

# HOW TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY

## PRAYER STARTS WHEELS MOVING



Many believers are concerned for unsaved or backsliding loved ones, but are praying in fear and anxiety instead of expectant faith. This has made me look for a definite way of praying and also for a definite promise on which to base our faith.

### **THE BELIEVER'S AUTHORITY**

First of all, we must know who we are in Christ, and exercise our authority as believers, against the devil and his opposing forces. We must know that through Jesus we have complete victory. (Rom. 8:37), for Jesus completely defeated the devil at Calvary (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8) and overcame all the power of the devil. (Luk. 10:19). This is God's Word, and He means what He says. The devil does not believe he is defeated, however, for he does not believe anything and continues to hinder and discourage those who will give in to him (1 Pet. 5:8). In other words, Satan tests us to see if we will give in to his attack or not, and unfortunately, too many believers forget who they are in Christ, and that Satan is a defeated enemy, and they

give in to him. However, we must resist the devil and not give in to him. (James 4:7). We must persist and persevere, in spite of seeming impossibilities, and we shall reap the harvest (Gal. 6:9), for with God nothing is impossible, and He will reward those who seek Him with confidence and expectant faith. (Heb. 11:6). Jesus often said "Let it happen, then, just as you believe" Mat. 8:13; 9:29. What is faith?

### **EXAMPLES OF EVERYDAY FAITH**

The farmer sows his seed, and though he sees nothing happening, by faith he knows he will receive a harvest at the right time.

A man seats himself in a train bound for some distant destination. He is unconcerned about his journey. By faith in the railway, he believes he will reach his destination. Many railpoints, junctions and crossings will have to be negotiated, but that is the railway's responsibility. He sits back and reads or sleeps.

And as we bring our need to the Lord, let us commit that need to the Lord, and leave the miracle to Him. Let us not be concerned with the difficulties and problems of bringing about the answer. That is God's business, and His ways are different from yours and His thoughts are not like yours. (Is. 55:8-9).

When you take your watch to the watchmaker for repairs, he insists that you leave it with him until repairs are effected. He cannot repair it if you take it away with you. Likewise, we must leave our need with the Lord, and not be full of fear and doubt. Only one thing is impossible with God, and that is to answer our prayer when we try to work out the problem ourselves, in fear and uncertainty. This is unbelief, and without faith no one can please God. Read Heb. 11:6.

Let us be like Paul and Silas in Acts 16:25. Having asked God for help, they thought about His greatness and faithfulness, and in spite of their wounds and hopeless circumstances, they sang praises to God, and God shook the prison and released them.

That was faith in the greatness of God and not in the hopelessness of their circumstances. Faith does the impossible.

### **THE DEVIL'S SUBTLE DEVICES AND OUR ATTITUDE**

Let us have faith in God, and not in our circumstances; let us fight against the negative thoughts that Satan will put in our minds. He will suggest to us that the situation is getting worse instead of better. He will show us the appearance of things as the evidence of a worsening situation. i.e. the symptoms and medical report in the case of sickness. He will even cause a dear friend to speak to you in a way designed to cause fear and doubt. He will draw your attention to a similar circumstance in somebody's life that ended in tragedy. He will heap up

evidence before your mind that points overwhelmingly to defeat. But thank God, as believers we do not need to look at appearances, symptoms and to the talk of people, for we look at the evidence of faith, for Heb. 11:1 tells us that faith is to be certain of the things we cannot see. Faith is that which we see until such time as it materializes into the answer to our prayer. This period of waiting requires our patience; it requires our persistent expectation of God's undertaking in spite of all odds; it requires our constant warfare against the devil's onslaught of doubt and negative persuasions; it requires our constant attunement to God and His unfulfilling promises in spite of all apparent failure. This brings us to consider His promises written in His Word.

## **GOD'S PROMISES**

These are written contracts in black and white, between God and the believer, and established forever. Ps. 89:34 says God will not take back even one promise He has made. We can safely place our faith in God's Word, for God is able to carry out His promises and there are over a thousand. (1 Kgs. 8:56). Abraham was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what He had promised. (Rom. 4:21). He waited year after year. Sarah was getting older, and the possibility of a son at her age of seventy odd was humanly speaking impossible in the natural, but he allowed no thought of that to enter his mind. **God had promised** – therefore it was God's responsibility. He took hold of the promise – God's contract with him. Nothing would sway his faith. In God's time, he received his son. God is never too late and never too early. Be encouraged therefore, and keep believing. God is greater than your need.

## **SALVATION**

Let us too, take hold of God's promise for our need. Is it for a loved one to be saved? One who seems far from God? The disciples mentioned a difficult case to the Lord. "Who then can be saved Lord?" they asked in Mat. 19:25-26. Jesus said: "This is impossible for man, but for God everything is possible." God will soften that stony heart; He will change that attitude. Pray and leave the impossible to God, ignore the appearances, and keep thanking and praising God, for His miracle working power. Reprimand Satan for his opposition and take charge over his evil power in the Name of Jesus, even as Paul did in Acts 16:18. Don't hesitate to use your authority as a believer. Jn. 14:13; Acts 3:6,16. As that loved one perhaps rebels more forcibly than ever before, recognise that it is Satan causing this. War against Satan continually in the spiritual realm through the medium of the prayer of faith, commanding him to set the captive free in the Name of Jesus. Don't be discouraged when there seems to be no apparent change. I say "apparent", because we cannot see the change that is taking place inside the heart and mind of the person. The opposition is definite evidence of a spiritual warfare going on. (Eph. 6:12). and as believers we are on the victory side.

Show love and grace, even though you may be criticised and insulted.

At the right time, God will have His way. "He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins." (Jn. 6:37; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

## **HEALING**

Much the same attitude should be adopted should you pray for the healing of a sick body. Be bold and strong in faith. Exercise your authority as a believer, and claim healing according to God's promises. Ps. 103:3 "He forgives **ALL** my sins and heals **ALL** my diseases." Mat. 8:17 "He Himself took our sickness and carried away our diseases." 1 Pet. 2:24 "... It is by His wounds that we have been healed." Mk. 16:17,18 "... they will place their hands on sick people, who will get well." These are positive statements of fact. The sick **WILL** get well. It is not a statement of "perhaps" or "maybe" or "if", but a positive "will get well". Therefore let us place our faith on these positive statements of fact, God's Word of written contract between believer and Himself, and expect an answer to our prayer. At the right time this faith will materialise as a reality. God cannot fail.

## **HOW TO INCREASE YOUR FAITH**

Rom. 10:17 says "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ." We have faith in people we know. We know if they are trustworthy and capable. We mould our faith according to our knowledge of their character. How can we have faith in God if we don't know Him, His attitude to us and His will for us? Therefore let us get to know God's will for us by reading His Word and spending time in meditation, getting to know Him better. 1 Jn. 5:14-15 says this gives us courage and faith that expects to receive from our loving Heavenly Father, who is longing to pour His blessings on His children. Keep believing and expecting. God will honour simple faith.

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(A Gospel Literature Mission financed by donations)

(Reg. No. 1961/001798/08)