

## EFFECTUAL PRAYER

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 5:16b

- I. The NEED FOR EFFECTUAL PRAYER Sets Forth the Importance of Praying By Its Purpose.
  - A. We may have great influence by prayer in our children, our families, our nation, our church, evangelism, against the devil, our health, our wisdom, our prosperity, our safety, etc.
  - B. God had five chosen men that He knew above others for their influence (Jer 15:1; Ez 14:14).
    1. Moses interceded for Israel to save them from God's wrath on several different occasions (Psalm 106:23; Exodus 32:7-14; Numbers 11:1-3; 14:11-24; 16:19-26; 21:7-9; Deut 9:7-29).
    2. Samuel prayed for Israel and saved them from doom (I Samuel 7:7-12; 12:16-24; Ps 99:6).
    3. Noah obtained grace in an evil generation and saved his family by prayer (Genesis 6:8-9).
    4. Daniel prayed for Israel and God heard his prayer and revealed things (Daniel 6:10; 9).
    5. Job prayed for his family (Job 1:5), and he prayed for his foolish friends (Job 42:7-10).
    6. God is seeking for such a man (Ezek 22:30). Why not have a number of them (Prov 28:2)?
  - C. The sons of God began to call upon the name of the Lord in the days of Enos (Genesis 4:26).
  - D. John saw in his visions the prayers of saints as incense before God's throne (Rev 5:8; 8:3-4).
  - E. We should desire that our prayers be as effective as those in Hezekiah's day (II Chr 30:27).
  - F. However, not all prayers are effectual. Consider that most religions make use of praying.
    1. The prophets of Baal called on the names of their gods to win the test (I Kgs 18:21-29).
    2. Those that ask shall receive (Matt 7:7), but only if they do not ask amiss (James 4:2-3).
    3. Effectual prayer is taught. The disciples were taught how to pray like Christ (Luke 11:1).
    4. We are dealing with prayer, not effort. Prayer. A solemn and humble request to God.
    5. We must have effectual prayer. Effectual. That produces its intended effect; effective.
    6. We must have fervent prayer. Fervent. Of persons and actions: Ardent, intensely earnest.
    7. We must have righteous men. Righteous. Just, upright, virtuous; acting rightly or justly.
  - G. Are you a praying person? Do you pray effectually? Do you want to learn effectual prayer?
- II. The EXAMPLES OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Review Prayers that Were Heard with Results.
  - A. Hagar, when fleeing from Sarai, looked after the God that saw her need (Genesis 16:7-14).
  - B. Jacob had this witness of His prayer: he had power with God (Gen 32:24-32; Hosea 12:3-4).
  - C. Moses, when threatened by rebellious Israelites, received a powerful answer (Num 16:28-35).
  - D. Joshua, when fighting the Ammonites, prayed for the sun and moon to stop (Joshua 10:6-14).
  - E. Samson, when blind and abused by the Philistines, received a final request (Judges 16:28).
  - F. Hannah, a childless mother, prayed for a son and received much more (I Samuel 1; 2:20-21).
  - G. Solomon, intimidated by his office, asked for wisdom and got wealth too (I Kings 3:5-14).
  - H. Elijah, in a great public display, called fire down from heaven on an altar (I Kings 18:30-39).
  - I. Elisha prayed for twice the spirit of Elijah - a hard but possible prayer (II Kings 2:9-12).
  - J. Hezekiah was healed of a terminal illness and saw the sun reverse itself (II Kings 20:1-11).
  - K. Jabez appears only once in scripture in a genealogy, but he prayed effectually (I Ch 4:9-10).
  - L. Jehoshaphat prayed for victory in a battle in which he did not even fight (II Chron 20:1-25).
  - M. Jonah got himself into a fishy mess by rebellion, but God heard his prayer (Jonah 2:1-10).
  - N. Habakkuk, stirred in spirit against Israel, prayed for justice and judgment (Habakkuk 1:2-6).
  - O. Annah, a widow indeed, saw the young Jesus through her dedicated praying (Luke 2:37-38).
  - P. A thief, when dying for his crimes, prayed simply to Jesus and was heard (Luke 23:42-43).
  - Q. Cornelius prayed to God for further religious light, and God sent Simon Peter (Acts 10:1-6).
  - R. Peter was delivered from prison by a powerful prayer meeting of the church (Acts 12:5,17).
  - S. Elijah prayed twice regarding rain to judge Israel for Ahab and Jezebel (James 5:17-18).
- III. The PROMISES OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Summarize God's Promises to Answer Good Prayers.
  - A. Our introductory text states that much can be accomplished by effectual prayer (Jms 5:16).
  - B. Jesus taught that asking is a principal means of securing things (Matthew 7:7; James 4:2).
  - C. Jesus Christ promised that God would do better than any "evil" natural father (Matt 7:9-11).
  - D. God promised to hear without regard to age (Ex 22:22-24) or economic status (Ex 22:25-27).
  - E. God will preserve nations, if His people will repent in humility and prayer (II Chron 7:14).
  - F. David spoke of God hearing prayers (Psalm 65:2; 10:17; 38:15; 55:17; 102:17-20; 145:18-19).

- G. Paul taught that God was able to do exceeding abundantly above our requests (Eph 3:20-21).
- H. Jeremiah recorded a similar promise of "things which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:2-3).
- I. The wicked plainly deny the value of prayer to the God of heaven (Job 21:7,14-15).

