

# Master Secrets of Prayer

by  
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## Contents

1. [The School of Prayer](#)
2. [The Approach to Prayer](#)
3. [How to Intercede](#)
4. [Hindrances to Prayer](#)
5. [How to Pray](#)
6. [How to Pray \(continued\)](#)
7. [Some Practical Hints About Prayer](#)

## 1. The School of Christ

G. Campbell Morgan has said, "Men only pray with prevailing prayer who do so amid the sobs and sighing of the race." In this book is the essence of what God has been pleased to teach the author in twenty years' residence in the school of prayer. Each principle set forth here has been tried and proved during many distributions of the Word of God in Latin America and the French and British West Indies. I early found that the seed of the Word will not thrive on dry ground, and the Lord was pleased to show me one word in one verse which set me forever in the school of prayer: "*He that goeth forth and WEEPETH, hearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him*" (Ps. 126:6).

It is for those who must pray amid the whirl and emergencies and madness of this twentieth century that this book is written, and while I have tried to leave no source unsearched in the vast literature of prayer, most of these principles were discovered in the glorious hours of the early morning as the best of all teachers, the Holy Spirit, suddenly gave me "openings" in the Word of God.

No one can in this life pass beyond the kindergarten of prayer. Thank God, there are no Doctors of Prayer, and I am keenly aware that there is yet very much land to be possessed. Therefore, these gleanings of a lifetime are sent forth with hope set on the grace of God that He may be pleased to use them for His glory to set the saints everywhere to praying.

### What Godly Men Have Said About Prayer

"Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons—but they are helpless against our prayers" (Sidlow Baxter).

"I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach" (Dr. Jowett).

"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray" (Samuel Chadwick).

"I never prayed sincerely for anything but it came, at some time ... somehow, in some shape" (Adoniram Judson).

"God sets more value on prayer and communion than labour. The heavenly bridegroom is wooing a wife, not hiring a servant ... Prayer brings God out of His secret place to work wonders in the earth ... to pour Himself through the believer into a world of lost souls" (A. W. Roffe).

"I have so much to do (today) that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer" (Martin Luther).

"God has a shoreless ocean of response to the feeblest whisper of the faintest saint, if it be but from a heart contrite and cleansed, and if it be but in utter dependence on the resistless name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"A day without prayer is a day without blessing, and a life without prayer is a life without power."

"An hour spent with God is worth a lifetime with man."

"Daniel would rather spend a night with lions than miss a day of prayer; Peter found it easier to get out of jail than to get into a prayer meeting."

"Faith is only omnipotent when on its knees."

"A secret sun, which never sets, rises in the hearts of those who anticipate the dawn; those who pant after God in the chambers of prayer will soon inhale the very atmosphere of the City of God."

"Many people believe in the power of prayer, and love to hear of it, but few pray."

"The gospel moves at a slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long."

## The Definition of Prayer

Prayer is the spreading out of our helplessness and that of others in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ before the loving eyes of a Father who knows and understands and cares and answers. Prayer is the breathing and panting of the spirit after God. It is a taking hold of the willingness of God, rather than an overcoming of His reluctance. It is a tuning in on the great, thunderous, two-thousand-year-old prayer meeting going on in the glory above.

In all true prayer God the Holy Spirit cries out in us to God the Father in the resistless name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we meet the simple conditions of prayer laid down in the Word of God we receive mercy and grace. And these come from the very throne of grace upon which is seated One who loved us unto death and past death, and who can more than satisfy the desperate cries and wordless yearnings of our hearts. *"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"* (Heb. 4:15,16).

## The Necessity of Prayer

The secret of all failure is prayerlessness. One has but to study the life of Saul of the Old Testament and of Judas Iscariot of the New Testament to see that this is true. They did not pray. And, we ask: did Adam pray, or Eve, when the serpent approached them in the Garden of Eden? Did Abraham pray before he went in unto Hagar or before he went down to Egypt? Did Paul pray just before he and Barnabas quarreled over John Mark (Acts 15:36-41)?

Prayerlessness is a disaster. Someone has said, *"God froze Jacob by night and consumed him with drought in the day"* (see Gen. 31:40), but twenty years passed before he would utter a word of prayer. When he did pray, he marvelously got in God's way trying to answer his own prayers (Gen. 32:9-20). It was only at Jabbok (the place of emptying) that he learned the secret of prevailing with God. For there he was emptied of all his natural strength and was wounded, lest he do anything else but cling to God all his life. *"Jacob wrestling only failed; Jacob clinging soon prevailed."* The great tragedy of David's life came when he walked—prayerless—on the roof top of his house and saw Bathsheba.

As to what place the early church gave to prayer, whether or not anything whatsoever should be allowed to crowd it out, note this; *"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables ... But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"* (Acts 6:2,4).

Two prominent ministers were asked, "Should Christ come, what would be your keenest regret?" They both replied, "That I did not pass more time in prayer." We all intend to pray, but few do.

One poor soul entered the school of prayer after his arrival in hell ("Hades" Greek), He asked for relief for his agony; it was refused. He asked that a beggar warn his brothers. He was turned down. He was praying to Abraham, a man. He could not locate God. He dared not ask to get out. He plainly knew that he was beyond all hope. Prayerless on earth, unanswered in hell, he suffers on as the man who tried to learn to pray too late. *"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him"* (Ps. 32:6).

