

# Prayer

by Bob Jennings

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance and blessing of prayer, and how it is a distinguishing mark of the true Christian.*

**Duration:** 45:41

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 5:20, Psalm 97:11, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 2:22

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by acknowledging the small size of their congregation in the city of Beaumont and questioning the impact they can make. They pray for God's presence and guidance to equip them to serve in their current generation. The preacher then transitions into a Bible study, referencing several scriptures and sharing personal experiences. They share how they prayed for four months leading up to a series of meetings, and God answered their prayers by manifesting His power in each meeting. Many people came forward, confessing their sins and seeking forgiveness. The meetings lasted late into the night, and by the end, over half of the church had either been saved or had a renewed encounter with God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of persistent prayer, comparing it to repeatedly cracking a rock with a hammer until it splits. They also mention a specific prayer request for a 19-year-old girl whose mother believes but whose father is still an unbeliever.

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## Transcript

All of you to invite such a one as me. Would it be any disadvantage if I stand down there? Or is the microphone here? Johnny, different times you know we've gone out in evangelism, open air evangelism, and often times we carry a sign that says, God puts people in hell for neglect of Him. And I would say, no doubt, most of the objection that has come to us about that sign has been from evangelicals.

God does not put people in hell, we put ourselves in hell, they say. How would you answer that? The Bible says different, doesn't it? The Bible says that we're going to be cast into hell. How can you cast yourself into hell? And furthermore, it's God's hell.

They don't care if they go down to hell as long as they go down in charge. Little do they realize. Rudy, I thought of this too in view of your sermon.

It was about a year ago, I ran into a Baptist pastor, a sovereign grace pastor. And he argued up and down that the warnings in the New Testament do not apply to the elect. They're the very things that are effectual

to the elect and keeping us, getting us there.

Could we pray again? We just pause before you, heavenly Father, and ask again for your blessing, your nearness, your presence. We ask you for light. You said, light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.

And we ask you, Lord, for light, some illumination today that we might see some more, something more of your glory and of your goodness, that we might see something more of what you'd have for us to do. We ask you, Lord, for light, yes, for joy. Joy, you said, is sown for the righteous.

And we ask you, Lord, that we might be able to experience more of the joy of the Lord, which is our strength. We ask, Lord, that you'd rejoice our heart at your word all the more. I thank you, Lord, for these fellow believers.

I thank you, Lord, for these dear saints of God. I thank you for this testimony of Christ right here in Beaumont, Texas. Folks that I've never known, and we wonder, Lord, at your people all around the world, where they are, how they're doing today, where you've got them hidden, where you've got them standing.

We pray today your kingdom come and your will be done. And we pray today around the world that your word might be glorified, magnified, run swiftly, and have free course. Lord, here we are, a little flock in the midst of this big city called Beaumont, and we wonder again, Lord, what difference can we make? What difference can this meeting make and these meetings? And we're asking, Lord, that you would make a difference with your holy hand and with your glorious presence.

We ask, Lord, that you'd equip us and arm us and help us that we might serve you in this present place, in this generation. Amen. Would you open your Bibles with me to 1 Peter 2. I won't be speaking, I don't believe, too long.

And I have, I believe, something more of a Bible study almost. And we'll turn to several Scriptures. Like Johnny said, you don't have to turn, it's not imperative.

But just several Scriptures, but yet only maybe about three or four minutes on each one. And so it's kind of a running commentary. And I'd like to speak on the subject of prayer.

Some principles of prayer. I know maybe nothing new for anyone, but just, I hope, a reminder somehow, an encouragement somehow, that it might be some encouragement to you in the call, in the life of prayer. And some helps and some hindrances in prayer.

It says here in 1 Peter 2, verse 5, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. And it says down here in verse 9, that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. So, a holy priesthood, and then a royal priesthood.

We are called to be priests unto God. And I would just like to remind you, first of all, of the tremendous blessing of being called priests of God. Of being placed in a position of being able to communicate with God.

