

Special Report

How to Pray with Power

By

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THERE is nothing more important in the Christian life than beginning correctly. But what is the right beginning in the Christian life?

The right way to begin the Christian life is by receiving Jesus Christ. No one can become a child of God in any other way.

Some accept this wondrous gift of God. Many others refuse this wondrous gift, and everyone who refuses this gift perishes. "He who believes in him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God." (John 3:18).

3 Fruits of God's Gift

1. **First of all, *God offers Jesus to us to bear our sins.*** We have all sinned. There is not a man or woman or a boy or a girl who has not sinned (Romans 3:22-23).

Now we must each bear our own sin or someone else must bear it for us. God Himself has provided another to bear our sins in our place so that we should not need to bear them ourselves. This sin-bearer is God's own Son, Jesus Christ, "For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). To receive Christ then is to believe this

testimony of God about His Son and to believe that Jesus Christ did bear our sins in His own body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

It also means to trust God to forgive all our sins because Jesus Christ has borne them in our place. "All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

2. *God offers Jesus to us as our deliverer from the power of sin.* Jesus not only died, He rose again. Today He is a living Savior. He has all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

He has power to keep the weakest sinner from falling (Jude 1:24). He is able to save not only from the uttermost but "Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25) "If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36).

To receive Jesus is to believe what God tells us in His Word about Him, to believe that He did rise from the dead, to believe that He does now live, to believe that He has power to keep us from falling, to believe that He has power to keep us from the power of sin day by day, and just trust Him to do it.

3. *But God offers Jesus to us, not only as our sin-bearer and our Deliverer from the power of sin, but He also offers Him to us as our Lord and King.* We read in Acts 2:36, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know certainly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Lord means Divine Master, and Christ means anointed King.

To receive Jesus is to take Him as our Divine Master; the One whose word we believe absolutely. The question from this time on is never going to be, what would I like to do or what do others tell me to do, or what do others do The whole question is WHAT WOULD

JESUS WANT ME TO DO? A right beginning involves an unconditional surrender to the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus.

The life of entire surrender is a joyous life all along the way. If you have never done it before, go alone with God today, get down on your knees and say, "All for Jesus," and mean it. Say it very sincerely; say it from the bottom of your heart. Stay there until you realize what it means and what you are doing. It is a wondrous step forward when one really takes it.

If you have taken it already, take it again, take it often. It always has fresh meaning and brings fresh blessedness. In this absolute surrender is found the key to the truth. Doubts rapidly disappear for one who surrenders all (John 7:17). In this absolute surrender is found the secret of power in prayer (1 John 3:22). In this absolute surrender is found the supreme condition of receiving the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:32).

This is the right beginning, the only right beginning of the Christian life. If you have made this beginning, all that follows will be comparatively easy. If you have not made this beginning, make it now.

9 Reasons to Pray

Our lives are busy and sometimes we forget to pray. Sometimes we may ask ourselves, "Why is prayer so necessary? Prayer is necessary because:

1. *Prayer is God's way for getting things, and the great secret of all lack in our experience, in our life and in our work is neglect of prayer.*

James brings this out very forcefully in James 4:2: "You lust, and don't have. You kill, covet, and can't obtain. You fight and make war. You don't have, because you don't ask." These

words contain the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian—neglect of prayer.

2. *Prayer occupied a very prominent place and played a very important part in the earthly life of our Lord.*

For example, in Mark 1:35 we read, "Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there." The day before had been a very busy and exciting one, but Jesus cut the hours of needed sleep so He could wake up early and give Himself to more sorely needed prayer.

3. *Praying is the most important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord.*

Christ's ministry did not end with His death. He entered the ministry of intercession and we can all have a part in it. The man or the woman who is shut away by sickness can have part in it; the busy parent; the hard driven corporate employee can have part in it, praying as he hurries from duty to duty. But of course we must, if we would maintain this spirit of constant prayer, take time—and take plenty of it — when we shall shut ourselves up in the secret place alone with God for nothing but prayer.

4. *Prayer is the means that God has appointed for our receiving mercy and obtaining grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 4:16 is one of the simplest and sweetest verses in the Bible,—“Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need.” These words make it very plain that God has appointed prayer as a way to seek and obtain mercy and grace.

5. *Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is the way Jesus Christ Himself has appointed for His disciples to obtain fullness of joy.*

He states this simply and beautifully in John 16:24, "Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full." Who is there that doesn't want his joy to be the fullest possible joy? Well, the way to have the fullest is by praying in the name of Jesus. We all know people whose joy is filled full, indeed, it is just running over, is shining from their eyes, bubbling out of their very lips, and running off their finger tips when they shake hands with you. Now people of that sort are always people that spend much time in prayer.

