



PRAYER

THAT
GETS
RESULTS

The Key to Your Survival

BENNY HINN

People of all ages
are increasingly
interested in how
to communicate
with God effectively.

CALL
UNTO
ME *and I will
answer thee, and shew
thee great and mighty
things, which thou
knowest not.*

—JEREMIAH 33:3

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P R A



Clarion Call Marketing

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introduction

TODAY'S GREATEST NEED

*Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and
shew thee great and mighty things, which
thou knowest not.*

—Jeremiah 33:3

What is the greatest need facing the church today?
Prayer!

A survey of 1,300 ministry leaders from around the world were asked that question. Participants were given a list of 3,700 different issues. They were also provided an opportunity for additional input. Most of the answers were fairly predictable: abortion (#10), marriage (#7), and apathy (#6). Numbers 5 to 2, respectively, were doctrine, evangelism, leadership, and discipleship.

Number 1?

It is prayer.¹

The greatest need facing today's Christians, according to top leaders, is the need for more ongoing, passionate prayer in both personal and church life! It is the most pressing challenge facing believers today. It is the greatest need in the church today!

God Almighty wants to birth prayer in your heart. It is the answer to your relationship with Him. It is the key to your survival in today's world in the coming days. Without prayer that gets results, we will be powerless and impotent in the midst of these troubled and confusing times.

How about you? What would your life be like if you could move into the powerful, overwhelming, all-encompassing, eternal presence of God without fail, anytime you desired? How different would your life be? Your conversations? Your relationships? Your thoughts? Your goals? Your actions?

What would it be like to receive answers to prayer, time after time? How would your life truly change if you could be in contact daily with your heavenly Father?

It is possible to enjoy the presence of God every day and to have your prayers answered. How do I know? The Bible is filled with promises that God answers prayer:

And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. (1 Kings 9:3)

The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer. (Psalm 6:9)

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:9-10)

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.
(1 Peter 3:12)*

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16)

God Almighty sent His Son to earth to die for our salvation and to provide eternal redemption, but also to restore the broken bonds of fellowship that man enjoyed with God before the Fall.

God sent His Holy Spirit to be our Helper in order that we might live a life of power and communion with Him, yet many today do not know this glorious privilege. They ask:

- Does God hear when I call?
- Is the Lord involved in every area of my life?
- Can I know Him intimately?
- Does He answer prayer?
- How can I learn to hear His voice?
- Does God intervene in the affairs of man?

The answer is a resounding *yes!*

Are you ready for an intimate walk with the Lord—a walk you have hungered for and longed for with all your being? As you read this book, I pray that the Lord will begin to show you how and empower you to live a life of prayer that gets results.

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THE
MODEL
PRAYER

*This is how the
Master teaches us to pray:
He brings us into the
Father's living presence.
What we pray there
must avail.*

Andrew Murray

o n e

Scripture records: “*And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). *MAT 6-10-9*

One of the greatest requests in the Word of God is the one made to the Lord Jesus by His disciples—“*Lord, teach us to pray*”—a cry that still echoes in the hearts of those who long to follow Him.

Why did the disciple make such an urgent request? It is because of the great and mighty hunger that dwelled in their hearts for the knowledge of God.

Effective prayer is God’s invitation into His limitlessness. Prayer crosses the border of time into eternity. And in response to the disciple’s request, “*Teach us to pray,*” the answer given by the Lord Jesus so long ago is as fresh and applicable right now as it was when He first offered the model prayer. He knew that a good example is worth a thousand sermons. He lived it daily. As a result, we not only have His teaching that came as a result of the disciple’s request, but we have an example, a model prayer, and a powerful pattern which we can follow.

And as we begin our study of prayer, I can think of no better place to start than with the Master's model prayer.

A PATTERN FOR PRAYER

What the Lord Jesus taught is often called the "Lord's Prayer." Actually, the "Lord's Prayer" is found in John 17. This one should actually be called the disciple's prayer. The Lord said, "*After this manner pray ye.*" He gave a model prayer—a pattern for those who would follow His example. It is the foundation upon which we can build a life of prayer. It is a foundation, not a formula; a standard to follow, not a rigid ritual.

The Lord Jesus gave us clear instructions that are vital as we build a life of prayer, calling daily upon Him. He said:

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
(Matthew 6:5-6)

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (Matthew 6:7-8)

Years ago, *Moody Monthly* ran this eye-opening paragraph:

It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they may be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be; or even the theology of our prayers, how good the doctrine—which God cares for. Fervency of spirit is that which availeth much.¹

Fervency of spirit is the key. Relationship is born of fervency. Fellowship springs from fervency. And I pray as we begin studying what the Lord Jesus taught

us, that God's power and presence will be released upon your life, filling your heart with His knowledge.

"Our Father" (Matthew 6:9)

True prayer is impossible without the knowledge of God as heavenly Father. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal Him as Father to our hearts. This takes place at salvation, when we are born again and surrender our lives to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

And at that moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit reveals God's omnipotence, God's omniscience, and God's omnipresence, the One who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and rules all—the One from whom nothing is hidden—God Almighty.

And when the Lord Jesus taught us to begin with, "Our Father," He was also telling us to surrender to our heavenly Father completely, obeying and loving Him at all times.

Strong, effective, and fervent prayer begins when the Holy Spirit reveals God Almighty as Abba Father.

"Which art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)

"Which art in heaven," speaks of recognition. When we come to God as Father, we recognize His authority both in heaven and on earth.

We say with the psalmist, “*Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him*” (Psalm 33:8). We declare that He rules in heaven and on the earth: “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him*” (Colossians 1:16).

“*Hallowed be thy name*” (Matthew 6:9)

When we come to God, we sanctify His holy name. We honor and glorify His blessed name. Prayer is impossible unless we stand in awe at the mention of His name. The name of the Lord is revealed throughout His Word as:

Elohim—“Creator”—is used 2,570 times in the Old Testament, first in Genesis 1:1: “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” God was the Creator—the Creator of everything—long before He was our Father. The name *Elohim* is always connected to creation and power.

Jehovah or Yahweh—occurs 6,823 times in the Old Testament. An example is in Genesis 2:7: “*And the*

LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The name Jehovah is revealed in connection with the creation of Adam and deals with God’s covenant with His people, and it is also used throughout the Old Testament in connection with God’s covenants with the children of Israel.

El Shaddai—“God Almighty, my Supply, my Nourishment”—the third name of God, used seven times in the Old Testament, was revealed to Abraham:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. (Genesis 17:1-2)

Adonai—“Master and LORD”—is used in Genesis 18:2. When Abraham saw God coming in the noon of the day with two angels to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he ran to meet them before the tent door, bowed himself before them, and said, “[*Adonai!*] My LORD, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not

away, I pray thee, from thy servant" (verse 3), and he became the great intercessor, for Scripture tells us, "*And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*" (verse 23).

Written 434 times in the Old Testament, this name indicates "mastership" and "ownership." Calling the Lord Adonai acknowledges His outright ownership over our lives totally, and when we call Him Adonai, we say to Him, "We are Your servants forever."

Jehovah Jireh—"The Lord my Provider" and "my Vision," or "the One I see"—occurs only once in the Old Testament (Genesis 22:14). In the ultimate act of obedience, Abraham took Isaac to Mount Moriah as God commanded to sacrifice his son.

And when Abraham approached the place where he was to build an altar, Isaac asked: "*Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*" (Genesis 22:7). Abraham told his son, "*God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together*" (verse 8). He bound his son to the altar, and as he stretched his hand to slay Isaac, the angel of the Lord stopped him: "*And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto*

him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (verse 12).

Abraham was shown a ram caught in a nearby thicket. When he looked and saw the sacrifice God had provided as a substitute for Isaac, he called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: *“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen”* (verse 14).

And at that moment God revealed His Son’s death on the cross to Abraham. The Lord Jesus said, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (John 8:56).

Jehovah Rophe—“the LORD who heals”—is used only once in the Old Testament. In Exodus 15:26, the Lord made a healing covenant with the children of Israel after their deliverance from Egypt:

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Jehovah Nissi—“the Lord my Victory” or “the Lord is my Banner”—is used only once in the Word of God (Exodus 17:15) In this memorable passage of Scripture, Amalek’s army came to fight with the children of Israel. During the battle, as long as Moses held up the rod, Israel prevailed. When his hands became heavy and he lowered the rod, Amalek prevailed. Finally Aaron and Hur held up his hands as he held up the rod until the battle was won. Afterward, “*Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi*” (Exodus 17:15).

Jehovah Mikkadesh, Jehovah M’Kaddesh—“The Lord my Sanctifier”—makes us whole and sets us apart to be holy. *Mikkadesh* comes from the Hebrew word *qâdash*, which means “sanctify,” “holy,” or “dedicate.”

It is recorded in the Scriptures, “*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you*” (Exodus 31:12-13; see also Leviticus 20:7-9).

Jehovah Tsidkenu—first used in Jeremiah 23:5-6 then again in Jeremiah 33:16—is filled with meaning.

Tsedek, from which *Tsidkenu* is derived, means “to be stiff,” “to be straight,” or “righteous.” When the two words are combined, Jehovah *Tsidkenu*, we have “the Lord who is our Righteousness.” He becomes our righteousness as we accept His Son Jesus as our Lord and Savior:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
(Jeremiah 23:5-6)

Jehovah Shalom—“the LORD my Peace” or “the LORD is Peace”—is used 170 times in the Old Testament. It was revealed to Gideon after the Lord called and commanded him to smite the Midianites: “*Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom*” (Judges 6:24).

Jehovah Rohi, Jehovah Ro'eh—“my Shepherd”—occurs in Genesis 48:15; 49:24, and Psalm 23:1; 80:1. The

root word for *Rohi* means “shepherd,” and it also means “intimate friendship” or “close companionship.” So when David wrote, “*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want*” (Psalm 23:1), he was speaking of the bond of intimacy the Lord desires to have with His people, as a Shepherd who guides His sheep, protecting and nurturing them.

Jehovah Shammah—“His Presence” or “the LORD is there”—is used only once in the Bible, in Ezekiel 48:35, the last verse of Ezekiel’s prophetic book. *Shammah* is derived from the Hebrew word *sham*, which can be translated as “there,” spoken of by Ezekiel the prophet after he was shown the millennium temple and the glory of God.

There are other names for the Lord used throughout God’s Word, but these twelve reveal His heart and His nature. When you say “Our Father” in prayer, you declare who God is. You approach His presence with love and reverence, and you walk into the Holy of Holies as you call Him, “my Elohim, my Jehovah, my El Shaddai, my Adonai, my Jehovah Jireh, my Jehovah Rophe, my Jehoal Nissi, my Jehovah Mikkadesh, my Jehovah Tsidkenu, my Jehovah Shalom, my Jehovah Rohi, and my Jehovah Shammah.”

“Thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10)

What is God’s kingdom? It is a vibrant relationship, for *“Behold, the kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21). The Bible also makes it clear that the kingdom of God is not a natural kingdom, but it is a heavenly one in the Holy Ghost: *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* (Romans 14:17).

It is a kingdom of eternal power: *“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”* (1 Corinthians 4:20).

When you pray, “Thy kingdom come,” you are asking God to release His righteousness, His peace, His joy, and His power—through the Holy Spirit—upon your heart and your life.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10)

There is a secret will—known only to God—and a revealed will for each of us. Deuteronomy 29:29 declares: *“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”*

The secret, unseen will of God is already set in motion. Our prayer cannot change His secret will: *“And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”* (Daniel 4:35).

Yet there is a revealed or expressed will that satan can oppose. We do not need much discernment to look around and see that God’s expressed will is not always being obeyed throughout the earth. We can find what the Lord’s revealed will is through diligent Bible study. For example, God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), nor is it His will that sin should dominate your life (Romans 6:14). It is His will to redeem you from destruction, to surround you with lovingkindness and tender mercies (Psalm 103:4), and to satisfy your mouth with good things so your youth is renewed like the eagles (Psalm 103:5). And all these blessings will be ours when we pray, “Thy will be done.”

“Give us this day our daily bread”
(Matthew 6:11)

The Lord taught us to pray first by coming to our heavenly Father in adoration and humility. Then He

commanded us to ask for the things that we need for daily living. “Daily bread” speaks of total dependence upon the Lord for daily nourishment and sustenance—first, as we receive His Word to nourish our spirits, and then for all our physical needs.

The Word of God teaches us that the Lord knows our needs intimately and knows us better than we know ourselves. Yet we receive nothing until we ask. James 4:2 declares, “*Ye have not, because ye ask not.*”

It is imperative that you ask for the things you need, and you must ask in faith in order to receive: “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*” (1 John 5:14-15).

By asking specifically and in faith, you acknowledge your dependence upon the Lord continually.

It is His will to answer every prayer that you pray in faith, but like blind Bartimaeus, you must ask in order to receive:

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might

receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. (Mark 10:51-52)

“And forgive us our debts” (Matthew 6:12)

As we continue in this glorious life of prayer, we move from dependence to repentance. Prevailing prayer always includes both truths—dependence and repentance.

Proverbs 28:13 declares, *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”*

The Lord promises: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). Without confession, there is no forgiveness.

“As we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12)

Forgiveness is a two-way street. We are forgiven as we forgive others. The Lord Jesus wanted us to understand this truth when He underlined the importance of forgiveness, saying: *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matthew 6:14-15).

Effective prayer is only possible when our relationship is right with God and with His people. There are two sins from which there is no forgiveness: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:22-30) and unforgiveness.

To be forgiven, we must forgive. Without forgiving others, prayer is empty and powerless. So today—from your heart—forgive, forgive, forgive!

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13)

It is God’s will that we ask for His guidance and protection. And as we do, He will lead us into a life of righteousness and into that place of refuge as promised in Psalm 91:2: *“I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”*

✓ Asking for guidance and protection will bring us into God’s strength against the enemy of our souls and will cause him to flee: *“When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me”* (Psalm 56:9).

Only then will God hide you in the secret of His presence: *“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues”* (Psalm 31:20).

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:13)

True, effective, and victorious prayer begins with God the Father, and it ends with God the Father, for He is *“Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”* (Revelation 22:13).

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PRAYER IN THE
LIFE OF OUR
WONDERFUL
LORD JESUS

*Prayer does not fit us for the greater works;
prayer is the greater work. We think of prayer
as a common sense exercise of our higher powers
in order to prepare us for God's work. In the teaching
of Jesus Christ, prayer is the working of the miracle of
redemption in others by the power of God.*

Oswald Chambers

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The eternal truths we have just studied cannot be fully experienced in our life unless we follow the example of our wonderful Lord Jesus, for without following His example, we will not know the power of prayer. Scripture declares that He often went alone to pray: *“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee”* (Mark 1:35-37).

The book of Hebrews tells us clearly that when the Lord Jesus walked the earth He offered up prayers and supplications, with crying and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death:

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard

in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Hebrews 5:7-9)

The Lord understood the power of prayer, and He recognized the importance of calling upon His Father. And to this moment, He is still interceding for you and for me. In fact, prayer is so important in the life of Christ that Scripture says, “*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*” (Hebrews 7:25).

If prayer was so vital in His life when He walked on this earth, and if prayer and intercession is His ministry eternally as our High Priest, then as His people we must follow His example.

Prayer brought God’s glorious anointing upon the Lord’s life and ministry.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like

a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:21-22)

Notice the Scriptures declare that while in prayer during His baptism, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended. It was prayer that caused the Holy Spirit to descend upon His life, anointing Him to accomplish God's will on earth, becoming the substitute for man's sins on Calvary's cross.

Prayer empowered Christ Jesus to defeat the enemy.

It was prayer in the life of Jesus that prepared Him for the battle with the enemy after His baptism. It was prayer that defeated the purpose of satan when Christ was tempted. And it was prayer that caused the Son of the living God to return in the power of the Holy Spirit to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom (Luke 4).

God's Word tells us that after His baptism and great victory, the Lord Jesus continued to pray. Mark 1:12-13 speaks of His temptation, but later in verse 35 we read: *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."*

After the Lord overcame the enemy because of prayer, He knew that only prayer would enable Him to preach the Gospel: *“And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth”* (verse 38).

✓ It was prayer that sustained Him and caused Him to minister with power, and it is prayer that will sustain you and enable you to serve the Lord.

Prayer protected the Lord Jesus from the evil plans of the Pharisees.

It was prayer in the life of our wonderful Lord Jesus that protected Him from the plans of His enemies, for the Word of God declares: *“And they [the Pharisees] were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus”* (Luke 6:11). The Lord Jesus knew that only prayer would keep Him safe, for verse 12 tells us, *“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”*

All decisions in the life of the Lord Jesus were made by prayer.

Not only did prayer protect His life, but it enabled Him to know the will of God in choosing His twelve

apostles: *“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles”* (Luke 6:13).

The Lord made no decisions without prayer, and how tragic it is that some of God’s precious people will make decisions that involve marriage, business, or family, yet they do not seek the Lord in making such critical choices. Then, when they are in trouble, they cry out to God for help.

Let us learn from the Lord. Before making any decisions that will affect your life and future, make sure you get on your knees and seek the Lord’s guidance and perfect will.

Prayer protected His disciples from harm.

It was prayer in the life of Jesus that also protected the lives of His disciples. Matthew 14:23-25 tells us: *“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.”*

In the fourth watch (3–6 a.m.), the Lord came walking toward His disciples in the midst of the storm.

They were in fear, but as the Lord drew near to the ship, they willingly received Him and were saved from harm.

A friend of mine told me of being caught suddenly in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. It is approximately eight miles wide, surrounded by mountains. Although the sea itself is relatively small, it is very deep in some parts. Great storms often occur when the wind blows in a circular pattern. Almost instantly the beautiful, tranquil waters can become turbulent, tossed, and life threatening. So it is not difficult for me to imagine the situation in which the disciples found themselves.

The Scriptures tell us that as the Lord entered the boat, He not only rescued His disciples, but the boat was also transported from the midst of the storm to the safety of the shore (John 6:21).

Prayer revealed Jesus Christ to Peter's heart.

Luke 9:18 speaks of the time when the Lord went to Caesarea Philippi and was alone praying. After that He asked His disciples, "Whom do people say that I am?"

They, of course, answered, "*Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets [risen from the dead]*" (Matthew 16:14).

Then He asked them, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" (verse 15).

Peter answered, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (verse 16).

Matthew 16 gives us the rest of the story, for after Peter had spoken these words, the Lord said to him: “*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*” (verse 17).

This revelation was given to Peter by God the Father as a result of prayer in the life of Jesus.

Prayer saved Peter’s life from ruin.

This amazing truth was spoken by the Lord Himself to Peter, for we are told in Luke: “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*” (Luke 22:31-32).

It was satan’s will to destroy Peter. It was his plan to sift him as wheat, for the devil had planned to thwart God’s plan for Peter’s life.

Peter had already confessed Jesus as the Christ. He had been shown that revelation by God the Father in Caesarea Philippi and had been given this promise: “*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (Matthew 16:18, NKJV).

three

RESULTS OF PERSEVERING PRAYER

The Christian's duty is to persevere in prayer.
He should never give up. He should never
stop. He should never be discouraged. He
should never be weary. He should never
be impatient. He should never be
inconsistent. He should never be
careless. He should never be
negligent. He should never be
inattentive. He should never be
indifferent. He should never be
unfaithful. He should never be
untrue. He should never be
unjust. He should never be
unmerciful. He should never be
unloving. He should never be
unkind. He should never be
unpleasant. He should never be
unfriendly. He should never be
unhospitable. He should never be
uncharitable. He should never be
unforgiving. He should never be
unforgotten. He should never be
unremembered. He should never be
unforgotten. He should never be
unremembered.

three

An intriguing story has been passed down through the centuries about one of Greece's best-known philosophers. According to the legend, a young man came to the legendary teacher with an urgent request. "I have walked 1,500 miles from my home to Athens to gain wisdom and learning," the student began. "I want learning, so I came to you. Can you give it to me?"

The great philosopher reportedly spoke without hesitation: "Come, follow me."

The acclaimed teacher led the student to the seashore. He walked into the gentle waves until he and his young follower were in water up to their waists. Then the older man grabbed his youthful companion and pushed his head under the water. In spite of the younger man's frantic struggles, the teacher held him under the surface. After several tense moments, the philosopher pulled the young man out of the water, laid the would-be pupil on the shore and returned to the marketplace. When the young man regained his strength, he walked back to challenge the teacher.

“You are a man of learning and wisdom,” the young man yelled furiously. “Why did you treat me so badly?”

“When you were under the water,” the teacher asked, “what was the *one thing* you wanted more than anything else?”

“I wanted air!”

Then the great philosopher reportedly said, “When you want wisdom and understanding as badly as you wanted air, you won’t have to ask anyone to give it to you. You will get it on your own!”

THIS ONE THING

This account of the philosopher and his would-be student is very cruel. It has nothing to do with our relationship with God. I told the story to make this point: What is the *one thing* you want more than anything else?

Until you answer this one question, and unless you begin seeking God with deep hunger and mighty thirst, literally to be as the deer in search of life-giving water—“*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God*” (Psalm 42:1)—you will not enjoy a blessed relationship with God the Father, nor will you begin to see results in prayer.

What is the one thing you want more than anything else?

Paul the apostle knew what he wanted, and he knew the one thing that would give him his greatest desire in life. What was that one thing? In Philippians 3:13-14, he writes: "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this **one thing** I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (emphasis mine).