To commune with God. To be in touch with God. To be able to speak with God.

To be on speaking terms with God. What a privilege, what a blessing that is. I mean, I grew up in a Methodist church, and I never thought about prayer.

I never thought about God. I never thought about heaven or hell. I remember seeing the words painted on a big barn roof.

We'd go by it on the way to a nearby city. And it said, Jesus saves. And I remember thinking, in my utter ignorance, saves? Saves from what? Just like what we were saying this morning.

What's the problem? And so, in my ignorance, I never thought about prayer. I never knew how to pray. And we'd go to the family reunions, you know, and there were some religious relatives, and they would stop and pray before the meal.

And I always hoped they'd never call on me to pray. And they knew better, and they didn't. And kindly didn't embarrass me.

But I mean, I had absolutely no idea how to pray to God. What words to say. Who He was.

And here we are. If you're a Christian this morning, you are called a priest unto God. A royal priest, a holy priest unto God.

Able to communicate with God. Who are the people that can talk to God? They're not the truck drivers. They're not the farmers.

They're not the scientists. They're not the educators. It's we, the Christians, the saints of God.

We are the ones that can talk to God, and He hears our prayer. It says, His eye is upon the righteous, and His ear is open to their cry. We're able to come to God, and it says here in verse 5, offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

To be acceptable. They are acceptable to God. He's pleased with the prayer and the sacrifice of the righteous.

What a thing it is if we were not to be rejected, to be unable to communicate with God and not be able to get through to God. I remember one time at a family reunion, my uncle had a heart attack. They carried him downstairs, and he was just terrified like you were saying, Johnny.

And his son ran down the block, a block away to get the doctor, and he came back just screaming. And he said, the doctor won't come! He won't come! He's in there, but he won't come! How would it be if we were able to cry, if we cried to God and He wouldn't come, He wouldn't hear? So it was with the priests of Baal. But for us, God hears our voice.

He hears our prayer. What a blessing it is. Secondly, Revelation 1, verse 5. We'll break in right at the end of verse 5, referring to Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father.

Loved us, washed us, made us. Made us kings and priests to God. Washed us in His blood and made us priests.

It is a blessing, number one. But secondly, I'm pointing out, it's a purchased blessing. The only reason we're able to draw nigh to God is because of the blood of Jesus.

If you knocked your neighbor's window out, you wouldn't be on too good of speaking terms with him, would you? Until that damage was paid for. Same way with God. The only reason that we can speak to God that we're on speaking terms with God is because the damage has been paid for.

The Lord Jesus washed us from our sins in His blood. We're made nigh by the blood of Christ. Third, Acts 9, verse 11.

9-11, So the Lord said to him, Arise and go to the street, go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. I just love that phrase, behold, he is praying. You've seen it before, haven't you? But I mean, it's just like a parent and their little baby.

And for the first time, that baby is walking. Look at that. He's walking.

And here is God saying of Saul of Tarsus who's prayed and prayed and prayed, but his prayers weren't prayers. And for the first time, He says, behold, he's praying. Look at this.

I say number one, it's a blessing. Number two, it's a purchase blessing. And number three, it is a blessing to God.

I mean, God is delighted with our prayers. He's delighted with our communication with Him. He wants to hear us talk to Him.

He wants to hear us pray. Prayer is likened to incense, something that smells good. And so apparently our prayers smell good to God.

It's fragrant to Him. And when we don't pray, that can be sin. That can be displeasing.

You know, Samuel said, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray. And so, prayer is pleasing to God. Fourth is 1 Corinthians 14.

1 Corinthians 14, verse 17. A blessing, a purchase blessing, a blessing to God, and a blessing to others. Look at this in 14, 17.

For indeed, you give thanks well, but the other is not edified. In other words, the other man who hears you pray should be, could be, ought to be, generally is edified. And we meet together.

Of course, you don't want to concentrate on that, think about that. You need to direct your prayers to God alone. But in doing that, the others will be edified.

