

Prayer That Pleases God

Series 1-10

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### **Praying with Power: Introduction – When Prayer Becomes a Weapon and a Witness**

There is a kind of prayer that reaches past the rafters and into the throne room.

It does not stumble in weakness—it storms forward in faith.

It does not beg like a slave—it petitions like a son.

It is not driven by routine, ritual, or religion—it is driven by **revelation** and **relationship**.

This is not the prayer of shallow tradition.

This is not the kind of prayer we toss at heaven in crisis and forget in comfort.

This is not “God is great, God is good” murmured out of habit.

This is **prayer that moves heaven and changes earth**.

This is **praying with power**.

### **A Powerless Church in a Perishing World**

We live in a generation that knows how to **host events**, **broadcast sermons**, and **organize religious activity**, but has forgotten how to **pray with power**.

We’ve mastered sound systems but lost our sense of spiritual soundness.

We can gather crowds without ever shaking the gates of hell.

Our churches are filled with noise, but the upper rooms are empty.

What the world needs is not more celebrity preachers, polished services, or clever branding.

What the world needs...

What the Church needs...

What **you** and **I** need...

Is a return to **prayer that pleases God**—

And prayer that **brings power from God**.

## What Is Praying with Power?

Praying with power is not about volume—it's about **authority**.

It's not about emotion—it's about **unction**.

It's not about convincing God to bend to our will—it's about **yielding to His**, and watching Him do what only He can do.

Praying with power is when the fire of heaven meets the faith of earth.

It's when the veil is torn in our hearts as surely as it was torn in the temple.

It's when we enter not with trembling guilt but with boldness, washed in the blood of Christ, and filled with the Holy Ghost.

It is **the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous** that avails much (James 5:16).

It is the kind of prayer that silences demons, heals bodies, breaks addictions, revives dead marriages, restores wayward children, and pushes back the darkness in cities and nations.

## A Prayerless Christian Is a Powerless Christian

Elijah was not a superhero.

Peter was not a seminary graduate.

The upper room was not a cathedral—it was a closet of desperation.

What did they have in common?

They **prayed**, not with shallow words, but with surrendered hearts.

And the heavens answered with **power**.

We say we want revival—but do we pray like it?

We say we believe in miracles—but do we tarry long enough for God to move?

We've grown used to lifeless altars, dry prayer meetings, and powerless preaching.

But the God who answered by fire has not retired.

The God who parted seas, raised the dead, and opened prison doors still sits on the throne.

He's not looking for performers.

He's not waiting on influencers.

He's searching for **intercessors**, for **priests**, for **watchmen**, for **those who dare to believe that prayer still works**.

## What to Expect in This Series

In this 10-part series, we're going to **dismantle weak, flesh-driven notions of prayer** and rebuild a biblical understanding of what it means to **pray with power**. You're going to learn:

- Why **prayer must be fueled by faith** (James 1:5–7, Hebrews 11:6)
- How **purity** opens the channel (Psalm 66:18, 1 John 1:9)
- What it means to **pray in the Spirit** (Jude 1:20, Romans 8:26)
- Why **persistence matters** (Luke 18:1, Daniel 10:12–13)
- How to pray **bold prayers that glorify God** (John 14:13, Acts 4:31)
- And what kind of fruit powerful prayer produces—**revival, transformation, and the impossible made visible**

This is not about theory. This is about access.

This is about the **open heaven that belongs to every blood-bought believer**—and how to step into it.

## If You've Been Spiritually Dry...

If you've been praying but seeing no results...

If you've lost confidence that God hears you...

If you've slipped into religious habits and neglected the fire...

This series is for you.

You don't need a new method—you need a new **moment** in the presence of God.

You don't need new vocabulary—you need **bold, believing, broken intercession**.

You can live with answered prayer.

You can walk in authority.

You can be known in heaven and feared in hell.

But it starts on your knees.

## Let the Fire Fall Again

The early church didn't have buildings, budgets, or broadcasting—but they had **power**.  
They didn't have cultural approval or political clout—but they had **an open line to heaven**.

They were filled with the Spirit, full of the Word, and fervent in prayer.

And they turned the world upside down.

That's not history. That's the **model**.

So in this series, let's cast off formality and fear.

Let's break out of dead routine and powerless praying.

Let's return to the upper room.

Let's return to the fire.

Let's return to the God who still answers—when His people **pray with power**.

Because when the Church gets off her stage and back on her knees...

**Hell trembles.**

**Heaven opens.**

**And God is glorified.**

## **1 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – The Heart Behind the Prayer**

### **Introduction: The Throne Room Test**

Not every prayer reaches heaven. That may shock some, but Scripture is clear: God is not impressed with the eloquence of our words or the length of our petitions. What moves the heart of God is the heart behind the prayer. The throne room of heaven is not accessed through formality or religious routine but by a spirit of brokenness, humility, and sincerity. As Hebrews 4:16 invites, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.” But boldness is not arrogance—it is confidence grounded in grace and clothed in humility.

In this opening essay of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we lay the foundation. Before we explore how to pray, or what to say, or even who to pray for, we must understand **what kind of heart God delights in when His children pray**. Because if the heart is wrong, even the most beautiful words will fall flat.

## 1. The Prayer God Hears vs. the Prayer God Hates

The Bible reveals two contrasting types of prayer: one that pleases God and one that disgusts Him. The difference is not always visible to man but is always clear to God. Consider Jesus' parable in Luke 18:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.”  
– *Luke 18:10*

The Pharisee, full of pride, thanks God that he's “not as other men.” He brags about his fasting and tithing. The publican, on the other hand, won't even lift his eyes to heaven. He smites his chest and says, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus delivers the verdict:

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other...”  
– *Luke 18:14*

This simple story shatters religious pretense. It shows that God despises arrogant, self-righteous prayer—even when it's outwardly religious. What pleases Him is humility, repentance, and faith. That's the heart behind the prayer that reaches the throne.

## 2. Woe to Them That Cover – The False Coverings of Religion

In Isaiah 30:1, the Lord declares:

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin.”

Many use prayer as a spiritual “covering” but not a spiritual *connection*. They say prayers, recite phrases, or repeat mantras as if that earns points with heaven. But God sees through coverings that are not of His Spirit.

Lucifer himself was a “covering cherub” (Ezekiel 28:14). He knew how to mimic glory, how to cover things with false light. Today, Satan loves to use religion as a veil—covering people in self-righteousness so they never reach true repentance.

Jesus said:

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”  
– *Matthew 15:8*

The mouth says one thing, the heart says another. And God listens to the heart.

## 3. The Broken and Contrite Spirit – God's Delight

David understood this truth deeply. After committing adultery and murder, he cried out in Psalm 51:

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

– *Psalm 51:17*

It’s not the ritual that moves God—it’s the **remorse**. Not empty words, but honest repentance. Not tradition, but truth in the inward parts.

In fact, when David prays this, he’s essentially saying: “Lord, I know burnt offerings are required, but I also know that what You really want is my brokenness.”

This is a critical lesson: **God is more pleased with a trembling heart than with trembling hands**. The altar of heaven is not fueled by performance, but by purity of motive.

#### 4. Vain Repetition vs. Persistent Passion

One of the most misunderstood teachings about prayer is Jesus’ warning in Matthew 6:

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

– *Matthew 6:7*

Jesus is not condemning persistent prayer. In fact, in Luke 18:1, He teaches “men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” The key difference is the word **vain**.

