

# Prayer

by Manley Beasley

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*Manley Beasley emphasizes the critical role of prayer in aligning with God's vision and strategy for revival and spiritual growth.*

**Duration:** 35:51

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 18:41-45, Matthew 6:6, Matthew 7:7-8, John 14:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 1:5, James 5:17

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, Dr. James Stewart emphasizes the importance of having both a vision and a strategy from God. He believes that God not only gives us a vision but also provides a strategy to accomplish it. Dr. Stewart shares his experience of interviewing potential missionaries and emphasizes the significance of prayer in their lives. He believes that a strong prayer life is essential for staying true to the message and method of God's work. Dr. Stewart concludes by sharing a story of a man who prayed for God's guidance and received a revelation about his mission.

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## Transcript

Dr. James Stewart used to say, when God gives you a vision, you also need to wait for the strategy by which he plans to accomplish that vision. And he said he always has a strategy, as well as a vision, he has a strategy by which you accomplish that vision. When we look at the Word of God, we realize that God not only speaks to us to give us a vision, a burden of faith, but he does give us a strategy by which to carry out what he's told us to do.

And it is important that you not only allow God to initiate what you do, but that you do it his way. Because if you run a race, and you run it unlawfully, and you get called out at the end, and because you have run the race unlawfully, and it means you haven't discovered the strategy that God has laid out, by which you do the work. And so there are some things we have questions about, and some we don't.

And one is the place of intercession in the life of the believer. It's all laid out in the Bible, how God works through intercession. I think there are several illustrations.

It's my favorite way to define the importance and the significance and the method of praying, or the why of praying. And that is found in this illustration. He said, if your objective is to bring a locomotive train down a track, prayer is the means of laying the track, so the locomotive can come.

And if there's no track, there's no train. Now, another fellow said that prayer is saying amen to what God wants to already do. But he never does it till you say amen.

Now, I do not understand why God would put such responsibility in the life of the believer. But I'll tell you what, he knows best, and he has commanded us to pray. And he's also committed himself to inhabit us, like these men just talked about, and literally pray.

Even when we do not know how and what to pray for, he does it. He does it. And so we have no problem with the fact that every one of us should be qualified prayer people.

If we're not qualified, it's not our weakness that's our problem, it's our strength. Because we get in the way. And in these meetings, we do not try to get rigid about the strategy, because we believe in individuality with the Lord, and a church individuality.

So we basically just want to lay out a general idea about praying, and then you have to obey. Now, I realize that one of the greatest hindrances to revival today is a interpretation that's out of line with the word, on sovereignty about revival. Now, you may not realize it, but the practice of your life will always be consistent with your faith.

And if you're dispirited about the view of sovereignty and revival, your prayer life will show it. And you'll say, well, a revival is a sovereign act, and you can't have revival without God sovereignly acting. The only thing wrong with that is that somewhere along the line, we have not interpreted sovereignty correctly.

It's always the sovereign will of God for a church to be restored to New Testament normality. I'll assure you that that group that went and prayed at Pentecost for those 10 days had no idea of sovereignty. And you know and I know that it was a sovereign act.

Why in the world would they go and pray 10 days? You can't justify it. Excuse me for being so honest, but it's a stupid man who thinks he's understood sovereignty. I think trying to understand sovereignty is like trying to measure the depth of the sky.

It's so far beyond man's capacity to understand. So man's come up with the word sovereignty to explain his thinking, rather than God's thinking. They prayed.

The only thing they needed to stand on was Jesus said, go and tarry and wait. That's all he had to have. And they prayed as if sovereignty had nothing to do with it.

And yet when he acted, it was according to his sovereign will. But what I'm trying to do is to lay out the fact that man has a responsibility. And that act of Pentecost was so sovereign that it came on Pentecost.

You can't get much more sovereign than that. And neither can you get more human responsibility than that. We have recently written a manual on revival.

It's really a collection, a lot of the material we got right out of this, some of this stuff. And we just got the best stuff that can be found and put it together. And we found, my dear friend, that there's a real problem with this thing.

Because of the human responsibility. It's not being met because people have crawled into the hole of sovereignty and waiting around for a sovereign act. And revival is not coming.

So I trust this morning that you'll realize, and I'm just talking to you, because I'm talking to you to try to, I can't swallow hardly at all. And so I'm being as quiet as possible. But I appreciate you praying about it.

