

The POWER of *PREVAILING Prayer!*

Prayer is a *UNIQUE key* to spiritual growth and success in life. Prayer is a special kind of contact with God. The world just doesn't know about the great *power* that can be unleashed by this source contact because it is cut off from God. Most people in the world have no more awareness of this true spiritual power than a lump of coal or a burned out light bulb.

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Jesus Christ declared to His disciples, “Verily, verily (or, most assuredly), I say unto you, He that BELIEVETH ON ME, the works that I do (including performing miracles, and great healings!) SHALL HE DO ALSO; and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME (there is awesome POWER in the name of Jesus Christ, when used rightly), that will I DO, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:12-13).

Jesus said, “If ye shall ask ANYTHING in my name, I will DO IT!” (verse 14).

Jesus also prophesied: “And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I KNOW THY WORKS, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then BECAUSE THOU ART LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH” (Rev.3:14-16).

How can a Church which is predominantly LUKEWARM expect to exert or manifest any spiritual POWER?

Isn't it high time we ask God to FILL us with His Spirit of POWER (II Tim.1:6-7)? As Paul said, “I can do ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil.4:13). Let's learn to pray earnestly, and learn how to PREVAIL in prayer!

Many years ago, when I was fifteen years old, my brother Bob and I were living with our father in Kaoshiun, Taiwan, off the China coast. Dad was stationed at the naval base in Tsoying. He was also the scoutmaster of our small Boy Scout troop. We used to go swimming often at the beach at Tsoying.

One day the water was very rough, and the current was very strong. As we were swimming, suddenly someone shouted for everyone to get out of the water – there was a very dangerous undertow, which could carry us out to sea. We managed to pull all the Scouts out of the water, except two. My brother Bob was trying to help a boy named

Ricky, and they both got dragged out to sea by the powerful current. They looked like mere pinpricks, little black dots, way out in the ocean. It was a desperate time.

At the time, I was a newly converted Christian, and had been reading the New Testament daily. I knew God answered the earnest, heart-felt prayers of His people. I went apart a little, and began praying earnestly, fervently, with my whole heart, for God to send angels and save my brother and Ricky. I had no idea of how He might do it, but I prayed from the heart, entreating God to intervene, knowing and believing that God heard me. This was a situation made to order for prayer!

Someone pointed down the beach and cried out, “Look!” I looked, and about 150 yards down the beach, I saw a group of about six to eight Chinese soldiers with a large pontoon raft, carrying it out into the surf, and then forcefully paddling out to where Bob and Ricky were bobbing up and down, sometimes disappearing beneath the water. The soldiers reached them and dragged them on board the raft, and paddled back to shore, where we were watching and waiting, anxious and breathless. They were SAVED! God had heard my fervent, sincere, desperate prayer!

Several years ago, my wife Cappy prayed for God to provide us a new piano, so we could praise Him in songs and hymns. Her old piano had been destroyed by a flash flood which struck our home in Altadena, California in 1980. Soon thereafter she saw an ad in a paper about a beautiful piano for sale. She had a friend inspect it, and we bought it for a \$1,000, and had it refurbished for another thousand dollars. It, too was an answer to prayer, and we have been using it to serve God ever since!

Prayer is all too often, however, a much neglected source of divine help, assistance, deliverance and power.

Do you know the secret of answered, powerful, prevailing prayer?

The Power of Prayer

When a true servant of God prays, it is like plugging in the extension cord connecting a lamp to its source of electrical energy and power and turning on the switch. Suddenly light floods the room, casting out the darkness and providing illumination everywhere in a startling, graphic manner.

What does the Bible teaches us about this source of power? If you really wish to *survive* the coming days of hellish anguish and trauma that are coming upon the earth and leading up to Armageddon, then you will certainly need to be familiar with God's revelations on prayer. If you wish to be a strong Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ and an overcomer, then you need to know about the keys to dynamic and answered prayer!

Just what is prayer?

