



Answered Prayers

Then said the Lord unto me,
"Thou hast well seen:
for I will hasten my word
to perform it."

Jeremiah 1:12

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Forward

Prayer in the Bible is answered by God in miraculous ways. Throughout the Bible, we find many instances of God's people praying and God answering their prayers. Through this study, you will see that God worked significantly through the prayers of His people:

Chapter 1

Prayer is significant in the Bible?

Prayer in the Bible is answered by God in miraculous ways. Throughout the Bible, we find many instances of God's people praying and God answering their prayers. Through this list, you will see that God worked significantly through the prayers of His people:

Abraham:

God agreed to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if He could find 10 righteous people in those cities (Genesis 18:22-32). Unfortunately, this was not the case and these cities were destroyed. However, God still answered Abraham's prayer by sending His angels to remove righteous Lot and his family before the judgment fell. So, even though the evil cities were destroyed, the righteous in those cities were spared.

And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. [23] And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? [24] Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? [25] That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? [26] And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. [27] And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: [28] Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. [29] And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. [30] And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. [31] And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

[32] And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

He did not change God's Mind. The more likely answer is that God changed Abraham's mind. Abraham knew that God is just and that he punishes sin, but he may have wondered about God's mercy. Abraham seemed to be probing God's mind to see how merciful he really was. He left his conversation with God convinced that God was both kind and fair. Our prayers won't change God's mind, but they may change ours just as Abraham's prayer changed his. Prayer helps us better understand the mind of God.

God let Abraham question his justice and intercede for a wicked city. Abraham knew that God must punish sin, but he also knew from experience that God is merciful to sinners. God knew there were not ten righteous people in the city, but he was merciful enough to allow Abraham to intercede. He was also merciful enough to help Lot, Abraham's nephew, get out of Sodom before it was destroyed. God does not take pleasure in destroying the wicked, but he must punish sin. He is both just and merciful. We should be thankful that God's mercy extends to us.

The people of Sodom were given a fair test. He was not ignorant of the city's wicked practices, but in his fairness and patience he gave the people of Sodom one last chance to repent. God is still waiting, giving people the opportunity to turn to him (2 Peter 3:9). Those who are wise will turn to him before his patience wears out.

God's fairness stood out. (1) He agreed to spare the entire city if only ten righteous people lived there. (2) He showed great mercy toward Lot, apparently the only man in the city who had any kind of relationship with him (and even that was questionable). (3) He showed great patience toward Lot, almost forcing him to leave Sodom before it was destroyed. Remember God's patience when you are tempted to think he is unfair. Even the most godly people deserve his justice. We should be glad God doesn't direct his justice toward us as he did toward Sodom.

God showed Abraham that asking for anything is allowed, with the understanding that God's answers come from God's perspective. They are not always in harmony with our expectations, for only he knows the whole story. Are you missing God's answer to a prayer because you haven't considered any possible answers other than the one you expect?

Lesson 2

Moses:

God miraculously answered many of Moses' prayers including the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13-22)

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. [14] The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

[15] And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore crieth thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: [16] But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. [17] And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. [18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

[19] And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: [20] And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. [21] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. [22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left.

The people were hostile and despairing, but Moses encouraged them to watch the wonderful way God would rescue them. Moses had a positive attitude! When it looked as if they were trapped, Moses called upon God to intervene. We may not be chased by an army, but we may still feel trapped. Instead of giving in to despair, we should adopt Moses' attitude to "stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will bring."

The Lord told Moses to stop praying and get moving! Prayer must have a vital place in our lives, but there is also a place for action. Sometimes we know what to do, but we pray for more guidance as an excuse to postpone doing it. If we know what we should do, then it is time to get moving.

There was no apparent way of escape, but the Lord opened up a dry path through the sea. Sometimes we find ourselves caught in a problem and see no way out. Don't panic; God can open up a way.

Some believe the Israelites did not cross the main body of the Red Sea but one of the shallow lakes or marshes north of it that dry up at certain times of the year, or perhaps a smaller branch of the Red Sea where the water would have been shallow enough to wade across. But the Bible clearly states that the Lord "drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land" (Exodus 14:21; see also Joshua 3:15-16; and 2 Kings 2:13-14). Also, the water was deep enough to cover the chariots (Exodus 14:28).

The God who created the earth and water performed a mighty miracle at exactly the right time to demonstrate his great power and love for his people. Exodus 14:13-22

Chapter 3

Giving the Israelites good water in the wilderness (Exodus 15:25).

And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute

and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

The waters of Marah are contrasted with the springs of Elim. Marah stood for the unbelieving, grumbling attitude of the people who would not trust God. Elim stands for God's bountiful provision. How easy it is to grumble and complain too quickly, only to be embarrassed by God's help!

God promised that if the people obeyed him they would be free from the diseases that plagued the Egyptians. Little did they know that many of the moral laws he later gave them were designed to keep them free from sickness. For example, following God's law against prostitution would keep them free of venereal disease. God's laws for us are often designed to keep us from harm.

Men and women are complex beings. Our physical, emotional, and spiritual lives are intertwined. Modern medicine is now acknowledging what these laws assumed. If we want God to care for us, we need to submit to his directions for living. Perhaps the most miraculous answer that God gave to Moses was when Moses prayed that God would spare Israel after the incident with the golden calf (Exodus 32:7-14).

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: [8] 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. [9] And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: [10] 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. [11] 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? [12] Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

[13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. [14] And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Even if we do not make idols, we are often guilty of trying to make God in our

image, molding him to fit our expectations, desires, and circumstances. When we do this, we end up worshiping ourselves rather than the God who created us—and self-worship, today as in the Israelites' time, leads to all kinds of immorality. What is your favorite image of God? Is it Biblical? Is it adequate? Do you need to destroy it in order to worship the immeasurably powerful God who delivered you from bondage to sin?

God was ready to destroy the whole nation because of their sin. But Moses pleaded for mercy, and God spared them. This is one of the countless examples in the Bible of God's mercy. Although we deserve his anger, he is willing to forgive and restore us to himself. We can receive God's forgiveness from sin by asking him. Like Moses, we can pray that he will forgive others and use us to bring them the message of his mercy.

