

Powerless Prayers

There was a tribe out in the wilderness of Australia. Each night the men of the tribe went out and met around the fire. They warmed themselves and occasionally when the fire went down, they would throw on another log or two to keep the fire going. While the men were around the fire there were several monkeys sitting above them in the trees. The monkeys sat quietly and watched the men laughing and talking together most of the evening. Then the men went inside for the night. After a little while the monkeys came down out of the trees and warmed themselves around the fire. They laughed and acted as the men had been doing, talking amongst one another. But to their surprise the fire started to go out. Since the monkeys did not know how to keep the fire going the fire went out, and they went back up into the trees to sleep.

The problem was that although the monkeys watched the men at the fire, the men never trained the monkeys how to keep the fire going. It is the same principle when we pray. A Christian can be around other Christians when they pray in the authority and power given us through the Holy Spirit and not learn how to walk and pray with that same authority and power.

If no one teaches them how to pray, they will only be going through the motion of praying or powerless prayers. It is the responsibility of strong Christians to teach them how to experience the authority and power seen in *James 5:16 NLT*, “The earnest prayer of a righteous person **has great power** and **produces wonderful results.**”

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“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.” Proverbs 3:5 NLT

The purpose of the word “Prayer” is defined as someone needing a miracle. The only person who does miracles is God, and every time we think of going to God in prayer, we are looking for a miracle. Whether we are praying for ourselves or praying for another person or body of people, each person can pray with the power of God **or** pray words but no power.

Often, we see a need for prayer, and we just start praying. Our goal is to pray for the need and see the power of God move on behalf of that need. The question is, why don't we take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit how to pray for that need or guide us in the prayer. If you are the focus point or the conduit in connecting the prayer need to God for His answer, shouldn't we ask God through the Holy Spirit, how to pray?

God does miracles for an individual, a family, or a body of people, **who on their own cannot overcome something in their lives**. This is the definition of what a miracle is, that God does for His people. He does what we cannot do on our own! John Lindell said a miracle happens when, **“God interrupts the natural course of events with His power for the purpose of accomplishing His will.”** The apostle Paul writes in *Philippians 2:13 NIV*, “...For it is God who works in you **to will and to act according to his good purpose.**” All miracles are designed to move people closer to God as they learn they can truly trust Him with everything. What we must realize is, **“The power of your prayers for a miracle is measured by the quiet time you spend sitting with God, listening to Him.”**

We will look at **“Five Principles”** to help us pray more effective prayers, with the power of God.

What is the difference between knowing God's power and the power of God actually moving? The answer is **relationship with God!** Relationship requires us to spend time listening to God so we can get to know Him and hear what He wants to say regarding every part of our lives and those we pray for.

Since the best example for powerful prayers is Jesus, let us look at what Jesus says and does. In *John 5:19 NIV* it is written, "So Jesus explained, 'I tell you the truth, **the Son can do nothing by himself** (neither can we). He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.'" Later *John* also wrote in chapter *14:12 NIV* that Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." But before this verse happens, Jesus set the example of listening to God and then He prayed with the power of God flowing through him touching lives everywhere He went. Isaiah shows the benefits of going to God first and then your soul/spirit will be able to give out to others. *Isaiah 55:1-2 NIV* wrote, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? **Listen, listen to me**, and eat what is good, and **your soul will delight** in the richest of fare."

We also must listen to the Father through the Holy Spirit and **do only what we are told to do or shown to pray**. It is our nature to want to see the climatic moment of God's answers, instead of helping the person requesting the prayer to understand all that is involved in the climatic moment that happens. The answer to what is involved in the climatic moment is understanding God's love and true caring for His children. Since each answer to prayer is designed to move us closer to God, we need to reinforce this understanding, to help the person see how God, their Father, is there for them. God is pouring out His heart to each person. This holds true whether you are praying for one person or the multitudes.