IV. The SUBJECT OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Defines the Necessary Character of Those Who Pray.

- A. Prayer must be done in the Holy Ghost, so we must be in the Spirit (Jude 20; Eph 6:18).
  - 1. Our access to God is through Jesus Christ but by the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18; Ro 8:26-27).
  - 2. We must draw near to God, if we expect God to draw near to us in prayer (James 4:8).
  - 3. We walk in the Spirit of God when we do those things the Spirit commands (Gal 5:16-26).
  - 4. If we grieve or quench the Spirit, we will not have His assistance (Eph 4:30; I Thes 5:19).
  - 5. Instead of assisting our prayers, the Holy Spirit will become our enemy (Isaiah 63:10).
- B. Prayer must be done in the truth. God is near to those that call on Him in truth (Ps 145:18).
  - 1. If we turn away our ears from hearing the law, our prayers will be abominable (Pr 28:9).
  - 2. Your prayers will be heard, if God's words abide in you. Keep His words (John 15:7).
- C. Prayer must be made by the righteous. God does not hear or answer the wicked's prayers.
  - 1. The effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much, so do righteousness (I John 3:7).
  - 2. God hears the righteous, but His face is against evil doers (Psalm 34:15-18; I Peter 3:12).
  - 3. Consider carefully the lengthy rebuke of Isaiah regarding hypocrisy in prayer (Isaiah 58).
  - 4. Even a poor unlearned blind man knew that God hears only the righteous (John 9:31).
  - 5. We receive our requests when we keep His commandments and please Him (I John 3:22).
  - 6. God will give any good thing to them that walk uprightly - the righteous (Psalm 84:11).
  - 7. The prayer of the wicked is sin regardless of form or sincerity (Proverbs 15:8,29; 21:27).
- D. Prayer must be made by those whose sins are confessed. Covering sins will destroy prayer.
  - 1. David said plainly that God will not hear those who regard iniquity (Psalm 66:18).
  - 2. Isaiah said that sins have the effect of turning away the ears of God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
  - 3. Don't think you have forever to repent and seek God in prayer (Isaiah 55:6-7; Prov 29:1).
- E. Our relationships with others must be clean or God will not honor our prayers to Him.
  - 1. Husbands must know their wives, honour them, and accept them appropriately (I Pet 3:7).
  - 2. If we do not forgive others their sins against us, God will not forgive us (Matt 6:14-15).
  - 3. Paul taught Timothy that men ought to pray everywhere but without wrath (I Tim 2:8).
  - 4. Are we known as merciful and kind in our dealings? We better be (Matt 7:2; Jms 2:13).
    - a. Consider Christ's lengthy explanation of the "golden rule" principle (Luke 6:31-38).
    - b. You need God to remember your frame (Ps 103:13-14). Do you so with your children?
    - c. David warned that God treats men with their own behavior (Psalm 18:25-26; 41:1-4).

V. The ATTITUDE OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Defines the Perspective and Mind We Pray With.

- A. God will give the desires of the heart to those that delight in Him (Ps 37:4; I Chron 28:9).
  - 1. God blessed Jehoshaphat greatly and heard him. What did he do (II Chr 17:3-6; Ps 44:8)?
  - 2. Those that fear God shall have their prayers answered and their desire (Ps 145:19-20).
  - 3. If we wish to receive the heritage of Jacob, we must delight ourselves in God (Is 58:14).
  - 4. Knowing God is greater than wisdom, might, or riches (Je 9:23-24; Ps 92:4-15; Job 22:21).
  - 5. God is a jealous God; He demands all our love; He wants our glory to Himself (I Co 1:31).
  - 6. It is a foolish scorner who says or thinks that delight in God does not profit (Job 34:9).
- B. Effectual prayer must be fervent (James 5:16). Righteous men will pray with great fervency.
  - 1. Jesus, when facing the cross, prayed so earnestly his sweat was as blood (Luke 22:44).
  - 2. Hannah had bitterness of soul and wept sore (I Sa 1:10); Hezekiah wept sore (II Kgs 20:3).
  - 3. Fervency can be shown by depriving yourself of pleasure and habit as God teaches.
  - 4. If you seek, you will find; but you must seek with your whole heart (Jeremiah 29:12-13).
  - 5. Fervent is used to describe the temperature of certain fire (II Pet 3:10,12; Rev 3:15-16).
- C. We ought to have a bold attitude in prayer through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:16 cp 10:19-22).
  - 1. We have a basis for supplicating the Lord superior to the Old Testament (Heb 8:6; etc.).
  - 2. Consider Abraham's boldness in bargaining with God for the city of Sodom (Ge 18:23-33).
  - 3. Consider how Moses used God's favour toward him to bargain for more (Exodus 33:13,18).