There are several Hebrew and Greek words used for “prayer.” Let us take a brief look at each of them.

Jesus Christ set us an example in prayer. We read: “Afterwards he went up into the hills to pray” (Mark 6:46). We also read: “The next morning he was up long before daybreak and went out alone into the wilderness to pray” (Mark 1:35).

Prayer is between each one of us and God. It is usually a private matter, and it is therefore good to get off by oneself to spend time in prayer. It is good to go into a private room, close the door so you won't be disturbed and then pray.

The word translated “pray” in these verses is the Greek word *proseuchomai* which means to pray, worship, to open up and pour out your heart. It is used 78 times in the New Testament and is the most common word for prayer. It is the word used also in Matthew 6:5-9 where Jesus taught His disciples a model outline of prayer, showing them what to pray for and how they should generally organize their prayers.

He instructed them: “Pray along these lines: ‘Our Father in heaven, we honor your holy name. We ask that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give our food again today, as usual, and forgive us our sins, even as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don't bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen’” (Matt. 6:9-12).

The very same word is used in Matthew 14:23: “Then afterwards he went up into the hills to pray.” Jesus Christ often spent hours at a time in prayer, meditation, and communion with God the Father. This was one very important reason He was such a strong dynamo of spiritual strength and power. He never let contact with God the Father slide!

Do you sometimes spend hours in prayer, communion and communication with God, talking over the things of your own life, your problems, needs for divine counsel, guidance, direction and wisdom? Do you pour out your heart before *Him*?

What Do You Mean, “Ask”?

Another word sometimes translated “pray” in the New Testament simply means literally to “ask.” It is the Greek word *erotao* and means to “ask,” or “interrogate.” When Jesus entered into Simon Peter's ship, He “prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land” (Luke 5:3). This means he simply asked him. It wasn't needful to make a moving, impassioned supplication to him, or a fervently phrased prayer – but He simply requested or asked him to do it.

Even so, there are many times when God simply wants us to learn to *ask* Him for certain things. As a loving heavenly Father, He promises to hear us when we *ask, simply ask*. This word is used in John 14:16, 16:26 and 17:9, 15, and 20. Sometimes we simply need to ask in faith, believing, and that is all that is necessary, because God knows our

needs even before we ask Him. Sometimes all He requires is the simple act of asking.

Beseeking God

In Matthew 9:38 we read: “ ‘The harvest is so great, and the workers are so few,’ he told his disciples. ‘So *pray* to the one in charge of the harvesting, and ask him to recruit more workers for his harvest fields.’” The word for prayer in this verse is *deomai* and means literally to “petition,” “beseech.” It is a much stronger word than “ask.” This is a very *intense* word, and refers to intensive, earnest prayer – crying out and literally begging or beseeching God to intervene and act. This is also the kind of prayer and praying we should do whenever trials or trouble come upon us, or when we really need a quick answer, or divine intervention on our behalf, to rescue us from potential threats or disaster or serious difficulty. This is also the kind of prayer we should do on behalf of other people.

Using this word, Jesus tells us: “Keep a constant watch. And *Pray* that if possible you may arrive in my presence without having to experience these horrors” (Luke 21:36). Or, as the King James Version has it: “Watch ye therefore, and *pray* always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Jesus prayed this way when He prayed for Peter. He said: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, but *I have pleaded in prayer* for you that your faith should not completely fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers” (Luke 22:31-32).

This is the kind of prayer the New Testament Church of God prayed when they were being persecuted and threatened by the religious establishment of that day. We read in the book of Acts: “After this *prayer*, the building where they were meeting *shook* and they were all *filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly* preached God's message” (Acts 4:31). They besought God fervently, with all their heart – and He heard their prayer!

We also read of Cornelius in the book of Acts. “In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer, Cornelius, a captain of an Italian regiment. He was a godly man, deeply reverent, as was his entire household. He gave generously to charity and was *a man of prayer*” (Acts 10: 1-2).

