

## "The Power of Prayer"

Believing in the power of prayer is really believing in the power of God to answer prayer. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're examining the power of prayer.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's word opens the door for us to understand the power, the authority, and the compassion of our Father in heaven. We learn from Scripture that He is our Creator and the one who sustains our lives and our universe. He is the God who cares, who hears our prayers, who tells us the truth and guides our morals. He is the God to whom we all must one day give an account for our lives. Jesus tells us to address Him as "Our Father." Thanks for tuning in. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Someone says, well, "I don't know what's happening to our marriage. Our love for each other seems to be fading away. There seems to be no hope." "Have you prayed about it?" You might say, well, "I don't know what to do about my life. What should I do?" "Have you prayed about it?" "Life is really hard for me right now. There seems to be so many expenses and so little money. There are so many demands and so little time." "Have you prayed about it?" We worry about sin and say, "I just don't know how to deal with temptation. And I'm so weak." "Have you prayed about it?" We worry about our lost friends and family. We say, well, "You can talk to them if you want to, but it won't do any good. I don't think they want to follow God." "Have you prayed about it?"

I believe in the power of prayer, because I believe in the power of God. When we love and serve God, our prayers matter to our Father. We don't have to beg God to hear our prayers; He invites us to pray!

We offer this study, The Power of Prayer, free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Matthew 7:7 to 11, and examine the power of prayer and how it works in our lives.

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus found in Matthew 7 verses 7 to 11. Where Jesus Himself talks about the power of prayer.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and (the door) it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

That's a reading from the words of Jesus found in scripture. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that we can come to You and ask. That we can seek and find. And that we can knock and the door will be opened. Father we're thankful for all Your love and for Your kindness and goodness. And bless us Father as we study. And help us always to love You and to serve You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer is a good habit, but praying by habit only is a very poor habit. Prayer out of habit really misses the point; it shows a lack of belief. You see real prayer, heartfelt and fervent, blesses both God and man. Proverbs 15:8 says that, “the prayer of the upright is His delight.” God wants to hear you; He wants to hear your heart and soul. James 5:16 to 18 says that, “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.” Prayer can do anything that God can and will do.

It is a great blessing to come away from prayer having shared our hearts, our burdens, our fears, and our concerns with our Father, knowing that He cares to listen and CAN DO SOMETHING about them.

The words of Matthew 7:7 to 8 ring true. You know the object of asking is to receive. The aim of seeking is to find. Now the goal of knocking is to have the door opened. God invites us to ask, seek and knock. Prayer can open the door to anything God can and will do. Since I cannot do many things, prayer reminds me of my dependency on God. I trust God, and trusting God means that my prayers matter! God will answer our prayers in ways that He wouldn’t have answered if we failed to pray and asked. Divine solutions are always the best solutions, the wisest solutions, and the right solutions for everyone.

Prayer releases the power of God. My friend, Greg Tidwell of Columbus, Ohio, recently wrote in a book on prayer published by Lads to Leaders: “Recognizing the limitless ability of God is vital to understanding the power of prayer. God’s ability to provide is limitless, and prayer is the key that opens the door to His abundant grace.” 2 Corinthians 9 and verse 8 says, “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” We think sometimes it all depends on us and we forget God is able to make all grace abound. God can do what we can’t do. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19 and verse 26, “with God all things are possible.”

Now the God who created the world and raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead can help you with your troubles and trials. The God who sent the flood and parted the waters of the Red Sea isn’t limited. The Lord Jesus who fed the 5000 from five loaves and two fish, stilled the raging waters of the Sea of Galilee, and walked upon the water can do great things beyond our understanding. Psalm 103:1 to 5 reminds us, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.”

Paul glorifies God in Ephesians 3:20 to 21: “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” God can do more than we can imagine—exceedingly, abundantly more! God can do more than we can ask—exceedingly, abundantly more!

2 Kings 19 tells how Hezekiah and Jerusalem were surrounded by the powerful king of Assyria and 185,000 troops. Hezekiah prayed to God for deliverance. 2 Kings 19:35 says, “Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead.” Does prayer work? Of course it does! When Israel sinned grievously; Moses prayed and saved a nation.

In Joshua chapter ten, Joshua spoke to the Lord and the sun stood still. In 1 Samuel chapter 1, Hannah prayed for a son; and God gave her Samuel. In 1 Kings 3, God gave Solomon the opportunity to “ask what I shall give you.” Solomon realizing his inexperience as a king, asked for “an understanding mind to govern your people.” God gave Him a wise and discerning mind and many other blessings.