## 2. The Approach to Prayer

George Müller discovered that it is far better to begin our days with the reading of the Word of God than to begin with any attempt to pray. Two things are required in the cylinder of a car to bring forth an explosion and the resulting power. The first is the spark and the second is the fuel. Now the spark of God's Holy Spirit may be present in our hearts in realized force early in the morning, but we need to fill our hearts with the fuel of the Word of God if there is to be power in prayer. The humble reading of the Word of God, the daily, systematic meditation on His Word brings faith and power and the desire to pray. We learn afresh of His love; we contemplate His past mercies; our hearts are thrilled with His ways.

It is indeed true that *"it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"* (John 6:63). But let us begin even the reading of the Word with a brief prayer: *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"* (Ps. 119:18). Let us read His Word systematically, and a goodly portion every day, and let us read all of His Word, for the Bible is Christ in print and we wish to know Him thoroughly, not just His face or His hands.

In prayer we look to our Heavenly Father.

### Adoration

We adore Him for what He is. We shall not have been long in the Word before we have the experience of Isaiah and see the majesty and glory of our God. For each diamond-verse flashes to our hearts the multi-colored grace and glory of God. We adore God for what He is. At such times we find the words of many of the Psalms on our lips and we also exclaim: *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* (Rom. 11:33).

### Thanksgiving

We thank Him for what He has done. After we have adored God for what He is, we find ourselves much inclined to thank Him for what He has done for us and others. Out on the great aircraft carriers a catapult is used to launch certain planes into the sky. When prayers are heavy and slow, how often do we find that the blockage lies in our failure to thank God for what He has already done? Often we should kneel and tell the Lord how we love Him and praise Him for what He has done and arise without asking for a single thing. *"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger"* (Luke 17:17,18).

A missionary to China who had found the skies brass to his prayers glanced about the room in despair one day and saw a wall motto: *"Praise Changes Things!"* He took this key and unlocked heaven. We may well ask why David was a man after God's own heart. Among other things, he repented with all his heart and he praised with all his heart. Praise is mentioned more than two hundred times in the Psalms alone. Do you know where praise is first mentioned in the Bible? (See Gen. 29:35.) Our Lord came from the tribe of Judah ("praise"). *"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"* (Ps. 107:8). Read often in the Psalms. Mark the praises as well as the promises in your Bible.

### Our Own Father

We come to Him as His very own child. Above all things, we must not forget that the mighty God, He who *"sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers"* (Isa. 40:22), is also our very own dear Father. *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [of son-placing], whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (Rom. 8:15). *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"* (Gal. 4:6). The word

"Abba" is a term of intimacy. We come with the simple faith of a child to our very own dear Father.

A little girl was spending the night away from home. She was a bit frightened and asked that she might say her prayers as usual before retiring. She prayed, "Father, won't You please make me feel as safe as I do when I go to bed at home?" She paused a moment and then said, "Of course You will!"

How much we can learn from children when we are in the school of prayer! Watching them, we will learn to come with bright expectation and humble dependence. As a child we will trust God for our daily needs, for no child worries about its food and clothes.

See how David felt about the matter (Ps. 131). Well may we study daily and hourly to receive in the Holy Spirit the very nature of a child, for our Lord said, "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 18:3,4).

Not only must we feed upon the Word of God, and adore God, we must also see ourselves before God and in relation to Him.

### **Condition of Heart**

We see the wretchedness of our own hearts. A view of God's glory and grace also brings a view of the wretchedness of our own hearts. As verse after verse searches our hearts we are led to bow our heads and confess what we are and then to confess our specific sins, naming them before Him. "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). It is here that we thank God for Calvary and realize that "*now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*" (Eph. 2:13).

### **Confession**

We confess our sins. Among the chief sins we must confess are these: That we do not really want to pray. We desire not to talk with our blessed Father, so wicked are our hearts. That we do not know how to pray; our hearts cry out that He will teach us. That we cannot pray; that we have utterly failed in the past to pray as we should.

### **Help from God**

We receive God's help. Now if we are honest with God in confessing our helplessness and ignorance and failure, we shall surely have from Him immense help. For our Lord will reveal to us that mighty provision has been made for our awful weakness.

You will recall that Moses, in fighting Amalek, sat upon a stone and his hands were upheld by Aaron on one side and Hur on the other (Ex. 17:8-12). Aaron, as a priest, pictures the mighty intercessions of Christ at the right hand of God. "*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*" (Heb. 7:25). We begin to take courage for the battle. Hur stands for the blessed help of the Holy Spirit. "*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself [himself, marg.] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*" (Rom. 8:26).

As long as Moses' hands were upheld, Joshua was able to prevail in the valley. We thus ask God for the cleansing of the blood, and we tell Him we cannot pray, that we do not know how to pray and do not even want to pray, and we ask that He fill us with His Spirit and pray through us. Behold, what help for the sons of men! In fact, there is no true prayer except as God the Holy Spirit cries out in us to God the Father in the resistless name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is the secret of all secrets in regards to prayer. God is pleased at the first mention of any subject in the Bible to sum up for us His teaching on that subject. We read in Genesis 4:26, "*And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos; then*

*began men to call upon the name of the Lord.*" God has gone out of His way in dozens of places to let us know that Bible names are of profound significance.

The name of Enos means "weakness, frailty." It is from the Hebrew root "*anash*" which means to be frail or feeble or sickly. In the days when men realized (after seeing death begin to operate around them and in them) that they were desperately helpless and weak, then they began to call upon the name of the Lord. And to this day only such a realization and confession will keep us in the school of prayer and at last cause us to have a true praying heart—one of the rarest things in the universe. Read how Jehoshaphat and Asa prevailed as they spread their helplessness and ignorance and powerlessness out before God (2 Chron. 20:12; 14:11).

