



Global College of Ministry

**EMPOWER**

**The Christian & Prayer (Part Three)**

## God Answers Every Prayer

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews”  
(Acts 12:5, 11).

**T**o human eyes and understanding it was an impossible situation. James had already been killed. Peter was in prison. Sixteen soldiers kept watch over him. Peter’s case looked hopeless. He too would soon be killed. However, the church met the bleak situation by calling a prayer meeting. They knew that prayer was their only hope and that “...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

The church gathered together and began to pray without ceasing. Their prayer was soon to be answered and they didn’t even expect it. As you read through Acts 12, you have to smile when you realize that they didn’t even recognize the answer to their prayers when it came. How many times have we prayed for something and not even believe that God was going to answer our prayers? But, God answers every prayer.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus never mentioned “unanswered prayer.” He proclaimed boldly that prayer is always answered.

“Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8).

“If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

You receive an answer to prayer each time you ASK:

- ✓ **A**        **Ask**
- ✓ **S**        **Seek**
- ✓ **K**        **Knock**

God always gives the correct answer to prayer. He may not answer like you want Him to, but he will always answer in the way that is best for you.

**The Answers God Gives to Prayer**

**No**

When what you are praying for is not in the will of God, then God will say “no” as an answer to your prayer. There are two other hindrances in prayer. They are sin and unbelief. Many times unbelief will keep people from prayer.

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).

We should not request things as a result of our selfish desires. However if we ask, in the will of God, He promises that He will hear us. His answer to our prayer becomes “yes.”

**Yes**

“And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:15).

Jesus prayed, “...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Any prayer that is based on the promises of God will be effective and answered.

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoke, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3). If we don’t call, He will not answer.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:22).

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:21).

**Wait**

Sometimes the timing is not right for the prayer to be answered.

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...”  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1).

One man has said, “God’s delays are not God’s denials.” Delayed answers to prayer are not the same as unanswered prayer. God answers every prayer. Cornelius in Acts 10 prayed until his prayers came up as a memorial before God. God kept putting His prayers in the “Wait File” until the timing was right. Up until then His answer had been, “Wait for the correct time! Be patient!”

**Stop**

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18).

Sometimes we pray and God asks us to “stop” and make certain things right. God wants our relationship to be right with him before He will answer our other prayers.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

God also wants to make sure that our relationship with others is correct before He gives us a “Yes!” answer.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee: Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

**The Rest of the Story**

Peter was fast asleep. He did not wake easily. A light filled the room and he partially woke up when the angel hit him on his side, and lifted him up. The angel had to lead the sleepy man of God each step of the way and gave him instructions of what to do. The chains were loosed, they passed the guards on duty, and the iron gate swung open.

Peter decided to go to the house where prayer was being made. The people would be so excited that their prayer had been answered. A young girl named Rhoda answered Peter’s knock at the gate. When she heard his voice she rushed to tell the other prayer warriors that Peter was at the gate. “You are mad!” they replied. When she persisted they claimed, “It is his angel!” The prayer warriors had resigned themselves to Peter’s soon death. She kept

interrupting their prayers. Peter kept knocking. The church was so taken up with praying for an answer that they left their answer knocking at the gate.

**A Word From the Wise**

“The Lord answers all prayer. Knowing so much more than we do, He grants some, refuses others, and delays still others. A delay is an answer! To have what He wants for us without His timing would be disastrous. Often the answer we’ve been praying for is staring us in the face...There are times when we are so intent on praying that the prayer is all talking and no listening. The answer is knocking!” (Acts Commentary, Lloyd Oglivie)

**Study Questions**

1. What does James 5:16 say about the “righteous man”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How many prayers does God answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does “A. S. K.” mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why would God say “No” to some prayers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did Jesus pray in Matthew 6:10? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why does God ask us to “WAIT” sometimes? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Provide two Scriptures that show us that Jesus will fulfill His promises. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does Psalms 66:18 say? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Why does God ask us to “STOP”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Persistent Prayer

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”  
(Acts 1:14).

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him”  
(Acts 12:5).

**T**he Apostle Paul admonishes us to “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) He also practiced what he preached. “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” (Romans 1:9).