God did not change his mind in the same way that a parent decides not to discipline a child. Instead, God changed his behavior to remain consistent with his nature. When God first wanted to destroy the people, he was acting consistently with his justice. When Moses interceded for the people, God relented in order to act consistently with his mercy. God had often told the people that if they changed their ways, he would not condemn them. They changed, and God did as he promised.

Lesson 4

Elijah:

God miraculously answered Elijah's prayer on Mt. Carmel when he rained fire from heaven in the showdown between God and the false god Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40)

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. [21] And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then

follow him. And the people answered him not a word. [22] Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. [23] Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: [24] And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. [25] And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. [26] And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. [27] And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. [28] And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. [29] And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. [30] And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. [31] And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: [32] And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. [33] And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. [34] And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. [35] And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. [36] And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

[37] Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. [38] Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. [39] And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the

God. [40] And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Although Elijah was alone in his confrontation with Ahab and Jezebel, he was not the only one in Israel who believed in God. Obadiah had been faithful in hiding 100 prophets still true to the Lord.

Instead of worshiping the true God, Ahab and his wife Jezebel worshiped Baal, the most popular Canaanite god. Baal idols were often made in the shape of a bull, representing strength and fertility and reflecting lust for power and sexual pleasure.

Ahab brought 850 pagan prophets to Mount Carmel to match wits and power with Elijah. Evil kings hated God's prophets because they spoke against sin and idolatry and undermined their control over the people. With the wicked kings' backing, many pagan prophets sprang up to counter the words of God's prophets. But Elijah showed the people that speaking a prophecy wasn't enough. One needed the power of a living God to fulfill it.

Elijah challenged the people to take a stand—to follow whoever was the true God. Why did so many people waver between the two choices? Perhaps some were not sure. Many, however, knew that the Lord was God, but they enjoyed the sinful pleasures and other benefits that came with following Ahab in his idolatrous worship. It is important to take a stand for the Lord. If we just drift along with the tide of the world we are sure to fail.

Although the prophets of Baal raved all afternoon, no one answered them. Their god was silent because it was not real. The gods we may be tempted to follow are not idols of wood or stone, but they are just as false and dangerous because they cause us to depend on something other than God. Power, status, appearance, or material possessions can become our gods if we devote our lives to them. But when we reach times of crisis and desperately call out to these gods, there will only be silence. They can offer no true answers, no guidance, and no wisdom.

God flashed fire from heaven for Elijah, and he will help us accomplish what he commands us to do. The proof may not be as dramatic in our lives as in Elijah's, but God will make resources available to us in creative ways to accomplish his purposes.

He will give us the wisdom to raise a family, the courage to take a stand for truth, or the means to provide help for someone in need. Like Elijah, we can have faith that whatever God commands us to do, he will provide what we need to carry it through.

Lesson 5

Daniel:

Daniel's whole career was spent in prayer to God. His prayers were miraculously answered. Daniel prayed to be shown the king's undisclosed dream and God answered him (Daniel 2:17-18).

Daniel 2:17-18

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: [18] That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel was at a crisis point. Imagine going to see the powerful, temperamental king who had just angrily ordered your death! Daniel did not shrink back in fear, however, but confidently believed God would tell him all the king wanted to know.

When the king gave Daniel time to find the answer, Daniel found his three friends and they prayed. When you find yourself in a tight spot, share your needs with trusted friends who also believe in God's power. Prayer is more effective than panic. Panic confirms your hopelessness; prayer confirms your hope in God. Daniel's trust in God saved himself, his three friends, and all the other wise men of Babylon.

Daniel was thrown to the lions because he continually prayed to God and God spared him (Daniel 6:4-24).

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. [5] Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

[6] Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

[7] All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. [8] Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. [9] Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

[10] Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. [11] Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. [12] Then they came near, and spoke before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said. The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. [13] Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. [14] Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. [15] Then these men

assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. [16] Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. [17] And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

[18] Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. [19] Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. [20] And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? [21] Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. [22] My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. [23] Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

[24] And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Although Nebuchadnezzar praised Daniel's God, he still did not believe in him completely or submit to him alone (Daniel 4:8). Many people attend church and use spiritual language, but they really don't believe in God or obey him. Profession doesn't always mean possession. How do your beliefs match with your obedience?

One of the most difficult lessons to learn is that God is sovereign. He is above all of those who are above us. He limits the power and authority of all the government, business, and religious leaders in the world. Those who live in freedom and with a relatively high degree of autonomy find this difficult to understand. While we may feel as though we are free to do what we please, God is sovereign over all of our plans and desires.

When Daniel understood Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he was stunned, and he wondered how to break the news. He told the king he wished what the dream foreshadowed would happen to the king's enemies and not to Nebuchadnezzar.

How could Daniel be so deeply grieved at the fate of Nebuchadnezzar—the king who was responsible for the destruction of Daniel’s home and nation? Daniel had forgiven Nebuchadnezzar, and so God was able to use Daniel. Very often when we have been wronged by someone, we find it difficult to forget the past. We may even be glad when that person suffers. Forgiveness means putting the past behind us. Can you love someone who has hurt you? Can you serve someone who mistreated you? Ask God to help you forgive, forget, and love. God may use you in an extraordinary way in that person’s life!

Much of the world thought that Nebuchadnezzar was a mighty (even divine) king, God demonstrated that Nebuchadnezzar was an ordinary man. The king would go insane and become like an animal for a set period of time (“seven times”). God humiliated Nebuchadnezzar to show that almighty God, not Nebuchadnezzar, was Lord of the nations. No matter how powerful a person may become, self-centered pride will push God from his or her life. Pride may be one of the most dangerous temptations you will face. Don’t let your accomplishments cause you to forget God. Daniel prayed for Israel and for forgiveness of their sins when the 70 years of captivity were nearing an end. God answered Daniel's prayer by sending Gabriel to tell him exactly when the Messiah would come (Daniel 9).

