

# The POWER of Prayer

**Why aren't your prayers ANSWERED? Do you know HOW to pray? Here are facts you need to understand!**

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## PART II

When you are sick or in trouble, you may pray about it. But do you have the faith and the understanding to leave it *completely* in God's hands—to absolutely *know* that He will deliver His children from sickness and trials of every kind? Very few people do.

When we don't seem to have the wisdom or the power to solve our problems we often become frustrated and unhappy. *Some commit suicide!*

We completely *forget* and *ignore* the fact that we have the *right* to call on the Supreme Creator of Heaven and Earth for help with all our problems. The greatest *wisdom* and *power* in all the universe will be with every one of us—IF we will only do our part.

Jesus Christ set a *perfect example* that we "should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). He lived a full and abundant life—a life filled with *love* and *power* from God. He knew how to keep in contact with, and draw upon the *Supreme Power of the Universe*.

### Christ the Example

Can you imagine Christ acting as if God had "gone way off somewhere"?

Yet that is the *exact attitude* displayed by most "Christians" of today. Do they completely rely on God to *heal* them when they are sick, to *rescue* them from disaster, to *bless* them in material as well as spiritual things? Of course not. But the disciples saw that Christ, unlike most people, actually *expected* God to intervene and heal the sick, cast out demons, and even to quiet a storm on the sea. They, too, wanted that kind of intimate contact with God.

By His fruits, they knew that Christ understood *the correct way* to draw close to the Eternal God, and to call upon His power to help in every pressing situation.

That *key*, that *correct way* to call upon God's power, is something you and I should be utilizing *every day* of our

*lives!* Its use can put new *meaning* and *power* into our lives!

But this "key" has been *incorrectly* employed by many people of many different religions. Remember that Christ is *our example*. He knew how to use this "key" perfectly. His way *gets results!*

### Christ Teaches How to Pray

In Luke 11:1-13, we read that the disciples came and asked Jesus *the way* to establish right contact with God. "Lord, *teach us to pray*," they asked. People do not know *how* to pray until they are properly taught. That, probably, is *your* trouble.

Then Christ gave them a type or pattern of a prayer that will *get results*.

Let us analyze this *perfect example*. The prayer is addressed to "Our Father which art in heaven." When you pray, think first of all of God as your Father. Not *your* Father only, but "*Our* Father." Remember that there are others who are trying to serve their Creator and Spiritual Father, and that God loves us all *far more* than a human father would be capable of doing.

Moreover, He has power to help you in ways that would be *impossible* for a human father. Would your earthly father let you rot away and die of disease if he could possibly help it? But God *can* help it, and He has *promised* to *heal* in a number of places including Ps. 103:3 and James 5:14. (Write for Mr. Armstrong's booklet on "Healing.")

Claim God's *promises* when you pray, and always think of Him as *your Father*.

"Which art in heaven," reminds us that God is not an ordinary father, but One who has all power and should be worshipped. We must be humble and reverent when we pray to the true God.

"Hallowed be thy name," shows that God's name—and *all that it stands for*—is to be held in reverence. God's name will someday be *our name* if we overcome and are *born of God*. THAT

NAME CARRIES AUTHORITY TO RULE. It must always be respected.

### What to Ask

"Thy kingdom come" is the first request of this perfect prayer. *First of all* we should learn to pray for God's kingdom—God's government—God's *RULE*—to come on this earth. *How many* so-called "Christians" really want God to *rule* their lives? Most carnal-minded men use every imaginable device to hide their eyes from the fact that God is *Supreme Ruler*. Christians should *PRAY* that God will *rule this earth*. Only His rule will bring about the peace and happiness that this world is striving in *vain* to achieve (Is. 11).

"Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth," teaches us to *surrender our wills* to God as we pray—to acknowledge His *Rule—His Authority*. Remember that *God knows what is best*. You need to *study* God's word so that you will learn the principles of God's will—and can pray accordingly.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:17, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the *will of the Lord* is."

Drink in of God's word so that you will begin to think as God thinks, and to have God's will made a part of your very character. "Let this *mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philip. 2:5). Then you will automatically pray according to God's will, as revealed in the Bible, and your *prayers will be answered*.

"Give us day by day our daily bread" certainly shows that God desires that we ask for our material needs. But notice that we are not to ask for great wealth, but our *daily bread*. God has *promised* to supply every *need* (Phil. 4:19). It is God's will that we prosper and be in health (III John 2), but being made wealthy might easily prove a stumbling block to our faith. So remember Christ's example of only asking for

our *daily* bread—not necessarily the sustenance for several years in advance.