- D. A righteous man will have the great character trait of persistence in prayer (I Thess 5:17).
  - 1. Jesus gave the parable of the unjust judge to exhort men to persistence (Luke 16:1-8).
  - 2. Jesus further gave the lesson of a friend's importunity to stress persistence (Luk 11:5-8).
    - a. Importunity. Pertinacity or constancy of action; bothersome pertinacity in solicitation.
    - b. Importunate. To solicit pressingly and persistently; to ply or beset with requests.
    - c. Even though he would not rise because he is his friend, his persistence gets the help.
  - 3. Jacob would not let the Lord go when he wrestled with him (Gen 32:24-32; Hos 12:3-4).
  - 4. A Canaanite woman persisted with Jesus Christ in spite of rejection (Matthew 15:22-28).
  - 5. Paul taught that we ought to continue in prayer (Col 4:2) with perseverance (Eph 6:18).
  - 6. Our continuing in prayer should not be vain prayer, but instant - insistent (Rom 12:12).
- E. Pray with the understanding. Effectual prayer requires intelligence and concentration.
  - 1. Though we are to pray in the Spirit, we are to pray with the understanding (I Cor 14:15).
  - 2. Unknown tongues, contrary to the Charismatics, are not an effectual means of praying.
  - 3. Memorized prayers, word and phrase repetition, and trite expressions must be guarded.
- F. Prayer engaged in to make a religious show before men will not be effectual (Matt 6:5-6).
  - 1. Pharisees work to seem religious, and they use prayer for a pretence (Matthew 23:14).
  - 2. They receive only the reward of being seen, not God's blessing (Luke 18:9-14; 6:24).
- G. Righteous men will be submissive to God's will (Matt 26:39; II Samuel 12:22-23; Job 1:20-21).
  - 1. Though we may lay plans ever so carefully, we must submit to God's will (James 4:13-16).
  - 2. Consider how Paul planned and prayed to visit the church at Rome (Rom 1:10; 15:23,32).
- H. We must pray for the will of God as we understand it in our petitions (I John 5:14-15).
  - 1. We accomplish this by submitting all our requests to the will of God (James 4:13-16).
  - 2. We also accomplish this by praying for God's will that we surely know (I The 4:3; Js 1:5).
- I. God loves a humble approach in prayer. Take joy in denigrating yourself before God.
  - 1. Humility is a condition for receiving exaltation and grace from God (Js 4:6; I Pet 5:5-7).
  - 2. Abraham appealed to God's favour by describing himself as dust and ashes (Gen 18:27).
  - 3. Jacob said he was not worthy of the least of God's mercies toward him (Genesis 32:10).
  - 4. David did not consider his house to be worthy of God's blessing (II Samuel 7:18; 23:5).
  - 5. Solomon did not consider his temple to be adequate for the Lord God (II Chronicles 6:18).
  - 6. Paul described himself as a wretched man in need of God's deliverance (Romans 7:18-24).
  - 7. Man has nothing to warrant God's favour, even when he obeys (Ps 144:3-4; Luke 17:10).
- J. We must be willing and diligent to do our reasonable best to obtain the things we seek.
  - 1. The Lord builds houses and keeps cities, but He uses carpenters and watchmen (Ps 127:1).
  - 2. The proper perspective sees a reasonable balance between God's part and ours (Ps 127:2).
  - 3. God expects us to use the intelligence He has given and to seek His favor (Jms 4:13-16).
  - 4. Jesus said the formula not only includes asking but seeking and knocking also (Mat 7:7-8).
  - 5. Jacob worked, prayed, and worked to be delivered from his brother Esau (Gen 32:6-20).
  - 6. David prayed and worked to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel (II Samuel 15:31-37).
  - 7. Nehemiah prayed and worked for deliverance from the conspiracy of enemies (Neh 4:9).
  - 8. The apostles worked, prayed, and worked to determine the twelfth apostle (Acts 1:15-26).
  - 9. Work as if everything depended upon you, and pray as if everything depended upon God?
  - 10. Be very careful of praying for God to satisfy some need that your foolishness created.
    - a. Examples are tests, a new job, a bad business, a debt burden, and a weight problem.
    - b. God will deliver from trouble created by your foolishness only with true repentance.
    - c. Without true repentance, you are making a mockery of God, prayer, and righteousness.
  - 11. Guard carefully against any fatalistic tendencies or lethargy from God's predestination.
    - a. God, seeing the end from the beginning, took into account the prayers of men.
    - b. Do not deny the foreknowledge of God in exalting His determinate counsel (Acts 2:23).
    - c. Consider praying for the health and/or sex of a child already conceived. Should we?
    - d. The health and sex of a child are as easily influenced by prayer as any other thing.
    - e. Does prayer change things? Yes, from our perspective. No, from God's perspective.
  - 12. Such does not indicate a lack of faith, but Satan will tempt you to tempt God (Luke 4:4).

- K. We must pray in faith without doubting. A lack of faith will make prayer ineffectual.
  1. It is impossible to please God without faith. We believe He is and He rewards (Heb 11:6).
  2. We shall receive our requests if we believe God will hear and answer them (Matt 21:22).
  3. If we waver in our faith when we pray, God will not give us anything (James 1:6-8).
  4. We cannot pray with doubts (I Tim 2:8). Learn hope from the Old Testament (Rom 15:4).
- L. We must pray with a care-free attitude of confidence and trust in the God we depend upon.
  1. Preparatory to prayer, we must develop an attitude without care or anxiety (Phil 4:6-7).
  2. We must cast all our care on Him (I Pet 5:7) and not think about the morrow (Matt 6:34).

