

# How to Prevail in Prayer

by Shane Idleman

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*To prevail in prayer, you must change your spiritual diet, persevere in prayer, schedule your prayer in as a priority, remind yourself who God is, and destroy those who speak falsehood.*

**Duration:** 58:25

**Scripture:** Psalm 5:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Prevailing in Prayer"

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## Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical role of prayer in overcoming the challenges faced by Christians today, urging believers to prevail in prayer through earnestness and a deep connection with God. He outlines eight practical ways to enhance one's prayer life, including changing one's spiritual diet, prioritizing prayer, and meditating on God's goodness. Idleman stresses that true prayer requires perseverance and a heartfelt cry to God, reminding the congregation that God hears the cries of His people. He encourages believers to align their hearts with God's will and to rejoice in His faithfulness, asserting that prayer is a powerful weapon against the struggles of life. Ultimately, he calls for a radical commitment to prayer as a means of spiritual warfare and revival.

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## Transcript

The title tonight, we find ourselves in Psalm chapter five. It's a book of psalms, and each psalm is called a psalm singular. This is Psalm number five, and they really weren't numbered in the Old Testament.

They would say a Psalm of David, a Psalm of different kings, or a Song of David, but we decided to put numbers in there as 500 years ago for easy reference. So you can find it in your Bible, Psalm five, or if you have your journal. How many of you are using your journal? Is that working out okay? Oh, wow, that's a lot of people.

And what we're doing is we're reading through our journal. We still have a few, I believe, and we're writing down what the Lord is saying. We're writing down questions.

We're growing together through the book of Psalms. I like to go through the book of Psalms. I like to go through a book of the Bible when we can.

As you know, we're in First Corinthians on Sunday, Psalm on Wednesday. I'll possibly go into Second Corinthians when that is over, and so far, we've been through Matthew. We've been through Timothy.

We've been through James. We've been through Proverbs and trying to get through the books of the Bible. So with that said, the reason this is an important message is because, I don't know if you've noticed, but things are tightening up in America, across the world, and just kind of getting through life isn't gonna cut it anymore.

You know, just kind of, you know, good old America in the 1950s and 60s and 70s and 80s, we are changing dramatically, and the only thing that is really going to get Christians through and persevering, the only way we're truly gonna see our nation change or our city change, Lancaster, Palmdale, the high desert, the sex trafficking, the abuse of, I mean, we see it, it's all around us, is through prayer. Prayer moves the hand of God. All great revivals have started from prayer, and I can take you back to revivals where God would shut down bars and saloons and the whole atmosphere of the community would change, and I truly believe that God can do that today.

Call me foolish, call me narrow-minded, call me naive, but it's biblical, that God can revisit and revive his people, but it's not gonna happen without prayer. It's not gonna happen without living holy, godly lives. That's why we have a Wednesday night prayer worship service and it's Wednesday morning, 6 a.m., and a Sunday morning.

That's why there's different prayer things that are going on because we believe that God will answer the prayers of his people. However, has anyone found that it's difficult to prevail in prayer? Boring? Maybe heavens feel like they're closed up, God isn't listening, I've been praying for things, they're just not being answered, and I think we can glean from this psalm. So the title is Eight Ways to Prevail in Prayer.

Now, by the title, I will tell you up front that prayer is struggling, prayer is contending. I look at prayer, personally, like I look at working out. The results come later, and there's a motivation that has to take place, and me and Morgan talk about this sometimes, where she needs to go somewhere and work out and I can just work out anywhere.

If I've got 20 minutes, I can just go take a jog out in the desert, or I can do some push-ups somewhere. I've gotta keep, whenever I can get it in there, I gotta just keep this body somehow not falling apart as it already feels like it is falling apart. Joints, I mean, I think I need shoulder surgery, elbow surgery, and knee surgery.

I'm avoiding all of that, I don't want the doctor to tell me that, I'm just praying, God, just use me as long as you can. But prayer is the same way, it's prevailing. It's warfare, it's struggling, it's contending, it's pulling down heaven, it's fighting against demonic influence, it's fighting against your flesh.

It's the most difficult thing a Christian can do, but also the most important. I mean, isn't it easy to put on Christian radio for an hour? Try praying for an hour, try turning off your phone and sitting and praying for an hour. And I just wanna encourage you that it can be done.

You can have a vibrant, healthy prayer life, and there are ways to prevail. And I grabbed some of these from Psalm 5. So it begins with this sentence, give ear, so this is a wonderful way to pray as well, give ear to my words, oh Lord, consider my meditation, consider my meditation. This jumped out at me this week because this is so important.

What does meditation mean? And I'm not talking about how they meditate in yoga. Buddhists meditate, they just sit there and like I don't know where they think they're thinking. They just meditate and they try to

empty themselves.

Biblical meditation is this, it means to reflect on, to study, and to practice. So he is saying here, give ear to my words, Lord, consider, Lord, look at, I've been meditating, I've been pondering you, I've been thinking about you, so here is the key. What you reflect on creates a hunger for more of God.

What you're meditating on, whatever you meditate on becomes something that you want more of, correct? Have you ever just tried to have a little piece of chocolate? How does that work? More, more, more, or just have a little, those little spoons they give you at Baskin-Robbins. Just try this cookies and cream, that's it, that's all you can have. Why, because that appetite is fueled.