Haven't you seen so many times where you got more out of somebody's prayer than you did out of their sermon? I mean, beautiful words. Wonderful words. Speaking of the glories of the Lord and of our salvation.

And their entreaties. Yes, that's my heart. Yes, that's the way I feel.

Thank you for praying that prayer. And so, when we come together for prayer, there ought to be an edification that goes on when we hear one another pray. And it says just a few verses before that we should seek to abound the edification of the church.

We should try to build one another up. And that's one way it happens is when we gather together in prayer, there is mutual edification as we hear one another pouring out their heart to God. Their honesty is

refreshing, you see.

And so, a blessing to others. Let me point out a sixth principle of prayer. And that is in 2 Timothy 2. Verse 22.

2 Timothy 2, verse 22. Paul says to Timothy, flee, run from it. Flee also youthful lusts.

But pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. My point here is that prayer is a distinguishing mark of the true Christian. That's his native breath.

That's his native air. That's natural. When you're born again, when a baby is born, he breathes.

And so when we're born again, we breathe out prayer to God. It says with those who call on the Lord. It doesn't say with the Christians.

It doesn't say with the fellow saints. It says with those who call on the Lord. Many times, that is the way the Christian is designated.

Paul, it says of Saul, of Tarsus, he persecuted those who call on thy name. And so it's a distinguishing mark of the true Christian. They are those who call.

They don't just yammer, mutter words. They call. They cry out to God.

They are looking to Him for life and breath and everything. They call on the Lord. Terri said that one thing that stood out to her after her conversion at age 23 was that she saw the Lord beginning to answer her prayers.

A distinguishing mark of the Christian. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 11, My house shall be called a house of prayer. If you see a house, a church, that is not characterized by prayer, you know it's not the Lord's house because He says His house is a house of prayer characterized by prayer.

Isn't it amazing that there's no verse like that that says singing, or talking, or preaching, or anything else? Or eating. I mean, it says, My house shall be called a house of prayer. As we gather together as a church, that ought to be a big mark, a big feature of our assemblings together is prayer.

Just continually offering up prayers to the Lord. What a privilege it is of those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Duncan Campbell said that after the Hebrides revival, he said, I could count on my one hand the number of people that backslid.

And he said, what we mean by backsliding is that they did not attend the midweek prayer meeting regularly. It's a mark of the true Christian. Why is it that we pray and the non-Christian doesn't? What keeps a person from prayer? It's pride.

Self-sufficiency. When we don't pray, what we're saying is that I can handle it myself. I don't need God, thank you.

I can do it myself. But we Christians, we're saying we've got the attitude that we can't handle it. We need a Savior.

We need help from the outside. Real intervention from heaven. It's a distinguishing mark of the true Christian.

Now, another point is Acts 1. We ought to look at prayer as a priority. Acts 1.14. It says, These all continued with one accord in prayer. That was before Pentecost.

They continued steadfastly in prayer. Another version reads, another reads, They were continually devoting themselves to prayer. And after Pentecost, the same thing in 2.42. They were continually, 2.42, they continued steadfastly and then last phrase, in prayers.

And in Acts 6.4. 6.4. We will give ourselves continually to prayer. And then in Romans 12. Verse 12.

Don't need to turn to it. It says the same thing. Continue in prayer.

Be devoted to prayer. And then last in Colossians 4.2. Colossians 4.2. Same thing. Continue earnestly in prayer.

So Acts 1. Acts 2. Acts 6. Romans 12. 12. Colossians 4.2. Be devoted to prayer.

Or continue steadfastly in prayer. Is that what you do? There ought to be something about your life that would show that there's a difference between you and someone else who doesn't do that. You pray continually.

It says continue earnestly in prayer. A priority. Paul writes to Timothy and instructs him about the church.

And he says, first of all, I urge that prayers and entreaties, supplications and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men. Oh, what's number one on the list? What's your big concern? First of all, that prayers be made. A priority it is.