What Jesus is saying, is he listens to God more than he talks or acts. The key is **when God shows you what and how to pray, then get up and do that without hesitation**. How can we do what the Father wants done unless we spend time in finding out what God **really wants us to do** or **says what His will is**, for that situation? There are times when you walk into a setting that is clear, like sickness or something specific, and we will know what and how we are supposed to pray and pray boldly in the name of Jesus Christ. However, there are other times we must be led by the Holy Spirit, for what we should pray. Jesus' example shows us we need the leading of the Holy Spirit to know what God wants us to pray. Then

we will experience the true power of prayer and God's anointing through our prayers.

The "**First Principle**" in seeing the Power of God move is listening to God!

Now that we are "listening to God," we must be willing to ask God if there is anything in us that we need to surrender to Him to be a **pure vessel** to pray for our needs and others. In *Psalm 139:23-24 NIV* David writes, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." David also writes in *Psalm 19:14 NIV* "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."

Jesus spoke of the bible scholars of His day, "...You have never heard his (God's) voice or seen him face to face, and you do not have his message in your hearts..." *John 5:37-38 NIV*. Jesus was expressing that people think 'if I appear holy and righteous then I must be spiritual.' He was showing there is only one way to know God and that is by spending time with Him. The process of spending time with God is what changes us into a **pure vessel**. *Romans 12:2 NLT* explains what it takes for God to work through us requires, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."

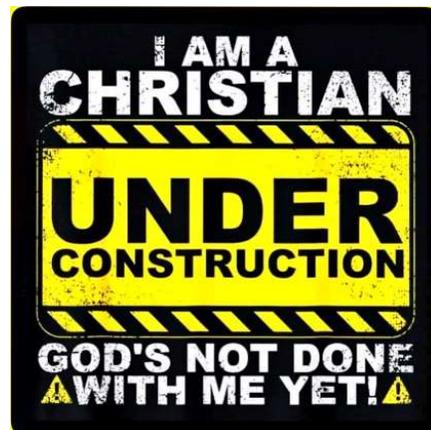
Another reason we struggle with being a **pure vessel** is we want God to answer our prayers, but we are not willing to give God the things that He knows are destroying us. Things like unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, pride, jealousy, and other issues specific to our lives. *Isaiah* wrote in *59:1-2 NIV* "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; **your sins have hidden his face from you.**"

If we as intercessors, want to see the power of God move in our lives and impact other people's lives, we must check ourselves through the Holy Spirit to be sure we are a **pure vessel**. This same truth applies for both the person who is praying, and the person being prayed for. I do not recommend that you confront each person you are praying for, but we should be listening to the Holy Spirit and see if He shows us something that person needs to let go.

Each of us needs to see things from our Father's perspective. God is more concerned about us being set free from things that can destroy us, than answering a prayer request. He may answer some prayer requests for a while but if we refuse to give Him the things that are destroying us, He will hold our answers until we decide to let go of those issues. God's priority is life over death saved vs not saved, or like things or actions that separate us from God's presence. That is why He sent Jesus. All other prayer requests come second. There are times God will do a miracle for someone who is not saved or living a godly life, because He has determined that is the best way for the person to truly see the love God has for them and then they will get saved or change their ways, like the one leper who was healed of leprosy in *Luke 17:11-19* and Naaman in *2 Kings 5:1-15*.

If you are working on surrendering those things, then God counts that to your credit or "Right Standing" and just keep going. Paul writes in *Philippians 1:6 NLT*, "And I am certain that **God**, who began the good work within you, **will continue his work until it is finally finished** on the day when Christ Jesus returns."