Prayer is so important that the Apostles’ said, “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). Edward Payson understood this when he wrote, “Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to a minister. Pray, then, my dear brother, pray, pray, pray.” Prayer helps us to see God’s view of things. It also strengthens our relationship with God. Prayer meetings produce God meetings. That is why they are aptly called, “prayer meetings.” It is here that we meet with God. Man was created to desire communion with God. This communion goes beyond “asking” into the realm of “seeking.”

Often prayer is treated like a market. We bring our list of shopping needs with us and trust that Jesus will fill all of the needs. We can move beyond just asking, into seeking the Lord, and even extend into intercession.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30).

“Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (1 Samuel 12:23).

Many times the answer to prayer involves a lot of waiting. None of us like to wait. It has been said, “Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait.” It is not something that we do well. Spurgeon said that by perseverance “the snail reached the ark.” We know that God answers all prayers. He gives three responses, “Yes, No, or Wait.” We must continue to pray until we receive an answer or until we receive the assurance from the Holy Spirit that our prayer has been heard and the answer is on its way. Andrew Murray says, “God’s giving is inseparably connected with our asking.”

**Let Go and Let God**

As children bring their broken toys  
With tears for us to mend,  
I brought my broken dreams to God,  
Because He was my Friend.  
But then, instead of leaving Him  
in peace to work alone,  
I hung around and tried to help  
with ways that were my own.  
At last I snatched them back and cried,  
“How can you be so slow?”  
“My child,” He said, “What could I do?  
You never did let go.”  
*(Author Unknown)*

<p><b>EXPECT A MIRACLE</b> <b>Don't give up! Your miracle is on its way!</b></p>
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Prayer is to be continual, unceasing, like a nonstop flight; not landing until it reaches its destination. “...Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Dutch Sheets in his book “Intercessory Prayer” explains that this does not mean, “it would be a good idea to pray. It is declaring that it is absolutely necessary-binding upon you - that you pray.”

As we continue to pray our prayers are stored in heaven. “...And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:8). This is what happened to Cornelius in Acts 10. Because he was a devout man who feared God and prayed always, his prayers came up as a memorial before God (Acts 10:2, 4). God considers our prayers a sacrifice to Him, and they remind Him of our perseverance.

Dutch Sheets writes, “It sort of reminds me of the mouse and the elephant who were best friends. They hung out together all the time, the mouse riding on the elephant’s back. One day they crossed a wooden bridge, causing it to bow, creak and sway under their combined weight. After they were across, the mouse, impressed over their ability to make such an impact, said to the elephant, ‘We sure shook up that bridge, didn’t we.’ Kind of reminds me of some of the advertisements and testimonials. You’d think He (God) was the mouse and we were the elephant. (Maybe that’s why we don’t shake many bridges)...Rise up! Better still, allow your Helper to rise up in you! Together, you can shake any bridge! Just make sure you know who the mouse is.”

As we begin to intercede (stand in the gap in prayer) then Jesus also will work with us and accomplish the work.

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:20).



Prayer must be persistent in order to be effective. This is what we see in the story of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-7). This story begins with a command to “always to pray, and not to faint” (give up). The judge in the story finally answered her because her “continual coming” would make him tired. Jesus then assures us that God will also answer “His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though he bear long with them.” Don’t give up. God will answer you if you persist.

One day, Winston Churchill was addressing a group of students and all he said was, “Don’t ever, ever, ever, give up!” The mighty oak tree was once a little nut that held its ground. (It never gave up!)

As long as Moses persevered in prayer with his hands lifted up, the people of God were winning the battle (Exodus 17:11). As Moses lifted his hands towards God he was showing his dependence on God to win the battle. When the prayer of Moses ceased, the flow of the divine power to the people also ceased.

**No Prayer, No Power!  
Less Prayer, Less Power!  
Much Prayer, Much Power!**

This principle of persistence in prayer is also seen in the story of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-13). This story appears immediately after the disciples asked Jesus, “teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). This verse appears immediately after Jesus says to Martha “one thing is needful” (Luke 10:42). “Ask, Seek, Knock” were the instructions that Jesus gave. They seem to suggest that we must keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. When we continue to ask the Lord for something in prayer, we are allowing Him to know that we have a need we can’t fill on our own and strengthens the conviction that God does hear and answer prayer. The man at midnight kept knocking on the door until his friend finally got up and provided whatever he needed.