He says, I want the men to lift up holy hands without wrath and assimilation in prayer. I want the men to pray. It ought to be a priority in the churches.

The Lord Jesus prayed. We shouldn't be surprised that we need to do some praying. It says in Psalm 27, one thing have I asked of the Lord and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and inquire in His holy temple.

He prayed that he might be a praying man. And then another point I'd like to bring out is in Luke 11. Luke 11, verse 1, Now it came to pass, as Jesus was praying in a certain place when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

There must have been something about the Lord's prayers and His prayer life that incited, invited, evoked this question and this request. Lord, would You teach us to pray? We've just heard You pray. That's wonderful.

Would You teach us to pray? My point here is that prayer is a discipline that can be taught and must be learned. There's something that can be taught about prayer. And we shouldn't take the attitude, well, if we're regenerated and born again of the Spirit of God, this will just be a natural thing.

No, it is valid to teach on prayer. It's valid to try to learn something about prayer. Lord, teach us to pray.

It's a challenge, isn't it, to discern God's will and to pray effectively. It is a challenge. It says in Romans 8, we don't know how to pray as we ought.

We ought to, but we don't know how to pray as we ought. And Abraham one time, this man of God, this friend of God, he missed it and prayed out of God's will. Same way with Samuel.

This man of God, this great intercessor, he was praying out of the will, I guess you'd say, out of the will of God. God said, how long will you continue to grieve for this Saul? In other words, quit praying for him. And again, Moses prayed out of the will of God.

God finally said, enough! Talk to me no more about this matter. Don't go on praying. Joshua! God told him the same thing.

Quit praying. Rise up. Israel has sinned.

And so it's a challenge to discern the Lord's will as to how to pray about different things. Another thing that might be a help in prayer is Colossians 4, verse 12. Back to Colossians.

Colossians 4, verse 12. It says, Epaphras, who is one of you, a born servant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers. It will help us if we realize that prayer is sometimes, oh yes, sometimes a delight.

I will make them joyful in my house of prayer. But it's sometimes work. It says Epaphras labored fervently in prayer.

It's valid for you to feel like you've worked after you've had a time of prayer. When we come together for the church prayer meeting, you ought to go away feeling like you've worked. Feeling like you've spent some energy.

It says labors fervently in prayer. Some heat, you know, has been generated. You've put in some effort here.

And so it's valid to work that way. It says the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. The Lord Jesus labored, obviously labored in the Garden.

The way He prayed, the sweating something like drops of blood, if the Lord prayed that way with strong crying and tears, we shouldn't be surprised that there's going to be some of that for us too, right? Payson. You've heard of praying Payson? Payson, this is beyond me. I admit, but he worked so hard in prayer that he rubbed grooves in the floor with his kneecaps.

David Brainerd prayed so hard that he melted the snow banks. They worked in prayer. I know of a preacher in Canada, Bill McLeod.

He's 84 years old. And even at 84, he prays for 250 people by name every day. I don't know.

Another thing that might help is found back in Luke 11. We're going back and forth here, but it seems like that's the order that might be the most helpful. In Luke 11, verse 8, and it's right after this request, the Lord teaches us to pray.

The Lord gives this parable. And He ends up that parable in Luke 11. He says, Yet because of His persistence, He will rise and give Him as much as He needs.

The key word there is persistence. It will help us if we realize that sometimes prayer requires persistence. It requires perseverance.

We must keep on. The Lord spoke a parable that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Why did the Syrophenician woman get what she requested? She was persevering.

She was persistent. She kept right at it. Even though there was much opposition, even though there was much discouragement, she kept coming, kept coming back and asking for deliverance for her daughter.

And the Lord Jesus prayed three times. He prayed three times. Sometimes it's valid to go back and say the same words again and again.