So as you meditate on God, and I would just tell you, if you go to bed meditating on God's word, maybe reading the Bible, reading a good book, a good biography, or E.M. Bounds on prayer, just grab any book by E.M. Bounds on prayer and get your highlighter out and you'll be hungry for more of God when you wake up. See, you're feeding that. Now if you go to bed watching Breaking Bad on Netflix, you're probably not gonna wake up hungry for more of God.

It's a story about a meth dealer I heard that's just going crazy and it's gory, it's horrific, but the Christian community is drawn towards it. It's drawn towards ungodly things and they watch the media all night. So if I'm watching the news, I don't care if it's Fox, CNN, whatever it is, I'm watching that all night, I'm not meditating on the things of God, I don't wake up hungry for the things of God.

So David's saying here, I meditate, I believe it's David, I should've checked that again. But there's a hunger you create for more of God. That's why, this is what I love about God, the more you feed on the things of God, the hungrier you become for the things, the hungrier you are for the things of God.

But the more you feed on the things of the world, you're hungry for the things of the world. So if we're meditating, consider my meditation, what are you meditating on? Here's where it starts, let me tell you. You don't just, okay God, tomorrow morning, now this would be a good prayer, but don't get me wrong, but just saying, okay God, tomorrow morning I wanna wake up hungry for you, but I'm not gonna feed my mind with your things.

I'm gonna feed my mind with things that are of this world. That's a hard prayer for God to answer because it's counteracting, it's going against what he's already outlined in his word. So how to prevail, number one, change your spiritual diet ASAP.

Change your spiritual diet ASAP, meaning what you're putting in. So here's a tip, who you are all week deeply affects your prayer life, amen? If I'm busy all week, I don't have time for God, I'm bickering, I'm complaining, I'm watching things I shouldn't be watching, and I'm just, whatever's happening, you think I'm gonna be hungry for God and prayer and I'm going to prevail in prayer? There's no way. So it begins here, begin changing your appetite.

If you say, well that's boring, Shane, I don't like the Bible or I don't like books about God or I'm just not there yet. Well, let me encourage you to get there quickly because the health of your prayer life is directly related to your spiritual health, what you're meditating on. Force your flesh to do what it doesn't wanna do.

Grab a book by E.M. Bounds, I think there's downloads on Kindle, different things, or grab the Bible at night and just read Psalms and start to feed on that. So that's how to prevail, number one, change your spiritual diet ASAP, align it with God's word. And then verse number two, we can see up there on the

screen.

Give heed to the voice of my cry. So he's saying here, give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to you I will pray. So give heed, what's he saying here? He basically, oh God, please listen.

Oh God, please listen. See, there's persevering in prayer. If you wanna prevail in prayer, prevailing and persevering go hand in hand.

It's knocking down those strongholds one brick at a time. It's breaking through one brick at a time. It's that persevering.

Oh God, have you ever prayed that? Oh God, please listen. Please listen to my prayer. So how to prevail, number two.

There is travail before you prevail. Now, that's actually the title next week of the sermon. And I don't wanna tell you too much right now because that'll mess up next week's sermon.

But the point is this, there is travail before you prevail in something. Have you ever had a baby, women? Is there a little bit of travail before you prevail? Before there's a blessing, there's always a travail. And in the Old Testament, I love when the prophet talks about when Zion travails, sons and daughters are born.

When Zion, when Israel travails, sons and daughters will be born. There's always a travailing. There's always a pushing in and a persevering.

I found this quote earlier this week. It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends. For none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God.

To me, this is pretty simple, but it shows us, it shows God how bad do you want it. That earnestness. You think God is looking for an earnest person, a person seeking him? Throughout the day, God, I'm gonna prevail.

I'm gonna pull down heaven. I'm gonna seek you in the morning. I'm gonna seek you in the evening.

Oh God, please listen. Give heed to the voice of my cry. Notice here, there's a cry.

There's a cry. It's okay to get emotional with God. Did you know that? Well, you would hear a lot of public prayers.

You would think it's not okay. They pray like they're in a cemetery or a library. Have you ever prayed in a library? How would you pray? Oh God, just keep us safe.

Thank you. Bless us. Just there's no travail of the hearts.

And God, I believe, hears the cries of our heart. Oh God, hear my cry. And then verse three, my voice.

My voice you shall hear in the morning. You ready to get convicted, late night people? How many late night people are here? Uh oh, this is not gonna go over well. My voice you shall hear in the morning.

Oh Lord, in the morning, I will direct it to you and I will look up. Now, I'm gonna be careful here. I'm not gonna make you feel bad because I do believe morning or evening person, if you can seek God, wherever you can seek him.

If you seek him better in the evening, it works good for you and you're growing in your faith, hey, I think that's wonderful. But the majority of people who don't get God in the morning, don't get him in later in the day. Here's what E.M. Bounds said.

The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and its freshness in other pursuits, then seeking God will make poor headway seeking him the rest of the day. Why is this so important? Well, how to prevail number three, schedule your prayer in as a priority.

You've heard me say that before, but it bears repeating. Is prayer on your calendar? Think about that. Well, I've got the dentist, I've got the doctor, I've got this schooling event, I've gotta be here, I'll fit God in somewhere.

