

Types Of Prayer

'Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen' (Matthew 6:9 to 13).

'Our Father, Who art in heaven'. If we study this prayer in segments, we can see it has a much deeper meaning than many people realise. The first two words, 'Our Father' (the Hebrew word is Avinu, or Abba) means much more than a flippant, 'Excuse me God'. The word 'our' is a corporate word, and it shows us He is the Father of all of us – the Father of all creation; He is our Head, our Ruler, our Master, our Maker, our King, our One and Only Personal Creator – The Father of all. There is no other God or creator. He is IT; the Top; The Authority of absolutely everything on earth, in heaven, in the universe – He is Boss! So, He is His creation's corporate, divine, holy Father, Who has His dwelling place in heaven. Both Jesus and Paul called God, Abba; a Hebrew pet name for 'Darling Daddy' but with the implication of complete authority (Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). Jesus said very strongly and decisively, that we are not to ever call any person on earth 'Father' in the same context as it is written in the Lord's prayer. 'Do not call anyone on earth Father, for you have one Father, Who is in heaven' (Matthew 23:9). The first words, 'Our Father, Lord of heaven', is a polite, reverent address to God, to begin our prayer.

'Hallowed be Thy name'. The Hebrew words are Kiddush HaShem. With humans, our name is often our reputation. For example: 'John Smith's business has a good name'. That means John Smith's business has a good reputation. God's holy name and His Son's name, have a good reputation. God's reputation grew greater and greater throughout the scriptures, until through the name of the Son of God, we are saved. Therefore, God's name is critical for His plan of salvation, and we need to 'hallow' God's name. That is to sanctify it, honour it, respect it, glorify it and keep it holy. God's reputation is that of a merciful, self-sacrificing God, and through His sacrifice, His reputation has expanded world-wide to bring His plan of salvation to fruition. God's name is already holy, but our desire should be to know His Holiness. 'Hallowed be Your name', are simple, reverent words of worship to follow the initial address and we must always come to God with words of praise and worship.

'Thy Kingdom come'. The Hebrew word is Malkhut. 'The Lord will be King over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord and His name will be the only name' (Zechariah 14:9). One day, when our Messiah returns, He will be King over the whole earth. That is what the scriptures say. When we say this in prayer, we are praying exactly as the Lord wills. It is His will to rule the earth, and we are saying, "Lord, let Your Kingdom come and rule over us." Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20). The minute we are born-again, we are born into the Kingdom of God, and our future is forever in the Kingdom, starting on earth and ending up in heaven. Once we go home to be with the Lord, we enter into His joy (Matthew 25:21 & 23).

'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. 'Thy Kingdom come' is synonymous with 'Thy will be done'. When we are born-again into the Kingdom of heaven, we will do His will on earth. God is the Boss and His will is done in heaven. There is never any disobedience in all of heaven. God speaks and the angels obey without question. Once we submit to the Lord's will and obey Him, His will is being done on earth, just as it is done in heaven. 'Thy

Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' are words of submission. We are prepared to submit to His will in order to have our prayers answered.

'Give us this day our daily bread'. In Hebrew 'Lechem Hukenu'. In this context, bread means food needed for nourishment in general. 'Give me only my daily bread, otherwise I may have too much' (Proverbs 30:8 & 9). In other words: 'Feed me with only the food that is needful for me, lest I be too full and deny You'. When Jesus said 'our daily bread', He was possibly alluding to the manna – the bread from heaven – that had to be collected daily. Jesus was also reminding us that it is God Who provides all our daily needs (Matthew 6:25; Luke 12:22 to 24). We could also say, 'Thank You Lord, for providing all my needs every day'.

'Forgive us our sins/debts/trespasses/shortcomings, as we forgive those who sin against us'. Straight after the Lord's prayer, Jesus said in strong words that we must forgive others before God will forgive us. 'If you forgive people their sins, leave them and let them go, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you' (Matthew 6:14 & 15). Our forgiveness and the removal of our guilt, depends on our forgiveness of others. If we refuse to forgive others and hold onto that unforgiveness, on Judgement Day, we could well miss out on going to heaven. 'I forgave that great debt of yours, and should you not have had mercy on your attendant as I had mercy on you? And in wrath his master turned him over to the torturers. So also My heavenly Father will deal with every one of you, if you do not freely forgive your brother from your heart' (Matthew 18:21 to 35). If we want our prayers answered, we need to have a forgiving heart.

