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How Can I Pray Effectively?

Jan - 5:17

(Charles Steinmetz), great scientist, was once asked (which) field/your future research offered the greatest promise. ("Prayer")-he replied instantly. Find out about prayer!

Greatest power in the world is not in the atom.

(Prayer) is a discovery--make a search--man must examine his attitudes and intentions. Search God's word for the type and manner of prayer which brings results.

(Religion) and prayer closely associated. If a man is religious he feels he ought to pray--usually a man who is successful in prayer is also successful in other areas of life.

(Disciples) observed ^{the} prayer life of Jesus and said, "Master, teach us to pray". (Did) not ask to be taught to teach, preach, build--pray.

(Was) something wrong with the way they were praying? They believed in prayer and listened to (Jesus) pray "Father I thank thee that thou heardest me and I knew that thou hearest me always". John 11:41-42.

Jesus faced life in confidence even in midst of severe pressures. They wanted this inner strength.

(How) many times have we uttered the same cry--oh that I knew how to get through to God in prayer! My mediocre life, life is empty, power is missing.

(Man) flying a (plane) over an area with which he was unfamiliar. He made frequent requests for information which brought immediate clear data from control towers along the way.

(Paul) said, Thess. Christians "pray without ceasing." Be attuned to God. Prayer is everyone's privilege.

Alfred Lord Tennyson said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of".

To experience the power of prayer we must learn to pray. Which means prayer must not be pushed to a last resort.

I. What Is Prayer?

Prayer is a (personal) appeal to a personal God.

(Bible) stories about men and women who made personal appeals to God.

Prayer is asking God to help us when things are too big for us to handle.

Placing into his hands our desires.

✓ 1. Prayer is a (recognition of our needs.)

Motivated by my sense of need--sensitivity and then a direct request to God.

(Man) hunting elk lost in the mountains of Colorado. Groping for hours. He prayed, specific, personal, sincere. Finally stumbled onto a camp of stranger hunters at 3 A.M. They asked, who are you? At the moment he was not interested in who, but where he was. Terrible feeling. lost in the snow.

(Pathway) to God is (admit) we are lost. (Prodigal) Son began to compare hog pen and lot of servants--bread to spare. I perish--I will arise and go to my father Lk.15:17.

First step toward home--need.

✓ 2. Prayer is recognition that God is (the true source of supply) to meet our needs.

When we pray we do (not) say "God please change your mind and meet our needs, or change his purpose".

God has already purposed to do everything for his followers that is good. Save their souls, peace of heart, heal their bodies.

2 Chronicles 16:9 "The eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him".

✓ 3. Prayer (includes the request for God to meet) your needs.

Someone may say--(since) God already knows my needs, do I have to pray and ask Him for these things?

Unchanging Spiritual Law--man's (part) and God's (part). Man's part is to ask--~~God's~~ part is to answer (not force or invade your life--waiting our asking).

II. Why Should I Pray?

Why is it important. Many reasons as to why we should pray.

- ✓ 1. (To live a holy life.)

If you have a goal to live a life pleasing to God then you must learn to pray.

Holy life and prayer can not be separated. One can not survive without the other.

Prayer is the greatest sin killer in the world.

Psa. 139:23-24 "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".

Secret sins, presumptuous sins are brought to the surface.

- ✓ 2. (To prevent spiritual decline)

Lack of prayer is a forerunner of deterioration.

Slip backward--cannot stand still--losing out spiritually generally is a gradual process.

Dr. Frank Laubach said when we cease to pray we go to zero.

- ✓ 3. (To keep ourselves spiritually energized)

2 Cor. 4:16 "Though our outward man is decaying yet our inward man is renewed day by day".

Romans 15:30-32. Paul said to stay on your spiritual tip-toes "strive together with me in your prayers...that I may come unto you with joy, and may with you be refreshed".

Isaiah 40:31. Prophet--"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength".

People say I'm serving the Lord in my own weak way--we can have power--comes through prayer.