All of us have a sign hanging on us that says:



The "**Second Principle**" in seeing the power of God move is **being a pure vessel or right standing with God!**

Once we are "listening to God" and a "pure vessel" we are ready to ask God for guidance through the Holy Spirit, regarding the prayer request. We are looking for the right approach to see the power of God move, regarding what we are asking for. The answer to knowing the right approach is found in *1 Samuel 2:35 NIV* which says, "I (God speaking) will raise up for myself a faithful priest, **who will do according to what is in my heart and mind**. I will firmly establish his house, and

he will minister before my anointed one always.” So, we can pray about everything but if we want to see God’s power move in our lives and other people’s lives, just like Jesus did, we need to listen to God through the Holy Spirit to **find out what is on God’s heart and mind**. King Jehoshaphat of Judah was following the same approach Jesus did to find God’s will for their problem, when he said, “...Is there no prophet of the Lord with us? If there is, we can ask the Lord what to do through him.” *2 Kings 3:11 NLT*

We do not have to be a prophet to get close to God. Each of us can develop a deep relationship with our Father in Heaven **so our hearts are compelled** to do **what is on His heart and mind**, regarding this request. Knowing the heart and mind of our Father is summed up in one word, “**Passion**.” Jesus showed this passion in *Matthew 9:36 NLT* which says, “When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus’ heart was moved by knowing His Father’s heart and love for His people. You will know you are praying with **God’s power** when you are praying with **Jesus’ passion** that is poured out from the Father’s heart.

The “**Third Principle**” in seeing the power of God move is **to know what is on God’s heart and mind, for that prayer request and do just that!**

Knowing what is on God’s heart and mind means our goal is to do **God’s will** and that becomes our primary focus. *1 John 5:14-15 NIV* says, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that **if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us**. And if we know that he hears us whatever we ask we know that we have what we asked of him.” “**According to his will**” means letting the Holy Spirit guide us in what He wants as the outcome for that prayer request, **at that time**.

Ephesians 1:9-10 NIV says, “**And he (God) made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure**, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

Answers to prayers/miracles do not just happen randomly or at any old time. God has a specific time, place and setting for every prayer/miracle large or small. Both Jesus and John the Baptist were born to a specific set of parents at a specific time and place to accomplish God’s plan. In the same way the parting of the Red Sea happened with the same parameters as Jesus’ and John’s birth. So, whether you

are praying for a good parking place or the parting of the Red Sea kind of need, every answer to prayer/miracle has been planned by God to get the results He wants. **There are no coincidences in God's plan!**

We always look for a complete miracle each time we pray, but it is up to God to determine the what, where, when and the how for the answer He wants, to happen for that prayer request. There are times when nothing will happen at that moment but as the person walks out their faith in believing God answered their prayer, the person will see the completion of that prayer request.

The **"Fourth Principle"** in seeing the power of God move is **knowing God's plan and timing He wants to happen at that moment!**

Realizing that God does not tell us everything, our goal is to **"only do what He wants"** and **we should be satisfied with His will and purpose.** We are always excited to be an instrument of His power, which sometimes causes us to rush too quickly to prayer. **We need to understand that God uses every event and moment in a person's life to help them grow to a deeper relationship with their Father in heaven.**

We must listen closely to God, because often we are so focused on the prayer need that we cannot see what God is trying to help us see or get us free from. God does not just show up every so often to help us out. No, God is working in everyone's life every moment we breath. With that reality, we must realize that every time something good (or sometimes bad), God allows to happen, it is part of God's plan for that person or body of people. We have the freedom to choose something bad that is not in God's plan for our lives, and God's answer is, **He is always trying to help us get out of wrong choices.**

Since every miracle happens at a certain moment in our lives, we need to realize that delays are not always because we have done something wrong. The blind man in *John 9:3 NIV* clarifies this point. **"Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'"**

In addition, Jesus set the example that it is okay to continue praying about the same issue as seen in Matthew 26:36-46 while praying in the garden of Gethsemane, when He prayed three times for the same issue. **But Jesus was**

praying for God's will for His life, not for God to do what He wanted. It is also written in *Isaiah 21:12 NLT*, "The watchman replies, 'Morning is coming, but night will soon return. If you wish to ask again, then come back and ask.'" **Persistence is an outward expression of our faith** that God is our only source, and He is there for each of us. The missing link in praying continuously requires us to keep the right perspective as we see in *Philippians 4:6 NIV* which says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." In essence, we turn our prayers into praise, thanking God for what He has done and what He is about to do, because we know we have a loving Father who is working on our behalf. Our reward is found in *Galatians 6:9 NIV* "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

But if you keep praying for the same thing repeatedly with no answers, then take time and ask God if there is an issue either for myself or the other person you are praying for, who needs to process something with God. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in this discussion.