### Forgive Others—Resist Devil

"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." You may ask God's forgiveness *only if you first forgive others*. When you kneel before God in prayer, never come before Him with feelings of bitterness, resentfulness, or hate. If you cannot first rid yourself of these feelings, ask God to *clean you up* and replace the spirit of *bate* with His Spirit of *love*. And love is charitable, and patient with others.

It is a wonderful feeling to know that you hate no man, but in your way, however clumsily, are trying to show love to everyone.

God *bears* and *answers* the prayers of a man in this spirit.

"And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." God himself tempts no man (James 1:13). But He does permit us to be tempted by Satan and our own lusts. We should constantly pray that He would not permit us to be *brought into*, or *partake of*, any temptation—that He would give us the spiritual *power* to master any wrong desires.

"But deliver us from evil," should be translated, "but deliver us from the Evil One (Satan)." The original Greek means this and most commentaries give this as the correct translation. Ask God each day to give you the strength to "resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

"Be *sober*, be *vigilant*; because your adversary the *devil*, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Satan the devil will try his best to upset you day and night! Ask God for strength and faith.

### Ask What You Need

Jesus continued teaching his disciples (Luke 11:5-13) about prayer by giving them a parable. It shows that if we are really in dire *need*, as the man who had an unexpected guest, we can be sure that God will answer our prayer if we throw ourselves completely on His mercy.

The disciples were still unconverted, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. Jesus told them (v. 13), "If

ye then, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts to your children: *how much more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? God is *more than willing* to give us of His Spirit!

Do you need wisdom, knowledge, faith, love? These are all *gifts* of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12 and 13). *Ask* God for these gifts. He is more willing to give you these things than you are to feed *your own hungry child*.

This is *His will*. So ask in FAITH!

### Two Things to Avoid

During His "Sermon on the Mount," Christ *assumed* (Mat. 6:5-8) that His true followers would pray. He did not say "If you pray," but "*when* thou prayest." He *knew* that anyone who was truly serving God would be *praying often*.

Are you?

He cautioned the disciples never to pray "to be seen of men," but to enter into a closet or "secret place," and there commune with their Heavenly Father. Christ taught that it was *wrong* to make long prayers in front of others to "show off" (Mat. 23:14). Preachers and "deacons" who delight in this sort of thing are *disobeying God*.

And have you ever heard certain denominations repeat prayers over and over again? Christ said, "But when ye pray, *use not vain repetitions*, as the *heathen do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Mat. 6:7).

Memorized prayers—including the "Lord's Prayer"—soon lose their meaning and sincerity.

Nowhere in the entire New Testament is the "Lord's Prayer" repeated. The apostles didn't repeat it over and over again. Jesus gave it only as a pattern or example after which we could fashion *our own* prayers.

This world's churches are in *error* when they practice repeating *any* prayer over and over again each week. Avoid this error. *And try not to return thanks in the same way at the table every meal*.

When you pray, don't just "rattle off" so many words. Think about your blessings, your needs, and pray from the *heart*.

### Don't Be Ashamed

We should be careful not to pray "to be seen of men." *But* does this mean that we should be overly secretive—as if we were ashamed—when we pray?

*Absolutely not!*

Many "babes in Christ" are faced with this problem. Some of you are afraid to pray as often as you should *because you are afraid other people will know about it!* Have no such fear! Should the nearness of your wife, husband, or children prevent you from maintaining an intimate contact with your creator and God? Of course not!

In Luke 9:18 and 28, we find two examples of where Christ—our *perfect example*—prayed a short distance from his disciples and they knew *where* He was and *what* He was doing.

So *don't* be ashamed if anyone knows you are praying! Just be careful not to pray "to be seen of men," and try hard to find a closet or "private place" where you will not be disturbed.

When Jesus was staying at Peter's home with his disciples, "rising up *a great while before day*, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there *prayed*" (Mark 1:35).

You *can* be alone with God if you will follow Christ's example and *make a way!*

### Position in Prayer

The Bible records many different positions in prayer. But it *always* shows that in private, personal prayer, you should *kneel on both knees*. It has always been a custom to kneel on *one* knee to a king or other ruler as a sign of *respect and esteem*. But the Bible always records that we should bow *both* knees to God in *reverence and worship*.

I Kings 8:54 and Ezra 9:5 show an example of a very suitable position in prayer. Notice that Solomon and Ezra kneeled upon *both* knees and spread out their hands—upward—toward God. This is a position of humility and supplication. You will come more nearly praying *fervently* if you are in such a position.

God may not answer "sleepytime prayers" that you mumble to yourself in bed just before dropping off to sleep. If you want an answer, better GET OUT OF THAT BED and kneel before your Creator.