**The Church Gets Desperate**

In Acts 12 Peter is in jail waiting for the death sentence to be carried out. While he was chained between two guards, sleeping, the church was desperately interceding for a miracle. They were praying without ceasing. Heaven heard and the miracle happened. Peter went to a place “...where many were gathered together praying” (Acts 12:12). He “knocked” (Acts 12:13) and the door was answered by a shocked girl who shared the miraculous news with an unbelieving group of prayer warriors. Peter “kept knocking” (Acts 12:16). Keep praying until your answered prayer keeps knocking at your door.

**P. U. S. H.  
Pray Until Something Happens**

**Study Questions**

1. What does Paul tell us in 1 Thess. 5:17? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did the Apostles' decide in Acts 6:4? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the first, second, and third thing necessary to minister? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do we call it "prayer meetings"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How do we treat prayer like a market? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. God wants us to stand in the gap through \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What is the quote about "patience" in this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What three responses to prayer does God give us? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. God's giving is connected with what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. In "Let Go and Let God" what was the reason why God did not fix the problem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What happens to our prayers as we continue to pray? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What did Sheets say about Luke 18:1? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What story in the Bible proves that prayer must be persistent in order to be effective?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Why did the Judge answer the Widow's petition? \_\_\_\_\_



# Effective Prayer

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”  
(James 5:16).

## Introduction

**T**he key verse talks about what happens when a “righteous” man prays. God’s Word often speaks of special things happening to the “righteous.” There is something about walking down the “Path to Righteousness,” that makes many of life’s troubles less difficult.

James specifically speaks about the kind of prayer this “righteous” man prays: it is both “effectual” and “fervent.” We know that “fervent” means to be very eager, excited, or emotionally involved in something. “Effectual” means that it works. It gets the desired results. James was telling us that the “righteous man” (the one who does things according to God’s laws, in a correct way) can pray in a very excited, emotional, involved way for something, and his prayers will work. What an exciting promise. But what is this “prayer” business?

## What is Prayer?

According to *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, prayer is “a humble communication in thought or speech to God or to an object of worship expressing supplication, thanksgiving, praise, confession, etc; an entreaty made to someone.”

In *The Accelerated Bible Curriculum – “Lesson 8,”* the story is told of a tourist to China who visited a heathen temple on a great feast day and observed hundreds of worshippers surrounding the hideous idol encased there. Most of the worshippers brought prayers written on small pieces of paper and wrapped in balls of stiff mud to fling at the idol. He inquired of the purpose for the strange and appalling practice, and learned that if the mud ball stuck to the idol, the prayer would surely be answered. If the mud fell off, their god had rejected the prayer.

This story may make us feel sad at the ignorance of praying to an idol, but often we who serve a living God do not know how to pray or get answers.

Many people pray, believing this is a “magic” formula that will get them whatever they are asking for. Prayer is not magic, but law. It works, regardless of whether man recognizes it or not.

Prayer is a need finding a voice. When hungry hearts cry out to God, He always meets them at their point of need (Luke 11:9).

Prayer is essential in a Christian's life. It does many things for and to us, things we will list here to help us understand what it really is:

- 📖 Prayer draws God's attention close to us and draws us near to Him (2 Chronicles 7:14-15; Psalm 25:1).
- 📖 Prayer gives us strength to bear our daily burdens (Psalm 18; Psalm 86:6-7).
- 📖 Prayer is the link that connects God's fulfillment of His promises to our daily lives (Luke 11:5-13; Matthew 9:38).
- 📖 Prayer is the only way we can receive His Spirit (Acts 1:12-14; John 14:12-26). Peter, the rest of the apostles, and even Jesus' mother were together in prayer for the promise of the Holy Ghost, and it came! Jesus always keeps His promises, but He expects us to fulfill our part too. Did the Holy Ghost fall on people who were not in the upper room? Did Jesus fill anyone who was not obeying the command to wait in Jerusalem until they were filled with power from on high (Acts 1:4)? No. The apostles had to obey God's Word, and then He kept His promise.
- 📖 After we have been obedient to His commandment to receive His Spirit, He again commands us to continue our worship in Spirit and truth. It is only through prayer that we can accomplish this (John 4:24).

Prayer is more than important, for without it, we would not have a means to communicate with God or a way to come before His throne. We have the great privilege of becoming acquainted with our God through prayer, just as we become acquainted with our earthly father through daily association and communication.

