. Mark 11:25 says, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." Unforgiveness can block your prayers.

Fourth, increase your Word intake and your confession. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If your faith is wavering, spend more time in the Word. Let it build your faith back up.

Finally, consider whether you're praying with right motives. James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." Make sure your prayers are aligned not just with God's Word but with His heart.

The Testimony of Persistent Word-Based Prayer

Let me share one more powerful testimony that illustrates the principle of persisting in Word-based prayer.

There was a businessman in our church who faced bankruptcy. His company was failing, creditors were calling, and financial collapse seemed inevitable. He came to me for counsel, and I shared these principles of praying God's Word with him.

He began to pray every financial promise he could find in Scripture. Every morning before work, he would spend an hour declaring God's Word over his business. He prayed Philippians 4:19, Deuteronomy 28, Malachi 3:10-11, Luke 6:38, and dozens of other promises.

For three months, nothing changed. In fact, things got worse. More clients left. Bigger bills came due. Lawyers started calling. But he refused to change his confession. Every day, despite the circumstances, he declared, "My God supplies all my needs according to His riches in glory. The windows of heaven are open over my life. I am blessed in the city and blessed in the field. Whatever I set my hand to prospers."

People thought he was crazy. Some told him to face reality. Others suggested he was in denial. But he kept praying the Word.

In the fourth month, things began to shift. A client he thought was lost called and doubled their order. An old debt that had been written off was suddenly paid in full. New contracts started coming in. Within six months, his business was not

just surviving—it was thriving. Within a year, he was more prosperous than he'd ever been.

But the most powerful part of his testimony was what he said to me: "Pastor, the money was wonderful, but the real breakthrough was learning that God's Word is true no matter what circumstances look like. I learned to stand on the promises when everything screamed the opposite. And now I know—I KNOW—that I can trust God's Word in any situation. That faith is worth more than any financial breakthrough."

That's the power of praying God's Word with persistence. It doesn't just change your circumstances—it changes you.

Conclusion:

Living a Word-Centered Life

Praying God's Word is not just a technique—it's a lifestyle. It's not something you do in crisis; it's something you do consistently. It becomes the language of your heart, the rhythm of your day, the foundation of your faith.

Joshua 1:8 gives us the blueprint: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Notice the progression:

1. The Word shall not depart from your mouth (constant confession)
2. Meditate in it day and night (constant contemplation)
3. Observe to do all that is written (obedience)
4. Result: prosperity and success

When the Word is in your mouth and in your mind, when you're speaking it and thinking it constantly, when you're not

just hearing it but doing it—that's when you experience the fullness of God's promises.

Psalm 1:2-3 describes the blessed man as one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

That's the life God intends for you—a life rooted in His Word, a life bearing fruit in every season, a life that prospers in every endeavor. And it all flows from a prayer life anchored in Scripture.

So I challenge you today: Make a commitment to pray God's Word. Not occasionally. Not when you remember. Not just when trouble comes. Make it your daily practice, your habitual response, your automatic default.

Find the promises that speak to your situation. Write them down. Memorize them. Declare them. Pray them. Believe them. Stand on them. And watch as the God who cannot lie fulfills every word He has spoken.

Remember: God is not obligated to perform your word—He is obligated to perform His Word. So make His Word your word. Make His promises your confession. Make His truth your anchor.

And as you do, you'll discover what countless believers throughout history have discovered: The prayer of faith based upon God's Word will bring results in your life, because the Word of God is the will of God.

Which report will you believe? The report of the circumstances or the report of the Lord? Choose today to anchor your prayers in the eternal, unchanging, powerful Word of God. It will transform your prayer life—and your entire life—forever.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD WRONG

The Other Side of the Coin

In the previous chapter, we explored the powerful truth of praying God's Word correctly—how Spirit-directed faith leads us into answered prayer and victorious living. We learned that when God speaks, whether through His written Word or by His Spirit, we can have confidence to pray and act on what He has said. This is the foundation of effective prayer.

But there is another side to this truth that we must address with equal seriousness: the danger of praying God's Word wrongly. Just as a surgeon's scalpel can bring healing when used correctly, but harm when misused, so the Word of God can be misapplied in prayer with devastating consequences. The difference between praying God's Word right and praying it wrong is not merely a matter of technique—it's a matter of the heart, motive, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding Misguided Prayer

The Bible addresses the concept of praying incorrectly in James 4:3, which states, "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure." This verse cuts to the heart of misguided prayer: it's not always about *what* we pray, but *why* we pray it.

Rick Renner, in his teaching on prayer, explains that the Greek word for "amiss" in James 4:3 is *kakos*, which describes something that is bad or wrong, depicting a person who is asking wrongly, badly, or inappropriately—simply not hitting the mark in their request. Even with the greatest fervor and the most eloquent words, if our prayers are not in agreement with God's will or if they flow from wrong motives,

we are essentially firing spiritual arrows that will never reach their target.

The Danger of Taking Scripture Out of Context

One of the most common ways believers pray God's Word wrong is by pulling verses out of their intended context and applying them to situations God never intended. This is not a new problem—it has plagued the church throughout history.

Imagine someone taking the verse "he went and hanged himself" from Matthew 27:5 about Judas, and then adding Luke 10:37, "Go and do likewise." Both verses are accurately recorded in Scripture, but pulling them together creates a ridiculous and dangerous interpretation. This extreme example illustrates a principle: we cannot randomly grab Scripture verses and expect them to work like magic incantations in prayer.

Consider the case of Isaiah 7:14, which prophesies that "a virgin shall conceive." This was a specific word spoken by God's Spirit to Mary for a unique moment in redemptive history. An unmarried woman today cannot simply claim this verse for herself and expect to conceive while remaining a virgin. That would be absurd, yet many believers make similar mistakes with other Scriptures—perhaps not as extreme, but equally misguided.

Andrew Murray, one of the church's greatest teachers on prayer, understood this principle deeply. He wrote, "The Lord gave the wonderful promise of the free use of His name with the Father in conjunction with doing His works. The disciple who lives only for Jesus' work and kingdom, for His will and honor, will be given the power to appropriate the promise. Anyone grasping the promise only when he wants something very special for himself will be disappointed, because he is making Jesus the servant of his own comfort."

This is the key distinction: Are we servants of Christ's interests, or are we trying to make Christ the servant of our interests?

When Personal Desires Masquerade as Faith

As a pastor, I have dealt with numerous situations where well-meaning believers have shared how they were "believing and confessing" certain things for their lives—some for specific people to marry them, others for people to give them money, and still others for various personal desires. When these things don't materialize—when the person they were confessing to marry marries someone else, when the money doesn't come—they are left confused and disillusioned.

They say, "But I was confessing it! I was naming it and claiming it! I was standing on God's Word!" And that is precisely why criticism of the faith message has emerged. When we claim things out of our own desires rather than from God's direction, we are not exercising biblical faith—we are exercising presumption.

Our true heart desires speak louder to God than our spoken prayers. If our hearts are pursuing worldly things while our lips are quoting Scripture, God hears the disconnect.

The Three Critical Mistakes in Prayer

Based on both Scripture and the experiences I've witnessed in pastoral ministry, there are three primary ways believers pray God's Word wrongly:

1. Praying with Wrong Motives

Even when we pray for the right thing, if we are so fretful and filled with fear and anxiety that we don't ask in faith, but rather cry out to the Lord in fear and anxiety, we are asking from a wrong spirit. Fear doesn't move God—faith does. I learned this lesson personally early in my ministry. There

were times when I would pound the floor while praying, yelling and screaming for God to move, but because I was so filled with fear about the situation, all that effort resulted only in a sore throat. I was praying from fear rather than faith.

The motive behind our prayers matters immensely. Are we seeking God's glory or our own comfort? Are we pursuing His kingdom or building our own empire? Are we asking for something because it aligns with His purposes or because it satisfies our ego?

2. Praying Without Discerning God's Will

Many people make the mistake of trying to pursue fame, fortune, power, position, and prestige by speaking portions of the Word erroneously. It is sad to take the message that saves, delivers, and heals and pervert it to cause a bad report in the world.

First John 5:14 says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." When you know God's will and ask Him to do something in agreement with His will, you can be completely sure that God will hear you and that your request will be positively answered.

The problem arises when we assume we know God's will without truly seeking it. We pick a Scripture that sounds good, claim it for our situation, and expect results—all without ever asking the Holy Spirit if this is what He wants for us in this season.

3. Praying Without the Leading of the Holy Spirit

This is perhaps the most subtle and dangerous mistake. We can pray Scripture. We can pray with seemingly pure motives. We can even pray for things that seem aligned with God's general will. But if the Holy Spirit has not specifically directed us to pray for that particular thing in that particular

way at that particular time, we are not exercising Spirit-directed faith—we are exercising self-directed presumption.

Remember the distinction I made in the previous chapter between *logos* (that which the Spirit has written) and *rhema* (that which is spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit). Both are God's Word, but not every verse of Scripture (*logos*) is meant to be a specific promise (*rhema*) for every person in every situation.

Andrew Murray captured this truth beautifully: "The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that He may be glorified, the richer will be the blessing that prayer will bring to myself." When we make prayer about us rather than about God's glory, we've already missed the mark.

How to Avoid Praying God's Word Wrong

Guard Your Heart and Examine Your Motives

Before you pray any Scripture, ask yourself these honest questions:

- Why do I want this?
- Whose glory am I seeking—mine or God's?
- Am I willing to accept "no" or "wait" as God's answer?
- Does this align with the character of Christ and the principles of Scripture?

As the Psalmist prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

Seek the Spirit's Direction, Not Just the Word's Permission

There is a profound difference between finding a verse that gives you permission to pray for something and receiving a Spirit-directed leading to pray for that thing. The former is mechanical; the latter is relational.

Andrew Murray wrote, "A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life." True prayer begins with a heart that has been revolutionized by God's love, not a mind that has been clever enough to find supporting Scripture for personal desires.

Spurgeon emphasized this when he said, "Let me tell you a little secret: Whenever you cannot understand a text, open your Bible, bend your knee, and pray over that text." We need the Holy Spirit to illuminate Scripture for us, not just our own interpretations.

Understand the Context and Principle

When you pray a Scripture, make sure you understand:

- Who was it originally written to?
- What was the historical and cultural context?
- What is the broader theological principle being taught?
- How does this fit within the whole counsel of Scripture?

This is what it means to "rightly divide" the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). We cannot be "rightly dividing" if we are wrongly applying.

Test Everything Against the Character and Nature of God

Anything God speaks will always agree with His written Word and His revealed character. It will never contradict Scripture or violate the principles and counsel of the Bible. If what you think God is saying to you contradicts what God has already said in His Word, you can be certain it is not God speaking.

As Scripture teaches, there is a right way to pray and a wrong way. We pray rightly when we are obedient to God's commands and stand in right relationship with Him. When we are obedient and want what God wants, we won't pray for selfish or silly things.

Cultivate Humility, Not Presumption

Pride is often at the root of misguided prayer. We think we know better than God. We think we deserve certain things. We think our plans are obviously good, so God should automatically endorse them.

Murray wrote profoundly, "Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you." Effective prayer flows from a humble heart that truly desires God's will above personal preference.

Pray in Faith, Not Fear

There is a crucial difference between praying with faith and praying with fear disguised as faith. Although someone may be asking for the right thing, if they are so consumed with worry and anxiety that they cannot ask in faith but instead cry out in fear, they are asking from a wrong spirit.

True faith rests in God's character & promises. Fear masked as faith tries to manipulate God through religious language and Scripture-quoting to get what we want.

The Devastating Consequences of Wrong Prayer

When we pray God's Word wrongly, several tragic consequences follow:

1. Unanswered Prayer and Spiritual Confusion

When our prayers go unanswered, we begin to question God's faithfulness rather than examining our own hearts and motives. This creates a cycle of doubt and disillusionment.

2. Damage to the Gospel's Reputation

When people see believers "claiming" things that never materialize, it brings reproach upon the name of Christ and causes the watching world to mock our faith. It is sad to take the message that saves, delivers, and heals and pervert it to cause a bad report in the world.

3. Spiritual Immaturity and Stunted Growth

If we are constantly using prayer as a means to get what we want rather than as a means to know God more deeply, we remain spiritual infants who never mature in Christ.

4. Separation from God's True Purpose

The ultimate tragedy is that in pursuing our own desires through misguided prayer, we miss out on the glorious things God actually wants to do in and through our lives.

A Balanced Perspective on Faith and Prayer

Just because some people have done ridiculous things with the faith message doesn't mean we should give up on believing and speaking the Word of God. That would be like refusing to drive a car because some people have accidents. The answer is not to abandon the vehicle but to learn to drive it properly.

As one teacher wisely noted, some people find prayer easy to engage in, but many struggle to pray. Regardless of where you are in your prayer life, there are common mistakes we can all make. The key is to learn from these mistakes and grow in wisdom and discernment.

That which is spoken in line with the Word of God, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, with pure motives and genuine faith, will come to pass for good in our lives. This is not name-it-and-claim-it prosperity theology—this is Spirit-directed faith that honors God and advances His kingdom.

The Path Forward: Praying with Discernment

The answer to praying God's Word wrong is not to stop praying God's Word—it's to pray it rightly. Here's how:

Wait for the Spirit's Direction

Don't rush into claiming promises. Spend time in God's presence. Wait until you sense His peace and leading. Abraham didn't decide on his own to leave Ur. Elijah didn't

decide on his own to declare a drought. God initiated, and they responded.

Pray the Word with Worship

Murray counseled, "Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!" When prayer begins with worship, it's less likely to end in selfish requests.

Submit Your Will to His

Like Jesus in Gethsemane, we should follow the pattern: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This is the model of righteous prayer.

Stay Accountable and Teachable

Surround yourself with mature believers who can help you discern whether you're praying in line with God's will or simply pursuing your own desires. Pride hates accountability, but humility welcomes it.

Focus on God's Glory, Not Your Gain

The primary purpose of prayer is not to get things from God but to get more of God Himself. When His glory becomes our highest aim, we naturally begin to pray for the right things in the right way.

Conclusion:

The Beauty of Spirit-Directed Prayer

There is a vast difference between misguided prayer that tries to manipulate God through Scripture and Spirit-directed prayer that cooperates with God's purposes. One flows from self; the other flows from surrender. One seeks to use God; the other seeks to serve God. One quotes verses as magical formulas; the other embraces promises as divine invitations.

When God directs you to pray something, then you will have faith to pray it. This is Spirit-directed faith. When you have the word of the Lord—confirmed by the Holy Spirit, consistent with Scripture, and accompanied by peace—then you can act with confidence.

Remember the words of James: we have not because we ask not, or because we ask with wrong motives. But when we ask according to His will, with pure hearts and Spirit-led faith, we can be confident that He hears us. And if He hears us, we know that we have what we've asked of Him.

Don't let the mistakes of others—or your own past mistakes—rob you of the power and privilege of praying God's Word effectively. Learn to discern the difference between praying God's Word wrong and praying it right. The difference is not minor; it's the difference between religious activity and genuine communion with God, between human presumption and divine partnership, between empty words and prayers that move heaven and change earth.

As we move forward, let us commit to praying with discernment, humility, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Let us be quick to examine our motives, patient to wait for God's timing, and bold to pray when He directs. This is the path to powerful, effective, God-honoring prayer that brings His kingdom to earth and displays His glory to a watching world.

May we be believers who not only know how to pray God's Word, but who know when, why, and how to pray it under the anointing and direction of the Holy Spirit. This is the prayer life that pleases God and produces lasting fruit for His kingdom.

Will you accept the invitation?

PERSONALIZE THE EPHESIANS PRAYERS

Introduction: The Power of Praying Scripture

In previous chapters, we explored various models and plans for effective prayer. We learned the importance of praying God's Word correctly and avoiding the pitfalls of misguided prayer. Now we turn our attention to one of the most powerful prayer tools available to every believer: the prayers of the Apostle Paul found in the book of Ephesians.

Kenneth Copeland has said that if you want all the "in Him, in Christ, in whom, etc." scriptures to come alive for you, then take the "Ephesians 1 Prayer" and pray it every day. This is not merely good advice—it's a life-transforming practice that countless believers throughout history have discovered leads to spiritual breakthrough and deeper intimacy with God.

John Piper testified, "I love the prayers of the Bible. They shape my own prayers more than anything else. I love the prayers of Paul in Philippians 1:9-11, and Ephesians 1:16-21 and 3:14-19, and Colossians 1:9-12." When spiritual giants like Piper and Copeland emphasize the importance of these prayers, we would be wise to pay attention.

The apostle Paul gives us two powerful prayer models in Ephesians—one in chapter 1 and another in chapter 3. These are prayers that every believer should pray every day. Paul asks God to grant wisdom, revelation, and strength to believers in Ephesus, and the beauty of these prayers is that you can personalize them by substituting "you" with "me" or the names of specific individuals you wish to pray for.

One believer shared, "Praying them at least twice a day (morning and night) and any other time of the day that I think to do it has changed more than I could put on paper in my life,

spiritually and naturally." This testimony echoes what thousands of Christians have discovered: the Ephesians prayers are not just beautiful Scripture passages to read—they are powerful weapons of spiritual warfare and keys to unlock God's purposes in our lives.

Let's take a deep dive into these prayers and explore how we can use them to make our prayer lives more effective and powerful.

The Foundation: Why Pray Scripture?

Before we examine the specific prayers in Ephesians, we must understand why praying Scripture is so vital to our spiritual lives.

If we pray out of our own minds and hearts without the anchor of God's Word, we tend to become self-focused and our prayers shrink to match the limited horizons of our immediate circumstances.

The great prayer warrior E.M. Bounds understood this principle deeply. He wrote, "The word of God is the food by which prayer is nourished and made strong," and "The Word of God is the fulcrum upon which the lever of prayer is placed, and by which things are mightily moved."

Without God's Word as the foundation and fuel for our prayers, we are trying to move mountains with our bare hands instead of with the lever of divine truth.

The early church prayed the Scriptures in Acts 4:24. In fact, they explicitly quote Scriptures." When threats were made against the early believers, they didn't simply pray from their fear or anxiety—they prayed the Word of God back to God. They quoted Psalm 2, reminding themselves and declaring to heaven that God is sovereign over all earthly powers. This is the pattern we must follow.

Scripture-based prayer does several powerful things:

It aligns our hearts with God's heart. When we pray God's own words back to Him, we are guaranteed to be praying in His will. We move from trying to bend God's will to ours, to conforming our will to His.

It builds our faith. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). As we speak Scripture in prayer, we are filling our hearts with faith-building truth.

It defeats the enemy. Satan has no defense against the Word of God wielded in prayer. Jesus Himself used Scripture to defeat the devil's temptations.

It enlarges our vision. Scripture takes us beyond our small concerns to God's vast purposes. As Piper described it, Scripture-based prayer catches us "up into great things, glorious things, global things, eternal things."

It brings clarity and focus. When we don't know what to pray, Scripture gives us language and direction. The Ephesians prayers especially provide a template for the most important spiritual realities we should be seeking.

The Ephesians 1 Prayer: A Prayer for Enlightenment Understanding the Context

Paul begins his first recorded prayer for the Ephesians with gratitude. In Ephesians 1:15-23, he writes:

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the

exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

One teacher explained, "Paul prays for the Ephesians to have an enlightened heart in verse 18. When the heart is referenced in the Word of God, its implication is that the heart is regarded as the center of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of humans." This prayer is not about intellectual knowledge alone—it's about heart transformation.

Paul was essentially saying, "I am praying that your inner man would become stronger and that you would be much bigger on the inside than you are on the outside, that you would be flooded with revelation knowledge and light, and that Christ would stand up in you so when people see you, they see Jesus. When you touch someone, then Jesus has touched them."

The Three Core Requests

The Ephesians 1 prayer contains three specific requests that form the foundation of spiritual maturity:

1. The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Him (v. 17)

According to one Bible teacher, "Wisdom means intelligence. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says this term speaks of the knowledge of diverse matters which belong to man and of supreme intelligence that belongs to God." This is not worldly wisdom

or mere intellectual capacity. Paul is praying for a supernatural unveiling of who God is.

The "spirit of wisdom" means an ongoing unveiling or a continual revelation. The Holy Spirit will give to you the spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that Jesus will become unveiled to you. As one writer noted, "Paul is not referring to abstract knowledge about God, nor is he referring to obtaining mere intellectual or factual information about Him. Paul is referring to knowing Him personally and intimately."

Many people are "in the dark" in their relationship with Jesus Christ. They may have heard about Him, but to them, He is a stained-glass Jesus or a historical Jesus. Many people can quote historical facts, but they don't have a revelation of what Christ did as it relates to their lives.

As a young boy, I went to church and Sunday School, and as a young man I would read the Bible, but I didn't have revelation of what the Word of God was saying. Then one day I heard someone explain salvation to me. The light bulb came on and I understood what it meant to be saved and how to be saved.

A few years after getting saved and being taught more from the Bible, I began to understand that God's Word is true, but every man is a liar (Romans 3:4). I remember discovering I could believe the truth of God's Word and speak it over natural facts and circumstances that were contrary to the Word, and if you stood by the Word, God would change the natural circumstances.

Until the Word becomes revelation to your inner man, as opposed to head knowledge, you won't be changed. This is why Paul prayed that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened.

2. Knowledge of the Hope of His Calling and the Riches of His Glory (v. 18)

To know "the hope of your calling" is to know that you have been called into the family of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have been called into eternity to live with God the Father in heaven. Every person who hears the voice of Jesus Christ and responds to it will hear that calling.

Paul prayed that we would understand "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance" in us. An inheritance is that which someone is given legally from someone who dies. Jesus' death took place at Calvary. Jesus not only died, releasing the inheritance to us, but He arose from the dead. That means He is now the Advocate, the Lawyer, or the Trustee who will ensure that the inheritance gets to the rightful heirs.

Wouldn't it be wonderful in all inheritance cases if the one who died could come back and make sure everyone received what was coming to them? In the natural, the big arguments come in when people can't figure out the intent and purpose of the person who made out the will.

Jesus rose from the dead to make sure we know our inheritance. He sent the Holy Spirit as the earnest deposit of His inheritance to us. Through all eternity, God will continue to unveil the riches of Jesus Christ, for we have only begun to understand the glorious, marvelous redemption that is in Christ.

We have inherited Jesus' name, and we have inherited His life. It's no small thing to have the zoe life of God flowing in our veins! It's no small thing to have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

Every promise in the Bible is a part of our inheritance, and all that we walk upon by faith we will have in our lives.

3. Understanding the Exceeding Greatness of His Power (vv. 19-23)

Paul prayed that we would understand the exceeding greatness of God's power toward us who believe. Paul was saying, "I want you to know how much power has been made available to you. This power is according to the working of His mighty power."

The two aspects of this power are:

1. **Authority**, like a policeman directing traffic has authority because a chief, a mayor and a city system have invested authority in him, with a badge and a uniform signifying that authority. He can stand up in the middle of a road, hold up his hand and cars have to stop. That is authority because of position.
2. **Dunamis** is explosive power, ability and might. As one teacher explained, "The original word for power in this verse is dunamis. The literal meaning of this word, according to Strong's Concordance, is 'miraculous power'." It is one thing to have the authority, but it is another thing to have the awesome power inside of us to speak and see sicknesses and diseases removed.

The power Paul was talking about is the same power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. Some people pray, "God, give me power to resist the devil." Paul is saying, "When you were born again, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead was put inside of you." If you knew the power that was on the inside of you, you wouldn't complain about depression, discouragement, or "the devil did this or that."

Through the years I have made the decision not to speak about negative things or what the devil has done. I don't want to give the devil any airtime. I have had people upset at me. They say, "Come on, be real. There's got to be things going wrong." My response is, "God is doing great things in our lives. Heaven has broken loose upon us. The enemy flees

from us." I choose to say what God says. I don't deny anything that may have happened that's bad; I just realize God's promises are better.

James says if you humble yourself and submit to God, you can expect the devil to flee. Why say anything else when you have the resurrection power of God working inside of you? To say anything else is to contradict the revelation of Jesus on the inside of you.

I'm not saying that we don't have to resist the enemy, for James 4:7 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

If no resistance was needed, James wouldn't have mentioned it. Paul wouldn't have mentioned resisting the fiery darts of the enemy with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit if no resistance to the devil was needed (Ephesians 6:16,17). Peter wouldn't have mentioned the need to be sober and vigilant because the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour if no resistance to the adversary, Satan, was needed (1 Peter 5:8).

Each of these men talk about the devil from the aspect that he has already been defeated and conquered, which he has and which is the view we are to take, but they do say that we must resist the devil.

Paul continues the Ephesians 1 prayer: "And He [God the Father] put all things under His [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body..." (vv. 22,23). If Jesus has had all things put under His feet and you are part of the Body of Christ, then the principalities and powers of the devil are under your feet!

The bottom line is, "Did Jesus do enough? Did His blood pay for all of your sins? Did He really defeat the devil, or is that yet to happen?" Colossians 2:15 says Jesus disarmed the devil of his authority, power, might, and dominion. When Jesus

was raised from the dead, He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18 KJV).

In Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus said: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

If Jesus has all authority and you are in His Body—the Body of Christ—then Paul was saying, "I am praying that you will get a revelation of what Jesus has already done for you." We aren't going to a victory, but we are proceeding from a victory! It has already been won. We are walking out a victory that has already been accomplished! We are enforcing Satan's defeat, which has already been accomplished. That's why we must keep our words in line with God's Word.

At the heart of Paul's prayer, he was saying, "I pray that you really know Jesus, not with denominational eyeglasses, not with traditions of men, not with the elements of the world, but that you would know Him as the resurrected King!"

How to Personalize the Ephesians 1 Prayer

When we personalize God's Word in our prayers, we will experience His phenomenal power and presence not only in our lives, but also in the lives of those we pray for. We will experience more boldness and confidence in our praying as we verbalize God's Word.

Your personalized Ephesians 1 prayer could go something like this:

*Thank You, Father, that because **I** am in Christ Jesus as a born-again believer, You have given **me** a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You.*

*The eyes of **my** understanding are being enlightened that **I** may know the hope of Your calling in **my** life and*

*the riches of the glory of Your inheritance for **me**. Thank You, Father, for enlightening **my** understanding to the exceeding greatness of Your power toward **me**, according to the working of Your mighty power, which You worked in Christ when You raised Him from the dead and seated Him at Your right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, in this age as well as in that which is to come.*

Thank You, Father, that You put all things under Jesus' feet and made Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is Your Body.

*Holy Spirit, reveal Jesus Christ in **me**. Bring to **my** remembrance everything Jesus said. Strengthen **me** in my inner man, that there would be no weakness on the inside of me, no character flaws, no place for the enemy, no depression, no discouragement, no fear, no doubt, no lust, no anger; but that love, faith, joy and peace would rule in **my** inner man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*

I want to encourage you to pray this prayer every day. Ephesians 1:3 says we have already been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." In other words, everything we will ever need pertaining to this life and the life to come has already been provided through Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve committed sin in the Garden of Eden, man lost the position, righteousness, eternal life, and authority he once had, but in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He regained what was lost. He redeemed us, so from a natural standpoint in creation and from a supernatural standpoint in the spiritual realm, through the resurrection, everything we need naturally and spiritually has already been provided for us in Jesus Christ.

No wonder Paul asked the Father to give us "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Ephesians 1:17), because "in Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). In Christ we have the fullness of life.

Paul's cry was that we would understand Jesus Christ, and it should be our heart's cry that we become like Jesus.

Praying for Others

One mother shared how she prays this prayer for her family:

"God, we thank You for our children and pray for them just like Paul did in Ephesians. We ask God because You are such an awesome Father, to give our families spiritual wisdom and insight so we can grow in our knowledge of You. I pray that our hearts will be flooded with light. I pray that our children's hearts will be flooded with light so they can understand the confident hope You have given them."

You can personalize this prayer for specific people in your life:

*Father, I pray for **[name]** that You would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Open the eyes of their understanding that they may know the hope of Your calling, the riches of Your inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of Your power that is available to them as believers. Let them know experientially the same power that raised Christ from the dead is working in them.*

When praying for grandchildren or children, you might pray: "I ask you, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give **[name]** spiritual wisdom and understanding to grow in his/her love for you. I pray that the eyes of **[name]** heart will be flooded with light so that he/she can know the hope and glorious future you want to share with him/her."

The Ephesians 3 Prayer: A Prayer for Empowerment

Understanding the Context

Victory in life is absolute if we appropriate the provision Jesus has already made for us. Effective prayer is simply agreeing with God. If you find out what God's will is in His Word and you agree with it and ask for it to be done, you can be assured God will release the power to bring it to pass, because He initiated it. His plans are blessed.

The Ephesians 3 prayer is found in verses 14-21:

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

The Family Name

Who has the family name? Jesus has the family name, and the whole family of God in heaven and earth has been named after Him. The word *Christian* means "little Christ." If you call yourself a Christian, you are calling yourself "one like Jesus Christ," because you have His life and nature in you and you are following Him.

We are part of a worldwide Body, or family, in heaven and in earth. The believers who have already died are just as real, alive, active, and a whole lot more alert and turned on than we are, because they see Jesus face to face. That's why grieving over a loved one who has gone on to glory is only a

temporary thing for a believer. We're not to sorrow as the world sorrows, because we have a promise of resurrection.

That doesn't mean you won't miss a person, but it's the same as if someone says, "I am moving to Arizona." You may cry a tear over their leaving, but you know you will see them again. You will see loved ones again who have gone to heaven because we are part of the same family.

Strengthening the Inner Man

Paul continues: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

The inner man of people who are born again but who don't feed on the Word, don't pray, and don't obey the Word, is very weak. They know Christ and they know what to do and how to do it, but they are incapable of doing it because their inner man is so weak.

Jesus said in John 3:7, "You must be born again." When you are born again, like a newborn baby in the natural, you aren't born fully mature. You are born as a baby. Peter said, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The writer of Hebrews talked about milk and solid food or strong meat in the believer's life: "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:13,14).

Jesus said to His disciples when they encouraged Him to eat after His confrontation with the woman at the well: "I have food to eat of which you do not know... My food is to do the

will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:32,34).

"Strong meat," as the King James Version says, is to do the will of God. Many people think strong meat is some strange revelation that only a few sophisticated intellectuals can comprehend. "Strong meat" isn't sitting around listening to some new revelation. It is to do God's will as Jesus said. Jesus was a soul-winner. He led the woman at the well who was drawing natural water to a place where she could receive living water! Being a soul-winner is "strong meat."

How We Are Strengthened

Paul prayed that we would "be strengthened with might through His [God's] Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). We are strengthened in several specific ways. Here are 5 key ways:

1. By the Word of God

We are strengthened in the inner man by the milk, the bread and the meat of God's Word. E.M. Bounds wrote, "Paul lived on his knees, that the Ephesian Church might measure the heights, breadths, and depths of an unmeasurable saintliness, and 'be filled with all the fullness of God.'" The foundation of that filling is the Word.

2. By Praying in the Holy Spirit

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20). Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:4, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...." To edify means "to build up or strengthen."

3. By Doing What Is Right

An inner character development takes place when we do what is right, while the inner man of people who do what is wrong and violate their conscience is weakened.

4. By Walking in Love

Love strengthens a person. People who are cruel, unmerciful, and unforgiving have a weak inner man because where envy and strife exist, there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:16). When you walk in love and refuse strife, bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness, your inner man will be strengthened.

Paul was saying, "I pray that you will be strengthened in your inner man so that you will refuse evil and be strong enough to help someone else." The strong are to bear the burdens of the weak (Romans 15:1). Some people say they have arrived at a certain place where all of their needs are met. They are blessed, happy and going through life not realizing that when they reach a point where they are blessed, they have an obligation to bless someone else. When we are strong, we have an obligation to strengthen others.

We are to become givers, not takers, and set a priority in our lives: "I am going to be a giver. I will be a stream, a conduit, a vehicle, a vessel for the glory, power, goodness, and graciousness of God to flow through."

5. By Stretching Our Faith

When you have to stretch your faith, your inner man is strengthened. In our church, we have had to stretch our faith many times as God has helped us to grow. We have had to buy land and build buildings. We have had to start different areas of ministries as God led us to expand our outreach. Each time it has taken faith. As we have prayed and believed God we have grown spiritually, we have become stronger in our faith.

In the natural, when you stretch your muscles with weights and you continue to increase the weights, your muscles will become stronger.

The reward of faithfulness is more responsibility. As you are given more responsibility, your faith muscles and your inner

man will be renewed and strengthened. One man said, "I'm a thousand times bigger on the inside than I am on the outside."