Do You “Pray Like Hell”?

In the movie “Chariots of Fire,” which I watched the other night, one of the British track runners was discouraged and thought there was no way he could compete with the Americans in the Olympics. His trainer said the key was, “*Pray like hell!*”

Sometimes, I think, this is the key to any victory!

The perfect example in prayer, of course, was set by our Saviour, Jesus Christ,

Yeshua the Messiah. We read: “Yet while Christ was here on earth he *pleaded* with God, *praying with tears and agony of soul* to the only one who would save him from (premature) death. And God *heard his prayers* because of his *strong desire* to obey God at all time” (Heb. 5:7).

The King James Version renders this verse: “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and *supplications* with *strong crying and tears* unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.” The strongest, most intensive form of prayer is “supplication.” This is the Greek word *deesis*. It refers to powerful entreaty and intense and fervent requests. Notice how it is used. “But the angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Zacharias! For I have come to tell you that God has heard your *prayer*, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son!’” (Luke 1:13). Elizabeth had been barren, unable to have a child. But Zacharias, her husband, did not give up. He prayed in faith, continually, that God would intervene supernaturally and give them a son. He implored God and made earnest supplication. Supplication is imploring God’s aid *and spending much time in prayer*, setting time aside every day to pray about the matter. Supplication means you stick with it – you don’t give up, ask just once, and then quit -- like so many faithless and unbelieving people do!

If I may be so bold, I need your earnest, bold, fervent and heart-rending prayers, too, so that I may be able to serve God as He directs, and be used by Him, with increasing power, love, wisdom and faith.

Pray All the Time

Paul exhorted Timothy with guidelines of supplication we all should heed and obey. He wrote: “Here are my directions: *Pray much for others; plead* for God’s mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them. *Pray in* this way for kings and all others who are in authority over us, or are in places of high responsibility, so that we can live in peace and quietness, spending our time in godly living and thinking much about the Lord. This is good and pleases God our Savior, for he longs for all to be saved . . . “ (I Tim.2:1-4).

We are given powerful instruction in prayer and supplication by the apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians. Let us read his message carefully. Paul wrote: “*Pray all the time*. Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit’s wishes. *Plead with him*, reminding him of your needs, and *keep praying earnestly* for all Christians everywhere. *Pray for me, too*, and ask God to give me the *right words as I boldly* tell others about the Lord, and as I explain to them that his salvation is for the Gentiles too. I am in chains now for preaching this message from God. But pray that I will *keep on speaking out boldly* for him even here in prison, as I should” (Eph. 6:18-20).

The Amplified Bible renders that verse very powerfully: “*Pray at all times – on every occasion, in every season – in the Spirit, with all (manner of) prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people). And also for me, that (freedom of)*

utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth to proclaim boldly the mystery of the good news (of the Gospel) for which I am an ambassador in a coupling chain (in prison); pray that I may declare it *boldly and courageously as I ought to do.*"

Pray Boldly and Earnestly

Turn to one of the most powerful, dynamic and incredible scriptures on the subject in the Bible, in the book of James. The apostle James tells us with apostolic authority: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray (speak up, pour out your heart) one for another, that ye may be healed. The *effectual fervent prayer* (supplication) of a righteous man availeth MUCH" (Jas. 5:16).

The *Living Bible* translates this: "Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. *The earnest prayer* of a righteous man has *great power* and wonderful *results.*"

The Amplified Bible has it: "Confess to one another therefore your faults -- your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins; and pray (also) for one another, that you may be healed and restored -- to a spiritual tone of mind and heart. The *earnest (heart-felt, continued) prayer* of a righteous man makes *tremendous POWER* available -- *dynamic in its working.*"

James continues: "Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have -- with feelings, affections and constitution as ourselves; and he *prayed earnestly* for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months. And (then) he prayed again and the heavens supplied rain and the land produced its crops (as usual)" (Jas. 5:17-18).