The last element to consider is regarding **the purpose for trials and/or difficulties** a person goes through. Seeing the power of God work requires us to consider the factor that God may have allowed these trials and difficulties for the purpose of helping each of us to see the changes we have been praying for in our character and nature. *Job 36:15a* says, "Hard times and troubles are God's way of getting our attention..." *CEV* and then in the *NCV* the second half of *Job 36:15b* says, "...God gets them to listen through their pain." The trials and difficulties cause each of us to stop and look to God for our solution, correction, and direction. Every diamond starts off in a very rough form and must be ground down to become the beautiful diamond it is intended for, so it fits where it is purposed to be placed, by its creator. Our Creator, our Father, works the same way with a plan for each of our lives.

Romans 8:28-29 NIV reminds us that God has a plan, as written, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also **predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among

many brothers.” God loves each of us so much that He will not allow us to stay the same, carrying our hurts and sins, **unless we start pushing ourselves away from our heavenly Father**. Make no mistake, God never backs away from anyone, because He loves us unconditionally.

The “**Fifth Principle**” in seeing the power of God move is **wanting to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**.

God is always working to help **our faith grow stronger** and **help us trust Him more**. No one gets around this growth process. *Isaiah 64:8 NLT* says, “...O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hands.” Realize that when we ask God to help us become more like Jesus, often it requires trials and difficulties to help us work through to see the changes.

James 1:2-4 NIV says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” **We are so quick to ask God to take our trials or difficulties away and we forget that there may be a specific purpose God has allowed that in our lives**. We need to take time to ask God what He wants each of us to see and grow through, before asking for God to take it away.

Most of the time, we will not understand what God is teaching us until we come out the other side of the trial or difficulty. At that point, we can look back and see how God loved us and protected us through the whole journey. Then we will understand what God was teaching us and see how He helped us change to be more like Jesus. **Enjoy the journey** and know our Father has each of us in the palm of His hands. *Isaiah 49:16a NLT* say, “See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands...”

So, the next time you are going to pray, and want to pray with the power of God for yourself or someone else, start by **listening to God** then take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit if you are a **pure vessel**. Then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in what is on **God’s heart and mind** for that prayer request. **Do not put your prayer request in a box of what and how you want the answer to come** but allow God through the Holy spirit guide you for what God wants to happen. You can do this in a matter of seconds if you have a good relationship with our Father in Heaven.

Trust what the Holy Spirit says and do just that. Remember, “I (each of us) can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” *Philippians 4:13 NKJV*

Isaiah writes there is only one person who can truly tell what is best for each person’s life going forward. “Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. **Only I can tell you the future** before it even happens. **Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish!**” *Isaiah 46:9-11 NLT*

God’s purpose always accomplishes what He sets out to do as seen in *Isaiah 55:11 NLT* which says, “It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. **It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.**” God is the only one who knows what He has planned for each person’s life, so we should start by asking what His will is and follow His directions. This is the only way each of us will see God’s power move on our behalf and others.

You may be reading this article because you are desperately searching for God’s direction. God’s promise is that He is always close to each of us, even if we do not think we feel Him or hear Him. I am sure you have been seeking God, looking for your answers and direction.

The simple path to God’s answers and direction is found in one simple word. We must “**surrender**” to God’s will and trust Him in His timing and purpose. What we are afraid of is, if we surrender to God’s plan, we will not get what we really want. **You will never be disappointed with God’s plans for your life!** We need to realize we cannot comprehend all God has in His plans to bless us and prosper us. *Jeremiah 29:11 NLT* says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” My encouragement to each of us is to keep seeking our Father in heaven and trust Him. God is working out His plan for each of us even though we do not feel anything is happening. Blessings as you pray for His direction and answers!

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