Don't ever judge a person by their outward appearance! A little child can have his inner man so strong in the Word that his prayers are answered immediately. A frail little lady of 85 pounds who knows how to pray and intercede can bring heaven and earth together. Some people who are big hulks on the outside are shriveled up on the inside with no love, joy, or peace.

When you consider someone for marriage, judge the inward person. Are they people of character? Is their spirit strong? Are they full of love, faith and power? When prayer is needed, do they go get someone else, or are they ready to pray? When it comes time to worship, do they have their hands in their pockets counting squares on the ceiling?

The person who is strong in his or her spirit is a strong worshipper. Your inward man will affect your outer countenance. Proverbs 18:14 says, "Who can bear a broken spirit?" The strength of a man's spirit will sustain him in an attack. If you are strong on the inside, it doesn't matter what comes on the outside. You can stand up against it.

That's why you should feed your inner man. Some people feed their outer man but starve their inner man. You ought to fast the outer man and overload the inner man with the Word of God! Take an overdose of the Word!

Luke 21:34 (NKJV) says: "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly."

This is talking about living a life "in excess," particularly in relationship to lust, food, and drink. Their stomach has

become their god. To bring the body under control, the inner man needs to be strengthened and the mind renewed.

Second Corinthians 10:5 (KJV) says we can bring our thoughts under control: "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

It's an effort to build your inner man strong enough that you listen to the voice on the inside instead of the voice on the outside. The flesh will always try to go in the opposite direction of your spirit, but if your mind is renewed with the Word of God, you will tell your body what it is going to do.

Fasting is good for you, not only so you can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit more clearly, but also because it is a time when you say, "Body, you are not going to eat." The body says, "I am, too. You're not going to starve me." But you say, "No, body, you are under the subjection of the Holy Spirit. You are under subjection to the Word and under my mind. I have a born-again spirit, a renewed mind and a submitted body."

Many people struggle to walk in victory because their spirit man is not strong. When you continually hear, study, and meditate upon the Word, you've got a tiger in your tank as far as your spirit man being built up and strengthened! Instead of a weak kitten purring, a roar is coming, because the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is standing up on the inside of you!

Rooted and Grounded in Love

The Holy Spirit says, "I pray that Christ would dwell in your hearts by faith, that you would be rooted and grounded in love, that you would be able to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of Christ's love and that you may be filled with all the knowledge of God."

When you are strong on the inside, you can walk in love and forgiveness. People who can't forgive an offense that has been done to them are not strong enough in their inner man. A person who is strong on the inside is quick to say, "I forgive you" when an offense comes.

Your spirit can become so strong that you, like Stephen, will cry out to the Father when an offense comes, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (Acts 7:60).

How to Personalize the Ephesians 3 Prayer

Pray Ephesians 3 on a daily basis for others as well as for yourself. Your Ephesians 3 prayer could go something like this:

I bow my knees to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

*Thank You, Father, for granting **me**, according to the riches of Your glory, to be strengthened with might through Your Spirit in my inner man.*

*Lord Jesus, You dwell in **my** heart through faith. Being rooted and grounded in love, **I** am able to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of the Father's love, so **I** may be filled with His fullness.*

*I pray that You would strengthen **my** inner man today. Remove all weakness, all character flaws, all places where the enemy could gain a foothold. Fill **me** with Your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

*Let Christ be fully formed in **me**. Let **me** walk in such a way that when people see **me**, they see Jesus. When **I** speak, let them hear the wisdom and love of Christ. When **I** act, let them see the power and compassion of the King.*

*Root **me** deeply in Your love so that no offense can move **me**, no trial can shake **me**, and no circumstance can separate **me** from the love of Christ.*

10 Practical Guidelines for Personalizing the Ephesians Prayers

1. Make It a Daily Discipline

One believer testified, "Print these out, put them in your bible or prayer journal and pray them at least twice a day for a few months or more and you will be blessed beyond measure." This is not a one-time exercise. The power comes through consistent, repeated praying of these prayers until they become part of your spiritual DNA.

E.M. Bounds wrote, "No man can do a great and enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer, and no man can be a man of prayer who does not give much time to praying." The Ephesians prayers deserve significant time in your prayer life. Consider making these prayers part of your morning routine.

2. Pray Slowly and Thoughtfully

Don't rush through these prayers as if they were a religious checklist to complete. Bounds cautioned, "Short devotions are the bane of deep piety. Calmness, grasp, strength, are never the companions of hurry."

Pause on each phrase. Let the Holy Spirit illuminate what you're praying. Ask yourself:

- What does it mean that God wants to give me wisdom and revelation?
- What would it look like for the eyes of my understanding to be truly enlightened?
- Do I really believe the same power that raised Christ from the dead is in me?
- Am I strong in my inner man, or do I need strengthening today?

Plan to pray. Set a time to pray. Choose a text and pray over it."

3. Meditate on Each Petition

One pastor explained his approach: "I go phrase by phrase through these prayers and meditate on what each phrase means. Then I apply it to my life specifically. For example, when I pray for 'the spirit of wisdom and revelation,' I think about specific areas where I need God's wisdom—decisions I'm facing, relationships I'm navigating, ministry opportunities before me."

This is the difference between merely reciting prayers and truly praying them. Meditation allows the truth to sink from your head to your heart.

4. Insert Specific Names and Situations

While these prayers work powerfully when personalized for yourself, they become even more potent when you pray them for others. Keep a list of people you're interceding for and systematically pray these prayers over them.

For children: *"Father, I pray for [child's name] that You would strengthen their inner man with might through Your Spirit. Protect them from depression, discouragement, fear, and doubt. Fill them with Your love, faith, joy, and peace."*

For your spouse: *"Lord, I pray that [spouse's name] would have the eyes of their understanding enlightened to know the hope of Your calling on their life and the exceeding greatness of Your power available to them."*

For your pastor or spiritual leaders: *"Father, grant [pastor's name] the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Strengthen them in their inner man so they can bear the weight of ministry and lead Your people with Your wisdom and power."*

For missionaries and those in ministry: *"Lord, I pray for [missionary's name] that they would comprehend the width, length, depth, and height of Your love. Root and ground them in that love so deeply that no hardship can shake them."*

For the sick: *"Father, I thank You that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in [person's name]. I pray this resurrection power would bring healing to their body and strength to their spirit."*

For the lost: *"God, I pray that You would open the eyes of [person's name]'s understanding. Give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know You. Flood their heart with light that they may see the truth of the gospel."*

5. Combine with Worship and Thanksgiving

Paul's prayers don't begin with requests—they begin with gratitude and worship. Notice how the Ephesians 1 prayer starts: "I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."

Before you launch into your petitions, take time to worship God for who He is. Thank Him for what He has already done. This posture of gratitude and worship prepares your heart to receive from Him.

I believe our worship creates the atmosphere in which faith thrives. When we worship God for His character and His faithfulness, we position ourselves to believe Him for greater things.

6. Declare the Truth Over Your Circumstances

These prayers aren't just about asking God for things—they're about declaring what is already true in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 reminds us that we have already been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

When you pray, "Thank You, Father, that You have given me a spirit of wisdom and revelation," you're not begging for something you don't have. You're acknowledging and activating what you've already been given.

This is why Paul prayed that our understanding would be "enlightened"—not that we would receive something new, but that we would see what we already possess in Christ.

7. Pray in Faith, Not Fear

Remember the distinction we made in earlier chapters about praying in faith versus praying in fear. When you pray the Ephesians prayers, pray them with confidence that God hears you and will answer according to His will.

First John 5:14-15 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

Since these prayers are directly from Scripture, you can be absolutely certain they are in God's will. Pray them with boldness and expectation.

8. Keep a Prayer Journal

Consider recording your prayers and God's answers. Write out your personalized version of the Ephesians prayers. Date them. Then watch as God moves in response to your prayers.

Months or years later, you'll be able to look back and see how God has answered. You'll see how your understanding has been enlightened, how you've grown in spiritual strength, how you've come to comprehend more of God's love.

One woman in our church shared, "I started praying the Ephesians prayers for my teenage son who was rebelling against God. I wrote them out in my journal every day for two years. Looking back now, I can see exactly how God

answered every single petition. My son is now serving in ministry, and the transformation is nothing short of miraculous."

9. Pray with Expectation

Don't pray these prayers mechanically, out of mere duty. Pray them with genuine expectation that God will move. Expect your understanding to be enlightened. Expect your inner man to be strengthened. Expect to experience God's love in deeper ways.

James 1:6-7 warns, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."

When you pray the Ephesians prayers, believe that God is doing what His Word says He will do. Trust that the Holy Spirit is working in you and in those you're praying for.

10. Allow the Prayers to Transform Your Perspective

As you pray these prayers regularly, they will begin to reshape how you see yourself, your circumstances, and your relationship with God.

You'll start seeing yourself as someone who has access to resurrection power, not as a helpless victim of circumstances.

You'll start seeing challenges as opportunities to exercise the authority you have in Christ, not as insurmountable obstacles.

You'll start seeing other believers as part of the same family—the family of God—not as competitors or strangers.

You'll start seeing your life as part of God's grand purposes, not as a random series of events.

This transformation of perspective is part of having "the eyes of your understanding enlightened." It's what happens when you consistently pray God's Word.

5 Specific Applications for Different Seasons of Life

1. In Times of Confusion or Decision-Making

Focus especially on praying for "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." When you don't know which direction to take, pray:

"Father, I need Your wisdom. Give me revelation knowledge about Your will for this situation. Enlighten the eyes of my understanding that I may see clearly what You want me to do. Remove all confusion and bring clarity by Your Spirit."

2. In Times of Weakness or Exhaustion

Concentrate on the Ephesians 3 prayer about being "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." Pray:

"Lord, my inner man is weak. I'm exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually. According to the riches of Your glory, strengthen me with might through Your Spirit. Renew my inner man. Give me supernatural strength that goes beyond my natural capacity."

3. In Times of Spiritual Warfare

Emphasize the portions about God's power and Christ's victory over all principalities and powers. Pray:

"Father, I thank You that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is working in me. I thank You that all things have been put under Jesus' feet, and because I'm in His Body, they're under my feet too. I resist the enemy in the name of Jesus, knowing that he has already been defeated."

4. In Times of Feeling Unloved or Rejected

Focus on being "rooted and grounded in love" and comprehending the dimensions of Christ's love. Pray:

"Father, root me and ground me deeply in Your love. Let me comprehend how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ for me. Fill me with the fullness of God. Let Your love drive out all fear, all insecurity, all feelings of rejection. Flood my heart with the revelation that I am deeply, completely, and eternally loved by You."

5. In Times of Ministry or Service

Pray for strength to serve others from your inner strength, not from mere human effort. Pray:

"Lord, strengthen my inner man so that I can bear the burdens of others. Let me be a conduit of Your grace, power, and love. Let Christ dwell richly in my heart by faith so that when people encounter me, they encounter You."

The Compounding Effect of Consistent Prayer

One of the most remarkable things about praying the Ephesians prayers daily is the compounding effect it has over time. Just as compound interest grows exponentially in a savings account, consistent prayer produces exponential spiritual growth.

E.M. Bounds understood this principle. He wrote, "The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day."

Another believer shared, "For the first month of praying these prayers, I didn't notice much change. But I kept at it. By month three, I started having breakthroughs in my

understanding of Scripture. By month six, I noticed I was stronger in resisting temptation. By the end of the first year, I realized I had become a completely different person on the inside. My inner man had grown so much stronger that circumstances that used to devastate me barely affected me."

This is the power of consistent, faith-filled prayer based on God's Word. The results may not always be immediate, but they are always certain.

Common Obstacles and How to Overcome Them

1. "I Don't Have Time"

This is the most common objection to daily prayer. But as Charles Spurgeon said, "Sometimes we think we are too busy to pray. That is a great mistake, for praying is a saving of time."

Start with just five minutes. You can pray through both Ephesians prayers in five minutes if you're focused. Then gradually increase the time as you experience the fruit of these prayers.

Remember: you're never too busy for what you prioritize. If prayer isn't happening, it's not a time problem—it's a priority problem.

2. "I Feel Like I'm Just Repeating Words"

If you feel like you're just going through the motions, stop and ask yourself why. Are you rushing? Are you distracted? Are you praying out of duty rather than desire?

Slow down. Engage your heart, not just your lips. Ask the Holy Spirit to make the words come alive to you. Meditate on what you're praying.

3. "I Don't Understand All the Theological Terms"

You don't have to be a theologian to pray these prayers effectively. But do take time to study them. Use a Bible commentary or a study Bible to understand what terms like "principalities and powers," "exceeding greatness of His power," and "filled with all the fullness of God" mean.

As you grow in understanding, your prayers will deepen. But don't let lack of perfect understanding stop you from praying. Even praying with simple faith releases God's power.

4. "I Don't See Results"

Sometimes God's work in answer to prayer is subtle and progressive rather than sudden and dramatic. The fact that you don't see immediate, visible results doesn't mean God isn't working.

Remember that Paul's prayers focus largely on internal spiritual realities—wisdom, revelation, understanding, inner strength, comprehension of God's love. These aren't always visible from the outside, but they produce lasting transformation from the inside out.

Keep praying. Keep believing. Keep expecting. God's Word never returns void.

The Ultimate Goal: Christ Formed in You

At the heart of both Ephesians prayers is a singular goal: that Christ would be fully formed in you and fully revealed through you.

Paul prayed that we would know Christ—not just know about Him, but truly know Him in an intimate, experiential way.

He prayed that we would be strengthened in our inner man—not so we could boast in our strength, but so Christ could dwell in us richly and use us powerfully.

He prayed that we would comprehend God's love—not just intellectually grasp it, but be so immersed in it that it overflows from us to others.

He prayed that we would be filled with all the fullness of God—an almost incomprehensible petition that God's very nature would fill every part of our being.

This is what it means to be a Christian, a "little Christ." It means being so transformed by the indwelling presence of Jesus that our lives become living demonstrations of His reality.

When we pray the Ephesians prayers consistently and faithfully, we are cooperating with God's ultimate purpose for our lives: to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

Conclusion: A Lifestyle of Biblical Prayer

The Ephesians prayers are not just formulas to recite—they are invitations into a lifestyle of biblical prayer that transforms us from the inside out.

When you make these prayers a daily discipline, you are aligning your heart with God's heart, your desires with His desires, your prayers with His purposes. You are asking for the very things God most wants to give you.

You are moving beyond surface-level, circumstantial prayer into deep, transformational prayer that addresses the core issues of spiritual life: knowing God, understanding your inheritance in Christ, experiencing His power, and being filled with His love.

When you pray the Ephesians prayers for yourself, your family, your church, and the world, you are releasing spiritual power that will outlive you. You are participating in God's eternal purposes. You are partnering with the Holy Spirit to see Christ formed in yourself and others.

This is the gift that the Ephesians prayers offer us—a way to pray that is saturated with Biblical truth, aligned with God's will, and powerful in its effects.

I encourage you to print out a personalized versions of these prayers. Put them in your Bible or prayer journal. Set aside time morning and evening to pray them. Pray them for yourself, for your loved ones, for your church, for the world.

Pray them in faith, knowing that God hears and answers prayers that align with His Word. Pray them with expectation, believing that God will do exceedingly abundantly above all you ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

And watch as God transforms you from the inside out, strengthening your inner man, enlightening your understanding, and filling you with the fullness of His love.

Paul concluded his Ephesians 3 prayer with a doxology that should be our heart's cry as well: *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:20-21).

May these prayers become not just words you recite, but realities you live. May you become a person who is bigger on the inside than on the outside, whose inner man is strong in the Lord, who walks in the revelation of God's love, and through whom Christ is powerfully displayed to a watching world.

This is the promise and the potential of personalizing the Ephesians prayers. This is the invitation God extends to every believer who will take Him at His Word and pray with faith and expectation.

HOW TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS IN PRAYER

While praying God's Word is the key to praying prayers that get results, and following a plan of prayer helps us stay consistent and disciplined, there is one divine element that unlocks heaven itself — *the name of Jesus*.

Jesus told His disciples that soon they would no longer come to Him directly with their requests because He was about to go to the cross and return to the Father. Up to that point, whenever they had a need, they simply went to Jesus and asked. But now, Jesus introduces them to a whole new level of prayer. He said, "*Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you*" (John 15:16; 16:23, 26). With those words, Jesus handed them — and us — the authority to use His name in prayer.

Praying in the name of Jesus isn't a magic formula or a ritual phrase we tack on at the end of our prayers. It's not about saying the right words; it's about standing in the right relationship. When we pray in His name, we are coming before God on the basis of who *He* is, not who *we* are. It's a declaration of faith, a statement of authority, and a reminder of our covenant connection with God through Christ.

In this chapter, we will discover what it truly means to pray in the name of Jesus — why that name carries such power, how Jesus received it, and why every knee will one day bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. When you understand the power of His name and how to use it in prayer, your prayer life will take on a whole new dimension of confidence, faith, and effectiveness.

The Name Above All Names

The name of Jesus is the name above all names. No other name is higher than the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is

your key to heaven's storehouse. It is the key that unlocks all the blessings of God.

When you pray in Jesus' Name, you immediately get God's attention. The power backing the Name of Jesus is the power of Almighty God Himself. This is not some mystical formula or religious incantation—it is the exercise of delegated authority given to every believer who walks in proper relationship with Christ.

The privilege to use the name of Jesus in prayer comes out of a proper relationship with Him. We are to speak in His name as His instrument in response to His directives. This is not about manipulating God through a magic word—it's about operating in the authority He has given us as His representatives on earth.

Jesus' Promise: Greater Works Through His Name

Before we explore how to properly use Jesus' name in prayer, we must understand the extraordinary promise He made to His disciples—a promise that extends to every believer today.

Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

I believe one of those greater works today is that we have the privilege to preach Jesus Christ and see people born again. Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, calmed the storms, raised the dead, caused maimed limbs to grow out and withered hands and paralytics to be healed and brought deliverance to the demon-possessed and the mentally deranged.

But notice what Jesus immediately says after this remarkable promise. In speaking to those who were in relationship with Him, Jesus said: "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the

Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

The "greater works" are directly connected to praying in Jesus' name. The power is not in us—it's in His name and in our proper use of that name through faith and relationship.

One writer beautifully captured this truth: "The name of Jesus is the gateway through which true prayers must enter heaven. His name is the 'pass key' that opens heaven's account."

Authority Is Based on Being Under Authority

I believe people have flippantly used the name of Jesus without having a proper relationship with Him. What happened to the seven sons of Sceva is a sobering example of this.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also, there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:13-16)

Apparently the seven sons of Sceva had seen or heard of miracles as a result of using the name of Jesus, and they said, "Let's try it." They "tried" using Jesus' name with a man who had an evil spirit.

The key to the defeat of the seven sons of Sceva by one man possessed of a devil was: They used the right formula, they used the right words, but they were not "in" the name of Jesus, meaning, personally, they weren't in relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of having no viable relationship with

Jesus, they were literally using the name of Jesus in vain. To them, the name of Jesus was merely a catch word.

As one teacher explained: "These seven men attempted to misuse the power in the name of Jesus for their own gain, but we serve a God who will not be manipulated and cannot be fooled". The demon mocked them because it knew they had no real authority—they were merely repeating words without the relationship that gives those words power.

If you are in the name of Jesus, the devil knows who you are. If you're not in His name, he also knows who you are. The devil knew that the seven sons of Sceva didn't have the authority that Paul had in the name of Jesus.

Authority is based on being under authority. This is a fundamental spiritual principle that we must grasp if we want to pray effectively in Jesus' name.

When the Roman centurion came to Jesus to seek healing for his servant, he demonstrated this principle perfectly:

"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" (Matthew 8:6-10)

How did the Roman centurion have what Jesus called "great faith"? He had it because he was under authority. He had been given authority, and he understood authority.

If you understand that God has authority and you submit to His authority, then you will receive the delegated authority

Jesus has given you as a believer. The seven sons of Sceva were not in the name of Jesus. They had no authority in Jesus' name because they weren't under His authority.

Abiding in the Word: The Foundation of Using His Name

To abide in Jesus Christ is to abide in God's Word. John 15:7 puts this scriptural principle in an even clearer light: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. "To be in the name of Jesus is to be in the Word of God. According to Psalm 138:2, God's Word is magnified above His name.

If you are going to relate to the name of Jesus, you have to be identified with the Word of God—abiding in it, dwelling in it, walking in it, submitting to it, and committed to obeying all of it. Some people want to obey only the parts which please them.

I have met and talked with many people who will embrace the promises of God's love and goodness, and praise God for all His promises, but when it comes to fully surrendering their lives and will to God they resist it.

We must accept all of God's Word, not just parts of it. We're talking about being in the name. We're talking about being immersed and submitted to all of God's Word. Commit to the light that you have. Submit to what you understand of the Lord. Then, as you grow in Him, you should make deeper commitments.

If you are delighting in the Lord, that means you are delighting in the Word of God. If you are feasting in God's Word, then you will have right desires that are in agreement with the Word. You will be able to discern and divide. The Word divides between the soul and the spirit, and you will be able to see whether a desire is soulish and selfish—out of your mind and emotions—or out of your spirit which is dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 119:130 (AMP) says of God's Word: "The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple."

The entrance of God's Word into your mind and heart brings light. It divides so that you can ask anything in the name of Jesus. When you are hooked into the name of Jesus, you are abiding in the Word of God, and you have surrendered your life to the Lord trusting Him in every area of your life.

Praying for Fruit That Will Remain

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).

Jesus is speaking of the authority in His name. The fruit He desires is answered prayer. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

In John 15:16 (KJV) Jesus said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...."

We are to bear many kinds of fruit. The fruit that will remain is fruit that is birthed by prayer in the name of Jesus. What you bring forth by your own abilities, you can take credit for, but if you have asked for it in Jesus' name, then the Father will be glorified when the prayer is answered, such as with souls being saved.

In John 16:23-24, Jesus said: "And in that day, you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

Think of it. Jesus, the Son of God, walked with the disciples every day. Anything they had need of, they could ask for. When there wasn't anything to feed the multitude, Jesus took a little boy's sack lunch and fed 5,000 with it. When there was a storm and the disciples were about to sink, Jesus stopped it with the words of His mouth. Whatever they needed, He was there to provide it.

In these verses, Jesus was telling the disciples that He was going to leave them, but He assured them that He would send the Comforter who would guide them into all truth. Jesus would give them His name to use after He was crucified, resurrected, and ascended to the Father. With His name, the disciples could go directly into the Throne Room of the Father.

Today, we can go directly into the presence of the Father, too, simply by using the name of Jesus.

Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Fullness of joy comes when you receive answers to prayer. When Greg came to Christ, we had joy unspeakable and full of glory! We had been praying to the Father in the name of Jesus on Greg's behalf.

How Jesus Got His Name

Understanding how Jesus received His name helps us appreciate the power and authority it carries. Jesus got His name in three ways: obedience, resurrection and inheritance.

First: Jesus Received His Name by Obedience

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the

death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

Every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord, whether in this life or in the next, whether in heaven or in hell. The best time to do it is in this life through salvation—accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Notice the progression: Jesus humbled Himself in obedience, even to death on a cross. *Therefore* God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above every name. The name was earned through perfect obedience.

Second: Jesus Got His Name by the Resurrection from the Dead

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:19-23)

The name of Jesus is above everything that has a name. It is above sickness and disease, poverty and lack and anything else that has a name!

One teacher explained: "The power of Jesus' name is the power of God. It doesn't matter how long or how short you've known Jesus for. The power doesn't come from you. It comes from heaven, and through Jesus, you have access to all the authority and power you will ever need."

Third: Jesus Got His Name Through Inheritance

"He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). That means the name of Jesus is more excellent than the angels, any human being, or any demon spirit. Just as you got your name from your parents, Jesus inherited His name, a royal name, from His Father.

Scripture tells us: "In Christ 'all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form' (Colossians 2:9). Jesus is 'the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being' (Hebrews 1:3)."

Power of Attorney in Jesus' Name

You and I, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been given the power of attorney in Jesus' name. In legal terminology, we have been given authority to act for Jesus Christ by using His name.

Jesus said of His followers, which includes you and me: "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

Jesus was saying, "Everything I have been doing, you will do." It's called, "Carry on business as usual in My name."

If you are going to go somewhere and you want business to go on as usual, you can confer upon another person the right to sign checks, enter into contracts, receive goods, negotiate business and carry on whatever needs to be done, if you specify it in a legal document. When you are gone, your name can be used by the designated person to whom you have given the legal power of attorney.

Jesus was saying, "While I'm gone, you take My name and heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils. Demonstrate My authority. When you are vitally linked

into My name, you are abiding in the Word, you have submitted your life and surrendered it under My authority, then whatever you ask the Father in My name, I will do it. You will be acting in My stead."

The power of attorney is legalized spiritually in us when Jesus abides in us through the Person of the Holy Spirit. We can't just take His name. We are in His name. We have wrapped our lives in His name. We have surrendered and submitted to His name.

Therefore, when we take the name of Jesus and lay hands on someone in that name, we break the power of homosexuality, drug addiction, immorality, alcoholism, uncleanness, perversion, and any other form of evil.

God is saying, "I will use My power to bring to pass the words that you speak when you are operating in My will in accordance with My Word, in Jesus' name."

What Does It Mean to Pray in Jesus' Name?

Andrew Murray wrote extensively about this vital topic. He asked, "What does it mean to do a thing in the name of another? It is to come with his power and authority, as his representative and substitute. Using another's name always presupposes a common interest."

Murray continued: "No one would give another the free use of his name without first being assured that his honor and interests were as safe with that other person as with himself. What does it mean when Jesus gives us power over His Name-the free use of it-with the assurance that whatever we ask in it will be given to us?"

This is remarkable when you think about it. Jesus could not give us unlimited access to His name if He did not completely trust us with His interests and know that His honor would be safe in our hands. Yet He has done exactly that for every believer who walks in proper relationship with Him.

When we pray in Jesus' name, we are "praying with His authority (Luke 10:19) and asking God the Father to act upon our prayers because we come by faith in the name of His Son, Jesus. Praying in Jesus' name means praying in line with Jesus' character and His will."

This is not a blank check to ask for anything our selfish hearts desire. Praying in Jesus' name means "to pray in submission and to pray with authority." These two concepts—submission and authority—work together, not against each other.

When we pray in the name of Jesus, "we communicate our requests to God, trusting that he answers and gives us what is best for us." We submit to God's will while simultaneously exercising the authority He has given us.

However, some have mistakenly believed that this authority means that God is somehow obligated to give us whatever we want, as long as we use a phrase with some form of "in Jesus' name." This is a dangerous misunderstanding.

Rather, the phrase "in the name of Jesus" is about "aligning hopes, faith, and life with Jesus' character, authority, and will. We pray with a heart inclined towards understanding, seeking, and submitting to God's will."

Practical Guidelines for Using Jesus' Name in Prayer

1. Understand the Relationship Requirement

You cannot effectively use Jesus' name in prayer if you are not in proper relationship with Him. This means:

- You must be born again, having received Jesus as your Lord and Savior
- You must be submitted to His authority in your life
- You must be abiding in His Word
- You must be walking in obedience to what He has revealed to you

- You must be living under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit

One ministry explains: "When you call upon someone's name, you are placing a demand on their ability. To know how much confidence you can place in a name, you must be able to measure the power behind it."

2. Align Your Prayers with God's Will

Scripture is clear: "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he listens to us" (1 John 5:14).

Before you pray in Jesus' name, ask yourself:

- Does this request align with God's Word?
- Does it align with God's character?
- Does it promote God's kingdom and glory?
- Am I seeking God's will or my own desires?

3. Come with Faith, Not Presumption

There is a difference between faith and presumption. Faith trusts God's character and promises. Presumption tries to manipulate God to do what we want.

When you believe the love God has for you, you'll begin to realize you have as much right to use the Name of Jesus as anyone else. But this right must be exercised with humility and reverence, not with arrogance or presumption.

This is faith in action—not demanding, but confidently asking in the authority of Jesus' name.

4. Live in the Name Before You Pray in the Name

Andrew Murray emphasized this repeatedly. He wrote: "Everything depends on my own relationship to the Name. The power it has on my life is the power it will have in my prayers. There is more than one expression in Scripture which can make this clear. 'Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus' is the counterpart of 'Ask all.' To do all and ask all in His Name go together."

Murray continued: "'We shall walk in the Name of our God' means the power of the Name must rule in the whole life. Only then will it have power in prayer. God looks not to our lips, but to our lives to see what the Name is to us."

You cannot compartmentalize your life—using Jesus' name in prayer while living for yourself the rest of the time. The name that governs your life will be the name that has power in your prayers.

5. Expect God to Act

When you pray in Jesus' name with proper relationship, proper motives, and proper faith, expect God to answer.

Scripture promises: "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong" (Acts 3:16). "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

6. Pray with Perseverance

Sometimes the answer doesn't come immediately. This doesn't mean God hasn't heard or that He won't answer. It may mean that He is working in ways we cannot see, or that there are spiritual realities being addressed that we don't understand.

It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When faith has taken its stand upon God's word, and the Name of Jesus, you don't need to be discouraged by delay. Just praise God and thank Him for the answer even when you don't see it.

7. Pray for God's Glory, Not Your Own

The ultimate test of whether you are properly using Jesus' name is this: whose glory are you seeking?

Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). The purpose of answered prayer is God's glory, not our comfort or convenience.

When our prayers flow from a genuine desire to see God glorified, we can be confident that we are praying in alignment with Jesus' name and character.

Common Mistakes in Using Jesus' Name

Mistake #1: Using It as a Formula

Some people tack "in Jesus' name" onto the end of every prayer as if it were a magic formula that makes their prayers work. This is not biblical prayer—it's superstition.

While God does want us to bring all our needs and concerns to him—and while we absolutely can and do experience his miracles—we must remember that God is God, and we are not. We cannot manipulate God by using a particular phrase or by praying a particular way.

Mistake #2: Using It Without Relationship

As the sons of Sceva discovered, you cannot use Jesus' name effectively if you are not in relationship with Him. The demons know the difference between someone who truly belongs to Jesus and someone who is just using His name as a technique.

Mistake #3: Using It for Selfish Purposes

James 4:3 warns, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." Using Jesus' name to get things for our own selfish purposes is a misuse of the authority He has given us.

Mistake #4: Using It Without Faith

If you pray in Jesus' name but don't actually believe He will answer, you are not praying in faith. James 1:6-7 says, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."

Mistake #5: Using It Without Submission

Jesus Himself, in Gethsemane, prayed, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). That's what praying in Jesus' name is all about: following Jesus by submitting to God's will.

The Results of Properly Using Jesus' Name

When we properly use the name of Jesus in prayer—when we are in right relationship with Him, submitted to His authority, aligned with His will, and walking in faith—remarkable things happen:

Demons Are Cast Out

Jesus promised: "These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17). When you speak to demonic powers in the name of Jesus, they must flee because they recognize the authority behind that name.

Prayers Are Answered

"Whatever you will ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). This is not a blank check, but a promise that prayers prayed in alignment with God's will and character, in Jesus' name, will be answered.

Joy Becomes Full

"In that day you will ask me no questions. Most certainly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full" (John 16:23-24).

The Father Is Glorified

The ultimate purpose of prayer in Jesus' name is that the Father would be glorified through the Son. When we pray rightly, God receives glory and we receive blessing.

The Church Advances

Murray believed that "Christ actually meant prayer to be the great power by which His Church should do its work, and that the neglect of prayer is the great reason the Church has not greater power."

Personal Testimony

Through the years I have made the decision not to speak about negative things or what the devil has done. I don't want to give the devil any airtime. I have had people upset at me. They say, "Come on, be real. There's got to be things going wrong." My response is, "God is doing great things in our lives. Heaven has broken loose upon us. The enemy flees from us." I choose to say what God says. I don't deny anything that may have happened that's bad; I just realize God's promises are better.

James says if you humble yourself and submit to God, you can expect the devil to flee. Why say anything else when you have the resurrection power of God working inside of you? To say anything else is to contradict the revelation of Jesus on the inside of you.

I'm not saying that we don't have to resist the enemy, for James 4:7 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

If no resistance was needed, James wouldn't have mentioned it. Paul wouldn't have mentioned resisting the fiery darts of the enemy with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit if no resistance to the devil was needed (Ephesians 6:16-17). Peter wouldn't have mentioned the need to be sober and vigilant because the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour if no resistance to the adversary, Satan, was needed (1 Peter 5:8).

Each of these men talk about the devil from the aspect that he has already been defeated and conquered, which he has

and which is the view we are to take, but they do say that we must resist the devil. And when we resist in the name of Jesus, he must flee.

Conclusion: Learn to Pray in the Name of Jesus

Andrew Murray issues this challenge to every believer: "Learn to pray in the Name of Jesus. He says to us as He said to the disciples, 'Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive.' Let each disciple of Jesus seek to avail himself of the rights of his royal priesthood, to use the power placed at his disposal for his work."

