

PRINCIPLES OF PREVAILING PRAYER

Dr. Darryl B. Starnes, Facilitator

Counsel from the Scriptures

⁷“Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. ⁹You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. ¹²“Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:7-12

Following the Scriptures' Wisdom

An important life lesson to learn is that the most significant things that we receive from God come in answer to prayer. It is most helpful to have a praying mother or father. It is beneficial to have a pastor who intercedes with God on our behalf. It is advantageous to have a spouse who can get a prayer through. But there are some things that God will not give us or do for us, until he hears from us. We must be aware that there are factors that can either help or hinder our prayers. Prevailing prayers are prayers that make things happen and get positive results. In the passage above, the Lord, Jesus Christ teaches us three principles of prevailing prayer. By learning and following these principles, the quality of our lives and those around us will be greatly enhanced.

In verses 7 and 8, Jesus teaches us that **persistence is the first principle of prevailing prayer**. The question that we must ask ourselves is this, “Can I continue asking, seeking, and knocking; or will I give up?” Persistence is vital to prevailing prayer because it tests our prayers.

- *Persistence tests the rightness of our prayers.* The more we pray, the clearer it becomes whether or not the thing for which we pray is right for us. If we become convinced that it is not right for us, we can't continue to pray for it. But, if we become convinced that it is right for us, we can continue to ask, seek, and knock.
- *Persistence tests the sincerity of our prayers.* The more we pray, the more we become aware of whether or not we sincerely want the thing for which we are praying. If we learn that it is not what we really want, we can't continue to pray for it. But, if we learn that it is what we really want, we can continue to ask, seek, and knock.
- *Persistence tests the motives of our prayers.* The more we pray, the more our true motives for seeking the thing for which we are praying come to the surface. If we discern that our motives are wrong, we can't continue to pray for it. But, if we discern that our motives are right, we can continue to ask, seek, and knock.

In verses 9-11, Jesus teaches us that **relationship is the second principle of prevailing prayer**. Another question that we must ask ourselves is this, “Is God really my Father or am I just using Him to get what I want?” Our relationship with God is vital to prevailing prayer because it determines if, when, and how we pray.

- When we have *no relationship* with God, we seldom, if ever, pray.
- When we have a “*need only*” relationship with God, we pray in times of crisis. [We treat God as we do a spare tire.]
 1. We often bargain with God to help us in a crisis situation.
 2. We seldom, if ever, keep the promises that we make to Him.
- When we have a *genuine relationship* with God, we talk to Him all the time. [asking for things is only a minor part]
 1. We don't have to bargain with God.
 2. He does not trick us in answering our prayers.
 3. He is more ready to give than we are to ask
 4. He gives good gifts to His children

In verse 12, Jesus teaches us that **fellowship is the third principle of prevailing prayer**. Still another question that we must ask ourselves is this, "Is my vital connection with God intact or is something hindering my prayers?" Maintaining unbroken fellowship with God is vital to prevailing prayer because it keeps us on praying ground.

- Our mistreatment of others breaks our fellowship with God and hinders our prayers.
- Our unwillingness to forgive those who have mistreated us breaks our fellowship with God and hinders our prayers.
- Our unwillingness to meet the needs of others breaks our fellowship with God and hinders our prayers.

What must we do in order to pray and get positive results?

- 1) First, let persistence test the rightness, sincerity, and motives of our prayers.
- 2) Make sure that we have a genuine relationship with God.
- 3) Maintain unbroken fellowship with God by treating people the way we want to be treated.