

'Things Prayer Will Do for You'

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the multifaceted benefits of prayer, highlighting God's personal interest in our spiritual, physical, and relational lives.

Scripture: John 14:13

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "God's Interest in Our Lives"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the transformative power of prayer, explaining that it serves both subjective and objective purposes in our lives. He outlines seven areas where prayer can have a profound impact: personal spiritual life, physical health, family, material needs, friendships, national concerns, and the advancement of the gospel. Tozer argues that God is deeply interested in the details of our lives, and that prayer is a means through which we can seek His guidance and intervention. He encourages believers to approach God with humility and faith, recognizing that while God is not a servant to fulfill our whims, He is attentive to our needs and desires. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a revival of earnest prayer within the church to foster spiritual growth and outreach.

Transcript

"Things Prayer Will do for You"

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I told you last week that I would speak on prayer. We have come to prayer in John, John 14:13 and 14. Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. In John 15:7, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. And in the 16th chapter, there where our Lord says, on that day ye shall ask in My name, and I say unto you that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father Himself loves you because you've loved Me and I believe that I came out from God.

Now, this is only one of hundreds of passages having to do with prayer. And last week, I pointed out, and I will only sketch this briefly and go on from there, that there were two contradictory views of prayer. They are made to be contradictory, where actually they are not contradictory, but are complementary. One of them is that the only value prayer has is the subjective effect it has upon you. If you pray for your enemy, it doesn't help your enemy, but it helps you to feel better toward your enemy. That's a sample of it.

And then, the other view is that prayer is a way of getting things done. That the Lord is our servant at our command. And that He has put Himself in our hands and made promises from which He cannot escape. that enable us to go to God and ask Him for something and get that thing. If two men are bidding for a contract, one of them is a Christian and one of them isn't, the man who is the Christian prays that he might get the contract. And so, his sealed bid is a little lower than the other man. When two men are in the prize ring, one says he's accepted Christ and the other one is a pagan unbeliever and the man who's accepted Christ prays that he might be able to knock the other fella groggy. And the Lord answers prayer and He does. That's making God our servant and getting things from God.

Now, both of those views are wrong and both are right. God isn't going to help a business man chisel another businessman. He isn't going to help a prizefighter knock another prizefighter unconscious. But nevertheless, God does answer in the realm of nature. He does answer prayer. And then your prayer does have a subjective effect upon you. Both are right, but either one run to extreme is wrong.

Last week, I talked about the subjective benefits of prayer. Tonight, I want to sketch briefly the things prayer will do for you; what we may expect God to do in answer to prayer.

Now, there are about seven provinces that prayer embraces. And any one of these would be well worthy of a full sermon. I will name them for you, and then try to sketch them as quickly as I can. One is our personal, spiritual life. The second is our bodies. The third, our family. The fourth, our material needs. The fifth our friends. The sixth, our country. And the seventh, the progress of the gospel. Tonight, I suppose the seventh one will receive the greatest amount of emphasis.

Now, there are those that say that there is no use to talk to God about any of these things; that it is impossible to believe that a God as great as the God of whom the choir sang, the great God who speaks in thunder, the Mighty God who holds the world in His hand. That God should be interested in details. They conceive God to be the chairman of the board or the president of a vast company. And you might as well ask the president of the company to replenish the paper cups in the dispensary at the watercooler in one of the small offices of his vast plant, as to ask God Almighty to be interested in any of the small details of our life.

Now, if there's anything that the incarnation of Jesus did, it was to explode this idea and to teach something else. When Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, before He was incarnated, left all that and thought it not being equal to God something to be hung on to, but voided it all and left it and came down in the form of a man, and took upon Himself our nature and our flesh, our nature without sin and our flesh, and became one of us. Then immediately we draw from that to conclusion that God must be interested in us in detail. That God is not the great president of the company, the top figure in a descending scale of important figures down, but that God being the God He is, can take care of the sparrow and the grass and the lily. And Jesus said that there was not a hair on our head, but the Lord had them numbered. And that Jesus said that the sparrow's fall was observed by the Father. And the Bible teaches that God the Father Almighty was interested in the care of his prophet Elijah and sent an angel to bake him barley cake for him to eat. And we read in the New Testament that when Peter was in jail, that the great God sent down an angel with a cloak, or at least he brought the cloak, Peter's cloak and told him to put it around him, put his shoes on his feet. It was cold outside, and then led him through the locked doors, showing that God the Father, because He's omniscient, omnipresent, and imminent, can take care of all the details of all of His people without any bother and without ever getting confused.