Murray continues with passion: "Let Christian awake and hear this message: Your prayers can obtain what would otherwise be withheld! They can accomplish what would otherwise remain undone! O awake, and use the Name of Jesus to open the treasures of heaven for this perishing world!"

The name of Jesus is not a magic formula. It is not a religious phrase we tack onto our prayers. It is the representation of all that Jesus is—His character, His authority, His power, His will, His purposes.

When we live in that name, abide in that name, submit to that name, and walk in proper relationship with the One who bears that name, then we have the right and the power to pray in that name with confidence that God will hear and answer.

God's love motivates Him to use His power. When you believe the love He has for you, you'll begin to realize you have as much right to use the Name of Jesus as anyone else.

So I encourage you: believe the love God has for you. Recognize that He has not left you defenseless and powerless against evil. When you pray, use His

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Discovering the Supernatural Language of Prayer

The Holy Spirit is not as familiar to Christians as the Father and the Son are. In fact, I grew up in the United Methodist Church and never heard anything said or taught about the Holy Spirit—good or bad.

The first time I heard about being "baptized with the Holy Spirit" and praying in tongues, I was totally ignorant. I had never heard anything about it. Then someone began to teach me from the Word of God. I saw things in the Bible I had never seen before. I began to read and study about the Holy Spirit, and it changed my life forever.

You can put on denominational eyeglasses that literally cause you to look at the Word and not see what the Spirit of God is saying. People sometimes have the idea that praying in the Spirit is simply praying with an excited attitude, a heightened spiritual awareness, or with more intensity. But prayer in the Spirit is specifically defined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.

Kenneth E. Hagin, who prayed in tongues daily for over seventy years, put it this way: "Praying in tongues charges your spirit like a battery charger charges a battery."

The Context of Love and Spiritual Gifts

Paul said, "Pursue love...." Immediately following that, he said, "And desire spiritual gifts..." (1 Corinthians 14:1). If we understand this verse properly, spiritual gifts are not for our own consumption. They are to bless other people. If you really love other people, you will want the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to bring what is needed on the scene—the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, the working of miracles, the gift of faith,

the gifts of healings, or tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy.

Paul goes on in verse 1 to say, "But especially that you may prophesy." Prophecy is the anointed revelation word of God that comes by the Holy Spirit.

"For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries." (1 Corinthians 14:2)

When you are speaking in tongues, you are addressing God. You are speaking mysteries. Things that are not known in the natural will flow up out of you as you speak in the Spirit. When you pray in tongues, you are speaking to God, but when you prophesy, you are speaking to men.

When you are speaking in tongues, no one comprehends what is being said unless there is someone to interpret.

On the Day of Pentecost, the 120 in the upper room spoke in tongues and told the wondrous works of God. It was a sign and a wonder. It verified to them that God was in their midst. It opened their hearts for Peter to preach the great Pentecost message that Joel had prophesied of the latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit and that they should repent and believe on Jesus Christ. As a result, many were saved.

"But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men." (1 Corinthians 14:3)

People who don't believe in the gifts of the Spirit will always identify prophecy as inspired preaching, but prophecy is an anointed word that comes directly from God. Many can preach from God's Word, read a scripture, explain what it means and admonish the people to act on it, but it takes the operation of the gift of the Spirit to prophesy. Prophecy is a supernatural gift.

Edification means "to build up." To exhort is "to challenge someone to do what God has spoken." To comfort is "to minister the presence of the Holy Spirit in the mercy aspect of God."

Praying in Tongues Edifies and Strengthens

"He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church." (1 Corinthians 14:4)

Paul is drawing a contrast between prophecy and tongues. He is not saying to do away with tongues. Sometimes people say, "The Corinthians were one of the most sinful groups of people, and they had one of the most worldly churches. They operated in the gifts of the Spirit, and since Paul had to correct them, tongues aren't relevant for the Church today. Tongues are just for carnal churches."

But they also took communion, so if you use the argument that tongues aren't necessary in the Church today, then you need to throw out communion, too. First Corinthians 11 gives instructions on communion. Many churches today have a problem understanding what God is saying. Paul wrote to explain communion, the gifts of the Spirit, the operation of love, and how tongues and interpretation are to operate supernaturally in a church service.

When someone prophesies under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in a known language, everyone can understand it and be edified spiritually. Do you ever need to be built up? If you're not up, you're not going to help anyone else get up. If you're not spiritually strong, you will have difficulty ministering strength to other people. That's why praying in the Spirit in an unknown tongue is such an important part of our prayer life.

Paul's Endorsement of Tongues

Paul is not saying, "Do away with tongues." This is what many people say who don't believe in tongues. First Corinthians 14:5 supports the argument that Paul was not discrediting tongues: "I wish you all spoke with tongues...."

In Mark 16:17, Jesus said, "And these signs will follow those who believe...they will speak with new tongues."

Acts 2:4 says that the 120 in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost, which included Jesus' disciples, "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 10:44-46 indicates that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles in Cornelius' household, and they spoke in tongues:

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God...."

In Acts 19:2-6, the disciples at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit as Paul laid his hands on them. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul continues to explain the importance of speaking in tongues:

"I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification."

Notice the phrase, "unless indeed he interprets." Prophecy is elevated over tongues in the public assembly, except when there is an interpretation. Tongues and interpretation are equivalent to prophecy.

Though people don't understand the "tongues" portion of tongues and interpretation, they will understand and be edified by the interpretation. The interpretation is a prophetic, supernatural utterance that comes from the Lord, and it will edify, exhort and comfort.

The Importance of Understanding in Public Worship

"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?" (1 Corinthians 14:6)

Anyone who moves in the prophet's office can bring a revelation from God. Preaching and teaching are basically the dissemination, distribution, or impact of knowledge and doctrine, but Paul separates these. He says:

"Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air." (1 Corinthians 14:7-9)

If I speak a message to the congregation in tongues, I would be edified, but they would not be blessed. It would be like blowing an instrument, but there would be no distinction in the sounds, no harmony, no flow, no pattern and it would make no sense.

Paul was saying, "If a trumpet sounds a distinct sound that everyone recognizes as the sound for battle, they will prepare for it." He emphasized the importance of having an

interpreter when a message is given in tongues. He wasn't saying to throw out tongues but to put tongues in its place.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret." (1 Corinthians 14:10-13)

Paul was saying, "If you are so zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to edify, build up, and strengthen the whole church." He didn't say, "Stop praying in tongues." He said, "If you are going to pray in tongues, pray for an interpretation because when you have an interpretation, the whole church will be edified and blessed."

Defining Prayer in the Spirit

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful." (1 Corinthians 14:14)

Paul defined praying in the Spirit as praying in an unknown tongue. When you pray in tongues, you only have half a loaf, because your understanding is unfruitful.

"What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:15)

Paul is encouraging believers to pray in their understanding and pray in the Spirit. Pray for interpretation when you pray in the Spirit, and you will move over into praying in your understanding and revelation will come.

"Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your

giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?" (1 Corinthians 14:16)

You can bless and give thanks to the Lord in the Spirit, but no one else will know what you are doing.

"For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified." (1 Corinthians 14:17)

Praying in tongues is a proper, accepted and beneficial way to give thanks, but other people will not be edified without an interpretation.

Paul's Personal Practice

"I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all." (1 Corinthians 14:18)

Paul spoke in tongues more than the entire Corinthian bunch. Obviously, he wasn't saying, "Quit." He was saying, "I am doing it in the proper time personally and privately. I am speaking to God and giving thanks in the Spirit. I am communing with my Father and blessing Him. I am speaking mysteries unto Him."

Kenneth E. Hagin testified: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. In other words, Paul was saying, 'I build myself up and charge myself like a battery by speaking in tongues more than all of you do!'"

"Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue." (1 Corinthians 14:19)

Paul was saying, "When I stand up to minister, I would rather speak in a language you can understand than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue because five words you can understand will help you more than ten thousand you can't understand."

We experienced this in our Russian crusades. I could preach all day to those people in English, and I would be blessed

because of the Word coming forth, but they wouldn't comprehend a thing. A young man who speaks both Russian and English interpreted so the people could comprehend what I was saying.

Is Tongues Required for Salvation?

Paul is saying, "I would that all of you spoke with tongues." You may be questioning, "Do you have to speak in tongues to go to heaven?" No. You must believe in Jesus Christ and believe in His shed blood, believe He died for you, He was raised from the dead, declare Him Lord and live out His lordship in your life.

You don't have to pray in tongues, tithe, serve the Lord in some type of Christian service, or praise and worship Him to be saved. But you will be blessed if you praise and worship the Lord. You will be blessed if you serve the Lord in a practical way in service to other people. You will be blessed if you give tithes and offerings. You will be blessed if you pray in the Spirit and in other tongues.

When we talk about praying in the Spirit, we are talking about the supernatural anointing and utterance in other tongues which builds you up. When you are built up, you can build other people up.

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray with Accuracy

Romans 8:26 (KJV) gives us another aspect of the importance of praying in the Spirit:

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself [Himself] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

When Paul talks about infirmities, many people think he is referring to sickness and disease. In this verse, he is not talking about sickness and disease. Infirmity, as used in this

verse, refers to weakness or natural, limited human ability. When we have areas where we lack, we don't understand, or we aren't capable of achieving in our natural ability, the Holy Spirit helps us. In other words, the Spirit of God will take hold in the area where we are weak and will strengthen us.

In verse 26, Paul identifies one area of weakness: "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought...." There are two aspects of this thing: 1) We don't know what to pray for; and 2) We don't know how we ought to pray. Those are weaknesses or infirmities.

Some people offer a prayer like this: "God bless the president, my family, China, and Lord, reach Africa." After ten minutes, they are done, because they don't know what else to pray. Paul is saying that it is a weakness (or infirmity) to not know what to pray for or how to pray because God moves in response to our prayers. If we can't pray and we can't take hold of the blessing and power of God, there is a limitation.

Paul says, "The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). There are utterances that we won't know how to express in a known language. They will come out in another tongue as the Holy Spirit utters those things through us.

"Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8:27)

The Spirit of God, Who dwells on the inside of you, will make the intercession if you allow Him to pray through you.

Remember, Paul said, "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays..." (1 Corinthians 14:14). In Romans 8:26, Paul is saying, "The Spirit of God takes hold of our spirit, and utterances that cannot be expressed in our known language begin to flow out of us."

The Threefold Knowledge of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit knows three vital things: 1) He knows your heart; 2) He knows God's heart; and 3) He knows all about the situation or person for whom you are praying. Not only does He know what to pray for, but He knows how to pray for it. His prayer won't be a hit-and-miss prayer. It will be according to the mind and will of the Father.

It won't be contradictory to you, because the Holy Spirit is linked up with your spirit and knows your spirit. Therefore, when you pray in the Spirit, you are praying a prayer of perfection, a prayer of accuracy, a prayer of strength that you cannot pray in your weakened ability as a human being without the Holy Spirit's anointing, help, revelation, insight, and utterance.

When you pray in the Spirit, you go beyond your natural limitations and pray according to the mind of the Father.

Greg Mohr, in his teaching on praying in tongues, explains: "Praying in tongues is praying the perfect will of God because your mind and will are not involved at all. There is no opportunity for you to pray a selfish prayer when you pray in the Spirit."

Illustration: The Missionary's Divine Protection

An English missionary to Africa was home on leave speaking at a missionary conference when a woman asked him if he kept a diary. He replied that he did. She began to relate to him, "Two years ago I was awakened in the night with a burden to pray. I got out of bed and was talking in tongues before I got down on my knees. For an hour I prayed in tongues. It seemed as if I were wrestling.

"When I finished praying I had a vision. I saw you in a grass hut surrounded by natives. You were sick and then died. I saw the natives pull a sheet over your head and walk sadly

out of the hut. Suddenly you came out of the hut and stood in their midst. All of the natives began to rejoice."

The missionary asked the woman if she kept a diary and requested she bring it that afternoon. Comparing diaries, and making allowances for time differences in England and Africa, they discovered the time of the woman's prayer burden exactly coincided with the time when the missionary was sick with a deadly fever. The doctor had pronounced him dead, but as the woman prayed in tongues halfway around the world, God raised him back to life!

This is the power of praying in the Spirit—you pray the perfect will of God for situations you know nothing about in the natural.

Praying in Tongues Brings Rest and Refreshing

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the benefit of praying in another tongue:

"For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, 'This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,' and, 'This is the refreshing....'" (Isaiah 28:11-12)

Not only does praying in the Spirit build your faith, but it can move you into a place of rest and refreshing. In our fast-paced, stress-filled world, this supernatural rest is desperately needed. When you pray in tongues, you enter into a dimension where the cares and anxieties of life cannot follow. The Spirit brings a peace that passes understanding.

Built Up to Build Others Up

Jude said: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." (Jude 20)

When you pray in the Spirit, you build yourself up. It's not a selfish thing to be built up in your spirit man. People go to church on Sunday to hear a sermon to be built up. People

read the Bible to be built up. People take time alone with God in prayer to be built up spiritually.

Jude says when you pray in the Spirit, you become stronger in your faith. We know that "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

The second aspect of what Jude was saying about praying in the Spirit is found in verse 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

When someone consistently prays in the Spirit, the Spirit of God keeps drawing him back to righteousness.

The Thermostat Principle

It's like a thermostat. If your thermostat is set and you open a door and hot air comes in, the thermostat will cause the air-conditioner to kick in to make the room cooler, even though hot air is coming in. Similarly, when the enemy brings something against your life to turn you off, turn you away, or get you off track, the Spirit of God—your internal thermostat—will kick in. When you pray in the Spirit, your spirit will rise up and throw off what the devil tries to bring against your life.

You will keep yourself in the love of God by praying in the Spirit because you give place to the Spirit. You are communing with Him and giving the Holy Spirit the right to dominate your heart. When you pray for the interpretation, you are giving Him the right to dominate your mind, too.

Your spirit can be deflated when you listen to ungodly music or conversation or when you are in ungodly places. In other words, certain environments will grieve your spirit. Arguing, strife, negativism, and depressed and cynical attitudes will repress your spirit.

The spirit of the world wants to bring your spirit down, because when you are down in your spirit, you aren't going to witness. You aren't going to be a shining light. You aren't going to let the love of God flow through you. Instead, you will hide your light under a bushel. But when you start praying in the Spirit, you will counter all the junk that's in the world. I believe we need this oil in our lamps!

When you look at the five wise and the five foolish virgins and the oil in their lamps or lack of it and the fact that the Holy Spirit is referred to as oil, there is a strong possibility that the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit could have been what Jesus was referring to when He spoke about keeping our lamps trimmed. One way we can allow that to happen is by praying in the Spirit. It will keep your faith built up, and it will help to keep you in the love of God.

If you don't read the Word, which keeps your faith built up, praying in the Spirit won't automatically compensate for failure in this area or in any other area. In the same way, in keeping yourself in the love of God, if the Spirit of God prompts you to quit doing something and you don't obey, it won't produce the end result that is desired.

Rivers of Living Water

Jesus said: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." This He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Rivers of living water out of your innermost being refers to the flow of the Spirit of God. A part of that flow is the prayer language of the Spirit. Isaiah called it "stammering lips, another tongue, a rest and a refreshing."

In Ephesians 6:18, the final piece of the believer's armor that is mentioned is, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...." Praying in the Spirit is very specifically defined in Scripture as "praying in other tongues."

When you are edified by praying in the Spirit, you can edify other people. As you go with the flow of the Holy Spirit, God will quicken you to pray for others.

Illustration: Praying for the Unknown Need

There have been many times through the years while praying in the Spirit the Holy Spirit has brought to mind someone to pray for—a pastor, family member, or church member. I didn't know exactly what to pray for so, I would pray in the Spirit for the person. On several occasions, I have spoken with one of these people and they would relate to me a situation they were going through and the time would correspond to the time I was praying for them.

I remember one specific instance when I was praying early in the morning and the Holy Spirit brought one of our church members to mind. I didn't know why, but I began to pray for him in tongues for about thirty minutes. Later that day, he called me and said, "Pastor, you won't believe what happened this morning. I was in a serious car accident at 6:00 AM, and miraculously, I walked away without a scratch. The police said I should have been killed." The time of the accident was exactly when I was praying for him in the Spirit.

This is not coincidence—this is the supernatural precision of praying in the Spirit!

Along with the other benefits of praying in the Spirit, you will be strengthened in boldness to witness as you pray in other tongues.

Practical Applications for Praying in the Spirit

Let me give you some practical ways to incorporate praying in the Spirit into your daily life:

1. Start Your Day Praying in Tongues

Before you check your phone, before you turn on the news, before you start your day, spend time praying in the Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit set the spiritual atmosphere for your day. Kenneth Hagin would often pray in tongues for an hour or more first thing in the morning.

2. Pray in the Spirit While Driving

Your commute time can become a powerful prayer time. Instead of listening to talk radio or music, use that time to pray in the Spirit. You'll arrive at your destination spiritually charged and ready for whatever the day brings.

3. Pray in Tongues When You Don't Know What to Pray

When facing a complex situation where you don't know how to pray, switch to praying in tongues. Let the Holy Spirit pray the perfect prayer through you.

4. Combine Praying in Tongues with Worship

Worship music creates an atmosphere for the Spirit to move. As you worship, begin to sing in the Spirit. First Corinthians 14:15 says, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."

5. Pray in Tongues for Specific People

When someone comes to mind, immediately begin praying for them in the Spirit. You may not know their need, but the Holy Spirit does.

6. Use Times of Waiting to Pray in the Spirit

Standing in line at the grocery store, sitting in a waiting room, waiting for an appointment—these are perfect opportunities to pray quietly in tongues.

Addressing Common Misconceptions

"I don't need to speak in tongues to be spiritual."

True, you don't need to speak in tongues to be saved or to be spiritual. But why would you refuse a gift that God offers to help you pray more effectively? Would you refuse a tool that could make your work easier? Praying in tongues is a spiritual tool that enhances your prayer life.

"Tongues are just emotional gibberish."

Paul called tongues "speaking mysteries unto God" (1 Corinthians 14:2). It's a legitimate spiritual language, not emotional nonsense. The fact that your mind doesn't understand it doesn't make it invalid—it makes it supernatural.

"I tried to speak in tongues but nothing happened."

Speaking in tongues is a cooperation between you and the Holy Spirit. You must open your mouth and speak by faith. The Holy Spirit won't force you to speak—He gives the utterance, but you do the speaking. Acts 2:4 says they "began to speak...as the Spirit gave them utterance." Notice both the human and divine elements.

"Only certain people have the gift of tongues."

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul discusses the gift of tongues that operates in public worship with interpretation. But in 1 Corinthians 14, he's discussing the prayer language available to all believers. Paul said, "I wish you all spoke with tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:5). On the Day of Pentecost, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues" (Acts 2:4).

The Connection Between Tongues and Other Spiritual Gifts

Kenneth Hagin observed something profound in his ministry: "I have found in my own life that the more I speak in tongues—the more I pray and worship God in tongues—the more the other gifts of the Spirit manifest. The less I speak in tongues, the less manifestation of the other gifts of the Spirit I have operating in my life."

Praying in tongues opens the door to the supernatural. It sensitizes your spirit to the voice and leading of the Holy Spirit. As you consistently pray in tongues, you'll find yourself more aware of promptings, more sensitive to words of knowledge, more accurate in discernment.

Illustration: Wisdom Through Praying in Tongues

Greg Mohr shares this testimony: "One specific time, I needed wisdom about a 20-acre piece of property our church owned. We had received a large offer for it, but the question the elders and I were praying about was: is it the will of God to sell it or keep it to build on later? I had been praying and had not heard anything specific on this. I kept praying in the Spirit, and the day before we had to give an answer to the buyer, God's wisdom came to me."

Praying in tongues accesses the wisdom of God that's been deposited in your spirit. As you pray mysteries unto God, He downloads understanding to your mind.

Moving Forward in the Spirit

If you've never been baptized with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, I encourage you to seek this gift. It's not reserved for super-spiritual people or for a select few. Jesus said these signs would follow "those who believe" (Mark 16:17). That includes you!

If you've been filled with the Spirit but have neglected praying in tongues, I challenge you to renew this practice. Don't let tradition, skepticism, or busyness rob you of this powerful tool.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is not the end—it's the beginning. It's the gateway into a supernatural prayer life that connects you directly with the heart of God. It's a divine language that bypasses your limited understanding and taps into the infinite wisdom of the Almighty.

Don't settle for a powerless prayer life when God has provided a supernatural means of communication with Him. Embrace the gift. Use the gift. Be built up by the gift. And watch as your spiritual life explodes with power, revelation, and effectiveness!

A Closing Challenge

I close this chapter with a challenge: For the next thirty days, commit to praying in tongues for at least thirty minutes every day. Don't do it legalistically—do it expectantly. Watch what happens in your spiritual life. Watch how your sensitivity to God's voice increases. Watch how your faith grows. Watch how answers to prayer come more quickly.

The great healing evangelist Smith Wigglesworth once said that the first thing he did when he woke up was speak to the Lord. He would spend hours in prayer, much of it praying in tongues. The result was a ministry marked by extraordinary miracles, including the raising of the dead.

You have access to the same Holy Spirit. You have access to the same supernatural prayer language. The question is: will you use it?

Paul's words echo across the centuries: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). May that become your testimony as well.

Pray in the Spirit. Build yourself up. And watch as God uses you to build up others!

Prayer: Father, I thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I thank You for the supernatural prayer language You've provided. Help me to be faithful to pray in the Spirit daily. Build me up in my most holy faith. Keep me in Your love. Use me as a vessel of Your power and glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SECTION TWO INTRODUCTION

7 Kinds of Prayer

Prayer is one of the most powerful and personal gifts God has given to His children. It's the lifeline between heaven and earth—the sacred conversation that invites the Creator of the universe into the details of our everyday lives. Through prayer, we draw near to God, and He draws near to us.

Throughout Scripture, we find countless examples of men and women praying in different ways and for different reasons. From Abraham interceding for Sodom, to Hannah pouring out her heart in desperation, to David worshiping with thanksgiving, to Paul praying for the churches—each prayer reveals a unique expression of relationship with God.

In fact, the Bible references prayer over **600 times**, emphasizing just how vital it is in our walk with Him. God has always desired fellowship with His people, and prayer is the means through which that fellowship is strengthened and sustained. It's more than words—it's communion. It's more than asking—it's aligning. It's not about religious duty—it's about divine connection.

Different Kinds of Prayer for Different Purposes

Just as there are many ways to express love to someone—through words, actions, or presence—there are many ways to express your heart to God through prayer. The Bible teaches us that not all prayers are the same. There are **different kinds of prayer** for different situations, and each serves a unique purpose in our relationship with the Father.

Sometimes we come before God in worship, overflowing with gratitude and praise.

Sometimes we cry out in faith, petitioning for breakthrough or provision.

At other times, we intercede for others, standing in the gap for those who need God's touch.

There are also prayers of agreement, dedication, consecration, and spiritual warfare—each designed by God for a specific reason, each carrying a distinct power and promise.

As the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:18:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...”

Notice that phrase—“*all prayer*.” In the original Greek, it means *all kinds* of prayer. In other words, there isn't just one way to pray! God, in His divine wisdom, gave us different spiritual tools for different moments of life.

Prayer: The Language of Relationship

Think about it this way: prayer is to the believer what breath is to the body. Just as our physical health depends on consistent breathing, our spiritual health depends on consistent prayer. But just as breathing changes with activity—deep and slow at rest, quick and focused in action—our prayers also change with the circumstances of life.

Each kind of prayer represents a different tone, posture, and purpose in our relationship with God. Together, they form the full vocabulary of spiritual communication. They allow us to worship, repent, intercede, and declare His promises with understanding and authority.

When we know how to use these different kinds of prayer, we stop praying aimlessly and start praying effectively. We no longer send random arrows into the sky hoping one hits the target—we learn to aim with precision, guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the Word of God.

Prayers That Work Together

In practice, most of our prayers don't fit neatly into one single category. Often, two or more kinds of prayer flow together naturally. For example, a prayer of thanksgiving might flow into worship. A prayer of intercession might blend with spiritual warfare. A prayer of faith might end in praise.

These combinations are not only natural—they're powerful. The Holy Spirit weaves them together in a beautiful harmony of divine communication. The important thing is not to follow a formula, but to understand how each type of prayer operates, so that we can pray with clarity, faith, and confidence.

As you learn these seven kinds of prayer, you'll discover how to cooperate with God's principles and flow with His Spirit. You'll see why some prayers bring immediate results while others require persistence and endurance. Most of all, you'll develop a deeper understanding of how prayer works—and why it works.

Understanding Brings Confidence

So many Christians love God deeply but pray uncertainly. They wonder, "*Am I praying the right way?*" or "*Does God really hear me?*" Friend, He does hear you. But understanding how prayer works gives you the confidence to pray with greater boldness and expectation.

When you know what kind of prayer is needed for a situation, you step into a new level of effectiveness. You begin to pray not just *from your heart*, but also *from revelation*. And revelation always produces results.

Prayer succeeds when all else fails. That's because prayer aligns you with the One who never fails. When you pray with understanding, your words become charged with faith and power. Heaven listens. Angels move. Situations shift.

An Invitation to Go Deeper

In the chapters ahead, we're going to take a closer look at **seven of the most common kinds of prayer** found in the Bible. We'll define them, explore how they work, and learn how to apply them in your daily walk with God.

Each kind of prayer is like a key. When used correctly, it unlocks a specific door in the spirit realm—doors of healing, provision, peace, guidance, and victory. The more you understand these keys, the more confidently you'll walk through the doors God has opened before you.

As we study together, I encourage you to approach this section with a hungry heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you, to expand your understanding, and to deepen your intimacy with the Father. Let this be more than information—let it be transformation.

Prayer is not a burden; it's a blessing. It's not a ritual; it's a relationship. It's not a last resort; it's our first response.

A Final Word Before We Begin

As you read, remember this truth: **there is no “wrong” way to pray when your heart is sincere before God.** These seven kinds of prayer are not rules to restrict you—they are principles to empower you. They're the spiritual framework through which you can grow in confidence and effectiveness.

So, as we begin this journey, may your spirit be stirred to pray with greater passion and faith. May you discover the joy of fellowshiping with your heavenly Father in new and powerful ways.

Prayer is a gift. Prayer is a privilege. And prayer—when prayed according to the Word—is the most powerful force on earth.

So let's begin to explore these seven kinds of prayer together, and learn how to pray by the rules that release heaven's power in our lives.

THE PRAYER OF PETITION

Coming Boldly Before the Throne of Grace

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." — Hebrews 4:16

Late one night, David sat alone at his desk, facing the hardest decision of his life. His business was failing, and an investor had offered a deal that could save everything—but it required him to compromise his integrity. Fear battled with faith as he stared at the papers in front of him.

Finally, he pushed everything aside, dropped his head into his hands, and prayed, "God, I don't know what to do. Show me Your will. Give me wisdom."

He opened his Bible and read James 1:5: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God..."* As he prayed a simple, sincere prayer of petition, peace filled his heart. He knew what he had to do. The next morning, David turned down the deal and chose to trust God.

Two weeks later, a new and better opportunity opened—one that honored God and restored his business.

This is the Prayer of Petition in its most authentic form. David realized the true power of the prayer of petition: it's not begging God to move, but confidently asking in faith, trusting Him for His help, in this case wisdom and direction.

A prayer of petition is any prayer that asks God for something. When we ask for wisdom, direction, healing, etc., we pray prayers of petition. It is the most common type of prayer, but there's nothing common about how God's power moves through them for our good and the good of others. The prayer of petition is usually asking God for something you specifically need. It can be for peace, joy, favor, wisdom,

provision, direction, healing, or about anything else you need. Again, the prayer of petition is when you are asking God specifically for something you need or want. If you are asking for anything of these things for someone else that is a prayer of intercession and in the next chapter we will go into detail about the prayer of petition.

The Foundation of Petition

The Prayer of Petition, also called supplication, is by far the most common type of prayer among believers. It is the prayer where we bring our needs, desires, and concerns directly to our Heavenly Father, trusting that He hears us and will respond according to His perfect will. This is not merely acceptable in God's eyes—it is *invited*. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 21:22, "And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

The Prayer of Petition includes requests for our personal needs—physical, financial, spiritual, and emotional. We come to God not as beggars hoping for scraps, but as beloved children approaching a Father who delights in meeting our needs. This is the privilege of relationship, the intimacy of family.

Understanding True Petition

It's crucial to understand what the Prayer of Petition is—and what it is not. This prayer is not about demanding from God or attempting to manipulate the Almighty into doing our bidding. Rather, it is about aligning our desires with His will and asking in faith, trusting His character and His promises.

Pastor E.M. Bounds, that great voice on prayer, spoke of petition as prayers that use "logic and reason" while simultaneously engaging our hearts in "spiritual prayer that came from the heart of [our] soul." The Prayer of Petition engages both our minds and our spirits—it is thoughtful yet

passionate, grounded in Scripture yet flowing from authentic need.

The apostle John provides us with the confidence we need to approach God with our petitions: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

Notice the key phrase: "according to His will." This is not a limitation but a liberation. When we know God's will through His Word, we can pray with absolute confidence that He hears us—and when He hears us, we have what we've asked for. It's that simple, yet that profound.

The Rules of Petition

To pray the Prayer of Petition effectively, we must understand and follow certain biblical principles—the "rules" that govern this type of prayer:

1. It Must Be a Prayer of Faith

Mark 11:24 declares, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Faith is not optional in the Prayer of Petition—it is essential. This is you praying for yourself, believing God for your own needs. When you pray the Prayer of Petition "by the rules," you believe that you receive at the moment you pray. If you do that, you will have what you ask for.

Faith means taking God at His Word. It means refusing to be moved by what you see in the natural realm. It means standing firm on the promises of Scripture even when circumstances seem contrary. The Prayer of Petition is a prayer that refuses to allow negative circumstances to dictate whether or not you believe that what you prayed will come to pass.

2. It Must Align with God's Will

James 4:3 warns us: "You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." The Prayer of Petition is not a blank check for selfish desires. It must be rooted in the revealed will of God, which we discover through His Word.

God's will is not mysterious or hidden when it comes to our basic needs. We know it is His will that we be healed (1 Peter 2:24), that we prosper (3 John 1:2), that we have wisdom (James 1:5), and that we experience His peace (Philippians 4:7). These promises form the foundation upon which we build our petitions.

This is why you should not conclude every Prayer of Petition with "if it be Thy will." That phrase belongs to the Prayer of Consecration, not petition. When you're praying according to promises clearly stated in God's Word, you already know it's His will. To add "if it be Thy will" in such cases actually demonstrates a lack of faith rather than humility.

3. It Should Be Specific

Jesus encouraged specificity in John 16:24: "Until now, you have asked for nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." Vague prayers receive vague answers. When you know what you need and that need aligns with God's Word, ask specifically.

Kenneth Copeland Ministries teaches believers to write out their petitions formally, based on Scripture, as "a formal written request addressed to a sovereign superior for a particular right or grace." This practice brings clarity, focus, and documentation of God's faithfulness when He answers.

4. It Must Be Combined with Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6 instructs us: "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Thanksgiving is faith in action. It says, "I believe before I see." When you walk away from your prayer

time, your countenance should be different because you know that what you have asked will come to pass.

Thanksgiving also keeps our hearts in the right posture. It reminds us of God's past faithfulness and positions us to receive His future provision with gratitude rather than entitlement.

5. It Requires Persistence

Jesus taught persistence through the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8. The point of the parable is that we should "always pray and not give up." Persistence in prayer is not about overcoming God's reluctance—He is eager to bless His children. Rather, it's about maintaining our faith and focus despite delays or obstacles.

6. It Must Be Prayed in Jesus' Name

John 14:13-14 records Jesus' promise: "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." Praying in Jesus' name is not a magic formula tacked onto the end of a prayer. It means praying in His authority, according to His character, and in alignment with His purposes.

An Illustration: The Courtroom of Heaven

Imagine, if you will, a courtroom. You have a need—a legal matter that requires a judgment in your favor. You cannot simply walk into the courtroom and demand the judge rule for you. That would be contempt of court. Instead, you must present your case according to the rules of law. You bring evidence, cite legal precedents, and make your petition based on established law.

The Prayer of Petition operates similarly, but with far greater confidence. You come before the Judge of all the earth with your need. But you don't come empty-handed or relying on your own merit. You come with the "legal precedent" of God's Word. You present your case: "Father, Your Word says in

Philippians 4:19 that You will supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I have a financial need, and I'm asking You to fulfill Your promise."

