

Harvest International Ministry

Teaching Article

Effective Prayer

James 5:13-16

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. ...The prayer of a righteous man *is* powerful and effective.” (NIV)

The Amplified Bible translates the last of verse 16 this way,

“The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].”

1. First, Prayer is a time to be alone and intimate with the Lord, our Bridegroom. This is the first and most important part about prayer. *This* is the reason we pray.

Prayer is a way of communing and fellowshiping with our Lord. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a *solitary place*, where he prayed”, Mark 1:35.

Jesus took time out, regularly, to commune with His Father. He made sacrifices in His busy schedule to get alone with God. Jesus *needed* to be alone with God, but best of all Jesus *wanted* to be alone with God.

You may be asking, “How can she say that Jesus “needed” to be alone with God?” Well, the Word says that although He was fully God, and fully man, He was tempted and tried as we are (Heb. 4:15). He needed the fellowship and He needed the strength from God to carry out God’s plan of redemption. Even when He was led in the desert and tempted 40 days, the angels came and “attended” to Him to meet His physical and spiritual needs, Mark 1:13.

“He was with the wild animals, and angels attended Him.” (Also in Matt. 4:11)

So getting alone with God in prayer is something that we need, *daily*.

This prayer time also helps us understand the love of God (as a result of the intimate time with Him alone), which in turn gives us God’s heart of compassion for the world. It would be impossible to spend intimate, daily, time alone with the Lord and not begin to gain His character of love in our lives.

2. Second, faith is key to getting our prayers answered.

In order for prayer to be powerful it has to be backed by faith. God desires that we *believe* His promises and take Him at His Word. The word teaches us that “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”, Hebrews 11:1. Believers are to LIVE by faith (Ro.

1:17). Having faith in God and in His Word to carry out His plan is absolutely necessary in prayer.

We must believe with all of our heart that what we are asking God to do is going to come to pass. Mark 11:22-24 says, "'Have faith in God,' Jesus answered. 'I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, Go, throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.'"

There are several key points in this verse that we need to recognize about prayer. First, it says to have *faith in God*. When we reverence God for who He is, He honors and blesses us (Ps. 34:9, 128:1-2, 145:19, 147:11). This explains why we are taught in (Heb. 4:16) that we are to come boldly to the throne of grace because we are His children and He is our Father. The Amplified Bible says it this way, "Let us then fearlessly *and* confidently *and* boldly draw near to the throne of grace."

We have faith in *who He is* and in *who He says we are* in Him.

Secondly, we learn from the verse *to not doubt*, but instead to believe what we say will happen! Wow, that is a powerful truth. Jesus teaches us to believe what WE say in prayer will happen because He says when we do believe, then "it will be done for him". Therefore, whatever you are asking God to do in prayer, have faith that what you asked ("say") will happen. God is moved by our faith! He is the one who said that prayer moves mountains (I Cor. 13:2)!

"Therefore I tell you, *whatever you ask* for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours", Mark 11:24. Also I want you to notice that the word *received is written in past tense*. Jesus is saying here that when you pray, believe that what you asked is *already done, the moment you prayed!* Isn't that wonderful! When you ask God for something, He said to believe that you have received it *when you prayed!* That is how important faith is to God! He just LOVES it!

3. Pray the Word.

We want to be sure we're praying the will of God and in order to do that we should incorporate God's Word into our prayers. We need to base every prayer on the Word. The answer to every problem and situation is in God's Word, so base your prayers on the answer which is the Word of God!

For successful prayer, you need to pray specifically. It is best to find scripture that applies to your situation and base your prayer on that scripture. For example, if you need financial provisions, you could base your prayer on the promise of Deuteronomy 8:18 which says, "But remember the Lord your God, for *it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth*, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today."

When you have God's Word, His promise, about a particular issue, then you have a foundation on which to believe Him.

4. Fourth God, through Paul, teaches in the Word to pray in the Holy Spirit. When we pray in the Spirit, we:

1. Utter mysteries with our spirit. "He utters mysteries with his spirit" I Cor. 14:2.
2. We edify ourselves (I Cor. 14: 4). It encourages us.
3. Our spirit (our heart) prays (I Cor. 14:14). Our "spirit" is our heart. We pray from our heart *by* the Holy Spirit.
4. The Spirit Himself intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27). "The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." This tells us that we pray the perfect will of God when we pray in the

spirit.

5. We can always pray. “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.*”

Praying an effective prayer that receives results every time is possible with God because *all things* are possible with Him (Mk. 9:23). *Our prayers work when we follow God’s instructions.* He has taught us in His Word how to pray effectively and these scriptures above teach us how to do that.

You can pray effective, powerful prayers every time! Don’t let the enemy deceive you into believing anything different!

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