VI. The MANNER OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Describes the Physical Aspects of Those Praying.

- A. David spoke of praying in the morning when fresh and before the day (Psalm 5:3; 88:13).
  1. He said that he prevented - preceded - the dawning of the morning (Psalm 119:147).
  2. Isaiah's prayer life included desiring God at night and seeking Him early (Isaiah 26:9).
  3. Jesus prayed very early in the morning - even a great while before day (Mark 1:35).
- B. David and Daniel had the habit of praying three definite times a day (Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10).
  1. Peter received his vision regarding Cornelius while praying at noontime (Acts 10:9).
  2. The Jews seemed to have a designated time for prayer in the afternoon (Acts 3:1; 10:30).
- C. Weeping while praying is totally appropriate: it should be an indication of a fervent heart.
  1. Hannah wept sore from bitterness of heart when she prayed for a son (I Samuel 1:10).
  2. God not only heard the prayer of Hezekiah - He also saw Hezekiah's tears (II Kings 20:5).
  3. Israel held a public prayer meeting that included sore weeping by all (Judges 21:2).
  4. Ezra and many Jews wept very sore for the iniquity they had committed (Ezra 10:1).
  5. Jesus Christ when facing death was heard with strong crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7).
- D. Fasting and depriving ourselves of other physical pleasures make prayers more effectual.
  1. Pain does not merit God's favour, but it may manifest our fervency in beseeching God.
  2. In praying against the wiles of the devil, we should heed Christ's advice (Matt 17:20-21).
  3. David refused to eat, lied on the ground, and prayed for his sick child (II Sam 12:15-18).
  4. Even wicked Ahab was able to find some mercy from God by fasting (I Kings 21:25-29).
  5. When Daniel sought the Lord, he did so with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes (Dan 9:3; 10:3).
  6. The citizens of Nineveh were heard through prayer, fasting, and sackcloth (Jonah 3:5-10).
  7. Some believe that fasting and other acts of self-deprivation were for the Old Testament.
    - a. Jesus taught that His disciples would fast more when he was gone (Mark 2:18-20).
    - b. Paul used fasting when sent as an evangelist and when ordaining (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).
    - c. Paul allowed couples to abstain from sexual relations and food for prayer (I Cor 7:5).
  8. For full instructions on the subject of scriptural fasting, see that sermon and outline.
- E. Kneeling to pray is a scriptural practice. It manifests humility and is a begging posture.
  1. Solomon, when dedicating the temple, lifted up his hands from his knees (I Kings 8:54).
  2. Ezra, when praying for the iniquities of the recovered remnant, hit his knees (Ezra 9:5).
  3. Bowing down in a kneeling position is a position of worship as all men know (Psalm 95:6).
  4. Paul and Luke were used to kneeling in prayer with the early saints (Acts 20:36; 21:5).
- F. Prayer can also be made in other positions. David prayed while sitting (II Samuel 7:18).
- G. You can pray anywhere at any time. Prayer can be done with the heart as well as the mouth.
  1. Hannah prayed in her heart before Eli (I Samuel 1:13), and Moses did the same (Ex 14:15).
  2. Nehemiah prayed for deliverance when he was sorrowful before Artaxerxes (Neh 2:1-4).
  3. Peter prayed on a housetop (Acts 10:9), and Cornelius prayed at 3:00 PM (Acts 10:30).
- H. Pray alone often as a personal habit. Our Lord Jesus Christ both taught and practiced such private prayer (Matthew 6:5-6; 14:23; 26:36-39; Mark 1:35; 6:12; Luke 5:16; 9:18).
  1. Consider that Jacob was alone when he manifested his power with God (Genesis 32:24).
  2. Consider that Elisha and Peter raised the dead by prayer alone (II Kings 4:33; Acts 9:40).
  3. It is the Pharisee that loves to pray in public. Emphasize private prayer (Matthew 23:14).
- I. Families should pray together. Jacob told his family to prepare for prayer (Genesis 35:1-4).
  1. Fathers should lead families in prayer as did Abram (Gen 18:19) and Joshua (Josh 24:15).
  2. Jeremiah called for God's judgment on those families that do not pray (Jeremiah 10:25).

- J. Prayer partners is a scriptural practice. Although they need not pray together (Matt 18:19).
    1. Paul and Silas prayed together while in the Philippian jail, and God heard (Acts 16:25).
    2. Jesus, Peter, James, and John were praying when Christ was transfigured (Luke 9:28).
    3. A man and his wife make obvious prayer partners in this manner (I Cor 7:5; I Peter 3:7).
  - K. Public prayer meetings are scriptural. Churches ought to engage in serious corporate prayer.
    1. Those who despise this practice because it appears "Arminian" are foolish and blind.
    2. The Jerusalem Church had an extended prayer meeting before Pentecost (Acts 1:13-14), a short one after persecution (Acts 4:23-31), and an evening one for Peter (Acts 12:5).
    3. The converts to the early Jerusalem Church continued steadfast in prayer (Acts 2:42).
    4. Paul prayed with the elders of the Ephesus Church when he left their area (Acts 20:36).
    5. Finding disciples at Tyre, Paul and Luke had a prayer meeting with them (Acts 21:4-6).
    6. Jesus promised to be present where two or three are gathered together (Matthew 18:20).
  - L. Lifting up your hands in prayer is a scriptural practice that we ought not to ignore.
    1. Though the Charismatics may abuse the practice, we should not let them cause our sin.
    2. David taught that prayer to God included lifting up of hands (Ps 28:2; 63:4; 134:2; 141:2).
    3. Jeremiah taught Israel to lift up their hearts to God with their hands (Lam 2:19; 3:41).
    4. Israel prevailed against Amalek as long as Moses kept his hands up (Exodus 17:8-13).
    5. Solomon at the dedication of the temple lifted up his hands to heaven (I Kings 8:22).
    6. Paul commanded in the New Testament that the practice was not put away (I Tim 2:8).
      - a. However, the hands we lift must be holy hands (Job 16:17; Ps 26:6; Is 1:15; Jms 4:8).
      - b. God sees sinful deeds as sins of the hands, so we lift up hands to show our holiness.
    7. Lifting hands (1) points out God, (2) presents our hearts, and (3) shows our innocence.
  - M. Men must have short and women long hair for their prayers to be effectual (I Cor 11:4-5).
    1. The covering referred to in the context is hair both for men and women (I Cor 11:13-15).
    2. The covering is taught regarding religious duties - praying and prophesying (I Co 11:5,13).
      - a. Women were involved in prophesying and praying (Luke 2:36-38; Acts 1:14; 2:17; 21:9).
      - b. However, we must apply a private sense to such duties (I Cor 14:34-35; I Tim 2:9-11).
    3. Men are born with short hair covering part of their heads, so we must find other parts.
      - a. Nature argues that God did not plan for a woman's face to be covered, so then what?
      - b. A veil further cannot be intended since men have never been subject to such a habit.
      - c. The head parts not covered by hair at birth are the ears, sides, back, and forehead.
    4. Long hair is satisfied, if the hair covers the above parts. Personal preferences are vain.
    5. Consider stacked and pulled-back hair. Some is long enough but does not cover the head.
    6. When approaching God, men and women should manifest clearly their different offices.
  - N. Saying "Amen" - signifying truth and agreement - is a scriptural practice in public prayer.
    1. Amen. A solemn expression of concurrence in, or ratification of, a prayer, or wish; Be it so really! Of concurrence in a formal statement or confession of faith: It is so in truth.
    2. It was common in the Old Testament (I Chronicles 16:36; Nehemiah 5:13; 8:6; Ps 106:48).
    3. Note its force of concurrence and public ratification (Numbers 5:22; Deuteronomy 27:15).
    4. Paul assumed its continued use in New Testament worship at Corinth (I Corinth 14:16).
    5. For those who dislike the interruption, read Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:20,24,27.
- VII. The NATURE OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Describes the Characteristics of the Prayer Itself.
- A. The prayer itself need not be long. God has provided powerful answers to short prayers.
    1. Jesus condemned the long prayers of the Pharisees as being pretentious (Matthew 23:14).
    2. When praying it is wise to let your words be few so as to avoid foolishness (Eccl 5:2-3).
    3. The best example is Elijah's short prayer compared to Baal's long one (I Kings 18:36-37).
    4. Asa won a great victory over the Ethiopians with a one-sentence prayer (II Chron 14:11).
    5. Consider the prayer of the apostles as they sought to replace Judas (Acts 1:24-25).
    6. The prayer meeting of the disciples after persecution did not last long (Acts 4:23-31).
  - B. However, long prayers are not wrong. They show a serious and fervent attitude in prayer.
    1. Moses interceded for Israel on at least two occasions for forty days (Deuteronomy 9:25).
    2. Nehemiah, when he heard the bad news from Judah, prayed for certain days (Neh 1:4).
    3. Jesus Himself continued all night in prayer to God on at least occasion (Luke 6:12).