What he wanted most was his death—death to his flesh, death to his desires, death to his past and to all his experiences in the flesh.

What did he long for? What was his greatest desire in life?

It was Christ Jesus and His fullness—the high calling of God was Paul's oneness with Jesus Christ.

Paul's greatest desire was his own cancellation and elimination, for in Philippians 3:10, the apostle wrote, "*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*" He wanted to be conformed to the death of Christ Jesus. The apostle wanted to die that Christ might live. He wanted to decrease that Christ might increase. He wanted to be fully clothed in the image of Christ Jesus.

He knew the secret to victory in this world, for he understood the words spoken by the Lord in Matthew 16:24: *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* Paul understood that only total death to self would cause a believer to belong wholly to the Lord.

Is that your cry? Is that why you pray? Do you pray to become more like Jesus Christ? Do you pray that self may die?

What is your reason for prayer? Is it that your needs will be met, or is it that Christ’s image will be formed in you?

Once we begin to experience prayer in its depth, seeking the Lord with all our hearts, souls, and strengths, then these glorious results will begin to show themselves in our lives:

You will discover that prayer will reveal your true heart and nature.

This is the first step to power with God. In Isaiah we read:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings;

with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (Isaiah 6:1-5)

When Isaiah saw the Lord while in prayer and saw His glory, and when he heard the seraphims cry “holy, holy, holy,” it was at that moment that he also saw his own uncleanness. It was at that moment that he saw that he dwelt in the midst of an unclean people, so he cried, “*Woe is me! for I am undone,*” for he knew he was a man of unclean lips.

It was because of prayer that God revealed Isaiah to Isaiah, for prayer is like a mirror. As you pray, God will reveal to your heart your sins and weaknesses in order that you might cry, “Woe is me!” and experience God’s power that will purge you and transform you.

Only prayer has the power to reveal what your true heart and nature is. Only prayer causes you to look to God for deliverance!

Prayer has the power to purge and cleanse your heart from all sin.

David the psalmist wrote: *“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression”* (Psalm 19:12-13).

As you pray for deliverance from sin, you will say with David, *“Then shall I be upright.”* When you pray and seek God with all your heart, you will live a life that is upright before God. And then you will walk in righteousness before God.

Hosea 10:12 tells us, *“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”*

In Psalm 119:2-3, David declares: *“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.”*

Only as you seek Him with your whole heart will you receive His power to live a holy life. For only then will you experience the promise that you will do no iniquity, and you will walk in His ways. As you pray for deliverance from sin, deliverance from sin will become yours.

Prayer will cause you to walk with God.

The psalmist prayed, *“Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not”* (Psalm 17:5). Prayer gives you the power to walk with God, for it is His strength that holds you and keeps your footsteps sure and secure.

Walking with God is dependent totally upon prayer. The Word of God says, *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect”* (Genesis 17:1).

The Word of God tells us that as we wait upon the Lord, He renews our strength: *“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”* (Isaiah 40:31).

As we wait upon the Lord and seek Him continually, this promise becomes ours. Our strength will be

renewed to defeat the enemy. We will mount up with wings as eagles, for the majestic bird stands upon the rock and mounts up when the wind currents are at full strength. Only those who wait upon the Lord are able to discern the currents of the wind of the Spirit and surrender to those winds.

And the promise continues: they shall run and not be weary. Running is redeeming the time. It is impossible to redeem the time without prayer. It is impossible to regain all that is lost without prayer, for Joel 2:25 tells us, *“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.”* Restoration and recovery are the result of prayer.

The promise of God also tells us that we shall walk and not faint. Walking with God is daily fellowship and an intimate relationship—all the result of prayer.

Prayer has the power to fill your heart with God's Word.

The psalmist teaches us when he said, *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”* (Psalm 119:18).

Only prayer will cause you to cry out, *“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through*

thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts” (Psalm 119:97-100).

Through prayer, hunger is born for the Word of God. Divine hunger for the Word of God is the result of prayer.

Prayer has the power to give you wisdom and understanding.

James 1:5-6 tells us, *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”*

The Lord promised to give us wisdom which none of our enemies will be able to contradict or resist (Luke 21:15), but we must ask. Prayer imparts this depth of wisdom.

The Word of God commands:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and

apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
(Proverbs 2:1-7)

Again I emphasize, you must ask for wisdom, seeking it as for hidden treasures. Only prayer imparts wisdom.

When the apostle Paul heard of the faith of the believers at Colosse, he prayed that they would be filled with wisdom. The apostle wrote: "*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*" (Colossians 1:9).

That is my prayer for you, for as evangelist Dwight L. Moody once said, "A Christian on his knees will see more than a philosopher on his tip toes."

Prayer brings the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God declares that as the Lord was assembled with His disciples,

He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. (Acts 1:4-8)

The Lord Jesus then told His disciples that they would receive power from on high and be His witnesses “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (verse 8).

The Scriptures then declare that the apostles and disciples continued in “prayer and supplication” (verse

14), for they fully understood that only as they prayed would they receive the promise given to them by the Lord.

Still in prayer, they remained together. Then on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on them with great power, for “*suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting*” (Acts 2:2).

It was prayer that brought about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the 120 on the Day of Pentecost. And it was prayer that transformed them into mighty witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus:

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.
(Acts 4:31-33)

And it is as you pray that He promises to fill you and empower you with His precious Holy Spirit: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”* (John 16:23-24).

four

✓

ROOTS AND
RESULTS OF
PRAYERLESSNESS

Sin breaks fellowship with God. A little girl committed a certain offense and when her mother discovered it, she began to question her daughter. Immediately the child lost her smile and a cloud darkened her face as she said, "Mother, I don't feel like talking." So it is with us when our fellowship with God is broken by sin in our lives. We do not feel like talking to Him. If you do not feel like praying, it is probably a good indication that you should start praying immediately.

Dr. Billy Graham

four

No power on earth can stand against the man or woman who knows how to pray, yet the Word of God tells us that from the time mankind began to walk upon the earth, the enemy of our souls has used every weapon in his arsenal to destroy our ability to commune with God. Sadly, most have submitted to satan's plan and have become prayerless and powerless against the enemy. This has brought about great ruin and destruction in the lives of so many.

ROOTS OF PRAYERLESSNESS

Prayerlessness began in the Garden of Eden. It is a direct result of the fall of man. In Genesis 3:1-10 we read:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy

*voice in the garden, and I was afraid,
because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

(Genesis 3:8-10)

When sin entered into the heart of Adam and Eve, they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. Hiding from the presence of the Lord is prayerlessness. It was sin that caused Adam and Eve to hide from God.

Notice that they hid *from* the Lord, not *in* the Lord. Hiding *from* Him is prayerlessness. Hiding *in* Him is prayer. We are commanded to hide *in* Him, not *from* Him.

When we hide in Him, we are protected from the enemy, but when we hide from Him, we cannot be protected. The Lord becomes our refuge and fortress, our deliverer and coverer, our shield and our buckler, only when we hide in Him.

Prayerlessness is the cause of misery and ruin in the lives of so many. And prayerlessness is a sin, for God commands us to seek Him, not to hide from Him. That is why Samuel said to the children of Israel: *“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way”* (1 Samuel 12:23).

And today, more than anything else, many need deliverance from this sin. Therefore, before effective prayer can begin, we must repent from the sin of prayerlessness. Just remember, it is not a weakness; it is a sin!

No Delight in God

Prayerlessness is in the heart of so many because the Word of God says they have no delight in God. Job 27 tells us that the wicked and unrighteous man, also called a hypocrite (verses 7-8), does not delight himself in the Almighty or call upon God (verse 10).

Yet God's Word commands: *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart"* (Psalm 37:4). Delighting in the Lord is a choice we make, and those who are wicked have made their decision. But our choice, as God's children, will always be to delight in the Lord.

No Knowledge of God

The prayerless are prayerless because the Scriptures declare that they have no knowledge of God. The psalmist wrote: *"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD"* (Psalm 14:4). The lack of the

knowledge of God results in prayerlessness, and it is because of that lack that so many do not pray.

But as God's people, we are commanded to *"walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Colossians 1:10).

The knowledge of God fills our hearts, and the result will always be prayer.

Turned Away from God

Those who are prayerless are the ones who have refused to walk with the Lord. Zephaniah 1:3-5 tells us that the prayerless, who are also called idol worshipers, have given themselves to the will of the enemy and refuse to seek the Lord, for they have given themselves over to rebellion. They have *"turned back from the LORD; and...have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him"* (Zephaniah 1:6).

RESULTS OF PRAYERLESSNESS

The consequences of prayerlessness are disastrous and frightening, for the Word of God in Job 21 tells us that the wicked (verse 7) say *"unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"* (verse 14).

The prayerless, as I said earlier, do not desire the knowledge of God or the knowledge of His ways. They

say, “*What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*” (verse 15). They are looking for profit. They do not seek God for who He is. Instead, they think they can use Him or get something out of Him, and only then do they call on Him. But the Word of God clearly tells us that this is not true prayer. True prayer is seeking God for who He is, not for what He can do for an individual.

What are the results of prayerlessness? The remainder of Job 21 unfolds before us a frightening picture for the prayerless and the ungodly.

No Goodness

The prayerless will never know true goodness. “*Lo, their good is not in their hand*” (Job 21:16). No good will come to them—only evil. Nothing good will ever be given into their hands.

No Counsel

Further, in the last part of verse 16, we are told that “*the counsel of the wicked is far from me.*” Imagine having no guidance, no direction, no clarity of heart and mind. God’s counsel will never be given to them. He will never counsel the wicked. They will walk continually in confusion because of prayerlessness.

No Light

Job 21:17 tells us: “*How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!*” Think about it—no light, only darkness. The wicked, the prayerless, will always walk in darkness and belong to the kingdom of darkness, not God’s kingdom of light.

Total Destruction

Continuing in verse 17, we read, “*And how oft cometh their destruction upon them!*” What overwhelming misery and destruction follow the prayerless. All that they touch is eventually destroyed. All that they build will end up in ruin. They are left with nothing. Total destruction is their reward.

No Gladness

The last part of verse 17 says, “*God distributeth sorrows in his anger.*” Imagine a life of no true joy. Gladness is far from them. There is no contentment, all because the prayerless refuse to seek the Lord.

No Preservation

The first part of Job 21:18 tells us that the prayerless have no preservation: “*They are as stubble before the wind.*” Stubble is what is left of the grain stalk and

roots when the crop is harvested. Those who do not pray are not preserved. Only as we pray do we become useful and are preserved. This is an awesome truth that the Word of God gives us—only through prayer are we secure. Only through prayer are we established. That is the reason why so many individuals are thrown to and fro by different doctrines. In Ephesians 4:14 we are commanded: *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”* Prayerlessness is the reason so many are easily deceived. They are not established and preserved. Only prayer reveals the Word of God that will establish you. Only prayer enables you to walk and not stumble. But the prayerless are like the stubble left in the field, useless and alone.