Do you take enough time for prayer to actually get into God's presence? Do you really give yourself up to prayer in the time that you do take?

6. *Prayer is God's way for getting freedom from anxiety and the peace of God. This peace goes beyond all understanding.*

Paul says, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7.) This verse tells us how the life is attainable by every child of God: Do not worry about anything. The rest of the verse tells us how, and it is very simple: Pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks.

What could be plainer or simpler than that? Some of us let the hurry of our lives crowd prayer out, and what a waste of time and energy there is by the constant worry! Time spent in prayer is not wasted, but is well invested.

7. *Prayer is the method that God Himself has appointed for our obtaining the Holy Spirit.*

The Bible makes this point very clear. Jesus says, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11:13.)

8. *Prayer is the Christ's way to overcome the cares of this life, and so the day of Christ's return won't sneak up on us.*

One of the most interesting and solemn passages upon prayer in the Bible is (Luke 21:34-36.) "So be careful, or your hearts will be loaded down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day will come on you suddenly. For it will come like a snare on all those who dwell on the surface of all the earth. Therefore be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the Son of Man." According to this passage there is only one way in which we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord when He appears, that is, through much prayer.

9. *Because of what prayer accomplishes. Much has really been said upon that already, but there is much that should be added.*

It is through prayer that my sin is brought to light, my most hidden sin. As I kneel before God and pray, "Search me, God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (Psalm 139:23-24), God shoots the penetrating rays of His light into the innermost recesses of my heart, and the sins I never suspected are brought to view.

3 Secrets to Praying with Power:

1. The first secret of powerful prayer is found in Acts 12:5 "Peter therefore was kept in the prison, but constant prayer was made by the assembly to God for him." This prayer prevailed with God, and had great results.

The first thing to notice in this verse is the brief expression "to God." The prayer that has power is the prayer that is offered to God.

But some will say, "Isn't all prayer to God?"

No. A lot of so-called prayer, both public and private, is not to God. In order for a prayer to be really to God, there must be a definite and conscious approach to God when we pray. We must have a definite and vivid realization that God is bending over us and listening as we pray. In a lot of our prayers there is little thought of God. Our mind is taken up with the thought of what we need, and is not occupied with the thought of the mighty and loving Father from whom we are seeking it.

Oftentimes it is the case that we are occupied neither with the need nor with the One to whom we are praying, but our mind is wandering here and there throughout the world. There is no power in that sort of prayer. But when we really come into God's presence, really meet Him face to face in the place of prayer, really seek the things that we desire *from Him*, and then there is power.

If we want to pray correctly, the first thing that we should do is make sure we really get an audience with God; that we really get into His very presence. Before a word of petition is offered, we should have the definite knowledge that we are talking to God. We should believe that He is listening to our petition and is going to grant the thing that we ask of Him. This is only possible by the Holy Spirit's power, so we should look to the Holy Spirit to lead us into the presence of God, and should not be hasty in words until He has actually brought us there.

If we want pray right, these two little words must sink deep into our hearts, *"to God."*

2. The second secret of powerful and effective praying is found in the words *"constant prayer."*

We read in Hebrews 5:7 that "He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear," Much of our modern prayer has no power in it because there is no heart in it. We rush into God's presence, run through a string of petitions, jump

up and go out. If someone asks us an hour later what we prayed for, a lot of times we couldn't tell. If we put so little heart into our prayers, we cannot expect God to put much heart into answering them.

But how can we put more heart into prayer?

Not by trying to work ourselves up into it. The true method is explained in Romans 8:26, "In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we don't know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which can't be uttered." The earnestness that we work up in the energy of the flesh is a repulsive thing. The earnestness in us by the power of the Holy Spirit is pleasing to God. Here again, if we would pray aright, we must look to the Spirit of God to teach us to pray.

3. A third secret of right praying is also found in this same verse, Acts 12:5. It appears in the words *"by the assembly to God for him."*

There is power in *united prayer*. Of course there is power in the prayer of an individual, but there is vastly increased power in united prayer. God delights in the unity of His people, and seeks to emphasize it in every way, and so He pronounces a special blessing upon united prayer. We read in Matthew 18:19, "Again, assuredly I tell you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven."