- C. The heathen use repetitions (Matt 6:7-8; I Kings 18:26; Acts 19:34). They will not help you.
  1. The Catholic rosary consists of 165 prayers - 150 to Mary and 15 to God the Father.
  2. Jesus condemns vain repetitions, but remember that some psalms use repetitions (Ps 136).
  3. Jesus condemns vain repetitions. Carefully consider whether the repetition has purpose.
  4. Consider how often Christians say the word "Lord" in their prayers. What is the purpose?
  5. Yet, consider the repetitions of God's name in the prayer by David (II Samuel 7:18-29).
  6. Vain repetitions are usually an empty habit. Pray with the understanding (I Cor 14:15).
- D. Be careful of praying for something that God has already denied you (Deuteronomy 3:23-27).
- E. Be careful of praying for something when you did not obey God in the matter (Joshua 7:10).

VIII. The CONTENT OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Describes the Words Used and Objects of Prayer.

- A. Asking God to manifest His will by some particular event is scriptural, but be careful.
  1. Abraham's servant asked God to reveal Isaac's wife by specific events (Genesis 24:12-14).
  2. Gideon asked God to reassure him by putting out the proverbial fleece (Judges 6:36-40).
    - a. Don't test God like Gideon; God's will had been revealed; don't be weak in faith.
    - b. God does not deal with outward sign gifts or visible manifestations as He once did.
  3. Asking God to intervene unnecessarily - even by promise - is to tempt God (Luke 4:9-12).
  4. When you ask God for a sign in something plain, don't be surprised with a temptation.
  5. If you face a dilemma with two wise options, ask God to close off all but the right one.
  6. If you "cast lots" for an indifferent decision, make sure you have done all that you can.
- B. It is scriptural and common among godly men to pray for God's judgment on the wicked.
  1. Moses, the meekest man on the earth, prayed for the judgment of God (Numbers 16:15).
  2. Moses' final prayer for Israel included judgment on the enemies of the priests (De 33:11).
  3. Nehemiah prayed for judgment upon Sanballat and Tobiah for their mockery (Neh 4:4-5).
  4. David, a man after God's heart, made judgment a common part of his prayers (Psalm 5:10; 10:15; 28:4; 35:4,8,26; 55:15; 59:5; 68:1-2; 79:10,12; 83:13-18; 137:7-9; 140:9-10; 144:6).
  5. Jeremiah prayed for God's judgment on his persecutors (Jer 11:19; 12:3; 17:18; 18:21-23).
  6. Jesus Christ, as recorded prophetically, prayed for judgment (Psalm 69:19-28; 109).
  7. Paul asked God to reward Alexander the coppersmith for his evil deeds (II Tim 4:14-15).
  8. The saints in heaven are praying in the presence of God for judgment (Revelation 6:10).
  9. Make sure such prayer is (1) without personal vengeance and (2) and is not hypocritical.
- C. Remind God of His promises when you pray. This trait is seen often in effectual prayers.
  1. This is best accomplished by quoting relevant promises of scripture during your prayer.
  2. Jacob, when preparing to meet Esau, reminded God of His promises (Genesis 32:9-12).
  3. Moses, when Israel refused to take Canaan, reminded God of His mercy (Num 14:17-20).
  4. David asked God to keep His word immediately upon hearing that word (II Sam 7:18-29).
  5. Jehoshaphat reminded God to hear prayers offered in Solomon's temple (II Chron 20:5-13).
  6. Nehemiah asked God to remember His words to Moses about restoration (Nehemiah 1:8-9).
  7. An excellent promise to invoke (if you are a good parent) is that of Matthew 7:9-11.
  8. Remind God of His promise to hear asking, to honor agreement, to give liberally, etc.
- D. Vows in prayer are effective as shown by the scriptures, but be prudent when vowing.
  1. It is better not to vow in prayer, then to consider vowing and not paying (Eccl 5:4-6).
  2. Hannah vowed that she would give back to God the son He would grant her (I Sam 1:11).
  3. Jephthah vowed unto the Lord foolishly in order to gain God's favor (Judges 11:30-31,34).
- E. Effectual prayer must include praise. God will hear and answer those who praise His glory.
  1. Read Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving (I Sam 2:1-10). The prayer is primarily of praise.
  2. Read Jeremiah's prayer (Jer 32:16-25). Out of ten verses, seven are dedicated to praise.
  3. Read the emphasis on praising God's sovereignty in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 4:23-31).
  4. Consider wisely that Paul and Silas joined singing praises with prayer in jail (Acts 16:25).
  5. Remember that those who delight in the Lord will receive their hearts' desires (Ps 37:4).
- F. Effectual prayer must include thanksgiving. God expects us to rejoice and be thankful.
  1. Sacrifices of blood are no longer required, but those of thanksgiving are (Hebrews 13:15).
  2. Paul's admonition to prayer is sandwiched between joy and thanksgiving (I Thess 5:16-18).
  3. Effectual prayer is defined by Paul as supplication with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6; Col 4:2).