But I'm just talking to you because what I'll have to say is somewhat of a strategy that puts this together. You've already heard more messages than you're living up to. So you know, you don't need to hear another sermon.

And so what I want to do is talk about the strategy. And we know that it's the will of God that men pray. Now prayer really, I love this, prayer is really the battlefield.

And gospel preaching and revival meetings as such, as campaigns and such, is nothing in the world as a means to pick up the result of the battle. The battles are won and lost in prayer. Now I'm going to tell you, it takes a spiritual person to see that.

Most of you, your prayer life is determined by what kind of difficulty you're in. And the reason is that we're not spiritual enough to be sensitive to the spirit of the living God. So God has to use to some physical, financial, family problem to even get us to pray.

Because if we were sensitive, we should be, we'd pray as the Holy Spirit of God would place it on our hearts. Do you know something I found out about God? Every time I have a crises in my life, and I'm in one and the other is just in and out. And it really doesn't bother me.

The thing that bothers me is that I'd be so stupid when I get in one. And you know what I found about God? That if I had been sensitive before I hit the crises, God had on many occasions prepared me for that crises. And I wouldn't see it because I was insensitive.

And so he had to let it get to be an abnormal crises to even get my attention. That has to be the nature of God because he never lets a need come up and then starts looking for the supply. He already has the supply and he will try to prepare you for that hour.

Yes sir. Now you just think about it. We've created a real dilemma because we're asking God to do something for us and he's done it and we don't know it.

And since we don't know it, since he's done it, he hasn't done it. So we haven't moved it out of the spiritual into the material. Because we are in, we're asking God to put us in a revival and so consequently we're asking him to do it.

Positionally he's done it. And it's not that we need to ask him to do it. We need to ask him to open our eyes and let us see we have it.

Because when you are asking him to do something that he has already in his side done, you are not obviously getting into the room, you're trying to get out of the room you're already in. And so you have the complexity, the confusion of trying to get out of somewhere you're already in. And that's quite a confusing mess.

You become the hindrance to your own life. Right? So our prayer really should be, Lord open my eyes and let me see what I have in you so I can accept it and believe it and experience it. Amen.

Well, we have a friend, an old friend named Ed Smith. That man came by one day and Ed was praying for \$200. One of my favorite stories.

And that man was praying for \$200. Boy, talking to Ed is a little more prepared spiritually I guess than Ed was. And he said, Ed, you need to quit asking God for \$200 and ask God to open your eyes and let you see you have it.

Well, Ed acted rather carnal. Now, I can stand immaturity. I can tolerate immaturity.

But I can't tolerate carnality. And I'll tell you, a lot of us are awfully carnal. That means we've heard the truth and not experienced it.

And I'll tell you, old Ed got mad. He said, bless God, if you knew him, he'd sound just like me. Bless God, don't you think I got sense enough to know if I had \$200, I know I had.

I don't know who that fellow was, but that fellow said, well, obviously you don't. That's it. That's the way it is.

And he was up there in Alexander, Louisiana. And so he's in that little prayer room here during that place rescue mission. And finally he got and closed all the doors, shut everything down, got down on his knees and he said, Now, God, if I've got something and I don't know I have it, would you open my eyes and let me see it so I can get it? And God said, get up, go to the window.

He got up and went to the window, pulled the shutters open and looked out there, had a rescue mission. And he looked out there on the grounds and there were men, a bunch of men milling around. And he noticed they'd reach down and pick up pecan.

And he said, look up. And he looked up there and there was those pecan trees right by the window. I believe they had several pecan trees on that land.

But those two, was it seven? Seven, I think it was seven. And he looked up those trees and they were so loaded with pecans that they had had to prop them up, limbs keep from breaking. And he saw it.

And now those men were out there doing nothing. And they went down with some cane poles and knocked those pecans off that tree, some of them. Picked them up, picked up a couple bags and they said, well, we'll just go take these and went down to the market.

And the man said, you have \$200 worth. In fact, he didn't just have them. God put it in the heart of old farmer, years before, sitting there with some pecan trees.

I'm going to have an old preacher come along here and meet you on a dollar. I hope it's necessary that we pray. It's necessary that we pray, but it takes a spiritual person.

It takes a sensitive person to realize the seriousness, the meaning, the significance of prayer. It really does. It really does.

Now, prayer takes on many forms. And I think most of us think that prayer is just talking to God. But if you'll study the whole message of prayer, you'll find that it covers a whole spectrum, like confession, petition, praise, intercession, and even the spoken word of faith.

