

PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that, PRAYER has been the mighty power that has moved not only God, but man. Jacob was a man of prayer, and angels came down from heaven to converse with him.

One of Jacob's prayers was answered in the wonderful interview at Mahanaim (Gen.32:1-2) that resulted in his having a mighty blessing, and in the softening the heart of his brother Esau. cf. (Gen. 32:1-3).

The child Samuel was given in answer to Hannah's prayer. cf. (I Sam. 1:1-20).

. Elijah's prayer closed up the heavens for three years and six months and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain. cf. ((James5:17-18). James also tells us that the prophet Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. I am thankful

that those men and women who were so mighty in prayer were just like us and we can seek a closer walk with God and be like them. We read that on another occasion Elijah brought down fire on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal cried long and loud, but no answer came. The God of Elijah heard and answered his prayer immediately cf. (I Kings 18:22-39). Let us remember that the God of Elijah still lives. The prophet is long gone, but his God still lives and we have the same access to Him that Elijah had. We have the same warrant to go to God and ask the fire from heaven to come down and consume our lusts and passions, to burn up our dross, and let Christ shine through us. Elijah prayed again, and life came back to a dead child. We see that in (I Kings 17:23-24) that says; “ *And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.*” Elisha, the young prophet that followed Elijah did the same thing. Many of your children are dead in trespasses and sins. Rise up and do as Elijah and Elisha did; entreat God to raise them up in answer to your prayers. This can and will happen only if you will submit yourself to God and draw nigh unto Him and He will draw nigh unto you. The closer you get to God the farther the devil will stay from you and you will begin to experience the mighty works of God in your life.

GOD ANSWERS SINCERE PRAYER.

Look at Samson. Even after disobeying God He prayed earnestly and sincerely asking God to help him once again; and his strength came back, so that he slew more at his death than during his life. He was a restored transgressor and again he had power from God. If you who have been out of fellowship with God and you renew that fellowship with Him you will see how quickly God will answer your prayer. Job prayed, and his trial was turned into victory. Light came in the place of darkness, and God lifted him up above the height of his former prosperity in answer to prayer.

Daniel prayed to God, and Gabriel came to tell him that he was a man greatly beloved of God. Three times that message came to him from heaven in answer to sincere prayer. The secrets of heaven were imparted to him, and he was told that God's Son was going to be cut off for the sins of His people. Peter had gone up to the housetop to pray in the afternoon, when he had that wonderful vision of the sheet let down from heaven. It was when sincere prayer was made without ceasing unto God for Peter, that the angel was sent to deliver him from prison. So all through the Scriptures you will find that when sincere believing prayer went up to God,

the answer came down. I think it would be a very interesting study to go right through the Bible and see what has happened while God's people have been on their knees calling upon him. Certainly the study would greatly strengthen our faith showing, as it would, how wonderfully God has heard and delivered, when the sincere cry has gone up to Him for help. Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi. As they prayed and sang

praises, the place was shaken, and the jailer was converted. cf. (Acts 16:23-30). This one conversion has probably done more than any other recorded in the Bible to bring people into the kingdom of God. How many have been blessed in seeking to answer the question; "What must I do to be saved?" It was the sincere prayer of those two godly men that brought the jailer to his knees, and that brought blessing to him and his family. Do You remember how Stephen looked up and saw heaven open as he prayed and he saw the Son of God at the right hand of God, the light of heaven fell on his face so that it shined. Remember, too, how the face of Moses shined as he came down from the Mountain after he had been in communion with God. So when we really get into communion with God, He lifts up His countenance upon us; and instead of our having gloomy looks, our faces will shine, because God has heard and answered our prayers. I want to call special attention to Christ as an example for us in all things; in nothing more than in prayer. We read that Christ prayed to His Father for everything. Every great crisis in His life was preceded by prayer. Let me quote a few passages here that I never noticed till a few years

ago that Christ was even praying at His baptism. As He prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him. Another great event in His life was His Transfiguration. "*As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.*"cf. (Luke & Matt. 17:1-3)