In public or at the dinner table, you may pray either standing or seated—whichever way you feel would honor God most in each situation. In Mat. 14:19, Christ commanded the people to sit down before he blessed the loaves and fishes.

But in private He, "kneeled down, and prayed" (Luke 22:41). In your personal prayers, you should kneel before God and pray *fervently* (James 5:16).

*Concentrate* your **WHOLE BEING** on communing with the Creator of heaven and earth—and your own loving spiritual Father. A correct position in prayer will help you do this.

### How Often to Pray

In Acts 13:22, we read that David was a *man after God's own heart*. Read some of the Psalms. Many of the Psalms are simply David's prayers. He prayed to God in time of trouble, for guidance, in thanksgiving. In *every circumstance* David went to God in prayer.

Don't think you are "bothering" God by sharing your joys and your problems with Him. *Talk to God often—in every circumstance*. That is undoubtedly one of the main reasons that David was a man after God's own heart.

If you want to be a child of God, then "get acquainted" with your Heavenly Father. Talk to Him *often*. *Share your life* with God. In Ps. 55:17, David wrote, "*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*" David went to God in prayer *three times a day*.

We read of God's prophet Daniel (Dan 6:10), ". . . he kneeled upon his knees *three times a day*, and *prayed*, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." These examples are not commands, but they certainly show that to kneel in prayer *three times a day* is a good way to bring God into our lives.

"He that hath an ear, *let him hear.*"

The apostle Paul was inspired to write the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 5:17), "Pray without ceasing." This means that we are never to *discontinue* our prayer

life. It also—with many other scriptures—shows that we should be *constantly* in an attitude or spirit of prayer. Talk to God as you go about your work or play. Ask Him to direct your *every thought and action*.

When you seem to be losing your temper, or when you are in doubt about a certain course of action—*stop and think*, "Would Jesus do that if He were here today?" Ask God to show you, and *study* your Bible so you will *know* what God would have you do. Then ask God for the *wisdom*, the *faith*, and the *power* to rightly carry out what you know is right.

This simple process will *change your life!* Your life will then have more *meaning*, and more *real happiness*, than you have ever before experienced.

### How Long to Pray

Prayer should be one of the most important and *most enjoyable* activities of your life.

If you really love God as your Father, you will *want* to spend a great deal of time talking to Him.

Your spiritual food is obtained by contact with God through Bible study and prayer. Preparing and eating your material food takes at least two hours each day. Isn't your "spiritual food" *even more important*? Spend *more time* acquiring it.

Time is precious. Use your time where it *counts*. It's better to miss a few *physical meals*, better to *fast* once in a while, than to get "too busy" to drink in the spiritual things from God.

That is the very *purpose* of your life!

Sometimes you will need to spend a *long session* with God. Christ prayed *all night* before choosing His twelve disciples.

When you have a tremendous decision to make, or when facing serious trouble, remember that example. In such a crisis, spend a *long time* in God's presence. Pray with all your might. God *will bear*. And it will be an experience that you will never forget.

### What to Pray

Do you have trouble knowing what to pray about? First of all, "count your blessings" and thank God for "every good and every perfect gift." How little most appreciate God's boundless love!

Then **STUDY** your Bible and find what God's true servants prayed about. Get your mind *away from self* once in a while. Paul said to pray for the saints and for himself—God's servant (Eph. 5:17-20). He wrote that he remembered the Philippian church in every prayer (Philipp. 1:4). Apply these principles to God's true ministers, His work, and His true churches of today.

Are you separated from other true Christians but want to have a greater part in helping them and God's work? Then read Colossians 4:11-13. Paul describes one of his helpers, Epaphras, as, "always *laboring fervently* for you *in prayers . . .*" This man's **LABOR** was in *prayer!* That was *his part* in God's work that Paul referred to especially. It can be **YOUR PART** as well! Paul said (v. 13), "For I bear him record, that he hath a great **ZEAL** for you . . ."

Do you have a *zeal* to help God's children? Do you get down on your knees *every day* and ask God to help and direct them? Do you pray for God's ministers and His work?

Your *part* in God's great work may be contributing what you should in tithes and offerings, and *crying out* to God day and night to guide and protect His servants. Mr. Armstrong and God's other true ministers are only human. We have a job beyond our human power to perform. *We need your prayers!*

### Power in Prayer

When a crisis comes, when you are sick or afflicted, **KNOW** that God is a God of *power!* You can tap the supreme source of all **POWER** *just by getting down on your knees in a private place and fervently beseeching God to intervene and help you.*

Learn to **EXPECT** an answer. God reveals Himself as a *real God—a living, acting God. Take God at His word!*