You're not begging. You're not hoping the Judge is in a good mood. You're simply citing the law—God's unchanging Word—and asking Him to rule according to what He has already promised. And because God is faithful to His Word, you know with absolute certainty that your petition will be granted.

The difference between an earthly courtroom and the throne of grace is profound: earthly judges may be swayed by circumstances, prejudice, or corruption. But our God is unchanging, perfectly just, and infinitely loving. When we come with a petition founded on His Word, we're not hoping for mercy—we're standing on a promise.

The Biblical Witness

Throughout Scripture, we see the Prayer of Petition modeled for us. Hannah's desperate petition for a child (1 Samuel 1:11) resulted in the birth of Samuel, one of Israel's greatest prophets. David's psalms overflow with petitions for deliverance, guidance, and vindication. The apostles prayed for boldness (Acts 4:29) and received an immediate answer as the place where they were meeting was shaken.

Even Jesus Himself practiced the Prayer of Petition. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He petitioned the Father: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me" (Matthew 26:39). While He ultimately submitted to the Father's will, He first made His desire known. This shows us that expressing our true feelings and needs to God is not wrong—it's the natural overflow of an intimate relationship.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Praying Without Faith: Many people pray hoping God will answer rather than believing He will. This violates the

fundamental requirement of faith. When you pray the Prayer of Petition, settle it in your heart that God has heard you and will respond according to His Word.

Asking Outside God's Will: Some believers pray for things that contradict Scripture or that stem purely from selfish motives. The Prayer of Petition must always be grounded in what God has revealed as His will.

Giving Up Too Soon: When answers don't come immediately, many abandon their petitions. Remember Jesus' teaching on persistence. If you're praying according to God's Word, don't quit. The answer is on the way.

Forgetting to Thank God: Starting with requests without thanksgiving can breed an attitude of entitlement. Always acknowledge God's goodness and past faithfulness before presenting new petitions.

The Privilege and Power of Petition

Remember this essential truth: God already knows what you need before you ask Him (Matthew 6:8). So why does He want us to pray the Prayer of Petition? Because He desires relationship, not robotic obedience. He wants us to come to Him, to depend on Him, to exercise our faith, and to experience the joy of seeing Him work on our behalf.

The Prayer of Petition is a dynamic and faith-filled way to communicate with God. It's an expression of trust, an exercise of faith, and a demonstration of our dependency on Him. When prayed according to biblical principles—with faith, alignment with God's Word, specificity, thanksgiving, persistence, and in Jesus' name—it becomes one of the most powerful tools in the believer's spiritual arsenal.

As you develop your practice of the Prayer of Petition, keep these truths at the forefront:

- You are praying to a Father who loves you and wants to meet your needs
- His Word is His will, and you can pray His promises with confidence
- Faith believes before seeing, trusts before receiving
- God's delays are not denials—persist in prayer
- Your petitions should transform your perspective, not just your circumstances

The Prayer of Petition is ultimately about intimacy with God. It's about recognizing that every good gift comes from His hand, and that He delights in His children coming to Him with their needs. It's about developing such confidence in His character that you can approach His throne boldly, knowing that He hears you and will respond according to His perfect wisdom and unfailing love.

Let us embrace this privilege with the confidence Hebrews 4:16 invites: "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Your heavenly Father is waiting to hear from you. What petition will you bring to Him today?

"The prayer of petition is a privilege that comes with being in relationship with a loving and caring Father. It is a prayer that refuses to be moved by what it sees. It is a prayer that will not allow negative circumstances to dictate whether or not you believe that what you prayed will come to pass."

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Standing in the Gap for Others

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." — Ezekiel 22:30

The phone call came at 3:00 a.m. Alice's heart was racing as she listened to the Holy Spirit's urgent whisper. Something was terribly wrong. She couldn't explain it, but she knew with absolute certainty that her husband was in danger. While shopping earlier that day at Home Depot, God had given her a vision—a man with a gun walking into her husband's office. The image was so vivid, so disturbing, that she immediately dropped to her knees right there in the aisle between the power tools and paint supplies.

For the next forty-five minutes, Alice engaged in spiritual warfare. She pleaded the blood of Jesus over her husband. She quoted Scripture after Scripture, declaring God's protection. She stood in the gap between death and life, between darkness and light. She didn't know the details, but she knew this was life or death.

Later that day, a doctor walked into her husband's pastoral office. The man confessed that he had been on his way to kill the pastor with a gun in his briefcase. But something had stopped him—an invisible force, a sudden conviction, an unexplainable change of heart. That day, through Alice's obedient intercession, three lives were saved: her husband's physical life, the doctor's physical life, and most importantly, the doctor's eternal soul when he gave his heart to Christ.

This is the Prayer of Intercession in action.

Understanding Intercession

The Prayer of Intercession is not a prayer of praise, nor is it about your troubles or your needs. Instead, it is a pointed, persistent pleading on behalf of someone else for a deep need. To intercede means literally "to come in between." The intercessor is one who comes between God and those who need His intervention—standing as a bold warrior in the gap.

Charles Spurgeon powerfully described this when referring to Moses: "Like a bold warrior who defends the wall when there is an opening for the adversary and destruction is rushing in upon the city, Moses stopped the way of avenging justice with his prayers."

In many churches today, all prayer is called "intercession." Some believers think it's the only effective kind of praying. However, as we've been learning throughout this book, there are many kinds of prayer, and each kind has its own purpose and rules. The Bible is very clear on this. In reality, the most effective prayer is the prayer the Holy Spirit inspires us to pray for what is needed at the moment—whether it's the prayer of agreement, the prayer of faith, the prayer of praise and worship, or some other type of prayer.

Often different kinds of prayer work together, much like the fingers on a hand. For instance, supplication—an earnest, heartfelt request—is used in intercession. The reason we're teaching about the different kinds of prayers and the rules for each is to help you have a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about each type, so your prayers will be more effective.

Be careful not to get too bogged down in rules, or you can lose the true spirit of prayer by becoming too legalistic and clinical in your praying. It's more important to recognize and learn to flow with the Holy Spirit in prayer than merely to know correct prayer terminology. However, when equipped with true biblical knowledge about the different kinds of

prayer, you can cooperate more fully with the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit always works in conjunction with the Word.

The Biblical Foundation

Scripture is filled with powerful examples of intercessory prayer. Let's examine some of the greatest intercessors who walked this earth:

Abraham's Bold Intercession

One of the earliest examples of intercessory prayer is found in Genesis 18, when Abraham pleaded with God for the well-being of the people of Sodom. Instead of being overcome with his own needs, Abraham prayed for those around him. He bargained with God, asking if He would spare the city for fifty righteous people, then forty-five, then forty, decreasing all the way down to ten. Abraham was much concerned about Sodom because his nephew, Lot, was living there. Abraham knew that if judgment came upon Sodom, Lot and his family would suffer with the rest. This is the heart of an intercessor—one who risks standing between God's righteous judgment and those who deserve it.

Moses: Standing Between Death and Life

Moses is perhaps the Old Testament's greatest example of an intercessor. In Exodus 8:28, Pharaoh himself requested that Moses pray for him: "Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.'" Later, in Exodus 15:25, Moses petitioned God on behalf of the Hebrew people: "Then Moses cried out to the LORD..." Moses prayed for others with urgency and boldness.

But perhaps his most dramatic intercession is found in Numbers 16, when a plague broke out among the Israelites. Aaron stood swinging the censer, and the smoke rose in a white line and divided the living from the dead. Where that

white smoke went up from the censer, the plague stopped. That is intercession: coming—at the risk of your own life—between the dead and those who are due to die, then offering up fervent prayer and supplication, like that white smoke from the censer, until the plague ceases.

The Apostle Paul's Passionate Prayers

Several of Paul's prayers of intercession are recorded in the New Testament. In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul prayed for the believers: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

Paul's ministry was saturated with intercession. He wrote to the Colossians, "We have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you" (Colossians 1:9). Can you imagine? Continuous, unceasing prayer for others!

The Church's Power in Unity

The early church understood the power of corporate intercession. Acts 12:5 tells us, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him." The result? An angel was dispatched, chains fell off, prison doors opened, and Peter walked free. This is the power of intercession when believers unite in prayer.

Jesus: The Ultimate Intercessor

Jesus is the greatest intercessor of all time! His entire earthly ministry was marked by intercession:

- He prayed for Peter when Satan sought to sift him like wheat (Luke 22:32): "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

- He prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34): "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'"
- He prayed His High Priestly Prayer in John 17, interceding for His disciples and for all believers throughout eternity.

And even now, at this very moment, Romans 8:34 tells us that Christ Jesus "is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." Every moment of every day, Jesus is standing in the gap between God and you, fighting on your behalf, pleading your case before the mighty Judge, our Heavenly Father, and doing it with His own blood.

The Call to Intercession

First Timothy 2:1-5 makes it clear that intercession is not optional for believers: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

This ministry of intercession is a calling placed on all Christians. Not everyone is called to pastor, write, sing, or lead Bible studies, but everyone is called to a ministry of praying for others. It's a high calling for the righteous person in Jesus Christ.

In other words, if you have truly experienced God's grace, you cannot help but intercede for others. A lack of intercession reveals a shallow walk with God.

How Intercessory Prayer Works

Intercessory prayer is not about getting God to follow our plan. Rather, it's actively praying for the strongholds in other people's lives to line up with God's Word. It's a battle against evil spiritual powers that requires courage and diligence.

Paul reminded the church in Ephesians 6:18 to "pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." This type of persistent intercessory prayer opens the door to bring about deliverance and deeper growth in others' lives.

When you actively speak against the enemy's designs, stand on the promises of God, and remind God of His Word, the enemy's attacks are thwarted. Light flows into areas where there was previously darkness (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). So don't give up, even when the answer is not yet visible.

A Word of Caution

As you pray for others, it's important not to take on the burden of the problem yourself, as that can be spiritually damaging. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon cautions believers to guard our hearts above all else (Proverbs 4:23). So be vigilant to intercede for the rebellious, the addicted, and the hurting, but guard your own heart against undue emotional strain and burdens.

You are not the savior—Jesus is. You are simply the vessel through whom His power flows. When the burden lifts, the assignment is done. Learn to recognize when God is releasing you from a particular intercessory assignment.

Practical Application: How to Use Intercessory Prayer

1. Be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit's Prompting

Be attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading about situations going on in the lives of those around you—family, coworkers, friends, church members. The Lord may wake you in the middle of the night and put a person or situation on your heart. You may not know exactly what's involved, but there's something inside you that's troubling you or simply won't let go. Begin to pray for that person or situation, interceding for them.

One Bible scholar defined standing in the gap as the call "to expose oneself for the protection of something." This means you take the position on the battlefield in place of a wounded brother or sister in Christ. This isn't always the easiest thing to do, but it's certainly the necessary thing to do.

2. Expand Your Circle of Intercession

How about your community or country and its political leaders? What about your church and the pastors? Are there situations, decisions to be made, spiritual battles being fought? Those are all perfect situations in which to apply intercessory prayer. Begin praying for them and continue praying, even when you're tempted to give up.

3. Persist Even When You Can't See Results

Prayer can be challenging because we don't always see the answer immediately. But that's no reason to stop. James 5:16 promises us, "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." Stay motivated and encouraged to persist in prayer, even when things haven't changed in the natural realm. God is constantly at work in the supernatural, and your intercessory prayers are not in vain!

Andrew Murray, another giant of the faith, expressed the intercessor's commitment this way: "God appoints watchmen not only to warn men—often they will not hear—but also to summon Him to come to their aid whenever need or enemy may be threatening. The great mark of the intercessor is that they are not to hold their peace day or night, to take no rest, and to give God no rest, until the deliverance comes."

4. Arm Yourself with Scripture

Effective intercession requires knowing God's Word. When you memorize Scripture, the Holy Spirit has ammunition to bring to your remembrance in moments of crisis. When Alice

interceded for her husband in that Home Depot aisle, she was quoting specific battle verses that she had committed to memory. Without those verses stored in her heart, the Holy Spirit would have had nothing to work with.

The Historical Power of Intercession

Church history is filled with examples of how intercession has changed the course of nations. In the early 1800s, a revival swept through the New England area of America. Churches in the area had been dried up for a while, and fervor for God had declined. A man by the name of Charles Finney felt led by the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel to towns throughout the Northeast. Charles became the face of one of America's greatest revivals; however, he didn't work alone. Behind the scenes was a man standing in the gap—Daniel Nash. He had pastored a church for a long time and once preached the Gospel but turned to a ministry of prayer, serving in a quiet room all by himself.

Daniel Nash would arrive in a town days before Finney and rent a room where he would pray and fast, sometimes for days on end, interceding for the revival meetings that were to come. The results were astounding—entire towns were transformed by the power of God. One man's intercession partnered with another man's preaching to produce one of the greatest spiritual awakenings America has ever seen.

Prayer saved a nation. To intercede in prayer is to be like a bold warrior. If the battle is won in prayer, then there must be warriors willing to stand in the gap and fight.

The Blessing of Intercession

Another often-overlooked benefit of intercessory prayer is that it brings about a deeper abiding in God in your personal walk with the Lord. When you consistently intercede for others, something profound happens in your own heart. It fosters a deep sense of compassion, selflessness, and

connection to the body of Christ. You become more in tune with God's purposes and more aware of the needs around you.

Spurgeon observed that intercessory prayer "opens man's soul, gives a healthy play to his sympathies, constrains him to feel that he is not everybody, and that this wide world and this great universe were not after all made that he might be its petty lord, that everything might bend to his will, and all creatures crouch at his feet."

In other words, intercession cures us of self-centeredness. It enlarges our hearts to beat with the rhythm of God's own heart for humanity.

An Illustration: The Wall and the Gap

In ancient times, many large cities had walls surrounding them to provide protection from enemies. These walls represented safety, security, and life itself. When part of the wall was broken down—whether through enemy attack, natural erosion, or neglect—the city became vulnerable. The broken gap in the wall was an open invitation to disaster.

Brave soldiers were needed to risk their lives by literally standing in the broken wall's gap to turn back the enemy until the breach could be repaired. These warriors would position themselves in the most dangerous spot, exposing themselves to enemy fire, making themselves living shields between destruction and the people they loved.

This is the picture God uses in Ezekiel 22:30. The nation of Judah had become corrupt. The wall of righteousness that should have guarded the land was broken down. God looked for someone—anyone—who would stand in that gap, who would position themselves between His righteous judgment and the people who deserved it. But He found no one. And because no intercessor stood in the gap, judgment fell.

Today, there are broken places all around us. Your unsaved family member has a gap in their spiritual wall—addiction, rebellion, unbelief. Your struggling friend has a breach where depression and hopelessness are flooding in. Your nation has gaps where immorality and godlessness are pouring through. Your church may have vulnerable places where the enemy is attempting to gain a foothold.

God is looking for intercessors—men and women who will stand in those gaps, who will position themselves between darkness and light, between judgment and mercy, between death and life. He's looking for warriors who will take the dangerous position, who will expose themselves to spiritual warfare on behalf of others, who will refuse to move until breakthrough comes.

Will you be that person? Will you stand in the gap?

Becoming an Effective Intercessor

To develop a powerful ministry of intercession, consider these essential practices:

Cultivate Intimacy with God

You cannot give away what you don't possess. The closer you walk with God, the more effectively you can intercede. Spurgeon noted that those who pray best are those who make the most certain of their personal relationship with God.

Study God's Word

Your prayers should be saturated with Scripture. The promises of God become the ammunition of the intercessor. When you know what God has said, you can pray with confidence and authority.

Develop a Prayer List

Keep a written record of those you're interceding for. This helps maintain focus and allows you to document God's faithfulness when He answers.

Set Aside Dedicated Time

Effective intercession requires time. Martin Luther famously said that he was so busy, he had to pray three hours a day to get everything done. The great intercessors of history were those who gave significant time to prayer.

Learn to Listen

Intercession is not just about talking to God; it's about hearing from God. Learn to be quiet in His presence, allowing Him to direct your prayers according to His will and timing.

Pray with Faith and Expectation

Charles Spurgeon declared: "There is nothing that intercessory prayer cannot do. Believer, you have a mighty engine in your hand—use it well, use it constantly, use it now with faith, and you shall surely prevail."

The Ultimate Example

Never forget that you have the greatest Intercessor in history praying for you right now. Romans 8:34 tells us that Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. When you feel weak, when you feel like giving up, when you wonder if your prayers matter—remember that Jesus Himself is standing in the gap for you.

And if He intercedes for us, how can we do any less for others?

Conclusion

The Prayer of Intercession is not a luxury for super-spiritual saints. It's the calling of every believer, the privilege of every child of God, and the responsibility of every member of Christ's body. "The Church has not yet touched the fringe of the possibilities of intercessory prayer. Her largest victories will be witnessed when individual Christians everywhere come to recognize their priesthood unto God and day by day give themselves unto prayer."

The world desperately needs intercessors. Families are falling apart. Churches are struggling. Nations are in turmoil. Souls are perishing. And God is looking for someone who will stand in the gap.

Ezekiel 22:30 records God's lament: "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one."

Let that not be said of this generation. Let it not be said that when God looked for intercessors, He found no one. Rise up, beloved. Take your position in the gap. Stand firm in prayer. Refuse to give up. Persist until breakthrough comes.

The battle is won in prayer. The victories are claimed through intercession. The miracles are birthed in the place of prayer. And you—yes, you—have been called to this high and holy ministry.

Someone's deliverance depends on your faithfulness. Someone's salvation may hinge on your persistence. Someone's breakthrough awaits your intercession.

Will you answer the call? Will you stand in the gap?

"From the day of Pentecost, there has been not one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three. And no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined." — A.T. Pierson

THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

The Power of Agreement

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." — Matthew 18:19-20

Maria's daughter had been in the hospital for weeks with a serious infection that doctors couldn't get under control. Exhausted and afraid, Maria called her friend Angela and asked her to pray. Instead of just offering comfort, Angela said, "Let's agree together right now for her complete healing."

Over the phone, their voices joined in faith as they prayed according to Matthew 18:19: *"If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."* They declared healing in Jesus' name and thanked God for His promise.

The next morning, Maria received a call from the hospital. The infection had suddenly begun to clear up, and by the end of the week, her daughter was completely healed. Even the doctors couldn't explain it.

Maria knew exactly what happened — two believers came into agreement, and heaven responded.

That's the power of the prayer of agreement: when faith joins faith, God's power is released, and breakthroughs become undeniable.

The Foundation: More Than Rules

There is awesome power when you come into agreement with other believers in prayer. Scripture tells us that one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30). Notice the multiplication

factor—it's not merely addition, it's exponential increase. When believers unite in agreement, something supernatural is released that far exceeds what any individual could accomplish alone.

In the natural realm, when people combine their efforts in work, what they accomplish corporately is far greater than what they can do individually. Corporations understand this principle—when businesses flow together in agreement and cooperation, their profit margin and market impact can be multiplied exponentially through corporate effort. The same principle operates in the spiritual realm. When believers come into genuine agreement in prayer, heaven responds with multiplied power.

The foundation for the Prayer of Agreement is found in Matthew 18:15-20. But here's what many believers miss: Jesus didn't just drop verses 19 and 20 into the conversation randomly. He gave us a crucial context—a prelude—that determines whether our agreement will be powerful or powerless.

The Prerequisite: Reconciliation

Before Jesus ever mentions the Prayer of Agreement, He lays down an essential prerequisite: reconciliation. Look at Matthew 18:15: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother."

What is the goal of telling someone their fault? To tell them off? Set them straight? Knock them back a lick? No! It's to gain your brother or sister. Why? Because if there has been an offense against you, then there is a breach or breakdown—a place where the enemy can come in and destroy the power of agreement.

Notice carefully: Jesus says the first step in resolving a difficulty is to go to the person alone. It doesn't say, "Talk to

your best friend about it. Confide in your husband or wife about it. Confide in your minister about it." It says, "Go and talk with that person alone."

Many of the world's problems, difficulties in relationships, negotiation breakdowns, and problems in churches and families would be resolved if this step were taken. When the objective is reconciliation and restoration, then the attitude that comes across will produce an atmosphere where reconciliation and restoration are possible.

The attitude is so important. When you go to someone and say, "You're wrong, buddy," do you think there will be a reconciliation? It's not likely! But if you approach it by asking, "Could you explain to me what happened?" or "Why did this take place?" you create an atmosphere free of hostility where restoration can take place.

Some people's greatest exercise is jumping to conclusions, running down their neighbors, and pitching a fit. Make an effort to get the facts. Some people spend their lives being upset or angry with people, which will eat away at them like cancer. "Go to the person alone" is a prelude Jesus gives to the Prayer of Agreement. You cannot pray powerfully with someone you refuse to reconcile with.

The Process: Steps to Resolution"

Jesus outlines a clear process:

Step 1: Private Confrontation (Matthew 18:15) Go to the offender alone. Most conflicts would be resolved at this level if people would simply obey this instruction.

Step 2: Bring Witnesses (Matthew 18:16) "But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'" This principle of two or three witnesses, found in both the Old and New Testaments, is to establish or verify something. This doesn't mean to go and get your two meanest, biggest

friends. It means to go with two people who are objective and who will hear and understand both sides.

When I counsel people who have differences or conflicts—whether married couples, staff members in our church, or even students in our school—when the first person tells their side of the story, I wonder why the other person doesn’t just change and ask for forgiveness. Then, when the other person shares their side of the story, you wonder if they’re talking about the same situation! There’s also a difference when you hear people tell something in private versus when you have them tell it in front of someone. It’s amazing how stories change!

In the world, the principle of using two or three witnesses is called arbitration. All parties agree to a group of people who will objectively hear both sides, and they agree to abide by the decision of that group. This is what Jesus was teaching.

Step 3: Tell It to the Church (Matthew 18:17) “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” This doesn’t mean that every Sunday morning we should air all the grievances before the entire congregation. This would make the church a courtroom and destroy the anointing in the service. Jesus is talking about the leadership of the church—the representative leaders to whom you are submitted.

When someone refuses to be reconciled, they are acting in unforgiveness, and in the spirit of unforgiveness, they are acting like an unsaved person. Saved people are forgivers!

The Power Killer: Unforgiveness

Peter dealt with this critical issue in 1 Peter 3:1-7, concluding with these sobering words to husbands: “dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker

vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Did you catch that? Treating people wrong and not reconciling relationships will break down the power of your prayer life. I have heard people say, “I have prayed and confessed the Word. I am tithing. Why isn’t it working?” Usually, I ask, “Have you checked your love life? Are you walking in love toward other people? Have you reconciled your differences?”

Just because someone is mad at you doesn’t mean you have to be mad at them. Just because someone is having an argument doesn’t mean you have to have one with them. It can be a one-sided deal. Make every effort to reconcile.

Follow the steps Jesus gave, and then pray for the offender: “Lord, I forgive, release, and bless _____. I want this completely out of my spirit. Every time I think about _____, I am going to thank You that You are working in them.” In this way, you protect your own spirit.

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” The issues or forces of life are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Protect your spirit, for out of it flows the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If your spirit is clogged up with unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment, then the fruit won’t flow as freely as it should.

Joseph’s Example

Joseph couldn’t be stopped from reaching the highest promotion God had planned for him, in spite of three major offenses in his life. His brothers sold him into slavery. He was maliciously slandered by Potiphar’s wife. He ended up forgotten in prison. Yet in Genesis 50:20, Joseph summed up the whole ordeal: “But as for you, you meant evil against me;

but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

What God has planned for you cannot be stopped by what other people do against you. Joseph could not be stopped because he kept on forgiving. He kept rising to the top. He rose to the top in Potiphar’s house, and they put him down. At the bottom of the prison, he rose to the top again. And then forgotten, he rose to the top from prison to prime minister in one day. Glory to God!

Pastor Billy Joe used to say, “If you don’t get bitter, you will make it.” We try to always choose to “get better.” Bitterness often is at the root of marriage problems, troubles in the church, and other relationships. If people would practice the principles Jesus gave for reconciliation in Matthew 18, most of those situations would be reconciled.

Understanding Binding and Loosing

After establishing the importance of reconciliation, Jesus says: “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18).

What is Jesus talking about? He just got through dealing with forgiveness and reconciliation. Now He’s talking about binding and loosing. Many of us have been taught verse 18 out of context. In context, when you forgive people on the earth, you loose the power of heaven upon their lives. When you don’t forgive or reconcile with them on earth, you stop the power of God from ministering to them.

Reconciliation and restoration are loosed when you forgive someone, but people are bound by an offense when an attitude of unforgiveness prevails.

I have ministered to many people over the years who have come to the altar for prayer at the end of one of our church services. They may have an illness, an emotional problem, or

some other need. Many times, the root of their problem is unforgiveness—with a parent who abused them, a spouse who mistreated them, or some other situation in the past they just haven't dealt with. In some cases, they've carried the burden for many years.

Often, I will ask them about their past and if there is something they have not been able to forgive. When they come to the realization that they need to forgive their dad or their ex-spouse or a former boss or even a pastor or someone in ministry, and they genuinely release and forgive that person, I have watched many people get healed emotionally and even sometimes physically. There is power in forgiveness.

Whatever you loose in the earth is loosed in the heavenlies. There is power in what we do on earth with forgiveness. The setting of Luke 6:36-38 is forgiveness: "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

In the way you give, it will be given back to you. Show mercy, and mercy will be released into your life and into the lives of others.

The Promise: True Agreement

Now we come to the promise in Matthew 18:19-20: "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Notice that Jesus is still speaking in the context of forgiveness and reconciliation. Agreement is more than simply saying to someone, “Agree with me.” It is agreement in the Spirit.

The Greek word for “agree” is *sumphoneo*—from which we get our word “symphony.” It literally means “to agree in sound” or “to be in harmony,” as may be heard in a symphony orchestra. Think about that! A symphony is not just one instrument playing the same note over and over. It’s multiple instruments, each with its unique sound, blending together under the direction of a skilled conductor to produce a beautiful, musical masterpiece.

The Requirements for True Agreement

1. You Must Be in Agreement with God You can’t have the power of God working in your life if you aren’t in agreement with God. What does that mean? If you are in bitterness and resentment, you aren’t in agreement with Jesus. Before you agree with another person, agree with Jesus Christ, and make sure your spirit is in agreement with God’s Word and His will.

2. You Need Spiritual Heart Agreement When you really want the power of agreement with another person, you need someone whose spirit is flowing with your spirit, so you don’t simply come into a mental agreement. You need to have a spiritual heart agreement. Charles Spurgeon observed, “In prayer, how slight the difference there is among well-taught believers! They address the throne of grace in the same style, whatever may be the particular form which their Church organization may have assumed.”

3. Agreement Creates Multiplied Power I believe the reason there is such a great attack on marriages is that there is no other agreement on the face of the earth more powerful than that of a husband and wife. Two people in perfect agreement with the Spirit of God make a three-fold cord, and

Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, “A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

An Illustration: The Symphony orchestra

Imagine you’re sitting in a concert hall. The curtain rises, and before you stands a symphony orchestra—violins, cellos, trumpets, flutes, drums, and more. Each instrument is unique. The violin cannot do what the trumpet does. The cello cannot replicate the piccolo’s sound. Each has its own voice, its own timbre, its own range.

Now imagine if every musician decided to play their own song, in their own key, at their own tempo, ignoring the conductor. The result would be chaotic noise—discordant, jarring, painful to the ears. No one would call it music. No one would be blessed or moved. People would leave the concert hall covering their ears.

But now imagine the same orchestra under the direction of a master conductor. He raises his baton. The musicians watch intently. He begins to conduct, and suddenly—magic! The violins soar with a melody. The cellos provide rich harmony. The trumpets punctuate with power. The flutes add delicate beauty. The drums provide rhythm and foundation. Each instrument plays its unique part, but they all blend together into one glorious sound that moves the soul, stirs the heart, and brings tears to the eyes.

That’s the Prayer of Agreement. You don’t lose your uniqueness. You don’t become a clone of someone else. But under the direction of the Master Conductor—the Holy Spirit—your voice blends with other voices to create something far more powerful, far more beautiful, far more effective than you could ever produce alone.

When believers come into true spiritual agreement, the result is a symphony that reaches heaven’s throne room and moves the heart of God. Kenneth Copeland teaches,

“Agreement makes prayer work.” But it must be genuine agreement—symphony, not just similarity.

The Power of Agreement in Action

Kenneth Hagin shared a powerful testimony about the Prayer of Agreement. He was traveling in ministry and needed extra money for Christmas. He wrote his wife, Oretha, telling her to open her Bible to Matthew 18:19 on Sunday afternoon and agree with him for a specific amount of money.

When they took up the offering, there was three dollars more than what they had agreed on. The next week, he asked her to agree again. They received \$1.49 above the amount they had asked for. The Sunday before Christmas, the offering was about twenty dollars short. Hagin insisted they count it again, declaring, “If the money is not there, I will have to go to every church I preached in and tell them Jesus was a liar and the Bible was not true.”

They counted a second time and still came up short. They counted a third time—still the same. Then Hagin remembered that the pastor’s wife had bought a Bible and put money in an envelope before church. When he opened it, there was a twenty-five-dollar offering. They received five dollars above what they had claimed!

Hagin concluded: “Do not put any limitations on Matthew 18:19! The prayer of agreement will work because it is God’s Word.”

When You Can’t Agree on Specifics

Sometimes people ask me to come into agreement with them for their specific vision. If God hasn’t spoken to me about their exact situation, I respond: “I don’t have your vision, and God hasn’t spoken to me about what you are to do, but I can agree with you in my spirit for the will of God to be done.”

When you don't know the specific information needed to come into prayer agreement with someone, you can always agree for the will of the Lord to be done. That's always a safe and powerful place of agreement.

The Power of Agreement Used Negatively

In Genesis 11:6, the power of agreement worked in a negative way when the people determined they were going to build a tower to reach heaven. The Lord had to stop them, so He came down and confused their languages. "And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.'"

They had one mind, one language, and one vision. They weren't saved, nor were they building the tower for God, yet God was saying, "There is power in their human ability that whatever they set their hand to do, they are going to do it unless I stop them." God stopped them because it was an agreement of evil.

This reveals to us the power of unity. If you ever get a group of people into unity for a purpose and you get them into prayer, nothing will be restrained from them if they are in agreement with God. There is awesome power in such agreement.

5 Practical Keys to Powerful Agreement

- 1. Maintain Clean Relationships** You cannot pray powerfully in agreement with someone if there's unresolved conflict between you. Reconcile first, then pray.
- 2. Base Your Agreement on God's Word** True agreement isn't just two people wanting the same thing. It's two people agreeing with what God has already said in His Word.
- 3. Agree in Faith, Not Just in Words** Both parties must believe they receive. Mental agreement without faith is powerless. Kenneth Copeland teaches that he and his wife

Gloria would write out their agreements formally, based on Scripture, and both would sign them as a declaration of faith.

4. Stay in Agreement After you pray in agreement, continue to agree. Don't let doubt, fear, or circumstances pull you apart. Maintain your symphony of faith.

5. Protect the Unity Spurgeon warned, "Nothing is sapping the church of Christ of her strength so much as these unresolved problems, these loose ends among believing Christians that have never been tied up." Guard your unity jealously.

The Ultimate Agreement

The most powerful agreement you'll ever enter is the three-fold cord of you, your prayer partner, and Jesus Himself. Matthew 18:20 declares, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

When Jesus shows up in the middle of your agreement, you have divine power backing your prayer. You're not just two believers hoping God will hear—you have the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and Omega standing in the middle of your circle, adding His authority to your request!

Conclusion: The Call to Symphony

The world is desperate for the power of agreement and harmony. Marriages need the agreement of husband and wife. Churches need the agreement of the body. Communities need the agreement of believers across denominational lines. Nations need the agreement of God's people standing together for righteousness.

But that agreement will only be as powerful as the reconciliation that precedes it and the spiritual harmony that maintains it.

Are you walking in unforgiveness with anyone? Have you taken the steps Jesus outlined in Matthew 18:15-17? Have

you forgiven, released, and blessed those who have hurt you?

Are you in genuine spiritual agreement with your spouse, your prayer partner, your church? Or are you just going through the motions of mental assent without true heart harmony?

The conductor is waiting. The Master is ready. The Holy Spirit wants to direct your symphony of prayer. But you must lay down your instrument of discord—unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, pride—and pick up your instrument of agreement—love, forgiveness, humility, and faith.

When you do, something supernatural will be released. Your one will put a thousand to flight. Your two will put ten thousand to flight. Your agreement will create a symphony that causes heaven to respond and hell to tremble.

Are you ready to symphonize in prayer? Are you ready to experience the awesome power of the Prayer of Agreement?

The promise is sure: "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

That's not a suggestion. It's not a possibility. It's a divine guarantee from the lips of Jesus Himself.