You remember the king in the Old Testament and the prophet came to him and said, take those war arrows and strike the ground with them. And he struck the ground three times and the prophet was angry and he said, you should have struck it five or six times and you would have had more victory. Sometimes it's that way in prayer.

When you don't get in there and pray hard enough, and we could have had more victory. I was with a preacher by the name of Keith McLeod in Canada for a few months. And he, during that time, accepted an invitation to hold meetings in an evangelical Mennonite church.

A big one in Saskatchewan. And so those meetings were coming up. I believe it was four months in advance.

And so we had four months, those of us who were there, to pray for those meetings. And we prayed every day. We got in there and labored in prayer.

I'm not giving out some formula, but just this time, at least let me testify of what happened. We labored daily for about four months in prayer. And so those meetings then were to run from Sunday through Sunday.

And God came the very first meeting in the measure of power. Every meeting, every meeting, there was about 40 people that came to the front. No altar call.

And sometimes they came to the front crying out for help even during, right in the middle of the sermon. Sometimes they would call somebody else across the aisle. Brother, would you forgive me for doing this and that? Gossip or whatever.

Some were just so powerfully wrought upon by the Spirit of God, it was just terrifying. They were like stuck pigs. It was terrifying.

That's the only word for it. And so God came in a great measure of power. It was an answer to prayer.

We could not help but think. And by the end of those meetings, it was estimated that over half of the church had either been saved or had a fresh meeting with God. Meetings went to 2 and 3 o'clock every morning by the time we were done talking with people.

It was really an encouragement to me to see that answer of prayer. Sometimes when you've ever taken a rock and go to split it with a hammer, it doesn't crack on the first hit. It takes repeated cracks before that rock will split.

And sometimes it's that way in prayer. Repeated cracks. We prayed for a girl up there in Sedalia.

She's 19 now. Her mother believes, but her father doesn't. He comes about 2 out of 3 times.

He's still an unbeliever. But here about 2 weeks ago, the daughter called up and she said in tears on the phone, she said, Bob, I just can't go on any longer. I want to become a Christian.

I want to follow Christ. And last Sunday she stood up and testified of that very thing. A few of these things, we want to write them down in our book.

Terry's mother. We prayed for her over the years. She's a good Baptist, but we never thought she was a true Christian.

And she just died a couple months ago, three months ago of cancer. It was about 6 weeks from the time she saw there was something wrong until the time she died. And about 2 weeks before she died, laying there in the hospital, one morning real early, her surgery had split open because of the growing cancer.

And there she called Terry and I to the bedside and she said, Robert, referring to her salvation, she says, I have my doubts. Maybe we're getting somewhere here. And she says that I don't know what to do, but to cast myself as a sinner upon Christ and trust that He died to pay my sin debt.

And that dear mother, her spirit was changed. She wasn't grumbling and griping anymore. And she was witnessing of Christ to the nurses.

This one nurse just stood at the bedside and wept as Mom testified of Christ to her. And she called in others to make restitution, asked Terry to call them in so she could make restitution for these people. And one night, she just sang and prayed all through the night.

And she called me over to the bedside. Robert, will you pray? And it was a room full of people. She said, Robert, would you share with us how you were saved? I mean, we'd never seen anything like that.

It looks like that dear mother got into the kingdom just at the end. I mean, at least there's some hope. Late repentance was seldom true, but it can be.

Another point, a principle is Isaiah 40. Isaiah 40, verse 31. It's a familiar verse, isn't it? Those who wait upon the Lord will be new their strength.

Waiting upon God. Yes, prayer does take time. It does take time to be holy.

And like Bowne says, hurried prayer is a curse. I mean, it takes time to get in there with God sometimes and to come away feeling satisfied. And the dew doesn't fall on a windy night.

It's got to be quiet. MacIntyre says we need a quiet place, a quiet time, and a quiet heart. How would your wife like it, men, if the only time you talked with her was when you're in a hurry just passing by? God wants us to have some time with Him, preferably daily where we can just settle in with God and just say, here we are, here I am, Lord, just You and me.