We learn much about the Lord by reading His Word (the Bible). But we begin to *know* and *enjoy* Him when we pray. Prayer is *talking to God*.

### How Do We Pray?

There are many examples of prayer in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus prayed and gave us examples. All His prayers had one thing in common. Jesus was always careful to "give thanks." The Psalmist David knew how to give thanks. Long before Jesus came to earth, David used this key to unlock heaven's door many times (Psalm 100:4; 116:17).

### Start With Thanksgiving.

Everyone is thankful *after* a prayer is answered. But it takes divine faith to thank the Lord and praise Him *before* the need is met, or the circumstances change for the better.

- 📖 Do not mention mistakes and failures now; let God know that you understand He is not the author of confusion, sickness, trouble or heartache. He is the Almighty, all-loving, all-powerful Creator of everything good, pure, loving, and holy. Hallelujah!
- 📖 God desires our praise and His Word says He, "*inhabits the praises of His people Israel*" (Psalm 22:3).

- 📖 In Hebrews 13:15 it is written: *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”* Let us begin our prayer with praise.

### Continue With Confession.

It is not easy to confess a wrong that we have done, or something we have left undone. Until we do, it feels like a giant weight is keeping us from the presence of God.

- 📖 Be specific: tell God exactly what you have done that was not pleasing to Him.
- 📖 God is looking for a *“broken and a contrite heart”* (Psalm 51, especially verses 10-12). We must be honest and sincere with our confession. God looks at our heart.
- 📖 Confession bridges the awful gulf between a righteous God and an unrighteous man. If you fall into sin, be sure to confess and ask for forgiveness (1 John 2:1). God’s forgiveness will remove every weight and usher you into the presence of the King (Hebrews 12:1).

### Send God Your Supplication.

The Apostle Paul talks of this portion of prayer in Philippians 4:6, *“...in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made know unto God.”* This expresses concern for our welfare. We tell God about these needs because we cannot supply them from our resources.

*“It is strange that in our praying we seldom ask for a change of character, but always a change in circumstances.”*  
(Bits & Pieces)

Supplication goes beyond communication.

- God’s presence is real, and your needs are specific. The Holy Ghost many times will direct your thoughts to particular needs and then you should voice them to God.
- State the exact problem and circumstances causing you difficulty.
- Let God know you are helpless unless He intervenes.
- Make sure you voice your complete trust in God’s power.
- Let Him know you believe He will perform His perfect will in the entire situation, for He has it in His hands. When you expect Him to answer, He will!

Another form of supplication is when we talk to God for someone else’s need. This is *intercession*. There are many examples of this type of prayer in God’s Word:

- 📖 Abraham prayed for Lot and his family (Genesis 18:23-32).
- 📖 Moses prayed for the children of Israel many times (Exodus 32:31-32). He was so serious and concerned that his life became of little value beside the need of the nation he was leading.
- ✓ It is at this point that *intercession* becomes different from *supplication*.

- ✓ Now we are desperate for God to answer for the other person, and we forget about ourselves.
- 📖 There is another special type of intercession, and that is *prayer for our enemies*. This is most difficult, but more powerful than any other.
  - ✓ This type of praying is a direct commandment of Jesus in His “Sermon on the Mount.” *“Love your enemies, . . .and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you”* (Matthew 5:44).
  - ✓ Jesus not only commanded it, but He practiced it. His final prayer from the cross released the power that resulted in the thief’s repentance and salvation (Luke 23:34).
- 📖 It is not easy to forgive an enemy or pray for him as a friend.
  - ✓ When we find ourselves in this type of predicament, we turn to God again – first for ourselves. We ask the Lord to give us the grace and strength to forgive this person and love them. If we keep our bad feelings, we are harming ourselves seriously.
  - ✓ Before we can expect good results from our prayers, we must first forgive someone who has wronged or hurt us.
  - ✓ Then we must seek that person and make peace. Otherwise, we cannot lift clean hands before the Lord and expect Him to answer our requests. *“Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift”* (Matthew 5:23-24).

