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## How to Pray! Part VII

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### How our Prayers get Through

**Luke 11:9-13; John 14:6; 16:23-27**

Remember, as a Christian you are a child of God; your prayers are always heard! There is no prayer that is too small, too big, or too hard. But also remember, when we are not living our lives for Him, our prayers will be hindered. What about putting more bounce in our prayer step? First, as I have already stated, He indeed hears us! We can have the confidence to go before Him and address Him. This is an incredible opportunity—far greater than it would be for any famous person you idolize to come to your door for dinner! Going before God is more precious and real than meeting for a private audience with the president of the USA. Our audience is Christ who loves and hears us (John 14:6; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:34)!

Prayer is not like just trying to get the laundry done, nor is it a grocery list of things to do and get. Rather, it is our existence in Him, from the innermost enclaves of our being (Rom. 12:12, Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Peter 4:7; Jude 20). For effective prayer to happen, we must come to God and acknowledge His Sovereignty and Holiness. He knows us beyond that we know ourselves; nothing can be hidden from Him. So, we have to be real, be honest, be ourselves, and make sure our motives are right. We cannot pretend; He always knows. When we are real, we are honoring Him! We need to have a soul that desires to be in God's courts (Psalm 84:2, 10; John 10:9). We need to desire to be with Him, to praise Him, and to bring Him glory (Psalm 50:14-15; 100:4; 1 Cor. 3:16, 23; 6:19-20).

Even though we are heard, we can be heard clearer and better when we increase our receptivity. As a better radio antenna will get you better reception, a better Christian life and the antenna of our faith will further empower our prayers. First, our attitude must be sincere and humble. Remember, we are going before our Holy LORD, so we must acknowledge His holiness, not just our friendship with Him. This means being reverent and worshipful. Then, through our frailty, reality, and humbleness, we are to pray continually. Then we can examine what we are saying to our Lord. Our words and thoughts should be specific and to the point. We can enjoy communing with Him, but say what we came to say. And, as I have said before, never, never seek to manipulate and control the Sovereign God of the universe! We are never to seek to manipulate God to get our way, even as we are not to do so with others. In this spirit, we can come to one another and seek accountability and reconciliation.

Our prayers get through when we can confess and be on guard with sin, so it stops rather than fester or escalate. And, as Elijah demonstrated to us (First Kings 17-21), always remember that a righteous person is a praying person. We cannot do anything of meaning or significance for our Lord unless we are a person and a church of prayer!

Many times, I have felt stuck in my prayer life. I could pick up the church directory and pray through it (which I do one or more times each week), or pray through the newspaper (which I still do), but I felt I needed more. I sometimes did not know what to pray for other than the obvious trials and pains of ministry life and the needs of being a missionary. I learned over the years to try to be more specific; when I do that, many more items come into my mind to pray for and my times of prayer go fast, and yet I still want so much more. I always seek to see the intimacy of my relationship with Christ and build from that. As I go through my daily life, I try to have a mindset of prayer and pray naturally as I go to the store, drive, visit with people, and write. The more I do this, the easier and automatic it becomes. I have even found myself starting to pray for people in movies and on TV, and then quickly realizing, *OH! This is not real!* Years ago, to build my prayer life, I would first consider my family, then friends, church members, coworkers, neighbors, and acquaintances. Then, I would move to political and religious leaders and organizations, then to current events, through countries where I know the people who are working there, and so forth. I still do this, but it has become more automatic, and more items come to my attention than I ever considered before, such as praying for pastors who have fallen and their families. To pray more, consider your community and the events around you. Learn more about them so you can pray for them specifically (without gossip!). This is a necessity for a church to grow and thrive (Mark 10:50-52; Phil. 4:6). If the church is to be better connected to the purpose and reason we exist (which is Christ), we must commune more in and with Him (Matt. 6:5-8; 21:22; Phil. 4:19; James 1:6-8; 4:8)!

The next key to a vital prayer life is to realize that all that is around us (us included) are in Him and in His sovereign control. He hears us before we can even think of what to say. Because He is worthy, we can have confidence in Him (1 John 5:14-15). Thus, we use this knowledge to further our faith and trust in Him. We have a God who is worthy of our praise and thus we can surrender ourselves to Him (Psalms 37:5; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil. 3:1-14)! We need to surrender our will over to His, including our attitudes, ideas, and inspirations so His purpose can take hold of us. Then, we can know more about what to pray for and what not to pray for, stuff that is outside of His will, or what is not best for us or our church, and allow His great and best work to transpire regardless of the outcome, because we know that His will be the best outcome! The more we know Him, the more we know for what and how to pray. Do not let your prayers be limited because your understanding of and your trust in Him is limited! We need to get our attitude lined up, allow our pride to be relinquished so our obedience and love will overcome our distractions. Then, we can pray more earnestly and with more perseverance because our faith, confidence, and will are in Him (Matt. 6:10; 19:26; Mark 12:30; Luke 18:1-8; Eph. 3:20; 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17).

Remember, one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to bring our prayers in an expedited way directly to God. He is the One who increases our prayers, as in supercharges them and fills us in on what we need to know—like cement to bricks—and He even architects it for us! We must allow Him to be our Guide and fill us up with His presence, power, and the specifics we need for what we do not recognize or comprehend. Best of all, He is always with us (John 14:16-17, Rom. 8:26-27; Heb. 13:5-6; 1 John 2:1)!

## Questions to Ponder

### Read John 14:6; 16:23-27

1. Why is passion paramount in your prayer life? How can you increase your passion for a heart that is after God?
2. Do your attitudes, desires, and passions line up with the precepts of His Word? Why is this important for an effective prayer life?
3. Do you realize that as a Christian you are a child of God; thus your prayers are always heard? How does that make you feel?
4. How is it that when you are not living your lives for Him, your prayers will be hindered? Have you ever experienced this?
5. What about putting more bounce in your prayer step? What would that mean? How can you do this?
6. Do you have the confidence to go before God and address Him? How so? Why not?
7. Do you realize that you have an incredible opportunity—far greater than it would be for any famous person you idolize to come to your door for dinner?
8. Why is prayer not just like just trying to get the laundry done, or a grocery list of things to do and get?
9. What can you do to have a mindset of prayer and pray naturally as you go to the store or take a drive, visit with people?
10. How can your prayer life become more automatic, yet still passionate?
11. How can you try to be more specific, yet still zealous?
12. Why is it bad to seek to manipulate and control the Sovereign God of the universe by our prayers? What is an example?
13. How can your prayer life become more enjoyable, so you look forward to it as you commune with God?
14. How can you increase your receptivity and also listen to God?
15. How has your prayer life been from the innermost enclaves of your being? How can it be more?
16. What does it mean to you to surrender your will over to His?

17. How can you surrender yourself to Christ more thoroughly, including your attitudes, ideas, and inspirations so His purpose can take hold of you?
18. For effective prayer to happen, we must come to God and acknowledge His Sovereignty and Holiness. How have you done this? How can you do it more?

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