Lesson 6

Daniel 9:1-27

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; [2] In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

[3] And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: [4] And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; [5] We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: [6] Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. [7] O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. [8] O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

[9] To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; [10] Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. [11] Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. [12] And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. [13] As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. [14] Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. [15] And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

[16] O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

[17] Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. [18] O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. [19] O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

[20] And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; [21] Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. [22] And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. [23] 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.

[24] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. [25] Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. [26] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel pleaded with God to bring about the promised return of his people to their land. The prophet Jeremiah had written that God would not allow the captives to return to their land for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; Jeremiah 29:10). Daniel knew of this prophecy and realized that this 70-year period was coming to an end.

In Daniel's prayer for the nation he confessed his own sin, using the pronoun "we" throughout. In times of adversity, it's easy to blame others and excuse our own actions. If any Israelite was righteous, it was Daniel; and yet he confessed his sinfulness and need for God's forgiveness. Instead of looking for others to blame, first look inside and confess your own sins to God.

Daniel knew how to pray. As he prayed, he fasted, confessed his sins, and pleaded that God would reveal his will. He prayed with complete surrender to God and with complete openness to what God was saying to him. When you pray, do you speak openly to God? Examine your attitude. Talk to God with openness, vulnerability, and honesty, and be ready for God's reply.

The captives from Judah had rebelled against God. Their sins had led to their captivity. But God is merciful even to rebels, if they confess their sins and return to him. Don't let your past disobedience keep you from returning to God. He is waiting for you and wants you to return to him.

God had sent many prophets to speak to his people through the years, but their messages had been ignored. The truth was too painful to hear. God still speaks clearly and accurately through the Bible, and he also speaks through preachers,

teachers, and concerned friends. Sometimes the truth hurts, and we would rather hear words that soothe, even if they are false. If you are unwilling to accept God's message, maybe you are trying to avoid making a painful change. Don't settle for a soothing lie that will bring harsh judgment. Accepting the truth even if it is painful can only help you.

Daniel mentioned the curses outlined in Deut. 28. God had given the people of Israel a choice: obey me and receive blessings, or disobey me and face curses. The affliction was meant to turn the people to God. When we face difficult circumstances, we should ask ourselves if God has reason to send judgment. If we think so, we must urgently seek his forgiveness. Then we can ask him to help us through our troubles.

Daniel spoke about how God continually tried to bring Israel back to himself. Yet even after disaster struck them, they refused to obey him. God still uses circumstances, other people, and, most important his Word to bring his people back to him. What would it take for God to get your attention?

It would be a mistake to read the Bible as dry history and miss the deep personal experience that God intends for you. In this section, Daniel was crying out to the Lord. He had a deep concern for his nation and his people. So often our prayers are without passion and true compassion for others. Are you willing to pray by pouring out your deep feelings to God?

Daniel begged for mercy, not for help, because he knew that his people deserved God's wrath and punishment. God sends his help, not because we deserve it, but because he wants to show great mercy. If God would refuse to help us because of our sin, how could we complain? But when he sends mercy when we deserve punishment, how can we withhold our praise and thanksgiving?

Just as God answered Daniel's prayer, so we can have confidence that God hears and answers our prayers.

Chapter 7

Peter:

The church prayed for Peter: The early church in Jerusalem prayed for Peter after his arrest by Herod and God miraculously answered their prayer by sending an angel to free Peter from prison (Acts 12:5-10).

Acts 12:5-10

Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. [6] And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. [7] And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. [8] And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. [9] And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. [10] When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

They had asked Jesus for special recognition in his kingdom (Mark 10:35-40). Jesus said that to be a part of his kingdom would mean suffering with Jesus (drink from the same cup—Mark 10:38-39). James and John did indeed suffer—Herod executed James, and later John was exiled (see Rev. 1:9).

Why did God allow James to die and yet miraculously save Peter? Life is full of difficult questions like this. Why is one child physically disabled and another child athletically gifted? Why do people die seemingly before realizing their potential? These are questions we cannot possibly answer in this life because we do not see all that God sees. He has chosen to allow evil in this world for a time. But we can trust God's leading because he has promised to destroy all evil eventually. In the meantime, we know that God will help us use our suffering to strengthen us and

glorify him. For more on this question, see the notes on +Job 1:1ff; +Job 2:10; +Job 3:23-26.

Peter was arrested during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the week-long festival directly following Passover. This was a strategic move, since more Jews were in the city than usual, and Herod could impress the most people.

Herod's plan undoubtedly was to execute Peter, but the believers were praying for Peter's safety.

The earnest prayer of the church significantly affected the outcome of these events. Prayer changes things, so pray often and with confidence.

God sent an angel to rescue Peter. Angels are God's messengers. They are divinely created beings with supernatural powers, and they sometimes take on human appearance in order to talk to people. Angels should not be worshiped, because they are not divine. They are God's servants, just as we are.

David:

God answered David's prayer and forgave him for his sin after his adultery with Bathsheba (Psalms 51).

Psalm 51:1-19

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. [2] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. [3] For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. [4] Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. [5] Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. [6] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. [7] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. [8] Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. [9] Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. [10] Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. [11] Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. [12] Restore unto

me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. [13] Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. [14] Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. [15] O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. [16] For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. [17] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. [18] Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. [19] Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

David was truly sorry for his adultery with Bathsheba and for murdering her husband Uriah to cover it up. He knew that his actions had hurt many people. But because David repented of those sins, God mercifully forgave him. No sin is too great to be forgiven! Do you feel that you could never come close to God because you have done something terrible? God can and will forgive you of any sin. While God forgives us, however, he does not always erase the natural consequences of our sin—David's life and family were never the same as a result of what he had done (see 2 Samuel 12:1-23).

Although David had sinned with Bathsheba, David said that he had sinned against God. When someone steals, murders, or slanders, it is against someone else—a victim. According to the world's standards, extramarital sex between two consenting adults is acceptable if nobody gets hurt. But people do get hurt—in David's case, a man was murdered, and a baby died. All sin hurts us and others, but ultimately it offends God because sin in any form is a rebellion against God's way of living. When tempted to do wrong, remember that you will be sinning against God. That may help you stay on the right track.