Which means you coming to the place of an intercessor that you see things as God sees it and you announce it. Say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and doubt not, and whatsoever thou sayest. See, that's prayer.

So to try to isolate prayer just to petitioning God is a very bad, bad mistake. But you and I can pray. Now, I don't know of any greater work for a saint than that of prayer.

I think Jesus illustrated this as much as anyone. You see, we are such theologians, we have taken the humanity away from Jesus. Folks, if he did not have humanity, if Jesus Christ could not have sinned, then you do not have a Savior.

And neither do you have a balanced gospel. Now, the reason I said that is not to stir your questioning so much as to let you know, as the humanity of Jesus, Jesus found it necessary to pray. Amen.

And in that context, he is a perfect example for you and me. And he let us know it. Now, folks, there is no question about he is God.

But there is no question either that he was man. And when we have Jesus here on earth, in those years of the flesh, my friends, he is man full of God. And it is not right to say, therefore he was God and he could just do it.

No, that is unscriptural. Amen. He was man full of God.

The same way you and I have to be, and he could do it. You know, we are not good dividers of the truth. And we confuse people instead of helping.

He had to pray. Before he made the choice of his disciples and so on, he prayed. I mean, friend, he prayed.

Prayer is laying the track. So the train can come. Prayer is saying amen to what God wants to do.

And he waits for that amen. Yes, sir. So what we like to do is, in these meetings, is find us, find people.

Now, you just watch this. Find an individual, or two or three individuals, under the pastor. Or three or four individuals.

And it can develop as the pastor. Now, a lot of churches have the 24-hour prayer type thing going. And I wouldn't suggest how you do this.

But we have found that people work that have a vision and a burden and a faith. Everybody's business is nobody's business. And nobody's business is everybody's business.

And it never gets done. Now, you may not realize it, but because you get out here and you see, you see this big crowd overflowing in these meetings, and you see all these manifestations and all that stuff on television, I'm going to tell you something. In most cases, the devil has never opposed it.

For one reason, is they're not preaching the truth gospel. But you're impressed with the crowds. And the money.

And you call that getting the job done. I always felt that you could determine as to whether God was up to something by how much the devil thought it. Somebody said, how did Mr. Swiger turn out so popular? It had to be God.

No. God just, Satan just backed off. And let him develop himself.

It's called soul power. None of us know anything about it. But let me listen.

The way that you still get the job done, if it gets done, is a man walking with God on his knees. And I'll tell you what you'll do. You will compromise the message.

You'll compromise the method. For money and crowds, or you'll pay the price in prayer and see the real thing. And if you do not know how to pray and learn how to pray and how to do it God's way, you will flat compromise.

The devil may deceive you in it, but you'll compromise. A strong man first has to be bound before you can rob him of his goods. And if you think he can be robbed without you bounding him by the grace and power of God through prayer, my dear friends, you've got another thought coming.

He's just letting you get by with it. Now what we look for is men and women who get the glimpse of the significance and meaning of prayer under the direction of the pastor. And get that person to literally pray and find them ten people and teach those ten.

And then they get ten. It's sort of a pyramid type thing, but if people have the calling and the burden and the vision, they will teach them. And my dear friends, build an army that can lock the doors of hell.

Amen. The other day we were in a meeting and just shared this thing that we get the pastor and he finds as he prays and finds about three people, the one person we said. And he found three.

And in a church that runs about 300 or so, 400 sometimes, he already has over 300 and something people interceding every day. Because he got in there and saw what it would do. He told them to get him a book and start laying it out, what they're praying for.

Let me tell you something, folks. Old Dr. James Stewart used to say, he's the head of mission projects and so on, hired a lot of missionaries. And when they'd come to him for an interview about becoming a missionary, the first thing he'd ask them is, do you pray? They'd say, yes.

Who doesn't? My two-year-old grandson prays. Amen. He said, do you pray? Yes.

Second question, do you get your prayers answered? He said, yes. He said, show me. And he said, when they would pull out a book and they'd have a history of asking and receiving from God, he said, I'd know they were saved.

He said, I'd know they were in fellowship. And he said, and furthermore, I would know that they knew how to get the job done regardless of the rest of the world. Amen.

You see, folks, when you know a person that knows that, you can take them on the other side of the desert. He'll come home because he takes the executive committee with him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

He takes the whole bank account with him. Amen. He's got the whole business with him.