James 5 and verse 17 tells how Elijah, a man with a nature like ours, “prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it did not for three years and six months.” Elijah in 1 Kings 18 prayed for fire to come down from heaven and consume a sacrifice, and it happened. Later Elijah prayed for rain, and it did that very day!” Let’s remember that Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. If God heard Elijah’s prayer, He can hear ours also.

In 2 Kings 20, Hezekiah became sick and he was at the point of death. Isaiah told him to set his house in order. Well weeping bitterly, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and he prayed for God to remember him. And God remembered his faithful service, heard his prayer, and gave him 15 more years of life.

In Daniel chapter six, Daniel defied the king’s edict and continued kneeling to pray three times a day to God. King Darius had no choice but to throw Daniel into the lion’s den, but Daniel was not killed by the lions. Daniel explains in Daniel 6:22, “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.”

In Acts 12, Herod the king put to death James the brother of John and arrested Peter. The disciples hearing about this arrest gathered to pray for Peter’s deliverance. When an angel of the Lord rescued Peter, Peter thought it was just a vision. Later he realized that God had delivered him. When Peter showed up at the door where they had gathered, the disciples could hardly believe and they thought the servant girl Rhoda was out of her mind. But Peter kept knocking until they opened the door and saw Peter. They were astonished. Sometimes we pray but we’re too slow to believe that God will truly answer our prayers.

Philippians 4:6 to 7 reminds us of God’s care for us: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Rather than living in anxiety and worry, let’s pray to God. 1 Peter 5:6 to 7 says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” God truly cares.

Mack Lyon wrote in his book, Continuing Instant in Prayer, that, “Since prayer is the means by which we draw upon the unlimited resources of God’s power, there is no limitation to what prayer can avail (that is to do), but little faith in God, that hinders us.” We need to believe. People wonder why they pray and God doesn’t answer. It’s not because God has no power; it could be because we fail to have a right relationship with God. God hears the prayers of the righteous.

Now God’s promise to answer prayer has some conditions. Many people pray but fail to believe or to live their faith and keep God’s commandments. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 reminds us, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Now Jesus’ promises go out to those who are committed to Him. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 11:22 to 24, “Have faith in God. “Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, (this is Jesus talking) all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.”

You may not always know what is best and wish you did. James 1:5 to 8 says that, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Our faith should lead us to commit ourselves to God and obey His teaching. The Lord Jesus said in John 15:7 that, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Do you abide in Christ? Do His words dwell in you? 1 John 3:22 says to Christians, "and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him." Do you please the Lord? 1 John 5:14 to 15 says, "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him." Are you living according to the will of the Lord?

Psalms 37:4 to 5 says, "Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it." Again, Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established." God answers our prayers, but He does it in His own time. And we have to be patient and wait upon the Lord. Lamentations 3:25 to 26 says, "The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD." Trust in the Lord to keep His word and bless you, when you love and serve Him.

The Lord Jesus didn't want us to give up on our prayers, simply because we didn't receive an answer immediately. You remember Luke 18:1 to 7 says, "And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said that, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'"

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" God answers prayer in His own good time, and when the time is right for you. And we're not always ready for all the things we desire. Let's persist in prayer. Let's devote ourselves to prayer. And God will answer, and we'll see His great power.

Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You hear our prayers and that You answer them. Help us to have strong faith. And to commit ourselves to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

One aspect of the power of prayer is in realizing how prayer changes us. I hope you can grasp how much change that regular, fervent prayer will cause in your life. Praying reminds me I'm God's child and God is my heavenly Father. It reminds me of my dependence on God and how He has blessed me and I also have a duty toward God. Prayer lets me share my burdens with God. And in prayer I confess my sins to God. Prayer reassures me that God is with me. It reminds me that I will be with God forever.

Now if you want your prayers to matter, then first look inside your heart and life. Some accuse God of not caring, while they live in unbelief without a thought of God's love, God's ways, or God's morals. Are you living like you should? Do you truly love the Lord with all your heart? Do you truly believe in God and believe that Jesus died and rose again? Do you care what God says? Do you obey the

commandments of the Lord? Are you living a sinful life, or have you repented of your sins? You can't please this sinful world and please the Father at the same time. When people refuse to honor God, why do they suppose God will listen?

Becoming a Christian involves much more than saying a prayer. Honoring God by placing your faith and trust in Him is also essential. Love Him with all your heart and put Him first. Surrender to Him by turning from evil and pursuing righteousness. Confess with your mouth Jesus Christ is the Son of God and your Lord; and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). In baptism God washes away our sins as we call upon His name (Acts 22:16), and then is when we become a child of God (Galatians 3:26 to 27).

We hope that our study on the power of prayer has caused you to begin praying more often and more fervently. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, of our little book on prayer, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). SEARCH is on YouTube as well! So subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. Everybody need a church family and you do too. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.