So find someone in harmony with your spirit. Get in agreement with God's Word. Unite your faith. And watch as heaven responds to your symphony of agreement!

"Again, I give you an eternal truth: If two of you agree to ask God for something in a symphony of prayer, my heavenly Father will do it for you. For wherever two or three come together in honor of my name, I am right there with them!" — Matthew 18:19-20 (TPT)

UNITED OR CORPORATE PRAYER

When Heaven Responds to One Accord

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." — Acts 4:31

The date was August 13, 1727. The small Moravian community in Herrnhut, Germany, gathered for their regular communion service. But this day would be different. As they came together in prayer and worship, something extraordinary happened. The Holy Spirit descended upon them with such power that they later described it as their "Pentecost."

What followed became one of the most remarkable prayer movements in church history. These believers established a twenty-four-hour prayer watch that continued unbroken for over one hundred years. Day and night, for more than a century, someone was always praying. The result? The Moravians became the most missionary-minded movement of their generation, sending out more missionaries in twenty years than all of Protestantism had sent out in the previous two centuries.

Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader, would later say that this continuous united prayer was the "mainspring" and "chief glory" of their movement. When believers come together in genuine unity and sustained corporate prayer, heaven responds with power that transforms not just individuals, but entire movements, communities, and nations.

This is the power of united and corporate prayer.

Understanding United Prayer

United and corporate prayer is when believers come together with one heart, one mind, and one purpose to seek God's face and His intervention. It's more than just a group of people praying at the same time in the same place. It's a symphony of hearts beating in spiritual harmony, a chorus of voices lifted in holy agreement, and a demonstration of the body of Christ functioning as one.

The principle is found throughout Scripture. In the natural realm, when people combine their efforts in work, what they accomplish corporately is far greater than what they can do individually. The multiplication factor enters into it. It's the same in prayer as in business. When people flow together in agreement and cooperation with others, their impact can be multiplied exponentially. Many times, their effectiveness and influence on certain situations can be dramatically increased through corporate effort.

Old Testament Examples of United Prayer

The power of united prayer is not a New Testament innovation. Throughout the Old Testament, we see God's people gathering in corporate prayer to seek His face, and we witness the remarkable results that followed.

Esther and Her People: Saved Through United Fasting and Prayer

In the book of Esther, a decree was prepared by Haman, an official in the king's court, with the intent to destroy the entire Jewish culture. The incident that incited Haman to prepare such a document was that Mordecai, a Jew and the man who had raised Esther after her parents died, would not bow or pay homage to him.

Esther had been placed in a position of authority inside the palace where she could intervene in this situation and reverse it for her people, although she had to jeopardize her

own life to do so. She knew she couldn't even attempt to intervene for her people, the Jews, without united fasting and prayer to uphold her.

Once Esther learned of the decree, she received Mordecai's admonition: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14).

Esther's response to Mordecai was bold and decisive: "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16).

Up until this time, Esther's identity had been hidden. She had been selected to be the queen because of her great beauty, but she kept it secret that she was a Jew. When Haman, a wicked and evil man, convinced the king to sign a decree certifying that all the Jews would be killed, the king didn't really understand what Haman was doing.

Esther became motivated real quick to stand in the gap before the king for her people when she realized she, also a Jew, would not be able to escape death either. The Jews began to fast and pray for Esther to use her position as Queen to go before the king. However, there was a law that anyone who went into the inner court of the king without being called would be put to death "except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live..." (Esther 4:11). The Jews were tapping into the power of united prayer.

As a result of Queen Esther's favor with the king, she invited Haman and the king to two banquets. At the second banquet,

she revealed to the king that someone had plotted to kill her and all of her people. Haman was exposed, and he and his sons were hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, while Mordecai was honored. Because of united fasting and prayer, an entire nation was saved.

The goal of united prayer is to seek the Lord for His help and direction. To "seek the Lord" means to go after Him with all of your heart so His will can be accomplished and His promises attained. Because Mordecai, Esther, and the Jews sought the Lord, their planned extermination was reversed. Esther 8:11 records how letters were prepared permitting the Jews in every city to gather together and protect their lives. Verse 16 says, "The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor." That happened because of united fasting and prayer!

Jehoshaphat and the Israelites: Delivered Through United Prayer

A similar situation happened with Jehoshaphat and the Israelites who were surrounded by three enemy armies. Jehoshaphat was a man of God, and he didn't know what to do but pray.

"It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, 'A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar' (which is En Gedi). And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord" (2 Chronicles 20:1-4).

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and prayed: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the

nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?" (2 Chronicles 20:5-6).

United prayer doesn't mean that no one prays a singular prayer. As the group was united in seeking the Lord, their prayer was recorded. Evidently there was a time when people stopped, and one man expressed the heart cry of the multitude. Wrapped together in one man's prayer, their plight and cry for divine intervention were brought before the Lord.

God doesn't get bothered by everyone praying at once. If He does, He's in big trouble, because there are millions of people all over the world praying at once. He hears individual prayer as well as corporate prayer all at the same time. There are times when one person needs to take the heart cry of what everyone has prayed in corporate prayer and bring it before the Lord.

Jehoshaphat continued: "Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?" (2 Chronicles 20:7). Jehoshaphat was putting God in remembrance, rehearsing the covenant God had made with them.

He went on: "And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our distress, and You will hear and save'" (2 Chronicles 20:8-9).

Then Jehoshaphat presented the current crisis: "And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit" (2 Chronicles 20:10-11).

Jehoshaphat's only hope was in God. He knew that without God's help, not only was his neck at stake, but everyone else would be slaughtered too. He said to God: "O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You" (2 Chronicles 20:12).

We have no might or power in our natural ability against the enemy we face in this hour. We have all might and power in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, but in our natural ability, we don't have the goods to match a former archangel of God who is now bent on destroying the earth and all of its inhabitants. In our natural man, we are no match against the devil. Jehoshaphat said, "Lord, our eyes are on You!" When we get our eyes on the Lord, then we will know what to do.

Jehoshaphat, an anointed king, was rehearsing his condition. He had a covenant with God, but in his own ability, he could do nothing, so he reminded God, "We are no match against this army without Your help, Lord." I think it would be good every day if we remembered that we are dust in our natural ability and that without God, we can't make it. Jesus rephrased this in the New Testament: "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Jehoshaphat's prayer wasn't a negative prayer. He was simply stating the conditions, rehearsing God's commitment to him, and welcoming His help. How do you pray when you've got three armies coming up against you? Maybe you've got leukemia, tuberculosis, and heart problems—three armies coming against you at once. Maybe you have gone through a divorce, you have been abused as a child, or you are without a job.

You have had problems in your past, you have problems in your present, and you know there are problems ahead of you in your future. You've got three armies arrayed against you at

once with one intent: to annihilate you. Satan and his forces have come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). That's what these armies had come to do. That's why we can take stories from the Old Testament and relate them to where we are at this very moment in time. These things were written as an example for us to learn from.

Jehoshaphat and the Israelites cried out to God and fasted, prayed, and came into agreement. Jehoshaphat's battle wasn't with flesh and blood, and neither is ours. It was with principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness in heavenly places.

Amos 3:3 asks, "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Just having a crowd doesn't necessarily produce power, nor does it guarantee power. When people are focused on Jesus and they come into agreement, there will be positive results.

God instructed Habakkuk to "write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it" (Habakkuk 2:2). Everyone needs to know why they are praying and the goal toward which they are praying for united prayer to be effective. That means someone has to declare it. Jehoshaphat stood up and declared it.

When people are together but they are praying in different directions, you don't have corporate, united prayer. It's like trying to move a large couch. It is a lot easier for five people to move it than one. One person simply can't do it, but if five people come at the same time, they can do it.

It is the same way in prayer. If everyone will focus on a singular thing at one time, the united energy will be far greater than the addition of all of our energies going in separate directions. In other words, if one person tries to lift something, he exerts all of his energy. But if you take the same amount of energy and combine it corporately on a singular object, it will move. That's the power of united

prayer. Nothing will be restrained to those who have one mind and are speaking the same thing. Whatever they put their hand to, it will happen.

New Testament Examples of United Prayer

The power of united prayer and the same prayer principles that worked with Esther and with Jehoshaphat are also found in the New Testament—and with even greater power through the finished work of Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

In Acts 1, Jesus told the disciples to gather in the upper room and "wait for the Promise of the Father..." (Acts 1:4). He was speaking of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

Acts 1:15 indicates that 120 people were gathered in the upper room, which included Mary, the mother of Jesus, the disciples, and the brethren of Jesus. They devoted themselves to prayer with one accord.

Acts 2:1 speaks of one of the greatest miracles in the Bible: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Can you imagine 120 people in one accord in one place? They were in unity, agreement, and harmony. This was no small feat. These were people with different backgrounds, different temperaments, different experiences with Jesus, and different expectations about what was coming. Yet they achieved true spiritual unity.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

The great events that took place on the day of Pentecost were preceded by people coming into unity. If churches want the power of God today, they must have this same unity. To the degree that people will come into one accord, the Spirit of God will be poured out in like measure.

Peter stood up and said: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy'" (Acts 2:16-18).

Then Peter declared: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:36-39).

Maybe you have been in places where there was disagreement and disharmony, and there was an outpouring, not of the Holy Spirit, but of different spirits—strife, division, fighting, and bickering. When we come into agreement, God's Spirit will move. People will be saved and delivered. That's what happened in Acts 2. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then Peter stood up and preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and 3,000 people were saved.

We should pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives daily, for the boldness to speak God's Word, and for the harvest of souls to be loosed into God's Kingdom.

The Lame Man Healed

In Acts 3, Peter and John went down to the temple gate and ministered healing to a lame man. As a result of this man's testimony of healing, 5,000 more people were saved.

Peter and John were headed to the temple together for corporate prayer when this miracle took place. They participated in corporate prayer on a regular basis. When people pray, not only will people be filled with the Holy Spirit, not only will the Word be spoken with boldness that brings about salvation, but it will also produce an atmosphere for miracles. Corporate prayer will bring the power of God on the scene to meet every need.

Peter spoke to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Verses 7 and 8 indicate the lame man's response: "Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God."

There are four parts to this miracle:

1. Corporate prayer
2. The lame man's healing
3. The man's testimony of his healing
4. Five thousand people were born again

The Church began with signs, wonders, and miracles. There is no reason for us to stop it in this day and hour. If they needed signs, wonders, and miracles then, how much more do we need them now? Thank God for medicine and education, but they cannot meet all of the needs of the human race. We need the power of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Praying for Boldness in the Face of Opposition

As a result of this miracle and the testimony of it, Peter and John ended up before the authorities. They were called on the carpet because they had caused a ruckus in Jerusalem by declaring that it was in Jesus' name, through faith in His name, that the lame man had been made strong (Acts 3:16).

The high priest rebuked Peter and John and told them not to speak anymore in Jesus' name. Peter and John responded: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

"So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed. And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord..." (Acts 4:21-24).

Notice that phrase again: "with one accord." This is the key to powerful corporate prayer. They prayed: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.' For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done" (Acts 4:24-28).

Peter traced two experiences: one of David and the other of Jesus. David was faced with all types of obstacles and adverse, negative circumstances, and he cried out to the

Lord. David knew that God would fight for him. Though an army would encamp round about him, he knew God would be with him. He declared that in his prayer.

Peter was saying, "I'm in the same position David was in. I'm in the same position You were in, Jesus." You may be in that position today. The enemy has come, and his plan is the same as it always has been: to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Obviously, what Peter and John had done went against the grain of the kingdom of darkness. It challenged the devil, and they were persecuted for it.

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30).

This is an hour when we need to pray for holy boldness. Many have prayed for other people to change or for circumstances in the land to change. Peter didn't pray any of that. He said, "Lord, let something happen on the inside of us. Grant that Your servants will be bold."

Peter prayed for the people's lives. He wasn't praying for the religious leaders who had threatened him, for those who were going to make laws to intimidate, threaten, or curtail their ministry activities. He said, "Lord, let Your healing miracles happen." We need to pray for miracles, signs, and wonders—obvious manifestations of the supernatural—that will give credence and evidence that Jesus is alive.

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

When people come together in one accord in unified prayer, the whole place will shake with supernatural signs, wonders,

and miracles. After the Holy Spirit came on them, they weren't intimidated by the leaders who had threatened them.

"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32).

Now we see something else. After they were filled with the Holy Spirit, not only did they speak the Word with boldness, but a spirit of love, unity, and compassion for one another came inside of them. The supernatural manifestations of the power of God should bring us closer together and give us more compassion for one another.

Verse 33 says, "And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all."

Acts 5:12-14 continues: "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."

When there are supernatural signs, wonders, and miracles, it will result in the salvation of lost people. "They brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:15-16).

United prayer initiated these miracles. The believers were in agreement in the face of opposition, and God brought the miracles.

The Holy Spirit Speaks in Corporate Prayer

When we come into corporate prayer, not only does the Holy Spirit come, not only do miracles happen and people get healed, not only is the Word preached with boldness resulting in people getting saved, but when we pray in a united way, the Holy Spirit speaks.

We find an example of this in Acts 13:1-2: "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

United prayer doesn't have to be the entire church body. It can be a group of people coming into agreement anywhere, praying for God's will to be done.

An Illustration: The Orchestra of Prayer

Imagine walking into a grand concert hall. On stage sits a full symphony orchestra—perhaps a hundred musicians, each holding a different instrument. The violins sit in their section, the brass instruments in theirs, the woodwinds, percussion, and strings all arranged according to their type.

Now picture what would happen if each musician decided to warm up their instrument all at the same time, with no coordination, no conductor, no unified purpose. The violinist practices scales while the trumpeter blasts high notes, the drummer pounds away, and the cellist plays warm-up exercises. The result? Absolute chaos. A cacophony of discordant noise that drives people from the hall with their hands covering their ears. No beauty. No power. No impact. Just noise.

But now imagine the conductor steps onto the podium. He taps his baton, and immediately every eye is fixed on him. He

raises his hands, and silence falls. Then, with a graceful movement, he begins to conduct. Suddenly, something miraculous happens.

The same instruments that moments ago produced chaos now create harmony. The violins enter with a gentle melody. The cellos provide rich undertones. The flutes add delicate embellishments. The trumpets punctuate with power. The percussion provides rhythm and foundation. Each section plays its unique part, yet they all blend together into one glorious sound.

The music swells and builds. It moves from gentle whispers to thunderous crescendos. It touches the heart, stirs the soul, brings tears to the eyes, and causes the spirit to soar. The same instruments, the same musicians, but under the direction of a master conductor, they create something far beyond what any individual could produce alone.

This is united and corporate prayer. Each believer is a unique instrument. You have your own voice, your own gifts, your own experiences with God. But when we come together under the direction of the Master Conductor—the Holy Spirit—our individual prayers blend into a symphony of intercession that shakes heaven, moves the heart of God, and releases divine power on earth.

The key is not uniformity—everyone praying the exact same words. The key is unity—everyone praying with one accord, one purpose, one heart, all under the direction of the Holy Spirit. When that happens, the place is shaken, believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Word is spoken with boldness, signs and wonders follow, and multitudes are added to the Kingdom.

The Power of the Family Unit in United Prayer

United prayer doesn't have to be the church body. It can be a group of people coming into agreement anywhere, praying

for God's will to be done. In fact, the family unit is the most powerful unit that can come into agreement in united prayer. No one can get closer than a family who lives together, who are joined together naturally by blood and supernaturally by the blood of Jesus Christ.

My wife Trudy and I make it a priority to pray together almost every morning, starting our day in unity and faith, combining the power of united prayer and the prayer of agreement. These moments of shared prayer are not just a ritual but a powerful expression of agreement and unity in the Spirit, as Matthew 18:19 reminds us: "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

Together, we declare the promises of God over our family, our ministry, and every situation we face. We boldly speak the Word of God, proclaiming that "no weapon formed against us shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17). We remind ourselves of His divine protection, affirming Psalm 91:11: "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." We thank Him for His faithfulness, speaking life over our endeavors, believing that "whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

In our prayers, gratitude flows freely. We thank the Lord for His grace, His mercy, and the ultimate gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:13 resonates deeply in our hearts: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Because of Him, we walk in divine health, eternal life, and the prosperity that comes from His blessing.

While we each cherish our personal prayer times, we recognize the unique power of praying together corporately and in agreement. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reminds us, "Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken." There is a

strength and unity in agreement that brings heaven's power to earth.

Reversing Negative Situations Through United Prayer

The prayer of Esther was that she would have favor with the king so the Jews would be saved. In Jehoshaphat's case, prayer was for supernatural deliverance in battle. On the day of Pentecost, they were praying for the promise of the Father. They didn't fully understand what it was, except He had said the Holy Spirit would come. They didn't know how He would manifest or what was going to happen, but they prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In each case, united prayer reversed what seemed to be an impossible situation. United prayer brought divine intervention where human effort would have failed. United prayer opened doors that were locked, freed prisoners who were bound, healed bodies that were broken, and saved souls that were lost.

What impossible situation are you facing today? What enemy has surrounded you? What diagnosis has been declared over you? What financial crisis threatens your family? What prodigal child breaks your heart? What spiritual dryness plagues your church?

The answer is the same as it was for Esther, for Jehoshaphat, for the disciples in the upper room, and for the persecuted believers in Acts 4: united prayer in one accord under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

8 Keys to Effective United Prayer

Based on these biblical examples, here are essential keys to effective united and corporate prayer:

1. Unity of Purpose Everyone must know why they are praying and the goal toward which they are praying. Someone needs to clearly declare the vision and the need.

When people are praying in different directions, you don't have genuine corporate prayer.

2. One Accord in Spirit Corporate anointing is quickly accomplished by praying and worshipping together, achieving what the Bible calls "coming together in one mind and in one accord." Individuals in a group gathering can be so timid and internal in their prayers and worship that the group never achieves a true unity of spirit. Unity of spirit is far more important than uniformity of words.

3. Persistence and Consistency The Moravians prayed continuously for over a century. The early church devoted themselves to prayer. George Mueller prayed for specific things until he received them. United prayer is not a one-time event but a sustained commitment.

4. Faith and Expectation Corporate prayer should be characterized by faith that God hears and will answer. When believers come together expecting God to move, He responds to that faith.

5. Spiritual Sensitivity A good way to enter into corporate anointing is by simply yielding to an anointed vocal lead that has lifted their voice up in prayer or praise to draw the group into unity. Be sensitive to the flow of the Holy Spirit and how He is directing the corporate prayer time.

6. Reconciliation and Unity You cannot have powerful corporate prayer if there is division, bitterness, or unforgiveness among the believers. As we learned in the chapter on the Prayer of Agreement, reconciliation must precede powerful united prayer.

7. Boldness in Declaration The early church prayed boldly for signs, wonders, and miracles. They didn't pray timidly or apologetically. They declared God's Word with confidence and expected Him to confirm it with power.

8. Gratitude and Worship United prayer should include thanksgiving and worship, not just petition. The early church was continually in the temple praising God. Praise prepares the atmosphere for God's presence and power.

The Results of United Prayer

When believers come together in genuine unity and pray with one accord, the results are both predictable and supernatural:

- **The Holy Spirit is poured out** - Pentecost demonstrates that unified prayer opens the door for fresh outpourings of the Spirit.
- **Boldness is released** - After praying together in Acts 4, the believers spoke God's Word with boldness.
- **Miracles happen** - Signs, wonders, and healings follow corporate prayer as God confirms His Word with power.
- **Salvation of souls** - Three thousand were saved at Pentecost, five thousand after the healing of the lame man. United prayer creates an atmosphere where the lost encounter Christ.
- **Unity and love increase** - After being filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 4, the believers were of one heart and soul, sharing everything in common.
- **The place is shaken** - When they prayed in Acts 4:31, the place where they were assembled was physically shaken. United prayer releases supernatural power.
- **Divine direction is received** - In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit spoke during corporate prayer and fasting, giving specific direction for ministry.
- **Impossible situations are reversed** - Esther's nation was saved, Jehoshaphat's enemies were defeated, Peter was released from prison. United prayer changes circumstances that seem unchangeable.

Historical Examples of United Prayer's Power

Church history is filled with examples of how united prayer has transformed communities, sparked revivals, and changed nations.

The Welsh Revival (1904-1905)

Evan Roberts, a young coal miner, began gathering small groups for prayer. As these prayer meetings multiplied and believers united in fervent intercession, revival broke out across Wales. Within a few months, over 100,000 people came to Christ. Crime rates dropped so dramatically that police were unemployed. Bars closed for lack of business. The entire moral fabric of the nation was transformed—all because believers united in prayer.

The Prayer Meeting That Founded America

On July 4, 1776, while the Declaration of Independence was being signed, something equally significant was happening. Believers across the colonies had united in prayer for God's blessing on the new nation. Benjamin Franklin, though not known for his evangelical faith, proposed during the Constitutional Convention that they begin each session with prayer, stating that without God's help, they would "succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

The Azusa Street Revival

The great Pentecostal revival that began on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906 was birthed in small prayer meetings where believers gathered with one accord, seeking God's face. William Seymour and a handful of believers prayed until the Holy Spirit fell. The revival that followed spread around the world and continues to impact millions today.

Andrew Murray, who witnessed revival in South Africa, wrote: "The chief need of the Church is for God to reveal His presence. The secret of power in the early Church was their spirit of continuous prayer. Would we have the Church of today become powerful once more? There is one sure way—earnest, believing, united prayer."

Practical Application: Starting a United Prayer Movement

How can you tap into the power of united and corporate prayer in your life, family, and church? Here are 8 practical steps:

1. Start with Your Family

Establish a regular time when your family gathers to pray together. It doesn't have to be long or complicated. Start with just a few minutes each day, declaring God's Word over your home, praying for each family member, and thanking God for His faithfulness. As you develop the habit, you'll experience the power of family agreement.

2. Form a Prayer Partnership

Find one or more believers who share your heart for prayer. Commit to praying together regularly—whether daily by phone, weekly in person, or whatever schedule works. Kenneth Hagin and his wife had specific times when they would pray in agreement for financial needs, ministry direction, and family concerns. They documented the answers and built their faith.

3. Participate in Corporate Prayer at Your Church

Make prayer meetings a priority, not an afterthought. Spurgeon said his church's prayer meeting was more important than his preaching. When believers gather corporately to seek God, supernatural things happen. Don't just attend—participate with faith and expectation.

4. Organize Focused Prayer Gatherings

When facing specific challenges—whether in your community, nation, or church—organize focused times of united prayer. Like Esther calling for a three-day fast, or Jehoshaphat proclaiming a fast throughout Judah, set aside dedicated times for intensive corporate prayer.

5. Use Technology to Unite Geographically Separated Believers

In our modern era, believers can unite in prayer across continents through video calls, conference calls, and online

prayer platforms. The Moravians had to be physically present for their 24-hour prayer watch, but today believers around the world can create continuous prayer coverage through technology.

6. Pray with One Accord, Not Just One Voice

Remember, united prayer doesn't mean everyone prays the exact same words or that only one person prays. It means everyone prays with one heart, one purpose, one faith—under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Like a symphony, each instrument has its unique voice, but all blend in harmony.

7. Combine Prayer with Fasting

Both Esther and Jehoshaphat combined prayer with fasting. The church at Antioch was ministering to the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke. Fasting intensifies prayer and demonstrates the seriousness of our seeking.

8. Document and Testify

Keep a record of your united prayer requests and God's answers. When you see breakthrough, testify to others. The lame man's healing testimony resulted in 5,000 more salvations. Your testimony of answered corporate prayer will encourage others and build faith.

Overcoming Obstacles to United Prayer

Despite its power, united and corporate prayer often faces challenges. Here are 6 common obstacles and how to overcome them:

Obstacle 1: Busy Schedules *Solution:* Make prayer a priority, not a convenience. The early church "devoted themselves" to prayer. Schedule it like any other important commitment. If you have time to eat, sleep, and work, you have time to pray.

Obstacle 2: Lack of Unity *Solution:* Address conflicts quickly using the principles in Matthew 18. Reconcile relationships before attempting powerful corporate prayer. Unity is a prerequisite for power.

Obstacle 3: Spiritual Dryness or Formality *Solution:* Start with worship and thanksgiving to prepare the atmosphere. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading rather than following a rigid formula. Let prayer be Spirit-led, not ritual-driven.

Obstacle 4: Discouragement When Answers Delay *Solution:* Remember the Moravians prayed for over a century. George Mueller prayed for some things for years before receiving answers. Persist in faith, knowing that God hears and will respond in His perfect timing.

Obstacle 5: Pride or Self-Consciousness *Solution:* Corporate prayer is not about performance or impressing others. It's about genuinely seeking God together. Humble yourself and focus on Him, not on how you sound to others.

Obstacle 6: Different Prayer Styles *Solution:* Embrace diversity while maintaining unity of spirit. Some may pray quietly, others loudly. Some may pray long prayers, others brief ones. The key is harmony, not uniformity.

The Critical Role of Leadership in Corporate Prayer

Leaders play a crucial role in facilitating effective united prayer. Notice in the biblical examples:

- **Jehoshaphat** stood before the assembly and articulated the prayer, expressing the heart cry of the multitude
- **Peter** stood up at Pentecost and gave voice to what the Holy Spirit was doing
- **The church leaders** in Acts 4 led the corporate prayer for boldness
- **The prophets and teachers** in Acts 13 were ministering to the Lord when the Holy Spirit spoke

Leaders in united prayer should:

1. **Clearly define the purpose** - Everyone needs to know why they're praying and what they're praying for
2. **Give voice to the corporate heart** - Articulate what the group is collectively feeling and seeking

3. **Keep focus** - Gently redirect when prayers wander off purpose
4. **Create an atmosphere of faith** - Lead with confidence in God's character and promises
5. **Encourage participation** - Draw others in rather than dominating the prayer time
6. **Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit** - Follow His leading in timing, direction, and emphasis
7. **Model vulnerability and authenticity** - Let your prayers be real, not performative

A Warning: Corporate Prayer Can Be Misused

Just as corporate prayer releases tremendous power for good when done in unity with God's will, it can also be misused. We saw this in the Tower of Babel example from your document. The people were unified, they had one language, one mind, one vision—but they were not aligned with God's purposes.

God Himself acknowledged their power: "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" (Genesis 11:6). But because their agreement was for evil purposes—building a tower to make a name for themselves rather than glorifying God—He had to intervene and scatter them.

This teaches us several critical lessons:

1. **Unity without godliness is dangerous** - Agreement is powerful, but it must be agreement with God's will and purposes.
2. **Corporate prayer must be God-centered, not self-centered** - Are we seeking His glory or our own? His kingdom or our comfort?
3. **The end doesn't justify the means** - Even if a group is unified and passionate, if their purpose contradicts

God's Word or character, their prayers will not produce godly results.

4. **Test everything by Scripture** - Any corporate prayer movement must be grounded in biblical truth and aligned with God's revealed will.

E.M. Bounds warned: "Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer."

The Ultimate Picture: Heaven's Corporate Prayer

The book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of the ultimate corporate prayer meeting—the worship and intercession happening in heaven right now:

"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation'" (Revelation 5:8-9).

Notice several powerful truths:

1. **Our prayers are precious to God** - They're held in golden bowls in heaven like sweet incense
2. **Corporate worship and prayer are eternal** - What we do in united prayer on earth echoes in heaven
3. **Diversity creates beauty** - Saints from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation unite in worship
4. **Christ is the center** - All worship and prayer ultimately focus on the Lamb who was slain

When we engage in united and corporate prayer on earth, we're joining a prayer meeting that's already happening in

heaven. We're adding our voices to the eternal symphony of worship and intercession that surrounds God's throne.

Conclusion: The Call to Corporate Anointing

The Church today desperately needs to rediscover the power of united and corporate prayer. We live in an age of individualism, where personal experience often trumps corporate commitment. We have private devotions but neglect prayer meetings. We have solo spirituality but lack the power that comes from one accord.

But the biblical pattern is clear: the greatest moves of God in history happened when believers came together in unity, with one heart, one mind, one purpose, and one faith. Pentecost didn't happen to isolated individuals—it happened to 120 believers gathered in one place with one accord. The healing of the lame man happened after Peter and John went to corporate prayer. The shaking of Acts 4:31 happened when believers prayed together. The direction for Paul and Barnabas's missionary journey came during corporate ministry to the Lord.

Leonard Ravenhill, that prophetic voice on prayer, declared: "The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray. No man is greater than his prayer life." How much more true is this for corporate prayer? No church is greater than its prayer meetings. No movement is greater than its united intercession.

Imagine what would happen if believers across your city, your nation, your world, would answer the call to united prayer. Imagine if churches laid aside denominational differences and united in one accord to seek God's face. Imagine if families made corporate prayer a daily priority. Imagine if prayer meetings became as important as Sunday services.

The results would be the same as they were in Acts:

- Places would be shaken
- Believers would be filled with the Holy Spirit
- The Word would be spoken with boldness
- Signs, wonders, and miracles would follow
- Multitudes would be saved
- Unity and love would increase
- The Holy Spirit would give clear direction
- Impossible situations would be reversed

The Moravians prayed continuously for over a century and sparked a missionary movement that changed the world. The Welsh Revival began with small prayer gatherings and transformed a nation. The Great Awakening was birthed in concerts of prayer. Azusa Street started with a handful of believers seeking God with one accord.

What mighty work is God waiting to do through your united prayer? What revival is He ready to release through your corporate intercession? What breakthrough is heaven holding back until believers come together in one accord?

The challenge before us is the same challenge that faced the 120 in the upper room, the same challenge that confronted Esther and her people, the same challenge that Jehoshaphat accepted when three armies surrounded him: Will we unite in prayer? Will we come together with one heart, one mind, one purpose? Will we persist until heaven responds?

Spurgeon issued this stirring challenge to his generation, and it echoes to ours: "If the prayer meeting is to be the power of the Church, then we ought to feel that if we miss the prayer meeting, we are missing the place where we may receive our equipment for every good word and work."

The conductor is waiting. The Master is ready. The Holy Spirit wants to direct your corporate symphony of prayer. The question is not whether God is able or willing to move. The question is whether His people will unite in prayer with one accord.

The harvest is plentiful. The enemy is aggressive. The hour is urgent. But the promise stands sure: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Will you answer the call? Will you gather with other believers in united prayer? Will you devote yourself to corporate intercession? Will you pursue the power that comes from one accord?

The choice is yours. But remember: the 120 in the upper room changed the world. Esther and her people saved a nation. Jehoshaphat and the Israelites defeated three armies. The persecuted believers in Acts 4 experienced a shaking that started a movement still impacting millions today.

What will your united prayer accomplish? There's only one way to find out.

Gather together. Come into one accord. Lift your voices in unified intercession. And watch as heaven responds to your corporate symphony of prayer.

The place will be shaken. The Holy Spirit will fall. Boldness will be released. Miracles will happen. Souls will be saved. And God will be glorified.

This is the promise. This is the power. This is united and corporate prayer.

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

One of the most sacred and powerful moments in all of Scripture is found in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, under the weight of His coming sacrifice, Jesus knelt to pray. Luke 22:41–42 records this moment:

“And He [Jesus] was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’”

This is what we call **the prayer of consecration and dedication**.

It wasn’t a prayer to get something from God—it was a prayer to *give* something to God. Jesus wasn’t asking for provision, healing, or direction. This wasn’t a prayer of petition or faith. This was a moment of surrender. He was yielding His own desires, His human will, to the perfect will of the Father. That is what the prayer of consecration is all about.

Surrender, Not Striving

In other types of prayer—like the prayer of faith or petition—we come boldly before God’s throne, knowing what His Word already promises. We know that it’s God’s will to heal, to provide, to protect, and to lead us. In those cases, we don’t pray “if it be Your will,” because His will is already revealed in His Word.

But when we’re facing a decision about direction, purpose, or calling—when we don’t yet know *what* His will is—that’s when the prayer of consecration becomes essential.

This is the prayer that says:

“Lord, I am Yours. My life, my plans, my dreams—everything I am and everything I have belongs to You. I’m willing to go

wherever You send me and do whatever You ask of me. Not my will, but Yours be done.”

This is not a weak or fearful prayer. It’s one of the most courageous prayers a believer can ever pray. It means letting go of control and trusting that God’s plan is far greater than anything we could ever design for ourselves.

The Heart of Consecration

Consecration means being “set apart” for God’s purpose. It’s the act of dedicating ourselves wholly to Him—our time, our talents, our future, and even our comfort.

When we pray the prayer of consecration, we’re saying, “Lord, I don’t belong to myself. My life is Yours to direct.”

It’s not always an easy prayer to pray. Sometimes it takes us through seasons of uncertainty, sacrifice, and surrender. But it always leads to fulfillment, peace, and purpose.