*“One way to have fewer conflicts with our fellow man is to wrestle with God in prayer.”*  
(Quotable Quotations)

*“It is good to pray for the repair of mistakes, but praying earlier would keep us from making so many...When puzzled, go to prayer and LISTEN”*  
(J. C. Macaulay)

### Take Time to Be Quiet.

If we call it “communion,” there must be a two-way conversation. This is a part of prayer that is often forgotten. David knew about this (Psalm 85:8), and we need to practice it.

- 📖 When we stop our talking and listen with an open heart and mind fixed on Jesus, He can speak to our hearts. This usually comes through a Scripture passage or thought from Him.
- 📖 Close friends do not need to talk all the time – they enjoy just being together. The same is true with Jesus and me – He needs to be my closest friend. I need to talk to Him often, listen often, and sometimes, we just need to be together.

### Some Requirements of Effective Prayer

Several conditions are needed for our prayers to be the best they can possibly be. According to the *New Life Study Bible* article entitled “Effective Prayer,” these include:

- 📖 Our prayers will not be answered unless we have a sincere, true faith (Mark 11:24).
  - ✓ Jesus reminded the father of the demoniac of this (Mark 9:23).
  - ✓ The author of Hebrews reminds us of this (Hebrews 10:22).

- ✓ James encourages us to ask of God *“in faith, nothing wavering”* (James 1:6).
- 📖 Prayer must be in Jesus’ Name. Jesus expressed this principle when He said, *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it”* (John 14:13-14).
- 📖 Our prayers should be in harmony with the person, character, and will of Jesus Christ. God will honor any prayer that He would have prayed Himself. There is no limit to the power of prayer when addressed to God in faith according to His desire.
- 📖 No prayer is effective until it is according to the perfect will of God. 1 John 5:14-15 says: *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*
  - ✓ Many times we know God’s will because He has revealed it in His Word. We can be sure that any prayer truly based on the promises of God in His Word will be effective (1 Kings 18:1; 21-24).
  - ✓ At other times, God’s will becomes clear only as we earnestly seek it. Then, once we know His will about any issue, we can pray with confidence and faith that God will answer.
- 📖 Not only must we pray according to God’s will, we must be in God’s will if we expect Him to hear and answer us.
  - ✓ God will give us the things we ask for only if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
  - ✓ The Apostle John states: *“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight”* (1 John 3:22). Obeying God’s commandments, loving Him, and pleasing Him are indispensable conditions for receiving answers to prayer.
  - ✓ When James wrote that the prayers of the *righteous* are effectual (see memory verse), he meant both a person who has been made righteous by faith in Christ, and one who is living a righteous, God-fearing, and obedient life (James 5:16-18; Psalm 34:13-14).
  - ✓ The Psalmist David lets us know what will happen if we cherish sin in our lives: *“The Lord will not hear”* our prayers (Psalm 66:18; James 4:3). God promises to listen, forgive our sins, and heal our land when we obey His laws (2 Chronicles 7:14; Luke 18:14).
- 📖 Finally, for our prayers to be effective, they must be persistent.
  - ✓ The persistent widow (Luke 18:1-7).
  - ✓ Jesus’ instructions to *“ask...seek...knock”* (Matthew 7:7-8).
  - ✓ The Apostle Paul admonishes us to be steadfast in prayer (Colossians 4:2).
  - ✓ Old Testament saints recognized this principle (Moses – Exodus 17:11 and Elijah – 1 Kings 17 & 18).

<p><b>A</b>    <i><b>“Ask</b>, and it shall be given you,</i></p> <p><b>S</b>    <i><b>Seek</b> and ye shall find,</i></p> <p><b>K</b>    <i><b>Knock</b> and it shall be opened unto you”</i></p>
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(Matthew 7:7).



Study Questions

1. According to James 5:16, what is meant by each of the following terms:
  - 1) “fervent” \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) “effectual” \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How does *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* define “prayer?”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. List five (5) things (with Scripture reference) that prayer does for us and to us.
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What was the one thing all of Jesus’ prayers had in common? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. List (with Scripture reference) and briefly explain the four (4) steps for how we should pray.
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
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4) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is “intercession?” \_\_\_\_\_

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7. List (with Scripture reference) four (4) examples of intercession found in the Bible.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Explain what is meant by the term “communion” in reference to prayer. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. List five (5) requirements of effective prayer. Support your answers with Scripture.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

## Building a Prayer Memorial

“And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him,  
Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God”  
(Acts 10:4).