### 3. How to Intercede

We have now learned to feed on the Bread of God by reading the Book, to adore God for what He is, to thank Him for what He has done, to confess to Him what we are, to spread our helplessness and weakness out before Him, and to take hold on His strength and willingness. We are now ready for supplication and intercession.

#### Praying for Others

Seldom do we hear a Bible teacher on the radio pray for another Bible teacher. Each sheep bleats within its own fold. Like safety matches, we strike only on our own boxes. But Paul and Moses could wish themselves cut off that others might be saved (see Rom. 9:1-3; Ex. 32:32). Dry and wilted flowers lift their heads when rain comes. So do the tired and discouraged saints when someone prays.

Consider Him who ever liveth to make intercession—for us, thank God! The prayers of Paul included the whole church, without boundary of sect or prejudice or locality or even time. See the example of our Lord in John 17 and hear Him dealing with one who was to be sifted by Satan: "*But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted [when thou dost turn back to me], strengthen thy brethren*" (Luke 22:32).

#### Praying for Ourselves

When we have *glorified* His name through asking that His will be done in the lives of our friends and enemies, we can then pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*" (Matt. 6:11). When we have spread the helplessness and needs of others before God, we can well spread before Him our own needs. God is honored by our asking. God delights to have His children ask Him for every possible need, even though He knows what we need before we petition Him. Our petitions may be as broad as the promises of God, and as deep as the treasures of God.

Though men may seek to build fences around the words "whatsoever" and "anything," declaring that they do not mean this and that, *these words are still in the Book*. Rejoice if your needs are great, if they are ever mounting, if they are incredible, if they are impossible! The very trials God puts you through are to enlarge your heart so that He can bless you the more.

Can your needs exceed those of the poor widow (2 Kings 4:1-7)? She was ordered not only to bring her own vessels before the Lord but to borrow "not a few." All were filled with oil; and it was not the oil which gave out but the vessels! You can pray and you can receive in the very same hour.

If you want to know what immense variety of things are available to you, trace the word "receive" in the New Testament. God has surprises for you in this search. When you read of answers that others received, use them as pleas for your friends and yourself. God has an answer for the barren womb, the empty purse, the unrequited love, the quenched desire, the unchanged situation, and the unbreakable habit. He will give you just what you ask for, something better or something more. "*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do*" (John 14:13). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). James says that war is caused by failure to pray: "*Ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not*" (James 4:2).

Surely heaven is overcrowded with answers to prayer for which no one has ever asked. Hundreds of years are covered in Bible history without the record of a single petition. Once God interrupted a long list of names (He can scarcely stop when He lists the names of those He loves) because of an astonishing thunderbolt of prayer which was hurled up against the battlements of heaven; "*And Jabez [“Sorrow”] was more honourable than his brethren [because he prayed]: ... and Jabez called on the God of Israël, 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!*" (1 Chron. 4:9,10).

One might think that here God would say, "Be careful, Jabez, you have asked too much!" But no such remark by God is ever recorded in the Bible. It does say: "*And God granted him that which he requested.*" Does this arouse your soul and spirit to try and see what it means to be blessed indeed by God? Such prayers as this cascade in golden blessings upon the heads of our descendants. It would seem that this one cry caused God to seize the levers of heaven and put Jabez under the central spout of his favor and almost to drown him with accumulated blessings.

Memorize this promise and pray it often: "*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*" (Rom. 8:32).

### **Praying Expectantly**

Prayer is not a one-way conversation. As we allow God to speak to us when we pore over His Word, so we take exquisite delight in His speaking to us after we have prayed. How often we knock and then run away before He opens the door. How many have leaped to their feet after asking, not waiting for His word, just as God was about to enable them to receive. What whispered love we miss when we do not know the quietness of communion! On stilled and quieted hearts does the dew of His blessing descend. When all the voices of this world and of self are stilled, we discover that Christ liveth in us.

"*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*" (Isa. 40:31). Search the Scriptures to see what things come to those who wait! Say with Samuel, "*Speak; for thy servant heareth*" (1 Sam. 3:10).

Then rise to look for His answers, to note the first little clouds of approaching showers of blessing (1 Kings 18:44). Rise to marvel how He answers from a direction of which we had not thought, at the variety of His methods and the infinitude of His resources. We desire to be among those who are at the wharf when galleons come over the horizons of prayer, laden with gold of Ophir. We watch for that instant when a billion prayers will be answered, when the shout of encouragement will take us all to be with Him (1 Thess. 4:16). If we watched lest we be distracted during our season of prayer, we now watch with eager hope to see how our Lord will manage for our friends and for ourselves.

Let us record our prayers on paper and mark well the answers, for many never understand that the blessings they have are the answers to their own prayers! And most of all, we watch lest communion should be broken with Him.



## 4. Hindrances to Prayer

God delays to answer some prayers, but He does not delay to answer all prayers. If you have had a period of even one day without an answer to prayer, it indicates that hindering sin has crept in. *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1,2).

Trams and trolleys and some buses have long poles which reach up to bring electricity and power to the motors from overhead wires. The pole may be within an inch of the wire, yet no power can pass; the bus or trolley stays in the same place. The people inside may sing and shout and preach and hold a great meeting, but when they get out, they are still at the same place.