Look at Jesus—His surrender in Gethsemane didn’t lead to defeat; it led to victory. The cross was the pathway to resurrection. The same is true for us. When we yield our will to God’s, He leads us into a life that’s far richer and more fruitful than anything we could have achieved by holding on to our own plans.

When to Pray This Prayer

You pray the prayer of consecration when you’re faced with choices about your calling or direction—when the road forks, and you want to make sure you’re on *God’s* path, not just a good one.

Maybe you sense God stirring your heart to make a change—to start a ministry, to move to a new place, to launch a business, or to step into a new season of service. You might not yet know if that’s His will or your own desire. That’s when you get alone with God and say, “Father, I want what You

want. I'll go where You send me. I'll stay where You plant me. Not my will, but Yours be done."

When you pray like that with sincerity, He will make His will clear to you. He's not trying to hide it. God *wants* you to know His will more than you want to find it.

The Power of a Willing Heart

God can do great things through a willing heart.

You don't have to have all the answers; you just have to be willing. Isaiah heard God's call and simply said, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). That's the essence of the prayer of consecration.

When you come to God with a yielded spirit, you open the door for His wisdom, guidance, and power to work through your life. Surrender doesn't make you weak—it makes you usable.

God doesn't anoint stubbornness; He anoints surrender. He doesn't bless independence; He blesses obedience.

Practical Steps to a Consecrated Life

1. Set aside time to listen.

Get quiet before God. Turn off distractions and ask Him to speak to your heart. His will is often revealed in the stillness.

2. Lay everything on the altar.

Tell God you're willing to release every plan, position, and possession to His use. Consecration always involves letting go.

3. Keep your heart tender.

A consecrated heart stays humble and teachable. Stay sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

4. Walk in obedience to what you know.

God reveals His will step by step. Do the last thing He told you to do, and the next step will become clear.

5. **Reaffirm your consecration regularly.**

Consecration isn't a one-time prayer—it's a lifestyle. Every season of life brings new opportunities to say again, "Lord, not my will, but Yours be done."

A Willing Vessel

God isn't looking for perfect people; He's looking for *yielded* people. The prayer of consecration is what positions you for divine usefulness.

When you pray this prayer with sincerity, heaven takes notice. You're saying, "Father, I'm Yours—fully, completely, unreservedly." And God says, "That's a person I can use."

Remember, Jesus' prayer of consecration opened the door to salvation for all humanity. Our prayers of consecration may not change the world on that scale—but they will change *our* world, and they'll allow God to work through us in ways we could never imagine.

A Prayer of Consecration

"Heavenly Father,

I present myself to You today as a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable, and ready for Your service.

Take my life, my plans, and my dreams. Shape them according to Your purpose.

Wherever You lead, I will follow. Whatever You ask, I will do. Not my will, but Yours be done.

Use me, Lord, for Your glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen."

PRAYER OF PRAISE

The prayers of praise and thanksgiving are often prayed together, flowing naturally from hearts that recognize the goodness of God. Hebrews 13:15 instructs us, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." These two prayer types complement each other beautifully—praise focuses on who God is, while thanksgiving celebrates what He has done. In this chapter, we will explore the prayer of praise, and in the next, we will delve into the prayer of thanksgiving.

Created to Worship

We have been created for one primary purpose: to worship God—to give Him praise and thanksgiving. When we engage in praise and worship, we enter into communion and fellowship with Him. This is not a spectator sport where we stand on the sidelines praising someone distant and unrelated to us. Rather, we are in vital union with the Creator of the universe. As Charles H. Spurgeon proclaimed, "God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation."

The prayer of praise should be woven into every other type of prayer we offer. It is the foundation upon which our entire prayer life rests. John Ortberg wisely observed, "I need to worship because without it I can forget that I have a big God beside me and live in fear. I need to worship because without it I can forget his calling and begin to live in a spirit of self-preoccupation." Praise reorients our hearts toward heaven and reminds us of whose we are.

What Is the Prayer of Praise?

The prayer of praise is communicating with God, honoring Him for who He is—our heavenly Father, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, the giver of life, and the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is our way of acknowledging His goodness, greatness, love, and faithfulness.

When we praise God, we are declaring His character and nature. He is El Shaddai, the all-sufficient God. He is Adonai, our Lord and Master. He is Jehovah, the Great I Am. He is El Elyon, the Most High God. Praise magnifies His holiness, His unchanging nature, His omniscience, His omnipotence, and His omnipresence. We praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the triune God who reigns forever.

A.W. Tozer reminded us, "Without worship, we go about miserable." This truth underscores why praise must be continual in our lives. We should be praising Him in the morning, praising Him at noontime, and praising Him when the sun goes down. Praise is not confined to a specific time or place—it is a lifestyle, a constant acknowledgment of who God is.

The Biblical Call to Praise

Scripture overflows with commands and invitations to praise the Lord. Psalm 150:6 declares, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." This verse emphasizes the universal call for all living beings to worship God. If you have breath in your lungs, you have a reason and a responsibility to offer up the prayer of praise.

Psalm 96:4 proclaims, "For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods." He alone is worthy of our praise. Throughout the Bible, we find that the Lord is worthy to receive honor, glory, and praise. The apostle John was given a powerful vision of heavenly worship, which

he shares in Revelation 5:11-12: "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!'"

This is our destiny—eternal praise in the presence of the Lamb. Charles Spurgeon beautifully expressed this truth: "Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By grace, we learn to sing, and in glory, we continue to sing." Every time we praise God on earth, we are practicing for heaven.

How to Praise the Lord

There are countless ways we can praise the Lord. The prayer of praise is not limited to spoken prayers alone—it includes songs of praise, the use of musical instruments, lifting up our voices, and incorporating praise into our everyday lives.

N.T. Wright explained, "Put it this way: if your idea of God, if your idea of the salvation offered in Christ, is vague or remote, your idea of worship will be fuzzy and ill-formed. The closer you get to the truth, the clearer becomes the beauty, and the more you will find worship welling up within you. That's why theology and worship belong together." True praise begins in the heart. It flows from an inner sense of wonder and appreciation for God's attributes and actions, as expressed in Psalm 103:1. Praise is not merely going through religious motions or reciting memorized words. Authentic praise engages our emotions and thoughts as we reflect on God's greatness and goodness.

John Bunyan, the English Puritan writer and preacher, captured the essence of heartfelt worship: "When I worship, I would rather my heart be without words than my words be without heart." This profound statement reminds us that God looks beyond our eloquence to the sincerity of our hearts.

Psalm 148 provides a comprehensive guide for praising the Lord, calling all of creation to join in worship:

"Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for at his command they were created, and he established them for ever and ever—he issued a decree that will never pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and women, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens. And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord."

The Transforming Power of Praise

Praise changes us. Myles Munroe taught, "God does not need your praise. Your praise does not change or affect Him. Your praise changes and affects you." When we lift our voices in praise, we shift our focus from our circumstances to our Creator. Praise silences the voice of the enemy and drives away discouragement and fear.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance." Like David, who danced before the Lord with all his might, we too can express our adoration with freedom and

joy. Praise is not about performance or perfection—it is about passion for the One who is worthy.

Consider these words of the renowned preacher Dwight L. Moody: "If a man just stops to think what he has to praise God for, he will find there is enough to keep him singing praises for a week." Even in our darkest moments, we can find reasons to praise God for His character, His promises, and His faithfulness.

A Lifestyle of Praise

Praise should not be confined to Sunday morning services or special occasions. It should permeate every aspect of our lives. Gerald Vann, British Dominican theologian, declared, "Worship is not a part of the Christian life; it is the Christian life." This perspective transforms how we approach each day.

When we wake up, our first thoughts can be praise. As we go about our daily tasks, we can praise Him for His provision and guidance. When challenges arise, we can praise Him for His strength and wisdom. Before we sleep, we can praise Him for His protection and faithfulness.

R.C. Sproul reminded us, "The worship to which we are called in our renewed state is far too important to be left to personal preferences, to whims or to marketing strategies. It is the pleasing of God that is at the heart of worship." Our praise must always be directed toward pleasing God, not ourselves or others.

The prayer of praise also prepares us for public worship and ministry. As Myles Munroe noted, "Private praise prepares you for public praise and worship. Private praise prepares you for public victory. Praise in the beginning of the day gives God room to handle whatever comes your way in the rest of the day."

Our Eternal Song

One day, we will join the countless multitudes around the throne of God in ceaseless praise. Until that glorious day arrives, let us practice now. Let us make praise our daily discipline, our constant companion, our joyful response to the One who created us, redeemed us, and sustains us.

As we cultivate a lifestyle of praise, we discover that it is not a burden but a blessing. Praise lifts our spirits, strengthens our faith, and draws us closer to the heart of God. It reminds us that no matter what we face, our God is greater. He is holy, He is mighty, He is faithful, and He is worthy of all our praise.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Having explored the prayer of praise—honoring God for who He is—in the next chapter, we turn our attention to its companion prayer: the prayer of thanksgiving. While praise focuses on God's character and nature, thanksgiving celebrates His actions and provisions in our lives. Together, these two prayers form a powerful expression of our relationship with our heavenly Father.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

While the prayer of praise focuses on who God is, the prayer of thanksgiving centers on what He has done. God has done so much for each of us—not the least of which was sending Christ to save us from our sins. When we pray, we should think of God's actions in our lives and recognize Him for those blessings by giving thanks. This practice will also help us build an attitude of gratitude in our daily lives.

The prayer of thanksgiving is all about giving thanks to the Lord. Psalm 100:4 tells us that thanksgiving is the key to entering the presence of God: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." We enter the gates of heaven with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. As Tim Keller wisely observed, "It's one thing to be grateful. It's another to give thanks. Gratitude is what you feel. Thanksgiving is what you do."

Always Be Thankful

Some people are naturally thankful for every little thing done for them, while others are never satisfied, no matter how much is done on their behalf. As Christians, we should always be thankful. Ephesians 5:20 instructs us, "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Choose to be a thankful person—one filled with gratitude and overflowing with appreciation for God's goodness.

Billy Graham explained the depth of true thanksgiving: "When thanksgiving is filled with true meaning and is not just the formality of a polite 'thank you,' it is the recognition of dependence." Thanksgiving acknowledges that we are utterly dependent on God for everything we have and

everything we are. John Wesley connected thanksgiving to the very heart of prayer itself: "Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer; it is almost essentially connected with it. One who always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity."

Thankful for What?

Your life may be a mess, and everything that can go wrong may be going wrong. Even so, you can still give thanks. There are so many blessings in our lives if we would simply open our eyes to see them. The air we breathe, the salvation Jesus provides, the assurance that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life—these are reasons to be thankful. I am grateful that the Lord is with me and never leaves me. I am thankful for my wife and family. I am grateful for my church, and the list goes on and on. Count your blessings one by one. Don't sit in the seat of the scorner, complaining about what you lack.

Henry Beecher beautifully stated, "The unthankful heart discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!" When we develop thankful hearts, we begin to notice God's fingerprints everywhere—in the ordinary moments, in the unexpected provisions, and even in the trials that strengthen our faith.

A.W. Tozer reminded us, "Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be not poorer but richer for having made it." Thanksgiving doesn't require wealth, education, or status. It is available to every believer, regardless of circumstance.

How Can You Be Thankful?

You must believe that God is at work and know that He has already provided everything you need, regardless of what the current situation is or what the circumstances appear to be. God is faithful, and He is a good God. Once you understand this truth, you can offer prayers that are filled with thanksgiving.

Paul declared in Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." This means that everything we need to live our lives victoriously has already been provided through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's blessings have already come to us in Christ Jesus. We receive those blessings as we take our position in faith. So when you pray, believe that you receive, and thank the Lord.

G.K. Chesterton wrote, "I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." Thanksgiving transforms our perspective and multiplies our joy. It shifts our focus from what we lack to the abundance we already possess in Christ.

Between the Amen and the Manifestation

People often ask me what to do when they've prayed but don't see the answer. If you have truly prayed in faith and believe you have received, then you have it even if you don't see it yet. This is what faith is. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). If you can see it and hold it, you no longer need faith.

So what do you do between the "amen and the manifestation"? You pray the prayer of thanksgiving. You don't keep praying and asking as if you don't have it. Instead, you pray, "Thank you, Lord, for answering my prayer. Thank

you that my dad is saved. Thank you for providing for me. Thank you for healing me." You thank Him for whatever you have prayed for.

Alexander MacLaren captured this beautifully: "The prayer that begins with trustfulness, and passes on into waiting, will always end in thankfulness, triumph, and praise." Now, if you doubt or aren't sure, then yes, continue to pray until you know that you know God has heard your prayer and that He answers your prayer. But once faith has taken hold, thanksgiving is the language of confident expectation.

This is the real power of the prayer of thanksgiving—it anchors us in faith while we wait for God's perfect timing. Joni Eareckson Tada explained, "As a matter of fact, God isn't asking you to be thankful. He's asking you to give thanks. There's a big difference. One response involves emotions, the other your choices, your decisions about a situation, your intent, your 'step of faith.'"

Stay Jesus-Focused and Promise-Focused

Too often, we get focused on the problems and circumstances. We let vain imaginations begin to run wild. The first key to being thankful is keeping your eyes on Jesus. "Fixing your eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of your faith" (Hebrews 12:2). When we look at our problems, they seem insurmountable. When we look at Jesus, the problems shrink in comparison to His power.

The second key is to stay promise-focused. Stay focused on what God's Word says. Are you focusing on the obstacles, the hurdles, the giants, or are you focusing on the promises of God? God's Word is true. He watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). It will come to pass (Isaiah 55:11). Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will by no means pass away (Matthew 24:35).

The third key is to get your thinking right. What you think about from the time you pray until the manifestation of your answers will determine whether you receive or not. The battle has to be won in your mind. See your answers coming to pass. Many people lose the battle in their imagination. They don't see it coming to pass. Their thinking is focused on all the negative possibilities.

Paul tells us what to do in 2 Corinthians 10:5: "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Once you take those negative thoughts captive, what do you do? Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8: "Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about" (TLB).

Warren W. Wiersbe taught, "The Christian who walks with the Lord and keeps constant communion with Him will see many reason for rejoicing and thanksgiving all day long." Communion with God through thanksgiving keeps our minds stayed on Him and our hearts filled with peace.

The Power of Thanksgiving

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving will bring God's hand of deliverance on the scene on your behalf! Prayers of praise and thanksgiving should be a part of your daily lifestyle! Make the prayer of thanksgiving a continuous practice of expressing gratitude for all of God's blessings, both big and small. Being grateful can shift your perspective from what you lack to appreciating what you have. This type of prayer cultivates a spirit of joy and contentment in your life.

C.S. Lewis wisely counseled, "We ought to give thanks for all fortune: if it is good, because it is good; if bad, because it works in us patience, humility and the contempt of this world

and the hope of our eternal country." In every season—whether abundance or adversity—we have reasons to give thanks.

When you look back on your day for all the things—big and small—that God has done, you may be surprised! There are so many things that He does that we are unaware of. Sometimes the things we are thankful for create an overwhelming list! It may be helpful to write down your list of things you are grateful for in a journal. Let Him know you see and appreciate His hand moving in your life.

Dr. David Jeremiah reminded us, "No matter what our circumstances, we can find a reason to be thankful." Even in our darkest hours, thanksgiving lifts us above our circumstances and connects us to the God who is greater than any trial we face.

Living in Thanksgiving

Charles Finney observed, "A state of mind that sees God in everything is evidence of growth in grace and a thankful heart." As we mature in our faith, we begin to recognize God's hand in all aspects of our lives. We see His provision in the expected and unexpected. We notice His protection in the dangers we never even knew threatened us. We acknowledge His guidance in the decisions that seemed insignificant but proved crucial.

John Bunyan wrote, "A sensible thanksgiving for mercies received is a mighty prayer in the Spirit of God. It prevails with Him unspeakably." Thanksgiving is not weak or passive—it is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare. When we give thanks, we declare our trust in God's goodness despite what our eyes can see. We affirm His faithfulness even when circumstances suggest otherwise.

Paul triumphantly declared, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). Thanksgiving is the language of victory. It is the anthem of those who know the battle is already won because of what Christ has accomplished on the cross.

A Lifestyle of Gratitude

Thanksgiving should not be confined to a single holiday or even to our prayer times alone. It should permeate every aspect of our lives. When we wake up, we can thank God for a new day and new mercies. As we go about our daily tasks, we can thank Him for strength and provision. When challenges arise, we can thank Him that He is with us and that He works all things together for our good. Before we sleep, we can review the day with grateful hearts, acknowledging His faithfulness in countless ways.

Cultivating a lifestyle of thanksgiving transforms not only our prayer lives but our entire outlook on life. It changes how we respond to difficulties, how we relate to others, and how we view our circumstances. A heart filled with thanksgiving is a heart that remains anchored in hope, secure in faith, and overflowing with joy.

As you develop your prayer life, remember that thanksgiving is not optional—it is essential. It is the response of a heart that has truly encountered the goodness and faithfulness of God. Let thanksgiving flow from your lips continually, for God is worthy, His mercies are new every morning, and His faithfulness endures forever.

PRAYER —

TO BRING SALVATION TO YOUR FAMILY

The Promise That Transforms Homes

You have the authority to pray for your family. The same principles of praying for family salvation presented in this chapter are applicable in praying for the lost of any community, culture, or nation.

Jesus declared with unwavering certainty, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, so what is written in God's Word is not just the will or whim of man, but it is the revelation of God coming through men so we might know God's will and purpose in the earth.

When we base our prayers on God's unchanging promises, we will receive His answers to our prayers. Acts 16:31 says: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

If you are a born-again believer, God has given you a promise in this verse that your family members will also believe and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is not presumption—it is faith standing on the solid rock of God's Word.

God's Heart for Families Throughout History

God loves families. He started with Adam and Eve. It was His plan that they have children, subdue the earth and take dominion over it. Although they had a problem in their home, with one son killing another, that didn't stop God. He raised up another righteous seed.

The knowledge of God was passed on to Noah. During Noah's day, all the people around him rejected God. They absolutely refused Him. Nothing could reach them, so God said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Genesis 6:7). This is a type and shadow of what will ultimately happen to people who live in the world today who reject God.

God destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth through a flood, except for Noah and his seed. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8).

Seven days before the flood, after building the ark, the word of the Lord came to Noah to gather his family and enter into the ark.

"Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation... For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." (Genesis 7:1,4)

The Bible doesn't say a lot about Noah's family being righteous, but it says Noah was righteous. He believed God and built an ark in obedience to God's directions. Obviously, his wife and children helped him during those many years of construction. They believed and entered the ark under Noah's leadership.

When the final penalty for all the wicked is released from God and the final judgment day comes, I am believing that your family will be in the ark of salvation.

Most people have some folks in their family that they don't know if they are the kind of people God even wants to save!

Maybe some of your family have wondered about you, too! Be encouraged about your family's salvation.

The Blessing That Extends to Generations

God chose Abraham and said He was going to bless him and through him, He would bless the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). He blessed him with a son, Isaac, who had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. God is interested in families, and His blessing extends outward to your relatives. The blessing of God includes the salvation of every member of your family.

First Timothy 2:4 says God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." That includes your family members and relatives! "All men" means all of the human race. It is God's will that every man, woman, boy and girl be saved.

Not everyone is going to be saved, but that does not change the will of God. He sent Jesus to die on the cross, to be buried and raised from the dead so "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

Second Peter 3:9 declares: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

The reason Jesus hasn't already come is because of His mercy. He is longsuffering, and He doesn't want anyone to be lost, so He is speaking to us to reach out and share His love with others.

Looking back through history, we know there are people who did not respond to the gospel, but that doesn't change God's will for all people to be saved. Remember, it was God's will that Adam and Eve be obedient, replenish the earth and take

dominion. They violated God's will, so we have to understand that though men may fail, it does not change the will of God.

Opening Blind Eyes to See the Savior

Second Corinthians 4:4 tells us that the god of this world—Satan—has blinded the minds of those "who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." The spiritual blindness Paul is speaking about in this verse keeps people from seeing the truth.

The good news is, that you, as a believer, have authority and power to pray for the blindness to be removed. In praying for the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "I pray for the eyes of your understanding to be enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). In other words, he was praying that the lights would come on in your house! If the spiritual lights are out in someone's life, you can pray for the blindness to be removed and for the light to shine in, in Jesus' name.

A Grandmother's Persistent Prayer

There was a grandmother in our church who prayed for and sent letters to one of her grandsons who was lost. This young man had problems in his life. He had gotten into drugs and other situations that were causing him and his parents all kinds of trouble. This grandmother continued to pray for that grandson. She prayed for several years. She would ask us to pray for him. Whenever I asked her how he was doing she would always say, "The Word is working."

She prayed for godly people to cross his path and witness to him. She prayed that his eyes would be opened and his heart softened. Every time she got a negative report from her daughter about him she would always thank Jesus that the Word was working. She never gave up on him.

One year she invited him to one of our Easter Illustrated messages. Every year we do a huge production reenacting the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus during Easter week.

He came to one of those services and when the program was over he came forward to give his life to the Lord. His life was changed forever. He began coming to our men's ministry meeting—"Every Man's Victory"—and was delivered from his drug habit and began serving the Lord. His grandmother's prayers made a difference.

Don't give up, no matter the situation. Regardless of what lifestyle or how young or old or impossible the situation may look, continue to pray. Prayer based upon God's Word will prevail!

Biblical Keys for Praying Family Members Into Salvation

After His resurrection, Jesus walked on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples who didn't recognize Him.

"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him...." (Luke 24:30-31)

You can pray this passage over the lost: "Lord Jesus, open their eyes to know You."

Verse 45 of this same chapter says Jesus opened the eyes of the disciples to understand the scriptures that prophesied His resurrection.

If we will mix faith with God's promises, believing and speaking them, God will perform them. He will fulfill His promises.

Acts 2:17 says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams." Mix faith with this promise that your sons and daughters will prophesy, and hold fast to it.

Proverbs 11:21 (KJV) says, "The seed of the righteous shall be delivered."

Isaiah 60:1-4 declares:

"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side."

Declaring God's Promises Over Your Family

To mix faith with these promises, begin to declare:

Father, thank You that Your Word says the seed of the righteous will be delivered. You made me righteous by Your blood, not by my own works, but by the gift of righteousness. My children are delivered, in the name of Jesus. They are set free. Lord, You said my sons and daughters would be nursed at my side.

Thank You for the privilege of nurturing them with Your Word. Thank You, Father, for pouring Your Spirit out upon my seed—my sons and daughters. Your Word will never depart from their mouth, from the mouth of their children, or from the mouth of their children's children.

You can put agreement with Acts 2:4 for your children to be filled with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Taking Spiritual Authority Over Darkness

In Mark 16:15-18, Jesus said:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Whenever Jesus gave a commission to go out and share the gospel, He also gave authority to cast out devils. Satan is the god of this world, and he has blinded the minds of the lost, keeping them from seeing the truth. You can loose the power of the Holy Spirit upon unbelievers, and bind the power of the devil and the wicked spirits off of them, in Jesus' name. You can take authority and command the wicked spirits to leave them and stand against the powers of darkness, even if the person is miles from you.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have the authority to pray and command the wicked spirits that have held people captive to be removed. Jesus said, "How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matthew 12:29).

We have to take authority over the strong man who has tried to wrap himself around a person's life and hold them back from salvation. We have been given authority to break the bands of the enemy and loose the captives. Many times people understand the principle of binding the devil only in

relationship to some type of demonic oppression, but we need to see it in relationship to soulwinning.

Loosing the Spirit of Repentance

We had some graduates from our Missions School go to Oaxaca, Mexico to establish a Bible School and missions base. It was an area with strong religious spirits and many different people groups. They would pray that the people's spiritual eyes would be open to see Jesus. They began to pray and bind the strong spirits of religion from the people and to pray for an open heaven so they would be free to respond to the gospel.

They would pray for their minds to be open and that the spirits of fear, torment, witchcraft, and bondage be broken. Then they would declare the Word of God over that area and loose the spirit of repentance for the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin and reveal Jesus to them.

They have seen incredible results in that area. Today, twenty years later, they have a mission base that has established well over 100 churches in the villages of the state of Oaxaca and train pastors and leaders who minister to thousands of people every year. Recently I went and spent twelve months working with them to help strengthen their leadership team and organization because of the tremendous growth and impact they have had in that area. All to the glory of God.

Unless a person repents and turns around, they won't be saved. They must have a heart change. When we pray for it, God will give repentance in people's lives.

Praying for Jesus to Be Lifted Up

Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32).

We know Jesus was speaking about His death on the cross, but many people have never had Jesus Christ lifted up in their mind. They have not been introduced to the real Jesus. They have seen religion, denominationalism, ideas and hypocrisy. When they see the real Jesus lifted up above the fog of what man has said about Him, they will accept Him. The devil has blinded them from seeing Jesus' love and from understanding what the cross is all about.

You can pray, "Father, help _____ to know that there is no greater love than Jesus' love when He paid the ultimate price with His life so they wouldn't have to go to hell."

John 6:44 says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...." You can pray, "Father, draw _____ with the cords of Your love. Mighty Holy Spirit, come upon _____'s life, in Jesus' name."

You may be in a situation where you have family members who are on drugs or involved in a cult. God's power can break through those things. Lift up Jesus and declare His name. Don't give up on your loved ones.

Praying for Laborers to Cross Their Paths

You can pray for laborers to cross the paths of the lost.

"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" (Matthew 9:35-38)

Your relatives and friends are part of God's harvest. To pray laborers across their pathways, you can declare: "Lord, send

them tracts, books, audio messages, videos, people, billboards, bumper stickers and radio and television programs. Every time they turn on the television, Lord, let the preacher point at them and tell them, 'Get saved.' When they tune in the radio, Lord, let it stop where someone is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank You, Father, that they are hearing a witness of Your Word."

The Power of Strategic Prayer for Laborers

Right after we got married my wife's aunt Titi would send us books every month. They were books about the Holy Spirit and serving God. My uncle Bob would talk to me about Jesus and living our lives for Him. One of the books was titled "They Speak in Other Tongues." I read that book several times. It spoke to me. It inspired me.

Others would come across our path and share their testimonies about how Jesus was working in their life. As a result, I recommitted my life to the Lord and my wife got saved. We were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began a whole new journey with God.

Years later we found out they and others had been praying for us and they were praying for God to send laborers across our path to witness to us. Praise God for the Holy Spirit using people to share His good news.

Our church would hold crusades in the subsidized apartment communities in our city. We would pray for these outreaches and part of those prayers were to pray for God to send laborers to help bring in the harvest. I would go and help set up the tent and go door to door inviting people to the nightly meetings. Many times, residents would say, "We have been praying for God to send revival to our apartment community." As we pray for laborers, God will send them.

Charles Story: From Skeptic to Prison Minister

I have had many people share testimonies of how they were saved, healed, or delivered because of someone praying for them. Someone was faithfully praying for them and believing God for their salvation. Sometimes they were praying for many years, but God honored their faith. I want to encourage you, don't give up! I can tell you we have had many people saved because of someone's prayers.

One of those people was Charles Story. He used to lead our prison ministry. His testimony is powerful. He was a tough nut to crack with the gospel. Years ago, his wife Rosemary, started coming to our church. She began to learn how to pray and stand in faith for Charles to be born again. Six weeks after she began praying, Charles came to church on Mother's Day and gave his life to Jesus Christ. For many years he was the only minister who was allowed to go on death row in the McAlester, Oklahoma, prison and hold services each week for the prisoners. Charles took me to almost every prison in Oklahoma where I was able to preach and pray for thousand of inmates.

Becoming an Answer to Someone Else's Prayers

I want to encourage you to be a witness. Sow the seed of witnessing to someone else in the same way you expect someone to witness to your loved ones. You may not see the fruit of your efforts immediately, but if you hold fast to the confession of your faith, the seed of the Word will work on them.

Whenever the opportunity arises, step out in faith and share the good news. Keep your eyes open. It may be as simple as asking a person if they know Jesus. Some of us plant, some water, and some harvest. Some people will mock and laugh when you witness to them, but remember, you are an answer to somebody's prayers. What you sow in prayer, you will reap back in your own life.

Paul understood this principle deeply. In Romans 10:1, he wrote: "Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved." Paul picked up the baton and prayed for a group of people who didn't know Jesus personally. We need to pick up that baton and pray for others as well.

Addressing the Question of Free Will

When I teach and minister to people on praying for others to get saved, the question I get is, "Don't they have a will of their own?" The inference is: what good does it do to pray for someone else if I'm going against their will?

Well, don't you think God knows they have a will of their own? Why would He say, "Pray for laborers," if He knows they have a will of their own? It's very simple. God is in the will-changing business! When you were born again, you had your will changed from darkness to light. Even as good as Nicodemus was, Jesus said, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). That requires a decision.

The point is, God can work on a person's will, so get your mind off of their will and onto God's will. Let God deal with their will. People can get hung up on the issue of another person's will to the point that they won't even pray for the lost.

Jesus Is the Answer to Every Need

Jesus is the Answer to every need. He delivers, saves, heals and restores, regardless of a person's past. True repentance and a genuine salvation experience will cause you to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Sinners have not believed because they have been blinded to the truth, or they have not heard a bold witness of the truth. It's time to pray the devil off of their back and the blindness out of their eyes. Pray for Jesus to be lifted up in their midst.

Pray for the Spirit of God to convict them and pray laborers to cross their path every day. Pray that they will get a vision of heaven and hell, realizing that there is an eternal judgment.

I am convinced that the person who really sees Jesus with the devil off his or her back and understands there is a heaven and a hell will be motivated to receive Jesus Christ.

A Prayer of Faith for Family Salvation

We come into agreement with Your Word, Father, that it is Your will that the lost be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. We pray that You would be exalted in their midst, Lord Jesus, drawing them unto You in this hour like a holy magnet! We command the darkness and blindness, deception and delusion to leave them now, in the name of Jesus. Let Your light flood them with a knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and understanding, Lord. Thank You for moving in their lives, in the name of Jesus.

It's time to move from petition to rejoicing and thank the Lord for His deliverance and salvation of the people for whom you have been praying.

Promises to Stand On

Here are specific promises to declare over your family:

For Spiritual Blindness: "Father, I pray according to Ephesians 1:18 that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of Your calling. Remove the scales from their eyes as You did for Saul on the Damascus road. Let the light of the gospel shine into their hearts."

For Stubborn Hearts: "Lord, according to Ezekiel 36:26, I pray that You would give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. Take away their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh that responds to Your love."

For Divine Encounters: "Father, according to Matthew 9:38, I pray that You would send laborers across their path—people who will speak Your truth in love, who will demonstrate Your power, and who will show them the reality of Your kingdom."

For Breaking Strongholds: "According to 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, I pull down strongholds and cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. I bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ in their life."

For the Drawing Power of God: "Father, according to John 6:44, I pray that You would draw them to Jesus. Let the Holy Spirit convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Make them restless until they rest in You."

Standing Firm When the Wait is Long

David Platt, in his sermon on praying for family salvation, expressed the heart cry of every believer: "God, I personally praise you for grandparents and parents who have loved me, who would have protected me, who have passed the gospel onto me. God, I want to be this kind of parent. I want to be this kind of grandparent if you give me the opportunity to do that. God, for all of us who have parents or grandparents who have passed on faith to us, we give you praise, glory, and honor. God, we pray for parents and grandparents in our lives who may not know your goodness and your grace. We pray for their salvation based on reading these passages. God, we pray, use us to pass faith on to them we pray."

Remember these truths as you stand in faith for your family:

1. **God's will is clear:** He desires ALL to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)
2. **Your prayers have authority:** You have been given the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19)

3. **God honors persistence:** The parable of the persistent widow teaches us to keep praying and not give up (Luke 18:1-8)
4. **Your faith activates God's power:** "According to your faith let it be to you" (Matthew 9:29)
5. **Generational blessing is real:** God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—He works through families
6. **Your prayers outlive you:** The prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective (James 5:16)

Moving From Anxiety to Confidence

Spurgeon's prayers reveal a man who had learned to trust God's sovereignty while maintaining passionate intercession: "We pray for friends that are ill, for many that are troubled because of the illness of others. We bring before Thee every case of trouble and trial known to us and ask for Thy gracious intervention."

As you pray for your family's salvation, move from anxious petition to confident declaration. Speak the Word over them. Bind the works of darkness. Loose the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for divine appointments. Declare God's promises. And then—this is crucial—thank God for the answer before you see it manifest.