No Protection from the Storms

Notice that the Bible mentions in the remainder of Job 21:18 that the prayerless are *“as chaff that the storm carrieth away.”* When the grain is harvested, it is separated from the hulls and stalks—the chaff—often by shaking, scraping, rubbing, and tossing it in the air. The grain remains, but the chaff is blown away by the wind. This verse also mentions the storms which come

whether you are prayerful or prayerless. If you are prayerful, the storms and wind will not affect you; if you are prayerless, they will. Only as you stay on your knees will you remain unmovable and unshaken by the trials of life.

Sorrow for Generations to Come

Job 21:19 tells us, “*God layeth up his iniquity for his children.*” Think about it, his children reap the seed sown by the prayerless. The seed of the prayerless is cursed by God, and the harvest of the prayerless will bring sorrow and anguish to their descendents. But the prayerful will see blessings untold upon their lives and the lives of their descendents. Remember, the Word of God declares: “*Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations*” (Deuteronomy 7:9).

Witness Suffering

Job 21:19 continues, “*He rewardeth him, and he shall know it.*” What a painful experience this will be! The prayerless will see the horrible reward brought upon his life and that of his descendents. He will see pain

and suffering. He will see anguish and sorrow. Prayerlessness is a dangerous and destructive practice. Neglecting God is the cause for much pain and suffering in our world.

Experience Wrath

Following in verse 20 we read, *“His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.”* In this verse the misery of prayerlessness is clearly described, for he shuts God out of his life and does not lift up his eyes to the hills where his help comes from (Psalm 121:1). And because he refuses to look to God, instead, he will look upon his destruction.

Horrible End of Life

Job 21:21 gives us a frightening picture of the end of his days: *“For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?”* The prayerless will not know a long life, nor will he know the promise of Psalm 91:16: *“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”* Only those who seek the Lord are guaranteed this promise: *“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him”* (Psalm 91:15). The promise of long life is the result of prayer.

At the End, a Bitter Death

In Job 21:22-25, we read:

Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

Concerning the righteous and the prayerful, the Word of God declares he will die in his full strength, wholly at ease, and quiet. When the righteous one dies, God's abundance is still within him (milk), and he has known a life of blessing ("*his bones moistened with marrow*"). Yet the wicked—the prayerless—die bitterly and never eat with pleasure.

Prayerlessness is a deadly sin and is the cause of all pain, but prayer is the key that will release all of God's blessings. As R. A. Torrey once said, "Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouse of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is, and all that God has is at the disposal of prayer."¹

five

OVERCOMING
PRAYERLESSNESS

*I have been driven many times
to my knees by the overwhelming
conviction that I had nowhere else to go.
My own wisdom, and that of all about
me, seemed insufficient for the day.*

President Abraham Lincoln

five

In the previous chapter we dealt with the danger of prayerlessness. The causes are very clear-cut:

- No delight in God
- No knowledge of God
- Turned away from God

In this chapter I want to discuss the vital importance of overcoming prayerlessness and the rewards that will follow.

DELIGHT IN GOD

God's Word commands us: "*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*" (Psalm 37:4). Delighting in the Lord is a choice we make every day.

This means spending time with Him: "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*" (John 15:7).

Years ago, a little boy lived next door to a great artist. Every day the lad would go to the older man's home and watch him paint. The youngster was entranced for hours as the man brushed pungent, colorful oils onto the canvas.

The boy was still quite young when the artist passed away. Sadly, the lad knocked on the widow's door and said, "I really miss your husband. I always loved coming to your house to watch him paint." Then he added, "When I grow up, I want to be just like him. What do I have to do?"

The widow struggled for the right words, not wanting to discourage the boy, yet knowing firsthand the lifelong, bittersweet pursuit for perfection her husband had lived. Her thoughts were interrupted by the boy's determined voice: "Ma'am, can I take one of his paintings home so I can copy it?"

She not only let him borrow the painting, but also gave him a box full of brushes, oils, and a canvas, then watched him proudly march home.

In a few days he dejectedly trudged across the yard with the box of art supplies. "I've tried and tried to do it like he painted," the lad explained, his voice choking with painful emotion. "I just can't do it. I give up."

The widow gave the boy a big hug and said, "You must keep trying. You see, it's not the brush or the paint or the canvas that makes a great work of art. It's not just the talent, though God gives more to certain people than to others. It's the trying again and again. It's learning through all the failures and successes that

eventually leads to being able to paint a masterpiece like my husband did. It is inside you! It is the spirit of the painter who keeps going when others quit that makes all the difference.”

I have met so many people who are like that child. With the sometimes-wonderful, often overwhelming fervency of the new convert, they want to be the next Elijah, Peter, Paul, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, or Kathryn Kuhlman. I speak from time to time at Bible schools and universities, and I have often heard a young student exclaim, “Oh, if only I could preach like Billy Graham!”

Every man or woman whom we might call “warriors of the faith” started as new believers with similar fears, mistakes, and tentative steps. They all had struggles that few knew about. They all had their own personal barriers. To be used mightily, they had to go through many trials before God could trust them with leadership.

I sometimes ask people, “What is the greatest desire of your heart?” Many answer, “I want the presence of God in my life. I want to truly know the Lord.”

I know of only one way to know Him intimately: You must spend time with Him. There is no

substitute. There are no shortcuts to prayers that get results.

If closeness with God is your desire, here is some wonderful news: The Lord desires a close relationship with you, even more than you do with Him. From the time God created Adam, man was created for fellowship. And from the moment sin broke that fellowship, the Lord offered ways to rebuild a loving relationship. Enoch is mentioned in the Bible simply for walking with God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were also known for their fellowship with the Lord, for He continually and patiently looked for those whose hearts were after Him.

Think back for a moment to the time when Moses was given instructions for the building of the ark of the covenant: *“And thou shalt put the mercy seat above you upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat”* (Exodus 25:21-22). God’s greatest desire was to commune with His servant Moses, and His great desire still is to commune with you. For remember, the veil was rent in two and the way unto the Holies was opened. Today, all you have to do is come. And when you approach Him, come with worship in your heart

and praise on your lips. Come seeking Him with all your heart, and He promises you will find Him. But you must come: *“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

Andrew Murray, a truly great man of prayer, once said that before he prayed, he often said, “Lord, melt my cold heart. Break my hard heart and prepare it for Your touch.”

Oh that we would be willing to approach the Father in that way. And when we come with such a heart, the Holy Spirit will meet us as our Helper and prayer Partner, enabling us to approach the throne of grace and touch the heart of God. For He promises as we draw nigh to Him, He will draw nigh to us: *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you”* (James 4:8).

You will know when He is present as your heart begins to break and the coldness begins to melt. Suddenly your empty words become life giving.

God wants fellowship with you. He doesn't just want words and formulas. He longs to answer that prayer that comes from your heart. You see, prayer is your heart listening to and talking to the Lord. Listening to the Lord is the key to power in prayer:

Keep thy foot [walk prudently] when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools. . . . Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2)

Be ready to hear the Holy Spirit's voice as you enter into God's presence. Real prayer is not filled with meaningless phrases but is the result of a heart filled with the abundance of God's presence. Therefore, prayer is the overflow of a heart filled with God. The Lord Jesus said, "*But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking*" (Matthew 6:7). And the apostle James wrote, "*The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16).

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

As God's people, we are commanded to "*walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*" (Colossians 1:10). We are commanded to be filled

with the knowledge of God, for it is that knowledge of Him, His person, and His heart that must fill our being. And once His knowledge is in us, the glorious result will be a life of prayer.

Prayer will be as easy as breathing. It will be as natural to pray as it is to live. The knowledge of God is the key to that kind of life. Once His knowledge fills us, His Word will empower us, allowing us to pray effectively. And as we come to His throne room, we come filled with His faith and confidence: *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him”* (1 John 5:14-15).

It is confidence in Him—confidence born of Him that gets results in prayer. And it is that confidence that enables you to say, “Father, Your Word says...” And it is at that moment the Holy Spirit will quicken your mind and bring the Word to your remembrance.

This is why we are commanded, *“Be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”* (Colossians 1:9). Prayer is impossible unless we are filled with His knowledge and the

knowledge of His Word. Overcoming prayerlessness takes place only when this happens.

And my prayer today for you is that the Word of Christ will “ *dwell in you richly in all wisdom* ” (Colossians 3:16).

s i x

THE
POWER OF
PRAYER

If only we knew how much God loves us and wants to communicate with us, we would not set up impossible standards for ourselves. Nor would we become discouraged in obtaining good things from God. After all, it is His earnest intent to give us good things: "He that spared not his own Son; but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Madame Jeanne Guyon

s i x

Do you realize that movements on earth govern movements in heaven? Do you realize that a child of God in prayer affects decisions in heaven? The Lord declared, “*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven* (Matthew 18:18).

So awesome is this power that it releases angels to do God’s bidding on the earth and binds demons as it destroys the purpose of the enemy!

PRAYER—A PLACE OF SUPERNATURAL PROTECTION

Job tells us there is a secret place, known and available only to God’s children. And when God’s children enter into it, only then is the power of God activated on their behalf and on behalf of those in desperate need: “*There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: The lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it*” (Job 28:7-8).

There is a path, a place which no fowl knows. That place is the secret place, that glorious place so

secure and protected that no demonic power can find it. It is a place hidden in God that no vulture's eye has seen. No demon on earth or satan, the enemy of our souls, has seen or knows. It is a place of refuge, a place of safety that no lion's whelps (principalities and powers) pass by—not even the lion, satan. That place is the place of prayer.

The psalmist tells us it is in that secret place that you will find the Lord to be your refuge and fortress, and it is in that secret place that He covers you with His wings so that no evil will befall you nor will any plague come nigh to your dwelling. That secret path, that secret place is prayer.

PRAYER—A PLACE OF DELIVERANCE

Job 28:9 tells us that God puts forth His hand upon the rock and overturns mountains by the roots: It is only as we pray that obstacles are revoked from our path. It is there He makes for us a way of escape and sends His power to bring us out: *“He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing (verse 10).*

It is as we seek Him that He binds floods from overflowing over our lives, protecting and keeping us, revealing to us His love and His will, for the thing that

is hid, He brings forth to light: “*He bindeth the floods from overflowing, and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light*” (verse 11).

Prayer is the only place of protection, deliverance, and revelation:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. (Psalm 91:1-7)

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God sent us His royal invitation and said, “*Call unto me, and I will*

answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3).

