

Give Yourself to Constant & Committed Prayer.

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Proverbs 15:8 – *The prayer of the upright is His delight.*

Every Christian has at his disposal the most mind-boggling wonder. The weakest saint can come before the throne of Almighty God in heaven in simple prayer. It's not the might of the saint that changes things. It is the intercession of the sufficient Savior who intercedes for the weakest Saint as the Spirit takes those prayers before the Father in heaven. That's where the power resides. O that every Christian would *set aside time* in his daily schedule to be alone with God in the communion of prayer. Not praying 'as you go' or praying 'as you drive' or praying 'from time to time.' And all of those are not bad, nor are they to be rejected. But the goal of this essay is to exhort and plead with Christians to set daily aside to go into the 'inner room' and be alone with God – to pray, to *really* pray, to call upon God fervently, passionately, unceasingly.

In this brief essay, I'll provide **7 pastoral suggestions as you give yourself to constant & committed prayer.**

1. Pray till you pray.

Elijah was a man like us and he "prayed in his praying" that it would not rain (James 5:17). And it didn't for three and a half years! There's a difference between saying a prayer and praying. There's a world of contrast between muttering a few half-hearted yet often repeated phrases in prayer to God for the same old things (or the same old people) and truly falling on one's face in fervent and tireless wrestlings with God till the cause is won. Do you what it is to pray like this? God has used men of prayer to rock the world for Christ's renown. Maybe there is little spiritual fruit in our land because the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is content to say its 'prayers' rather than to *pray till one has truly prayed* – that is, to pray in one's praying and seek God by taking hold of His garment and not letting Him go till the answer comes. O dear saints, pray till you pray. Godly saints of old have said that truly praying doesn't happen in three minutes while you're at a red light. No! It may take time to get in the spirit of prayer, the attitude of prayer, the fervency of prayer, and the warmth of prayer. But pursue it! Don't be too busy to quiet yourself to pray. Those who have truly called on God know what it is to pray *in your praying*. Seek God for this grace and this blessing.

2. Pray with an open Bible.

How does one pray so fervently? Perhaps the greatest way to do this is to open your Bible and read a portion of it, a phrase, a verse, even a word (!) and let the truths therein produce the outgushing of your soul to God! Speak to God in light of what He has spoken to you from the written Word. Our God initiates. So let Him initiate conversation with you by reading His Word and then respond (=a conversation) to God with genuine praise, heartfelt requests, contrite penitence, and diligent intercessions. Don't hurry in prayer. Don't hurry in conversing with God. Relationships take time and conversations take time. Going deep with a loved one takes time. So it is with God. Hear from Him (thru the Word) and then respond to Him (in prayer). Dear beloved, pray with an open Bible before you.

3. Pray starting with praise & thanksgiving.

Before we seek the hand of God and the roll off the things we want God to do for us and for our loved ones, consider starting your seasons of prayer with praise and thanksgiving. To put it simply: seek the face of God before you demand the hand of God. And one easy way to do this is to have your Bible before you as you seek God in the inner room and on your knees. Go through the psalms. How easy it is to read a verse and turn that into a shout of praise for God's character! You can read what God has done and exclaim His marvelous deeds! You can marvel at David's pains and thank God that He never leaves His redeemed ones. O begin with praise before you petition Him! Start with thanksgiving before you lay out your wants. Thank God for everything He is and everything He has given – even your trials. *The* cure for complaining and grumbling is thankfulness. So thank God for that hard family situation. Thank God for *that* person who is after you, angry with you, persecuting you. Thank God for the hardships in life (no matter what they may be). Set your soul aright with God as you remember who He is and who you are. Remember, God is in heaven and you are on earth. Praise Him. Thank Him. Lift up your eyes in praise!

4. Pray bewailing your sins.

When you praise God and remember who He is – especially when you have your Bible still open before you – you will see the holiness of God, the character of God, the gospel of grace, and the commandments God has given and you will see how far short you fall. Don't let this lead you to despair and depression but rather let it lead you to genuine repentance and heartfelt bewailing of your shortcomings as you behold the grandeur and glory of God in Christ. Bewail how much iniquity still resides in your heart – even as a Christian! Sorrow over your selfishness that still exudes out from the heart so frequently! Repent over the littleness of your love for Christ and over the littleness of your hatred – God-like hatred – for wickedness. Repent that you have laughed at sin rather than been grieved over it. Bewail the sins that we still commit and the duties that we often neglect. O come before God humbly as a penitent sinner.

5. Pray laying hold of Christ.

And as you find yourself with your open Bible flat on your face before God in repentance, lay hold of Christ and His omnipotent righteousness. Cling to Him and His intercession as a loving and great High Priest. Don't stop your prayer as you repent and see yourself as a vile transgressor. Flee quickly and decisively to Christ alone and cast your eye upward to Him at Calvary and see Him who paid for your sin there! Behold Him who bore your transgressions upon His own righteous soul. Gaze at Him who mightily and sufficiently shouted: "It is finished!" Lay hold of Christ and seek Him till your soul is warmed afresh with the saving mercy and tender compassion of your Bridegroom. Lay hold of Christ and let the love of this Savior warm your heart and fill you full as you seek God in your fervent praying.

6. Pray specifically & largely.

What if God answered *all* of your prayers affirmatively? What would change? Would the city be saved? Would all your church congregation be converted and discipling and revived and street preaching and pleading for souls? What would happen if you prayed *big prayers*? Don't limit God by asking small things of a global God! Maybe we see little fruit around us in contemporary Christianity because the saints are not earnestly yearning for *big things* from our *big God*! God does say, after all, open your mouth wide and I will fill it (Psalm 81:10). God is *able* to do far more abundantly beyond all we *ask* or *think* (Ephesians

3:20). Do we forget this? Do we forget that the God who brought revival to the entire city of Nineveh can bring revival to our cities? Do we forget that through one Christ-exalting sermon, the Spirit of God cut many to the quick so that thousands were converted on the Day of Pentecost? We worship the same God today! Let us ask big things of God. And indeed, when you pray, *believe* that God hears and that God will answer. And with your open Bible, make a case with God. Pray prayers in conformity with His will so that God can't refuse our prayers. Yes, make biblical cases with God and hold Him to His Word. Press Him!

7. Pray worshipfully.

And in all this earnest praying, pray worshipfully. Worship, after all, is responding rightly to who God is. Respond to God's glory revealed in Scripture with genuine and heartfelt prayers to Him through Christ. Behold the glory of God in the face of Christ as the Spirit impresses His truth upon your heart in prayer and Bible reading. Worship your God in prayer. Let it not become a sheer duty or a mindless ritual. Engage with God. Discipline yourself. Mere activity in the name of God without heart-affection is utterly worthless before God. Don't come in the dark, early morning hours and seek God in prayer because you *must* -- seek God because you *can*! And because you *can*, then we can say that we must! For I do believe that we can do much of great value after we've met with God in quiet and communing prayer. But I believe that you can't do anything of great value *till* you've met with God in quiet and communing prayer. Worship God in sweet communion of prayer. He is delighted in the prayers of the upright. So get to it!