“Vain repetition” is prayer that is mechanical, empty, and faithless. It is religious performance. But **passionate persistence** is prayer that is heartfelt, honest, and hopeful. Elijah prayed seven times for rain—but each time was real. Jesus prayed three times in Gethsemane—each time in agony.

God is not annoyed by repetition. He is repelled by **vain** repetition.

#### 5. The God Who Weighs the Spirit

Proverbs 16:2 teaches:

“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.”

That means God evaluates not just what we do, but **why we do it**. The motives behind our actions are as important to Him as the actions themselves.

You can pray for someone to be healed—and inwardly want recognition.  
You can pray for a spouse—and inwardly idolize marriage more than God.  
You can even pray for revival—and secretly desire a platform.

God sees all of it. He weighs the spirit.

That’s why some prayers, even if technically correct, do not please God. They are not offered in the spirit of worship, but in the flesh of ambition or pride. That’s why James wrote:

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”  
– *James 4:3*

## **6. Humility Before Honor – The Posture of Pleasing Prayer**

The most powerful prayers in Scripture often come from the most **humble postures**:

- Moses falling on his face (Numbers 16:22)
- Daniel confessing with fasting and sackcloth (Daniel 9:3)
- Hannah weeping silently in bitterness of soul (1 Samuel 1:10)
- The leper kneeling before Jesus, saying “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Mark 1:40)

None of these prayers were long. Few were articulate. But all were heard.

Humility is the doorway to heaven. 1 Peter 5:6 says:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”

Prideful prayers hit the ceiling. Humble prayers break through.

## **7. What About the Boldness?**

We are told to come “boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16), but boldness does not cancel humility. True boldness is not presumption—it’s confidence in God’s character.

A child can boldly ask their father for help—not because they are entitled, but because they are secure in their father’s love. Likewise, when we pray with boldness, we are not demanding our way—we are trusting His.

Jesus prayed boldly at Lazarus' tomb, but with full confidence in His Father. Elijah called down fire, but only after soaking the altar with water in faith. Boldness is not yelling. It's not arrogance. It's **faith in the Father's will and Word**.

## 8. God Looks on the Heart – Always

When Samuel was sent to anoint the next king, he saw Jesse's strong sons and assumed they were God's pick. But the Lord corrected him:

“Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

– *1 Samuel 16:7*

This applies directly to prayer. You may feel like your words are weak. You may stumble or weep or not know what to say. But if your heart is right—God hears it.

You may not sound like a preacher. You may not know all the verses. But if your prayer comes from a heart that loves, trusts, and fears the Lord—it pleases Him.

## 9. When God is Displeased with Prayer

There are also times when God explicitly says He will not hear:

“When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”

– *Isaiah 1:15*

And in Psalm 66:18:

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

These verses are not saying God's ears are defective—they're saying **sin blocks communication**. The sin may not be public, but even hidden iniquity cherished in the heart can silence heaven.

This is why confession and humility are essential. If we approach God while knowingly holding onto sin, bitterness, or disobedience, we should not expect our prayers to please Him.

## **10. The Example of Jesus – Perfect Prayer, Perfect Heart**

Jesus is our model. He always prayed in alignment with the Father. His prayers were marked by:

- **Submission** – “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42)
- **Thanksgiving** – “I thank thee, O Father” (Matthew 11:25)
- **Intercession** – “Father, forgive them...” (Luke 23:34)
- **Communion** – “I know that thou hearest me always” (John 11:42)

Even in His greatest agony, His heart was pure, surrendered, and faithful. If you want to know what pleases the Father, look at the prayers of the Son.

### **Conclusion: The Heart Is the Altar**

In the Old Testament, incense represented prayer (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8). But for that incense to rise, it had to be burned—set on fire on the altar. So too, your prayers must come from a burning heart—a heart lit with love, purified with repentance, and centered on God's will.

Don't worry about your vocabulary. Don't try to impress God with theological terms. Instead, bow your heart.

Let it be broken. Let it be honest. Let it be trusting.

**That** is the prayer that pleases God.

## **2 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Teach Us to Pray: Learning from the Model of Jesus**

### **Introduction: The Most Important Question Ever Asked**

In all the time the disciples spent walking with Jesus—watching Him calm storms, heal the sick, raise the dead, and confound religious rulers—they never asked Him, “Teach us to preach,” or “Teach us to perform miracles.” They asked Him one thing:

**“Lord, teach us to pray...”**

– *Luke 11:1*

Why? Because they saw something in Jesus' prayer life that no religious system or synagogue had ever shown them before. His prayers carried **power, intimacy, and authority**. He prayed as one who truly knew the Father. And they wanted that.

What Jesus gave them in response was not just a **script** to be repeated endlessly, but a **spiritual framework** that teaches us how to approach God in a way that pleases Him.

## 1. The Setting: A Rabbi Who Prayed Differently

Luke 11:1 sets the scene:

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

The disciples had seen plenty of prayer before. Pharisees prayed in public squares. Priests prayed in the temple. But Jesus' prayers were different. They weren't performance—they were **personal**. He wasn't reciting—He was **communing**. They watched as the Son of God poured His heart out to the Father in ways no man ever had.

They didn't ask for a method. They asked for a **relationship**. And Jesus was eager to show them.

## 2. The Lord's Prayer Is a Pattern, Not a Formula

Many have turned the Lord's Prayer into a rote recital, but Jesus specifically warned against **vain repetitions** right before He gave it:

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do...”

– *Matthew 6:7*

Then He gives the model prayer—not as something to be **mindlessly repeated**, but as something to be **deeply understood and sincerely followed**.

Jesus said:

“After this manner therefore pray ye...”

– *Matthew 6:9*

That phrase “after this manner” means **"in this way"**, not "with these exact words." This is a **template** for prayer—a divine outline of how to approach the Father with reverence, submission, need, and spiritual focus.

### 3. “Our Father Which Art in Heaven” – Relationship and Reverence

Jesus begins:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

– *Matthew 6:9*

This is radical. Jesus didn’t say, “Oh distant God of the cosmos.” He said “**Father.**” That one word transforms the nature of prayer. We don’t approach God as peasants begging a king—we come as **children approaching our Father.**

But He also says, “which art in heaven.” This reminds us that though God is close like a Father, He is also holy and exalted.

Then, “Hallowed be thy name”—this is reverence. To hallow means to honor as holy. Before we ask for anything, we acknowledge who He is: holy, pure, above all. True prayer doesn’t rush to requests. It begins with **adoration.**

### 4. “Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done” – Surrender and Submission

Next comes the aligning of priorities:

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

– *Matthew 6:10*

Prayer that pleases God isn’t about getting our will done in heaven. It’s about getting **His will done on earth.** This part of the prayer is about surrender.

- We are surrendering our **agenda.**
- We are aligning with His **kingdom** purposes.
- We are acknowledging that our desires must bend to His sovereign will.

In heaven, His will is done **perfectly, immediately, and joyfully.** We pray that we would reflect the same attitude on earth. This line crushes pride and births obedience.

### 5. “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” – Dependence and Trust

Jesus teaches us to pray for **daily provision,** not monthly stockpiles:

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

– *Matthew 6:11*

This reminds us of Israel in the wilderness, gathering manna every morning. If they tried to hoard it, it spoiled. God was teaching them to trust Him **one day at a time**.

In this request:

- We acknowledge God as our **Provider**.
- We learn to depend on Him for **physical and spiritual nourishment**.
- We resist anxiety by focusing on today, not tomorrow (cf. Matthew 6:34).

This line teaches contentment, simplicity, and daily dependence. It pushes back against fear and self-sufficiency.