A pack of cigarettes, a dirty book, envy, hatred, unforgiveness, an unclean habit, failure to visit hospitals and jails, neglect of Bible reading—ten thousand things can utterly cut off the communion of the Holy Spirit and make it impossible for God to hear your prayers. Do not say that it is hard to pray or that God does not answer, but rather cry out, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Ps. 139:23,24).

As we daily and hourly search the Scriptures and read the Word of God, the Holy Spirit reveals where the blockages are. *"This book of the law [God's Word] shall not depart out of my mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success [do wisely]"* (Josh. 1:8).

But one may know all of this and still remain for months, and even years, without a single answer to prayer. For when the sin is revealed, we must confess to God and we must confess specifically, calling the sin by its true name no matter how evil, asking God to cleanse and forgive, and declare our heartfelt purpose not to repeat this sin nor to allow these God-dishonoring snakes to make our hearts their nest. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

If you have been pretending before God and have thought that perhaps He would hear your prayers even while you held fast to known sin, would it not be best at this very moment to fall on your knees before our Lord and to do business with Him?

We now come to some of the specific sins which God says will make it impossible for Him to hear your cries, no matter how sincere and fervent they may be. Are any of these sins yours?

### Unforgiveness

Our Lord hastens, after He has given us the model prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), to inform us in no uncertain terms what the chief blockage to prayer is. *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matt. 6:14,15). The Lord repeats the statement so that we will get the point. Unforgiveness is the chief blockage to prayer.

Read and meditate on the parable of the king who will take account (Matt. 18:21-35) if you want to see how vastly important it is that we do not hold grudges or fail to forgive a few cents' worth after our Lord has canceled our multibillion-dollar debt.

### Selfishness

"God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more," is the general trend of prayer. The first recorded prayer in the Bible (Gen. 15:2) is petulant and selfish: *"And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?"* In the next chapter Abram sets out to answer his own prayer by taking Sarai's handmaid Hagar.

But in Genesis 18 we find Abraham (with name changed) interceding for others (vv. 23-33).

Many wives want their husbands converted so that it will be more pleasant at home. This is wicked selfishness. They should desire them to be converted so that they will no longer dishonor God the Father by spurning the salvation of God the Son. Cries for revival often mean nothing more than some church wanting to increase its income through added members. When we cannot longer bear to have God displeased with the worldliness of our churches we are on the road to revival.

Evangelist Dawson tells of a lady who came to him during a meeting and doubted if God answered prayer, because, said she, "I have prayed for both of my boys from before they were born, and neither of them is saved." Dawson asked her to make him a solemn promise. "I want you to agree to stop praying for your boys for one month—*pray for other mothers' boys!*" She accepted and saw both of her sons converted in less than thirty days.

Here, indeed, is a master secret of prayer. "*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts [pleasures]*" (James 4:3). "*And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before*" (Job 42:10). "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10).

### **Lack of Family Love**

Many men who are angels in public and devils at home wonder why their prayers are not answered. Wives who are jealous and sarcastic and given to pouting and complaining marvel when their prayers freeze on the ceiling and drip back down their neck. Horrible and unholy things are carried on in the name of marriage, and many hold the marriage license to be a license of lust.

Perhaps your whole married life needs to be spread out before the Lord. "*... Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well ... Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered*" (1 Pet. 3:6,7).

### **Stinginess**

Paul was very happy that the Philippian church had shared with him in finances. "*For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity*" (4:16). And to this generous church, which backed up its missionary with prayers and funds, God gave a mighty promise: "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

God is a great giver (see John 3:16), and He pours out His choicest blessings on those who are anxious that nothing shall stick to their hands. There is only one safe place for our money—in the hands of those who are spreading the gospel over the world. "*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*" (1 John 3:17).

When we give, the Lord takes a long look at what we have left. How much did God have left when He gave His only begotten Son? It is to those who are hilarious givers, to those of the open heart, that John now gives God's amazing promise: "*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 3:22).

Stingy churches which spend more on themselves than on others, as well as individuals who value the rainy day above the present agony of the world, will get no blessing from God. How horrible it is to God when men disobey His plain command: "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal*" (Matt. 6:19).

Some other blockages are: failure to thank God (Rom. 1:21); idols—placing wife or husband or children or property or anything before God (Ezek. 14:3); disobedience to the Word of God (Prov. 28:9); pride (Job 35:12,13); failure to be reconciled with offended

brothers (Matt. 5:23,24); stubborn self-will (1 Sam. 15:22,23); failure to read the Word of God (Prov. 28:9); underestimating the faithfulness of God (James 1:5,6).

## 5. How to Prayer

The prayers of our Lord Jesus Christ produced the greatest astonishment and desire in the hearts of the disciples. *"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples"* (Luke 11:1). When God the Son talked to God the Father in the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit, it was an event that stirred the disciples more than all His miracles previous to the crucifixion and resurrection.

If the Son of God found prayer necessary in His life, what place do you think it should have in ours? His disciples, who never asked to be taught to preach, begged that He would teach them to pray. And it is hinted that John the Baptist was not only the mightiest of the prophets but was, also, mighty in prayer and in teaching men to pray.

On earth our Lord *"took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening"* (Luke 9:28,29). And in heaven He continues to pray: *"When he had by himself purged our sins [he] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"* (Heb. 1:3). *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:25).

Christ lived on earth for about thirty-three and a half years. He taught and healed and preached for about three and a half years. He has been praying for us for nearly two thousand years!