**T**he subject of “prayer” has been addressed in other levels of Acts: God’s Training Manual for Today’s Church. Some topics because of their value keep returning in each level. Such topics include: Prayer, Fasting, Doctrine (Truth), Evangelism, Gifts of the Spirit, Church Growth, Giving, and Leadership. This is intended.

You may recall the words of the Apostle Paul, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Philippians 3:1).

Certain things are repeated for our protection. They are worth repeating. It is important that we learn these lessons. They mean a great deal in our Christian walk. Even though the matter of prayer has been discussed in the past, let us look at “building a prayer memorial.”

*(Anthony Polotzola, Webmaster for PBSI preached a message while visiting Africa entitled, “Building a Prayer Memorial.” His message motivated the formation of this lesson.)*

Our lesson begins with a centurion named Cornelius. Centurions were the backbone of the Roman army. They held the office that would be like “Captain” in the army today. They had control over at least 100 men and reached their rank by proving to be strong, dependable, and responsible. Cornelius’ greatest strength was in his reliance on God. More than just being a good soldier, he was a devout man, who loved God, gave money, and prayed to God always. Let us not miss that point. Cornelius prayed to God constantly.

It is attention-grabbing that God spoke to both Cornelius and Peter at their prayer times. God speaks to us when we pray!

### Pray Until Something Happens

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It is important that we continue to pray until the Lord gives us an answer. Sometimes He will say, “Yes,” sometimes “No,” and sometimes, “Wait.”

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Continuous prayer was the ministry’s priority in the early church.

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14). Continuous prayer preceded Pentecost. They prayed until Pentecost happened.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). After Pentecost the early church continued in prayers.

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5). Continuous prayer resulted in Peter being released from prison.

### **What Are Memorials?**

A memorial is a way of observing the memory of a person, thing, or event. It is a reminder of something. In the Bible a memorial is “an object or activity intended to help God’s people identify with God’s historic acts or words. Throughout the Old Testament and New Testament, ceremonies, words, acts, and physical objects were used to commemorate various ways in which the Lord and His people interacted.” (The Revell Bible Dictionary) Memorials helped God’s people remember what God had done both for their fathers and them as well.

Before we look at a small number of memorials mentioned in the Bible, let’s look closer to home. What type of memorials do you have in your city or country? What are the memorials called? What are they intended to get you to remember?

### **Joshua’s Memorial**

Twelve stones were collected from the middle of the Jordan River. A memorial was built to remind generations to come that the waters had been cut off so the Israelites could pass over.

### **Passover Memorial**

The Passover Feast was a memorial of God sparing the firstborn of Israel in Egypt. It reminded God’s people of how He delivered them out of captivity and oppression (Exodus 12:12-14).

### **Mary’s Memorial**

The act of Mary anointing Jesus’ feet was to be spoken of as a memorial of her (Mark 14:9).

### **The Lord’s Supper**

Communion is another memorial that we observe. Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

Paul told the Corinthians: “And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

### **Back to Cornelius' Memorial**

In Cornelius' case his prayers built a memorial that was remembered by God.

Our prayers ascend to the Lord. He takes note of each appeal. Although God may not answer all of our prayers right away, it seems that He sets them aside for a proper time of fulfillment.

Scripture does not clearly exposed how God records our prayers. However, He does, and He remembers. God will answer. He always does!

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3).

Revelation repeatedly mentioned the prayers of the saints. In this case, it appears the prayers are stored in golden containers. These prayers come up before God like incense.

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:8).

“And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand” (Revelation 8:4).

In the Jewish temple priests entered into the Holy Place to burn incense and offer prayers of intercession for the nation. This duty was given to the priest by lottery, and he could be chosen only once in his lifetime. (Reference: The Son by E. L. Towns) In the Tabernacle, the incense was a type of prayers and praises to God.

### **Our Prayer**

“LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense” (Psalms 141:1-2).

### **His Promise**

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Hebrews 6:10).

**Study Questions**

1. Why do some topics keep returning in each level of Acts: God’s Training Manual for Today’s Church? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What were Peter and Cornelius both doing when they received a message from God? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What are memorials? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Why are memorials used in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Provide two examples of memorials (in the Scriptures). \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. According to Revelation, where are prayers stored? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. In the Tabernacle what was incense a type of? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Additional Notes**

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