## 6. “Forgive Us Our Debts” – Repentance and Release

The next line exposes the heart:

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

– *Matthew 6:12*

Prayer is a place of **repentance**. Not condemnation, but confession. Jesus is teaching us to come clean daily. As 1 John 1:9 says:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us...”

But this line also includes a test: “as we forgive our debtors.” That’s heavy. We are asking God to treat our sins the way we treat others’ offenses. If we withhold forgiveness, are we really praying this prayer?

Unforgiveness blocks effective prayer (Mark 11:25). This portion teaches that **prayer is not just vertical—it’s horizontal**. If you want clean fellowship with God, you must walk in grace toward others.

## 7. “Lead Us Not Into Temptation” – Guidance and Protection

This line guards the soul:

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

– *Matthew 6:13*

God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13), but He allows tests. Here, we're asking Him for **guidance away from snares** and **protection from the enemy**.

This is spiritual vigilance:

- **Lead us** – We want His direction.
- **Not into temptation** – Keep us from paths that feed our flesh.
- **Deliver us from evil** – Rescue us from the enemy's traps.

We are recognizing that **without His help, we are weak**. Prayer is warfare, and this line is about putting on the armor (Ephesians 6:11) before we enter the battlefield of the day.

## 8. "For Thine Is the Kingdom" – Praise and Perspective

Though some manuscripts omit this doxology, it aligns with Scripture's spirit:

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Here, we end where we began—with **praise**. This reaffirms:

- God is **sovereign** – "Thine is the kingdom"
- God is **mighty** – "Thine is the power"
- God is **worthy** – "Thine is the glory"

This helps us zoom out. After asking for daily needs and spiritual strength, we close in awe. The focus returns to Him.

## 9. Jesus' Own Prayer Life – A Pattern of Priorities

Jesus not only gave us a model prayer—He lived it. His prayer life was constant, disciplined, and passionate.

### Luke 5:16 – He Withdrew to Pray

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."

Jesus sought solitude. He disconnected from crowds to reconnect with the Father. If the Son of God needed alone time with God, how much more do we?

### Mark 1:35 – He Prayed Early

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

Before the sun rose, Jesus was already seeking God. Before the day made demands, He prioritized communion. That’s a blueprint for us. Seek Him **first**.

### **Hebrews 5:7 – He Prayed Fervently**

“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...”

Jesus prayed with **intensity, emotion, and surrender**. This wasn’t lukewarm, dry religion. This was real. Authentic. Passionate.

## **10. Reverence, Submission, Petition, and Vigilance – The Four Movements**

Let’s summarize the spiritual framework in the Lord’s Prayer:

### **1. Reverence – “Hallowed be thy name”**

Begin with worship. Acknowledge who God is before you ask what He can do.

### **2. Submission – “Thy will be done”**

Align with His purposes. Prayer isn’t manipulation—it’s **yielding**.

### **3. Petition – “Give us this day...”**

Ask boldly but humbly. Trust Him with today’s needs and tomorrow’s unknowns.

### **4. Vigilance – “Lead us not into temptation...”**

Pray defensively. Stay spiritually alert and dependent on His guidance.

This is the rhythm that pleases God. It’s not about words—it’s about **worship, will, wisdom, and warfare**.

## **11. Teach Us Still, Lord**

Though this model prayer is nearly 2,000 years old, its truths are eternal. The disciples needed to be taught—and so do we. Our flesh forgets. Our minds wander. Our prayers become mechanical.

But if we return to this pattern, and pray **with the Spirit and the understanding also** (1 Corinthians 14:15), we'll find ourselves walking in a rhythm of prayer that pleases God.

Let your prayer begin not with your problems—but with His person.

Let it continue not with your demands—but with your surrender.

Let it not end in fear—but in worship and confidence.

### **Conclusion: A Classroom of One**

Imagine that moment—Jesus kneeling in the quiet, eyes lifted to heaven. The disciples watching in awe. One finally asks, “Lord, teach us to pray...”

Jesus smiles.

And He still smiles today when you ask Him the same.

Because He's not looking for professionals. He's not grading your grammar. He's not impressed with your religious vocabulary.

He's looking for **worshippers in spirit and truth**.

So open your heart. Follow the pattern. And say it with sincerity:

“Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name...”

He's listening.

And if your heart is in it—that prayer pleases Him.

### **3 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Thy Will Be Done: Submitting to God in Prayer**

#### **Introduction: When Desire and Surrender Collide**

Prayer is not a means to twist God's arm or manipulate heaven into granting our wishes. True prayer, the kind that pleases God, is not about achieving **our will** in heaven—it's about **yielding to His will** on earth.

Nowhere is this truth more powerfully displayed than in the words of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane:

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

— *Luke 22:42*

That single sentence captures the essence of surrendered prayer. The Son of God, perfect and sinless, expressed a deep desire to avoid the impending agony of the cross. Yet, He bowed to the higher plan of the Father. His heart was real. His emotions were honest. And His obedience was absolute.

In a generation that often views prayer as a blank check or vending machine, this lesson is critical. Prayer that pleases God is prayer that says, “**Thy will be done.**” This essay explores what it means to pray like that—especially when our desires run deep.

## 1. Jesus in Gethsemane: The Ultimate Example of Submission

Let us begin in the olive press of Gethsemane.

“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

— *Luke 22:42*

In this single moment, we witness the collision of **human desire** and **divine obedience**. Jesus, fully God yet fully man, faced the overwhelming dread of becoming sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21), enduring separation from the Father, and drinking the full wrath of God on the cross.

He did not pretend the cup was pleasant. He asked for it to pass—if the Father was willing.

But then came the word that shifts all of heaven:

**"Nevertheless..."**

That word is the bridge between **honest request** and **holy surrender**. It acknowledges the pain but exalts the purpose. It confesses weakness but chooses obedience.

This is the prayer of a Son in perfect alignment with the Father, and it must become the prayer of every believer.

## 2. Misused Verses: The Dangers of Detached Promises

In a world saturated with prosperity teaching and shallow faith formulas, it's common to hear verses like Matthew 21:22 thrown around carelessly:

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

— *Matthew 21:22*

This is often used as a divine guarantee—as though God is obligated to say “yes” if we just believe hard enough. But such interpretations miss both **context** and **the character of God**.

Let’s consider three key problems with how this verse is often misused:

### **A. It Ignores God’s Sovereignty**

Prayer is not an act of control—it’s an act of **cooperation** with God’s purposes. The idea that we can demand anything we want, and God must obey, turns the **Creator into a servant** and the **servant into a master**.

Jesus taught us to pray:

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...”

— *Matthew 6:10*

God answers prayers that align with **His will**. 1 John 5:14 makes this clear:

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”

### **B. It Ignores the Larger Context**

In Matthew 21, Jesus had just cursed the fig tree. The lesson wasn’t about getting whatever you want—it was about the power of **faith and authority**. It was also tied to Israel’s spiritual fruitlessness and judgment. To rip the promise out of its prophetic and symbolic context is to misrepresent the heart of the passage.

### **C. It Breeds Disappointment**

When believers are taught that faith guarantees results, they often feel **betrayed by God** when things don’t go their way. They are told, “Just believe harder,” and when that fails, they conclude that either God failed, or they failed. But the truth is simpler: **God always hears—but He doesn't always say yes**.