Let us then be perpetual students in the school of prayer; let us enjoy the courts of His majesty, making full use of the rent veil and the blood-bought way; let us draw near to a God who has the answer to our every physical, mental and spiritual need. Let us learn how to pray from the Bible.

### Sixteen Mighty Laws of Prayer

#### 1. Persistent Prayers

Our prayers should be persistent. God's delays are not denials. Each day brings the answers to our prayers nearer. The church has, for instance, been praying for nearly two thousand years the last prayer of the Bible, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Rev. 22:20). Yet we are not discouraged for we know that any moment may see the flaming of His advent feet. Moses prayed that he might *"go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan"* (Deut. 3:25), and God answered, *"Speak no more unto me of this matter"* (Deut. 3:26). But the Lord did not say, "No," and centuries later we find Moses in the land talking with our blessed Lord (Luke 9:30).

At a meeting in a small town in the United States a very old man was converted. Another old man stepped forward and with tears told how fifty years earlier twenty-five young people had made a pledge to pray for this man every day. Said he, "I am the only one still living to see the prayers of fifty years answered." If it be for God's glory and according to His will (and He will show you in due time if it is), then just keep on praying until light breaks through and you can praise, or until the answer comes.

The author prayed for over twenty years that he might see well enough to drive an automobile at night, and in his forty-second year this prayer was answered. *"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Luke 18:1). A literal translation of a famous verse will thrill our hearts: *"And I say unto you, keep on asking and it shall be given you; keep on seeking, and ye shall find; ever continue knocking, and it shall be opened unto you"* (Luke 11:9).

To learn of those who persisted patiently and relentlessly in prayer, read of the man who would not give up at midnight (Luke 11:5-8), the man who refused to stop crying out (Mark 10:46-52), the widow who wore out a judge with her pleading (Luke 18:1-8), and the woman who had an answer for every objection of God and man (Matt. 15:21-28).

At times our Lord will wait much later than we think He should to answer our prayers. He came to the disciples on the lake at the fourth watch of the night. But just as the sun

risers exactly when it is due, so our Lord is never really late. I have in my files many dozens of answers to prayer marked "LMD." It is the largest file I have. "LMD" means "Last Minute Deliverances."

## 2. Insistent Prayers

Our prayers should be insistent. There comes a time, in spite of our soft, modern ways, when we must be desperate in prayer, when we must wrestle, when we must be outspoken, shameless and importunate. Many of the prayers recorded in Scripture are "cries," and the Hebrew and Greek words are very strong. Despite opinions to the contrary, the Bible recognizes such a thing as storming heaven—"praying through." *"The fervent prayer of a righteous man is mighty in its working"* (James 5:16, Greek). When Herod stretched forth his hands to vex the church (Acts 12), the church stretched out in prayer (v. 5).

*"O God, Thou must do as Thou hast said!"* is the cry of those who must have an answer, who cannot be denied. It is not that we overcome the reluctance of God; rather that we take hold of His willingness, plowing through principalities and powers, inviting His almighty power into our desperate needs. Lest we become proud because we think we have learned to pray, we should read, *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death ... was heard in that he feared"* (Heb. 5:7).

Read of the boldness of Abraham (Gen. 18:23-32), of Moses (Ex. 33:12,18), and then let us take heed to what has been called the most gracious of all invitations to prayer: *"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"* (Heb. 4:15,16).

## 3. Resist

We must resist in prayer. We have a terrible enemy who knows that prayer is his undoing. If Satan had ten atomic bombs and freedom to use them, he would drop them on the ten most effective prayer chambers in the world. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits [Greek] in the heavenly places"* [Greek] (Eph. 6:12).

We have an enemy who will send late hours so that we cannot have early rising, who will substitute the good for the best, who will let us feast on one answer to prayer too long so that we shall not think to get another. He will even let us take courses in prayer and read books on prayer, so long as we do not pray. He is quick to point out the apparent failure of God to answer some prayer. He loves to center our attention on the rut we are in, to tell us of the impossibility of our petition being granted, causing us to forget that we have a God who begins with the impossible and goes on from there.

God never discouraged anyone; you can be sure that all-*all*-discouragement is from the devil. He distracts our attention from the resistless name of Christ to our own unworthiness. He is a master of the telephone, causes the baby to cry, provokes the dog, and brings useless visitors. He can pour a smoke screen of evil and foul thoughts into the midst of a beautiful supplication. He turns our attention from the majesty of God to the aches and woes of our bodies. He explains away all answers to prayer, if given a chance, and slanders both God and the brethren.

Satan's greatest trick is to get us into a direct fight with himself, thus bypassing Christ. His influence is apparent in all books which magnify his power and ignore his defeat, though they are supposedly designed to instruct us how to resist him. He has the church to call committee meetings each night and cracks the whip behind the frenzied religious activity of the day, smiling all the time at the empty prayer chamber. He is the greatest of side-trackers and time-consumers.

But our Lord gave us the one and only way to resist the devil—the sword of the Word of God. *"He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God ... Then the devil leaveth Him"* (Matt.

4:4,11). (Note carefully the passages which tell us to watch: Hab. 2:1; Matt. 26:40,41; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:6; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7.)

#### 4. Let God Work

We must let God work. That is, we should not try to answer our own prayers, unless the Lord Himself should lead that way. Shall we take a sieve and try to make a passage through the Red Sea by bailing out the water, or shall we push at the walls of Jericho while marching around them? *"Commit thy way unto ["roll thy way upon," marg.] the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass"* (Ps. 37:5). *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:14).