What is God telling us in these verses? He is assuring us that, in other words, we don't have to be some kind of spiritual giant, for God to answer our prayers. We often tend to think of Elijah as some spiritual giant, but James here tells us that the famous prophet of old was just like us, completely human as we are. He had all the same impulses, drives, emotions, feelings, and even became discouraged and depressed at times. Yet when he prayed, the dead were raised, and miracles occurred! When he prayed, dramatic results took place! He himself had no power or strength at all. But when he prayed, *God heard his prayers -- and intervened!*

May God help us all to heed, to learn the lesson, and to obey, to draw close to God in fervent, continual, daily, earnest, powerful prayer, so that we might do the will of God and work the works of God, and serve Him with total dedication and with all our being and mind and heart and soul and strength!

The Spirit of Prayer

In our day and age many think prayer is not all that important -- at least prayer on your knees before God. They think all they need to do is maintain an attitude of prayer

throughout the day. And they will get by. No wonder their prayers are so ineffectual – worthless – useless – powerless – vapid – insipid – inane – mere powder-puffs of spiritual vanity!

God's Word says we should be “instant in prayer” (Rom.12:12), and that we should “pray always” (Eph. 6:18). But this does not mean we should just have an “attitude of prayer.” This is talking about CONSTANT PRAYER – repeated and consistent and persevering prayer!

What about your prayers? Have you discovered the secret of powerful praying? Are you developing the HABIT of resourceful, energetic, ALIVE praying?

The example in the Bible of all God's Spirit-led servants was of praying with intensity, with fervor, with dynamic energy, and spiritual strength, and gripping emotion, with surcharged feeling and commitment. Have you begun to pray in this way, consistently, repeatedly, often? This kind of prayer leads to supernatural power and spiritual deliverance! It unlocks the doors of heaven, and opens heaven's gates of blessing, encouragement, and prosperity. It makes things happen!

Developing the right *habits* of prayer is not easy. In the Scriptures, we read that the men of God prayed on their knees, with arms outstretched towards God. They also generally set us an example of praying THREE TIMES A DAY, AS A CUSTOM, OR HABIT, ON THEIR KNEES, even when their lives were threatened!

David said, “*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice*” (Psa. 55:17).

Daniel, who was greatly beloved of God, “*kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God*” (Dan. 6:10).

When you pray in a private place, lift up your voice – don't hold back in timidity or embarrassment. Pray before God three times a day. It is amazing how soon your self will go, as you pray with emotion, with fervor, with feeling. Put your heart in your prayers!

Daniel, a man beloved in God's sight, prayed three times on his knees every day, despite the danger and peril of losing his life. Even though the Persian king had made a law that no man should petition or pray for 30 days, except to the king, Daniel remained faithful to God.

“*But though Daniel knew about it, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs bedroom, with its windows open toward Jerusalem, and PRAYED THREE TIMES A DAY, just as he always had, giving thanks to his God*” (Dan.6:10).

If we pray three times a day, consistently, on our knees, this will help us to “fill up” with God's Spirit – to keep spiritually rejuvenated, refurbished, super-charged. Three

times a day should not be that difficult, if we set our minds and heart to it! Is eternal life worth it? Three times a day to keep strong and healthy spiritually and to maintain real spiritual POWER and IMPACT in our lives!

David said: “But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [precede] thee” (Psa. 88:13). He said: “Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as incense*; and the lifting up of my hands *as the evening sacrifice*” (Psa. 141:2). Prayers of the saints are a sweet smelling sacrifice to God. We should pray during the best parts of the day and commune with our Father and Christ at the times the ancient Hebrews offered their sacrifices, every morning, and evening.

And as the “meal offerings” given to God were *of unleavened* fine flour, mixed with oil, so our prayers should be *humble*, not puffed up or vain, and made in fine detail, not coarse and crude crumbs, mixed with the oil of God's Spirit, offered with thanksgiving and praise to our heavenly Father.