If one man, or the President of the United States, had to take care of Ward 19 and had to see whether the light was working here at the corner of 69th and Halsted and it had to do that all over the United States. And had to see that all the post boxes, the mailboxes were painted, and that all of the little details were all taken care of, He would die of a nervous breakdown in 24 hours. Nobody could do it, because men are men.

But God being God can do everything as easily as He can do anything. And He can do all things with as little effort as He can do any one thing. And the eyes of God go throughout all the earth. And God sees not only everybody that lives, He sees every hair on all the heads of all the people that live. He sees not only all the sparrows that were ever hatched, but He sees all the feathers on the wings and misses a feather and knows where it falls. So, the Bible teaches us that God is personally interested in us. That He's interested in the details.

Now, I want to talk a little about our spiritual lives and since I preach on that so much, I suppose that I really ought to give that only once over lightly and say that God is interested in your spiritual welfare, and that God is ready to hear you pray. David, when he got himself into a jam because of his sin, got on his knees and talked to God about that the same as you would talk to a doctor. And he let God probe him and analyze him and diagnose him and find out what was wrong with him in order that He might be able to make him well again.

And you and I can go to God, and we should go to God. We shouldn't waste our, all our time on ourselves. It's a very and decidedly selfish kind of praying that's always talking about me and my and I. But before we can pray rightly for anybody else, we have to be right ourselves, and therefore we can come to God with all the details. You have a perfect right to go to God and talk to God about anything that bothers you in your spiritual life. Then have God give you a sympathetic hearing, and a warm, friendly attention to all the details. That's your personal spiritual life.

And then our bodies. Now, there are many people who do not believe that God is interested in human bodies. Oh, when God knelt down, as the poet said, out of the river he scooped the clay. And there the great God, like a mother bending over her baby, worked over a lump of clay until it became the shape of a man, and then blew into it the breath of life and man became a living soul. God sanctified the human body. And when God the Son came to the body of the Virgin Mary and Himself took a body which grew to manhood and became a full, mature human body with all the functions of the human body, God swept away forever that doubt, that says, God is not interested in our bodies. There is a passage in 1 Corinthians that says, the Lord for the body. And Simpson and those around him made a great deal of that little phrase, the Lord for the body. I think he wrote a book on that subject, The Lord for the Body.

The Lord is interested in the human body. So don't you imagine that He isn't. We go to God, some of us, only about the things that matter and then we look at the other things ourselves. That is, the things that we think that matter that they are particularly interesting to God, but God isn't interested in the other things. God is interested in your baby. God is interested in its temperature. He's interested in you. He's interested in your body. And you and I have a right to come to God believing that. Now I'm not quoting scripture tonight. But the Holy Ghost is bearing witness to the truth of this because I am giving you the distilled essence of the Scriptures, and the sum and substance of what's found all throughout the Bible.

So, God is interested in our bodies. You say then you believe in the Lord healing the human body, Mr. Tozer? I do, I don't think that we ought to become so body-conscious that we become physical the way

some people are. There are people that would not drink two glasses of water before breakfast, if they thought it was for medicinal reasons. There are people that wouldn't stretch nor yawn if they thought it would do them any good physically. They expect God to keep them well by a perpetual, sparkling miracle. Well, I don't go for that.

Neither do I go for big healing campaigns. You may put me down there that I do not, because it's 95% psychology and 5% is a racket. But I do believe that God's interested in my body. And I believe that I have a right to go to God, and to talk over with Him my condition, and then to hear God speak to me. And I believe that in the will of God, I have a right to expect deliverance when it's God's order that I should have it for His praise. I don't believe that I can just eat as I please, live as I please, do what I please and use my faculties and powers for my own amusement and pray and joy and pleasure and then goes through the world as a worldling, seeing what I can get out of it and then run to the Lord and have the Lord do a miracle deliverance on my body. I don't believe that. I wouldn't respect a God who would stoop to that kind of thing. But the humble child of God walking in humility before God can go to the Heavenly Father and ask prayer and ask in prayer for deliverance and can get that delivered. The Lord knew that I'd never make good healing evangelist or good healing preacher, so the Lord gave me a verse back in the Old Testament, as thy days, so shall thy strength be. God gave me that, as thy day so shall thy strength be.