What have You got to say? And I want to pour out my heart to You. We're not in a hurry. I just want to sit at Your feet and worship You.

Yes, they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. It takes time to recharge a battery. It takes time to recharge your soul.

The Lord often went out into the lonely place that He might wait upon God without distraction. Let me point out another thing, and that is in 1 Chronicles 5. It says, 1 Chronicles 5, verse 20, And they were helped, that is, the Reubenites, the Gadites, the half-tribe of Manasseh. They went to war with these other people.

And it says, And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand and all who were with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. It goes on to say they trusted in God too. There were two reasons there, but let's just look at that first one.

For they cried out to God in the battle. Sometimes prayer can, must, needs be desperate. It's valid for prayer, only fitting for some situations that our prayers be desperate.

That we cry out to God. The children of Israel in Egypt, it says they cried out to God. At the Red Sea, they cried out to God.

Hezekiah attacked by Sennacherib and his men, they cried out to God over and over. Psalm 107, four times in their trouble, they cried out to God. Acts 4, under persecution, they lifted up their voice to God.

They didn't mutter and mumble. They cried out to God. They lifted their voice.

Sometimes that's only fitting, only natural. It's not that God is hard of hearing, but it's what He expects and wants. That's what He sees is a heart that cries out to God that is just that desperate.

And the reason a lot of people aren't really saved, like you were talking, Rudy, that they're not true Christians is because they never did call out to God. It says, whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And that implies, that's what a drowning swimmer does.

He cries out. There's a desperation there. I remember one time I had a blotch, a skin irritation right there between those two fingers.

It was when I lived in Perksville. It would not go away. Wouldn't it go away for a while? Then come back.

And just really a vexing thing. And I remember one time out there in the country kicking the gravel in prayer. I just cried out to God, would You set me free from this thing? And I never had a trouble with it since.

Sometimes it's fitting to cry out to God that way, to be desperate in prayer. The Lord Jesus prayed with loud cryings and tears. And about a half a year ago, one of the young women in the church, all of a sudden she called and she says, I want to tell you, Bob, that I don't think I'm a Christian.

And she says, and I'm not going to repent. And I don't care. And I told her about everything I could in 40 minutes time.

And my battery on the phone ran out. And I went out into the auditorium and I cried out to God desperately. And when I was done, the phone rang.

And she called back. And she was just sobbing and broken. Just utterly broken.

She'd had a meeting with God in the shower. It wasn't just my prayers. I found out later that her parents had spent the night in prayer to God.

I know it doesn't always happen that way, but I'm thankful that did. And it looks like her life has been changed. She's walking with the Lord.

I read in Isaiah 64, there's no one who stirs themselves up to take hold of God. Isn't that something? No one who stirs himself up to take hold of God. To really get a hold of God.

That's what our prayer meetings ought to do. We ought to try to get a hold of God. I'll never forget going to that wrestling meet in high school where our big man, our heavyweight, was wrestling this other big man.

Both of them had a reputation as wrestlers and street fighters, and so there was a lot of rivalry between the two schools. And there was even bets going on as to who would win this wrestling match. And there these two fellows were out there like beefs, pushing one another around, accomplishing nothing.

And this other guy hit our guy in the nose and bloodied his nose, and it made him mad. And he wiped his face like a gorilla and took a hold of that other guy and threw him down and the show was over. He got a hold of that, stirred himself up, and took hold of that fellow.

And that's exactly what we should do with God. No one stirs himself up to take hold of God. Another thing that will help in prayer, and we won't turn to it, is to know the Bible.

To memorize the Bible even. The more we know the Word of God, the more it will help us to pray. If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you'll ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.

Daniel, the reason Daniel found confidence to pray what he prayed, was that he read in the book of Jeremiah that the time of the captivity was over. And so, the Word of God encouraged him to pray, enabled him to pray according to the will of God. That will help us.