The Apostles' Example

The example of the apostles in the book of Acts confirms that Christians should *pray three times* a day. “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple *at the hour of prayer*, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3: 1). The ninth hour was about three in the afternoon, since the daylight hours began to be counted from sunrise. Cornelius, who was “a devout man, and one that feared God” and prayed always, “saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him” (Acts 10:3). He also was praying about the ninth hour, or 3:00 PM in the afternoon (probably from 3-4 PM; see also Acts 10:30).

Was it the custom of the apostle Peter to pray at noon? In the same chapter we read, “Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the *sixth hour* . . .” (Acts 10:9). Yes he did! The “sixth hour” was noon-time! No one can deny how powerfully God used Peter in His service. Even his shadow passing over the sick made them well (Acts 5:12-16).

And in regard to morning prayer, we find that the apostles and believers were assembled together, “all with one accord in one place,” on the day of Pentecost, no doubt in prayer and praising God, when the Spirit of God first came upon the Church. What time of day was this? It was “but the *third hour* of the day” (Acts 2:15). This was about nine o'clock in the morning!

The point is, of course, not that God expects us to pray at precisely 9:00 AM, 12:00 noon, and 3:00 PM – not at all. But we should try to pray three times on our knees every day, morning, noon and at evening – giving God the *best* part of the day. This is the spiritual principle involved. If we do this, how much more will God in mercy shower down His Spirit upon us and fill us with the Spirit of faith, love and humbleness? How much more will God use us in doing His work, and fill us with spiritual strength and power? Let us follow the example of the early New Testament Church in this regard, and

we, too, can be literally “all filled with the Holy Spirit” and speak the “word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

"Watch Unto Prayer"

God wants us to be alert, vigilant and “watch unto prayer” (I Pet. 4:7). “Watch,” in this verse, means “be sober, discreet, abstain from wine.” Paul wrote: “Continue in prayer, and *watch* in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). Here the word “watch” means “to keep awake, be vigilant.” It is the same word Jesus used when He commanded us: “Watch ye therefore” (Mark 13:35-37), and when He told His disciples after they had fallen asleep as He prayed at Gethsemane: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh weak” (Mark 14:38).

But in Luke 21:36, where Jesus tells us to “watch ye therefore, and pray always,” the word for WATCH in Greek means, literally, “to be sleepless, i.e., keep awake.”

How much do you pray? Are you alert, sleepless in prayer? Or do you tend to fall asleep while praying, as the disciples apparently did? When you pray, are you sometimes drowsy, sleepy and half awake? And when you pray at night, assuming that you do, do you wait until you are ready to fall into bed with fatigue? This is not the kind of prayer that is pleasing to God, brethren and friends, so let's begin to improve our prayer habits, following the custom and practice of God's servants of old, the apostles and the prophets!

And David set us an example, let us say with him, “but I give *myself unto prayer*” (Psa. 109:4). In this Psalm, David literally says, in the Hebrew, “*I am prayer.*” That is a profound statement – he becomes “prayer,” the essence of prayer.

You older women, why don't you follow the example of the aged Anna, who was a widow for 84 years following her husband's death, who “served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:37)?

How often do we “pour out our heart” to God in prayer? David wrote: “Trust in him at all times; ye people, POUR OUT YOUR HEART before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah (So be it! Amen!)” (Psa. 62:8).

Next, David reminds us: “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity” (v. 9). Therefore, the point is, it is useless to place one's trust in man. Human beings are less than nothing, a broken reed to lean upon, a smashed cistern incapable of holding water. But all our trust and faith should be in the Eternal *living* God! He is the One who answers prayer and is a place of refuge for His people.

David continued, in this Psalm: “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that *power belongeth unto God*” (v.11). Only *God* has the power to deliver us from our enemies, from temptation's grip and from the crushing tentacles of sin. It is to God,

therefore, that we should offer up our prayers as sweet incense before Him, three times on our knees, besides a multitude of times as we go about our daily business.