Hyssop branches were used by the Israelites in Egypt to place the blood of a lamb on the doorframes of their homes. This would keep them safe from death (Exodus 12:22). This act demonstrated the Israelites' faith and secured their release from slavery in Egypt. This verse calls for cleansing from sin and readiness to serve the Lord.

Because we are born as sinners (Psalm 51:5), our natural inclination is to please ourselves rather than God. David followed that inclination when he took another man's wife. We also follow it when we sin in any way. Like David, we must ask God to cleanse us from within (Psalm 51:7), clearing our hearts and spirits for new thoughts and desires. Right conduct can come only from a clean heart and spirit. Ask God to create a pure heart and spirit in you.

Do you ever feel stagnant in your faith, as though you are just going through the motions? Has sin ever driven a wedge between you and God, making him seem distant? David felt this way. He had sinned with Bathsheba and had just been confronted by Nathan the prophet. In his prayer he cried, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation.” God wants us to be close to him and to experience his full and complete life. But sin that remains unconfessed makes such intimacy impossible. Confess your sin to God. You may still have to face some earthly consequences, as David did, but God will give back the joy of your relationship with him.

When God forgives our sin and restores us to a relationship with him, we want to reach out to others who need this forgiveness and reconciliation. The more you have felt God’s forgiveness, the more you will desire to tell others about it.

God desires a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart. You can never please God by outward actions—no matter how good—if your inward heart attitude is not right. Are you sorry for your sin? Do you genuinely intend to stop? God is pleased by this kind of humility

Lesson 8

Christians today worldwide:

God has miraculously answered a prayer from every Christian in the world today when he forgave their sins, made them new creatures in Christ, and gave them His salvation.

Prayer in the Bible was significant! God heard the prayers of these people and He answered in life-changing ways! Even though the power of God is beyond our understanding, beyond our ability to measure, God asks us to cry out to Him in prayer. He already knows our needs and desires, but He wants us to pray! As you read above, God works when people pray!

How powerful is The Power of Prayer?

The power of prayer should not be underestimated. James 5:16-18 declares, "...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops." God most definitely listens to prayers, answers prayers, and moves in response to prayers.

Jesus taught, "...I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 tells us, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." The Bible urges us, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

How do I tap into the Power of Prayer?

The power of prayer is not the result of the person praying. Rather, the power resides in the God who is being prayed to.

1 John 5:14-15 tells us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him." No matter the person praying, the passion behind the prayer, or the purpose of the prayer - God

answers prayers that are in agreement with His will. His answers are not always yes, but are always in our best interest. When our desires line up with His will, we will come to understand that in time. When we pray passionately and purposefully, according to God's will, God responds powerfully!

We cannot access powerful prayer by using "magic formulas." Our prayers being answered is not based on the eloquence of our prayers. We don't have to use certain words or phrases to get God to answer our prayers. In fact, Jesus rebukes those who pray using repetitions, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:7-8). Prayer is communicating with God. All you have to do is ask God for His help. Psalm 107:28-30 reminds us,

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper, the wave of the seas were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm. He guided them to their desired heaven. "There is power in Prayer."

For what kind of things should I pray?

The power of prayer is available for all kinds of requests and issues. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." If you need an example of a prayer, read Matthew 6:9-13. These verses are known as the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's prayer is not a prayer we are supposed to memorize and simply recite to God. It is only an example [model] of how to pray and the things that should go into a prayer - worship, trust in God, requests, confession, protection, provision, etc. Pray for these kinds of things, but speak to God using your own words.

The Word of God is full of accounts describing the power of prayer in various situations. The power of prayer has overcome enemies (Psalm 6:9-10), conquered death (2 Kings 4:3-36), brought healing (James 5:14-15), and defeated demons (Mark 9:29). God, through prayer, opens eyes, changes hearts, heals wounds, and grants wisdom (James 1:5). The power of prayer should never be underestimated because it draws on the glory and might of the infinitely powerful God of the universe!

Daniel 4:35 proclaims, "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"

Chapter 9

What is Intercessory Prayer?

Intercessory prayer is prayer for others. An intercessor is one who takes the place of another or pleads another's case.

One study Bible defines intercession as "holy, believing, persevering prayer whereby someone pleads with God on behalf of another or others who desperately need God's intervention."

The Biblical basis for the New Testament believer's ministry of intercessory prayer is our calling as priests unto God. The Word of God declares that we are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5), a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and a kingdom of priests (Revelation 1:5).

The background for understanding this calling to priestly intercession is found in the Old Testament example of the Levitical priesthood. The priest's responsibility was to stand before and between. He stood before God to minister to Him with sacrifices and offerings.

The priests also stood between a righteous God and sinful man bringing them together at the place of the blood sacrifice.

Jesus is Our Model Intercessor:

Jesus Christ is our model for intercessory prayer. Jesus stands before God and between Him and sinful man, just as the Old Testament priests did: For there is one God, and one mediator (intercessor) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus brings sinful man and a righteous God together at the place of the blood sacrifice for sin. No longer is the blood of animals necessary as it was in the Old Testament. We can now approach God on the basis of the blood of Jesus that was

shed on the cross of Calvary for the remission of sins. Because of the blood of Jesus, we can approach God boldly without timidity (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Jesus was an intercessor while He was here on earth. He prayed for those who were sick and possessed by demons. He prayed for His disciples. He even prayed for you and me when He interceded for all those who would believe on Him. Jesus continued His ministry of intercession after His death and resurrection when He returned to Heaven. He now serves as our intercessor in Heaven.

Effective Intercession:

In intercessory prayer, we follow the Old Testament priestly function and the New Testament pattern of Jesus - standing before God and between a righteous God and sinful man. In order to be effective standing "between" we must first stand "before" God to develop the intimacy necessary to fulfill this role. Numbers 14 is one of the greatest accounts of intercessory prayer recorded in the Bible. Moses was able to stand between God and sinful man because he had stood "before" Him and had developed intimacy of communication. Numbers 12:8 records that God spoke with Moses as friend to friend and not through visions and dreams as He did with other prophets.

