

Enlarging in Prayer

Foundations Of Prayer

Prayer and Fasting Prophetic Words:

- **The picture of us tugging at his garment. He hears us and His favour is on us. He is pleased with the offering and sacrifice and has held out the sceptre to us.**
- **Unity is key for God to command His blessing. Let us not just pretend to be untied but let us love one another in unity.**
- **Each of us who has been involved in the fast, in whatever way, had been building an altar to the Lord and He was going to answer by fire.**

Unity or oneness

Two plastic containers super glued together will be United but easily pulled apart. But when a chemical is used to melt the plastic and they are joined it becomes one.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at the theme enlarging in prayer. One of the most important parts of our lives and a place where everything flows from is the place of prayer.

If we don't enlarge in our prayer lives and we start spreading out physically and enlarging in ministry, in wealth, in gifting. Very soon our spirit man will not be big enough to keep us grounded and we will soon find ourselves being carried away by all that is going on around us.

We will be looking at prayer as a foundation for our enlargement and I want to encourage you to make a commitment that in these next 2 months you will increase in prayer. You will give time to grow in your time in prayer.

Books:

- **Growing in Prayer - Mike Bickle**
- **The Hour That Changes the World - Dick Eastman**

Prayer like every other good thing in life starts a discipline. You set out time to do it, you find it hard at the start, you might even find it boring, you

Aim to move from Duty To Delight

When you are starting out on the journey of prayer (not just new believers) it might start as a duty but if you keep persisting in it, it will eventually become a delight.

e.g. Going to the Gym.

1 - Prayer is communication with God.

It is our means of speaking to and hearing from God.

The disciples had been watching Jesus pray and they saw he prayed different to the way they knew how to pray.

Then they asked him please teach us to pray.

Matthew 6:5-13

“5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

You are praising Him

Worshiping Him

Declaring His Kingdom here on earth

Asking Him for your needs.

You are communicating with God.

2 - Prayer is connecting with the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the one who energises us to love God. Our love for God is what causes us to overflow in love for others.

We have been learning about praying in the Holy Spirit and growing our Spirit man.

- **I am a Spirit**
- **Who has a soul**
- **And lives in a body**

Jesus made an absolute statement about our inability to walk in the fullness of our destinies in God without growing in prayer. He said that unless we abide in Him, we can do nothing related to bearing fruit or maturing in our spiritual lives:

***He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
—JOHN 15:5***

Illustration:

A plant has branches that need to abide in the vine.

Because we are not the source of spiritual life ourselves, we cannot generate it, nor can we receive it unless we abide in Christ.

Just as it is impossible for us to fly even if we push ourselves, it is impossible for us to generate spiritual life.

It is not an issue of practice; we were not created to be able to fly! And neither were we created to have a Spirit-life while living independently of the Holy Spirit.

That is why Jesus said we needed to be born again. But just being born again is the first step, we must abide in Christ, in the vine.

We must abide in Christ by prayer and connection with the Holy Spirit to make our lives work.

We pray to keep that connection with the Vine through the Holy Spirit. It is in the secret place of prayer that we remain connected to the vine.

- **We cannot remain green and alive if we are not connect to the vine.**
- **We cannot be connected to the vine without a prayer life.**

- **We cannot bear fruit when you are not connected to the vine.**

3 - Prayer is the way to receive Gods blessings:

I know some believers twitch and have a passive indifferent attitude towards receiving God's blessings. They prefer the view of prayer being about connecting with God and feel it is humility not to desire any blessing from the Lord.

Jesus never affirmed a passive attitude of indifference about receiving from Him. It is not true humility but false humility not to desire the blessing that Jesus has ordained for His people.

We do not need to choose between the two views on prayer; we can have both greater intimacy with God and more blessing in our circumstances, as well as more power in our ministry from answered prayers.

God has chosen to give some of His blessings only as His people pray for them with confidence.

Isaiah 30:19

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem;

You shall weep no more.

He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry;

When He hears it, He will answer you."

Receiving more from God is not about convincing Him to be willing to give us more. Rather it is about God convincing His people to pray for more with confidence.

Some of God's promises for increased blessings are not guarantees but invitations to partner with Him in Holiness, believing, persevering Prayer.

Many promises include the conditional word "if"- if we call out to Him, then God promises to answer in specific ways.