The Word of God Is the KEY to Prayer

Why do so many prayers lack power and punch? Why do people seem to “run out of things to pray about” after they have been on their knees for a few minutes? The answer is partly that they do not *really* know how to pray. They may think all they need to do is fall on their knees and begin speaking to God. So they mumble a few things, and first thing you know their mind begins to wander and they begin to daydream. Heart-felt, intercessory prayer is very difficult to achieve under such circumstances.

True, heart-felt prayer, intercessory prayer, prevailing prayer, requires HARD WORK – LABOR. It requires effort, and even sometimes perspiration or sweat. At one point in His life, when Jesus Christ was praying, the apostle Luke tells us, “And being in an agony he prayed MORE EARNESTLY: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke22:44).

Are we willing to LABOR in prayer? As Paul wrote of one of his fellow co-workers in his day: “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, *always labouring fervently for you in prayers*, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. 4:12).

But even fervent, agonizing prayer is useless if we are knowingly disobedient to God, and transgressing His commandments. As the prophet Isaiah declared: “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear: *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your SINS have hid his face from you, that he will not listen*” (Isa.59:1-2).

God says in His Word, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness” (Prov.15:8-9).

Solomon also declared, “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Prov.28:9).

In Proverbs 15:29, Solomon wrote, “The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.”

And what is righteousness? Who are the righteous? God says: “ALL thy commandments are righteousness” (Psa.119:172). In other words, God’s eyes and ears are open to see and listen to the prayers of His obedient, loving servants who keep His commandments, His statutes, and His laws – those who actively have Christ living within them (Gal.2:20).

But God will not hear the prayers of those who disobey laws and break His

commandments – who transgress His law – especially if they KNOWINGLY and deliberately do so!

Remember that scripture in James, about the earnest, fervent prayers that bring about great results, and mighty power and impact? Notice it again: “The effectual, fervent prayer OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN availeth much”! (James 5:16). If we want to have our prayers answered, then, we must strive to obey and please God in our daily lives, with our thoughts, words, activities, and desires. The apostle James put it this way: “Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:2-3).

The apostle John put it another way. He wrote: “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep his commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (I John 3:22).

The Lesson of the Sacrifice

A little known key to powerful and meaningful prayer is found in understanding the sacrifices offered by ancient Israel. We read in Numbers 15: “Each sacrifice – whether an ordinary one, or a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or a free-will offering, or a special sacrifice at any of the annual *festivals* – *must be accompanied by a grain offering*. If a lamb is being sacrificed, use *three quarts of fine flour* mixed with *three pints of oil*, accompanied by *three pints of wine* for a drink offering . . . This will be a sacrifice that is a *pleasing fragrance* to the Lord” (Num. 15:4-7).

Notice that there are *three threes* involved in this offering. There is grain, oil, and wine – three commodities – and three units of each (three quarts of grain, three pints of oil, and three pints of wine). The number three is “God's signature,” His number – and the number of “decision,” or judgment. Peter denied Christ three times before the rooster crowed (Luke 22:34); Jesus asked him three times if he loved Him (John 21:15-17); Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be removed from his flesh (II Cor.12:7-9).

What do these three elements required in a grain offering represent? The fine flour represents the WORD OF GOD, which is perfect, pure. Jesus Himself is the “bread of life” (see John 6:48, 51, 58, 63). He is also the “Word of God” (John 1:1-3, 14). The “fine flour,” then, represents the Word of God which we are to study, pore over prayerfully, and read carefully.

The next portion of the grain offering is the “oil,” which represents the Spirit of God. Oil is a symbol of God's Spirit (Exo.37:29; Matt. 25:3-8, James 5:14, 1 John 2:20, 27, John 16:13). God's Spirit teaches us all things (I John 2:27, John 16:13, 14:26). It even *teaches us how to pray and inspires us* what to pray for! As Paul wrote: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because

he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27).