Abraham asked God for a son (Gen. 15:2) and then tried to help God out by taking Hagar to be his wife (Gen. 16:1,2), hearkening to the voice of Sarai, his wife, rather than the voice of God. How awful when we meddle with the plans of God and try to answer our own prayers! To this day the Arabs claim descent from Ishmael who came from Abraham's unholy alliance, and they still vex the Jews who are descended from Isaac. Hands off the Ark!

Jacob prayed to be delivered from the hand of his brother Esau (Gen. 32:11) and then set out to appease him with goats and ewes and rams and camels and kine and bulls and asses. Utterly roll your petitions upon God. If a man stood at the mailbox holding on to the corner of a letter, how long would it be before he would get an answer?

#### 5. Pray in Secret

*"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet ["storehouse"—Greek], and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"* (Matt. 6:6). In the Song of Solomon, the Lord repeats this gracious invitation: *"... In the secret ... of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely"* (Song of Sol. 2.14). One has said of this verse: "He not only allows us to come, and invites us to come, but commands us to come, and empowers us to come, but He actually longs for us to come!" One man said to me recently, "If I have to neglect all my friends, I am not going to neglect the Lord Jesus any more." When the enemy suggests many things for me to do early in the morning, I must reply, "Excuse me; He is waiting." How amazing that He should be sad all the day, if we do not keep our love-tryst in the early dawn!

Some feel that we should tell God alone our needs; others find more or less liberty in spreading them also before God's people. But it is certain that we must always go to Him first, and that our trust should be in Him alone, and in what He can do—and not in what man can do. Each person and organization must draw the line in this matter according to the faith that God grants and according to the guidance that He gives for the particular work in which they are engaged.

## 6. How to Prayer (continued)

### 6. Specific Prayers

Our prayers should be specific. If you are praying for \$99.33, it is most interesting to watch the Lord not only bring in the ninety-nine dollars but also the pennies. The man who was working on his friend at midnight did not ask for bread in general, but for three loaves (Luke 11:5). He got all he wished, but he was careful to see that it was not less than three! Someone has said, "If you pray for a secondhand car you will usually get exactly that."

One of our daughters asked the Lord to send her money for some glasses and to send it "Special Delivery." You may be sure that the Lord sent it just that way. Our baby Joy set her heart on a certain present. She asked her sisters how many pennies it would take to buy it. Then she prayed for 1,400 pennies. A few days later some friends came by with a jar of money they were saving for us. In it were slightly more than 1,400 pennies.

When some of our friends have finished praying we wonder if the Lord or anyone else knows what they were praying for. Vague praying is lazy praying. Many ask for a blessing "on all the missionaries around the world." It is better to pick out Sam Jones and ask the Lord to help him with the language, ward off disease, fill him with the Spirit and get him the jeep he needs.

### 7. In Christ's Name

Our prayers should be in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When all else fails, His name prevails! Here, indeed, is the fragrance that is acceptable to God. Many imagine that they have a claim on God through some fancied goodness or merit of their own. Such persons' prayers are never answered. But when we humble ourselves at His feet and cry, "Lord, do this thing, not for anything that is in me, but do this thing for Jesus' sake!" then all heaven is astir with loving excitement, the Father is immensely pleased and mighty dispensations of grace are hastened toward our needy lives.

*"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:13,14). If it be in the resistless name of Christ and for the glory of the Father, then there is no need to tone down the words "whatsoever" and "any thing." What that peerless name means to God—who can tell? Read Esther 8:8 for a real surprise.

### 8. In Faith

We are to pray in faith. This frightens many people and they are prone to cry out, *"Help thou mine unbelief"* (Mark 9:24). But our Lord says to us, *"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth"* (Mark 9:23). But God has made wonderful provision for our unbelief. Reading the Word of God with intention to hear and obey generates faith. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17). Furthermore, if we lack faith, we can frankly confess to the Lord our sin of unbelief and ask Him for the faith of Christ. The best rendering of Mark 11:22 is *"Have the faith of God."*

If your faith is low try reading Hebrews 11, and then come before God with the matter that has seemed so hard for you. We have faith in people we really know. Get better acquainted with our Lord by abiding in Him. *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"* (John 15:7). The word for "done" is sometimes used for "create." God will create something out of nothing to answer the prayers of those who receive His Word and abide in His fellowship.

### 9. Promises of God

Plead the promises of God. One authority says that there are exactly 7,487 promises from God to man in the Bible. If you want to set out on a great adventure this very day, plan to read three chapters in the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament) each weekday.

and five on Sunday, thus reading the Bible all the way through in one year. And every time you see a promise that is for you or yours greedily claim it, and mark in the margin "FM"—which means "For me!"

Psalms 37 alone contains over forty promises which believers may claim. Here is a sample to whet your appetite: "*Delight thyself also in the Lord [your part]; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*" (v. 4). Two of the promises which I have claimed most often are: "*Call upon me in the day of trouble [my part]; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*" (Ps. 50:15), and this amazing promise: "*For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Heb. 13:5). This has been translated poorly. The literal meaning is, "*I will not, I will not, I will not let you down; I will not, I will not let you go.*" He would sooner let us go than let us down! And if you are trying to learn to pray when you have not even been born again, here is a promise for you: Romans 10:9 and 10. Do not fail to claim It.

### **10. Do Not Dictate**

We should pray without dictating to God how He shall answer the prayer. As the Lord has made every leaf different, so also He shows limitless variety and divine ingenuity in answering prayer. The nobleman (John 4:46-54) said, "*Sir, come down ere my child die.*" But our Lord preferred to heal the lad at a distance. Read the four Gospels and note the amazing variety of methods which Christ used in healing people.

