**THE POWER OF PRAYER - Nine Principles For Prayer**

Genesis 32:22-30; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8; Psalm 121:1-8 10.20.19

Summary: Biblical principles to take a person's prayer life to the next level

Intro: Prayer is a mystery- Almighty God does NOT NEED our help but He gives us the JOY OF PARTNERING with Him! Like a father and son mowing grass or a mother and daughter baking a cake.

 Our confidence is NOT in our ability to pray, it is in GOD’s ability and faithfulness to answer!!! The devil is terrified of God's power released through prayer- not our human abilities!

**1. Proper POSTURE**- Like a visit to the Oval office, a sense of awe.

 Remind yourself who you are addressing, who you are praying to:

 Yahweh- the Great I AM

 Jehovah Adonai- LORD and Master of the Universe

 Jehovah Jireh- the Lord God who is my provider

 Jehovah Rapha- the Lord God who is my healer

 Jehovah Shalom- the Lord God who is my peace

 El Shaddai- the God Almighty who is more than enough

 El Elyon- the God of the FINAL word

 When I have the proper posture and exalt Him to His rightful place above all else then I develop the proper perspective.

**2. Proper PERSPECTIVE**- Seeing things from God’s point of view.

 *“Then the LORD said to Moses, Go to Pharaoh and say to him, this is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews says: Let my people go!” (*Exodus 9:1) When Moses approaches Pharaoh he was reminded of a GOD that can make a bush burn and not be consumed!

 *“And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Come here, he said, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals! Then David said to the Philistine, You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the Name of the LORD Almighty, the GOD of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a GOD in Israel. All those gathered here today will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give all of you into our hands.”* (1 Samuel 17: 43-47)

 David had a confident faith and was reminded of God’s faithfulness from the lion and bear! God sees Goliath not as an obstacle too big to overcome but as a target too big to miss!

 God is NOT the least bit concerned with humanly impossible odds- in fact He relishes the opportunity to do something so great and so mighty that ONLY He gets the glory!

 The size of the giant doesn’t matter! Judges 7- Gideon and 32,000 Israelites are facing 300,000 Midianites. (10 to 1 odds) *“The Lord said to Gideon, You have TOO MANY men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands or they will boast it is our own strength that saved us. Now announce to the army, anyone who is afraid may go home.”* (Judges 7:2-3) Only 300 soldiers remain to face the 300,000. (1000 to 1 odds) God is supremely confident in HIS power and ability and so should we!

 *“I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”* Jer. 32:27)

 *“Behold the Lord’s arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call”* (Isaiah 59:1)

 My circumstances say this BUT GOD says THIS! And HE will have the FINAL word on this matter!

**3. Proper PRIORITY**- Don’t Stand up the King of the Universe!

 “*Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* (Jer. 29:12-13)

 *“If my people who are called by my name, will HUMBLE themselves and PRAY and SEEK my face and TURN from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.”* (2 Chron. 7:14)

 Don’t make prayer the last thing you do when in trouble, but the first thing.

 Ill. (The lesson I learned in the mission field with sickness and healing.)

**4. Pronounce PRAISE-** God inhabits the praises of His people. (Psalm 22:3)

 Praise is a weapon- it routs the enemy! (Psalm 149:6)

 *“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.”* (Acts 16:25-26) Praying and praising always brings God’s power on the scene!

**5. Practice PURITY**- Clean hands and a pure heart. (Psalm 24:4)

 If we allow the air filter in our car to clog with dirt the engine won’t run very well and has no power!

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

 Regarding iniquity is willfully sinning against God’s law while you know it is wrong. This results in a hardening of your heart

 As a good parent you want to train your child to do right because you love them and want what’s best for them. You discipline in love because you cannot reward bad behavior!

 *“Dear children if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him.”* (1 John 3:21-22) We are like a garden hose allowing God’s power and blessing to be channeled through us. If we are clogged up with impurities and sin then it restricts the full measure of God’s blessing and power from being released.