I am reminded of the words spoken by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln as he led America through one of its most devastating years: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day."¹

Dangers and trials will also come our way, but if we obey the command of Proverbs 27:12, we cannot be defeated or overcome. We will prevail, for none who prays ever fails: "*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.*"

Only as we hide *in* God—not like Adam who hid *from* God—can we find continual safety from harm. For God in His great love will warn us of coming dangers, yet He expects us to beware and hide in Him. Only the prudent know how to pray. The foolish neglect God and are punished.

I will never forget the time I was invited to minister in a politically unstable nation in Africa. Great pressure was placed on me to accept the invitation, yet in my heart I felt something was wrong. I had no peace. I sought the Lord greatly concerning this, and

in His grace He spoke to Oral Roberts who told me if I would go, I would be killed and that God would judge me for dying before my time. Prayer saved my life, and the purpose of God was accomplished: *“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me”* (Psalm 50:15).

PRAYER DRIVES AWAY ALL FEAR

David the king said:

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. (Psalm 3:1-4)

David's enemies had increased greatly. Trouble was all around. They mocked his faith in God and said, “Who can help him now?” But David knew the secret of deliverance from trouble. He cried to the Lord and found Him to be a present help in time of trouble.

You, too, will experience God's power as you call on Him in your time of anguish and fear, for you will find Him to be your shield and the lifter of your head. And as you seek Him, He will fill you with His peace and cause your sleep to be sweet as He holds you in His arms and sustains you.

Oh, the glorious power of prayer! Truly great peace belongs to those who know how to call upon the Lord.

PRAYER GIVES SUPERNATURAL PROTECTION FROM JUDGMENT

Are you bound or oppressed? Are you tired of the bondage that has wrapped itself around your soul?

Oh, if you will only call on Him today, you will find He is looking down from heaven to hear your cry and to loose the chains of death that have held you. You will find Him ready and able, for you will hear His voice saying, "Be not afraid, it is I," and He will lift you out of your storm and cause the sun to shine again.

The prophet Jeremiah said: "*I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not*" (Lamentations 3:55-57). And like

Jeremiah, you, too, will hear His voice the day you call.

Corrie ten Boom used to say, "There is no pit so deep that Jesus is not deeper still." Only prayer can lift you up and put you back on the mountaintop.

PRAYER HAS POWER TO CHANGE THE PLANS OF GOD

The Bible is filled with examples of prayer changing God's plans. Now, prayer does not change prophecy, but if man cooperates with God, God will answer, and His plans to punish will be changed:

Abraham and Abimelech

One of the first examples is recorded in Genesis:

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near

her: and he said, LORD, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. (Genesis 20:1-7)

King Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, to be his. The Lord warned him in a dream that if he did not restore her back to Abraham, he would die. The Lord also had closed the wombs of King Abimelech's wives so that none could bear children in his house.

Yet when Abraham prayed, God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his maidservants. The plan of God was changed as Abraham prayed: "So Abraham

prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife" (Genesis 20:17-18).

Moses and the Children of Israel

In Exodus, we read how Moses was upon the mount with the Lord. Even after all God had done to deliver, protect, and feed the children of Israel, they turned away from Him and made a molten calf and worshiped it. Then the Lord said to Moses:

Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me

alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. (Exodus 32:7-10)

God, in His holy wrath, wanted to destroy Israel, yet when Moses prayed, the Lord turned away from His anger, revealing His mercy, all because a man knew how to pray: *“And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand.... Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people”* (32:11-12).

As a result of Moses’s earnest prayer *“the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people”* (verse 14). It was God’s plan to destroy His people for their disobedience, but prayer caused Him to change His plans.

Deuteronomy 9:19-20 even reminds us that God wanted to destroy Aaron, as well, but as Moses prayed for his brother, the Lord spared Aaron also: *“For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. And LORD was very*

angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time” (Deuteronomy 9:19-20).

Of this, the great Bible teacher Matthew Henry wrote:

See here, the power of prayer; God suffers himself to be prevailed with by the humble believing importunity of intercessors.

[See also] the compassion of God towards poor sinners, and how ready he is to forgive. Thus he has given other proofs besides his own oath that he has no pleasure in the death of those that die; for he not only pardons upon the repentance of sinners, but spares and reprieves upon the intercession of others for them.²

What a mighty, loving God we serve! He keeps His promises. He is ever merciful and full of compassion.

King Hezekiah

Following the death of King Ahaz, his son Hezekiah ascended the throne in Jerusalem. The new monarch abolished the places of idol worship and returned the children of Israel to the worship of Jehovah. Also, for the first time since the kingdom had been split under

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, the remnants of the tribes of Israel were encouraged to renew the Passover feast and pilgrimage.

As the godly King Hezekiah reached the end of his life, Isaiah tells an amazing account of God's plans being changed through prayer:

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. (Isaiah 38:1-5)

King Hezekiah's prayer was answered. His life was extended.

Jonah and Nineveh

Another powerful example is recorded in the book of Jonah: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jonah 1:2). God planned to destroy Nineveh.

You remember the story. God told Jonah the prophet to go to Nineveh and proclaim God’s judgment upon the city. Jonah rebelled and went a different direction, but when the storms hit the boat he was riding in, he was thrown overboard and was swallowed by a big fish. God got Jonah’s attention. He was delivered from the fish’s belly, and when he hit dry land, Jonah headed directly toward Nineveh to preach:

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed

a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. (Jonah 3:1-10)

God's plans were to destroy Nineveh, but when the people of that great city prayed, God saw their hearts as they turned from their evil way. As a result, God changed His plans: "He did it not."

R. A. Torrey, the great American Bible teacher, said, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." Richard Trench, a powerful English preacher, once wrote: "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His highest willingness."

If the Lord can find just *one* person who will seek His face, the tide of events can be turned. He told the prophet Ezekiel, "*I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none*" (Ezekiel 22:30). And because He found none who would pray and intercede, the Word of God declares, "*Therefore I have poured out mine indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed [their own deeds] upon their own heads*" (verse 31).

It is not the Lord's will to destroy. He continues to ask, "Is there anyone who will step forward and stand in the gap?"

God is looking for men and women who, like Moses, will cry to God for deliverance. The psalmist wrote, "*Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them*" (Psalm 106:23).

Prayer is not meant to overcome God's reluctance. You cannot strong-arm the Lord and force Him to do something. Moses prayed and interceded, and God answered Him for His mercy's sake.

Prayer is partnership with God. Despite being imprisoned for her devotion to God, Madame Jeanne Guyon taught, "Come, then, give your heart to God and learn the ways of prayer. For those who have the desire, it is easy to pray. The Holy Spirit has enabled common men to pray great prayers by His gifts and grace."³

GOD HAS PROMISED TO ANSWER PRAYER

Before I discuss the right location, position, and condition of prayer, here is a list of some of God's precious promises from Psalms that will lift your faith, for the One who loves you still hears and answers prayer:

Psalm 18:3—*"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."*

Psalm 50:15—*"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."*

Psalm 55:16—*“As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.”*

Psalm 86:5—*“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”*

Psalm 86:7—*“In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.”*

Psalm 91:15—*“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”*

Psalm 99:6—*“Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.”*

Psalm 145:18—*“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”*

s e v e n

RIGHT LOCATION,
RIGHT POSITION,
RIGHT
CONDITION

*Power will come when
the way is paved by prayer.
That way is available to you and me.
We must tap into it. To do so,
we must travel on a road toward
a life of abiding prayer that is built
on the greatest of foundations.*

Harold J. Ockenga

seven

Near Campbellville, Ontario, some thirty miles southwest of Toronto are the grounds of a retreat center called Bezek, a wonderful place founded by Bernie Warren. Brother Warren was affiliated with the United Church of Canada and had launched the ministry at Bezek Center after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He named the retreat Bezek after the place where the Israelites gathered to be refreshed and encouraged as they faced an important battle (1 Samuel 11).

After my own encounter with the Holy Spirit in 1973, I often attended the Friday night charismatic meeting there. Bezek always seemed to have lots of vibrant Christians, and I felt very welcome there. I knew God had called me to preach the Gospel, yet I felt so inadequate, so unprepared. Even though I had yet to stand behind a pulpit for the first time, I identified with the apostle Paul, who said, "*Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

On one particular day I arrived quite early and began to walk alone on the grounds of the retreat center, talking to God. I went up the hill and sat on a rock,

a hymnal in hand. As I sat, I began to worship the Lord as I waited upon Him, calling His precious name.

And it was in those glorious days, I began to understand the importance of being alone with God, for I began to experience God's presence in a very special way when I was alone and began to practice what I want to discuss in this chapter.

Effective prayer is impossible unless we understand the importance of being in the right location, the right position, and the right condition.

RIGHT LOCATION

When we pray, we must come to the right place. Moses understood this, for we read in Exodus 33:7-11:

And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he

was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Moses knew where to meet God. The Lord said in Matthew 6:6, “*Enter into thy closet.*” This doesn’t necessarily mean a physical closet or specific address, for you and I can experience that solitude and oneness with the Lord even in the midst of a crowd. But separating ourselves as the Lord did enables us to come into God’s presence, free from the distractions of the world and the things that can so easily harm our communion with the Lord.

That is why Moses entered into the tabernacle (Exodus 33:8-9), away from the multitudes. That is also why the Lord Jesus often separated Himself from

the crowds, for He understood this glorious secret to power with God *“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone”* (Matthew 14:23).

Even when Peter, James, and John were with Him in Gethsemane at the time He needed them most, He knew the importance of being alone with God the Father: *“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder”* (Matthew 26:36).

The Lord Jesus told us, *“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly”* (Matthew 6:6).

The Master loved being with the people. He spent much of His time ministering to those in need in public places, mountainsides, and seashores. Yet He knew that only alone could He know and enjoy that glorious intimacy with God the Father. Elijah, too, showed he understood this when the Lord met Him in Horeb (1 Kings 19).

So it is with us. It is impossible to know close communion with God unless we are alone with Him. For it is in that place of quietness and rest that we are able

to commune with the Lord. And prayer that gets results must have a location.

RIGHT POSITION

When I talk about position, I do not mean standing, sitting, or kneeling. I am talking about something much more important. The Scriptures tell us that when Moses went into the tabernacle to be alone with God, he came into the Holy of Holies where stood the Ark of the Covenant; he came to the mercy seat and to the blood.

It is impossible to pray effectively without coming to the blood. We pray as we come under the blood at the Cross:

And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him. (Numbers 7:89)

And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall

he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. (Leviticus 16:14-15)

You must be under the blood. As believers, we must come through the work of the Cross:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

Not only is the right position important, but also the right condition.

RIGHT CONDITION

By the “right condition” I mean the condition of the heart, a heart drawn and touched by God Almighty. It is impossible to pray effectively until the Lord touches

your heart and quickens it: *“And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 30:21).

Notice the Word of God tells us *“I will cause him to draw near, and He shall approach Me”* (NKJV). For it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

The Word of God tells us, *“So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name”* (Psalm 80:18). And in the Song of Solomon, we read: *“Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee”* (Song of Solomon 1:4).