- G. Effectual prayer must be done in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23).
    - 1. Praying in the name of Jesus Christ is more than just mouthing the words of His name.
    - 2. It means praying with Christ's authority, merit, value, work, and glory as your basis.
    - 3. God accepted saints - how much more will He accept Christ (Is 37:35; Je 15:1; Ez 14:14).
  - H. Effectual prayer may include asking God to judge you if He will not answer your request.
    - 1. When making such a strong request, make sure you are praying for the will of God.
    - 2. Moses called on God to forgive Israel or blot his name out of God's book (Exodus 32:32).
    - 3. Paul said he could wish that he were accursed from Christ for his kinsmen (Rom 9:1-3).
  - I. Effectual prayer may include reasoning with God about how His answer will be perceived.
    - 1. Moses reminded God what the Egyptians would think (Ex 32:11-12; Nu 14:13-16; De 9:28).
    - 2. God acknowledged that He does consider the response of the wicked (Deuteronomy 32:27).
    - 3. David prayed judgment on the wicked so the righteous would be encouraged (Ps 58:6-11).
    - 4. David prayed for a token of good so that his enemies would be ashamed (Psalm 86:17).
    - 5. Reason against the wicked by reminding God against their pride (Ps 140:8; Is 10:5-19).
  - J. Effectual prayer may include reasoning with God about the practicality of His response.
    - 1. Moses reasoned with God that he would be better dead than overworked (Num 11:10-17).
    - 2. Joshua reasoned of how God's name would disappear if Israel were defeated (Josh 7:6-9).
    - 3. David prayed for God to reveal Himself through judgment (Ps 74:18-23; 79:9-10; 83:18).
    - 4. David often prayed against death by appealing to his praise (Psalm 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12).
    - 5. Hezekiah reasoned with God about Rabshakeh's blasphemous claims (II Kings 19:15-19).
    - 6. Asa reasoned with God that the battle was actually between God and man (II Chr 14:11).
    - 7. God is jealous, and He will regard reasoning for His great name's sake (I Samuel 12:22; Psalm 106:8; 109:21; 115:1-2; 143:11-12; Isaiah 48:9-11; Ezekiel 20:9,14,22,44; 36:21-24).
  - K. Effectual prayer may include reasoning with God about the righteousness of the situation.
    - 1. God's children have a divine mind that should know some things of God (I Cor 2:10-16).
    - 2. Abraham reasoned with God about destroying Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:23-33; 19:29).
    - 3. Moses reasoned that "favour in my sight" and Israel should mean something (Ex 33:13).
    - 4. Moses reasoned with God about the destruction of Israel for Korah's sin (Numbers 16:22).
    - 5. Jeremiah reasoned with God about the threatenings of the wicked (Jeremiah 18:19-23).
    - 6. We can reason before God through the merit of Jesus Christ His only Son (Romans 8:32).
  - L. Effectual prayer may include reasoning with God to reward your integrity and faithfulness.
    - 1. Hezekiah prayed for God to remember his perfect heart and goodness (II Kings 20:3).
    - 2. Nehemiah asked God to consider all the good he did for Israel (Neh 5:19; 13:14,22,31).
    - 3. We may ask God to forgive and forget our sins and to remember our obedience (Ps 25:7).
    - 4. If done in the right spirit, we may acknowledge our goodness (Psalm 7:8; 18:20-26; 26:1).
    - 5. Yet we must always admit our dependence and unprofitableness (I Cor 15:10; Luke 17:10).
  - M. Effectual prayer may include a serious request for God to hear and answer your prayer.
    - 1. Consider David asking God why He sleeps (Psalm 7:6; 35:23; 44:23; 59:4-5; 78:65; Is 51:9).
    - 2. Do not be ashamed to ask God to hear your prayer (Neh 4:4; Psalm 4:1; 54:2; Dan 9:17-19).
- IX. The OBJECTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Are the Things for Which God Expects Us to Pray.
- A. We should pray for wisdom (Jms 1:5). Solomon prayed for wisdom and obtained it (I Kgs 3:9).
    - 1. One of the requirements for obtaining understanding and wisdom is to pray (Prov 2:3,5-6).
    - 2. But do not forget the importance of seeking, knocking, and obeying (Prov 2:4; John 7:17).
    - 3. By praying for the Holy Spirit (Lu 11:13), we pray for the Spirit of wisdom (Eph 1:15-18).
    - 4. An effectual prayer would include reminding God of His promise of liberality (James 1:5).
    - 5. Do you wish God would offer you gifts as with Solomon? He has (I Kgs 3:5 cp Ma 7:7,11)!
  - B. Jesus assumed men would ask for the Spirit, and He would give it them (Lu 11:13; Jo 4:10).
  - C. Pray for your children (Lam 2:19). Consider Job's example of a perfect man (Job 1:1-5).
    - 1. We can seriously pray for teachers, jobs, friends, lessons, safety, mates, obedience, etc.
    - 2. Should we pray for the conversion of children? regeneration? justification? election?
    - 3. Is any one of God's decrees more established than any other? If not, pray for all things.
    - 4. Such a prayer must include all righteousness and admit that God is right no matter what.