This unity, however, must be real. Two persons might agree to ask for the same thing, and yet there be no real agreement about the thing they asked for. One might ask for it because he really desired it, the other might ask for it just to please his friend. But where there is real agreement, where the Spirit of God brings two believers into perfect harmony, where the Spirit lays the same burden on two hearts; in all such prayer there is absolutely irresistible power.

How to Get What We Ask for in Prayer

One of the most significant verses in the Bible on prayer is 1 John 3:22, "And whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight."

What an astounding statement! John says, in so many words, that everything he asked for he got. How many of us can say this: "Whatever I ask I receive?" But John explains this was because we obey God's commands and do what pleases him.

In other words, the one who expects God to do as he asks, must *do what God wants him to*. If we give a listening ear to all God's commands to us, He will give a listening ear to all our petitions to Him. If, on the other hand, we turn a deaf ear to His precepts, He will be likely to turn a deaf ear to our prayers. Here we find the secret of much unanswered prayer. We are not listening to God's Word, and therefore He is not listening to our petitions.

How to Pray in the Name of Christ

It was a wonderful word about prayer that Jesus spoke to His disciples in John 16:23, "Most certainly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you."

Prayer in the name of Christ has power with God. God is very pleased with His Son Jesus Christ. He hears Him always, and He also always hears the prayer that is really in His name.

But what is it to pray in the name of Christ?

There is nothing mystical or mysterious about this expression. If you go through the Bible and examine all the passages in which the expression "in My name" or "in His name" or similar expressions are used, you will find that it means just about what it does in modern usage.

If I go to a bank and hand in a check with my name signed on it, I ask for money from the bank *in my own name*. If I have money deposited in that account, the check will be cashed; if not, it will not be. If, however, I go to a bank with somebody else's name signed on the check, I am asking *in his name*, and it does not matter whether I have money in that bank or any other, if the person whose name is signed on the check has money in their account, the check will be cashed.

So it is when I go to the bank of Heaven, when I go to God in prayer. I have nothing deposited there and if I go in my own name I will get absolutely nothing; but Jesus Christ has granted to me the privilege of going to the bank with His name on my checks, and when I go, my prayers will be honored to any extent.

To pray then in the name of Christ is to renounce the thought that I have any claims on God whatever, and approach Him on the ground of Christ's claims. Praying in the name of Christ is not merely adding the phrase "I ask these things in Jesus' name" to my prayer. I may put that phrase in my prayer and really be resting in my own merit at the time.

On the other hand, I might leave out that phrase but really be resting in the merit of Christ. But when I really do approach God, not on the ground of my merit, but on the ground of Christ's merit, God will hear me.

A lot of our modern prayer is ineffective because men approach God imagining that they have some claim upon God where He is under obligations to answer their prayers.

Great light is thrown upon the subject of "How to Pray" in 1 John 5:14-15: "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he listens to us. And if we know that he listens to us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him." This passage teaches us plainly that if we are to pray right, we must pray according to God's will.

But can we know the will of God? Can we know that any specific prayer is according to His will?

We most surely can.

How to Learn the Will of God

1. First by the Word. God has revealed His will in His Word. When anything is definitely promised in the Word of God, we know that it is His will to give that thing. If when I pray, I can find some definite promise of God's Word and lay that promise before God, I know that He hears me, and if I know that He hears me, I know that I have the petition that I have asked of Him.

For example, when I pray for wisdom I know that it is the will of God to give me wisdom, for He says so in James 1:5: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach; and it will be given to him." So when I ask for wisdom I know the prayer is heard, and that wisdom will be given me.

In the same way when I pray for the Holy Spirit I know from Luke 11:13 that it is God's will, that my prayer is heard, and that I have the petition that I have asked of Him: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Here is one of the greatest secrets of prevailing prayer: To study the Word to find what God's will is as revealed there in the promises, and then simply take these promises and spread them out before God in prayer with the absolutely unwavering expectation that He will do what He has promised in His Word.

2. But there is still another way in which we can know the will of God, that is, by the teaching of His Holy Spirit. There are many things we need from God which are not covered

by any specific promise, but we are not left in ignorance of the will of God even then. In Romans 8:26-27 we are told, "In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we don't know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which can't be uttered. He who searches the hearts knows what is on the Spirit's mind, because he makes intercession for the saints according to God."

Here we are distinctly told that the Spirit of God prays in us, draws out our prayer, in line with God's will. When we are led out by the Holy Spirit in any direction, to pray for any given thing, we can do it with confidence that it is God's will.

There is no doubt there are many times when we do not know the will of God; and in all prayer submission to the excellent will of God should underlie it; but when we know God's will we will have *confidence* and *know* that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.

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