

The Power Of Prayer

No. 30

Introduction.

- I. Alfred Tennyson, the noted English poet of the 19th century, once made this provocative statement, *“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”*
- II. **Paul C. Witt** wrote these words about the power of prayer,
“It is awesome to contemplate the physical power of the hydrogen bomb. A few ounces of material, carefully controlled, can exert a power of millions of tons! Properly harnessed this power can accomplish untold good. But there is a power that far transcends that of the hydrogen bomb. It is immeasurably more important because it is spiritual rather than physical. This power is the power of prayer.”
- III. Agreeing with both of these statements I would like to speak to you on “The Power of Prayer.” In recent years there has been a great deal of discussion concerning what prayer will and will not do.
 - A. Many people have alleged that prayer goes no higher than the ceiling. It is only a pep talk to oneself. In other words they are saying that prayer is of little or no value. It certainly does not reach a caring God who hears and answers our prayers.
 - B. The Bible does not teach this concept of prayer. It teaches that prayer has great and explosive power that transcends any power known to man. (Prov. 15:29; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; 1 Jn. 5:14,15).
- I. **Enriching Power** - Prayer has enriching power.
 - A. God promises to bless those that ask Him with material blessings. (Matt. 7:7, 9-11).
 1. **One time there was a woman who bought a steamship ticket from Boston to New Orleans.** The cost of the ticket was so high that she brought along a case of crackers and packages of cheese, feeling she could not afford the meals on the boat. All through the voyage she lived on crackers and cheese. On the last day she offered to pay for the dinner, and was told that the meals had been included in the price of the ticket. She had lived on a meager diet of crackers and cheese because she did not ask about what was included in the price of the ticket.
 2. We often miss even greater blessings because we **do not ask God.** (Jas. 4:3).
 3. **Prayer is not something that is always answered instantaneously.**
 - a. We must be persistent and patient in prayer.
 - b. Example of man who waited to late in life to come to Christ.
 - B. Another reason we often lack for blessings is because we **do not ask in faith.** (Heb. 11:6).
 1. On time **a country preacher** said, “Brothers and sisters, here you are praying for rain. I would like to ask you just one question, “Where are your umbrellas?”
 2. Brethren, isn’t this the way we often pray? We don’t bring our umbrellas. We do not really expect God to answer our prayers.
 3. The Bible says that when we pray like this that we will receive absolutely nothing from God.
 4. We need to expect God to answer. **Example from Stanford, Kansas door to door campaign**
- II. **Enlightening Power** - Prayer has enlightening power. (Jas. 1:5).
 - A. I do not know about you, but the longer I live the more I realize I need wisdom from above. I do not need more food. I do not need more clothing and ten thousand other things. I do need more wisdom to cope with the many challenges and decisions and

problems of life.

B. God promises to give us this wisdom if we will but ask Him

III. **Strengthening Power** - Prayer has strengthening power.

A. Through prayers we obtain the strength to live the Christian life and to overcome the many temptations that confront us every day. (Jas. 4:7-8; 1 Cor. 10:13).

B. Someone has aptly said, "*We kneel how weak! We rise, how full of power!*"

1. Nearly 2,000 years ago our Savior entered the garden of Gethsemane and went about a stone's throw from His disciples. He knelt down on His knees and prayed 3 times that God would remove the cup of sorrow from Him and give Him the strength to go to the cross. It is recorded that His anguish was so great that His sweat was like drops of blood. When Jesus arose from His knees He was full of the power and strength He needed to go to the cross and redeem man.

2. Prayer strengthened Jesus - God's perfect Son. It will also do the same for you and I.

IV. **Unifying Power** - Prayer has unifying power.

A. The slogan, "*The family that prays together stays together*" is very true.

B. Prayer helps families to be united and happy. Families that forget God have many heartaches.

C. Would you like to have a happy home? Then pray with your family every day.

V. **Healing Power** - Prayer has healing power.

A. Even though God does not heal through miraculous means as He did in the 1st century, it does not mean that God does not heal people. God heals today through the natural laws.

B. An example of God working through natural laws is found in 1 Kings the 18th chapter. In this chapter we read that Elijah prayed that it would not rain. God answered this prayer and it did not rain for 3 ½ years. At the end of that time Elijah prayed that it would rain and it did. In 1 Kings 18:45 we learn that God caused the heavens to grow black and caused the wind to come up. God answered Elijah's prayer by working through the laws of nature.

C. God can also heal in the same way! He does not have to supersede the laws of nature to effect a healing.

VI. **Comforting Power** - Prayer has comforting power.

A. When we are heavy laden with anguish and sorrow, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. A talk with God will help us overcome our sorrows and will give us peace and comfort which surpasses human understanding.

B. In the **121th psalm** we have these comforting words.

1 I Will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From whence shall my help come?

2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand.

6 The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night.

7. The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.

8. The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever.

VII. **Transforming Power** - Prayer has transforming power.

A. Prayer will help us to be more like God.

B. **It will add to our lives a heavenly glow.**

I asked the robin as he sprang
from branch to branch and sweetly sang,
What made his breast so round and red,
“‘Twas looking toward the sun,” he said.

I asked the violet, sweet and blue,
Sparkling with the morning dew,
Whence came the color. Then, so sly,
They answered, “Looking toward the sky.”
I saw the roses one by one
Unfold their petals to the sun;
I asked what made their tints so bright,
They answered, “Looking toward the light.”

I asked the thrush whose silv’ry note
Came like a song from angel’s throat
What made him sing in twilight dim.
He answered, “Looking up to Him.”

C. Looking up to Him, the Almighty God of heaven, is what we must do if we are to be like Him.

VIII. **Peace-making Power** - Prayer has peace-making power.

A. We are living in a time when **international tensions** are very great. There is constant war and threat of war. Every thoughtful person on earth hopes war can be prevented.

B. There are many weapons a Christian can use in pursuit of peace, but none is more powerful or more effective than prayer. Prayer reaches the God who controls the universe.

C. Christians have been commanded to pray for those in authority that we might have peace. (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

IX. **Pardoning Power** - Prayer has pardoning power for the child of God.

A. As children of God we often sin and fall short of God’s glory. When this happens the Bible teaches us to repent and pray.

B. Prayer from the penitent child of God reaches the Father’s throne of mercy and secures His forgiveness. (1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1-2).

Conclusion.

I. As you can see prayer has great power for the Christian. Realizing the great power of prayer, we should pray often as the Scriptures command. (1 Thess. 5:17).

I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish,
That I didn’t have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled upon me,
And heavier came each task;
“Why doesn’t God help me?” I wandered,

I tried to come into God’s presence
I used all my keys at the lock;
God gently and lovingly chided,
“My child, you didn’t knock.”

I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish,

He answered, "You didn't ask."

That I had to take time to pray.

I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day was gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me,
He said: "But you didn't seek."

- II. Let's take time as individuals to pray each day. Let us take time as God's children to pray together very often. This will be a great blessing to our lives and to the lives of others.
- III. Before the power of prayer can be yours, you must become a child of God. Why not make God your Father tonight?
Will you come as we stand and sing?