'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'. The Hebrew word for evil is Ra. It seems strange for Jesus to say, "Lead us not into temptation," when the scriptures clearly state God never tempts anybody. 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God; for God ... Himself tempts no one. But every person is tempted when he is drawn away by his own evil desire' (James 1:13 & 14). So what was Jesus saying? If we look at Genesis 3:1 to 5, we see that Eve was tempted by the evil one, and only then she gave into her desire for the fruit. Jesus is asking us to pray that we do not give into the temptations from the evil one, and that He would deliver us from those temptations, which lead to evil or sin.

'For Yours is the Kingdom, and power and the glory, forever, Amen.' This is self-explanatory. The Kingdom is God's, the power is God's, the glory is God's and it will be forever. The word Amen is a Hebrew word, which is related to other Hebrew words for faith, truth, trust, belief and phrases like, 'Let it be so' or 'I agree'. When Moses spoke to the children of Israel, they answered, "Amen", meaning that they agreed with and affirmed Moses' words. "All the people shall say, Amen" (Deuteronomy chapter 27). It is like our response to someone praying out loud. When we say 'Amen', we are implying, 'I agree with you; let it be so', or 'let it happen'. Jesus often began a discourse with the word 'Amen', but an incorrect translation from the Hebrew to Greek then to English, has the old King James Version saying 'verily, verily' which means 'truly, truly', or in Hebrew, 'Amen, Amen'. What Jesus was saying was, "In absolute truth, I say to you ... "

In summary, the Lord's prayer says; 'Dear Father in heaven; I praise Your holy name. I am looking forward to Your Kingdom coming to earth, and I am willing to do Your will on earth as it is done in heaven. Thank You Lord for providing my daily needs. Thank You Lord for forgiving me for all my wrong doing, just as I forgive all those who have wronged me. Please strengthen me and help me not to give into temptations from the evil one. The

Kingdom, power and glory are all Yours, Father, and will be forever. I know that is the absolute truth'.

Now to other types of prayer. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous person achieves much' (James 5:16).

Prayer of fellowship with the Lord. There are prayers that ask for nothing at all, but time is spent in the Lord's presence just connecting with Him. Jesus sometimes spent all night praying (Luke 6:12). When we just sit in His presence, we are still in a attitude of prayer but instead of asking, we are listening. Many times the Lord has a word of encouragement for us, sometimes He wants to teach us about something in the Bible, sometimes He wants to speak to us about serving Him and what to do next, or to give us an instruction. Sometimes He wants to explain why we need to wait for the answer to a particular prayer or He may just want to touch on a little sin, but if we never just sit and listen, then we will never hear His voice. Listening to God without asking for anything is more important than serving Him or just speaking to Him. Mary used to just sit and listen while Martha chose to serve without listening, and Jesus said Mary had the best part of the fellowship with Him (Luke 10:39 to 42). It is hard to have a two-way conversation when only one person speaks. We need to heed, but to heed we need to first hear. Sheep hear, but lambs do not; they heed the voice of the ewe. Lambs hear the voice of the shepherd but follow the ewe. The Eastern shepherd calls his sheep and they obey. He leads the flock; goes before the flock and they follow him and he calls each individual sheep by name. Jesus is this kind of shepherd. 'When the shepherd brought his own sheep outside, he walks on before them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice' (John 10:4). In reality, listening is essential; we have to realise and accept that before we can freely do it. Sometimes hearing from God is not easy and at times can be difficult. Listening to and hearing God is scriptural. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice. I know them and they follow Me" (John 10:27).