Peter uses two words to describe this priestly ministry: "Holy" and "royal." Holiness is required to stand before the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). We are able to do this only on the basis of the righteousness of Christ, not our own righteousness. Royalty is descriptive of the kingly authority that is delegated to us as members of the "royal family," so to speak, with legitimate access to the throne room of God.

Praying for Others?

The best gift anyone can give to another is to pray for him or her. We live in a sinful world where bad things happen to people and people are tempted to sin. Praying for another person not only helps that person find God in the midst of trouble, but also helps us recognize the blessings that God gives us daily!

1 Timothy 2:1-5 says, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

We are exhorted to pray for others - including our country's leaders, our authorities at work and elsewhere, our church leaders, our co-workers, friends, and family.

To answer the question, "How can I pray for others," let's take a look at prayers in the Bible. Notice the varying topics of biblical prayers:

Wisdom and power: Ephesians 1:18-20 says, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength."

Strength and knowledge of God's love: Ephesians 3:16-19 says, "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Discernment: Philippians 1:9-11 says, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God."

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Steadfastness: 2 Thessalonians 3:5 says, "May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance."

Boldness in sharing the faith: Philemon 1:6 says, "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."

When reading those biblical prayers, you may think, "I can't pray that fluently." When praying, do not worry about how your prayer is phrased. Our communication to God should be just as you would talk to your friends or family. Pray for others whenever you think of them (at work, home, doing chores, in the car). Soon, praying for others will become a part of your daily life!

God answers prayers in unexpected ways.

God answers prayer! The beauty of God answering prayer is just that; He answers us! God, in His ultimate and unfailing love desires nothing less than our absolute best. Sometimes, what we think is best is definitely not beneficial for us. Often, we aren't able to see that until time passes and we can look back and see how the situation played out. God knew what was best for us all along!

So, next time you fail to get the answer you want or the next time you feel like God is simply being quiet, set your concerns aside and trust Him. With time, you'll see His protection and divine hand in your situation.

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Chapter 11

Be Sharp In Insight and be Quick in Discernment:

"Test all things, and hold firmly that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22.

"Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1.

Surround Themselves With Good Staff Members and Advisers:

"Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers." Psalm 1:1.

"If a ruler listens to lies, all of his officials are wicked." Proverbs 29:12.

"For by wise guidance you wage your war; and victory is in many advisors." Proverbs 24:6.

Enjoy God's Protection Over Themselves and Their Families:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we won't be afraid, though the earth changes, though the mountains are shaken into the heart of the seas; Though the waters of it roar and are troubled, though the mountains tremble with their swelling." Psalm 46:1-3

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are ordained by God. Therefore he who resists the authority, withstands the ordinance of God; and those who withstand will receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil..

The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-15

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. [10] Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread. [12] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. [14] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: [15] But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is often called the Lord's Prayer because Jesus gave it to the disciples. It can be a pattern for our prayers. We should praise God, pray for his work in the world, pray for our daily needs, and pray for help in our daily struggles.

The phrase "Our Father in heaven" indicates that God is not only majestic and holy, but also personal and loving. The first line of this model prayer is a statement of praise and a commitment to hallow, or honor, God's holy name. We can honor

God's name by being careful to use it respectfully. If we use God's name lightly, we aren't remembering God's holiness.

The phrase "Your kingdom come" is a reference to God's spiritual reign, not Israel's freedom from Rome. God's kingdom was announced in the covenant with Abraham (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28), is present in Christ's reign in believers' hearts (Luke 17:21), and will be complete when all evil is destroyed and God establishes the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1).

When we pray "Your will be done," we are not resigning ourselves to fate, but praying that God's perfect purpose will be accomplished in this world as well as in the next.

When we pray "Give us today our daily bread," we are acknowledging that God is our sustainer and provider. It is a misconception to think that we provide for our needs ourselves. We must trust God daily to provide what he knows we need.

God doesn't lead us into temptations, but sometimes he allows us to be tested by them. As disciples, we should pray to be delivered from these trying times and for deliverance from Satan ("the evil one") and his deceit. All Christians struggle with temptation. Sometimes it is so subtle that we don't even realize what is happening to us. God has promised that he won't allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). Ask God to help you recognize temptation and to give you strength to overcome it and choose God's way instead

Jesus gives a startling warning about forgiveness: if we refuse to forgive others, God will also refuse to forgive us. Why? Because when we don't forgive others, we are denying our common ground as sinners in need of God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness of sin is not the direct result of our forgiving others, but it is based on our realizing what forgiveness means (see Ephes. 4:32). It is easy to ask God for forgiveness, but difficult to grant it to others. Whenever we ask God to forgive us for sin, we should ask ourselves, "Have I forgiven the people who have wronged me?"

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone in all the earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life--to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do. And now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

Chapter 12

The Tax Collector's Prayer - Luke 18:13

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. The Pharisee did not go to the temple to pray to God but to announce to all within earshot how good he was. The tax collector went recognizing his sin and begging for mercy. Self-righteousness is dangerous. It leads to pride, causes a person to despise others, and prevents him or her from learning anything from God.

The tax collector's prayer should be our prayer because we all need God's mercy every day. Don't let pride in your achievements cut you off from God.

Habakkuk's Prayer - Habakkuk 3:2-19

Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. [3] God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. [4] And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. [5] Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. [6] He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. [7] I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. [8] Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? [9] Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. [10] The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

[11] The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. [12] Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. [13] Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah. [14] Thou didst strike through

with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. [15] Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. [16] When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

[17] Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: [18] Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. [19] The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

Habakkuk knew that God was going to discipline the people of Judah and that it wasn't going to be a pleasant experience. But Habakkuk accepted God's will, asking for help and mercy. Habakkuk did not ask to escape the discipline, but he accepted the truth that Judah needed to learn a lesson. God still disciplines in love to bring his children back to him (Hebrews 12:5-6). Accept God's discipline gladly, and ask him to help you change.