The grandmother who prayed for her drug-addicted grandson had it right: "The Word is working." That's not denial; that's faith. That's standing on the promise that God's Word does not return void but accomplishes what He sends it to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Your Family's Salvation: A Certainty Worth Fighting For

I close this chapter with this declaration: Your family's salvation is not just a possibility—it's a promise you can stand on. God is more interested in saving your family than you are. He's the One who gave you the burden to pray. He's

the One who placed that love in your heart. He's the One who wakes you up at night with their name on your lips.

Don't let the enemy convince you that your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. Don't let circumstances dictate your faith. Don't let the length of time weaken your resolve. Stand firm. Pray bold. Believe big. Your family's salvation is worth every prayer, every tear, every declaration of faith.

As Jesus Himself prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34), He modeled intercession for the most unlikely converts. If Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him, surely we can pray persistently for those we love.

The harvest is coming. The breakthrough is near. The salvation you've been praying for is on its way. Stand firm in faith. Your family will serve the Lord.

Prayer Declaration:

Father, I thank You that Acts 16:31 is true for my family: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." I declare that my household will be saved. I bind the spirit of blindness and unbelief. I loose the spirit of repentance and revelation. I pray for laborers to cross their path daily. I declare that Your Word will not return void. I thank You that my sons and daughters, my parents and siblings, my spouse and relatives will all come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I declare Proverbs 11:21—the seed of the righteous shall be delivered. Thank You, Father, for the salvation of my entire family. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

PRAYER – TO BIND THE DEVIL

Understanding Your Enemy

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

John 10:10 tells us the devil is a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy your life. One of the most effective ways to stop the devil from messing with your life is with prayer! Through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, you have been given the victory over anything you will ever face. Yet, you must resist the devil in your daily walk, or James would not have mentioned it. The enemy has been conquered, but he still must be resisted.

C.S. Lewis wisely observed, "Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign in sabotage." We are living in hostile territory, and prayer is one of our most powerful weapons.

The Foundation: Submit to God

The way to resist the devil starts with the word *submit*. To submit to God means to surrender to Him, to yield yourself fully to Him, to come under His authority. You can't have authority unless you are under authority. To submit means to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer. It means to believe, speak and obey God's Word. Submission could be stated another way: have faith in God.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Prayer that stops the devil is based upon believing, speaking and acting upon what God says. Submission is not only to the written Word of God, but it is also to the spoken Word when we are under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Active Resistance

To resist the enemy means an active, willful decision to say "no" to the devil with your heart, mind, words, and attitude. Every time you invite the will of God to be done in your life, you are saying "no" to the devil. Every time you praise God, you are saying "no" to the devil. Every time you obey the Word of God, you are saying "no" to the devil. In other words, you are making positive choices that literally evict the enemy! You are choosing the will, purposes and desires of God. When you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

There are people who will not submit to God because they don't want to be under His authority. They have failed to realize that if you aren't under God's authority, you are under the devil's authority. There is no middle ground. People who are selfishly ruled are Satan-ruled.

Leonard Ravenhill, the great prayer warrior, declared: "My main ambition in life is to be on the devil's most wanted list." This should be the heart cry of every believer—to be so committed to God's kingdom that we become a threat to the enemy's schemes.

The Power of the Blood of Jesus

There is power in the blood. To be able to pray and stop the devil, you must believe in the power of Jesus' blood.

Hebrews 10:16-19 says:

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," Then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where

there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.

You can enter into the presence of God with boldness, confidence, and liberty through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The devil and his demonic forces fear the "blood of Jesus." It was Jesus' blood that destroyed Satan's hold over you and me. It was His blood that ransomed us from Satan's authority. It was His blood on the cross that bought and paid for our total salvation, so when we come to God, we are coming through the blood of His Son.

Every time we quote Romans 8:1, we are declaring the power of Jesus' blood: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

If you do not believe in the power of Jesus' blood, you will not pray with authority. You will be reminded of what you have done in the past, of your failures and shortcomings, and as a result, your prayers will be like a wet noodle. The devil knows when you don't know your authority. It takes the blood of Jesus to free you of guilt and condemnation. It takes an understanding of the blood of Jesus to know your sins have been remitted.

When you call on the power of Jesus' blood, you have immediate access to the heavenly Father.

The Authority of Jesus' Name

There is power in the name of Jesus. To be able to pray and stop the devil not only do you need to believe in the power of the blood, you must approach the Father in the name of Jesus.

In John 16:23-24, Jesus said to His disciples in preparation for His departure from them:

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

God wants you to have the fullness of joy. He doesn't want the enemy to overrun your life in any area. The Bible says that the shield of faith quenches every fiery dart of the wicked (Ephesians 6:16). David the Psalmist declared, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). He said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

First John 5:18 says, "He who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him." Psalm 91:10 says, "No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling." Isaiah 54:17 says, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn...."

Then, how much place should the devil have in your life? Absolutely none! If you want to get something done, why don't you go straight to the top? Go to Jesus! Go to the Father in Jesus' name! That name is above the head of every company. Go to the very top! He has authority, and when you go to the Father in Jesus' name, He will help you and give you the wisdom and the avenue to the provision you need.

Jesus already won a victory that is sufficient to give us complete liberty from the devil's work in our lives, but we have to enter into the type of prayer that will stop him. That's believing prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.

The Highest Name in Heaven and Earth

Jesus has authority because...

[He] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:7-11)

When you use the name of Jesus, you have used the highest name in heaven, on earth and under the earth. There is no other authority greater than the name of Jesus.

You and I have been given the power of attorney to use that name! Jesus was saying to His disciples and to you and me, "I am going away. I will send the Comforter [My Spirit] to you. Carry on business as usual, because I am giving you My name. I will never leave you. I will never abandon you. I will be with you always, to the end of the world."

A Real-Life Testimony of Jesus' Name

There was a student on one of the college campuses here in Tulsa who was attacked by a would-be rapist. As he came at her she yelled the name Jesus and the attacker immediately stopped, turned, and ran away.

The name of Jesus carries divine authority! When spoken in faith, demons tremble, circumstances shift, and the enemy flees.

The Weapon of God's Word

To pray to stop the devil, you must declare God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 says:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul

and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Because God's Word is a living entity, you can take it into your prayer closet. This is an aspect of prayer that many people have not entered into because they have not recognized the value of it. They pray, beg, and plead, but they never come with the Word. If you will start your prayers with God's will, which is His Word, you will never pray amiss.

MacArthur explains how Jesus modeled this for us: "Consider how our Lord Himself resisted Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness (see Matthew 4 and Luke 4). Jesus did not 'bind' Satan. In all three instances of Satan's temptations, our Lord quoted Scripture, and the devil was repelled. We should follow our Lord's example when attacked or tempted. And let's not forget that if we are going to quote Scripture, we must know Scripture! Our Lord quoted three times from the book of Deuteronomy."

If you are approaching God for healing, come into agreement with His promises of healing in Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:17, and 1 Peter 2:24. You can pray, "Father, I am coming to You through the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus and with Your Word. You put sickness and disease upon Your Son, Jesus Christ, so I wouldn't have to bear it. By His stripes, I am healed. Thank You for my healing now, in Jesus' name."

A.W. Tozer reminds us of an important truth: "The devil is a better theologian than any of us and is a devil still." This means we cannot out-argue Satan with our own wisdom—we must stand on the authority of God's Word.

Standing Firm in Truth

MacArthur further instructs us: "What is our armor? It consists of the belt of truthfulness (not merely knowing the truth, but being committed to it), the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace (confidence

that we have made peace with God), the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation (confidence in our security in Christ), and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. None of those hints at any secret technique. Rather, they speak of clear understanding and a solid commitment to biblical truth and holiness. When we resist Satan by taking our stand in the armor of God's truth, he flees."

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare

Timothy Chester provides valuable perspective: "Spiritual warfare is not about naming territorial spirits, claiming the ground, or binding demons. It is all about the gospel. It is to live a gospel life, to preserve gospel unity and to proclaim gospel truth. It is to do this in the face of a hostile world, a deceptive enemy and our sinful natures. And it is to pray to a sovereign God for gospel opportunities. Advance comes through godliness, unity, proclamation and prayer."

David Powlison, in his final book on spiritual warfare, wrote: "Scripture treats spiritual warfare as a normal, everyday part of the Christian life, and so we should as well. It's not about spooky special effects. It's about how we think, feel, live, desire, and act in the presence of our enemies. The real devil is utterly normal, and his role is fully integrated into daily life. Mundane evil is the devil's business."

He also reminded us: "Spiritual warfare is what happens when God enlists us in His cause and equips us to join His battle. It's about light invading darkness. Often when people envision spiritual warfare, they think 'I'm under attack' and that is true. Satan does have his wily ways and he is out to get us. But we are also God's invading army, and we are on the attack. We are bringing light into a dark world."

Praying God's Promises

Second Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...." So let's not be slack in possessing His promises.

We possess them by believing and speaking God's Word in prayer and then acting as if it is so in our lives, even before the manifestation. Glory to God!

When you pray God's Word, you are praying His will. You are aligning yourself with heaven's agenda. You are standing on promises that cannot fail. You are wielding the sword of the Spirit with precision and power.

The Victory Is Already Won

The greatest truth to remember is that Jesus has already defeated Satan. Colossians 2:15 declares: "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

First John 4:4 gives us this assurance: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

We don't fight *for* victory—we fight *from* victory. Jesus has already won the war; we simply enforce His victory through prayer and obedience to God's Word.

Martin Luther, who had his own intense spiritual battles, said: "The world is a den of murderers, subject to the devil. If we desire to live on earth, we must be content to be guests in it, and to lie in an inn where the host is a rascal, whose house has over the door this sign or shield, 'For murder and lies.'" Yet Luther also knew the power of God's Word to overcome the enemy's schemes.

How to Pray Effectively Against the Enemy

Here are practical steps for praying prayers that bind the devil's activities in your life:

1. Begin with Submission to God Before you resist the devil, humble yourself before God. Acknowledge His sovereignty and lordship over your life. This is non-negotiable. James 4:6 says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

2. Come Through the Blood of Jesus Declare your access to the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ. Remind yourself (and the enemy) that you have been purchased by Christ's blood and are no longer under Satan's authority.

3. Pray in the Name of Jesus Use the authority that has been given to you through the name of Jesus. Remember, at that name every knee must bow—including the knees of demons.

4. Declare God's Word Speak Scripture over your situation. Find promises in God's Word that apply to what you're facing and declare them with faith. The Word of God is your offensive weapon.

5. Stand Firm and Resist Don't retreat. Don't compromise. Don't negotiate with the enemy. Simply stand firm on God's promises and resist the devil's lies, temptations, and attacks.

6. Give Thanks for the Victory Even before you see the manifestation, thank God for the victory that is already yours in Christ Jesus.

A Prayer of Resistance

Here is an example of how to pray against the enemy's attacks:

"Father, I come to You through the blood of Jesus Christ. I submit myself completely to Your authority and lordship. I resist the devil and all his works in my life. I refuse to give place to fear, doubt, anxiety, or any other weapon the enemy would use against me.

In the name of Jesus, I declare that no weapon formed against me shall prosper. I stand on Your Word that says greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world. I put on the full armor of God—the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I declare that Jesus Christ has disarmed principalities and powers and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore, I walk in that victory today. Devil, you have no authority over me. You are defeated. You are under my feet. Flee from me now in Jesus' name!

Thank You, Father, for the victory. Thank You that Your promises are yes and amen. I stand in faith, knowing that You are fighting for me. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen."

Conclusion: Walk in Your Authority

Prayer that binds the devil is not complicated, mystical, or reserved for spiritual giants. It is the birthright of every blood-bought believer. You have been given authority over all the power of the enemy. You have been equipped with spiritual armor. You have been given the name that is above every name.

As Spurgeon encouragingly wrote: "Prayer is our most formidable weapon, the thing which makes all else we do efficient. Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains, opens all prisons, and widens all straits by which God's saints have been held."

The question is not whether you have the authority—the question is whether you will use it. Will you submit to God? Will you resist the devil? Will you stand firm on God's Word? Will you pray with boldness through the blood and in the name of Jesus?

The enemy is already defeated. Now it's time for you to enforce that victory in your life through powerful, Word-based, faith-filled prayer. When you do, the devil will have no choice but to flee.

Stand firm. Pray boldly. Walk in victory. The battle is the Lord's, and He has already won.

PRAYER – TO BRING BREAKTHROUGH

The phone call came at 3:47 a.m. Clara Yeo's hands trembled as she listened to her sister's voice on the other end. Their father had suffered a massive stroke. Half his body was paralyzed. The doctors were cautiously optimistic, but the prognosis wasn't good. When Clara arrived at the hospital, she found her once-strong, vibrant father confined to a wheelchair, unable to move his right side.

For the next several weeks, Clara watched helplessly as her father struggled with basic tasks that had once been second nature. The man who had taught her to ride a bike, who had walked her down the aisle at her wedding, who had chased his grandchildren around the backyard, now couldn't even feed himself. Medical treatments offered incremental improvements, but nothing dramatic. The doctors spoke in terms of "managing expectations" and "learning to adapt."

But Clara refused to accept this as the final verdict. She had heard her pastor teach about breakthrough prayer—the kind of prayer that doesn't just accept circumstances but boldly petitions God to intervene. So she began to pray. Every single day for twenty-one days straight, Clara prayed over her father with unwavering faith.

Initially, nothing happened. No dramatic improvement. No sudden healing. The wheelchair remained a constant presence. But Clara kept praying. Then came the breakthrough. During a church service she was watching online while caring for her father at home, she felt prompted to lay hands on his shirt and pray while the pastor ministered. As she prayed, something supernatural happened. Her father suddenly stood up from his wheelchair and began walking down the stairs—something he hadn't been able to do in months.

The healing was complete. Clara's father could walk again. When she later shared her testimony, her words rang with joy and gratitude: "I want to thank God for healing my dad!"

This is the power of breakthrough prayer. This is what happens when believers refuse to give up, when they press through discouragement, when they stand on God's promises with unwavering faith.

It's Time for Your Breakthrough

The name of my ministry is "Breakthrough for You." I have a heart to help people breakthrough the barriers and challenges that are keeping them from experiencing the abundant life Jesus came to give us. As Jesus declared in John 10:10, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

It's time for you to get the breakthrough in your prayer life! But before we can understand how to pray for breakthrough, we need to understand what happens when believers pray—and what happens when they don't.

A Tale of Two Apostles

Acts 12 gives us a graphic, sobering picture of the difference prayer makes. The account begins with persecution:

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. So, when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover" (Acts 12:1-4).

James—the beloved disciple who had left his fishing nets to follow Jesus, who had been part of Jesus' inner circle, who had witnessed the Transfiguration—was executed. Just like that. His life cut short by the stroke of a sword. The early church was devastated. And now Peter, another pillar of the faith, faced the same fate.

Herod took no chances with Peter. He assigned four squads of soldiers—sixteen men altogether—to guard this one apostle. Peter was chained between two soldiers at all times, with two more standing guard at his cell door. This was maximum security. Escape was impossible. Humanly speaking, Peter was as good as dead.

But something was different this time. Something that would make all the difference between life and death, between tragedy and triumph, between despair and deliverance.

"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church" (Acts 12:5).

That little word "but" is always a crisis word in Scripture. It indicates a change in direction. James was killed. But constant prayer was made for Peter.

Let me be crystal clear about what Scripture is teaching us here: John Wesley, the great revivalist, wrote, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer; and even they who have been converted to God, without praying for it themselves (which is exceeding rare), were not without the prayers of others. Every new victory which a soul gains is the effect of a new prayer."

This doesn't mean God loved Peter more than James. It doesn't mean James's life mattered less to God. What it means is that prayer unleashes God's power in specific, tangible ways. The church rallied around Peter with fervent, continual prayer—and heaven responded.

When Heaven Invades Earth

The night before his scheduled execution, Peter was sleeping. Think about that. He wasn't pacing his cell in terror. He wasn't wringing his hands in despair. He was sound asleep, chained between two Roman soldiers. This demonstrates the supernatural peace of God that transcends understanding—the kind of peace that can only come from knowing you're held in the Father's hands, regardless of the outcome.

As one pastor beautifully expressed it, "It is better to be in the middle of the storm with Jesus in your boat, than to be on calm seas without Him." Peter had that peace because he knew Jesus was with him, even in that dark prison cell.

While Peter slept and the church prayed, heaven was already in motion:

"And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, 'Arise quickly!' And his chains fell off his hands" (Acts 12:6-7).

Chains and bars can't stop angels! They have access to all places, including maximum-security Roman prisons. The angel didn't break the chains—they simply fell off. There's a profound truth here: When God moves to deliver you, the things that have bound you don't require a struggle to remove. They fall off naturally when His power is present.

What's remarkable is the leisureliness of the deliverance. Alexander MacLaren, the great biblical expositor, pointed out how methodical the angel was: "A prisoner escaping might be glad to make a bolt for it, dressed or undressed, anyhow.

But when the angel comes into the cell, and the light shines, look how slowly and, as I say, leisurely, he goes about it."

The angel told Peter: "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals." Then, "Put on your garment and follow me." There was no rush, no panic, no frantic scrambling. When God delivers, He does it thoroughly and completely. He doesn't just crack the door open—He leads you all the way to freedom.

Peter followed the angel past the first guard post, then the second. They came to the iron gate that led to the city. Here's what happened next:

"Which opened to them of its own accord" (Acts 12:10).

Walmart didn't have the first automatic doors! God had them thousands of years ago. That massive iron gate, designed to keep prisoners in and rescue attempts out, simply opened on its own. No key required. No explosive breach. No elaborate escape plan. Just the sovereign power of God responding to the prayers of His people.

When they reached the street, the angel departed. Peter suddenly realized this wasn't a vision or a dream—it had actually happened. God had delivered him from certain death.

The Church That Prayed but Didn't Believe

What happened next is both amusing and convicting. Peter made his way to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many believers had gathered to pray—for him!

"And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, 'You are beside yourself!' Yet she kept insisting it was so. So they said, 'It is his angel'" (Acts 12:13-15).

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones highlighted the irony: "The people who are full of faith... when they're told that Peter has been delivered and is standing at the gate, they not only don't believe it, they tell this girl that she is mad."

Think about this: They were praying for Peter's deliverance, but when God actually delivered him, they didn't believe it! They thought the servant girl was crazy. When she insisted, they decided it must be Peter's ghost.

How often do we do the same thing? We pray for breakthrough, but when God starts to answer, we're shocked. We pray for healing, but when symptoms begin to improve, we attribute it to coincidence. We pray for provision, but when opportunities arise, we hesitate in disbelief.

"Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison" (Acts 12:16-17).

Peter had to keep knocking! The very people praying for his release were the ones keeping the door closed. Sometimes our unbelief is the only thing standing between us and our breakthrough.

The Battle We're In

The same spirit that operated through Herod is in the world today. Christians in various parts of the world are targeted, just like Peter, for destruction. But when believers pray, a standard is raised up to stop the work of the enemy. Sickness, calamity, tragedy, divorce, division, and premature death are stopped when believers pray with faith and fervency.

We're in a serious time on the earth. This is no hour to take lightly our protection, deliverance, and salvation. James, a

mighty warrior of God who could have reached many more people, was taken out early by the enemy's plan. But it didn't have to be that way.

There are no lost people in heaven to witness to, no demons to cast out, no sick people to be healed. We are in the earth for a holy, divine purpose: to witness of Jesus Christ, the Savior, Healer, and Deliverer. We are on the earth to fulfill God's purposes and plans.

Jesus said that God's plan for us is good—His plan is for abundant life. But the devil's plan is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). That's why breakthrough prayer is so critical. It's not just about getting what we want. It's about enforcing God's will on earth as it is in heaven.

The Sovereignty of God and Human Responsibility

Let me address a common misunderstanding. Some people, when faced with tragedy or unanswered prayer, quickly say, "It must be God's will." But we need to understand something crucial about God's sovereignty and our role in prayer.

God did not have a plan for Adam and Eve to disobey Him in the Garden, but He gave them free will. Saul disobeyed God's commands, and Judas betrayed Jesus—both acting out of their own free will. God sovereignly chose to give humanity free will, and He has sovereignly chosen to work through the faith of people who believe Him.

That's why Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). If everything that happens were automatically God's will, why would we need to pray this prayer? Why would Jesus instruct us to pray for God's will to be done if it was going to happen anyway?

The truth is, a lot of things happening in the world are NOT the will of God. It's not God's will for people to go home

prematurely. It's not God's will for children to suffer abuse. It's not God's will for marriages to be destroyed. But because God has given humanity free will, and because He has chosen to work through the prayers of His people, these things sometimes happen when we fail to pray.

Wesley also wrote, "God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it." This isn't about manipulating God or twisting His arm. It's about understanding that God has established prayer as the primary means by which His power is released on earth.

Think of it this way: God made the earth and gave humanity dominion over it. When Adam sinned, he handed that authority to Satan. Jesus came and defeated Satan, destroying his power and regaining the authority that was lost. Now, to all who believe in Jesus Christ and make Him Lord, God has given that authority back. But we must exercise it through prayer.

Why would Jesus tell sick people, "Your faith has made you whole," if faith played no role in their healing? Many people could have touched Jesus, but only those who released their faith received healing from Him.

The Power of Constant, Fervent Prayer

Notice the specific language of Acts 12:5: "Constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church."

Not occasional prayer. Not casual prayer. Not "Lord, if it be Your will" half-hearted prayer. Constant, fervent, unrelenting prayer. This is breakthrough prayer—the kind that doesn't give up, doesn't back down, doesn't accept defeat.

Alexander MacLaren beautifully illustrated this principle: "The moving spring of the Divine manifestation was an individual's prayer; the aim of it was the individual's

deliverance. A teaspoonful of water is put into a hydraulic ram at one point, and the outcome is the lifting of tons."

Your prayer may seem small, insignificant, powerless. But when it connects with the power of God, mountains move. Prison doors open. Chains fall off. The impossible becomes possible.

As the old saying goes, "No prayer, no power; little prayer, little power; much prayer, much power!" The church that prayed for Peter discovered this truth firsthand.

Declaring God's Will on Earth

God has all power and authority, but He has given believers the right to pray and release His power into the earth. Prayer is listening, communing, hearing the voice of the Lord, and being built up and strengthened. But there's another crucial aspect to prayer: declaring the will of God to be done with your own words.

Remember, God's Word and His will are one and the same. The Word is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). When you declare, "Lord, Your will be done," you become the establishing witness on the earth. Jesus has entered heaven with His blood, and the covenant made for us is forever settled. But you have to make the declaration: "Jesus, You are the Lord of my life, and I will not bow my knee to the devil."

It's established in heaven that Jesus is Lord and that He defeated the devil. Jesus is Lord of heaven, earth, and all that is under the earth. But He's not Lord in your specific situation until you declare, "Lord, Your will be done in my life."

It's the same with healing. It's established in heaven that Jesus bore our sicknesses, carried our diseases, and redeemed us from the curse. It's a settled fact. But you have to take an immovable stand on the Word of God and

establish it on the earth through your declarations in prayer. God watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12).

To stand upon the promises of God, you must declare them with your mouth: "Thy will be done on the earth as it is in heaven." How much sickness is in heaven? None! How much sin is in heaven? None! That is God's will on earth—no sickness, no sin, no fear, no torment. He wants the peace, joy, light, and life of His Kingdom manifested in the earth, so we have to declare it boldly.

The Problem of Double-Mindedness

Some people say, "I've declared it, and it's not working." Here's the problem: Two things are coming out of their mouth. They're declaring God's Kingdom with one breath, then declaring that it isn't working with the next. You need to undo the negative declarations and begin to say, "Whether I see it or feel it, God's Word is working in me."

Hebrews 10:23 (KJV) says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." And James 1:5-8 provides crucial instruction:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

The reverse of verse 8 is also true: A single-minded person is stable in all of his or her ways and will receive whatever he or she asks of the Lord. Single-mindedness in prayer means aligning your words, your thoughts, and your declarations consistently with God's Word, without wavering between faith and doubt.

The Prayer of Faith

James 5:14-15 teaches us about the prayer of faith:

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."

Notice: It's not the prayer of doubt, the prayer of wishing, or vague remembrance prayers that are effective. The prayer of faith is based on the written Word of God. Someone who knows the promises of God, lays claim to them, prays, and believes they receive the moment prayer is offered will receive from the Lord.

Simply defined, the prayer of faith is Mark 11:24: "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Believe you receive when you pray—not when you see it or feel it.

The other part of the definition is found in 1 John 5:14-15:

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

To ask according to God's will is to pray the promises of His Word. Pray what God has already spoken and written. You can find God's promises on any subject—from childbirth to facing death, from believing God for the salvation of loved ones to receiving strength and wisdom. Every area that relates to your life is covered in His Word.

The Principle of Sowing and Reaping in Prayer

James 5:16 tells us to "confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

I have watched people receive their healing as they pray for someone else. What you give out will come back to you. What you sow, you will reap. When you bless someone else through prayer, God's blessings will come back to you.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

James is talking about heartfelt, genuine, sincere prayers that make great power available in the earth. If we ever needed great power, it is in this hour.

If you have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ, the devil wants to tell you that your prayers don't count. But your prayers have as much power with God as the most well-known Christian speaker in the world. Why? Because we gain access to God by the blood of Jesus Christ, not by great talents and abilities.

Anyone made right by the blood of Jesus Christ has great power available. How great is it? Great enough to send an angel into a prison and loose a person guarded by dozens of soldiers! That means with God's power, we can pray someone out of a coma. We can pray for someone to be healed of cancer and taken off a death bed. We can pray for someone to be delivered out of harm's way when danger threatens.

Constant prayer was made to God for Peter by the church, and God sent His angel to deliver him. God still has angels available to bring answers to our prayers.

The Invisible Release of God's Power

There is an invisible release of the light of God the moment we pray. As we pray, an angel could be ten thousand miles away delivering a missionary. A doctor could be receiving divine wisdom for a difficult diagnosis. A struggling marriage could be receiving a breakthrough. A prodigal child could be having their heart softened toward God.

We don't always see the immediate results of our prayers, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening. In the spiritual realm, tremendous things are taking place that we won't fully understand until we get to heaven.

Matthew 21:22 says, "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." When you know something is God's will, then you can have faith to believe it.

God Likes His Own Ideas

Here's something I've learned after decades in ministry: There is something about God—He likes His own ideas! You can pray over your own ideas for a long time, but when you get one little idea from Him, you won't have to pray very long before you see a breakthrough!

This is why spending time in God's presence, listening to His voice, and aligning our prayers with His will is so crucial. When we pray what God is already saying, we're praying with the full backing of heaven. That's when breakthrough comes swiftly and decisively.

Your Prayer Life Anchors Your Future

God has a plan for your life. Early morning prayer, prayer in the daytime, and prayer in the evening time are essential to make sure His plan is fulfilled in your life.

If your life is not anchored in Jesus Christ through prayer and relationship with Him, Satan and his forces will attempt to

knock you off track, abort God's plans for you, and bring depression, discouragement, and defeat.

Constant, fervent prayer will bring you through to victory. When the church rose up in constant prayer for Peter, Satan's plans were stopped. The same can be true for you and your situation.

The Challenge: Stir Yourself Up

I want to challenge you to stir yourself up in prayer on behalf of other members of the Body of Christ—for people who are in distress, going through struggles and difficulties, or battling sickness or disease. It's time that we stop the works of darkness.

Because constant prayer was offered by the church for Peter, God intervened by sending an angel. There is no clearer picture in Scripture of the effectiveness of fervent prayer.

Don't let another James situation happen when you have the power to pray for breakthrough. Don't stand by passively when someone you love is under attack. Don't accept defeat when victory is available through prayer.

Your prayers matter. Your intercession counts. Your faith can move mountains.

Practical Steps to Breakthrough Prayer

Based on what we've learned from Acts 12 and other Scriptures, here are practical steps to breakthrough prayer:

1. Pray Constantly, Not Occasionally The church prayed constantly for Peter. Not just once. Not just when they felt like it. Constantly. Set specific times each day for prayer. Make it as non-negotiable as eating or sleeping.

2. Pray in Agreement with Others The believers gathered together to pray for Peter. There's power in corporate prayer.

Find prayer partners who will stand in faith with you for your breakthrough.

3. Pray Specifically, Not Vaguely They prayed for Peter's deliverance, not just "God bless Peter." Be specific about what you're asking God to do. Vague prayers get vague answers.

4. Pray with Faith, Not Doubt While the believers initially struggled to believe their prayers were answered, Peter himself had enough faith to sleep peacefully the night before his scheduled execution. Build your faith by standing on specific promises in God's Word.

5. Pray God's Word, Not Just Your Wishes Base your prayers on Scripture. When you pray God's Word back to Him, you're praying with confidence that you're praying His will.

6. Pray Persistently, Not Giving Up Don't quit after one prayer. Don't stop when you don't see immediate results. Keep praying until the breakthrough comes.

7. Pray Expectantly, Looking for God's Answer While the believers were surprised when Peter showed up, we should pray expecting God to answer. Look for signs of breakthrough. Be ready to recognize when God is moving.

When Your Breakthrough Seems Delayed

Alexander MacLaren noted that Peter had been in prison for some time before the Passover, and the praying had been going on all the while with no answer. Day after day of the festival was slipping away. The last night had come; "and the same night" the light shone and the angel appeared. MacLaren asked, "Why did Jesus Christ not hear the cry of these poor suppliants sooner?" He answered his own question: "For their sakes; for Peter's sake; for our sakes; for His own sake. For the eventual intervention, at the very last moment, and yet at a sufficiently early moment, tested faith."

Sometimes God waits until the last moment to build our faith and demonstrate His power more dramatically. Peter's deliverance on the eve of his execution was far more powerful than if he had been released immediately after arrest. The longer the delay, the greater the testimony of God's power when breakthrough finally comes.

Don't interpret delay as denial. Keep praying. Keep believing. Keep declaring God's promises. Your breakthrough is coming.

The Ultimate Purpose of Breakthrough Prayer

Remember, breakthrough prayer isn't ultimately about getting what we want—it's about seeing God's Kingdom established on earth. It's about people being saved, healed, delivered, and set free. It's about God's name being glorified and His purposes being fulfilled.

Wesley wrote, "I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions."

That's the heart behind breakthrough prayer—not just personal victory, but corporate revival. Not just individual healing, but community transformation. Not just our own deliverance, but the advancement of God's Kingdom on earth.

Your Breakthrough Starts Now

Are you ready for breakthrough in your life? Are you ready to see God move in power? Are you ready to experience the kind of deliverance Peter experienced, the kind of healing Clara's father received, the kind of provision that came to those who prayed and fasted?

Your breakthrough starts with a decision to pray. Not casual, occasional prayer, but constant, fervent, faith-filled prayer based on God's Word.

Stop waiting for things to change on their own. Stop accepting circumstances as unchangeable. Stop believing the lie that your prayers don't matter.

You have access to the same God who sent an angel to deliver Peter. You serve the same Jesus who healed the sick and raised the dead. You have the same Holy Spirit living in you that raised Jesus from the dead.

The question isn't whether God can give you breakthrough. The question is: Will you pray for it?

Will you stand in faith like Clara did for her father? Will you persist in prayer like the believers did for Peter? Will you declare God's Word over your situation without wavering?

As one prayer warrior declared, "Some miracles happen instantly, but others take time. Keep knocking, keep seeking, and keep asking. Just like the persistent widow, God will answer in due time."

Your breakthrough may not come overnight. It may require twenty-one days of prayer and fasting like Clara's situation. It may require months of persistent intercession. But I can promise you this: If you don't give up, if you keep praying, if you stand on God's Word with unwavering faith, breakthrough will come.

God is not a respecter of persons. What He did for Peter, He will do for you. What He did for Clara's father, He will do for your loved ones. What He did for those who prayed and fasted, He will do for those who seek Him with their whole heart.

The Testimony That's Coming

I believe that as you read this chapter, faith is rising in your heart. I believe God is stirring you to break through barriers of doubt, discouragement, and disappointment. I believe your breakthrough is closer than you think.

Start praying today. Not tomorrow. Not next week. Today. Right now. Wherever you are, whatever your situation, lift your voice to God and declare His Word over your circumstances.

Pray for the salvation of your loved ones. Pray for healing in your body. Pray for restoration in your relationships. Pray for provision in your finances. Pray for deliverance from every bondage. Pray for breakthrough in your ministry, your business, your calling.

And as you pray, remember Clara's words when her father was healed: "I want to thank God!"

Your testimony is coming. Your breakthrough is on the way. The same God who opened prison doors for Peter is about to open doors for you that no man can shut.

The chains are about to fall off. The gates are about to swing open. The angel of the Lord is being dispatched on your behalf.

Get ready. Your breakthrough is here.