### **11. Limitless Resources**

We should pray, realizing that our Father is the mighty God whose resources are limitless. Every real prayer brings in the omnipotence of God. It is a destination beyond space and a destiny beyond time. One has said, "God is not only able to accomplish our utmost prayer or remotest thought, but when He has done so, an infinity of prayer-answering power lies beyond." And again, "Generations without end, down an unceasing eternity, will never see a horizon to God, nor to the power of God."

Alas that our prayers should be so puny in the presence of His Majesty! We need to ask according to His greatness and not according to the feebleness of our desires. One who asked an incredible boon of Napoleon had it immediately granted because, said Napoleon, "He honored me by the magnitude of his request."

A prayer for a secondhand car may indicate that we have a secondhand God. We will surely get what we ask. God will answer prayers for lost toys and parking places and sick animals. Nothing is too small to place before the Throne of Grace. We have a God who can through our faith subdue kingdoms, grant promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, make strong the weak and turn to flight the armies of aliens (Heb. 11:33, 34). "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end*" (Eph. 3:20,21).

### **12. God's Will**

We are to pray according to God's will. We can find that will by asking for it, by asking for wisdom (James 1:5), by seeking God's ways in the Word of God, by noting whether the Holy Spirit encourages us to go on praying a certain prayer. And we are not to use the phrase, "if it be Thy will," to kill our faith and that of others, at the end of a prayer. At the very beginning of prayer we should ask God of His purposes and plans and His kingdom and His will. Paul prayed this way at the beginning of the letter to the Colossians: "*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*" (1:9).

### **13. Praise for the Answer**

We should pray until we can praise for the answer. True faith not only asks but also receives. When the Spirit of God is praying through us according to the will of God, He



permits us to reach a point in due time where we know that we have received the answer. This does not often come with one session of prayer, but it is the goal of all prayer. He that asks receives.

The Spirit of God can grant us the faith of God about a matter. An answer to prayer can be more real to us when we are on our knees than when it actually comes to pass. Faith is the substance; it stands even deeper and more real than sight. A matter truly committed to God is on its way to realization. *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [have already received] them, and ye shall have them"* (Mark 11:24). *"Commit thy way unto the Lord ["roll thy way," marg.]; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass"* (Ps. 37:5). *"And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not"* (Num. 11:23). *"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble ... send thee help from the sanctuary ... the Lord fulfil all thy petitions"* (Ps. 20:1,2,5).

#### **14. Obey God**

We should pray with a desire to please and obey God. The Lord Jesus Christ could say, *"And I knew that thou hearest me always"* (John 11:42) because He also could say, *"I do always those things that please him"* (8:29). So great is the grace of God that before we are translated, before we are raptured, we can have the testimony of Enoch, that we pleased God. *"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 3:22).

Note carefully that we are heard not for slavish adherence to rules and laws, but for keeping a new and amazing commandment through His grace. *"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment"* (1 John 3:23). When we abide in Him we truly obey Him and please Him. Study all of John 15 for instruction on what it means and how important it is to abide.

#### **15. Authority in Prayer**

We can pray with authority. There are times when the Spirit of God, praying through us, lifts us until we share in the very prayers of the Son of God, who is seated at *"the right hand of the Majesty on high."* At such times we have unusual boldness and authority in our prayers. The Bible teaches that it is not only in a future day but now that we can *"reign as kings in life by One, even Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 5:17, Greek).

When the Spirit of God is praying through US' in His fullness we dare to claim such amazing promises as this: *"Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me"* (Isa. 45:11).

But there are deeper depths. We can even gain positions of prayer, places of confidence whereby we have special liberty and assurance when praying for certain people and certain objects.. Past mercies encourage us to enlarge our future pleas. Fresh glimpses of His glory expand our petitions.

Our Lord was extremely pleased at the persistence of the Syrophenician woman and He granted her an open door of prayer which is so wonderful that our minds can barely grasp-its meaning. For what He actually said to her, literally translated, is this: *"O woman, great is thy faith: let it continue being unto thee even as thou wilt"* (Matt. 15:28). He handed her the golden keys to every future prayer.

God has a word for those who are not satisfied with their prayer accomplishments: *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and hidden [Heb.] things, which thou knowest not"* (Jer. 33:3). When God is working in unhindered power, we rise from our knees to speak the word of authority. Stephen went out *"full of faith and power."* *"And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake"* (Acts 6:10). We do not have a tunnel through the mountains which forever confront us, but we can speak to them the word of resistless force, *"Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea"* (Mark 11:23).

## **16. Pray for Christians**

We are to pray more for the building up of the saints than for the conversion of sinners. Paul knew that when the saints were edified they would go forth and win many to Christ. Almost all of his prayers are cries that we may know God's will and the riches of our present inheritance.

Let us pray but little for money and support and passage and equipment for our missionaries, but let us pray very much that God will open their eyes to know "*what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe*" (Eph. 1:19).

## 7. Some Practical Hints About Prayer

### A Time

It is best to meet God early in the morning. We should see His face before we see the faces of our loved ones. The sun never rose in China but what it found Hudson Taylor conversing with God. The Mohammedans put us to shame as they rise very early to pray to Allah. When David said, *"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me"* (Ps. 57:2), he hastened to add, *"I myself will awake early"* (v. 8).