- D. We should pray for our government, so the saints might have freedom and rest (I Tim 2:1-2).
    1. Darius the king of Persia understood and appreciated prayers for kings (Ezra 6:10-12).
    2. Nehemiah prayed that God would give him mercy before king Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 1:11).
    3. God instructed Israel through Jeremiah to pray for the peace of Babylon (Jeremiah 29:7).
    4. Since the hearts of kings are as rivers of water to our God, let us pray (Proverbs 21:1).
    5. Mordecai and Esther prayed for mercy before Ahasuerus and received it (Esther 4:15-17).
  - E. We should pray for deliverance from the wiles of the devil through the victory of Christ.
    1. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection destroyed the devil (I Jn 3:8; He 2:14; Re 12:10-11).
    2. Our offensive action in wrestling with the devil is through prayer (Eph 6:18; Matt 17:21).
    3. The devil is seeking whom he may devour, so we need be sober and vigilant (I Pet 5:8-9).
    4. The disciples did not watch and pray, and they all fled Christ (Matt 26:38-41; Col 4:2).
  - F. We should pray for evangelism that the word of the gospel might go forth and bear fruit.
    1. Paul sought prayer for God to give him the ability of speech and boldness (Eph 6:19-20).
    2. Paul sought prayer for God to provide doors (opportunities) of utterance (Col 4:3-4).
    3. Paul sought prayer for God's blessing and deliverance (II Thess 3:1-2; Romans 15:30-31).
    4. When we see the fields white unto harvest, we should pray for laborers (Matt 9:36-38).
    5. Paul prayed for the conversion of elect Israelites with great fervency (Romans 10:1-4).
  - G. We should pray for daily bread. By doing so we acknowledge basic dependence upon God.
    1. Man cannot live naturally by bread alone, so we see bread used here as a synecdoche.
    2. In the prayer given by Christ to exemplify effectual prayer, we ask for bread (Mat 6:11).
    3. God feeds young ravens that cry (Ps 147:9); young lions seek meat from God (Ps 104:21).
    4. God can provide food supernaturally (Exodus 16:11-15; Numbers 11:31-32; I Kings 17:1-7).
    5. God can multiply food supernaturally (Ma 14:15-21; 15:32-38; I Kgs 17:8-16; II Kgs 4:1-7).
    6. God can also cause food to supply the body with supernatural strength (I Kings 19:4-8).
    7. A wise prayer relative to material provision is the prayer of Agur (Proverbs 30:7-9).
  - H. We should pray for the peace of Jerusalem - our church (Ps 122:6; 51:18; Ep 4:3; II The 3:16).
  - I. We should pray for God to search out sin in our lives (Psalm 139:23-24; 26:2; Job 34:31-32).
- X. The EXAMPLE OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Is the Prayer Given By Jesus Christ As a Pattern.
- A. The Lord's Prayer was provided to teach proper prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4).
    1. We never read of it being repeated as a memorized prayer, and the two accounts differ.
    2. Roman Catholics and Bob Jones University repeat it verbatim as if it had magical value.
  - B. We address God the Father and acknowledge His present position in the high heavens.
    1. The Father is addressed usually, but not exclusively (Ac 7:59; 9:14; I Co 1:2; Re 22:20).
    2. When praying to God, it increases boldness to remember our relationship as His sons.
    3. Acknowledging His place in heaven should help restrain our verbosity (Eccl 5:2).
    4. Acknowledging His place in heaven should lift our minds from the earth (Col 3:1-2).
  - C. We seek the holiness of God and His name by stating our desire for it to be hallowed.
    1. Seeking to sanctify His name, we declare and praise it for its holiness (Rev 4:8).
    2. Seeking to sanctify His name, we define our holy duty (Lu 7:29; I Pet 3:15; II Ti 2:19).
  - D. We seek for the increase of His kingdom; we pray for universal submission to His will.
    1. The disciples obviously were seeking the yet future coming of Christ's kingdom in power.
    2. We may yet pray for the coming of Christ's everlasting kingdom as His soon appearing.
    3. We acknowledge that God's secret will is done in heaven and earth without resistance.
    4. We should desire the saints to keep God's will as do the holy angels (Psalm 103:20-21).
  - E. We show our dependence on Him by praying for insignificant things for which we labour.
    1. Though we work for our daily bread, the Lord must bless our feeble efforts (Ps 127:1).
    2. We ask for daily bread or bread day by day: we do not ask for riches to forget God.
  - F. We confess our sins and acknowledge our integrity and justice in forgiving others theirs.
    1. Confession of sins is an essential part of effectual prayer, but it does not take long.
    2. This petition is a constant reminder of our duty to show mercy to others (Psalm 18:25).
  - G. We pray for delivery from temptation, thus owning our vulnerability and dependence on God.
    1. God has promised not to tempt us above our ability (I Cor 10:13), but we ask for mercy.
    2. Rightfully knowing our hearts, we will beg God for preserving strength (Rom 7:15-25).

- H. We may conclude our prayers with a doxology of praise of God's glory, kingdom, and power.
  - 1. We acknowledge that God has the authority, the ability, and the honour of responding.
  - 2. Having submitted all to God, we close with an affirmation of agreement with "Amen."
  
- XI. The RESULTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Reviews the Answers of Prayers from God's View.
  - A. God has not promised the answer we seek every time we pray. We may not know His will.
    - 1. Jesus prayed three times to avoid the cup of the cross without avail (Matt 26:39-44).
      - a. The prayers, strong crying, and tears of Jesus were heard by God (Hebrews 5:7-8).
      - b. He prayed that He might avoid the cup, but He also prayed for God's will (Mat 26:39).
    - 2. Abraham prayed for Ishmael to be God's son, but God blessed him anyway (Gen 17:18-21).
    - 3. Moses prayed to see the land of Canaan, but God only let him see it (Deut 3:23-27).
    - 4. David prayed for Bathsheba's child, but God would give him Solomon (II Samuel 12:14-24).
    - 5. Paul prayed to have his thorn removed, but God gave him grace instead (II Cor 12:7-9).
    - 6. If we pray presumptuously for our lusts, God just may give us our request (Ps 106:14-15).
  - B. God's timing requires great persistence in prayer and great patience in our experience.
    - 1. Jeremiah once prayed for some men of Judah, and God took ten days to answer (Je 42:7).
    - 2. God knows that his elect cry day and night unto Him, but He bears long (Luke 18:7).
    - 3. Mary and Martha prayed for Jesus to heal Lazarus, but He tarried (John 11:1-7,32-38).
  - C. Prayer does not change God's mind, but God foresaw all prayers in His eternal counsel.
  