I believe that all those things should be fit around your time with God. How to prevail in prayer, God is on the calendar, wherever that time is. But we would see something interesting.

Jesus would seek God early in the morning. The prophets sought God early in the morning. There's more Psalms and more prophetic voices.

There's something about getting up and seeking God first. Now, I know most people have to get up early and get to work. I know friends of mine have to get up at four in the morning and be down in Los Angeles.

But you can put on worship in 405 traffic. I listened to dozens, hundreds of hours of tapes, back when they had tapes, driving or in heavy equipment, just listening and worship and growing and not putting on talk radio that profits you very little. And so there is something there too.

My voice you shall hear in the morning. What do you do in the morning? Isn't it hard? Isn't it hard sometimes? What competes for your time? Morgan sometimes, well, did you get my text this morning? No, this is staying in the garage in airplane mode until I seek God because it's like addictive. What's going on? Did the church blow up? Is everything okay? Can the world survive without me? And there's something to that, putting that on the back burner and letting God be on the front burner.

And there's a priority in the morning. What do you seek? What do you seek before God? What's the desire of our heart? Now, I don't wanna get too convicting here, but a lot of people seek a big black drink in the morning before God. I can't seek God until I've had my, you know what? Or we look at the news or we gotta get going or the kids are up.

Many times we don't get up early enough. Don't worry, I'm not gonna go there anymore. We don't get up early enough because why? We go to bed too late.

Now, if you are productive in the evening and you're growing spiritually, that's wonderful. This is not for you. But for the vast majority of people, the reason we don't get up early and seek God is because we're going to bed too late.

Have you ever thought that God designed us in such a way to where we get tired? We should when the sun goes down and then we should be waking up even before it comes up. That's how we were created, our biological clock. That's how God designed us, that sleeping pattern.

So those going to bed at 11 or 12 at night and they're getting up rushing to get through the day, they're missing that time with God. So Shane, what does that mean to me? Well, take it to God. How can you reschedule your life and make Him a priority? I will tell you this, you will never be let down.

You will never be discouraged or disappointed that you did that. So take this test this evening or tomorrow. Is what I'm doing at night building me up spiritually or hurting me spiritually? What is it doing spiritually to me? Whatever hurts our praying must be removed.

And people say, I know I hear this sometimes, man, Shane, your message is, that's just too hardcore. I need something, man, I can just kind of work with, you know, that's, ooh, that's too much for me. I'm talking to believers who want to prevail in warfare.

They understand that this, we are in a battle for our soul, the soul of our nation, for the souls of our family. I'm talking to believers who want to be filled with the Spirit of God and do business till Christ returns and who wants to witness the glory of God, be filled with His Spirit, see miracles take place, witness to, I'm talking to those people. I'm not talking to those who just want to barely get by and don't want more of God.

All of this is straight from the Bible. Did Jesus spend a lot of time praying? If you just look through the New Testament, spent the whole night in prayer or went away from them into a desolate place. I wish we could find a desolate place where we live.

It is difficult to fight for that. I mean, He would just walk and you would not find Him for a while. I must be about my father's business.

And I know sometimes with the phones, with kids and stuff, we just got to get back to trusting God. God, you're sovereign, you're in control. I'm gonna take this time and I'm gonna just trust you.

And then verse four, He's gonna shift gears. Are you ready? He's shifting gears. He says, for you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness.

It looks like you're like, where's He coming out of the blue here? What you do have to remember though, in the Hebrew, when this is written, they don't write like we write. They're poetic and at the beginning of a Psalm might match the end of a Psalm or the middle. They're poetic.

There's a rhyme and a reason to it. It's not just flowing like a book often. That's why if you ever try to study verse by verse through Proverbs, you will lose your mind.

I tried that once and a couple months into it, I think I said, oh, this isn't gonna work. I just need to get topics out of here. So shift gears, for you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with you.

The boastful, the boastful shall not stand in your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity. So how to prevail number four.

Are you ready for this? Remind yourself who God is. Remind yourself who God is. Why is that important? Because I get up in the morning, I remember everything else but who God is.

Complaining and bickering, look what's going on. Look what's happening in our nation. Look what's happening in our school districts.

Look what's happening in our libraries. In the LGBT reading to kindergarten, it seems like LA County is falling. God, what's going on? And then I'm reminded, remind yourself who God is.

God, you do not take pleasure in wickedness. You do not love evil. The boastful shall not stand in your sight.

And when I remind myself who God is, I realign my heart to his sovereignty and to his control. That's right, you're good. That's right, you are holy, you are righteous.

And then also I use this time, if there's anything in my heart that needs to be realigned, that's right, God hates wickedness, he hates evil. Is there besetting sin that is existing in our hearts? Let me tell you, that will kill a prayer life quicker than anything else. I see a lot of head shaking, amen? Besetting sin, I know I shouldn't be doing this, but I don't care, I'm going to do it.

That will kill your prayer life. That can be as simple as a prideful, boasting heart or an unforgiving heart, a bitter, have you ever held bitterness? I have, I've stewed, I've let that stew up, the bitterness and upset at somebody, how could they? And that, it kills my prayer life. Or that besetting sin, there's an area where God keeps wanting you to work on but you keep falling in that area.