Prayer with thanksgiving. When we pray, we are to always give thanks for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Thanksgiving and praise are requirements for entering into God's presence (Psalm 100:4 & 5). The Lord is good, everlasting and faithful. We need to focus on these attributes and not on irritations, discouragement and self, if we are to hear and receive from God, and we need to have a thankful heart for our prayer to be successful. One key to peace of mind is to be thankful (Philippians 4:7). If we come to God with a kind of 'shopping list' of desired items, we need to be careful to have a list of things to thank Him for, and we must enter into thanks and praise first, before we begin asking. Jesus and Paul always began prayer by giving thanks, and their attitude was unchanging. Jesus said, "I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth ..." (Matthew 11:25). 'He took the seven loaves and the fish. He gave thanks and broke them... (Matthew 15:36). 'He took a cup and gave thanks' (Matthew 26:27). Paul said, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus ...' (Romans 1:8). 'I don't cease to give thanks ...' (Ephesians 1:16). 'We give thanks to God the Father through Jesus ...' (Colossians 1:3). Giving thanks can release the greatest miracles. When Jesus fed the 5,000 men plus women and children, a total of about 10,000 people, He first gave thanks (John 6:11). It is not recorded that Jesus prayed; it is written that He simply gave thanks, and He is our example. John 11:41 says again that Jesus gave thanks before raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus didn't specifically pray, He just gave thanks. In Luke 17:12 to 19, Jesus healed ten lepers of their terrible disease. He noticed only one of the ten lepers returned to give thanks. Nine were healed of the disease of leprosy, but the one who returned to give thanks was made whole, or in other words, the dreadful effects of the leprosy had disappeared and he was saved from eternal death too;

something the other nine missed out on. The difference was giving thanks. In our own lives, we need to give thanks for blessings already received.

Prayer of repentance that encourages personal holiness. 'If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). We need to look to Jesus for guidance, not to other people, because the Lord wants to teach us individually. We need to make a conscious decision to ask the Holy Spirit for help, because we can't be holy or righteous by ourselves. He gives us the power to overcome sin. If we are to live a continuously righteous life, we need to continually confess sin and be forgiven. Once we repent and are forgiven, we need to put whatever sin we have committed behind us and not think about it nor even mention it again. Paul said: 'One thing I do; forget what lies behind and press forward to what lies ahead' (Philippians 3:13). When we take a 'sin skeleton' out of a cupboard it begins to get 'flesh and bones' and it begins to take on an appearance; as we focus on it, we begin to see ourselves as a sinner again, not as one who has been forgiven. Condemnation of self can cause us to stumble, so we need to let the past go and walk in forgiveness. 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus' (Romans 8:1).

Prayer of petition. That is specific prayer for a specific thing; a definite request. 'By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God, and God's peace which transcends all understanding, shall mount guard over your hearts and minds in Jesus' (Philippians 4:6 & 7). Even with a prayer of petition, we need to offer thanks. Petitions are usually prayers for people or situations that affect us directly. The prayer could be for the salvation of a spouse, in which case we would thank God we have a spouse. The prayer could be for a larger vehicle to accommodate a new baby, and so we would thank the Lord for the new child. That is prayer with thanksgiving.

Prayer of intercession. Intercession is the prayer for another person. One example is the prayer for an innocent person to be released from prison, after being convicted of a crime she did not commit. We may never meet the person, but God knows who they are. Another example is the prayer for a new Christian in the church, who is rather rough around the edges and has no idea how to behave like a Christian. When you are praying for someone, never point out their faults to God, but thank God for them before you pray. Only then, will you see a change in their lives and behaviour. The Holy Spirit constantly makes intercession for us (Romans 8:26 & 27). Jesus also makes intercession for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). We are told to make intercession for others (1 Timothy 2:1). Intercession is not casual prayer. It is often accompanied with deep weeping on behalf of the person we are praying for. We sometimes feel as though we have a heavy burden on our shoulders, and that will not lift until we have 'broken through' into the heavenly realm for that person. There are times when we feel what they are feeling; their distress, their anguish or their sorrow and only by praying and interceding for them, can we receive relief.