Well, we have a man for instance in the Alliance. He is now I think about to give up his position and retire. And about 35 years ago he had tuberculosis. And he took it to the Lord in prayer and the Lord healed him of tuberculosis, but he only has one lung. And he is about this tall and about this wide. And he has been all over the world Brother Tom, all over the world, traveling all around, up and down the mountains going everywhere like brother Thomas here, and he's been doing it for 30 years, and still he's able to keep going somehow or other. You look at him and wonder why and what holds him up. But he has learned he says, to take strength from the Lord day by day. He says, I've learned day by day to take strength from the Lord.

That's Dear Dr. Sneed, one of the saintliest and one of the best informed and one of the most poured out and devoted men that I know in Christian circles anywhere. He should have been dead long ago. At least he should have been retired and dangling his long legs in the water in Florida long ago. But he's still able to get around. The last picture I saw of him looked to me as if he wouldn't be around much longer. He's an old, old man now. But he should have died 25 years ago, but he's lived on the strength of God. God took care of him.

What I'm trying to say here tonight is that the human body lies within the province of God's prayer willingness in our families. Because some of us weren't able to get all of our children actively in Christian work. There's one of my boys that's not a Christian. Why the people sneer and say, who are you to talk? Who are you to talk? Brother, did you ever stop to think, we brought up six boys in Chicago, Illinois, and not one of them got hanged or went to jail. That's a miracle in itself. If the great God Almighty hadn't helped us and answered our prayers, we would have had at least two juvenile delinquents out of the six. So, God did answer prayer. God does answer prayer. And He answers prayer for the family.

Now, you have a mean husband, and you're a Christian and living with your husband is like living with a bale of barbed wire. And you don't like it. And you'd love to have him changed. And so, you pray continually, O Lord, bless my husband so he'll be easy to live with. He won't hear that prayer, because God knows what you want to do is you want the weather to be warmer in your house. You don't want to live with a fellow like that. Oh, you want to live with him, but you want him changed. God isn't going to answer that selfish prayer at all. And until you get to you accept him as he is, rusty barbed wire and all, the

Lord won't even hear you for him.

Dear old brother Tom Hair, I heard new one about him just recently. I think it's worth telling. Dear old brother Tom is up in St. Paul. And some woman came to him, and he saw she was a selfish, carnal thing and that she wanted her own way. So, after a number of conversations with her and she's following him around one day, he said, by the way Sister, do you have your gun with you? She said no, no gun. What do you mean? No. He said, I'd like to shoot you. You'd be more good in heaven than you are on earth. You're no good down here Sister. And he bid her goodbye and dismissed her. That was praying Tom's Irish way of handling her. I suppose she went out of there white as a sheet and wondered what happened to Tom. But he'd been in Chicago and decided that was the way to handle your enemies. But Tom didn't mean he was going to kill her. He just meant that she was so hopelessly wrapped up in herself she was no good to anybody. You can get that way. There are people that haven't wept in sympathy for anybody else's family but their own for 25 years. There are those who never pray for anybody but their own family, except in a more or less hit and miss way.

But God does care about your family. And God does hear pray for your family and He will, because the point is now, your family is embraced within the province of prayer. It lives within the boundaries of prayer possibility and God does hear for your family and their material needs.

I got myself in a bit of trouble here and there by some of these rub the Aladdin lamp and make God Your servant kind of prayer fellows. And they've written some sour things about me. And I thank God for every sour thing. But the impression is among some people that the Lord is your junior partner to run errands for you, to sharpen your pencils and be sure that you get the help you need so that your prosperity will grow and then in order to keep God coming, you give him a tithe of your money. God works on a percentage and he works on a 10 percent percentage and if He keeps you prosperous the more He prospers you the more he gets.

Now, that is literally what you would gather from a lot of tracts and a lot of testimonies that I read, that God works on percentage. No. What does God need of your money? God has to give you a dime before you can give Him back the dime anyhow. Did you ever think of that? It's like getting a Christmas present from your four-year-old boy. Where did he get the money? You gave it to him. And so you give him the money for the Christmas present he gets and comes to you just as innocently as if he'd worked and earned it. And so when you give anything to God, where did you get it anyhow? God gave it to you or you wouldn't have had it.