Could it be that that's why there's not powerful prayer? Remember, you pray as well as you live and you live as well as you pray. They go together, if you want a powerful prayer life, do business with God, cleanse your heart out like David said, God, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me. God, I empty myself of my pride, examine me, God, examine me, have you ever told the Holy Spirit that? Be careful, a lot of things might start popping up.

God, examine me, I wanna be clean before you, I wanna be right before you. So how to prevail, number four, I just said it, remind yourself who God is and realign your heart to that. You have to realign your heart.

And then verse six, you shall destroy, you shall destroy those who speak falsehood. Praise God for that. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

If this is a prayer, why do you think the author is doing this? Well, a lot of times we know that these words are recorded, why? For our benefit, not just his, our benefit, reminding us God is going to destroy those who speak falsehood. So in the end, guess who's gonna have the final say? I'm so tired of looking at the news, I don't even know what's true anymore. This falsehood, this destructive nature that's going on in our nation.

God is going to destroy all those who speak falsehood. The Lord abhors, he means he hates the bloodthirsty and the deceitful man. But as for me, but as for me, I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy.

In fear of you, I will worship towards your holy temple. So how to prevail, number five, meditate on how good God is. Did you catch that? Meditate on how good God is, because most of us need a reality check in this area.

We allow bitterness to come in, resentment to come in, kind of getting maybe upset at God. But if I remember, God's mercy was shed abroad in my heart. Look at the good things that he has got us through.

Look at how good God has been to you. Has God ever let you down once? Yes, difficult things happen, yes, we get bad news, there are circumstances, but if I remember, remind myself who God is, it changes my whole attitude of prayer. I start praising God in the storm and saying, oh God, you are merciful, you are good, change my heart, and then my prayer focus changes.

I had this list over here, and now my heart changes and prevailing in those areas. And when God points your prayers, here's how you get prayers answered, okay? Here's the secret. Listen, sit up, don't look at phones, don't fall asleep.

Your prayers are answered, and I've had biggies answered, biggies answered, big ones. It's when you align your heart with God's heart. You start praying for things that are gonna bless others.

You start praying for salvation of others that God puts on your heart. You start praying for ministries or things in the church that are gonna help others. You align yourself with God's heart, and he begins to give you the desires of your heart, the desires he puts in your heart.

What's the scripture say? Commit your ways to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established. I mean, I remember my early years, my prayers, oh God, give me a race. Oh God, let me retire at age 40.

Did you know that was one of my goals in my 20s? That never, prayer's not gonna be answered. I don't believe a Christian often retires. I think they're just, they're doing something in the Lord's work, that's what I'm gonna be doing.

But I prayed that prayer. They were so out, on so just worldly things. But you're growing in those things.

You're growing in the faith, but when you commit, Lord, I commit my ways to you, your thoughts are established, meaning he begins to plant thoughts to pray for certain things, certain things that you would think were ridiculous, or God will open a door that only God can open, amen? Have you ever had those doors open? That's impossible. That's impossible, but by God. For example, what I talked about earlier, the radio stations that we purchase here as a church.

That is the most ludicrous idea I have ever heard. That's not even on the radar, it wasn't even on our radar. Not only was the price too high initially, but we had no radio manager, we had no engineers, I had no FCC attorney, nothing, that's impossible.

But God began to plant that thought into my heart, the desire of the church. And the focus is on that, and he'll begin to focus on that. What are we gonna do now as the church is growing? We've got an overflow room, we've got both services, Sunday we're full and not a lot of seats.

What are we supposed to do? We begin to pray and God will begin to direct our thoughts, and our prayer life will be focused on that. He'll bring somebody into our lives. Many people in the prayer room that I've prayed for, I'm praying for them throughout the week, some of you are in here, I can point you out, but I don't wanna embarrass you.

I've been praying for you because God put, and then we see prayers answered. Well how did that happen? Because your heart begins to align with God's heart. You begin to humble yourself, you begin to seek him, and God's desires are on your desires.

Your thoughts become God's thoughts, and you don't become bored in prayer anymore. Why? Because now there's a passion, there's a purpose. Wouldn't you pray better if you had a passion to pray? How many of you have a passion for sports? Or passion for a new movie coming out? Or passion for something? Where does that passion come from? It's a hunger for something.

Some of those things aren't bad. A desire to go to a playoff game. Who's ever going to the World Series soon? I don't know.

But a desire to do that. Those are okay, those are good things. But also when it comes to the things of God, I don't think they should be boring.

I mean, and this is coming from somebody who is challenged in all these areas I'm sharing with you. So I'm not standing up here going, come on guys. Pray like me.

I love praying prayer in the morning. I wake up so filled with prayer, I just can't wait to start praying. Now often that does happen if these things are aligned.

I love waking up, seeing the clock and going, oh, it's only three, I need to go back to sleep. And I wake up hungry for God, why? Because I pray, God, I need to seek you tomorrow morning. I need direction tomorrow.

I'm reading the things of God, I'm hungry for the, so I wake up hungry based on what I ate the night before. The same thing applies. So how to prevail, number five.

Meditate on how good God is. When the heart becomes thankful, it deeply affects your prayer life. How many of you can pray well, really well, when you're angry and bitter and upset? Hmm, hmm, no one? I thought there'd be at least one person who would take me up on this.