9:29). We read again: "*It came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*". (Lk. 6"12) This is the only place where it is recorded that the Savior spent a whole night in prayer. What was about to take place? When He came down from the mountain He gathered His disciples around Him, and preached that great discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount, the most wonderful sermon that has ever been preached to mortal men. Probably no sermon has done so much good, and it was preceded by a night of prayer. Pastors, if our sermons are going to reach the hearts and consciences of the people, we must be much in prayer to God, that there may be power with the word. In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus at the grave of Lazarus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "*Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me; and I know that Thou hearest Me always*" (Jn. 11:41b-42a) Notice, that before He spoke the dead to life He spoke to His Father. If our spiritually dead ones are to be raised, we must first get power with God. The reason we so often fail in moving our fellowmen and women is that we try to win them without first getting power with God. Jesus was in communion with His Father, and so He could be assured that His prayers were heard and answered. We read again, in the twelfth chapter of John, that He again prayed to the Father. I think this is one of the saddest chapters in the whole Bible. He was about to leave the Jewish nation and to make atonement for the sin of the world. Hear what He says: "*Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" (Jn.12:27-28) He was almost under the shadow of the Cross; the iniquities of mankind were about to be laid upon Him; one of His twelve disciples was going to deny Him and swear he never knew Him; another was to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver; all were to forsake Him and flee. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, and He prays; when His soul was troubled, God spoke to Him. Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, while He prayed, an angel appeared to strengthen Him In answer to His cry, "*Father, glorify Thy Name,*" He hears a voice coming down from the glory - "*I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" Another memorable prayer of our Lord was also in the Garden of

Gethsemane: "*He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed*" I would draw your attention to the recorded fact that four times the answer came right down from heaven while the Savior prayed to God. The first time was at His baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him in answer to His prayer. Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, The Father spoke to Him. Then when the Greeks came desiring to see Him, the voice of The Father was heard

responding to His call; and again, when He cried to the Father in the midst of His agony, a direct response was given. These things are recorded, so I doubt not, that we may be encouraged to pray. We read that His disciples came to Him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." It is not recorded that He taught them how to preach. I have often said that I would rather know how to pray like Daniel than to preach like Paul. Paul was a great preacher because he was also a great man of prayer.

If you get love into your soul, so that the grace of God may come down in answer to prayer, there will be no trouble about reaching and preaching to the people of God. It is not by eloquent sermons that perishing souls are going to be reached; we need the power of God in order that the blessing may come down. The prayer our Lord taught his disciples is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. I think that the Lord's prayer, more properly, is that in the seventeenth chapter of John. That is the longest prayer on record that Jesus prayed. You can read it slowly and carefully in about four or five minutes. I think we may learn a lesson here. Our Master's prayers were short when offered in public; when He was alone with God that was a different thing, and He could spend the whole night in communion with His Father. My experience is that those who pray most in their closets generally make short prayers in public. Long prayers are too often not prayers at all, and they weary the people. How short and effective the publican's prayer was: "*God be merciful to me a sinner!*" The Syrophenician woman's prayer was shorter still, but sincere: "*Lord help me!*" She went right to the mark, and she got what she wanted. The prayer of the thief on the cross was also a short and effective one: "*Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom!*" Peter's prayer as he began to sink into the water was even shorter, "*Lord, save me, or I perish!*" So, if you go through the Scriptures, you will find that the prayers that brought immediate answers were generally brief and sincere. Let our prayers be to the point, telling God exactly what we need. I know that there are those that will disagree with me, saying that your prayers should be detailed and specific. The specific I totally agree with but the reason and occasion will determine the length of your prayer. As I have mentioned before, God is not moved with the length of the prayer or position you take when you pray but He is moved by the condition of your heart and your motive. Remember the words of Jesus in (Mat. 6:7) as translated in the NIV and it says; "*And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.*" In the prayer of our Lord, in (John 17), we find that He made seven requests -, four for His disciples around Him, and two for the disciples of succeeding ages and finally one for Himself. Six times in that one prayer He repeats that God had sent Him. The world looked upon Him as an impostor; and He wanted them to know that he was sent from heaven. He speaks of the world nine times, and makes mention of His disciples and those who believe on Him fifty times In 26 verses. This definitely was Not a selfish prayer. Christ's last prayer on the Cross was a short one: "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*" I believe that prayer was

answered. We find that right there in front of the Cross, a Roman centurion was converted. It was probably in answer to the Savior's prayer. The conversion of the thief, I believe, was in answer to that prayer of our blessed Lord. Saul of Tarsus may have heard it, and the words may have followed him as he traveled to Damascus; so that when the Lord spoke to him on the way, he may have recognized the voice. One thing we do know; that on the day of Pentecost some of the enemies of the Lord were converted. Surely that was in answer to the prayer, "*Father, forgive them!*" Hence we see that prayer holds a high place among the exercises of a spiritual life. All God's great people have been praying people. Look, for instance, at Baxter! He stained his study walls with praying breath; and after he was anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and converted hundreds. Luther and his companions were men of such mighty pleading with God, that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the Cross. John Knox grasped all Scotland in his strong arms of faith; his prayers terrified tyrants. Whitefield, after much holy, faithful closet pleading, went to the Devil's fair, and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley turn more than ten thousand souls to the Lord! Look at the praying Finney, whose prayers, faith, sermons and writings, have shaken this whole

country, and sent a wave of blessing through the churches on both sides of the sea.