Third is the *wine*. Wine is a symbol of rejoicing and thanksgiving (Judges 9:13). Our prayers are to be accompanied with praise to God and thanksgiving. Paul wrote: “Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6).

Thus the ancient sacrifice of the grain offering was a symbol of PRAYER. Today God command us, “Offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, that is, the fruits of our lips *giving thanks* to his name” (Heb. 13:15).

When we *put together* these three elements – Word of God, the Spirit of God, and praise and thanksgiving – in our prayers, then we have a “sacrifice that is pleasing fragrance to the Lord” (Num. 15:7, 10). These are “*golden vials full of odours*, which are the *prayers of saints*” (Rev. 5:8; see also Rev. 8:3-4).

One of the major reasons so many people don't pray nearly as much as they ought to be doing is simply this: They don't incorporate the *Bible* into their prayer life! They don't spread out the Bible before them, when they drop to their knees to pray and pray over the Word of God, applying its richness and depth to their own lives, problems, trials, family, job, circumstances, opportunities, questions, decisions, persecution, situations, friends, relatives, employers, the Work of God and the needs of saints specifically.

So often, as the apostle James said, we don't receive what we pray for because we don't know *what to ask* (James 4:2-3) or how to ask, or we have for the wrong things, with selfish motives. Sometimes we don't pray about something because we don't really know the will of God (Eph. 5:17). And we don't know the will of God because we don't study His Word enough, or pore over it as we pray, because *the will of God is often revealed in the Scriptures!*

Our prayers should be combined with, first of all, the searching of the Scriptures, and praying over the Word of God (the Psalms is one of the best places to *begin*, and then turn to different passages from there, as you are led of God's Spirit in prayer).

Secondly, our prayers should be according to the Spirit of God, which inspires us, which God gives to those who OBEY Him (Acts 5:32). We should pray as God's Spirit leads us, making our requests and needs known to God in heaven, beseeching and imploring Him as His Spirit guides us.

Thirdly, we should add the elements of praising and blessing God, praising His Holy name, thanking Him for all He has done and has promised to do, on our behalf -- even thanking Him for the answers to our prayer, and for all His bountiful blessings and mercy and goodness – “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

Pray with POWER!

If you will learn to pray this way, your prayers will grow in richness and meaning. They will grow in power and impact. They will become prevailing, energetic, moving, passionate prayers that are prayed according to God's will. And they will achieve marvelous results!

If you pray this way, you will find it very easy to pray for an hour or more a day. As you develop the HABIT of prayer, and begin to pray on your knees three times a day, you will find your prayer life expanding in impact and in spiritual power. You will become more pleasing to God, and your prayers will be more pleasing to Him.

There is much to pray about. Isn't it about time that we fall on our knees, before our Maker, Sustainer, Provider, and Protector, our Creator, Ruler, and the Great and Magnificent God whom we worship, and pray to Him as we ought?

“And . . . they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings . . . And *when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, and they spake the word of God with boldness*” (Acts 4:24-31).

Servants of the Living God, it is high time that we re-double our efforts in prayer to God! Let's do it! Let's lift up holy hands to God in the heavens, and pray as never before!!! Let's pave the road to heaven with our earnest prayers. Let's “put our hearts into our prayers.”

The prophet Joel wrote, “Yet even now, the Eternal promises, turn to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning; come, heart-broken, not with garments torn, and turn to the Eternal One your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to be angry, rich in love, and ready to relent” (Joel 2:12-13, Moffatt translation).

God declares in Jeremiah, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer.29:13). God says, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty [*inaccessible*, margin] things, which you do not know” (Jer.33:3). Moffatt has this verse, “Call to me, and I will answer by revealing what is hard and hidden, what you do not know!”

God continues, “Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth” (v.6).

Isaiah tell us, “Seek the Eternal while he may be found, call to him while he is near. Let the guilty men give up their ways, and evil men their purposes; let them turn back to the Eternal, who will pity them, turn back to our God, for he will pardon them abundantly” (Isaiah 55:6-7, Moffatt).