Might pray with anger. Oh God, how could you allow this? But see, it's thankfulness because one of the ways the enemy will knock you off track, here you go, no surprise, is by being discontent. Those who leave the church are discontent.

Those who get away from ministry and back away from ministry, quit ministry, are discontent. Pastors who resign are discontent. Marriages that are falling apart, they're discontent.

People who don't wanna do anything for God, they don't wanna witness on the streets, they don't want to go to the hospital homes, they don't wanna do, they are discontent. So if the enemy can't steal your salvation, can he make you ineffective as a believer? That's his goal, is to ruin your testimony, it's to make you so discouraged that you give up. So how important is thankfulness? Think about this, being thankful to what God has done.

Now if you're going through a bad situation, if you're going through a situation you can't understand, something that doesn't make sense, there is something to be thankful about. You can find something to be thankful about. You need some help? How thankful should we be that Christ saved us? Think about that.

How thankful that he went to the cross, bore the wrath of God, the abuse of men, and took on your sin and my sin, took on the penalty, and freed us from shame and guilt and the penalty of sin? I don't know, but you might wanna be a little thankful. It might motivate, but see, you have to take your mind there, you have to go there and concentrate and focus on thankfulness. And then verse eight we read, we can put that up

as well.

This is so important and we miss it often. Lead me, lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies. Make your way straight before my face.

In a nutshell, what he's saying is, Lord, show me, lead me. Have you ever cried that out? God, show me, give me direction. God, I don't know what to do.

And if I can speak life into you on this point, let me tell you this. If you don't know what to do, wait. Oh, let me say that again.

If you don't know what to do, what? Wait. Unless, of course, it's a court case or something, you know, you have to make a decision. But looking back on my life, every time I get in trouble, it's because, well, God, I mean, you're not answering, so here I go.

It's in the waiting time, it's not wasted time. It's in the waiting time that you develop faith. Again, unless a timely decision needs to be made.

You know, a surgery coming up or something. I believe that we step out in faith, knowing what God's principles teach. Lord, I've gotta make a decision today.

The court needs to know. My business, Lord, I need to know. I need to make a decision.

I'm not talking about that. I'm just talking overall decisions. It's very important that we ask for direction, we ask for wisdom, and we ask for clarity.

You'd be amazed at how many people do not ask and they do not receive. Jesus said that, ask and you will receive. And when I talk to people, a lot of the times they say, well, Shane, God knows my heart.

He'll do what's right. He knows, he'll do it. True, but Jesus said, ask and you will receive.

Why? Because that asking clarifies our motives. It's specific. God, would you show me, like the prayer for the church, God, what are we gonna do as a church grows? God, I need you to show us, give us wisdom, open doors that no man can shut, and close doors that no man can open.

What do you want to do, God? We need to be specific in this area. And I know this might not be right. I'm working on it.

But I sometimes give God a timetable. I need to know by the end of this year. And honest, if your heart is right and there's sincerity there, God has answered that many times for me.

When I say, God, could you let us know this month? We have to make a decision. I need to know, and you're seeking him, and you're asking for, it's almost like, I know what my kids need, you know, technically, but if they come and ask, daddy, daddy, can I have this? Absolutely, let's go, let's go. But see, there's something in the asking.

I don't quite understand it. But when Jesus said, ask and you will receive, knock and the door will be open. Seek and you will find.

There's this voluntary action in prayer that God wants us to move in these areas. And I look at it as direction and wisdom and praying for these things, it's stepping out in faith. God, I'm gonna wait until you

give me light.

What about, Shane, I'm looking for a job, what should I do? Wait till God brings me a job? No, fill out resumes. Put your feet to the pavement. Ask, Lord, show me what to do.

You might run in, did you love divine connections or what? You're at the right time, at the right place to meet the right person. Only God can do that. For example, I'll just give you an example.

I was at the National Religious Broadcasters meeting in Anaheim, I think it was, this year. And I was sitting down with a friend of mine and we're having, I was having coffee, he was having coffee. I had to get to sleep that night, Starbucks.

And we were sitting there talking and this lady sat down. Like, well, that's okay. I mean, there goes our conversation, right? And so he's talking and he goes, hey, you should check out this guy's sermons and get his sermons on PureFlix.

Little did I know that she's the executive in charge of getting content on PureFlix. They sat down at the table, right there, no other way. And there's other connections that God will just bring in his time as you're moving out, as you're seeking, as you're waiting.

He'll bring that job offer. You know how many jobs we put together here at this church in nine years? How many connections, persons that, man, I'm looking for this employment. I just heard this person is hiring.

And these connections that God brings as we seek and as we wait on him. But Shane, that's not happening to me. I've been there.

What you need to do is get on your face and cry out to God and say, God, I'm gonna wait in here. I'm gonna use this time not to get disgruntled, not to get impatient, but I'm gonna use this time to seek you. Actually, most people don't use that time to seek God.

They get disgruntled. Well, God hasn't answered my prayer. I've been praying this prayer.

God hasn't answered my prayer. I'm done praying that prayer. Have you ever been there? Don't leave me hanging.

I have. Maybe I can share it in the future. I've quit on this prayer about 10 times in 10 years.

And God keeps bringing it to just the surface and waiting and waiting again. And then verse nine, for there is no faithfulness in their mouth. Again, he's talking about the wicked, destroying the wicked.