Madame Guyon, a mighty woman of prayer, once said:

The simple requirement is that you must learn to pray from your heart and not your head. The reason for this is that man’s mind is so limited in its operation, it can only focus on one object at a time. But the prayer offered from the heart cannot be

interrupted by reason. Nothing can interrupt this prayer except confused affection. When you have enjoyed God and the sweetness of His love, however, you will find it impossible to set your affections on anything other than Him.¹

To enjoy the sweetness of His love in your heart, however, your heart must be pure and contrite, for the Word of God tells us: "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*" (Psalm 51:17). God is looking for a broken heart, a truthful and honest heart. Psalm 51:6 declares, "*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*"

Psalm 145:18-19 is also very clear on this: "*The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*"

The Lord is close to the one who calls on Him in truth, whose heart is full of honesty, and whose spirit is free from guile: "*Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all*

those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:1-2).

When you pray, God looks on the condition of your heart. Prayer must come from a prepared heart. This is the prayer that touches heaven!

The secret to effective, anointed, powerful prayer is not dependent upon any of the external elements, but upon a **relationship** and **heart**:

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end [a future and a hope]. Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, and I will be found of you, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

When you are in the right location (alone with God), the right position (under the blood), and the right condition (a prepared, pure heart), God stands ready to honor your prayers with His presence and power!

e i g h t

THREE
WORLDS
OF PRAYER

Let us be faithful to our high calling and our heavenly ordaining, for "I have chosen you, and ordained you," is our Master's word, "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). Let us not fear, but let us pray. Let us not doubt, but let us pray. Let us not murmur, but let us pray. Let us not faint, but let us pray. Let us not struggle so hard to try to do it all ourselves, but let us recognize it all as but a greater opportunity for proving the all-sufficiency of God and the power of prayer.

A. B. Simpson

eight

It has been more than three decades since the early days of our ministry in Toronto, yet I can recall many scenes as if they happened yesterday. One incident that happened in April 1974 is indelibly etched in my mind. I was having a wonderful time of prayer in my bedroom, enjoying God's presence. His presence had been so real to me since I had attended a Kathryn Kuhlman service in December of 1973.

As I was in prayer, I remember asking the Lord, "Why am I experiencing Your presence in such a glorious way?" I knew God had a divine purpose in all that had been happening to me.

Standing in my room, I suddenly had a vision. I saw someone standing in front of me. That person was enveloped in tormenting flames. I couldn't tell if it was a man or woman. The person's feet weren't touching the ground. As I looked at this being's face, his or her mouth was opening and closing, making a horrible sound, just as Matthew 13:42 describes: *"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

I was horrified as the person was completely engulfed in tormenting flames, and I began crying, "No! No! No!"

At that moment, the Lord spoke to me audibly: "Preach the Gospel."

"But Lord," I said, "I can't talk." I had had a stuttering problem all my life. How could I possibly preach?

Sometime later I had a vivid dream. An angel appeared, carrying a chain that was attached to a door so huge that it seemed to fill heaven. As he pulled on the chain to open the door, I suddenly saw a multitude of people stretching as far as the eye could see. Then the angel called me and took me to a higher place. As I looked down, I saw the same multitude slowly walking forward. To my horror, the shuffling throng was moving toward a billowing inferno. Fire blazed from the abyss, and I saw people at the front of the line being pushed over the precipice, disappearing from sight. And the same happened to those following as the crush of humanity behind them kept pushing them over the edge and into the raging flames.

Again, I heard the Lord's voice say clearly, "Preach the Gospel. If you do not preach, every soul that falls will be your responsibility."

The words cut through me like a jagged sword. From that moment, I knew I had to preach the Gospel.

Shortly after that dream, the doors began opening for me to preach. As I stood to preach for the first time, the Lord healed my stuttering tongue!

Though it has been nearly three decades since then, the reality of that terrible vision is still as vivid to me as the day it happened.

It was because of prayer that the call of God was made so real and clear to my heart. It was prayer that opened my eyes to a heavenly vision and prayer that enabled me to hear the voice of the Lord at a young age.

And it was in those early days that I began to understand and experience the power of prayer.

THREE WORLDS OF PRAYER

When we study the subject of prayer, we should always go to the Source. In Matthew, the Lord Jesus said: *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8).

In this truth, the Lord presents to each one of us three worlds of prayer: the world of asking, the world of seeking, and the world of knocking. Each has a

unique purpose in developing direct access to the throne room.

When Moses, under God's direction, built the tabernacle in the wilderness, he built it with three distinct areas:

- The outer court, which was surrounded by a linen fence, and within it stood the altar of sacrifice and the laver
- The Holy Place, where stood the candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the table of incense
- The Holy of Holies, where he placed the ark of the covenant and the golden censor

In the tabernacle are revealed the three worlds of prayer:

- The outer court is the world of asking.
- The Holy Place is the world of seeking.
- The most sacred place behind the veil—the Holy of Holies—is the world of knocking.

The World of Asking

Matthew 7:8 tells us, "*For every one that asketh receiveth.*" Asking is where you begin, and asking is the

result of abiding in Christ: *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”* (John 15:7):

Asking begins in the outer court. This is where we make our requests known: *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”* (Philippians 4:6).

This is where we ask and receive. This is where we come to the Lord and make our desires and needs known to Him.

This is also where we are cleansed by the blood as we confess our sins. This is where we find Him faithful and just to forgive us, as promised in 1 John 1:9—*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”*—for it is in the outer court that we find the altar of sacrifice, where the work of the Cross and the blood of Jesus avails.

And remember, the outer court is also where we find the laver, the Word of God, and it is in this world of prayer that we remind the Lord of His promises. We do this by asking according to His will, according to His Word: *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he*

heareth us" (1 John 5:14). This is why David cried, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart" (Psalm 119:2).

It is in this world that we must prevail in prayer as we wait upon the Lord. And as we overcome in this world of prayer, we are granted the privilege of entering into the next.

The World of Seeking

In the Holy Place, the seeking world of prayer, stood the candlestick on one side and the table of showbread on the other. As you looked toward the veil, you would see the table of incense.

It is here in the seeking world of prayer that the Holy Spirit grants you the power to seek the Lord. In Jeremiah 29:13-14 we read:

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

It is in this world of prayer that you find the Lord and receive liberty from all captivity. It is here that God Almighty gives you illumination through His Word. It is here that you receive the truth of God's Word. And it is also here that you will be nourished and satisfied by the promises of God, for it is here that you find the table of showbread.

Only in this world of prayer can you experience true worship, for the table of incense stood in the Holy Place.

Seeking the Lord, finding Him, and finding the fullness of your liberty will cause your heart to be filled with His Word. It will cause you to erupt in worship and prepare you for the greatest privilege a Christian will ever know—the knocking world.

The World of Knocking

This knocking world of prayer, the Holy of Holies, is the place of partnership with God. Intercession, the deepest form of prayer, takes place only here.

It was in the Holy of Holies that the high priest entered once a year to intercede for the children of Israel. It was here that he offered the blood of the sacrifices for himself and for the sins and errors of God's people.

And it was here that Moses interceded continually for Israel, for the Holy of Holies is the place of intercession.

And it is in the Holy of Holies in heaven today that Christ Jesus still intercedes for you and me: *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Hebrews 7:25).

Charles Spurgeon was England’s best-known preacher for most of the second half of the nineteenth century. He wrote:

We will now remember that our Lord presents us with a promise. Note that the promise is given to several varieties of prayer: “I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7-8). The text clearly asserts that all forms of true prayer will be heard, provided they are presented through Jesus Christ and are for promised blessings. . . . To each of these stages of prayer there is a distinct promise. He who asks will have; what more did he ask for? But he who seeks will go

further; he will find, will enjoy, will grasp, and will know that he has obtained. He who knocks will go further still, for he will understand, and to him will the precious thing be opened.¹

The Lord today is asking us to come into the outer court to make our requests known and to receive from His giving, loving hands. He is asking us to come into the Holy Place, seeking Him until we find Him. And He wants us to come into the Holy of Holies, interceding for others, where we will find Him able to save to the uttermost.

INCREASING YOUR PRAYER LIFE THROUGH FASTING

If we would pray with power, we should pray with fasting. This of course does not mean that we should fast every time we pray; but there are times of emergency or special crisis in work or in our individual lives, when men of downright earnestness will withdraw themselves even from the gratification of natural appetites that would be perfectly proper under other circumstances, that they may give themselves up wholly to prayer. There is a peculiar power in such prayer. Every great crisis in life and work should be met in that way.

R. A. Torrey

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As He walked on the earth, the Lord Jesus was very clear on the subject of fasting: *“I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”* (Matthew 17:20-21).

If fasting was that vital to the Lord, it should be no less important to us. It has been to me for many years. I have learned a lot about prayer and fasting by reading the works of many great people of faith from the past. I have also witnessed firsthand the incredible, dynamic results of fasting by both my wife, Suzanne, and my mother.

Years ago, my mother began the practice of fasting every Friday. It was not something she was told to do by a parent or minister, nor was it a custom she learned as a young girl raised in the Greek Orthodox Church.

“God led me to do it,” she told me. In ways too numerous to mention, fasting had a profound impact on her spiritual life and mine.

Suzanne, on the other hand, grew up in a pastor's home. I have always been amazed at how committed she has been to prayer and fasting. Over the years she has fasted more times than I can count, and I have watched her experience incredible spiritual breakthroughs.

From both of these extraordinary women, I have learned many things that have led to spiritual victories for me. More than ever, I am of the opinion that believers must have a proper understanding of fasting. Only then can each of us be equipped to break down the barriers and open the floodgates of heaven. First, we must learn why and how to fast.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE FASTING

It is important to know that there are special fasts for specific purposes. Before we begin, here are five questions to ask yourself.

Is this fast God directed?

Are you fasting because God has led you into it? Is it ordained by Him? Some people fast so they can boast about their spiritual piety. When Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, He said, "*The*

Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican [tax collector]. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess" (Luke 18:11-12). The reason the Lord Jesus condemned the fasting of the Pharisee was because it was done in the flesh, led by pride and tradition.

It is vital to follow God's leading regarding prayer and fasting. Otherwise it may lead to bondage. Be certain you are prompted by the Holy Spirit and that your actions will please, honor, and glorify Him.

What are your motives for fasting?

I have known people who treat fasting as a hunger strike, attempting to push God into a corner to have Him respond to what they want accomplished in their life. Others go without food, calling it a spiritual fast, but they mostly want to shed a few pounds.

The person who does anything for the flesh is an idol worshiper. We are warned, "*Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*" (1 Corinthians 10:7). Their bodies were their gods. True fasting, on the other hand, always crucifies self. We must become as Paul, who brought his body into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden because of the lust of the flesh, and the flesh is something satan will attempt to arouse in you. When the devil came to the Lord Jesus, he said, *“If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread”* (Matthew 4:3). Why did the evil one use those words? He wanted to see if the Lord would bow to the temptation of the flesh. Jesus answered, *“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (4:4).