You will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

–DEUTERONOMY 4:29

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face...then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

–2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

–LUKE 11:13

Characteristics of Effective Prayer:

Prayer is first of all about relationship with God, but it is also about results - results that help to fulfil God's will on the earth.

The apostle James, who was known in the early church as a great man of prayer, gave the church invaluable insight into this subject. His letter in the New Testament includes his teaching on effective prayer and what it accomplishes.

James 5:13-18

***“13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*”**

1 - EFFECTIVE PRAYER IS ROOTED IN FAITH

Faith is confidence in God. Hey 11:1 says “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

The prayer of faith mentioned in James 5:15 is prayer that is rooted in a threefold confidence in God.

Firstly, it is prayer with confidence in the authority of Jesus over sickness and all the works of darkness.

Jesus declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Our faith is to be anchored in the knowledge of His authority over every other power that exists.

Secondly, it is prayer with confidence in the blood of Jesus that qualifies weak people such as us to be vessels that release His power and receive His blessings.

In the Book of Hebrews we learn that we have "boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).

Thirdly, it is prayer with confidence in the Father's love for us and His desire to heal, set free, and bless His people by the work of the Holy Spirit.

God is our Father; He is eager to hear the prayers of His children.

In Luke 11 Jesus concluded His teaching on prayer, saying,

"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?... 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 11:11-13).

We pray in faith, knowing that God, whose heart burns with passion for us, really does desire to bless us.

2 - EFFECTIVE PRAYER IS IN THE CONTEXT OF GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

In teaching on effective prayer, James exhorted us to confess our sins to one another:

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

We are encouraged and exhorted to have strong relationships with others. In our Home Church setting this can be encouraged, we confess our sins one to another and pray for one another and the bible promises healing.

Matt 18:19

“19 “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”

You can't be going around holding grudges with people and be expecting to have an effective prayer life.

Marriage:

Even in the context of the marriage the bible exhorts us to be in unity with our spouse so that our prayers will not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

“7 In the same way, you husbands must give honour to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.”

3 - EFFECTIVE PRAYER COMES FROM A LIFESTYLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

A very important condition for effectual prayer is to be committed to walking out a lifestyle of righteousness before God and people, as indicated in

James 5:16:

"The effective... prayer of a righteous man avails much."

The "righteous man" in this passage is any believer who sets his heart to obey Jesus as he seeks to walk in godly character with a lifestyle of practicing the truth.

1 John 1:6

“6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

Setting our hearts to obey is very important, even if we fall short of mature, consistent obedience. I have never met a person who is so mature in righteousness that he is above all temptation and never falls short in his walk with God.

4 - EFFECTIVE PRAYER IS PRAYER THAT IS EARNEST

Using the prophet Elijah as an example, the apostle James taught that one characteristic of effective prayer is earnestness in prayer:

***"Elijah...prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain"
James 5:17.***

What does it mean to be earnest?

It is important to understand what earnest prayer is because it is one of the primary conditions of effective prayer as set forth in the Scripture.

Two ways to describe Earnest prayer:

Firstly, earnest prayers comes from a heart that is engaged with God.

To be earnest implies that we are not praying mechanically or just going through the motions.

Being earnest is the opposite of speaking our prayers mindlessly into the air. We are to focus our minds and attention toward the Lord when we pray.

Secondly, earnest prayer is prayer that is persistent.

Even Jesus teaches us to be persistent in prayer.

Luke 11:5-10- The story of the man who is asleep and his friend comes to him at midnight asking for bread.

Jesus ends the story by saying:

"8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[a] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Luke 18:1-7 - The Parable of the persistent widow.

Jesus ends the parable by saying

"7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

The Greek word proseuche translated as "earnestly" in James 5 literally means "he prayed with prayer," which is an idiom expressing persistence in prayer. Hence, the translators said of Elijah that he "prayed earnestly."

We must refuse to be denied answers to prayers that are in agreement with God's will. We must never stop asking and thanking God for the answers to prayers that are offered in His will until we see them with our eyes. We must not be casual about our prayer requests but persistent and tenacious.

Earnest prayers don't have to be loud
Earnest prayers doesn't depend on what we feel
Weak people can pray earnestly

Conclusion:

Coming back to the the point of prayer being a means of connection with the Holy Spirit.

I really feel a sense that there might be some people here who have lost that connection. It feels almost like you have been severed from the vine and a branch severed from the vine can keep looking green for a bit but then after a while it dries up and dies.

Are you feeling like you are disconnected from the Holy Spirit?