The mature believer learns that a **“no” from God is often a greater blessing than a “yes” from men.**

### **3. Trusting God’s Wisdom Above Our Understanding**

Surrender in prayer is only possible when we trust that **God knows better.** Our emotions fluctuate. Our perspective is limited. But God sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He is never confused, never surprised, and never unjust.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”  
— *Proverbs 3:5*

Let that verse sink in: **Lean not.**

We’re not told to throw away understanding, but to **lean on God instead of on ourselves.** When your heart says, “This makes no sense,” your spirit must still say, “But I trust You, Lord.”

This kind of trust was modeled repeatedly in Scripture.

### **4. The Power of “Nevertheless” in Prayer**

Let’s go back to Luke 22:42. That word—“Nevertheless”—might be the most powerful word in the vocabulary of surrendered prayer.

What does it imply?

- “This isn’t what I want... **Nevertheless**”
- “This will break my heart... **Nevertheless**”
- “This means pain, loss, or delay... **Nevertheless**”
- “I don’t understand... **Nevertheless**”

It is in that word that **faith triumphs over feeling.**

Some of the most effective prayers in Scripture were not the ones that changed circumstances—but the ones that changed the one praying.

A man or woman who can say **“nevertheless”** in the valley is a person whom God will use on the mountain.

## 5. Hannah: Praying Through the Pain of Barrenness

Hannah is a powerful picture of surrendered prayer.

“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.”

— *1 Samuel 1:10*

She wanted a child. She had been mocked, misunderstood, and broken. But she didn’t just vent—she **vowed**:

“O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid... then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life.”

— *1 Samuel 1:11*

That is **surrender**. She didn’t say, “Give me a child for my sake.” She said, “Give me a child, and I’ll give him back to You.”

She got her answer—not just a son, but a **prophet** (Samuel). And God was pleased with her prayer—not just because it was fervent, but because it was surrendered.

## 6. Paul: A “No” That Brought Grace

Paul, the apostle who wrote most of the New Testament and walked in extraordinary power, experienced a personal affliction he called a “thorn in the flesh.”

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.”

— *2 Corinthians 12:8*

He asked three times. He had faith. He had authority. But God said **no**.

Why?

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

— *2 Corinthians 12:9*

Paul didn’t complain. He didn’t accuse. He surrendered:

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

This is spiritual maturity. He moved from asking God to remove the thorn... to **rejoicing** that it remained. Because the pain had purpose.

Surrendered prayer brings not just relief—it brings **revelation**.

## 7. The Danger of Idolizing Our Desires

Sometimes the biggest barrier to surrender is **idolatry**. Even good things—like marriage, children, healing, ministry, or success—can become idols if we demand them above God’s will.

When we insist that God must give us a certain outcome, we make the **gift greater than the Giver**.

A surrendered heart says:

“Lord, this is what I desire... but I want **Your will** more than I want **my outcome**.”

This does not mean we don’t pray boldly. It means we pray **with open hands**.

Like Abraham placing Isaac on the altar (Genesis 22), we must be willing to lay down even our most treasured dreams.

## 8. When the Answer Is “Wait”

Surrender also includes accepting divine **delay**.

God may not say “no.” He may say, “**Not yet**.”

Consider Joseph. His dreams came from God—but they were fulfilled **decades later**, after betrayal, slavery, and imprisonment.

Consider David. He was anointed king as a youth—but spent years in caves, hunted like a criminal.

In those seasons, they learned to pray “**Thy will be done**”—**even when the promise tarried**.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time... though it tarry, wait for it.”

— *Habakkuk 2:3*

Surrendered prayer trusts **God’s calendar** more than **our clock**.

## 9. Characteristics of a Surrendered Heart in Prayer

Let’s summarize what “Thy will be done” looks like in daily practice:

1. **It seeks God's glory, not personal gain.**  
— John 14:13: "That the Father may be glorified in the Son."
2. **It prays with open hands.**  
— Willing to release anything God asks for.
3. **It trusts God's character even in confusion.**  
— Job 13:15: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
4. **It submits in private before standing in public.**  
— Jesus bowed in Gethsemane before He rose to face the cross.
5. **It believes that God's "no" is rooted in love.**  
— Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good..."

## **10. Jesus, Again: The Pattern and the Power**

We return to Jesus, because there is no greater example. His life, His prayer, His suffering—all point to one resounding principle: **Submission to the Father's will is the path to resurrection power.**

Without Gethsemane, there is no Calvary.  
Without Calvary, there is no empty tomb.  
And without surrender, there is no victory.

Jesus shows us that the greatest miracles are birthed through the deepest surrenders.

### **Conclusion: The Prayer That Brings Peace**

Surrender is not weakness—it is **strength under authority.**

To pray "Thy will be done" is to lay your Isaac on the altar.

To say "Nevertheless" is to walk into Gethsemane with trembling but trusting hands.

To let go is not to give up—it is to trust God to write a better story.

So when you kneel to pray today, you may bring your desires. Bring your tears. Bring your hope.

But when you're done pouring out your heart, don't forget the phrase that shakes the heavens:

**"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."**

Because **that** is the prayer that pleases God.

#### **4 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – The Prayer of Faith: Asking in Full Assurance**

##### **Introduction: Between Boldness and Balance**

In the Christian walk, few topics are more frequently misunderstood—or more powerfully essential—than the concept of **praying in faith**. Some treat faith like a spiritual currency: if you just “believe hard enough,” God is bound to act. Others shy away from faith-filled requests altogether, afraid of being presumptuous or disappointed. Both extremes miss the biblical balance.

The kind of faith that pleases God is neither timid nor demanding. It’s not passive and doubtful, nor arrogant and entitled. It is **humble confidence**—a settled trust that **God hears, God cares, and God will act** according to His will and His Word.

The Bible calls this the “**prayer of faith**”, and it is not reserved for spiritual elites. It is available to every believer who desires to pray with full assurance that God is both **able** and **wise**—a prayer that both trusts and yields.

Let’s explore what the prayer of faith really means, how it differs from counterfeit faith teachings, and how we can walk in this kind of confidence without crossing into presumption.

##### **1. James 1:5–7 – Faith That Asks Without Doubting**

James offers one of the clearest teachings on faith in prayer:

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally... But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea... Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

— *James 1:5–7*

The principle is simple but profound: **God gives generously**—but not to the doubting heart. Faith is not a feeling; it is a **conviction** that God is good, God is wise, and God is able.

James warns that a **wavering mind**—one that oscillates between belief and unbelief—will not receive anything. Why? Because it approaches God with instability, not trust.

Let's unpack this.

### **Faith is Confidence in God's Character**

To pray in faith is not to believe in an outcome—it is to believe in a **Person**. You may not know how God will answer, but you are certain that **He is faithful, kind, and perfect in judgment**.

### **Doubt is Not the Same as Honest Struggle**

This is crucial. Faith is not the absence of questions—it's the **refusal to let questions overrule truth**. Abraham believed God, even when it seemed impossible (Romans 4:18–21). Faith stares down the natural and chooses to stand on the supernatural.

Wavering, on the other hand, is not mere weakness—it's instability that refuses to decide if God is trustworthy.

## **2. James 5:15 – The Prayer of Faith Shall Save the Sick**

James later makes this bold declaration:

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up...”  
— *James 5:15*

This verse has been twisted by those who claim that healing is guaranteed if you just believe enough. But again, **context and consistency** are key.

Let's look at what the verse is saying—and what it's not.

### **“Shall save the sick” = Deliverance, not always healing**

The Greek word “sozo” translated here as “save” means *to deliver, preserve, or make whole*. It's often used of **spiritual salvation**, but also of **restoration** in general. This means the result of the prayer of faith may be physical healing—but it may also be spiritual revival, emotional strength, or even peaceful endurance in suffering.