And you can't put him in a place where he doesn't. You can even surround him, but you can't stop the way up out. Amen.

The devil can circumvent him. I mean, come all around the folks, you can't stop the relationship between him and God. And God still knows the way.

And so I pray today that God will put it on your heart that the greatest thing you can do is pray. And you'll make yourself available to your pastor, and that they will set up a structure of having a person like a captain that's in charge of ten. And then that ten in charge of another ten.

I mean, friend, and all that person has to do, that captain, is call ten people and say, we are praying about this. And my dear friends, before an hour is over, you've got a hundred, two or three hundred people praying. The Bible says pray by the Spirit and also says pray by the understanding, which I believe that means that the Spirit of God can put it on your heart.

And you can intercede according to the Spirit. But it also says don't neglect the praying and the understanding. In other words, you can intelligently lay out what's out there to pray about and pray with understanding.

And the only person that doesn't do this is a person that doesn't know the value, the meaning, the purpose of prayer. Right? See, in James 5, it says if any monk is sick, let him call for the elders of the church. And then it goes on and says let him pray the prayer of faith.

Now, you know, you go back to the prophet, and you look at that passage in James that I'm referring to, and it looked like that the prophet prayed and stopped up heaven for three years and six months. By his prayer. But if you go back there in the Old Testament and study that passage out, you know what he did? He said he prayed according to the word of God.

Elijah didn't sit down and say, now God, this thing needs a revival. And in fact, God, I have a strategy. The strategy is you shut up heaven for three years and six months, and it'll shake the devil out of this bunch, and we'll have revival.

Now, is that the way he did? Did he tell God what to do? No, you study the text of that verse, Old Testament and New Testament, and you'll find that the Lord said, Elijah, this thing needs revival. And I want you to get out here and announce this. And he went out and said, it's not going to rain by the space of three years and six months according to the word of God.

Then God zipped up heaven. And then when the time came, he went out and prayed several times. And he said, I see the cloud the size of a man's hand.

It's on the road. It's on the way. Beloved, we need to pray.

And what we do, we have some little old slips down here to sort of lay that out for you if you just need some ideas, suggestions. And what we like to do to the people that get involved in this fires of revival is to send that to you, and the material in there does not create a problem in your local church. And out of there comes material that will pray.

And then we just send a little simple prayer bulletin to these leaders and listing things to pray for. And we're not just talking about our ministry. We're talking about needs that come into us from all over the world.

And get people praying and writing down and receiving the answers. Folks, it'll grow you. It'll bless you.

And it'll redeem mankind. Yes, sir. So we challenge you to do this.

I want to close with a little story. I think the most neglected part of the ministry I see today opposed to 30 years ago is the fact that I can't find people praying. They just do not pray.

And I'm sure it's because they don't think they need it. Oh, I suppose it was 10 years ago, I flew into Jackson, Mississippi. Pastor said to me, John Hillman, he said to the man that was your buddy when you were kids, he wants to meet you.

Well, he used a name, the first name that I didn't recognize. So I agreed to meet this boy. And when I met him, of course, he lived across the creek from us, and we ate muscadines together, possum grapes, went swimming.

I mean, we were real close. And we were just real good friends. But I had not seen him in over 40 years.

Didn't know what happened to him. And we got to talking. And he said, Brother Manly, he said, I've been saved and told me about it.

And we were laughing and talking. And he said, you know, he said, you probably don't even know this. But he said, do you know why I'm saved? I said, well, I'm sure Jesus loves you.

And he died for you and saved you. He said, I know that. But he said, he said, do you remember I used to come spend the night with you? And I said, yeah, I remember that.

He said, do you know, he said, something happened in those days, and I never will forget it. He said, we played all evening after school and stuff. And your mother would bring us in and make us take a bath in a wash tub and clean us up, feed us.

And he said, I loved it so much. And he said, we'd get in that bed and you'd fall asleep. And he said, I'd hear your mother praying.

And she said, oh, God. Saved, Don. His mother was a harlot.

I mean, friends. They had about 10 kids and none of them knew who the daddy was. He said, Brother Manly, all my family died and went to hell.

Some of them are in the pen yet. He said, the ones that haven't died aren't saved. But he said, Brother, one day I remembered your mother praying for me.

And he said, I'm saved because of that. I went home and told my mother, you know, folks, that woman had touched eternity forever. And she didn't even know it.

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