Their inward part is destruction. Their throat is an open tomb. They flatter with their tongue.

They pronounce them guilty. Oh God, let them fall by their own counsel. Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against you.

And you might say, Shane, what in the world does that have to do with prevailing in prayer? David, this person is going off. There's no faithfulness in their mouth. Their inward part is destruction.

Their throat is an open tomb. Well, here it is. You're gonna love this one.

How to prevail, number seven. What? Oh, six. Okay, here's number six.

How to prevail, number six. Ask, ask for direction. Ask for wisdom.

Ask for clarity. And you would be amazed. I've asked, when I've said, God, I need wisdom in this area.

Some type of spiritual influence comes in to me as I'm reading God's word. I'm like, I've never thought of that before. It's the wisdom of God speaking into your life for that season of making a decision or trying to move things around.

And God gives you that wisdom. So that's number six. How to prevail in prayer.

It seems basic, but it's true. Ask for direction. Ask for wisdom.

And here's my favorite. Ask for clarity. Do you need clarity in any area? Clear, to see clear, for clarity? So number seven, how to prevail.

It's okay to vent and ask God to intervene. Why is that important? Because most people don't vent to God. And it's okay to vent to God.

All the writers of the Bible, many of them, actually, I should say, vented to God. Jeremiah says, why do the wicked prosper? Job vented to God. Isaiah vented to God.

Habakkuk vented to God. Why are the wicked prospering? And that's when God told Habakkuk, write the vision down, make it plain on tables, so in the end, that vision will speak and not lie. What I say will come to pass.

So it's okay to vent to God in your prayer time. God, our nation has drifted from you. God, our state is rejecting you.

God, look at around the media. This is sick. This is perverted.

God, look at what they're passing. Look at the, God, I'm venting to you. I can't handle this anymore.

Family issues, marital issues, whatever it is, it's okay to vent to God. That's how you prevail, because you get it out and God starts working in your heart and that righteous anger, God, begins to give you a desire to do something for his kingdom. I've shared with you before, this really spoke to me when I first went to a conference in Los Angeles right by the LAX, I think it was the LAX Hilton.

I don't remember the year. I know it was over 10 years ago and it was many Christian pastors were gathered and I heard about abortion, specifically partial birth and saline abortions. I could not believe, I could not believe what we've allowed and I went back, boy, did I vent in my hotel room and I vented, I prevailed in prayer because I said, God, this is wrong.

God, give me a voice. Back then, I was not doing anything in ministry. I had no voice, but that venting, that venting, what it is, it's a crying out for God.

It's a crying out to God and I believe, I mean, you could take this however you want, but I believe that God sees the concern of our heart and those quick little prayers, oh God, help my kids today. Watch over them, bless us, thank you. God, I just wanna have a good day today and we go on.

No, there's nothing wrong with that. I've prayed prayers very similar to that, but there's something when you can pull down heaven, when you can pull down heaven and you cry out to God, you vent to God, you

cry out for that prodigal, you cry out for that wayward. It's that crying out that God hears.

Remember I told you before, when I hear my child crying in the backyard, you know that cry, you know that cry where it doesn't matter what you're doing, you'll get up, you'll break down that door, you'll grab a baseball bat just in case something's going, I mean, there's a cry that goes out. So God hears the cries of his people, that is biblical. He often tells his people to cry out to me, pull down heaven, persevere in prayer, vent to me, let your desires be poured out of your heart to me.

You don't see a lot of just complacency in the prophets praying to God or in Jesus praying to God. In the garden of Gethsemane, you see that crying out to God. I don't know, I should just throw this out there as well.

I just thought of this. The most, please don't take this wrong, I don't have anybody in mind or any situation, I just, something I've been thinking about this week as well, but some of the most powerful prayers to God are short. You don't have to focus on long, eloquent prayers, grasping every area of your life, listing all your kids' names and their issues and their this and, if God directs you, wonderful.

There's time and it's okay to be specific many times, but sometimes when things are going on, let's say with our kids, I say, oh God, I need you. God, please help, bring a spirit of humility to our children and to our homes. God, please, God, please, change the environment here.

Oh God, please, that's it, because he hears your heart. God doesn't necessarily look at words. Vain repetition, what'd Jesus say about that? He looks at the heart, not the words.

It's interesting, many of you know I talked about this, I'll share more later maybe, but I had a Jehovah Witness come over on Monday and try to convince me to change, of course. But one of the, I mean, there's so much, this'll take a whole sermon, but one of the things he said, my Bible removed the name Jehovah thousands of times. I said, well, what did it put there? Well, it put other words, well, like Lord? Yeah, or Yahweh, or Elohim? Yeah, not Jehovah, it needs to be Jehovah.

I said, it can be a dash, as long as the heart is right. A deaf person can cry out to God in their heart. It's not the exact syllable, no, the name is important, reverence is important, don't get me wrong, we shouldn't just, well, I mean, God's name was so holy, that's why they used, I believe it was the four letters, the Y, the H, the W, you know, and they pronounce it Yahweh.

It was so holy to them, and that's good, but God isn't saying, was that Jehovah? Or was that Jesus, or Lord, or God, or shame? It's the heart crying out to God. Even somebody in Syria or Iraq that has a dream about Jesus Christ, they don't know the name exactly, but they cry out, who is that? Who is that almighty one? Almighty one, creator of heaven and earth, I cry out to you, I call out to you, and it's the heart. But see how legalistic that is? No, you gotta call it the right name.