Prayer of desperation. There are certain times when God will not intervene until we come to the point of absolute desperation. That is what salvation is. Salvation is taking advantage of the only hope we have of escaping from hell. There is no other way of escape and if we don't take His way, we are lost. God waits until we meet His conditions (Isaiah 30:18 & 19). He is waiting to hear the sound of our cry. In Hebrew this word means a desperate call for help, not weepy tears. If we read about Jonah the prophet in the book of Jonah, we read how God wanted him to go Nineveh and preach to the people there. Back then, Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. God told Jonah to go East, but instead of obeying God, he went West. Notice that from the moment Jonah ran away from

God, every step he took was a step downwards. He went down to Joppa, then down into the ship, then he went down from the ship into the depths of the sea. After spending three days in the belly of a large fish that the Lord had prepared, he cried out to God in absolute desperation. Jonah 2:1 to 9, records the prayer of Jonah in the fish's belly. At first nothing in Jonah's circumstances changed until Jonah changed the way he prayed. Verse 9 says he gave a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and then the Lord spoke to the fish and the fish vomited Jonah up onto dry land. It wasn't praying and crying out that changed Jonah's circumstances, it was thanks. If you are in a difficult situation and have cried out to God and have prayed with all your heart, try thanking Him in advance for the answer you are hoping for and expecting to receive.

Prayer involving God's timing. In Jonah's dire situation, his prayer was answered almost immediately. If the Lord had not answered his cries for help, Jonah would have died and the job set before him would not have been carried out, so that was a life or death situation. When our lives are not at risk, thanking the Lord does not always bring immediate results. If we are waiting on God for an answer to prayer, sometimes we need to wait for His timing, no matter how much we pray, cry, thank, plead and sigh. Sarah had to wait until she was 90 before the Lord allowed her to have her first baby. In those days a girl was marriageable age long before she was 20, but even if Sarah was married at that age, she still waited 70 adult years for Isaac! In fact Sarah waited so long, she had gone beyond believing it possible, and laughed when she heard the angel tell Abraham that his wife Sarah would have a baby (Genesis 18:10 to 12). Even after Isaac was born, Sarah could hardly believe it (Genesis 21:6 & 7). Sometimes we need to wait years and more years before the Lord will answer our prayers, petitions and intercessions, both for ourselves and for other people. Other times we need to realise that God will never, ever override a person's own free will. If we are praying for the salvation of a family member for example, that person has to want to come to God. We can pray in desperation until we turn blue, but if that person stubbornly refuses salvation, then even God Himself will not force them. It has to be their choice. All we can do is keep praying, hoping and thanking. Sometimes we have to stop asking and start trusting God in the situation, and let it go.

Prayer with faith. The principle is, faith without works is useless. The 'works' here, is our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (James 2:17 to 22). Faith must be accompanied by action and that action can sometimes be just thanks, or it can be a task. Thanking God is the simplest way of expressing our faith in Him. When we pray without thanking God, it is faith without works. We only need a tiny bit of faith. 'For truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed ... nothing will be impossible to you' (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6). 'The prayer of faith will heal those who are sick' (James 5:15). The task here may be the laying on of hands. Another example is, if we need employment, we first pray in faith, then the task may be then to go out and look. If we loose our wallet, we pray in faith for the Lord to help us locate it, then we would return to the place where we last saw it. Just asking for employment or asking for the return of our wallet in faith is useless unless we do the 'work' necessary.

Prayer with the right motives and the right attitude. 'You ask and do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives' (James 4:3). Praying with selfish motives will get us nowhere. For example, if we ask the Lord for something fancy just so we can keep up with the neighbours, it is likely we it will not happen. If we pray with the wrong attitude to God, He will not hear us. 'In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up definite, special petitions and supplications with tears ... and He was heard because of His reverence before God' (Hebrews 5:7). We need to have an uncomplaining attitude and scripture has some solemn warnings about grumbling. 'Do all things without grumbling, faultfinding and

complaining against God and questioning amongst yourselves; that you may show yourselves blameless, innocent children of God' (Philippians 2:14 & 15). If we are to be real children of God, blameless and pure, we will have to learn to do everything without complaining. All the things that happened to Israel was recorded as examples for us. 'We should not tempt the Lord as some of them did – and were killed by snakes. Nor discontentedly complain as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel. All these things ... were written to admonish us for right action' (1 Corinthians 10:9 to 11). What the Lord did to punish the grumblers, the Lord may do to us; we are not to grumble and complain if we want answers to our prayers.