And then another thing is found in Jude 20. Jude 20, it says, praying in the Holy Spirit. Praying in the Holy Spirit.

It says that in Ephesians 6, Romans 8, it speaks of the Spirit's assistance in prayer. Now, I take it this way, that we're not just talking about regeneration, we're talking about an engaging of the Holy Spirit in prayer. You know what it's like to pray and you don't feel like you've got to.

As opposed to times where you labor, you get in there with the Lord and you sense the Spirit of God is engaging your prayer, pouring gas on your fire. There's liberty that you didn't have. And you feel like you've had contact with God.

Praying in the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks like that. It says John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Do you think he was ever out of the Spirit? In a sense, no. But there it says he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. And so, we ought to at least be open to that, if not even strive for that, to have the Spirit of God engaging our prayers.

What a difference. What a difference to go away from a prayer meeting where you felt like the Spirit of God was right there engaging your prayers. Now, also it will help us, and this is my last point, it will help us to know that there's not only helps to prayer, but there's hindrances to prayer too.

And probably it could be all summed up under one word and that is sin. It says in Psalm 66, verse 18, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. And so, if you don't have a clear conscience, you've got some sin fluttering around there in your conscience.

Just forget it. You're playing the hypocrite. You're trying to draw near to God with your lips when your heart is far from Him.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His holy place? He with clean hands and a pure heart. Those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. You've got to be clean, lifting up clean hands, holy hands without wrath and doubting.

And so, sin will hinder our prayers. It says in 1 Peter 3, if there's a problem between the husband and wife, your prayers are going to be hindered. There's resistance in the circuit.

It says in Matthew 5, if you've come to present your offering and you know that your brother's got something against you, it says first go get it right and then come back. Make it right with him. If you know he's got something against you and Mark 11 says, if you've got something against him, so either way, it's on your back to make things right, and then you can come and pray.

Sin hinders our prayer. Carpenter, when he goes to work, when you go to work, you at least have to take a hammer. And so when we go to prayer to work, at least we've got to take a clear conscience regarding equity in our heart.

Motives or wrong motives can hinder prayer. You ask but you don't receive because you ask for the wrong motives. Think about it.

What are you asking for? Why are you asking for this thing? Unbelief will hinder prayer. But let him ask in faith. Let not the man who doubts think that he'll receive anything from the Lord.

James 1. Forget it. If you've got all these options and you're not going to believe God in what you're asking Him for, just forget it. Don't think that you're going to receive anything from the Lord.

Well, in closing, we like things at work, don't we? When it says the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much. We like a mechanic who can get the job done. We like a doctor who can get the job done.

We like things at work. Well, without making an idol out of prayer itself, it does say the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much. And what an encouragement it is to our own hearts when we see God answering prayer.

My daughter Bethany, a few months ago, she was doing an internship in the doctor's office. And she was still in school and had finals coming on her. And she was really loaded and she longed for more time to be able to study.

And she prayed that the Lord might make it that she wouldn't have to work that day. And she got to the doctor's office and they said, we're closing the shop because there's nobody here. How many times have you ever been to a doctor's office when there's nobody there? That's why they call them patients.

Because it takes a lot of patience to ever get in and see the doctor. And that place was shut down. That was an encouragement to Bethany, to her faith.

The effectual, fervent prayer. E.M. Bounds, he says, what we need is not more machinery, not new methods. What we need is better men.

Men of prayer. Men mighty in prayer. I mean, the churches are trying everything else.

Where are the churches that will labor and get in there in prayer? I'm trying to, as a pastor, think of ways in which I can stimulate and encourage more prayer up there in Sedalia. I wish we could have a schedule where at least some of the men would be meeting every day for prayer. It just seems like to me that the one mid-week prayer meeting is not enough.

It just seems like it's not going to get the job done. I know we'd go crazy if we didn't believe God was sovereign. And so thankfully there is a balance here.

But how can we stir up more prayer and keep hitting the rock until we see a crack? The Lord bless you.

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