God isn't concerned with your money. It's awful to tell an audience that isn't it Brother Tom? It's awful to tell and audience that God isn't concerned with your money. If any of you think that you can buy God off or get an in with the Lord or get any special favors from God because of your generosity, you might just as well sleep on your wallet and sew the thing up and hide it under the bed because God isn't interested in your money. He's interested in your soul and he's interested in what giving will do for you.

But the Lord has lots of money. Think of it all. Think of the uranium God has and the gold and the silver and the pearls. Why, of all the oysters with all the pearls, that God knows where they are, were fished up on earth and the pearls taken out, why it would be more than you and I could ever pay for in a million years, yet God owns all of His oysters and all those pearls. And all the silver and gold, and anything we give, it's God's in the first place. And God isn't going to work on a percentage or on a commission at all. But if you want things for His honor, He will bless your business. And He will help you and He will work

with you. And the workman has a perfect right to go to God. In fact, he should do it and consecrate his business, his job, his occupation, his profession, whatever it is to the Heavenly Father.

And I think of a man, say, like a surgeon that a good many of us in this church know. A fellow said that he had to have a very serious bit of surgery. And this man knelt down by his bed and said to the nurse, would you kindly go out and get so and so, and she went out and closed the door and this surgeon got down on his knees and prayed. The surgeon told me this in another instance. He said a man brought his wife to him and he said, this woman, my wife has something wrong with her leg. And I'm bothered, we're bothered about it and we'd like to have you see what the trouble is. And he examined and then he said, I am afraid that I'll have to tell you that you're in trouble and I'm afraid that it's cancerous.

Well, they both jumped up and went up and said, we won't take that. We won't take that diagnosis. We'll go somewhere where people know something. So, they went to Mayo's. And after she had been thoroughly examined by Mayo's, they corroborated his testimony and they said she has cancer. And the only way they can save her life is to amputate, take her leg off. And they brought her back to this good brother, rather humbled now and chastened. They said, Doctor, we're sorry that we blew up on you and talked the way we did. You were right and we were wrong and we want you to perform the surgery to save her life. And he said, Mr. Tozer I got down and cried and cried and cried. He said, think of it brother Tozer. For me to take a knife and cut off that white leg. He said, I cried, but I did it. He said I did it to save her life. I did it because they both wanted it and now, she's healthy and well, but she's crippled. And you tell me God doesn't hear prayers for a man like that brother. A man whose tears lie close to the surface and who loves and who's sympathetic and who wields his knife and prescribes after seasons of prayer.

Yes, God hears prayer for our bodies and he hears prayer in our professions. He blesses the farmer and glorifies God in his living. He blesses the laboring man who glorifies God in his home and in his work. He blesses the businessman who glorifies God in his business. He blesses the professional man who takes God into his profession. But He doesn't run errands for anybody. And He isn't a water boy for a proud Christian businessman. But if we're humble and meek and live for the glory of God and live to praise Him and live for the good of our fellow men, God will work on our books and God will work on our sales and God will work on our jobs. And God will help us.

Then our friends. Our friends lie within the province of prayer possibility too. I'll simply say that means intercessors. You've got to watch in praying for other people that we don't get our nose in other people's business. Some people are careless and don't care for anybody. Other people are so careful about everybody, that they're really in danger of intruding. Let's watch that. Don't intrude in other people's affairs. Be careful not to do it. But if you know where prayer should be made or if someone comes to you for prayer and counsel, then you have a perfect right to take that person on your heart as though you were that person and intercede in a unity that makes the two of you one.

Did you know Everett Rowl in the city of Akron, Ohio? Everett Rowl was a worker in the rubber shops in Akron and a lay preacher and one of the dearest and most wonderful Christian men that I ever knew, and quite a preacher in his own right. There was an evangelistic campaign coming to town, and wise Brother Rowl went to the Lord about it. He said, Now Father, I want to pray, but I don't want to waste my prayers. So, I would like to have you lay on my heart the people I ought to pray for to get converted during this meeting we're having. And he said, slowly there began to crystallize within his mind five men's names, rough, tobacco-chewing, dirty storytelling, rugged Adamic sinners they were who worked with him in the shops.