Aggressive prayer. That is praying day and night with fasting. 'She did not go out from the temple enclosure, but was worshipping night and day with fasting and prayer' (Luke 2:37). This elderly lady named Anna, denied herself both sleep and food and was rewarded by being able to see the Salvation of Israel. When Jesus died and rose again, He triumphed over everything that was lost by the foolish actions of Adam. Our battle was won by Jesus when He disarmed the principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15). When we pray aggressively, we need to pray with reverence to God, yet with strong aggression, using the name of Jesus, speaking firmly through the mouth. Just as Jesus always spoke firmly and audibly, so must we. We can't pray aggressively by just thinking about it. Jesus said sometimes we need to pray and fast before a prayer will be answered (Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29). There are people who think shouting is aggressive prayer. If it works for them and shouting gets results by building their faith, so be it, but shouting at God is not really necessary. If we follow the examples of Jesus; He spoke audibly, He spoke simply, He got straight to the point, He spoke with authority, He prayed with the right attitude and it always worked.

Praying within God's will. We must always pray within the will of God. If we pray in the will of God, we know already that our prayer has been heard and answered. 'This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, in agreement with His own plans, He listens to us. If we know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests made to Him' (1 John 5:14 & 15). That is if we after seeking His will. If we pray, no matter how honourably, out of God's will, we will never see the answer. If we are praying out of the will of God, then it really does not matter how much we believe for something, it will not happen. That also includes prayers of a busybody. For example, we may know of two lovely young people in the church who we think would be perfect for each other, and so we pray for them to be married. If it is not the will of God for those two people to be together, then we are praying incorrectly. That is a 'busybody' prayer, because it is none of our business who marries whom.

Harmonising in the Spirit can be a powerful weapon in prayer. 'I tell you, if two of you on earth agree, that is to harmonise, or make a symphony together, about whatever they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven. For whenever two or three are gathered or drawn together, as My followers in My name, there I am in the midst of them' (Matthew 18:19). When Jesus said, 'If two of you shall agree', He meant harmony in the spirit, not intellectual agreement. 'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (Romans 8:14). Believers who are led by the Holy Spirit can gather together in His name. The exercise of spiritual authority depends on the leading of the Holy Spirit and being in complete harmony with one another. If there is discord among those gathered, their prayers will not have the power needed to 'move mountains'.

Prayers for binding and loosing. We need first to understand exactly what that means. Binding can mean to literally tie or bind up, or it can mean to declare unlawful or improper.

'Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven' (Matthew 16:19; 18:18). The moment it is bound on earth, it is bound in heaven. When it is loosed on earth, it is immediately loosed in heaven. To put this more fully, we could say, 'Whatever we declare to be improper, and therefore forbid on earth, is already forbidden in heaven. Whatever we declare to be proper and permit on earth, is already permitted in heaven'. Binding and loosing covers any situation we can think of. If some are still unsure about binding and loosing, here is an example of how those prayers can be used. We will speak about a hypothetical violent, unsaved husband, we'll call Joe. His wife could pray, "Lord, I bind that violent spirit in Joe, and I loose Joe into the Kingdom of God." So the violent spirit (not Joe) is declared unlawful, is not permitted to continue and is bound and thus made inactive; then Joe is declared lawful and is permitted or loosed into the joy of salvation. The wife's prayer of binding and loosing, results in Joe being delivered and born-again into heaven.