Jesus would not yield. Neither should we.

What specific needs are you fasting for?

In Scripture, when people fasted, it was usually because of a specific need: deliverance, healing, ministry challenges, or personal problems. No one fasted “just to fast.”

What about you? When you fast, can you state specifically why you feel led to enter this time of self-denial?

What results are you expecting?

When your time of fasting is completed, how will your life be different? Do you expect to be closer to the Lord? What prayer do you believe will be answered? Will your actions affect the life of someone else?

Remember, you are not going through a ritual or routine. It is not out of place to establish a “goal setting” aspect to your fast. When the fast is completed, what will be the results?

Will you minister to the Lord while fasting?

Often, we get this backward. We fast, fully expecting God to minister to us. He will, but it is more important for you to minister to Him. During this time you are ministering to God Himself. The believers at Antioch “*ministered to the Lord, and fasted*” (Acts 13:2).

The Lord wants to know, “Are you fasting for My purpose?” That is what God said through the prophet Zechariah: “*Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, say when ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?*” (Zechariah 7:5).

Above all, a fast is more than a personal spiritual exercise, more than religious gymnastics. It must have a purpose. Then you can move confidently toward the purpose of your fast.

SEVEN TYPES OF FASTS

In Scripture there are seven unique types of fasts for distinctive purposes. Some are to be observed for one

day, others for three days, three weeks, or even forty days and nights. These are not given as a rigid formula, but as examples of how God works.

Fasting in a Crisis

In the Old Testament there is a fascinating story of Esther who became deeply troubled when she learned that Haman, the prime minister of the land, was determined to eliminate the Jewish race from Babylon and plotted to kill Esther's older cousin Mordecai by publicly hanging him from the gallows. Esther gave these instructions to Mordecai:

Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go into the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish. (Esther 4:16)

Esther entered the three-day fast because there was a crisis that needed to be solved. She prayed that God would turn the situation around, and that is exactly what happened. The king not only granted her request, but when he learned of Haman's evil plans

“they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai” (Esther 7:10).

It is not the only time in Scripture that God directed a fast of three days because of impending danger. Saul of Tarsus, who had persecuted the church, had his life-changing conversion to Christ on the road to Damascus. The experience was so powerful that he was blinded by the light from heaven that shone around him. As a Pharisee, his conversion would surely mean death. Saul *“was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink”* (Acts 9:9).

It was after that time of fasting that Ananias laid hands on Saul, later called Paul. His sight was restored, and Paul began to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

Fasting for Revelation

The second fast described in God’s Word is a twenty-one day partial fast so that God would reveal the future. The prophet Daniel wrote, *“In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, til three whole weeks were fulfilled”* (Daniel 10:2-3). This was not a total fast since he mentions only the food he did *not* eat. No dessert, no meat, no wine.

The purpose became clear when the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and said, *“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for yet the vision is for many days”* (Daniel 10:14). Daniel’s twenty-one day partial fast was for revelation. God pulled back the curtain and unveiled what would happen in the coming days.

The same thing happened to Daniel earlier. He shunned food for the same purpose, and there was an identical result: *“And I set my face unto the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes”* (9:3). Soon after, God gave him a revelation: *“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision”* (9:23).

Fasting for Reexamination

In the Old Testament, God asked His people to set aside one day each year—the Day of Atonement—to take a better look at their spiritual state: *“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD”* (Leviticus 23:27).

How did King David afflict his soul and humble himself? With fasting. He wrote, *“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting”* (Psalm 35:13).

God directed His people to use a specific day for denial of self. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, *“Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth [at my instruction], the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD’S house upon the fasting day”* (Jeremiah 36:6). It was a specific day. God wanted His people to reexamine their spiritual state on a particular day. They were to ask, “Where do I stand with God?” The New Testament church continued the practice of fasting, not out of duty or custom, but because it was a way of drawing closer to the Lord.

With your own fasting day, as with every aspect of your life, let God direct you in these matters. Then you can be certain it is of Him.

Fasting for Deliverance

The book of Judges relates a dramatic story of Israel as they engaged in a battle with the tribe of Benjamin for a sin that had been committed. God specifically told His people to fight against this one tribe. Here is what took place.

The children of Israel asked God, *“Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first”* (Judges 20:18).

So the men of Judah prepared themselves to battle Benjamin at a place called Gibeah. The results, however, were not what Israel expected. Scripture records that the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites (verse 21).

It is amazing that God told them to go into battle, yet they were sorely defeated. Those who returned were distraught, and with bitter tears they cried, *“Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him”* (verse 23).

So the next day they reorganized and headed again into battle: *“And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men”* (verse 25).

In two days Israel lost forty thousand men. Most people would say, “God can’t be in this! If we try one more time we’ll all be dead!” However, there was something missing in their prayer prior to the first two battles. They had not fasted. The Scriptures record, *“Then*

all the children of Israel...came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD” (verse 26).

One of the leaders stood before the ark of the covenant and asked God: *“Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand”* (verse 28).

They should have known to fast from the beginning. Moses and the prophets had given them God’s clear instructions on fasting, yet they waited until two major defeats before they saw the importance of fasting unto the Lord for deliverance.

It was only after total obedience that God told them precisely when the battle would be won. It would happen “tomorrow.” God kept His promise. The Word says, *“The LORD smote [defeated] Benjamin before Israel”* (verse 35). On their first two attempts, the Israelites tried to fight the battle by themselves. They lost. When they fasted, the Lord won the battle for them!

Fasting for Freedom from Judgment

God’s principles regarding keeping His ordinances are universal. There are examples in Scripture where even

the sinful were spared judgment because they followed the Lord's command.

Ahab, the husband of Jezebel, is one example of this. God let His displeasure be known against this evil king of Israel:

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent [tore] his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly [in mourning]. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days. (1 Kings 21:27-29)

Fasting lifted judgment from the life of Ahab. It can do the same for anyone who discovers this powerful spiritual principle.

Fasting for Health and Healing

For years many nutritional doctors and health practitioners have known that fasting promotes a cleansing and healing process because it helps eliminate toxins from the body.

In the Bible we read of an Amalekite who went without food for three days and was healed:

And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him [his strength returned]; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. (1 Samuel 30:11-12)

Some may conclude that it was the food that made him well. I believe it was fasting that brought him back to health. There have certainly been hundreds of other examples around the world of people who have benefited spiritually, emotionally, and physically from fasting.

Of course, I recommend that you always talk with your personal physician before going into a fasting-for-health program. I do this. In fact, one of the best fasting practitioners I know of is my friend Don Colbert, M.D., who has a medical and nutritional practice in Longwood, Florida. He has written numerous books

on the subject, including *Walking in Divine Health* and *Toxic Relief*. I recommend anything he writes or teaches on the subject, and for good reason: Dr. Colbert has been my personal physician and nutritional teacher for many years.

Fasting for Dominion

In Scripture there were only three individuals who fasted forty days: Moses, Elijah, and the Lord Jesus.

- Moses went without food forty days before he received the law (Exodus 24:18).
- Elijah, as he slept under a juniper tree, was awakened by an angel who cooked a meal for him: “*And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God*” (1 Kings 19:8).
- The Lord Jesus was “*led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing*” (Luke 4:1-2).

I don't recommend fasts that last this long for anyone! In the natural, you cannot live that long without food or water.

FASTING SPECIFICS

I have often been asked, “How do you begin a fast, and how do you end one?” As mentioned earlier, my advice is that you first check with your doctor before you begin any fast. Some physicians may not understand what you are trying to do, but there are a growing number of medical and nutritional practitioners who do recognize the physical, mental, and spiritual advantages of fasting. As Dr. Don Colbert has been to me and my family, a spirit-filled physician is a Godsend.

Regardless of your situation or the availability of anointed medical personnel, your current spiritual, emotional, and physical condition must always be taken into consideration. For example, if you are on a medication to be taken with food, you should not be fasting. That one is simple enough, but your situation may be much more complex. Whatever you do, use wisdom.

Once you have consulted with a doctor, begin a fast by entering into it slowly. I suggest you start by skipping just one meal. The next time, miss two meals. Eventually you may feel comfortable with fasting for a few days or even a week.

One man told me, “God is directing me, and I know He will take care of any problems no matter how long I fast.” That is simply not sound judgment. Again,

I urge you to consult with your physician regarding any fast you are contemplating for any length of time. And be more careful about ending your fast than beginning it. Anyone who has fasted for any length of time knows that your body actually becomes accustomed to not eating. The last thing you want to do is run out to a restaurant and scarf down a big steak with all the trimmings. Drink fruit and vegetable juices (just don't mix them!) after completing the fast. Then on successive days, add fruit, soup, salads, and whole-grain breads until your body is ready for meats such as fish or chicken. Control your food quantities. Get plenty of rest. Be wise in your pursuit of reasonable goals.

I am convinced more than ever that fasting should be part of your normal Christian walk. It will strengthen your relationship with the Lord. The presence of God will become closer, and your prayer life will take on added power.

Fasting in the name of the Lord Jesus will build a stronger, more potent faith. And fasting will intensify your prayer life.

t e n

STEPS TO
EFFECTIVE
PRAYER

*Prayer is
releasing the
energies of God,
for prayer is asking
God to do what
we cannot do.*

Charles Trumbull

t e n

This story reportedly happened during World War I: A British soldier was caught one night while creeping secretly back to his tent from a nearby wooded area. He was immediately hauled before his commanding officer and charged with holding communications with the enemy. The man pleaded that he had gone into the woods to pray. That was his only defense.

“Have you been in the habit of spending hours in private prayer?” his officer asked roughly.

“Yes, sir.”

“Then get down on your knees and pray now like you’ve never prayed before!” the commander ordered.

The young man knew he could be shot at sunrise for the crime he was accused of committing. He knelt and poured out his soul in prayer that could have only been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

“You may go,” the officer said in hushed tones after the soldier finished praying. “I believe your story. If you hadn’t drilled often, you couldn’t have done so well at review.”¹

The young man had a breakthrough that saved his life. He did so because he had prepared for that breakthrough for some time, not knowing what challenges he would face.

Oh, that believers today would “drill” often in preparation for the times which lie ahead. Our lives would be so different.

PREPARATION FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

James 5:16 gives every believer this powerful truth: *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* Becoming an effective (another word for effectual) prayer warrior is a practical, attainable goal that every child of God can attain. Hopefully we will not have to have a death threat over our heads, as did the British soldier, when we are called upon to pray for a breakthrough, but we should be ready, nonetheless.

Everything begins with preparation. Becoming an effective prayer warrior begins by preparing yourself every day for serious, intimate communion with God. It only happens when you spend time with Him. Only then can breakthroughs happen in every area of your life.