You gotta make sure you pronounce it. So what happens when you go to Africa, or translate the Bible in Swahili, or Peru? You gotta make sure you say Jehovah. But see, it's the same thing, getting caught up on tradition, and legalism, and things.

It's, where is the heart? Do you know that people are saved? Do you wanna believe this? People are saved, they're actually saved without saying the exact sinner's prayer. Do you know that? Well, how, Shane? Because their heart breaks, and they cry out. Say, God, I need you.

I'm a, God, I've been drifting from you. I don't even know you. Oh, God, save me.

It could've been broken English. It could've been messed up theologically. Well, that's not quite right.

I mean, theologically, you have to say that he bore the propitiation, the wrath of God. And from a historical context, you gotta bring in the nuances of the repentance, and understanding that, no, just the heart breaks, and cries out for God. Now, a sinner's prayer is wonderful, but you have many people in the church who have come forward and said, I guess I'll try out God.

I'll say this prayer. I'll raise my hand. I guess I'm good.

And you have a person weeping on the altar that didn't say a word, and that person's on the right road. They know God. In the last couple weeks, we've had people walk into the prayer room, just standing there.

Say, Cal, can I pray for you? I need Jesus. Crying. Well, hold on, hold on.

We gotta do this right. We gotta, hold on. Let me go grab this sinner's prayer.

Now, I'm not making fun of this sinner's prayer. I think if somebody prays, look, the exact wording, you know what it is, and their heart means it, that's fine. But it's not the exact wording, even though theology is good.

It's the crying out of the heart to God. My heart cries out to you, God. I need you.

I need Christ to save me. I can't say this perfectly. I don't even know.

I don't quite understand the Trinity. Do you know you don't have to understand everything about God to repent and believe? I still have questions. Amen? How can one God, I, O Israel, am one? I'm one, that's it.

However, I reveal myself as Father in creation, Son in redemption, Holy Spirit in regeneration. Jesus said, I and the Father are one, yet Colossians says he's the first fruit, the firstborn of God. Not creation, necessarily, but meaning that he was the heir of everything God has, and it goes on in Colossians.

It says that in him all things were made, and the fullness of the Godhead dwells fully in Christ. I and the Father are one. Before Abraham was, I am.

They wanted to kill him because he said he was God. But there's a hierarchy. The Son submits to the will of the Father.

The Holy Spirit points out the Son. I don't know. All I know is Scripture says it, and we believe it.

Somehow, God, I believe your truth that you are one. We don't worship three different gods. You are one, but you choose to reveal yourself in three persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

God the Father sent the Son for redemption. The Holy Spirit comes and is an ever-present help in time of need. He indwells the believer.

That just amazes me. The Spirit of the living God indwells a believer. Are you quenching or grieving the Spirit of God? I might change course on this sermon real quick because that's where you get powerful prayer.

That's where you prevail in prayer. How did I miss this point? How did I miss this? You prevail in prayer by being filled with the Spirit of the living God, and that prayer cries, Abba, Father. That prayer directs your prayers to the enemy's lines, and no weapon formed against you will prosper.

The gates of hell will not prevail because somebody is filled with the Spirit of the living God. They will prevail in prayer. So could it be that most people are quenching and grieving the Spirit, and they're not filled with God's Spirit? So of course they're not prevailing in prayer.

Let's put that as point number one. Prevailing in prayer. So again, it's okay to vent and ask God to intervene.

Verse 11, but let all those rejoice who put their trust in you. Let them ever shout for joy because you defended them. Some of you need to know this.

You need to get back to rejoicing, joy-filled heart. Somehow the enemy has brought bitterness into your heart, and a critical spirit, and negative. Christians should walk around as the most joy-filled believers on the planet.

Joy-filled, thankful. Well, yes, there's difficulty. Yes, I get in bad moods.

Do you? Usually when I'm fasting. 20 hours into it, watch out. I'll go just take a drive.

That's a physical thing that's happening, giving a spiritual dynamic. But we should be joy-filled because you defend them, God. You are my defender.

You are my strength. You are my high tower. Let those also who love your name be joyful in you, for you, O Lord, will bless the righteous with favor.

You will surround him as with a shield. So how to prevail, number eight, go back to rejoicing and trusting God. Is your prayer life dead? Then get up tomorrow and rejoice and trust in God.

Well, Shane, I don't feel like it. I don't care. I'm tired of our feelings telling us what to do.

I'm tired of my feelings telling me how and when I'm going to pray. I pray, I'm tired of my flesh telling me to sleep in, don't worry about it. Flesh, you're coming around with me.

I'm not going to listen to you. I'm going to pray. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

I shall be filled with his grace and his love and his mercy. See, you got to remind yourself. I'll tell you right now, I'm so much joy-filled than I was two hours ago.

Why? Because I'm reminding myself. We should be, though he slay me, yet will I trust him, Job said. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

Paul said, I've been through much affliction, much beatings, many fastings, shipwreck. I was beaten and left for dead, but my heart will rejoice. I will rejoice in him.

The Lord is my strength. He is my banner. He is my shield.