The other binding means to tie up. 'How can a person go into a strong man's house and carry off his goods without first binding the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house' (Matthew 12:29). 'When the strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his belongings are undisturbed. But when One stronger than he attacks and conquers him, He robs him of his whole armour on which he had relied and divides up the spoils' (Luke 11:21 & 22). When Jesus died and rose again, He defeated the 'strong man' and took from the devil all the armoury on which he had relied, leaving the devil an unarmed enemy. As Christians, we now have the armour and Jesus divided the spoils. Jesus took everything the devil had to use against us, and Jesus handed it all to us and now we have authority over the devil. However, we have to use what Jesus has given us, and sometimes that calls for us to first bind the strongman. Our prayers are good but will sometimes not be effective unless we first bind the strongman. We can't take away his goods until we have bound him and we need to learn how to bind him. Jesus is the One Who defeated the devil – all we have to do is administer that defeat. When God gives us the responsibility of ministry, we may need to deal with the strongman, which is the devil's delegated representative to watch over the devil's interests in any given situation. We are dependent on a word of knowledge – a revelation from God, to tell us what strongman is holding each person captive. One example of this is found in Daniel chapter 10. The evil Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece represented the interests in those two empires. Before the answer to Daniel could come, the strongman over Persia had to be overcome by the angel and Michael, the heavenly Prince (or guardian) of Israel (Daniel 10:21). There was no way around the Prince of Persia; he had to be defeated. Just as the strongman over ancient Persia had to be defeated, so too does the strongman over more modern nations.

Every race, people and area has their own 'strongman'. Just look at the negative influence coming from Hollywood and the movie studios there. Almost every modern movie has violence, witchcraft, murder or illicit sex woven within its theme. That is unquestionably an evil strongman. The Christians who live in that area should bind the strongman, take authority and pray against those movies that are negatively influencing our youth and therefore our world for the worse. If we look at the high infant mortality, the alcoholism, the awful illnesses, the violence and the seeming hopelessness of some Australian Aborigines, American and Canadian Indians, Africans, Hispanics, New Zealand Maoris, New Guinea natives, Haitians and other native tribes around the world, we can see a strongman working amongst them to keep them oppressed, sick and dying young. Christians need to pray for these people, bind the strongman in their nations or areas, and reach out and show them God's love. They need to hear the Gospel and know they can have the hope of salvation. Jesus died for them too. Some of these tribes still engage in ancestor worship and have witch-doctors, which is a form of witchcraft, something God

hates. If these tribes would turn to God, stop their ancestor worship and other forms of witchcraft, they would be stronger, healthier, joyful and have the hope of salvation. God loves the people, but hates their sin. Their practices are what God calls wicked, and some tribes have been forced from their lands because of their wickedness. 'It is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them ... because of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord our God is driving them out' (Deuteronomy 9:4 & 5). Those nations written about in Deuteronomy were involved in witchcraft, idol worship and other evil practices and were driven from their lands as a result. How can we explain the evil power behind the mafia, triads, freemasons, motorcycle gangs, atheistic communist countries etc, except that they each have their own 'strongman' which needs to be bound and overcome, then we can reap the 'spoils' of seeing them born-again and loosed into the Kingdom of God. People are merely the playthings or puppets of these evil, invisible strongmen, but once we realise that and take authority over them, cut the strings, then we have total victory. Once the strongman is really dealt with, in all of the above situations, we can walk in and take hold of the people by their hands and lead them into the Kingdom.

Okay now, on to the next type of prayer. There is **specific, directed, persistent prayers** given by the Holy Spirit. There are times when the Lord Himself will ask us to pray for a specific individual or situation. Sometimes the Lord will use the most mundane item to achieve a victorious result. An example of that can be found in Joshua 8:18. 'The Lord said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give the city into your hand'." The outstretched spear had no military significance at all; it was wholly spiritual. Joshua pointed the spear from the onset of the battle until the victory had been totally won (verse 24 & 26). That was persistent, unwavering directed prayer. We also need to pray specifically and directly towards the problem. Be specific and unwavering and don't give up till you have won the battle. If we win the victory in the spiritual realm, it will be worked out in the natural. It is useless to pray vaguely, "God bless all our missionaries." We need to pray specifically for each missionary by name until they return from the mission field. Or, "Bless our leadership, Lord." That is no good either. Our church leaders all have names, as do their spouses. We need to pray for each person, by name, who is in leadership in our home church. They are in the 'front lines' in the battle for souls, and need to be upheld constantly in prayer. After all, if it were not for the leadership, we wouldn't have a church! It is God Who chooses our leaders; He puts them in the position they are in and we need to accept God's choice and sovereignty. The responsibility of Christians is to pray for their governments in all levels, but we need to ask the Lord to give us the prayer that is His will. If we have a 'dodgy' person in government, we can legally pray for the Lord to put down an unrighteous Member of Parliament and lift up one more righteous, because God is the Judge (Psalm 75:7). He removes kings and sets up kings (Daniel 2:21). 'He who walks uprightly walks securely, but he who talks a crooked way shall be found out and punished' (Proverbs 10:9). We need to pray specifically, by name for each person we pray for and not be vague.