So, he said, I went to God Almighty on my knees and in intercession I pleaded for the souls of these five men. And he said before the last night of the meeting, four of them had come and been soundly converted, but one held out. He said, I went back to God and I said, God, you've given me four but four fifths is not enough. I want five fifths. Give me that last man. So, that evening meeting was about to close, it was closing that evening, and the invitation was given to those who would like to become Christians. And this man stood and held on to his seat solid in the church. And then, just before the last song was sung, he bowed his head and went forward and knelt and surrendered his heart to Jesus Christ and became a Christian too.

There were five sinners, literally snatched as brands from the burning by the determined intelligent intercession of a man for his friends. Your friends lie within the province of prayer possibility. There may be some things God won't answer, but that's not one of them. He will answer for your friends. You have a right to go for your friends, your neighbors, your relatives and intercede, provided you will take the blame on yourself as Jesus did, and carry the load as Jesus carried it in a more limited and relative sense.

Then there's our country. Our country lies within the province of prayer, God will hear for our nation. When brother Thomas told me that these different allied groups would have nothing to do with other allied groups with a no man's land between, I said you'd think they were civilized. That's the way we do it after 6-4000 years of civilization education. But our country and the nations of the earth and the rulers and those in authority, and those whom God has set up and put in authority to carry on the business of politics. That dirty word politics is not a dirty word. It's the science of managing human affairs. And it once was a beautiful thing, read Aristotle's politics, read John Locke's politics and see what it meant to them. A high and lofty thing, a beautiful thing, the managing of human affairs, human society so as to achieve the greatest amount of freedom and the least amount of oppression for the vast numbers of people.

You and I have a perfect right to go to God. I will not bring politics into this pulpit. I have been advised to tell you who to vote for but I'm not going to do it. And you wouldn't do it any half a day. I'm not going to drag politics into this pulpit. I stand here not as a Democrat nor Republican; I stand as a Christian above both of them. But I have a right to go to God as a Christian and we have a right to go to God as a church and pray that He will throw his shielding arms around this land of the free.

Our worst enemy is not Russia. Our worst enemy is ourselves. If America would clean up and brighten up and pray up and get right with God and preachers would begin preaching the Word of God again, and we'd repent and become penitential, not all the armies of the world could destroy us. For our beams were laid deep in theology and religion and a high moral philosophy and righteousness and nobility. And the country was dedicated to the glory of God. And there aren't enough enemies, there aren't enough enemies no matter how they pool their interest in the whole wide world and destroy America unless we destroy ourselves from within. But if we rot from within, we'll collapse and go down as the Romans did. Nothing could stand before the Roman Empire while she worshipped her rugged gods and held to a strong, stoic morality but when she began to laugh at God. That's happened, it's now happening in America. It became necessary for the police to protect women walking the streets in Roman cities. And they're doing it in America and in Chicago today. They rotted from within and then it was easy for the Vandals and the Goths and the rest of them to come down and destroy a nation that was already rotten inside. So, our country lies within the province of prayer.

And of course, the progress of the gospel. We can pray the Danis to sanity. We can pray. We can pray Capulcas to righteousness. We can pray the tribes in the Philippine Islands to God. We can do it. We can

break the chain of Russia. We can pierce the iron and the bamboo curtains. We can. We can deliver these countries if the people of God pray. And next time I talk to you it will be two weeks from tonight. And I want to talk about conditions of prayer. What they are, but I'll leave it for tonight.

There is a hymn sing following at the Ver Ploegh home down in Beverly Hills. We want all you young people to go and have yourself a nice time and get in off the streets. Poor brother Thomas, I thought we were going to have our greatest missionary convention, and I think we'll have a \$40,000 missionary offering this year. 35,000 last year, no reason why we can't jump it to 40,000 this year or more. Are you going to join me over the next weeks in earnest prayer to God Almighty, that this church might come alive and begin to produce fruit in a manner never has before? Will you promise me that, hand up in answer to prayer. Will you pray with me and for me and for us? Brother Thomas Will you close in prayer? Our Father we would ask the that a real spirit of prayer, that kind of intercessory prayer that only Thou canst give birth to would take hold of every one of our hearts. Teach us the real value of prayer and make these thy people a praying people. This we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

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