Now pray this prayer with me:

"Father, I come to You in the name of Jesus. I thank You that You are a God of breakthrough. I declare that no weapon formed against me shall prosper. I stand on Your Word that promises healing, provision, protection, and deliverance. I refuse to accept defeat. I refuse to bow to circumstances. I refuse to give up.

Lord, I ask You to send Your angels on my behalf just as You did for Peter. Break every chain. Open every door. Remove every obstacle. I pray for breakthrough in every area of my life that's under attack. I pray for breakthrough in my family, my health, my finances, my relationships, and my calling.

Give me the faith to pray constantly, the perseverance to pray persistently, and the wisdom to pray Your Word. Surround me with prayer warriors who will stand in agreement with me. Give me the testimony of Your faithfulness that will encourage others and bring glory to Your name.

I declare that breakthrough is coming. I believe I receive my answer now, by faith, even before I see it manifest. And when the breakthrough comes, I will give You all the glory.

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen."

Now go forth expecting breakthrough. It's time for you to get the breakthrough in your prayer life. It's time for you to get the breakthrough in every area that has held you back.

Your chains are falling off. Your doors are opening. Your breakthrough is here.

Welcome to your season of breakthrough prayer!

PRAYER – TO MOVE MOUNTAINS

There comes a time in every believer's life when prayer must move beyond words and into authority—when your faith must rise up and *speak* to the mountains standing in your way. Whether it's a mountain of sickness, fear, financial lack, oppression, or relational turmoil, those mountains are not immovable. They are temporary barriers waiting for the voice of faith to speak God's Word and command them to move.

Now is that time.

Jesus did not tell us to admire the mountain, to analyze it, or to complain about it. He told us to *speak* to it. Mountains move when faith speaks.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

On one of Jesus' final walks over the Mount of Olives before His betrayal, He gave His disciples one of the most profound lessons on faith and prayer ever recorded.

“Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.

And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard it.” (*Mark 11:12–14*)

At first glance, this moment seems insignificant. A hungry Jesus finds no figs and simply curses the tree. But what happened next changed everything.

The next morning, as the disciples passed by, they were astonished to find the same fig tree *withered from the roots up*. Peter exclaimed, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away!”

Jesus turned to them and said:

“Have faith in God.

For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (*Mark 11:22–24*)

In this passage, Jesus linked **speaking faith-filled words** with **mountain-moving results**.

A Deeper Symbolism

There’s more happening here than a withered tree. The fig tree symbolized Israel—a nation called to bear the fruit of righteousness but found barren. Jesus’ action toward the tree reflected His coming judgment upon a faithless religious system.

But there’s also a personal lesson for every believer: God expects His people to bear fruit—fruit of faith, prayer, obedience, and love. We are not saved to simply exist; we are saved to produce the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of answered prayer.

As Jesus said in John 15:8:

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Faith Speaks—Even When Nothing Seems to Happen

When Jesus spoke to the fig tree, nothing *appeared* to happen. It still stood there—green, leafy, and alive. But something invisible began beneath the surface. It dried up *from the roots*.

That’s how faith works. You may not see instant results when you pray or speak God’s Word, but in the unseen realm, the roots of the problem are dying.

When faith speaks, things begin to shift—even when you can’t see it yet.

Faith: The Currency of the Kingdom

Romans 12:3 says, “God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

Romans 10:17 declares, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Faith isn’t mysterious—it’s spiritual currency. It’s how we transact with heaven. Just as money functions in the natural realm, faith functions in the supernatural. You “spend” faith when you act on God’s Word, trusting that His promises are true.

Corrie ten Boom once said,
“Faith is the radar that sees through the fog.”

Faith doesn’t deny the fog—it simply sees *beyond it*.

Speaking to Mountains

When Jesus said, “Whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed,’” He was teaching a spiritual law. Mountains represent any obstacle that stands between you and God’s promise. He didn’t say, “Pray about the mountain.” He said, “Speak to it.”

That's where many believers miss it. We talk *about* our mountains instead of *to* them. We describe them, analyze them, name them, and share them in prayer chains. But Jesus didn't say, "Call three friends and tell them about your mountain." He said, "Speak to it."

You have the authority, through Jesus' name, to command sickness to leave, fear to flee, lack to bow, and depression to break. When your words align with God's Word, they carry divine power.

Faith-Filled Words Create the Future

The Bible says, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). Your words are not empty—they are containers of power. They set the direction of your life.

When you speak in faith, you're not trying to convince God; you're enforcing what He's already said. You're releasing His will into the earth.

Imagine your words as spiritual seeds. Each time you speak in faith, you're sowing a seed that will grow into a harvest of answered prayer.

Guarding Your Words

If you want your words to move mountains, you must first guard your mouth. Some people talk themselves out of victory by constantly confessing defeat.

"I'm so broke."

"I'll never get well."

"My kids will never change."

Every word you speak sets something in motion—either faith or fear, victory or defeat.

When I first learned the power of confession, I made a decision to speak only life-giving words. It wasn't easy, but it changed everything.

You can't speak victory and expect defeat. You can't speak health and expect sickness. You can't speak abundance and expect lack.

Faith speaks what God says—*not what circumstances say*.

An Example: David and Goliath

David faced a literal mountain named Goliath. The giant taunted him with threats: "I'll feed your flesh to the birds of the air." But David didn't run. He spoke.

"You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts... This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand." (*1 Samuel 17:45–46*)

Before the stone ever left David's sling, the rock of God's Word had already been released from his mouth. The victory was spoken before it was seen.

When you speak God's Word, your words go before you and make a way. The miracle follows the confession.

Faith, Forgiveness, and Fruitfulness

Jesus didn't end His teaching on faith without addressing the heart. Right after saying "You will have whatever you say," He added:

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him..." (*Mark 11:25*)

Unforgiveness will short-circuit your faith. You can confess, declare, and decree, but if bitterness lives in your heart, your mountain won't move.

Faith works through love (Galatians 5:6). Forgiveness keeps your spiritual pipeline clear so that God's power can flow unhindered.

If you want your prayers to move mountains, keep your heart free. Forgive quickly, love deeply, and speak boldly.

Why Faith Works

Faith works because it is built into the very fabric of creation. Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God."

When God said, "Let there be light," it wasn't a suggestion—it was a decree. Words framed the universe. Words framed your destiny.

Begin to pray the Word over your children: "*You are anointed. You are blessed. You will serve the Lord all the days of your life.*" Don't let a negative word come out of your mouth toward your children. If you have spoken negative words, repent and speak God's Word over them.

Continue to pray the Word: "*All of my children are taught of the Lord. They are far from oppression. Fear will not come near them. The seed of the righteous is delivered. No iniquity, uncleanness, rebellion, defilement, or perversion can come into my children, in Jesus' name.*"

The power of the laws of faith that God gave in His Word is meant to be applied to everything that our hands touch. We are meant to walk in dominion like Adam and Eve did in the beginning, not to rule with arrogance and oppression, but to rule with the love of God.

What comes out of your mouth in prayer and confession will set the course of your destiny.

When you pray and declare God's promises, you're using the same creative force that shaped the heavens and the earth.

Decreeing God's Will

Job 22:28 declares:

“You will also decree a thing, and it shall be established for you.”

Faith decrees are not empty wishes—they are declarations rooted in God's revealed will. When you decree healing, you're not demanding from God; you're enforcing His covenant promise. When you declare peace over your home, you're agreeing with heaven's agenda.

Your mouth is the steering wheel of your life. What you decree determines where you go.

Putting It All Together

So, how do you move mountains?

1. **Fill your heart with the Word of God.** Faith comes by hearing.
 2. **Speak boldly.** Don't whisper—declare. Jesus didn't mumble to the fig tree.
 3. **Believe, don't doubt.** See the invisible roots dying even when nothing seems to change.
 4. **Forgive.** Keep your heart pure.
 5. **Thank God in advance.** Praise is the language of faith.
- When you apply these principles, you will begin to see your mountains move—some instantly, some gradually, but they *will* move.

Closing Challenge:

Open Your Mouth and Move Your Mountain

This is not the hour for silent faith. This is the time for believers to rise and *speak* the Word with authority.

Jesus said,

“The works that I do you will do also; and greater works than these.” (*John 14:12*)

We are called to continue His works—praying, believing, and declaring the Word of God with boldness and love.

So, stand up in faith. Look at the mountains in your life and say with confidence:

“Mountain, in the name of Jesus, be removed!”

Then thank God for the victory, because it’s already done in heaven—it just needs your words to release it on earth.

Prayer of Faith Declaration

Father, I thank You that I am a person of faith. I believe Your Word.

I speak to every mountain in my life—every obstacle, every sickness, every limitation—and I command it to move in the name of Jesus.

I forgive those who have wronged me.

I release love and faith, and I believe that I receive what I’ve asked for.

My words are filled with life and power. I declare that I walk in victory, blessing, and abundance.

In Jesus’ mighty name—Amen!

PRAYER — TO FINISH YOUR RACE

The crowd fell silent as Ben Payne approached the finish line of the 2015 Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta. Just meters from victory in the open men's 10K race, the confident American raised his arms in premature celebration. The finish line was right there—so close he could taste the victory. But in that brief moment of distraction, another runner caught up with him, surging past in the final meters to claim the title. Payne's overconfidence cost him first place when he started celebrating before crossing the finish line. After all the training, sacrifice, and miles of running hard, he lost in the home stretch.

It would be tragic to put in the effort, training, sacrifice and running hard only to lose in the home stretch. Yet this happens far too often—not just in athletic competitions, but in the race of faith. How many believers start strong, burning with passion for God, only to stumble and fall before reaching the finish line? The statistics are sobering: many believers are no longer excited with their Christian life, no longer as energetic as before in running or finishing this race of faith.

But today is not the day to stop. This is not the time to quit. No matter how big your problems may be, no matter what challenges you face, you can still run this race with strength and finish it victoriously. The secret isn't found in your own determination or willpower alone—it's found in the power of prayer.

The Divine Assignment

Hebrews 12:1 tells us, "...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Notice those words: "the race that is

set before us." God has given each of us a specific race to run—a divine purpose uniquely designed for our lives. This isn't a generic, one-size-fits-all assignment. Your race is different from mine. Your course, your calling, your purpose is as unique as your fingerprint.

One of the most critical keys to finishing your race is making prayer a daily, non-negotiable part of your life. Prayer isn't just a religious ritual or a box to check off your spiritual to-do list. Prayer is the fuel that powers your race. It's the oxygen that keeps you breathing when the climb gets steep. It's the compass that keeps you on course when the path becomes unclear.

As one pastor wisely observed, staying motivated to run the race with perseverance requires a deep connection to God's Word and a heart set on the finish line. Prayer creates and sustains that connection. Through prayer, God reveals your assignment, renews your strength, and realigns your focus when distractions threaten to derail you.

Jesus' Example: The Prayer Before the Race

Before Jesus faced His greatest challenge—betrayal, crucifixion, and death—He prayed. His prayer in John 17 stands as one of the most powerful examples we have of how prayer prepares us for the race ahead. This wasn't a casual, throw-up-a-quick-petition kind of prayer. This was deep, intimate communion with the Father that revealed the heart of Jesus' mission and equipped Him for what lay ahead.

Jesus had just finished explaining to His disciples that He would be leaving them. He told them about the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would come to teach them, guide them into all truth, convict the world of sin, and declare the things to come. Then, in the midst of what must have been an emotionally charged moment, Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven and prayed.

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" (John 17:1).

Notice that Jesus asked for the Father to be glorified through His life. This should still be our prayer today. By faith, as we identify with Jesus' suffering, consider ourselves dead to sin, and receive His resurrection power within us, we can pray, "Father, glorify Yourself in us, and our lives will glorify You."

Jesus continued: "As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:2-3).

Eternal life isn't just a distant future reality—it's a present, tangible relationship. It's the personal, intimate knowing of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Greek word for "know" in this passage isn't the casual knowledge of knowing someone's name or face. It's the deep, intimate knowing that exists between a husband and wife—a relationship of profound connection, trust, and love.

This is why we must ask ourselves and others: "Do you really *know* Jesus?" Not just know *about* Him, but actually know Him—experience Him, walk with Him, hear from Him? This kind of knowing only develops through consistent, fervent prayer.

Finishing the Work Given to You

Jesus prayed: "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

Think about those words. Jesus could stand before the Father and say, "I have finished the work." Can you imagine reaching the end of your life and being able to say the same thing? The apostle Paul echoed this same sentiment when he wrote:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

This verse is not just about physical endurance but also about maintaining our faith and integrity throughout life's challenges. God has something specific for each of us to accomplish on this earth. The question is: Will we finish it?

Jesus received His instructions in prayer. The Father imparted into His Son's heart the full vision of everything He was to accomplish through times of communion and fellowship. We are to follow His example. As we run on a track of daily prayer, God will show us the things we are to do, too.

Manifesting the Name

Jesus continued praying: "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word" (John 17:5-6).

Our primary goal in life should be to manifest the name of Jesus and the Word of God to the people of this earth. To manifest means "to bring forth, to demonstrate, to give out." We should pray daily, "Lord, help us to manifest Your name in the earth."

Throughout His ministry, Jesus gave the Father credit for what He was saying and doing. "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You," Jesus prayed (John 17:7). Similarly, we should give God the glory for the things we say and do for His Kingdom. This isn't false

humility—it's honest recognition of where our true strength comes from.

As the psalmist declares, "The Lord is my strength and my defense; He has become my salvation" (Exodus 15:2). This verse encourages athletes to give God acknowledgment and thanks for His role in their success, reminding us that in all endeavors, including our spiritual race, God is the source of strength and victory.

Praying for Those in Your Race

Jesus said, "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours" (John 17:8-9).

We are called to pray for the people God gives us to win to Christ. This is not optional—it's our calling. We should pray for their eyes to be opened, their ears to be receptive, their minds to be understanding, and their hearts to receive the truth. We should pray that the power of the devil be removed from them and the power of God be loosed upon them, so the Lord can work on their will to choose Him and refuse evil.

One believer wrote to their pastor requesting prayer, saying they fully understood how powerful prayers are and had proven it many times, which is why they wouldn't give up praying for their sons to know Jesus. This is the kind of persistent, faithful prayer that changes lives and impacts eternity.

Eric Liddell, the Olympic gold medalist immortalized in the film "Chariots of Fire," understood this principle deeply. Before his famous 400-meter race, he said, "The secret of my success over the 400-m is that I run the first 200-m as fast as I can. Then, for the second 200-m, with God's help, I run

faster". Liddell famously declared, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast! And when I run I feel his pleasure".

Liddell didn't just run races on the track—he ran the race of faith with the same dedication. And he did it through prayer, always giving God credit for his abilities and successes.

Praying for Unity

"And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" (John 17:10-11).

To "keep" means "to guard and protect." Jesus prayed that His followers would be kept "that they may be one as We are." This should be one of our constant prayers: "Lord, let there be unity in the Body of Christ. Let there be a joining, a linking, a brotherhood. Let there be a flowing together as one in the Body of Christ, just as You and the Father are one."

Division and discord weaken us. Unity strengthens us. When we pray for unity, we're praying for the health and effectiveness of the entire Body of Christ—and for our own ability to finish our race strong.

Protection from Evil

Jesus prayed: "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:13-15).

One of the most important prayers we can pray is, "Lord, deliver and keep me, my family, and all Your people from evil.

Help us to remain fruitful while we are in this world, but keep the evil that's in the world out of each of us."

We need this protection daily. Our faith race is not against other people, but against "the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". These spiritual forces are real, and they're actively working to trip us up, slow us down, and knock us out of the race entirely.

As one pastor explained, many Christians become tired and want to quit because of sins they're still clinging to and doing in their lives. He shared the story of an old deacon who frequently ended his prayers with, "O Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of my life!" Finally, a neighbor who knew the deacon was a self-seeking, carnal Christian stood up and shouted, "Don't do it Lord! Don't do it! Make him kill the spider!"

The point is clear: If we really want to finish this race, we must willfully decide to turn away from all the sins that entangle us and hinder our progress. Prayer alone isn't enough if we're not willing to make the hard choices that align with our prayers.

Sanctified by Truth

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:16-17).

How are people going to be cleansed and sanctified? Some think it happens through beating, condemning, or criticizing people until the sin is squeezed out of them. But there's only one way to be truly sanctified: through the washing of the water of God's Word.

If hard times alone could sanctify us, then people in the most difficult circumstances would be the sweetest and holiest

people of all. But experience proves this logic doesn't hold. If a person doesn't pray or get into God's Word, they'll become harder with the hard times. It's the Spirit of God who works in our hearts as we open our wills to receive God's truth.

God's Word plays a crucial role in running the race of faith, serving as a lamp for our feet and a light on our path, providing guidance, wisdom and encouragement for every step of the journey. As one writer beautifully expressed, a daily regimen of prayer, worship, reading God's Word and examining our lives for impediments will help us commit to running the lifelong marathon to the very end.

Sent with a Mission

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

As Jesus was sent, we are sent. Jesus was sent to destroy the works of the devil and to seek and save that which was lost. You and I have been sent into the world for these same reasons.

We've been sent to preach the Good News of the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives (those bound by Satan and his works), recovery of sight to the blind (both naturally and spiritually), and to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18). We are Jesus' hands extended, His voice speaking, and His life flowing in the earth.

And the foundation of this entire mission is PRAYER.

Training for Your Race

Running a marathon doesn't start with the race itself but with the training, discipline, and preparation. The same is true for the spiritual race we're running. We can't expect to finish strong if we don't train consistently.

Becoming a successful long-distance runner requires a lot of strict training. Scripture repeatedly uses athletic metaphors to drive home this point. Paul wrote, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Corinthians 9:24-25).

Athletes have coaches, and God serves as our coach—He knows the course we're running, what our body is capable of, and our full potential. He's given us a manual—the Bible—that teaches us what to do and what not to do. God wants us to run and keep running. He wants us to keep the faith and win the crown.

Prayer is how we receive our daily coaching. It's how we hear the Father's instructions, get our course corrections, and receive the encouragement we need to press on when we want to quit.

Strip Off Every Weight

One of the first disciplines in running the race is to remove every weight that pulls us down: sin, guilt, shame, worries. We accumulate so many burdens along the way. The problem is that running a race while carrying heavy baggage is next to impossible.

Hebrews 12:1 instructs us clearly: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race God set before us."

This verse urges believers to cast off hindrances and sins, emphasizing the importance of running the race of faith with endurance and perseverance. We have to lay our burdens down at the feet of Jesus and keep going. We must persevere.

But here's what many miss: We can't strip off these weights in our own strength. It happens through prayer—through bringing everything to God and allowing His Spirit to work in us. As we pray, God reveals the hidden weights we've been carrying without even realizing it. He gives us the strength to release them and the grace to walk in freedom.

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

The same passage in Hebrews continues with perhaps the most important instruction of all: "...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

We look away from all distractions because He is already at the finish line. Jesus is both the author and finisher of our faith. He started this work in you, and He will complete it—but you must keep your eyes fixed on Him.

Endurance is not just about physical strength; it also takes mental and emotional strength to continue in the face of hardship and fatigue. Athletes must learn to push through doubt and obstacles, trusting that the race marked out for them has a divinely-planned purpose.

One runner who trains for marathons shared how a surprising side effect of training for a longer race has been a renewed sense of patience, having to mentally prepare for the fact that it may take an hour, two hours, or even longer to reach the distance. This reminds us that patience and self-control often make the difference between success and failure, and even if we need to slow down or stop along the way, as long as we keep going, we'll get there.

The same is true in our spiritual race. Some seasons will be faster than others. Sometimes we sprint; sometimes we

trudge. But as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus and keep moving forward through prayer, we will reach the finish line.

When You Want to Quit

Let's be honest: There will be times when you want to quit. Times when the pain is too great, the obstacles too many, the road too long. In those moments, prayer becomes your lifeline.

One pastor candidly shared his struggle with depression, describing how his mentality became progressively darker and all the exits from his downward spiral seemed barred shut. He confessed to his church elders about his mental struggles, and one elder responded, "I don't think you are supposed to resign either. But you can't go on like this".

Sometimes finishing the race means getting help. It means being honest in prayer about where you really are. It means reaching out to fellow runners who can support you. The race God has for you isn't meant to be run in isolation.

One prayer for runners beautifully captures this: "Turn my eyes on You, Lord. You are the Author and Finisher of my faith, the Keeper of my heart. Help me run this race with endurance and passion, and help me run it well".

When you feel like giving up, remember Isaiah 40:29-31: "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

As we run the race of life, we must always remember that we have an unfailing source of strength in our Heavenly Father who empowers us to keep going, to overcome and to finish strong.

The Power of Persistent Prayer

Prayer isn't a one-time event. It's not something you do once and then coast on for the rest of your journey. Prayer must be consistent, persistent, and fervent if you want to finish your race.

While the act of running itself can bring glory to God, it's also one of the best opportunities to have a quiet time with God in which you can specifically pray for your life and those God places on your heart. What a great way to stay in shape both physically and spiritually!

Jesus said, "Men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). The implication is clear: Without consistent prayer, we will lose heart. We will grow weary. We will want to quit.

But when we maintain a lifestyle of prayer—daily communion with the Father—something supernatural happens. We tap into a strength that isn't our own. We gain perspective that transcends our circumstances. We receive direction that guides our steps. We experience peace that defies logic.

Run to Win

Paul wrote, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

If our mindset is fixed on winning the prize, then we will have many advantages. This doesn't mean we're competing against other believers—remember, we're all on the same team. But it does mean we should run with purpose, intentionality, and determination.

One cannot be a successful athlete without undergoing rigorous training, and they endure because of their goals and

dreams. As Christians, we persevere for something even greater—we're running toward eternal life, toward the crown of righteousness, toward hearing "Well done, good and faithful servant."

A runner's prayer expresses this beautifully: "This is my running prayer Lord. I run in praise of you. I praise you with my motion. You sustain my breath that I may sustain your praise".

Every step of your race can be an act of worship. Every prayer can be a declaration of faith. Every obstacle overcome can be a testimony to God's faithfulness.

The Prize Awaiting You

What exactly are we running toward? What's the prize at the end of this race?

Paul describes it in 2 Timothy 4:8: "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

The crown of righteousness. The joy of the Lord. The satisfaction of hearing, "Well done." The privilege of standing before Jesus, having finished the work He gave us to do.

But there's more. The race you're running—the divine assignment God has given you—impacts eternity. The people you're called to reach, the work you're called to accomplish, the influence you're called to have—all of it matters beyond this life.

When you pray, you're not just maintaining your own spiritual health. You're positioning yourself to fulfill your purpose, impact lives, advance God's Kingdom, and leave a legacy that outlasts you.

Begin Today

The foundation of your mission—the key to finishing your race—is PRAYER. Let's begin today to pray by the rules, using the principles Jesus taught us. When you have a consistent life of prayer, you will be thrust into the center of the divine assignment God has for your life.

Don't wait for a more convenient time. Don't put it off until you feel more spiritual or more disciplined. Start now. Start today. Make prayer a non-negotiable part of your daily routine.

Set aside time each morning to seek God's face. Pray throughout the day, maintaining an ongoing conversation with the Father. End your day in prayer, reflecting on His faithfulness and committing the next day to Him.

As you do this consistently—day after day, week after week, month after month—you'll find yourself growing stronger. You'll develop spiritual endurance. You'll gain clarity about your purpose. You'll experience breakthroughs in areas where you've been stuck. You'll see God move in powerful ways in your life and in the lives of those around you.

Finishing Strong

Remember Ben Payne, the runner who lost his race in the final meters? Don't let that be your story. Don't let premature celebration, momentary distraction, or loss of focus cost you the victory God has planned for you.

One writer encouraged: "Train to endure, throw off all that burdens you, and rest when needed. Keep your eyes on Jesus and finish well!"

Jesus finished His race. Paul finished his race. Countless believers throughout history have finished their races. And you can too.

The race God has for your life is achievable. The work He's given you to do is accomplishable. The purpose He's placed within you is reachable. But it all hinges on prayer—consistent, fervent, faith-filled prayer that connects you daily to the Source of your strength.

So run your race with endurance. Run with purpose. Run with passion. And most importantly, run with prayer as your foundation, your fuel, and your compass.

The finish line is waiting. The crown is prepared. The Father is cheering you on. And when you cross that finish line—when you can say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"—you'll discover that every prayer, every struggle, every step of obedience was worth it.

God has given you a race to run. Will you finish it? With prayer as your daily practice and Jesus as your focus, the answer is a resounding yes. You will finish your race. You will fulfill your purpose. You will hear those precious words: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Now run. And as you run, pray. Pray without ceasing. Pray with faith. Pray with expectation. And watch as God does immeasurably more than you could ask or imagine as you faithfully finish the race He has set before you.

FINAL WORD

KEEP PRAYING BY THE RULES

As we come to the end of this journey together, I want to take a moment to pause and reflect with you. My heart is full of gratitude—gratitude to God for allowing us to walk through His Word together, and gratitude to you for your desire to grow in one of the most powerful, life-changing areas of the Christian walk—**prayer**.

My hope is that through these pages, you’ve gained not only knowledge but revelation—an understanding that prayer is not meant to be complicated, mechanical, or routine. It is meant to be *powerful*, *intimate*, and *effective*. Prayer is the very heartbeat of our relationship with God. It’s how heaven connects with earth, how divine purpose meets human partnership, and how ordinary people like you and me get to participate in the extraordinary plans of God.

Throughout this book, we’ve discovered that there are many kinds of prayer—each with its own unique purpose, principles, and practices. Just like every sport has its own rules, prayer too has its divine structure. Imagine trying to play football using basketball rules, or attempting a tennis match while following baseball regulations—it would be confusing, frustrating, and ineffective. The same is true with prayer. To pray effectively, we must understand and follow the “rules” that govern each type of prayer that God’s Word reveals.

The prayer of faith, the prayer of intercession, the prayer of agreement, the prayer of petition, the prayer of consecration, and the prayer of thanksgiving—all have a place in the believer’s life. Each is designed for a specific purpose, and each carries its own set of biblical guidelines. When you

understand those principles and apply them, prayer ceases to be a mystery and becomes a dynamic, life-giving force that releases heaven's power into your world.

When you pray by the rules, you're no longer guessing what might work—you're praying with understanding, confidence, and precision. You're not hoping God might hear; you know He hears. You're not pleading in desperation; you're declaring in faith. You're not wondering if your prayers make a difference; you're watching them change circumstances, shift atmospheres, and transform lives.

Key Lessons We've Learned Together

1. Prayer is God's Design for Communication

Prayer was never man's idea—it was God's. He created it as the divine channel through which heaven and earth stay connected. Prayer is not a ritual; it's a relationship. It's not just something we *do*; it's who we *are* as God's children. Through prayer, we draw near to His heart, receive His wisdom, and exchange our weakness for His strength.

When you understand that prayer is God's invitation into partnership, it changes everything. You stop seeing prayer as an obligation and start seeing it as an opportunity—an opportunity to commune with the Creator, to hear His voice, and to see His will established on earth.

2. Each Kind of Prayer Has a Specific Purpose

Just as there are many tools in a toolbox, there are many kinds of prayer—and each serves a distinct function. You wouldn't use a hammer to tighten a screw, and you shouldn't use the wrong kind of prayer for the wrong purpose.

- **The Prayer of Petition** – Bringing your personal requests before God with faith, humility, and thanksgiving.

- **The Prayer of Intercession** – Standing in the gap for others, allowing God to use your voice, your faith, and your compassion to bring change in someone else’s life.
- **The Prayer of Agreement** – Joining your faith with others, standing together on the promises of God, knowing that where two or three agree, He moves powerfully (Matthew 18:19–20).
- **The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise** – Shifting your focus from your need to God’s greatness, creating an atmosphere where His presence dwells and His power flows.
- **The Prayer of Consecration** – Surrendering your will to God’s plan, echoing Jesus’ words, “Not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

Each of these prayers is powerful when used correctly. Learning to discern which type of prayer fits each situation will help you pray with greater authority and see more consistent results.

3. Praying According to God’s Word Ensures Results

God’s Word is our prayer manual. It is both the foundation and fuel of effective prayer. When you pray God’s promises, you are praying His will—and His will always prevails. First John 5:14–15 assures us, *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”*

The power of prayer is not in our emotion or eloquence—it’s in our alignment with the Word of God. Prayer rooted in Scripture carries authority because it carries divine truth. Heaven moves when we declare what God has already spoken.

4. Faith is the Foundation of All Prayer

At the core of every effective prayer is faith. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us, *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”* Faith believes before it sees, speaks before it feels, and acts before it receives. Faith is not wishful thinking—it’s confident trust in God’s integrity and promises.

When you pray with faith, you’re saying, “Lord, I believe You more than my situation. I believe Your Word more than what I see. I trust Your promise more than my pain.” That’s the kind of faith that moves mountains, heals bodies, restores marriages, opens doors, and turns the impossible into the inevitable.

A Pastor’s Heart

As a pastor and teacher of God’s Word for over forty years, I have seen firsthand what happens when believers discover the power of praying by the rules. I’ve seen people who once felt intimidated or uncertain about prayer become bold, confident, and effective intercessors. I’ve seen prayers turn impossible situations around—broken families restored, prodigals come home, sickness healed, debts canceled, and nations changed.

I’ve also seen the pain of unanswered prayers—and often, it wasn’t because God didn’t want to answer, but because we didn’t understand the principles that govern effective prayer. My heart in writing this book has been to help you avoid those frustrations and step into the joy of answered prayer.

Prayer is not meant to be a guessing game. It’s a divine partnership. It’s God inviting you to take your place beside Him, to use your authority as a believer, and to participate in bringing His will to pass on earth. And when you learn to pray by His rules, you will experience results that go beyond anything you could imagine.

Final Encouragement

As you move forward, I challenge you—don't just read these principles; *live* them. Make prayer a lifestyle, not just an event. Let the Word of God shape your prayers and the Holy Spirit direct your heart. Develop a consistent, confident, and courageous prayer life.

Remember—God loves to hear your voice. He delights in your fellowship. He longs to respond to your faith. Every time you pray, heaven leans in to listen. Every time you speak His Word, power is released.

Never underestimate the power of your prayers. They can heal the sick, deliver the oppressed, comfort the hurting, and change the course of nations. Prayer is the key that unlocks heaven's resources and brings God's will into your reality.

As Ephesians 3:20 declares, *“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”* That power works *through prayer*.

So, pray boldly. Pray persistently. Pray expectantly. Pray by the rules—and watch what God will do.

Thank you for allowing me to walk this journey with you. It has been my joy and honor to share these truths from God's Word with you. My prayer for you is that your life becomes a living testimony of answered prayer, divine favor, and supernatural results.

Keep praying. Keep believing. Keep expecting. The best is yet to come.

Be blessed,

Pastor Bruce

Final Word: The Most Important Prayer

Before we close, let me speak to your heart about the most important prayer you will ever pray—the **prayer of salvation**. This is the prayer that changes your eternal destiny. It's the prayer that opens the door to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and connects you to the heart of the Father forever.

Romans 10:9–10 tells us, *“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”*

If you have never prayed this prayer, I invite you to do it now. Don't wait another day. Your new life can begin right here, right now.

On the next page, you'll find a simple yet powerful prayer to guide you as you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. It's not about the exact words—it's about the faith in your heart. This prayer is the doorway to a life filled with peace, purpose, and the assurance of eternity with God.

PRAYER OF SALVATION

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (John 6:37) I know You won’t cast me out. You take me in, and I thank You for that.

You said in Your Word, “Whoever calls on the name of Jesus the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13) I am calling on Your Name, and I know You have saved me.

You also said, “If we confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:9-10) I believe in my heart Jesus is the Son of God. I believe He was raised from the dead for my justification. I confess Him as Lord.

Because Your Word says that, “with the heart one believes unto righteousness” – and I do believe with my heart – I have now become the righteousness of God in Christ (2Cor. 5:21). I am now saved!

Thank You Lord!

Signed _____

Date _____

If you prayed that prayer or have more questions, go to my website

www.bruce-edwards.com

where you will find more information and
resources to help develop your faith.

I especially recommend you download my free e-book “What’s Next”. You will find the download link under the “Free Book” tab on the top menu.

Congratulations and God bless!

Pray by the Rules

learning how to pray

"Praying with all kinds of prayer" (Ephesians 6:18)

There are different kinds of prayer in the Bible and each kind of prayer has certain rules.

This book will help you discover -

- > The power of prayer.
- > How early morning prayer is the breakfast of champions
- > Different patterns of prayer to help you pray
- > The different kinds of prayer
- > How to pray each kind of prayer
- > How to get your prayers answered
- > and much more

"At that time, you will call out for Me, and I will hear. You will pray, and I will listen."

Jeremiah 29:12

Bruce R. Edwards