

MINISTUDY The Power of Believing Prayer

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The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Prayer to God is stressed in the Bible, but neglected by many people today because most fail to realize the power of believing prayer.

You have read that believing prayer can move mountains, heal incurable diseases and raise the dead. Prayer was effective for Jesus and the apostles, as well as the prophets before them, but many Christians will admit their prayers aren't doing much today if anything!

Why?

Because prayer to most people is a ritual of words - a form, a ceremony, a liturgy of sanctimonious phraseology - an utterly meaningless obligation.

God simply doesn't hear such empty prayers! What, exactly, is prayer? And why should we pray in the first place?

Prayer is personal, intimate, understanding communication with God Almighty. Daily fervent prayer is intended to help Spirit-begotten Christians achieve God's glorious purpose for their lives.

Meaningful and effective prayer is absolutely essential to being born into God's Family. And only through believing prayer is God's instant help available to enable you to overcome the temptations of Satan, the world and your nature, which lead to sin!

Notice now a few inspiring examples of the power of believing prayer by men who set themselves to obey the almighty, eternal God.

After God led His people Israel out of slavery in Egypt, they rebelled in the wilderness. When Moses climbed Mount Sinai to meet with the Creator God, the Israelites plunged into idolatry and sexual lewdness.

1. What did God declare to Moses? Ex. 32:7-8. Did God actually plan to destroy the nation of Israel? Verses 9-10.

God's wrath was stirred. The God who later came in the flesh as Jesus Christ was ready to annihilate the children of Israel because of their wickedness and sensual debauchery. A whole nation was about to be destroyed!

2. Did Moses immediately intercede on behalf of Israel? Verses 11-13.

Without hesitation Moses earnestly prayed that God would spare the nation. In utter humility and deep concern, he fervently besought God to spare His people whom He had

redeemed from Egyptian bondage. Moses reminded God of his glorious promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and pleaded with Him to turn from His wrath.

3. Did God hear Moses' fervent prayer? Did God actually change ("repented") His mind and spare the nation of Israel because of one man's prayer? Verse 14.

Moses' prayer changed the entire course of history! It changed the future of an entire nation.

4. Another outstanding example in the Old Testament is that of Elijah, a prophet of God. Was Elijah weak - did he suffer the downward pulls of the flesh as any other man? Jas. 5:17. And yet, what did he earnestly pray might happen? Jas. 5:17-18. Turn to I Kings 18:17-39 and read of another spectacular answer to one of Elijah's prayers.

The reason God heard Elijah's prayers is because he served God wholeheartedly. He walked with God, talked with God, obeyed God. Not only did Elijah have faith in God, he had the faith of God! Elijah knew God was there. He knew God answered prayers. So he put his whole being into his prayers.

And God answered!

All too many hang back in doubt today, Most are hesitant and apologetic in their prayers. They are not sure of God's will so they pray only halfheartedly. God inspired these and many other examples of answered prayer to be recorded in the Bible for us today (I Cor. 10:11) so that we might become "mighty in prayer." 5. Are we to approach God's glorious throne with boldness? Heb. 4:16. And with a sense of fervency and urgency? Jas. 5:16.

6. Did Christ have absolute confidence that the Father always heard His prayers? John 1 1:41-44.

When Moses prayed for Israel, he prayed boldly and courageously, When Elijah prayed, he prayed boldly - with faith and confidence. And Jesus could pray in absolute faith because He kept in close contact with and drew upon the Supreme Power of the universe!

The servants of God definitely did not hang back apologetically in fear or gnawing doubt or indifference. They all knew God's will, and they prayed accordingly - boldly.

7. What is our confidence when we pray to God according to His will? I John 5:14-15.

For you to pray boldly - with real faith and confidence - you must first know God's--will. His will is revealed in the Bible. You must come to know how God thinks, how He acts and how He views things. You must know His character and His holiness, the purpose He is working out here below and the promises He has made in His Word. Then, and only then, can you pray to God boldly and confidently.

8. Will God sometimes later perform even above and beyond what we ask of Him? Eph. 3:20.

Learn to expect answers to your prayers. God reveals Himself as a living, dynamic God who will intervene on your behalf - if you will beseech Him in believing prayer.

In Matthew 6:5-15 Jesus enumerated the principles of effective prayer. He showed that through prayer God's children - truly converted and Spirit-led Christians - can have an ever deepening relationship with their Father in heaven. By prayer we praise and venerate His name, office and beneficence. By prayer we ask for our daily physical needs and for

the spiritual help, inspiration and guidance necessary to grow spiritually. By prayer we confess our transgressions and are forgiven daily. And by prayer each and every one of us can have an intimate part in God's Work on earth.

9. Did the apostle Paul especially ask Christians to pray for God's ministers? I Thess. 5:25, Heb. 13:18-19. Was he very grateful for their prayers on his behalf and for his fellow ministers? II Cor. 1:8-11.

Offer up your personal, heartfelt prayers on behalf of God's Work and for God's ministers so they may speak and write the truth of God plainly and boldly, and be granted protection to carry on His Work. Your daily, fervent prayers for help, deliverance and inspiration for those conducting the Work of God's Church today can accomplish miracles.

10. Do Christians today need to pray that God will continue to open "doors" for His Work so the Gospel may be preached more effectively around the world? Col. 4:2-4.

Prayer opens doors of radio television and the printed page so that Christ's Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God can be proclaimed as a "witness unto all nations" (Matt. 24:14).

11. Should we also pray that God will send more laborers to help in the great Work of His Church? John 4:35, Matt. 9:37-38.

Pray that Christ's Gospel will pierce the hearts and minds of more listeners and readers. Pray that God will lay it on the hearts of many more to become co-workers in helping to support His growing Work with their tithes and offerings. And pray for more consecrated laborers - with the skills and talents God foresees will be needed - to be led directly into the Work of God.

12. Are you one who for some reason is separated from other true Christians, but wants to have a greater part in helping them and God's Work? What is the marvelous example set for you in Colossians 4:12-13?

Epaphras was one of the apostle Paul's helpers. His part in God's Work that Paul referred to especially was prayer. You can have a significant role in the Work of God as well. We all have ready access to God's throne room in heaven through earnest, believing prayer.

So pray to God every day.

Pray fervently for the Work, other Christians and yourself - and expect God to answer!

Establish a habit of daily prayer. Maintain personal contact with God to receive the power to spiritually overcome and ultimately obtain His gift of eternal life.

When you do, your prayers will accomplish much good for others and a miraculous change in your life through the power of God's Spirit. And you will be achieving the very purpose for which you were born.

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