Man says I have no natural gifts--why not pray God to give supernatural gifts.

Many times we find it necessary to pray for wisdom or special knowledge, or about matters beyond us, or sudden emergencies.

That is why the inner man must be renewed day by day.

Man formed problems etc - Depressed - Night watching
Children say Prayers - but then pray for him - He looked
down with - not pray for gifts but that he be happy with him.
most day some Pr. but diff - fresh -

✓ 4. (To remain spiritually sensitive.)

Is'nt it true we become callous and dull without prayer?

Neglect your prayer life for a few days and see what happens.

Some things we would never do if sensitive to the will of God--find ourselves justifying, excusing our behavior, because lost sharpness of a sensitive heart.

Practice of medicine. There are certain vital signs which an alert watch is always kept. Change of pulse, respiration, blood pressure of grave importance.

Christian vital signs of apiritual health by prayer or the lack of it.

Bible--Men of secret knew which way God was going and went with him.

Enoch--walked with God.

Gen. 5:24. This requires keeping step with him neither lagging behind or running ahead.

Luke 22:54--Peter followed afar off. True he was going in same direction, but by no means keeping step with Christ.

Slept while Christ prayed in Garden of Gethsemane. Lord asked why he could not watch and pray.

Following afar off resulted in Peters denying his Lord, some of old habits take over.

If we sleep when we should pray, we find it easier to follow afar off.

Prayer equips us to carry on God's business.

John 9:4. Jesus, I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.

John 20:21. Jesus, as the father hath sent me, even so send I you.

III. What Kind of Prayer Pleases God Most?

✓ 1. (Prayer in Jesus name)

John 16:23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you".

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".

Prayer that pleases is prayed in Jesus name, because that name means much to the Father.

It is through His son Jesus our redemption was made complete and Satan's rule was broken.

✓ 2. (Prayer that is whole-hearted.)

Jer. 29:13. "Ye shall seek me, and find me, and ye shall search for me with all your heart".

Luke 22:44. "Jesus being in agony, he prayed more earnestly".

James "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man".

Jesus frowned upon the kind of praying that was mere words and repetitious words uttered without sincerity.

Prayer from the lips without soul.

Word "agonize"--common N.T. christians--wholehearted.

Louise Eggleston booklet, "Our real success in prayer depends upon how fully we open our hearts to God and how completely we yield our wills to the direction of his indwelling Spirit. We fail not because the arm of the Lord is shortened-- He knows instantly when you release yourself and your cares into His keeping."

He will accept us anytime and under any conditions, if we only offer our all--whole heart.

This not mean prayer must be in loud voice.

Hannah prayed earnestly but was only moving her lips. From her heart.

✓ 3. (Prayer according to His will.)

Pleases God when we accept His will as final.

There are no grounds for answered prayer outside of God's will. ("Father into thy hands I commend my spirit".)

His will to save us--"Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved".

His will to supply our every need--provided we ask that need to be met.

It is not argue with God or get him to tear up the moral laws

1 John 5:14-15. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything 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".

✓ 4. (Prayer in Faith.)

This pleases God--God meets faith.

Matt. 9:29. "According to your faith be it unto you".

James 1:6-7. "But let him ask in Faith, noting doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord".

Precious promises--

John 14:14-15. "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 anything in my name, I will do it".

John 16:23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you".

They are given to him that believeth.

Bible does not teach that it is Gods plan for men to be poor--sick and full of failure.

Neither is it wrong to pray for victory over these things. Can not blame God if go through life ineffective.

I'm not saying God will not test you or that Satan will not buffet.

God desires to meet your every need. He waits for our asking. Yet what good is there to ask if we do not believe.

Expect God to answer. Believe not for a little while but without wavering.

Heb. 11:6. He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

✓ 5. (Prayer of intercession)

We all have at our disposal five ways of pleasing God and blessing our fellowman.

1. By what we are, living epistles know and read of men.
2. By what we say, the words we speak.
3. By what we do, the service we render.
4. By what we give, our money; and
5. By intecessory prayer.