The word "Selah" occurs 71 times in Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. Although its precise meaning is unknown, it most likely was a musical term. It could be a signal to lift up the hands or voice in worship, or it could be an exclamation like "Amen!" or "Hallelujah!" affirming the truth of the passage.

Crop failure and the death of animals would devastate Judah. But Habakkuk affirmed that even in the times of starvation and loss, he would still rejoice in the Lord. Habakkuk's feelings were not controlled by the events around him but by faith in God's ability to give him strength. When nothing makes sense, and when troubles seem more than you can bear, remember that God gives strength. Take your eyes off your difficulties and look to God.

God will give his followers surefooted confidence through difficult times. They will run like deer across rough and dangerous terrain. At the proper time, God will bring about his justice and completely rid the world of evil. In the meantime, God's people need to live in the strength of his Spirit, confident in his ultimate victory over evil.

The note to the director of music was to be used when this passage was sung as a psalm in temple worship.

Habakkuk had asked God why evil people prosper while the righteous suffer. God's answer: they don't, not in the long run. Habakkuk saw his own limitations in contrast to God's unlimited control of all the world's events. God is alive and in control of the world and its events. We cannot see all that God is doing, and we cannot see all that God will do. But we can be assured that he is God and will do what is right. Knowing this can give us confidence and hope in a confusing world.

Chapter 13

The Prayer of Ezra - Ezra 9:5-15

And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God. [6] And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

[7] Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. [8] And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. [9] For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. [10] And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, [11] Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. [12] Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. [13] And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; [14] Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? [15] O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

Tearing one's clothes or pulling hair from one's head or beard were signs of self-abasement or humility. They expressed sorrow for sin.

After learning about the sins of the people, Ezra fell to his knees in prayer. His heartfelt prayer provides a good perspective on sin. He recognized: (1) that sin is serious (Ezra 9:6); (2) that no one sins without affecting others (Ezra 9:7); (3) that he was not sinless, although he didn't have a pagan wife (Ezra 9:10ff); (4) that God's love and mercy had spared the nation when they did nothing to deserve it (Ezra 9:8-9, 15). It is easy to view sin lightly in a world that sees sin as inconsequential, but we should view sin as seriously as Ezra did.

Ezra's prayer confessed the sins of his people. Although he had not sinned in the way his people had, he identified with their sins. With weeping, he expressed shame for sin, fear of the consequences, and desire that the people would come to their senses and repent. His prayer moved the people to tears (Ezra 10:1). Ezra demonstrated the need for a holy community around the rebuilt temple. We need a holy community in our local churches too. Even when we sin in the worst imaginable way, we can turn to God with prayers of repentance.

Building a wall was not only a matter of civic pride or architectural beauty, it was essential for security and defense against robbers and marauders (see Ezra 9:7). God in his kindness had given them new life and protection.

Ezra recognized that if God gave the people the justice they deserved, they would not be able to stand before him. Often we cry out for justice when we feel abused and unfairly treated. In those moments, we forget the reality of our own sin and the righteous judgment we deserve.

How fortunate we are that God gives us mercy and grace rather than only justice. The next time you ask God for fair and just treatment, pause to think what would happen if God gave you what you really deserve. Plead instead for his mercy.

Chapter 14

Hezekiah's Prayer When Sick – Isaiah 38:2-8

Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, [3] 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.

[4] Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, [5] 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. [6] And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. [7] And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; [8] Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. The Prayer of Jabez -1 Chron. 4:10

And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Jabez is remembered for a prayer request rather than a heroic act. In his prayer, he asked God to (1) bless him, (2) help him in his work (“enlarge my territory”), (3) be with him in all he did, and (4) keep him from evil and harm. Jabez acknowledged God as the true center of his work. When we pray for God’s blessing, we should also pray that he will take his rightful position as Lord over our work, our family time, and our recreation. Obeying him in daily responsibilities is heroic living.

Jabez prayed specifically to be protected from harm and pain. We live in a fallen world filled with sin, and it is important to ask God to keep us safe from the unavoidable evil that comes our way. But we must also avoid evil motives, desires, and actions that begin within us. Therefore, not only must we seek God’s protection from evil, but we must also ask God to guard our thoughts and actions. We can begin to utilize his protection by filling our minds with positive thoughts and attitudes.

Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication I Kings 8:22-30

And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: [23] And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: [24] Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. [25] Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. [26] And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. [27] But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? [28] Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: [29] That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. [30] And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

David's Prayer of Thanks – 2 Samuel 7:18-29

Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? [19] And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? [20] And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant.

[21] For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. [22] Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. [23] And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? [24] For thou

hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God. [25] And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. [26] And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. [27] For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. [28] And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: [29] Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

This section records David's prayer expressing his humble acceptance of God's promise to extend his dynasty forever. David realized that these blessings were given to him and his descendants in order that Israel might benefit from them. They would help fulfill God's greater purpose and promises that through the nation the whole world would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3).

Chapter 15

Stephen's Prayer at His Stoning – Acts 7:59-60

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus the Messiah standing at God's right hand. Stephen's words are similar to Jesus' words spoken before the council (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69).

Stephen's vision supported Jesus' claim and angered the Jewish leaders who had condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy. They would not tolerate Stephen's words, so they dragged him out and killed him. People may not kill us for witnessing about Christ, but they will let us know they don't want to hear the truth and will often try to silence us. Keep honoring God in your conduct and words; though many may turn against you and your message, some will follow Christ. Remember, Stephen's death made a profound impact on Paul, who later became the world's greatest missionary. Even those who oppose you now may later turn to Christ.

Saul is also called Paul (see Acts 13:9), the great missionary who wrote many of the letters in the New Testament. Saul was his Hebrew name; Paul, his Greek name, was used as he began his ministry to the Gentiles. When Luke introduces him, Paul was hating and persecuting Jesus' followers. This is a great contrast to the Paul about whom Luke will write for most of the rest of the book of Acts—a devoted follower of Christ and a gifted gospel preacher. Paul was uniquely qualified to talk to the Jews about Jesus because he had once persecuted those who believed in Jesus, and he understood how the opposition felt. Paul is a powerful example of how no one is impossible for God to reach and change.

he penalty for blasphemy, speaking irreverently about God, was death by stoning (Leviticus 24:14). The religious leaders, who were furious, had Stephen stoned without a trial. They did not understand that Stephen's words were true, because they were not seeking the truth. They only wanted support for their own views.