Here is one true example of specific, directed, persistent prayer. 'Who shut up the sea when it broke forth ... and marked it for My appointed boundary ... and said "Thus far shall you come and no further; and here shall you be stayed"' (Job 38:8, 10 & 11). Many years ago, committed men of God prayed this prayer to halt the spread of communism around the world. Communism halted, faltered and is in decline. We can pray this prayer, with aggression and persistence, to stop the spread of Islam and terrorism around the world. Let us now pray for the spirit of Islam to be bound around the world, and the poor people who are deceived by that spirit to be loosed into the Kingdom of God. Jesus died for them too. They need hope. O Lord, thus far and no further, shall the spread of Islam go. We bind the spirit of Islam in the mighty name of Jesus, and loose those lost souls into the

Kingdom of God, for Your glory. Amen. Let us persistently pray this prayer until we see results and the evil spread of Islam is in decline. It happened with communism and it can happen with false religions too.

For those who feel as though God is not answering their prayers, there are a few things we have to consider when praying. (1) Have we met all God's conditions; is our life right with God; is there sin lurking there in secret; have we been obedient?

(2) Have we considered the possibility our prayer may not be God's will? Only when we pray in God's will, are our prayers answered.

(3) Is God trying to use that situation to purify us and make us ready for the Kingdom of God? That means He will answer our prayer – after He has dealt with something deep in our lives.

(4) Is God's timing involved? Our prayers may be spot on, but the timing may be out.

(5) Is our prayer selfish? We will not have selfish or carnal prayers answered.

(6) Is our attitude to God right? If we berate Him for not answering our prayers when we want them answered, He will certainly made us wait longer. Plus, we must never grumble.

(7) Do we have unforgiveness in our hearts? God will withhold prayer if there is any unforgiveness.

(8) For the men. If you are violent or unkind towards your wife, that will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:7).

For counsellors. When people come to you with problems, don't feel sorry for them. Feel empathy and compassion, but not pity or sympathy. Compassion and sympathy are very different. Sympathy says, 'Ohh, poor you'. Compassion says, 'I will have mercy when you submit to God and change'. Counsellors need to counsel from nothing but the Bible, so it would be better to toss out all the books on psychology and the like, and speak the Word of God into their lives; it's alive and like a two edged sword. Hours are wasted trying to counsel people who are not willing to change. The Holy Spirit is our Counsellor and our Comforter, and we need to show people how to tap into the Water of Life that flows from God above. God will not intervene and answer prayer until He sees His people yield to Him. No one can deliver us from the hand of God when He is disciplining us. We have to come to the point of total submission and He is absolutely in control. For example, there may be an area of sin in their lives that only God knows about and they need to submit to God, then the Holy Spirit will put His finger on that area and the person will be delivered. 'If I by the Spirit of God ...' (Matthew 12:28). 'If I by the Finger of God ...' (Luke 11:20). That tells us the Finger of God is the Spirit of God. When the Holy Spirit touches something in our lives, He puts his finger right on the spot where the sin is. Once that is dealt with, prayers are answered.

Another thing about prayer that many people do not realise is this: we have to obey God – He does not have to obey us. We are here to serve Him; He is not there to serve us.

Amen and God bless you.

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