### **“The Lord shall raise him up” = God decides the outcome**

It's *the Lord* who raises—not the prayer itself. The faith here is not in **the outcome**, but in **the Lord** who sovereignly acts. Faith pleases God, and sometimes He responds with immediate healing—but other times, with grace to endure.

### **Example: Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)**

Paul pleaded three times for his affliction to be removed. He had faith. He prayed in submission. But God said “No”—because His strength was made perfect in Paul's weakness. That is still a victory of faith.

### **3. Hebrews 11:6 – Without Faith, It Is Impossible to Please God**

At the heart of prayer is **relationship**, and that relationship is built on **trust**.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

— *Hebrews 11:6*

This verse gives us two pillars of pleasing prayer:

#### **A. Believe That God Is**

Not merely that He exists, but that He **is who He says He is**—holy, just, good, merciful, powerful, and wise. Faith in prayer starts with this settled knowledge of God's unchanging character.

#### **B. Believe That He Rewards Those Who Seek Him**

Faith believes that **seeking God is not in vain**. It's not the seeking of religious obligation, but of **earnest pursuit**. The reward may not always be what we asked for—but it will always be good, right, and best in God's eyes.

### **4. When Faith Falters vs. When It Grows Through Prayer**

Let's be honest—faith is not always steady. Even strong believers experience **moments of weakness**, fear, and hesitation. The good news is that God **grows faith through prayer**.

### When Faith Falters:

- **Peter on the water** – Matthew 14:30  
Peter started in faith but took his eyes off Jesus. He doubted and began to sink. Still, Jesus caught him, saying, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”
- **The man with the demon-possessed son** – Mark 9:24  
He cried out, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!” And Jesus healed his son.

God is not intimidated by trembling faith. He responds to honesty and humility.

### When Faith Grows:

- **Through remembering past faithfulness** – Psalm 77:11  
“I will remember the works of the LORD...”
- **Through meditating on God’s Word** – Romans 10:17  
“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
- **Through praying persistently** – Luke 18:1  
The parable of the persistent widow teaches us not to faint in prayer.

Faith is like a muscle—it gets stronger the more we **exercise it**, even in weakness.

## 5. Misconceptions About “Name It and Claim It”

Now we must confront a dangerous distortion of faith—the “name it and claim it” movement. This theology teaches that **whatever you desire**, if you speak it in faith, God is obligated to deliver it.

But this teaching is not just shallow—it’s **unbiblical**. Here’s why:

### A. It Treats God Like a Vending Machine

Instead of submitting to God’s will, it tries to **manipulate God’s hand**. This is not prayer—it’s spiritual witchcraft masquerading as faith.

## **B. It Ignores the Suffering of the Righteous**

Scripture is filled with godly men and women who suffered despite great faith:

- Paul was beaten and imprisoned
- Stephen was stoned
- Job lost everything
- Jesus Himself was “a man of sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3)

Were they lacking in faith? No. But their **faith was refined in affliction**, not removed from it.

## **C. It Turns Faith Into a Formula, Not Fellowship**

The prayer of faith is not a mechanical chant—it’s a **relational exchange with God**, rooted in reverence, trust, and surrender.

## **6. Faith in Alignment with God’s Word and Promises**

True faith is not blind—it is built on the **sure foundation of God’s revealed will**.

**Faith is not believing for what God never said—faith is believing what God already said.**

When we pray **in alignment with His Word**, our faith is anchored.

Here are some trustworthy promises we can pray in faith:

- **Forgiveness** – 1 John 1:9  
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful...”
- **Wisdom** – James 1:5  
“Let him ask of God... and it shall be given him.”
- **Peace** – Philippians 4:6–7  
“The peace of God... shall keep your hearts and minds...”
- **Strength** – Isaiah 40:29  
“He giveth power to the faint...”

These are not “if-I-claim-it” promises. They are **God’s heart revealed**, and faith receives them with reverence, not arrogance.

## **7. Jesus: The Author and Finisher of Our Faith**

Jesus didn’t just teach on faith—He **modeled** it perfectly.

### **At Lazarus’ tomb:**

“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always...”  
— *John 11:41–42*

Jesus prayed in **assurance**, even before the miracle occurred.

### **In Gethsemane:**

He still expressed His request, “If it be possible, let this cup pass...” but submitted with **faith in the Father’s plan**.

Jesus’ faith wasn’t in outcomes—it was in **the Father’s perfect will**.

## **8. Practical Marks of the Prayer of Faith**

So what does the prayer of faith actually look like?

Here are five characteristics:

### **1. It is rooted in the Word of God**

It does not presume or invent promises—it **stands on what is written**.

### **2. It is bold, not arrogant**

It comes to the throne of grace confidently (Hebrews 4:16), but not proudly.

### **3. It is persistent, not pushy**

It knocks and keeps knocking (Matthew 7:7), without demanding its way.

#### **4. It is submitted, not selfish**

It always includes, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” (Luke 22:42)

#### **5. It is peaceful, not panicked**

Faith prays and then **rests**—not because it sees the answer, but because it knows **God is faithful**.

#### **9. When the Answer Is “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait”**

Faith doesn't depend on the **result**—it depends on the **relationship**.

- If God says **yes**—faith rejoices in His goodness.
- If God says **no**—faith trusts in His wisdom.
- If God says **wait**—faith rests in His timing.

True faith remains steadfast in all three cases. The outcome doesn't change the character of God—and therefore, it shouldn't shake the confidence of the believer.

#### **Conclusion: Praying in Full Assurance**

The prayer of faith is not a loud voice, a clenched fist, or a fancy phrase. It is the quiet confidence that says:

“God is able. God is wise. And I trust Him—whatever He chooses.”

It stands on His promises. It yields to His purposes. It waits on His timing.

So ask boldly. Believe faithfully. Surrender humbly.

And when you pray—pray with full assurance that your Father **hears, knows, and rewards**.

That's the prayer that pleases God.

## **5 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Intercession: Standing in the Gap Like Christ**

### **Introduction: The Selfless Prayer That Touches Heaven**

There is a kind of prayer that rises beyond personal needs. A prayer that doesn't begin with "Lord, bless me," but rather "Lord, help them." This is the prayer of **intercession**—the act of standing in the gap on behalf of others, pleading their case before God with compassion, burden, and faith.

Intercessory prayer is **Christlike prayer**. Jesus, our Great High Priest, is not just our Savior—He is our Intercessor. He stands before the Father, even now, praying for us (Hebrews 7:25). The Spirit, too, intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26–27).

To intercede is to imitate Christ. It is to willingly step into someone else's burden and carry it to the throne of grace. In this fifth installment of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we explore the power, pattern, and purpose of intercessory prayer—and how every believer is called to stand in the gap.

### **1. 1 Timothy 2:1 – The Command to Intercede**

Paul writes to Timothy with clarity and urgency:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men..."

— *1 Timothy 2:1*

Notice the phrase "**first of all**". Intercession is not an afterthought—it's a **priority**. And it is commanded for **all men**—not just the saved, not just friends, not just those who agree with us. **All men** means enemies, leaders, neighbors, nations, and the lost.

This verse introduces a layered structure of prayer:

- **Supplications** – Asking for specific needs
- **Prayers** – General communication with God
- **Intercessions** – Standing in the place of another
- **Giving of thanks** – Gratitude for what God has done and will do

Intercession is different from personal petition. It's **advocacy in prayer**, not for ourselves, but for others.