Dr. Guthrie thus speaks of prayer and its necessity: "The first true sign of spiritual life is prayer, and it is also the means of maintaining it. Man can as well live physically without breathing, as spiritually without praying." There is a class of animals known as the cetaceous, neither fish nor seafowl that inhabit the deep. It is their home, they never leave it for the shore; yet, though swimming beneath its waves, and abiding in its darkest depths, they occasionally have a need to rise to the surface that they may breathe the air. Without that, these monarchs of the deep could not exist in the dense element in which they live, and move, and have their being. And something like what is imposed on them by a physical necessity, the Christian has to do by a spiritual one. It is by frequently ascending up to God, by rising through prayer into a loftier, purer region for supplies of Divine grace, that they maintain their spiritual life. Prevent the cetaceous mammals from rising to the surface, they die for want of breath; prevent the Christian from rising to God, and they die for want of prayer. "*Give me children*" cried Rachel, "*or else I die.*" "Let me breathe," says a man gasping for air, "or else I die." "Let me pray," says the Christian, "or else I die." Luther, when most pressed with work, said, "I have so much to do that I cannot get on without three hours a day of praying." And not only do theologians think and speak highly of prayer; men of all ranks and positions in life have felt the same. It reminds me of a statement that I made to my wife one day as

we sat at the gas station in our Hyundai car waiting for our chance to pull up to the next open pump. While we were waiting a bright shiny silver Rolls Royce pulled up beside us. I said to my wife, "I don't care how much they cost or how good they look they all need gas to keep running." Prayer is the pumping station for Christians to renew our power to keep our light shining before the world as we are commanded to do in (Matt. 5:16) that says; "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" General Havelock rose at four o'clock, if the hour for marching was six so he would have time to talk to God before starting the march. Rather than lose the precious privilege of communion with God before setting

out, Sir Matthew Hale says: "If I omit praying and reading God's Word in the morning, nothing goes well all day." And I say, "amen to the truth." Mc Cheyne (a well known Scottish Preacher) once said; "A great part of my time is spent in getting my heart in tune for prayer. It is the link that connects earth with heaven." A comprehensive view of the subject will show that there **are ten** elements which are essential to true and effective prayer. The first is **Adoration**; we cannot meet God on a level at the start. We must approach Him as One far beyond our reach or sight. The next is **Confession**; sin must be put out of the way. We cannot have any communion with God while there is any transgression between us. King David realized this and it is stated in.)Ps. 66:18-19) "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*" If there exists some wrong you have done a man, you cannot expect that man's favor until you go to him and confess the fault. **Restitution** is another; we have to make good the wrong as soon as possible. **Thanksgiving** is the next; we must be thankful for what God has done for us already. Then comes **Forgiveness**, and **then Unity**; . These things clear the way for prayer to get through to God. For these things to take, there must be an exercising of Faith. *Thus influenced, we shall be ready to offer direct **Petition**. We hear a good deal of praying that is just exhorting, and if you did not see the person's eyes closed, you would suppose they were exhorting. Then, much that is called prayer is simply finding fault. There needs to be more petition in our prayers. After all these, there must come Submission. While praying, **we must be ready to accept the will of God.**(that was the example of our Lord.cf (Matt 26:39&42). Finally there is the prayer of **Intercession**. We must be willing to intercede for the needs of our brothers and sisters in The Lord. Prayers of this construction get through to God and are Always answered. All of these elements can be incorporated into one prayer but I will present a detailed analysis of each one in the following chapters. "Lord, what a change within us one short hour Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make! What heavy burdens from our bosoms take; What parched grounds refresh as with a shower. We kneel - and all around us seems to lower, We rise and all, the distant and the near, Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear; we kneel: how weak! we rise: how full of power! Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, Or others - that we are not always strong? That we are ever overborne with care; That we should ever weak or heartless be, Anxious or troubled, while with us is prayer, And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?" _Trench. The following chapters will look individually at the elements of successful prayers mentioned above. These type of prayers get Gods attention and response.