As Stephen died, he spoke words very similar to Jesus' words on the cross (Luke 23:34). The early believers were glad to suffer as Jesus had suffered because that meant they were counted worthy (Acts 5:41). Stephen was ready to suffer like Jesus, even to the point of asking forgiveness for his murderers. Such a forgiving response comes only from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can also help us respond as Stephen did with love for our enemies (Luke 6:27). How would you react if someone hurt you because of what you believed?

Paul's Prayer for Knowing God's Will

Colossians 1:9-12

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, [10] That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11] Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; [12] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Paul was exposing a heresy in the Colossian church that was similar to *Gnosticism* (see the note on +Col. 2:4ff for more information). Gnostics valued the accumulation of knowledge, but Paul pointed out that knowledge in itself is empty. To be worth anything, it must lead to a changed life and right living. His prayer for the Colossians has two dimensions: (1) that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding, and (2) that they would bear fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. Knowledge is not merely to be accumulated; it should give us direction for living. Paul wanted the Colossians to be wise, but he also wanted them to *use* their knowledge. Knowledge of God is not a secret that only a few can discover; it is open to everyone. God wants us to learn more about him, and also to put belief into practice by helping others.

Sometimes we wonder how to pray for missionaries and other leaders we have never met. Paul had never met the Colossians, but he faithfully prayed for them. His prayers teach us how to pray for others, whether we know them or not. We can request that they (1) understand God's will, (2) gain spiritual wisdom, (3) please

and honor God, (4) bear good fruit, (5) grow in the knowledge of God, (6) be filled with God's strength, (7) have great endurance and patience, (8) stay full of Christ's joy, and (9) give thanks always. All believers have these same basic needs. When you don't know how to pray for someone, use Paul's prayer pattern for the Colossians.

Paul lists five benefits God gives all believers through Christ: (1) he made us qualified to share his inheritance (see also 2 Cor. 5:21); (2) he rescued us from Satan's dominion of darkness and made us his children (see also Col. 2:15); (3) he brought us into his eternal kingdom (see also Ephes. 1:5-6); (4) he redeemed us—bought our freedom from sin and judgment (see also Hebrews 9:12); and (5) he forgave all our sins (see also Ephes. 1:7). Thank God for what you have received in Christ.

The Colossians feared the unseen forces of darkness, but Paul says that true believers have been transferred from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from guilt to forgiveness, and from the power of Satan to the power of God. We have been rescued from a rebel kingdom to serve the rightful King. Our conduct should reflect our new allegiance.

Chapter 16

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom – Ephesians 1:15-23

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, [16] Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; [17] That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: [18] The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, [19] And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, [21] Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: [22] And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, [23] Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Paul's Prayer for Partners in Ministry – Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, [4] Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, [5] For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; [6] Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: [7] Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. [8] For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. [9] And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; [10] That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; [11] Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

This is the first of many times Paul used the word *joy* in his letter. The Philippians were remembered with joy and thanksgiving whenever Paul prayed. By helping Paul, they were helping Christ's cause. The Philippians were willing to be used by

God for whatever he wanted them to do. When others think about you, what comes to their minds? Are you remembered with joy by them? Do your acts of kindness lift up others?

The Philippians first heard the gospel about ten years earlier when Paul and his companions visited Philippi (during Paul's second missionary journey) and founded the church there.

When Paul said that the Philippians were partners in the gospel, he was pointing out their valuable contribution in spreading God's message. They contributed through their practical help when Paul was in Philippi, and through their financial support when he was in prison. As we help our ministers, missionaries, and evangelists through prayer, hospitality, and financial donations, we become partners with them.

The God who began a good work in us continues it throughout our lifetime and will finish it when we meet him face to face. God's work *for* us began when Christ died on the cross in our place. His work *in* us began when we first believed. Now the Holy Spirit lives in us, enabling us to be more like Christ every day. Paul is describing the process of Christian growth and maturity that began when we accepted Jesus and continues until Christ returns.

Do you sometimes feel as though you aren't making progress in your spiritual life? When God starts a project, he completes it! As with the Philippians, God will help you grow in grace until he has completed his work in your life. When you are discouraged, remember that God won't give up on you. He promises to finish the work he has begun. When you feel incomplete, unfinished, or distressed by your shortcomings, remember God's promise and provision. Don't let your present condition rob you of the joy of knowing Christ or keep you from growing closer to him.

Paul prayed that the Philippian believers would "discern what is best"—in other words, that they would have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad, vital and trivial. We ought to pray for moral discernment so we can maintain our Christian morals and values. Hebrews 5:14 emphasizes the need for discernment.

The "day of Christ" refers to the time when God will judge the world through Jesus Christ. We should live each day as though he could return at any moment.

A Prayer of Praise – Jude 1:24-25

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, [25] To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

As the letter begins, so it ends—with assurance. God keeps believers from falling prey to false teachers. Although false teachers are widespread and dangerous, we don't have to be afraid if we trust God and are rooted and grounded in him.

To be sinless and perfect (“without fault”) will be the ultimate condition of the believer when he or she finally sees Christ face to face. When Christ appears, and we are given our new bodies, we will be like Christ (1 John 3:2). Coming into Christ's presence will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine!

The audience to whom Jude wrote was vulnerable to heresies and to temptations toward immoral living. Jude encouraged the believers to remain firm in their faith and trust in God's promises for their future. This was all the more important because it was a time of increased apostasy. We are much closer to the end than were the original readers of this letter. We too are vulnerable to doctrinal error. We too are tempted to give in to sin. Although there is much false teaching around us, we need not be afraid or give up in despair—God can keep us from falling, and he guarantees that if we remain faithful, he will bring us into his presence and give us everlasting joy.

Chapter 17

Pat Robertson Says:

“How can I know that God will answer my prayers”?