What can my enemies do to me? But I will rejoice in him. And you begin to be high and lifted up and you leave joy-filled and prayerful and it reignites your prayer again. Anybody feel like praying tomorrow

morning now or tonight when you get home? Pray, pray.

Listen, I'm gonna be transparent. Often we try to pray in the morning, me and Morgan. And it happens, it's like, do you wanna pray? No, I don't feel like it, but let's do it.

Because when you've had a baby up every two hours, you don't feel like it. And if you happen to look at your phone and see all the negative stuff before prayer, you don't feel like it. So you have to fight against that.

And you tell the flesh, you tell the flesh it's time to pray. And here's what I love about God. He doesn't leave you hanging.

Within a couple, five, 10 minutes, when the flesh eventually submits, then something interesting happens. You begin to experience the pain of discipline, the reward of discipline, I should say. And the joy begins to flood your heart.

The peace begins to come. Assurance begins to come after the difficult decision was made. So again, how to prevail in prayer, I'm gonna close soon, number eight.

Go back to rejoicing and trusting in God. Notice what he said here. But I will put my trust in you no matter what you're going through.

No matter what you're going through, you put your trust in God. Even if that job might be stripped from you. And so many people in America today, teachers, officials, police officers, they're so fearful of losing their job.

And I understand that. Please don't misunderstand. But we need to go back to trusting God because even if he takes your employment, he's still on the throne.

He's not gonna let you live under a bridge. He says, I have never seen the righteous perish. I have never seen them go without bread.

God will sustain his people. Going back and we trust in him. So I'm gonna leave you with this thought.

I mentioned this about a year ago when I spoke at a church in Bakersfield and I was reading about a Welsh revival. It was amazing how it was like 100,000 people converted in a short amount of time. And they interviewed an old man, an old man who experienced revival.

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine actually experiencing the power and presence of God on a continual basis? Let me tell you what revival is. Revival is when we have church every night and you can't stop the people coming in. They come to the altar without even a word.

The worship team just continues to worship and it goes on for hours and God's drawing his people, people being broken and touched by the power of God. When you experience that, there's nothing else you want more in life. Somebody can say, here's a \$10 million check.

I won't trade it in for revival. I won't trade it in for God reviving his people. So they talked to this guy.

He was old and I think in his 90s at this time. And he said, how was that time way back then? We've never experienced that. What can you tell us? And he looked at the man.

The book records that his eyes lit up. His eyes lit up like with fire and excitement or fear. But he wasn't sure what he was gonna say and he said this.

He said, young man, when you lay hold of God, when you lay hold of God, never, never, never let go. When you lay hold of God, never let go. When you lay hold of God in prayer, never let go again.

When you find him, you hold onto him with all of your heart. Yes, the waves will beat against you. Yes, the storms will come.

Yes, the challenges and the disappointments. But when you lay hold of God, you never let go. There's no other direction but going forward in his strength and in his courage.

And you learn to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Do you know where this passion is coming from? You think it's coming from somebody who just came up here to be an actor? I felt the presence and power of God before. I've seen him get through life.

I've seen him pull me up and save me from killing and destroying myself. I've seen God answer and change situations. I've lived with heaven and I felt the flames of hell and God pulled me back and he set me up and he can do the same for every single person in this room.

That's why there's passion. You've met the risen savior and you've seen him as healer and deliverer and he's silenced the voice of my enemies. He's lifted me up.

He saved my children at a young age. We don't share a lot of things but we've had one child, he was, the Jew was leaving God. And I said, oh no, she's not.

It's time to fast and I'm calling down heaven and then they start saying, I wanna go back to God. I'm hungry for his truth. I've seen God answer in the midst of the storm.

I've seen him hold me to that rock. I've seen him when I'm drifting, he pulls me back. I've seen when I should have destroyed myself, he anchored me and said, son, I've got plans for you.

Though you may fall, you will not be utterly cast down because I hold you up. See, that brings a devotion and a passion when you've experienced God. That's it.

I could not come up here and act. I'm not an actor. How are you supposed to act when you feel the fire and passion of God? How are you supposed to act when you see him answer prayers? How? So I wanna encourage you, get that fire back.

Lay hold of God. Lay hold of God and never, never let go. Do whatever it takes.

Yes, I'm radical. Name me right now. I'm radical.

I'm extreme. I'm a Jesus freak. I'm a holy roller.

I wanna preach sin. I wanna preach heaven wonderful and hell hot. I wanna preach the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, the mercy of God.

Yes, this is radical Christianity you are living in. Show me some other form of that in the Bible. You have extreme snowboarding.

There's even extreme makeovers. Extreme this, extreme that. Why can't we have an extreme and intense love for God and for his word? I've a lot I'd like to share, but I'm gonna do that next week.

Next week, the message is, there is travail before you prevail. There is travail before you prepare to really get heard by God, you know, women won't agree with this, but that's okay. It's kind of like pregnancy, because men can't relate.

But there is a travailing. There is a travailing before you prevail. It's not gonna be easy.

It's not gonna be easy. Because this is life and death. This is heaven and hell.

We are fighting for the soul of a nation. We are fighting for the souls of our family. We are warring against an enemy that is sent to kill, to steal and to destroy.

Prayer is the only weapon, only weapon you will find where you actually pull down strongholds. You cast down arguments and you remove every hyping that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

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