## 2. Romans 8:26–27 – The Spirit Intercedes With Groanings

Paul unveils a mysterious, yet comforting reality about prayer:

“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.”

— *Romans 8:26*

We are not alone in prayer. The Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer, **intercedes through us and for us** when words fail. This means that even our weakest prayers are caught up in the powerful current of divine intercession.

### Key insights:

- **“Helpeth our infirmities”** – We are weak, but the Spirit strengthens us.
- **“We know not what we should pray”** – Often, our understanding is limited, but the Spirit's isn't.
- **“Groanings which cannot be uttered”** – There is a depth of intercession beyond language—a spiritual burden that bypasses intellect and reaches the heart of God.

This should humble and encourage us: **even when you feel like you're failing in prayer, the Spirit is not.**

## 3. Christ the Intercessor: Our Ultimate Example

Jesus is not only our model in intercession—He is the very foundation of it. Consider these verses:

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died... who also maketh intercession for us.”

— *Romans 8:34*

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

— *Hebrews 7:25*

Jesus didn't stop ministering when He ascended. He now serves as our **eternal Advocate**—our great Intercessor before the Father. When Satan accuses, Jesus intercedes. When we stumble, He stands on our behalf.

**Christlike intercession includes:**

- **Pleading mercy, not wrath** – “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (*Luke 23:34*)
- **Praying before judgment** – “Simon, Simon, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” (*Luke 22:32*)
- **Praying with full identification** – “He ever liveth to make intercession” (*Hebrews 7:25*)

To intercede like Christ is to love **sacrificially**—to weep over sinners, to plead for the hard-hearted, to ask for mercy over judgment, and to refuse to give up on others.

**4. Abraham for Sodom – Interceding for the Undeserving**

In Genesis 18, Abraham learns of God's impending judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Instead of rejoicing in their destruction, he **intercedes**.

“Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”  
— *Genesis 18:23*

Abraham engages God with reverence and persistence. He begins with 50 righteous and works down to 10. He appeals not to Sodom's goodness, but to **God's justice and mercy**.

Though the cities were destroyed, God honored the **heart of intercession**, and **Lot was delivered** (Genesis 19:29).

**Lessons from Abraham's intercession:**

- He was **bold**, yet **humble**.
- He **stood before the Lord** (Genesis 18:22).
- He cared more for **others' souls** than his own comfort.

Abraham teaches us that intercession often means pleading for the guilty—not because they deserve it, but because **God is merciful**.

## **5. Moses for Israel – Intercession in the Face of Wrath**

After the golden calf incident (Exodus 32), God told Moses:

“Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them...”

— *Exodus 32:10*

But Moses refused to step aside. He interceded with urgency:

“Turn from thy fierce wrath... remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel...”

— *Exodus 32:12–13*

And God relented.

Later, in Exodus 32:32, Moses even offers himself:

“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin... blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book...”

This is **Christlike love**. A shepherd willing to suffer for the sheep. A leader bearing the burden of a rebellious people.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Moses stood between judgment and the people.
- He appealed to God’s promises, not their performance.
- He risked himself out of love.

We are called to the same posture—not one of condemnation, but of **compassionate intervention**.

## **6. Bearing One Another’s Burdens – Galatians 6:2**

Paul writes:

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

— *Galatians 6:2*

Intercession is more than a spiritual activity—it is an **act of love**. To “bear” someone’s burden means to feel the weight of their need and carry it to God on their behalf.

### **What does this look like?**

- Praying for a friend trapped in sin (Galatians 6:1)
- Lifting up a family member in grief
- Fasting for a prodigal child
- Standing in faith for a sick brother or sister
- Pleading for a backslidden church

This fulfills **“the law of Christ”—which is love.** (John 13:34)

## **7. Praying for Leaders, Nations, and the Church**

Returning to 1 Timothy 2:2, Paul says:

“...for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life...”

Intercessory prayer is not limited to individuals—it **extends to leaders, nations, and the global Church.**

### **Pray for Leaders (Even Unjust Ones)**

Paul wrote this under Roman rule—wicked emperors like Nero were in power. Yet he commanded prayer for them. Why?

Because **God can influence anyone.**

Because **peace comes through spiritual intervention.**

Because **leadership affects lives.**

### **Pray for Nations**

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God says:

“If my people... shall humble themselves, and pray... I will heal their land.”

The healing of a land does not start in the courthouse—but in the **prayer closet**.

### **Pray for the Church**

Jesus prayed for His Church in John 17. Paul constantly prayed for the churches he planted (Ephesians 1:16–20; Colossians 1:9–11). We should do the same.

- Pray for unity in the body (John 17:21)
- Pray for purity and boldness in the pulpit
- Pray for revival, holiness, and spiritual awakening

### **8. Intercession for Enemies**

Perhaps the most difficult—yet most Christlike—form of intercession is praying for those who hurt, betray, or hate us.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them...”

— *Matthew 5:44*

Jesus did not suggest it—He commanded it.

Stephen, the first martyr, followed Jesus’ example:

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

— *Acts 7:60*

To intercede for enemies is to **break the cycle of bitterness** and allow **God’s mercy to move**. It is the ultimate act of spiritual maturity.

### **9. The Power and Cost of Intercession**

Intercessory prayer is powerful—but it comes with a cost. It requires:

- **Time** – It cannot be rushed.
- **Compassion** – You must feel the burden.
- **Spiritual sensitivity** – To discern what and how to pray.
- **Persistence** – To continue even when nothing changes.

- **Faith** – To believe that God is working even when you don't see it.

The intercessor stands where few are willing to stand: **between judgment and mercy, between earth and heaven, between despair and hope.**

### **10. Becoming a Gap-Stander: Ezekiel 22:30**

God once looked for an intercessor and found none:

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land... but I found none.”

— *Ezekiel 22:30*

Will He find you?

To “stand in the gap” is to **fill the space where judgment is coming**—and to cry out for mercy.

Let that not be said of our generation—that God looked for someone to pray, and found no one. Let us answer: **“Here am I, Lord. I will stand in the gap.”**

### **Conclusion: The Forgotten Ministry That Moves Heaven**

Intercessory prayer is not glamorous. It's not often noticed or praised. But it **moves heaven and shakes hell**. It changes lives, saves souls, restrains judgment, and releases mercy.

To pray for others—especially the undeserving—is to join the ministry of Christ Himself.

So start today.

Stand in the gap.

Plead for the wayward.

Weep for the lost.

Pray for your enemies.

Intercede for the church.

Lift up your nation.

Because that is the prayer...

**That pleases God.**

## **6 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Thanksgiving: The Secret Weapon in Every Prayer**

### **Introduction: More Than Manners—The Power of Gratitude**

In the spiritual life, few things are more neglected and underestimated than the power of thanksgiving. It's often treated like a polite nod at the end of a meal—"thanks, Lord"—and quickly brushed past to get to the real business of asking and receiving.

But what if thanksgiving is not an afterthought, but a **spiritual weapon**?

What if it's not a garnish to our prayers, but the **very atmosphere** in which effective, pleasing prayer takes place?

Thanksgiving is not a side dish—it's a **main ingredient**. It aligns the heart, clears spiritual fog, and releases God's peace. It is the oxygen of the prayer room and the antidote to anxiety. It doesn't just express faith—it **activates** it.

In this sixth installment of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we will uncover why **thanksgiving is not optional—it's essential**. We'll explore its place in Scripture, its power in hardship, and why heaven listens more intently when the heart is grateful.

