

Journey Into Powerful Prayer



LESSON 1 . . . Why Pray?

Do you ever feel like your prayers have no power? Do you ever wonder if you even really know how to pray? It is interesting to note that as the disciples travel with Jesus, they never ask Him to teach them to be great teachers, like He is, or to show them how to perform miracles. However, one thing about Jesus impresses them so much they want to know how to do it. Therefore, they ask, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Lk 11:1). To answer that question, Jesus shares with them what we today call the “Lord’s Prayer” or the “Model Prayer.” In this prayer, Jesus provides all the principles necessary to have a “journey into powerful prayer.” To find the motivation to complete this “journey,” we need to answer the question, “why pray?” There are at least **four** reasons:

NOTES

First, praying is a command.

As He introduces the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus says, *After this manner therefore pray ye* (Mt 6:9a). Is that a suggestion or a command? It is a command! What other command does Jesus give us in Matthew 7:7?

The three key words—*ask*, *seek*, and *knock*—form an acrostic. What word is formed by using the first letter of each word? _____! These three words are all imperative mood, meaning they are commands. They are also present tense, which means continuous action. Therefore, that verse could be translated, “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.” This command is amplified by what other command in 1 Thessalonians 5:17?

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To *pray without ceasing* means we are always in a spirit of prayer, saying numerous prayers throughout the day as the Lord brings needs to our attention. I pray silently while walking through our church as I greet people on Sundays, and they ask me to pray for various needs. I also pray while driving my car, lying in bed at night, sitting in my office, or any time a need comes to my mind. To obey God’s commands to pray, we must make a habit of praying short prayers throughout the day as He reminds us to pray through requests, circumstances, or spiritual impressions.

Whenever and wherever we pray, we must remember Jesus told us not to pray with the motives of the hypocrites who stood in the synagogues and

prayed wanting to be seen by men (Mt 6:5). Instead, what does Jesus tell us in Matthew 6:6 about where to pray?



When we pray, we should not pray to impress people because the Lord commands us to pray unseen by others. Private prayer enables us to pour out our hearts to God and to listen to Him without distractions. We should pray because **praying is a command**.

Second, praying allows God to meet our needs.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us how to pray so God can meet all our physical, psychological, and spiritual needs. God chose prayer as the means through which He will meet our needs. The Bible teaches there are some things God promises to give us only if we ask. Some people think, "God knows what I need. I don't have to tell Him. He'll just give it to me when I need it." No, that is not how it works. God gives us some things only if we ask Him, no matter how obvious they are. How does the last sentence of James 4:2 remind us of this truth?

At this very moment, what is your life lacking simply because you have not asked God? Why does God want us to ask Him to meet our needs, such as our *daily bread* (Mt 6:11)? How does Jesus answer this question in John 16:24b?

God wants us to ask Him to meet our needs because it makes our joy *full*. It will cause us to be happier with what we have. When good things we don't ask for happen to us, we think it is luck, our own hard work, wise investing, or whatever. However, when good things happen to us because we ask God for them, we experience a completely new dimension of joy. It is not so much what we have but why we have it that brings us joy.

When my son Jeremy was in college, he had little money. Nevertheless, he spent what he had on Christmas presents for his mother, his sisters, and me. I really didn't expect much, but when I opened my Christmas present from Jeremy one year, I was shocked. He had purchased a nice Buck knife in a sheath, so I could carry it on my belt. Jeremy thought I would really like it because it was something he would really like. Do you know where I keep that nice Buck knife? In my nightstand drawer! It brings me a special joy each time I see it, not because of what it is but because Jeremy gave it to me.

When we ask God for things—a house, car, or better job—and we realize God gives them to us because He loves us, we will have a completely new appreciation for them. Our joy will be *full*. We should pray because **praying is a command, praying allows God to meet our needs, and . . .**

Third, praying releases God’s power in our lives.

God is “omnipotent,” which means He is all-powerful. Therefore, what does Jesus reveal about God in Matthew 19:26b?

This means His power has no limits and therefore, neither does prayer. With the exception of the Lord Jesus, through whom did God perform more miracles than anyone else in the Bible? Moses! The last forty years of his life are filled with miracles. How many can you remember? The ten plagues in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, etc. God worked His miracles through Moses because Moses had a *tabernacle*, which was a tent he set up outside the camp (Ex 33:7). This was not the tabernacle proper (which is often called *the tent* (or *tabernacle*) *of the congregation*—see Ex 40:7, 12) because this tent was outside the camp (Ex 33:7), while the tabernacle proper was in the center of the camp (Num. 2:17). Furthermore, the tabernacle proper (also called *the sanctuary*) was not constructed until later (Ex 36:1-39:43). When Moses would go out to his *tabernacle*, what would happen, according to Exodus 33:11a?

To experience God’s mighty power in our lives we need a *tabernacle*—a regular place where we can meet God. It can be in our home or office, in a car on the way to work, or wherever we can privately pray. It is only then we can experience what truth found in James 5:16b?

We should pray because **praying is a command, praying allows God to meet our needs, praying releases God’s power in our lives, and . . .**

Fourth, praying brings immediate rewards.

Although we should ask God to meet our personal needs, such as *daily bread* or deliverance from temptation, our prayer time should not be just giving God our personal want list. One reward of prayer is being able to help others when there is little else we can do. Praying should be a ministry—a way of helping others. We are commanded to *bear* each other’s

burdens because this is the way we *fulfil the law of Christ* (Gal. 6:2). A primary way we *bear* each other's *burdens* is by praying. Failing to pray for others is not a minor omission. Why, according to 1 Samuel 12:23a?

As we pray for others, we will have the immediate reward of knowing we are having a powerful and positive impact on their lives. Prayer also has an immediate reward when we pray for our own needs or problems. The book of Philippians commands: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God* (Phil. 4:6). What is our immediate reward for this kind of praying, according to the next verse (4:7)?

Praying allows God to guard our *hearts and minds* immediately against worry, anxiety, and stress. The *peace* that exceeds human *understanding* is one of the greatest rewards of prayer.

 Why pray? Because **praying is a command, praying allows God to meet our needs, praying releases God's power in our lives, and praying brings immediate rewards.** At this moment, make a commitment to spend the next twelve weeks sitting at Jesus' feet, learning how to have a "journey into powerful prayer." In other words, make a commitment to finish this "journey." Right now, would you pray:

"Lord, I want Jesus to teach me how to pray. For Him to do that, right now I make a commitment to You, that unless providentially hindered, I will attend the next twelve sessions of this study. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

Before going to bed tonight, make a list of things for which you should pray, including personal needs and problems, needs of others, etc. Then, decide on your "tabernacle," where you will meet with God on a daily basis (in your car on the way to work, a room in your home, or wherever).

My prayer list: _____

Time for my daily prayers: _____

My "tabernacle": _____