We must prepare our hearts for prayer. Everything starts by creating an atmosphere that makes it easy to commune with God. Let me share five simple ways to help you develop a conducive atmosphere for spending effective time with the Lord.

Find a Quiet Place

Do you want freedom in prayer? Do you want breakthroughs? Find a quiet place to be alone.

As I have mentioned several times in this book, especially in chapter 8, it is important to get away from distracting influences because you cannot commune with the Lord as effectively in a busy, loud atmosphere surrounded by people. Certainly there are times when you pray with your family, church, or friends, but you must also find a quiet place during those all-important times you want to be alone with God.

Wait Quietly Before the Lord

I have mentioned this before, but it bears repeating. You must learn to come into the presence of God, then wait until you feel Him near. You may ask, "What if that doesn't happen?"

Then you wait!

Don't worry. God is already there, waiting for your heart and mind to become in tune with Him.

Our number one problem is emptying our thoughts from the clutter of the day and calming our hectic pace of life. Get on your knees and just wait quietly before Him. Moses, Ezekiel, and the prophets came into God's presence with stillness, calmness, and serenity. You can, too.

Play Worship Music

Perhaps like me, you sometimes know you need to spend time with the Lord, but you feel empty and low, not really ready to pray. I have learned that worship music changes everything. I find that as I put on my earphones and begin to play a CD of worship music, within minutes I find myself enraptured by the glorious presence of the Holy Spirit. All the outer influences and the inner hindrances leave, the praise lifting me to new heights.

I find that even after the CD ends, songs and melodies keep flowing out of my heart. This has happened to me more times than I can count, so I can tell you from personal experience that it is very important that the music you play has been written and produced for worship.

So much music today is designed to stir our emotions, tell a story, or deliver a message. There is noth-

ing wrong with any of those, and there is a time and place for those tunes, but music of this nature probably will not help create the atmosphere you need for worship. You need songs that usher you into the very presence of the Lord. This is why the apostle Paul wrote, *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:19).

Worship and praise prepares you for victory, for what lies ahead. Remember how the Lord Jesus and the disciples shared the Last Supper together, then as they prepared to leave, the Bible says, *“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”* (Matthew 26:30). Christ Jesus then won the victory!

This is why we emphasize praise and worship music during our broadcasts and crusades. There is something about this music that lifts you up, sets you on a firm foundation, and prepares you for victory—no matter where you are in life.

Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, told the church to teach and admonish each other with these powerful words: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Colossians 3:16).

“God is a Spirit,” we are told in John 4:24, *“and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* Likewise, Psalm 29:2 declares, *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”* Enter into worship with music and see how much more effective your prayer life can be!

Become Totally Dependent upon the Holy Spirit

When left to our own devices, we have a difficult time preparing for breakthroughs. The phone rings, the kids start crying, the doorbell chimes, the dog begins to bark, our stomach tells us we are hungry, and suddenly we drift off in a thousand different directions.

For some people, the moment they get on their knees they start to yawn and have to fight drowsiness. Instead of praying, they try reading a chapter from the Bible and fall asleep.

Every believer needs God’s help in becoming an effective prayer warrior. In fact, the psalmist was so reliant on the Lord that he asked God to guide his footsteps. He prayed, *“Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.... Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way”* (Psalm 119:35, 37).

In Psalm 80:18, David wrote, *“So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.”* What was he saying? “I can’t do it on my own. Can you help me?” We should make the same request when we pray.

There comes a time when we must die to self and surrender totally to the Lord. Remember, the Lord became weary of the hollow prayers of the children of Israel. God said, *“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear”* (Isaiah 1:15).

Why was the Lord so displeased? Because the flesh cannot please God, nor can the flesh pray. We need to say, “Holy Spirit, I can’t pray. Help me. Pray through me. Holy Spirit, I can’t even worship in my own strength. Help me worship the Lord as He deserves to be worshiped and adored. Be reminded that *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24).

Open Your Heart to God

It is futile to enter God’s presence while attempting to impress Him. He knows your heart and wants you to pour out your heart to Him, telling Him your deepest desires. You must confess your need and your sin, for

without confession, there can be no forgiveness: *“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer”* (Psalm 32:3-4).

The psalmist also declared: *“I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin”* (Psalm 32:5).

David continues: *“For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found”* (Psalm 32:6). Likewise, it is impossible to pour your heart out to the Lord without first confessing your sin, and once He cleanses you, there will be intimacy that words cannot express.

REVELATIONS TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Once sin is confessed and the Holy Spirit has touched your heart to pray, He will lead you into the seven revelations of prayer.

Confession

True prayer begins with confessing who God is. After the apostles were threatened by the Pharisees and told not to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, Peter prayed,

and the apostles came into God's presence by confessing who He is:

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is....

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:23-24, 29-31)

Before asking the Lord to heal and do signs and wonders and before the place was shaken, the apostles said, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (verse 24).

When Moses approached God's throne, he confessed who God is. The Scripture tells us, "*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name*" (Psalm 100:4). True prayer begins by confessing who He is. We confess His glory. We confess His holiness. We confess His majesty.

When I enter prayer, I always begin by telling God who He is: "Lord, You are God Almighty. You are just. You are pure. You are holy." I begin to magnify His holy name.

"The heavens declare the glory of God," the psalmist cried (Psalm 19:1). He always began with exaltation.

How can you approach God and immediately begin telling Him your needs until you tell Him how mighty He is to meet those needs? You begin by confessing how mighty He is. Prayer begins with declaring the glory of God. You cannot begin true prayer until you declare who God is.

Supplication

Not only do we declare the sovereignty and power of God, but we also must present our needs to Him. This is called supplication. After the apostle Paul told us to put on the whole armor of God (see Ephesians 6:11-17),

he declared that we should be *“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”* (verse 18).

Literally, take your requests to the Lord. Don't hesitate to say, “Lord, here is the need I am bringing to You today.” Paul wrote, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7).

He knows our petitions before we even ask, yet God is waiting to hear the cry of our heart. Unfortunately, many people end their time of prayer at this point. They never move beyond supplication. They present their requests and say, “Well, I feel better now. That's it. I am finished.” They rush to turn on the news, read a newspaper, or phone a friend, not realizing that God is still waiting.

Adoration

Supplication always leads to adoration. After you confess who God is, and after your petition has been presented, then peace begins to fill your soul, and you will enter into worship: *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”* (Psalm 29:2).

Communion

From adoration, we always move into communion and intimacy with the Lord. Intimacy is where words become inadequate. As we worship Him, He will fill us with His presence, and as a result, our hearts will be filled with His abundance. This results in holy silence and intimacy.

Intimacy is the result of abundance, not lack. The presence of God begins with quietness and intimacy, which will impart to you the quietness and confidence wherein you will find your strength: *“For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength”* (Isaiah 30:15).

The apostle Paul prayed: *“The love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all”* (2 Corinthians 13:14). Intimacy is the key that will lead you to intercession.

Intercession

Often I have met people who tell me, “I’m an intercessor.” Yet when I talk with them it becomes clear they simply see their role in ministry as “praying for others.” True intercession has a far deeper meaning and

is the result of a relationship with the Lord that is immeasurable.

Intimacy with the Lord prepares the heart for intercession and victory. It is in intimacy with the Lord that the Holy Spirit takes over our hearts and intercession is born. For it is He who intercedes. We become vessels for the Intercessor: *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Romans 8:26).

Praise

After intercession, praise will erupt out of your soul, for the Holy Spirit, the great Intercessor who knows the will of God, who has wrought great victories in the heavenlies as you were willing to surrender to His presence, will cause praise. Praise is the result of intercession, and it brings about the will of God into this world and into the lives of many. It is in praise that the enemies of God will be bound:

*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,
and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute
vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments
upon the people; To bind their kings*

with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD. (Psalm 149:6-9)

Thanksgiving

Because of the victories wrought in praise, thanksgiving will follow. Thanksgiving seals the work which was wrought in praise.

Paul the apostle told us we are to be "*abounding therein with thanksgiving*" (Colossians 2:7). He also tells us, "*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance,
but laying hold of His willingness.

—Martin Luther

Groanings which cannot be uttered are
often prayers which cannot be refused.

—Charles Spurgeon

Prayer does not fit us for the greater works;
prayer is the greater work. We think of

prayer as a common sense exercise of our higher powers in order to prepare us for God's work. In the teaching of Jesus Christ, prayer is the working of the miracle of redemption in others by the power of God.

—Oswald Chambers

The greatest power that God has given to any individual is the power of prayer.

—Kathryn Kuhlman

If you live in the neglect of secret prayer, you show your good will to neglect all the worship of God. He that prays only when he prays with others, would not pray at all, were it not that the eyes of others are upon him. He that will not pray where none but God seeth him, manifestly doth not pray at all out of respect to God, or regard to his all-seeing eye, and therefore doth in effect cast off all prayer. And he that casts off prayer, in effect casts off all the worship of God, of which prayer is the principal duty.²

—Jonathan Edwards

I have so much to do that I must spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it.

—John Wesley

Many persons, being told that God answers prayer for Christ's sake, overlook the condition of obedience. They have so loose an idea of prayer, and of our relations to God in it, and of His relations to us and to His moral government, that they think they may be disobedient and yet prevail through Christ. How little do they understand the whole subject! Surely they must have quite neglected to study their Bible to learn the truth about prayer.³

—Charles G. Finney

When God intends to bless His people, the first thing He does is to set them a-praying.

—Matthew Henry

Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?

—Corrie ten Boom

We must know the power of the Blood if we are to know the power of God. Our knowing experimentally the power of the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of prayer is dependent upon our knowing the power of the Blood of Christ.

—R. A. Torrey

n o t e s

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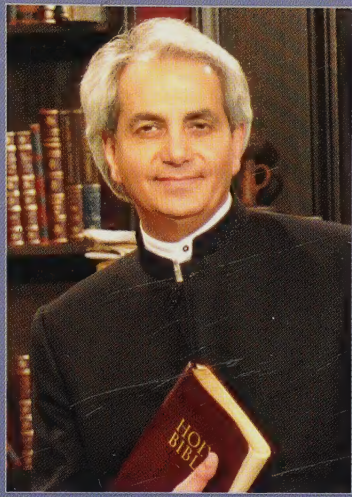
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Prayer that gets results is the greatest need in the church today! God Almighty wants to birth prayer in your heart. It is my prayer that as you begin to seek the Lord Jesus Christ with more intensity, more fervency, and more determination, you will move to an entirely new dimension of power and authority. Prayer is the secret to both survival and success for anyone who seeks to walk in faith, power, and unshakable strength.

Benny Hinn

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In *Prayer That Gets Results: The Key to Your Survival*, international best-selling author Benny Hinn takes readers on a life-changing adventure as he teaches:

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