The prayer warriors of the Old and New Testaments rose early. Observe Abraham (Gen. 19:27), Jacob (Gen. 28:18), Moses (Ex. 34:4), Joshua (Josh. 3:1), and especially our blessed Lord: *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed"* (Mark 1:35).

### A Place

Have a definite place to pray. When Dwight L. Moody could find no other place, he prayed in a coalbin. A businessman made it an invariable rule that none should enter his office from nine to ten each morning, for that time was strictly set aside for prayer and prominent men had to wait patiently while he talked to the King of kings.

Soldiers never bothered a certain general when they saw a white handkerchief in front of his tent. It was an indication that he was in prayer. Mothers who are hindered early in the morning can retire to the secret place to pray after the children have gone to school. At any cost, we must have a regular place of prayer. How the enemy works to stop this! One man said, "My closet is my seat on the bus, where I cover my face with my hat and pray."

### Family Prayer

Family prayer is indispensable for a home that wishes to count for Christ. Of Abraham the Lord said, *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"* (Gen. 18:19).

Timothy came from a household where, without doubt, family prayer was held: *"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also"* (2 Tim. 1:5).

Read a chapter each morning from the Bible; let each child read; read and discuss missionary letters; listen to and learn from the simple and expectant prayers and praises of your little ones. The Lord will show what is best, but woe to that man who, like Samuel, prays much but neglects to pray with his family (1 Sam. 8:3).

### United Prayer

United prayer has a special blessing from God. *"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matt. 18:19,20).

A blazing fire of revival will surely follow where one man gets utterly right with God, begins to pray and joins with his friends in prayer. But such efforts, to be effective and scriptural, must be regular. *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:46,47),

### Praying Always

Pray at every opportunity, It is good to pray before each trip in your car. When people phone you for help, you can pray with them over the phone. Men and women have often

been led to Christ over the phone. Many wait until they are at wit's-end corner, at the bottom of the well, before they call on the Lord. "It looks as though I am just going to have to trust the Lord to work this out," said a poor man. "Has it come to that!" exclaimed his alarmed friend.

Robert E. Lee was president of a military school in his late years. He spent the time between classes praying for his men. For years we have prayed at the mailbox when sending out the letters of the day. We keep a box into which we put all of our bills. We pray, holding them up before the Lord, and they are always honored. Pray in the night when you are awakened, even if it is but for a moment. Pray before making decisions, especially those that are likely to be sudden. See what Nehemiah did: "*Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven*" (2:4). "*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer*" (Rom. 12:12).

### **Public Prayers**

Avoid lengthy prayers in public. Moody said that he would rather hear a man pray several short prayers than one long prayer; a long prayer in public indicates little prayer in private.

It is said that during the extended prayer of a dear saint, Sir Wilfred Grenfell became disgusted and started to walk out. Mr. Moody, leading the service, noticed this and interrupted the prayer and announced a hymn. Grenfell was converted as a result of this act.

Solomon prayed the longest prayer in the Bible and, judging by his subsequent life, seems never to have prayed again (see 1 Kings 8). God had no trouble hearing Peter when he cried, "*Lord, save me*" (Matt. 14:30); nor the Syrophenician woman when she cried, "*Lord, help me*" (15:25); nor David when he prayed, "*Help, Lord*" (Ps. 12:1), the shortest prayer in the Bible. "*But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions*" (Matt. 6:7). This includes prayer forms or predigested prayers, which are an abomination to God.

There is not a line in Scripture to authorize the reading of prepared prayers. Such props are best left for the heathen. Men who pray the same weary round each time they are called on should not be called on to pray.

### **Praying Not Preaching**

Preaching during prayer is an abomination. A newspaper item once recorded: "It was the most wonderful prayer ever offered to a Boston audience." It is best not to instruct the Lord while praying. Often study the model prayer given by our Lord to teach principles of prayer (not to be chanted in a church), and note its fathomless depths (Matt. 6:9-13).

In private prayer, feel free to pour out your complaints, wonderments, bewilderment, questions, and troubles with holy boldness, in an utter abandonment and emptying. Abraham's first recorded prayer (Gen. 15) contained much of this. David said, "*I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path*" (Ps. 142:2,3). (Note particularly Psalm 102).

### **Encouragements**

Some encouragements to prayer: We clearly understand that our main encouragement to pray comes from the Word of God wherein we learn of our wonderful Friend of friends who is always ready to hear us and help us. But so many of us find that after a time we have drifted into a life of careless and unbelieving prayer. I have discovered a wonderful remedy for this. I resolved that to remind myself of the tremendous importance of prayer I would read at least one chapter from a good book on prayer each day. I began collecting these books as a hobby, and within them I have, indeed, found treasure and encouragement. Seek counsel of those who know good books. Be sure to include many missionary biographies among those books you purchase.

If you find it tedious to record your prayers, at least record the answers which thrill you. Ask visitors at your home, speakers, pastors, to tell you of answers to prayer. In reading of answers to prayer I have discovered whole fields of prayer I knew nothing of. Some have from the Word which they have claimed or wish to claim.

When you hear of or read of an answer K to prayer, carefully note the secrets or principles which are involved. Meditate on the answer. List the things people have prayed for in the Bible. There are hundreds of them. Mark the great chapters on prayer in the Bible and study the biographies of men and women who prayed. In all the Bibles which I have read through, each prayer is marked in the ... margin with the letter "P," and the margins are filled with exclamations about the things God has shown me.

But only the Holy Spirit can pray. If we do not grieve Him by our words and deeds, we shall always know and practice the unparalleled adventure of prayer.

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