Bible--Gen 18:23--Abraham interceded for Sodom.

Ez. 9. Ezra poured out his heart in intercession because of the sins of his people.

Neh. 1:4. Nehemiah fasted and prayed for Jerusalem.

Dan. 9:4. Daniel prayed for the captive Jews.

Romans 8:26. Important passage on prayer. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered".

v. 27--"He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God".

Christ--example in intercession.

Isaiah 53:12--prophesied he would pray for sinners--"Made intercession for the transgressors".

Luke 22:32--For weak believers.

Luke 23:34--For enemies.

John 17:9--For all believers.

Heb. 7:25--In heaven he still intercedes.

Matt. 9:37-38--"The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore".

Many people in the world have no one to pray for them, no one to intercede before God in their behalf.

May each of us began this ministry of intercessory prayer--the kind that brings joy to the heart of God.

A woman just called--a neighbor is ill, one in hospital, no food in the house. (Intercessor) I promised to visit and try to meet their needs.

IV. Why are Prayers not Answered.

A question asked often.

Prayer that pleases God is prayer according to God's will, prayed in faith.

Reasons you may fail.

✓ 1. (Sin in your life.)

Psa. 66:18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me".

Pushed sin into the backyard of your life, covered it up and think you have fooled God. You can not hide anything from His all seeing eye.

Isaiah 59:1-2. "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened that it can not 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, so that he will not hear".

✓ 2. (Unforgiving spirit.)

Matt. 5:23-24. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift".

Bad relations cuts the prayer line.

God's forgiveness depends upon our forgiveness of our fellowmen. If we do not forgive them we cannot be forgiven.

Peter reminds us it is necessary for husbands and wives not to be at odds.

1 Peter 3:7. "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman. That your prayers be not hindered".
Spirit of strife.

✓ 3. (Stingy attitude.)

Prov. 21:13. "Who so stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry, but shall not be heard".

No man keeps everything he receives for himself, living only for his own pleasure, can expect God to hear his prayers.

The people who pray are always people who give.

You cannot pray and become like God without having a spirit of generosity. It is an impossibility. God so loved the world that he gave. What you want God to do for you, you must do for those about you.

V. Is Prayer Within The Reach of Every Man?

Does prayer really make a difference.

James 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much".

v. 17- Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years six months and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain!!!

Like passions--prayed and fire fell. Review his life. Sat under juniper tree and wished he could die. After all, Elijah was like you and me. He knew power, secret, had a need, knew the source of supply and prayed in faith.

Why not put this mightiest force to work in your life.

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".

Dr. Charles Blanchard Penn. Industrious College yrs ago - Book Railroad Engineer rained from Dead - Hospital Phil. - Praying Wife - sinful man, weighed less 120 lbs - Pen. times
Dr. said Dead - wife No - prayed 27 yrs. and promised to save him. Screen. To satisfy here -
one after another until 7 examined, confirmed dead, wife insisted God bring back if could -
home - pillow kness - 1, 2, 3, lbs (13 lb - opened eyes, she ask What do you wish dear?
al wish to go home. Dr. horified you will commit suicide. Took home - when he gone this
testimony he weighed 246 lbs & Pen fast from on Pennsylvania line. Ans to wife prayer
Hard to believe - Rare a woman would pray like that - God still ans prayer for those who
Trust Him! (P. 270 J. Rice)

Charles Finney - miracles - one woman in Ans of Prayer given ability to read Bible - Not
know alphabet before - converted, distressed could not read The Bible. Ask young class teach me
to read. children had a N.T. el picked it up & read. Went to school teacher asked her
if el was reading it right - yes - since then el have read The Bible for myself. Her neighbours
said she could not read a syllable before conversion. Prayer still ans. according to
Faith. (P. 275 - J. Rice)

Horton - daddy died in home - no change of school
sold union sets or child to buy one small book -
man went to school - prayed and help learn read
Bible - she did & know a great deal about the Bible.