 Our purity and righteousness does not come from within ourselves but only comes from abiding in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)- *“We have become the righteousness of God in Christ.”*

**6. Persevere with PERSISTENCE-** This is the message of our Gospel lesson.

 *“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. . . there was a widow in that town who kept coming to the judge … finally he said to himself, … I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t keep wearing me out! And the Lord said, Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not GOD bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly.”* (Luke 18:1-8)

 *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and pray without ceasing for all the saints.”* (Ephesians 6:18)

 *“The devil was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”* John 8:44

 When the devil tells you your prayers aren’t working tell him he is a liar and pray even harder!

 The answer and breakthrough you seek may be closer than you think!

 The closer you get to the target, the heavier the anti-aircraft fire!

 Sometimes when we pray circumstances get worse before they get better- why?

a. It is a test- how bad do you want it

b. The devil panics and pulls out all the stops to get you to turn around and go back

 Does God always answer our prayers the way we pray or think they should be answered? NO!

 He is too wise to be mistaken, too good to be unkind, when you don’t understand- trust his heart! “*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.“* (Jeremiah 29:11)

 God answers EVERY prayer that we pray. He doesn’t always answer the way that we think He should but He answers one of two ways!

 Sometimes God’s answer is “yes”- here is a blessing for you my child

 Sometimes God’s answer is “no” or “not right now” When God answers this way:

a. Sometimes the timing is just not right- Like your 5 year old “Daddy may I have the keys to the car?” “No, wait till your old enough to get a license.”

b. Sometimes what we are asking for would be harmful for us.

c. Sometimes God has something far better for us!

**7. Pray with PASSION**- the DESPERATE prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

 When our DESPERATION FACTOR exceeds our EMBARRASSMENT FACTOR then we are a candidate for God to move on our behalf!

 *“There was a woman there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all the money she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard Jesus was passing by, she came up behind him and touched his garment, because she thought, IF I CAN JUST TOUCH HIM I will be healed. Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering”* (Mark 5:25-29) She was DESPERATE to touch Jesus so she could be healed!

**8. Claim the PROMISES**- God is fanatical about keeping His Word! He is Truth and cannot lie!

 *“God is NOT A MAN that He should LIE nor a son of man that He should change His mind. He does not speak and then not act. He does not promise and then not fulfill.”* (Numbers 23:19) This is one of the most powerful verses in the whole Bible!

 *“This is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us and if He hears us we know that we have what we asked of Him.”* (1 John 5:14-15)

 *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask us for anything in my Name and I will do it.”* (John 14;13-14)

 *“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* (John 15:7)

Three things we don’t know when we pray:

a. WHAT God is going to do

b. HOW God is going to do it

c. WHEN God is going to do it

 BUT we DO know this: that GOD promised to work everything out for our good and His glory!

 (Romans 8:28) We try to figure everything out in our own wisdom and strength. God could do A, B, C or D. That is not our job to figure everything out- that is God’s job!! Our job is to pray and trust Him! *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will direct your path.”* Proverbs 3:5-6

**9. Engage your PARTNERS**- both Human and Divine

 *“Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in Heaven.”* (Matthew 18:19) The power of agreement-Greek word for symphony- 2 instruments playing exactly the same note!

 We need prayer partners to pray and agree with us in prayer!

 God himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is also your prayer partner! Prayer is SO important that ALL three members of the Trinity are actively involved in it 24/7/365!!

 God the Father: *“This then is how you should pray: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name”* Matthew 6:9

 The Lord Jesus: *“Now there have been many of those priests, since their death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save totally and completely all those who come unto God through Him, because He ever lives to intercede for them.”* (Hebrews 7:23-25)

The Holy Spirit: *“In the same way, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us in wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”* (Romans 8:26-27)

**Close:**

 *“I looked for someone who would build up the wall and STAND BEFORE ME IN THE GAP on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”* (Ezekiel 22:30)

 God is looking for a few faithful people to STAND IN THE GAP and partner with him in prayer. He will open the heavens and rain down His Holy Spirit and blessings on this church and on this city! Will you answer the call?

**Prayer:** Lord God, we come to You with hearts longing for Your power and blessing in our lives, our church, our city and our land. We lay claim to the promise You give us that when we humble ourselves and pray and confess our sins, that You will hear from heaven and bless our land. Please Lord, hear our fervent prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.