### **1. Philippians 4:6 – The Antidote to Anxiety**

Let's begin with one of the most quoted verses on prayer:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

— *Philippians 4:6*

The phrase "**Be careful for nothing**" means "don't be anxious." And what is the prescription? Prayer. But not just any prayer—prayer **with thanksgiving**.

Paul is not saying, "Only pray when you feel thankful." He's saying, "Make thanksgiving the **spiritual posture** through which all your requests pass."

### **Supplication + Thanksgiving = Peace**

What happens when you follow this pattern?

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

— *Philippians 4:7*

Gratitude doesn't just bring answers—it brings **peace**, which is often the answer we needed most.

### **Why Thanksgiving Calms Anxiety:**

- It shifts focus from **what we lack** to **what God has already done**.
- It reminds us that God has come through before—and will again.
- It places the heart in a **receiving mode** instead of a **demanding one**.

Thanksgiving says: *"Lord, I know I need things—but before I ask, let me thank You for everything You've already given."*

## **2. Psalm 100:4 – Entering with Thanksgiving**

The psalmist provides another principle that reshapes how we approach God:

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

— *Psalm 100:4*

This verse describes the **protocol for entering God's presence**. It's not casual. It's not careless. There's a spiritual rhythm.

### **\*\*Gate – Thanksgiving**

Court – Praise\*\*

Thanksgiving is not something you “work up to”—it's how you **enter**.

You don't come complaining. You don't start with your list. You enter with gratitude.

### **Picture the Tabernacle:**

In the Old Testament, the tabernacle had layers:

- **Outer Gate** – Entry point
- **Courtyard** – Sacrifice and cleansing
- **Holy Place** – Lampstand and incense
- **Holy of Holies** – God's manifest presence

Thanksgiving gets you through the **gate**. It prepares your heart for the journey inward—toward deeper communion with God.

### 3. Paul's Letters: A Lifestyle of Continual Thanks

Paul's epistles are drenched in thanksgiving—even when he was in prison, shipwrecked, beaten, or slandered. His life is proof that thanksgiving is not dependent on **circumstance**—it's the fruit of a God-focused heart.

#### Examples:

“I thank my God always on your behalf...”

— *1 Corinthians 1:4*

“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.”

— *Colossians 1:3*

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

— *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Paul thanks God **for people, for spiritual fruit, for God's grace, for deliverance, and even for affliction**. It's not a performance—it's a **reflex** of his renewed mind.

#### Paul's Thanksgiving Was:

- **Habitual** – “Always...”
- **Targeted** – Thanking God for specific people and breakthroughs
- **Faith-Driven** – He gave thanks even **before** the answer came

Thanksgiving for Paul was **not seasonal**—it was **continual**. It wasn't tied to turkey and stuffing. It was tied to the cross and the empty tomb.

#### 4. Thanksgiving as a Form of Spiritual Warfare

Gratitude isn't just good manners—it's **spiritual warfare**.

Why? Because thanksgiving:

- Shuts the mouth of the accuser (Revelation 12:10)
- Crushes the complaining spirit
- Weakens the grip of fear, discouragement, and despair
- Reinforces God's faithfulness over Satan's lies

#### Example: Jehoshaphat's Battle (2 Chronicles 20)

When Judah faced an overwhelming enemy, King Jehoshaphat sought the Lord. The prophet said, "The battle is not yours, but God's."

"And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon..."

— *2 Chronicles 20:22*

**Praise and thanksgiving** led the charge—and the enemy was confused and defeated.

Thanksgiving brings **divine intervention** because it lifts the atmosphere from fear to faith.

#### 5. Giving Thanks Even in Hardship – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

This is perhaps one of the most radical commands in the Bible:

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

— *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Note: It says "**in**" **everything**, not "for" everything. We're not told to give thanks **for** evil, injustice, or tragedy. But we're told to give thanks **in** those situations—because God is still good, still sovereign, and still working.

#### Why Give Thanks in Hardship?

- It declares: **God is still in control**.

- It remembers: **Suffering is temporary—glory is eternal.**
- It reflects: **A mature trust that doesn't depend on circumstances.**

### **Biblical Examples of Gratitude in Trial:**

- **Job:** “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (*Job 1:21*)
- **Jonah:** Prayed with thanksgiving **from the belly of the fish** (*Jonah 2:9*)
- **Paul and Silas:** Sang praises in prison at midnight—**before** their chains broke (*Acts 16:25*)

Gratitude in hardship confuses the enemy and glorifies God. It turns prisons into sanctuaries and pain into praise.

### **6. Why Gratitude Pleases God**

God is not needy. He doesn't require our gratitude to feel better about Himself.

So why does thanksgiving matter so much?

### **Because Gratitude Is an Expression of Faith**

When we thank God, we declare:

- “I remember what You've done.”
- “I trust what You're doing.”
- “I believe what You've promised.”

It's not just politeness—it's **worship.**

### **Because Gratitude Glorifies God**

“Neither were thankful...”

— *Romans 1:21*

This verse about depraved humanity says they knew God but failed to glorify Him—and **weren't thankful**. Ingratitude leads to **idolatry** and **delusion**.

### **Because Gratitude Keeps Us Dependent**

When you're thankful, you acknowledge your **need for grace**. You stay soft, humble, and open to correction.

## **7. Gratitude as a Heart Posture in Prayer**

If you want your prayer life to go deeper, stronger, and longer—start with thanksgiving.

Here's what it does:

### **A. It Prepares the Heart**

Thanksgiving “tills the soil” of the heart so that faith can grow.

### **B. It Clears Spiritual Clutter**

When you're thankful, the fog of fear lifts. You begin to see clearly.

### **C. It Honors the Giver Above the Gift**

Thanksgiving says, “Even if You never answer another prayer, You've already done enough for me to praise You forever.”

## **8. Practical Ways to Grow in Thanksgiving**

How can we develop a lifestyle of gratitude?

### **1. Keep a Prayer Journal of Thanks**

Every day, write down three things you're thankful for. Watch how your mindset changes.

## 2. Begin Every Prayer with Thanksgiving

Before you ask—thank. Even if it’s just for salvation, breath, and mercy.

## 3. Tell Others What God Has Done

Testimony fuels thanksgiving. Share the small and large victories.

## 4. Thank God for What He Hasn’t Done Yet

This is advanced thanksgiving. It says: “I haven’t seen it yet—but I trust You.”

## 9. The Cross: The Ultimate Reason for Thanksgiving

Above all else, we give thanks because of the cross.

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

— *2 Corinthians 9:15*

Jesus paid a debt we couldn’t pay, took a wrath we couldn’t bear, and gave a righteousness we didn’t deserve.

Even if God **never did another thing**—the cross alone is reason enough to spend eternity in gratitude.

## 10. When You Don’t Feel Thankful

What if your heart is cold? What if you’re weary, wounded, or numb?

Thanksgiving is not about **feeling** thankful—it’s about **choosing** to be.

It’s lifting your hands through tears. It’s whispering, “Thank You” through clenched teeth.

It’s faith—raw, real, and rugged.

“Offer unto God thanksgiving...”

— *Psalms 50:14*

Sometimes, thanksgiving is a **sacrifice**. But those are the offerings God loves most.

## **Conclusion: The Atmosphere That Invites Heaven**

Thanksgiving is not a backup singer in prayer—it's the **lead voice** that sets the tone. It transforms cold routine into warm communion. It replaces grumbling with glory. It prepares the heart for miracles.