The Bible overflows with God's repeated promises to hear and answer His children's appeals. "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." (John 5:14, 15) To pray according to God's will means to pray in a way that is consistent with the principles in His Word. The Bible shows us that a righteous person's prayers will be answered:

"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16). But righteousness means a lot more than "clean living." More than that, it means depending on Jesus Christ for answers to every problem you face.

The Old Testament prophet Elijah was one such righteous man. "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit" (James 5:17, 18). If you need to call forth showers of blessing in a dry and barren situation, remember that the key is righteousness -- your trust in God's promises.

As you commit your requests to Him, believe that His will is being done according to the greatness of His power and wisdom. Don't underestimate God's ability to make a way for you when one doesn't seem possible. With our limited understanding and abilities, we often forget His boundless wisdom and power. Ask with faith, and be like Abraham when you pray. The Bible says of Abraham, "With respect to the promise of God, he (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20, 21).

Lastly, Jesus told us to pray according to His name (John 14: 13, 14). He is the Architect, Creator, and Sustainer of all that is, and He promises in His words to the disciples, "All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you" (Mark 11:24). No obstacle is too great to withstand His power: "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken

up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him" (Mark 11:23). Begin on a regular basis to pray about the biggest obstacle you face, and command that particular personal mountain to move by the power of the name of Jesus.

Prayers answered in the Old Testament

Psalm 138:3

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

Notice that God answered and strengthened him in the very day when he cried to Him.

He also answered prayer in the New Testament

John 14:13-14

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. Notice here that this seems to give us an unlimited menu of prayer choices.

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: [15] And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Chapter 18

God answers prayer in time of trouble

Psalm 50:15

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

In this Scripture, deliverance is promised, whether in the same day we call or at a later time. The point is that God answers prayer that is prayed in the day of trouble.

Psalm 91:14-16

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. [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. [16] With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

The answers to your prayers come in the day of trouble. Furthermore, deliverance comes from God out of the trouble you are in. He also honors you with long satisfying life.

He answers your prayer when you are in distress

Psalm 118:5

I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

When in distress, we are moved from the confines of a corner to a large place where we can have freedom from the confines dictated and enforced on us by distress.

He answers your prayer when you are in affliction.

Psalm 106:44-45

Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: [45] And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

All of this was occasioned by our cry. When affliction of any kind slams you against the wall, cry out to God and help is on the way.

He answers your prayer when you are poor and needy.

Isaiah 41:17-20

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. [18] I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. [19] I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: [20] That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

When we call out to God in our poverty, God will hear us. He will also not forsake us. He also gives us the very provisions we require to alleviate our need.

Look at verse 18. He made water in four different places. Yes, God answers prayer when called on by the poor and needy.

Jeremiah 29:13

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Notice above that it is not enough to just seek God, we must search or seek him “with all our heart.

In other words, we must leave no stone unturned, as it were, in our search for God when we absolutely must have an answer from him to our prayers.

Even on the foreign fields, our Battle Healing Prayer has proved to be the most effective spiritual warfare tool for healing and deliverance.

What are the requirements for answered prayer?

1. We must seek God and search for him with all our heart.

Psalm 40:1-2

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. [2] He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

Not only does he hear us when we wait patiently on him, he will also bring us up out of a horrible pit. Furthermore, he will bring us up out of the miry clay, set our feet upon a rock and establish our goings.

God can and will do something about them when we turn these things over to him and then patiently wait on him to deal with them.

2. We must return to Him.

2 Chron. 7:14

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

Here we see that we are required of four things: (1) to be humble, (2) to pray, (3) to seek God's face, (4) turn from whatever wicked way we have that we know about.

Then God will deliver three things which all his children need: (1) they will hear from heaven. (2) he will forgive their sin, (3) he will heal their land. He will do all the above simply because they return to him

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.

As Christians, to confess our sins is to acknowledge them to God by telling Him all the details about them. Obviously it is best to immediately confess them as they happen.

The point here is this: God wants openness and honesty. When we are confessing our sins, we simply confess to him that we may not be remembering them all. We need cleansing from "all unrighteousness" including that unrighteousness caused by the sins we could not remember in order to confess them. This is returning to God.

We must pray according to His will.

What is praying according to his will and how do we do it?

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: [15] And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. To pray according to his will is simply this: Find a Scripture promise that covers your situation. Pray that specific Scripture promise. This is God's will. Find your promise. State this specific Scripture promise to God. Tell him what he said. Remind him that this promise includes you. This is praying according to the will of God.

When we pray according to His will, He hears us.

Isaiah 30:19

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

God's grace comes at the voice of our cry. When he hears it is the exact time he begins sending forth the answer and solution to our problems.

Daniel 9:21-23

Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. [22] And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. [23] 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.

Daniel said that "While I was speaking in prayer". The commandment came forth, and God caused Gabriel to "fly swiftly,".

There may be a delay between the time when we pray and the time we actually get the answer to our prayers.

Daniel 10:12-14

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. [13] But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. [14] 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.

Sometimes answers are delayed by demonic hindrances but God brings the answer.

Put your feet to your prayers!

Neh. 4:7-9

But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, [8] And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. [9] Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

When rebuilding the wall as God had commanded, the enemies of God set out to stop Nehemiah's building. They prayed, but they also set a watch against them day and night. Here they put feet to their prayers.

Neh. 4:16-18

And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. [17] They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. [18] For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Praying to God requires submission and a loving heart toward Him. Always give the credit to Him.

Chapter 20

Scriptures on Answered Prayer.

1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1 John 5:14 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 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Acts 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Exodus 15:26 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.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Hebrews 4:11-16 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

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

Isaiah 26:3, 12, 55:12

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Isa 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Isa 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Isa 49:25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

Isa 54:13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

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.

James 5:16; 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.

Jer 17:14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

Jer 30:17 For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

John 15:7

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Malachi 4:2

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 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.

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Psa 103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Psa 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

Psa 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psa 34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

Psa 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

Psa 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psa 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

This study contains comments from: King James Version Bible, NIV Bible, Tyndale Commentary and Jay Snell, Evangelist.

