

The Mighty Power of Prayer

As Seen in the Book of James

Evangelist Doug Lowery

Prayer is the privilege and opportunity of the child of God. We have the awesome honor of talking with the God of the Universe. Yet, prayer is a greatly neglected practice in the average Christian's life. We sing, *Sweet Hour of Prayer*—but, only give a few minutes a day to this exercise of faith. In some cases, we don't even log in a full minute of prayer in a 24 hour period. (A recent survey indicated that the average evangelical Christian prays only 3 minutes a day.)

Art DeMoss was a very successful Christian businessman, who amassed millions of dollars and set up a foundation that has donated his wealth to countless causes. When asked about his fortune, he said the following was “God’s Secret to Success”:

- Give God the first day of each week
- Give God the first hour of each day (in prayer and the Word)
- Give God the first part of each dollar that we earn
- Give God the first place in your home

Charles Spurgeon said, “It should be our rule never to see the face of men before first seeing the face of God. The morning watch anchors the soul that it will not very readily drift far away from God during the day; the morning is the gate of the day and it should be well guarded with prayer. He who rushes from his bed to his business without first spending time with God is as foolish as though he had not washed or dressed, and as unwise as one dashing to battle without arms or armor.”



The mighty power of God is displayed through the avenue of prayer. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote, *Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.* (Jeremiah 33:3) We have the open invitation of heaven—the welcome mat is there at the throne of God, but we turn away because there is so much else to do! **There is nothing better to do, but we still choose to do the insignificant things over the most important thing—spending time with our God.** (Remember the story of Mary and Martha!)

When the early church had rapid and amazing growth in Jerusalem, there arose the need for helpers. The apostles were over-worked. They said, *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. **But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.*** (Acts 6:3 and 4)

If America is ever going to be healed (2 Chronicles 7:14), it must come through prayer. Prayer is a prevalent theme throughout the Bible. To keep our focus in just one of the 66 books in God's divine library, I have chosen the book of James. Our message today (tonight) is The Mighty Power of God as seen in the Book of James. May God use this message to spur us on to greater times in prayer. May we see afresh the wonderful privilege that we have to come into the holiest by the blood of Christ. **May we come boldly to the throne of God, approaching our God through our Mediator, Jesus Christ, and learn to pray in the Spirit, as it instructs us to do in Ephesians 6:18.** May the mighty power of prayer overcome our anemic, mediocre Christianity. In this message we will see the Fire of Prayer from our key verse, James 5:16.

PRAYER

The book of James answers 3 critical questions about prayer!

WHY—WHEN—And HOW Should We Pray?

1. The Objective (reasons/purpose) of our Prayers

(Why Should We Pray?)

A. Because we have a generous God 1:5

giveth to all men liberally 1:5

“His love hath no limits, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth, and giveth again.”

(Malachi 3:10—God is ready and able to pour out His blessings from His windows in heaven!)

B. Because we have a gracious God 1:5
and upbraideth not “to revile” God will not scold you, but will be gracious and kind unto you. Hebrews 4:16 says, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

C. Because we have a good God 1:17 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* (Psalm 34:8)

2. The Occasion for our Prayers

(When Should We Pray?)

A. When we need wisdom 1:5



B. When we need strength 5:13

Afflictions come to the child of God to show us our weakness, remind us of His strength, and drive us into His Word! (Psalm 119:71—*It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy statutes.*)

C. When we need healing 5:14

D. When we see the needs of others 5:16 a

Listen to Ephesians 6:18—*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Listen to this verse from 1 Samuel 12:23 *Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:*

We are a NEEDY people! I’ve only listed 3 of our needs seen here in James—we also need His comfort in times of trial and sorrow, His all-sufficient grace, His victory over temptation, His supply of our material needs, His Spirit anointing us in power for soulwinning, etc..

One more critical question to answer—

3. The Occupation (Work) of our Prayers

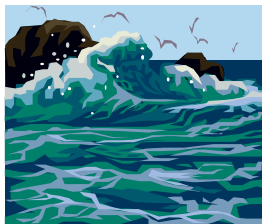
(How Should We Pray?)

A. Without wavering 1:6-8

B. Without lusting 4:2, 3

C. Without ceasing 5:18

(See 1 Kings 18:41-45 7 times Elijah prayed)



Then, from our key verse, James 5:16b:

E. With labor

Effectual = to be operative/ to show forth effort, work

Colossians 4:12—*Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

F. With fire

Fervent= boiling heat/ zeal for what is good

(Romans 12:11- *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*)



A wonderful Christian friend, Chatru Mohanini, shared with me an experience he had as a new Christian. His Christian boss (seeing his new found zeal for Christ) told Chatru that his zeal would cool down because he was a new Christian, and he would not be as zealous as time went by. Going to a mature believer he asked about that with great concern. This godly friend took him to a perfect verse—Proverbs 4:18: *But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth **more and more** (not less and less) unto the perfect day.*

Let's take inventory—let's make an application—do we pray without wavering, without lusting, without ceasing, and with labor and fire??

Let's quickly review some verses on the prayer life of our Lord Jesus. **This is both convicting and comforting!**

- ❖ Mark 1:35 **He placed a high priority on prayer**
And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.
- ❖ Luke 6:12 **He put time into prayer**
And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.
- ❖ Luke 22:44 **He poured His soul out in prayer—earnest prayer**
And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- ❖ Romans 8:34 **He still prays—for you and for me**
Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for you.

May the prayer life of our Savior be our example and goal.

“Blessed Jesus, Lord of all,
Teach us on Thy name to call;
Help us to be much in prayer,
And upon Thee cast our care.

Jesus, deign to bless us thus,
And to glory in Thy cross;
Then, though men and devils roar,
We will ever Thee adore.”

Draw us, Lord, by Thy sweet power,
In temptation's darkest hour;
Make us cry to Thee our Friend,
And upon Thy grace depend.

A Hymn of Public Worship
by William Gadsby

At all times, in every case,
Lead us to Thy throne of grace;
Let our needs—be what they may,
Teach us how and what to pray.

May the mighty power of prayer overcome our anemic, mediocre Christianity. May the fire of prayer be ignited in our souls, and may we see revival in our own hearts and homes and churches—and our land, because prayer is revived!

A prayer prayed by Pastor Joe Wright at the opening session of the Kansas State Senate on 1/23/96.

“Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, ‘Woe unto those who call evil good,’ but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of your Word and called it pluralism; We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism; We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle; We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery; We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation; We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare; We have killed our unborn and called it choice; We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable;

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem; We have abused power and called it political savvy; We have coveted our neighbor’s possessions and called it ambition; We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression; We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of your will. I ask it in the name of your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ.” AMEN