- XII. The EFFECTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Are the Results We Should Expect Because of Prayer.
  - A. David said that he loved the Lord because he heard and answered prayer (Psalm 116:1-2).
  - B. Paul promised peace beyond our comprehension, if we learn to pray effectually (Phil 4:6-7).
  
- XIII. The RULES OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Summarize the Requirements for Prayer to Be Effectual.
  - A. Pray Obediently. Be righteous in conduct and fear God (James 5:16; Ps 84:11; I John 3:22).
  - B. Pray Gloriously. Be quick to delight and glory in God (Psalm 37:4; Isaiah 58:14; Job 22:21).
  - C. Pray Boldly. Be aggressive with God as His dear children (Heb 4:16; Gen 18:27; II Kings 9:9).
  - D. Pray Fervently. Be sincere and very earnest in prayer (Luke 22:44; I Cor 7:5; Exodus 32:32).
  - E. Pray Faithfully. Be fully persuaded in God's ability (Heb 11:6; James 1:6-8; Matt 21:22).
  - F. Pray Persistently. Be patient and diligent to continue in prayer (I Thess 5:17; Luke 18:1-8).
  - G. Pray Intelligently. Be ready to reason and remind God (I Cor 14:13; Num 14:17-20; Je 18:20).
  - H. Pray Submissively. Be submissive to God's will against yours (Matt 26:39; II Sam 12:22-23).
  - I. Pray Spiritually. Be in the Spirit and use scriptural prayers (Ep 6:18; Rom 8:26-27; Is 63:10).
  - J. Pray Actively. Be ready and willing to help yourself (Luke 4:12; Mat 7:7-8; II Samuel 15:31).
  
- XIV. The COMPONENTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER Summarize Briefly the Main Aspects of Prayer.
  - A. Praise God. Prayer should include efforts to ascribe greatness to our God and His works.
  - B. Confess Sins. Prayer should include a free confession of our sinfulness and specific sins.
  - C. Thank God. Prayer should thanksgiving for all God has done and prayers already answered.
  - D. Petition God. Prayer should include a request for those things that we need and desire.
  - E. Acknowledge Christ. Prayer should include appeal and trust in Christ's merit and name.

## BIBLE GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTUAL PRAYER

1. PRAY OBEDIENTLY. Fear God and be righteous in conduct before Him.  

|                    |               |                |             |
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| <u>Psalm 34:15</u> | Psalm 84:11   | I John 3:22    | Psalm 66:18 |
|                    | Proverbs 15:8 | Proverbs 28:9  | John 9:31   |
|                    | I Peter 3:7   | Psalm 18:25-26 | Matthew 7:2 |
  
2. PRAY GLORIOUSLY. Delight in God and glory in His works and nature.  

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| <u>Psalm 37:4</u> | Job 22:21 | Isaiah 58:14 | Job 34:9 |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|----------|
  
3. PRAY BOLDLY. Be aggressive with God as His dear children and in Christ.  

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| <u>Hebrews 4:16</u> | Hebrews 10:18-22 | Genesis 18:27   | Genesis 32:26 |
|                     | II Kings 2:9-10  | Exodus 33:12-23 | Joshua 10:12  |
  
4. PRAY FERVENTLY. Be sincere and extremely earnest in soul during prayer.  

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|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| <u>James 5:16</u> | Luke 22:44        | I Samuel 1:10    | Jeremiah 29:13 |
|                   | I Corinthians 7:5 | Matthew 17:20-21 | Exodus 32:32   |
|                   | Hebrews 5:7       | Mark 1:35        | Psalm 55:17    |
  
5. PRAY FAITHFULLY. Be fully persuaded in your mind that God is very able.  

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|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <u>Hebrews 11:6</u> | James 1:6-8       | I Timothy 2:8   | Matthew 21:22     |
|                     | Ephesians 3:20-21 | Jeremiah 33:2-3 | Philippians 4:6-7 |
  
6. PRAY PERSISTENTLY. Be patient and diligent to continue prayer always.  

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|---------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>I Thess 5:17</u> | Matthew 15:22-28 | Luke 11:5-8  | Luke 16:1-8    |
|                     | Colossians 4:2   | Romans 12:12 | Ephesians 6:18 |
  
7. PRAY INTELLIGENTLY. Know God, His promises, and good godly reasoning.  

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| <u>I Cor 14:13</u> | Numbers 14:17-20 | Ecc 5:1-7      | II Samuel 7:27 |
|                    | II Chron 14:11   | Psalm 6:5      | Jeremiah 18:20 |
|                    | Matthew 6:5-6    | I John 5:14-15 | Matthew 18:19  |
  
8. PRAY SUBMISSIVELY. Be submissive to God's will regardless of your desire.  

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|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <u>James 4:15</u> | Matthew 26:39 | II Sam 12:22-23 | Deut 3:23-27 |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
  
9. PRAY SPIRITUALLY. Be in the Spirit and pray as the Spirit moved others.  

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|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| <u>Jude 20</u> | Ephesians 6:18 | Romans 8:26-27 | Isaiah 63:10 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
  
10. PRAY ACTIVELY. Be ready and willing to do all that you can for yourself.  

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|------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <u>Luke 4:12</u> | Matthew 7:7-8 | Acts 2:23 | II Samuel 15:31 |
|------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|