So as you continue growing in prayer, remember:

- Supplicate with thanksgiving.
- Enter with thanksgiving.
- Persist with thanksgiving.
- Fight battles with thanksgiving.
- Endure trials with thanksgiving.

Because **that** is the prayer that pleases God.

## **7 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Confession: Cleansing the Channel of Communication**

### **Introduction: When Heaven Seems Silent**

Have you ever prayed and felt like your words bounced off the ceiling? Like heaven had gone quiet, and no matter how many times you asked, there was no reply?

Often, we blame circumstances, timing, or even the devil. But Scripture clearly teaches that one of the primary reasons for unanswered prayer is this: **sin that has not been confessed.**

Confession is not a religious formality—it's a **relational necessity**. Prayer is a conversation, and **sin clogs the line**. Just as static disrupts a phone call, unconfessed sin disrupts our communion with God.

In this seventh installment of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we'll explore why confession isn't a once-in-a-lifetime act, but a **daily spiritual discipline**. We'll uncover what it really means to confess, how it restores access to the throne, and how it invites God's mercy, healing, and closeness back into our lives.

## 1. Psalm 66:18 – When Sin Blocks Prayer

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

— *Psalm 66:18*

This verse is blunt—and sobering. It teaches that **harbored sin** in the heart **blocks prayer**. Not every sin, but sin that is **regarded**—welcomed, protected, or excused.

God is not expecting perfection. But He is looking for **honesty and humility**. When sin is **cherished**, not confessed, God goes silent.

### What does “regard iniquity” mean?

It means to:

- **Make excuses for sin**
- **Justify wrongdoing**
- **Refuse to surrender or repent**
- **Hide sin from others and God**

Sin that is *hidden* from man is *visible* to God—and it **clogs the pipeline of prayer**.

### Key Principle:

**God doesn't turn away from struggling sinners. He turns away from stubborn ones.**

David, the psalmist, knew the difference. When he sinned with Bathsheba, his cover-up cost him dearly—until he confessed.

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long... I acknowledged my sin unto thee...”

— *Psalm 32:3–5*

Confession opened the floodgates of mercy—and it can for us too.

## 2. 1 John 1:9 – Restoring Fellowship Through Confession

This is one of the most hope-filled verses in all of Scripture:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

— *1 John 1:9*

Let’s break it down.

### “If we confess...”

The word “confess” (Greek: *homologeō*) means “to say the same thing.” It means to **agree with God** about your sin.

You’re not defending it.

You’re not blaming others.

You’re not minimizing it.

You’re **owning it**.

### “He is faithful and just...”

God’s forgiveness doesn’t flow from emotion—it flows from His **character**. He is *faithful*—He never fails to forgive a truly repentant heart. And He is *just*—because the penalty for your sin has already been paid by Christ.

### “To forgive... and to cleanse...”

Forgiveness erases the guilt.

Cleansing restores the relationship.

Both are yours—**immediately**—when you confess.

### Key Insight:

Confession doesn’t make you *more saved*—it makes you *more in fellowship*. Salvation is once-for-all; fellowship is daily.

Unconfessed sin won’t send a believer to hell—but it will create **distance from the Father** and steal joy, peace, and power.

### 3. Daniel 9 – National and Personal Confession

Daniel's prayer in chapter 9 is a **masterclass in intercessory confession**. He's not just praying for himself—he's praying for a nation. And what's remarkable is that **Daniel was one of the most righteous men in the Bible**, yet he includes himself in the guilt.

“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly...”  
— *Daniel 9:5*

#### Lessons from Daniel's Confession:

- He **identified** with the sin of others, not just pointed fingers.
- He didn't sugarcoat anything—he named the sins boldly.
- He appealed to **God's mercy**, not Israel's merit.
- He **prayed the promises of God** back to Him.

Daniel teaches us that confession can be both **personal and prophetic**. When we confess for ourselves and others, we open the door to **national healing** and **personal revival**.

“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him...”  
— *Daniel 9:9*

Confession magnifies **God's mercy** more than it dwells on man's failure.

### 4. God's Faithfulness in Forgiveness

People may hold grudges. They may say, “I forgive you,” and then throw your mistake back in your face later. But not God.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”  
— *Psalms 103:12*

When God forgives, He:

- **Cleanses fully** (Isaiah 1:18)
- **Forgets eternally** (Hebrews 8:12)

- **Restores joyfully** (Luke 15:20–24)

### **Why Can God Forgive Like This?**

Because the debt has already been paid. Jesus didn't die so we could **cover up** our sin—He died so we could **confess it and be free**.

### **Faithfulness in Action: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15)**

The moment the son returned—**with confession in his mouth**—the father ran. He didn't wait for the son to grovel. He didn't bring up the past. He forgave **with joy, with love, and with full restoration**.

God delights in mercy (Micah 7:18). He is more willing to forgive than we are to ask. Confession is how we stop running—and let Him embrace us.

### **5. Hidden Sins, Self-Deception, and Openness Before God**

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

— *Proverbs 28:13*

Trying to hide sin is like **trying to cover a fire with a paper towel**—eventually, it will burn through. And yet, how often do we:

- Pretend we're fine spiritually?
- Ignore the conviction of the Spirit?
- Justify secret sins because "no one knows"?

God knows. And until it's confessed, it festers.

### **Hidden Sin is a Double Weight**

It weighs on the **soul** and silences the **spirit**.

- David said his bones “waxed old” when he kept silent (Psalm 32:3).
- Unconfessed sin breeds **guilt, shame, and spiritual dullness**.

## **Self-Deception Is the Enemy of Confession**

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

— *1 John 1:8*

You cannot confess what you will not acknowledge.

The key is not **morbid introspection**, but **Spirit-led honesty**. Let the Holy Spirit search your heart—not to condemn you, but to cleanse you.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart...”

— *Psalms 139:23*

True confession is not just listing mistakes—it’s **opening the windows** of your soul and saying, “Lord, shine Your light on every corner.”

## **6. Practical Steps to Biblical Confession**

Here’s how to practice confession that pleases God:

### **1. Be Specific**

Don’t just say, “Forgive me for all my sins.” Be honest. Name it.

- “Lord, I lied.”
- “I gave into pride.”
- “I was lazy with my responsibilities.”

Naming sin breaks its power.

### **2. Take Responsibility**

Don’t blame others.

- Not, “She made me angry,” but “I chose to react in anger.”
- Not, “They pressured me,” but “I gave into fear of man.”

Ownership precedes freedom.

### 3. Trust in God's Mercy, Not Your Performance

Don't try to "earn" forgiveness with guilt trips. The blood of Jesus is enough.

"Come boldly unto the throne of grace..."

— *Hebrews 4:16*

### 4. Confess Immediately, Not Eventually

Don't let sin linger. The longer you wait, the more it poisons.

Keep short accounts with God. When you sin, **run—not walk—to confession.**

### 5. Accept His Cleansing with Gratitude

Don't wallow in shame after God has forgiven you. Receive His cleansing and walk in freedom.

"Whom the Son sets free is free indeed."

— *John 8:36*

### 7. Confession and Revival: A Forgotten Ingredient

Every great revival in history began with **deep confession of sin**—personal and corporate.

- In the Welsh Revival, whole churches wept over pride, gossip, and lukewarmness.
- During the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards emphasized **brokenness and repentance.**
- In Acts 19:18–20, believers **confessed and burned their occult books**, and the word of God grew mightily.

We want revival without repentance. But the gate to glory is **brokenness.**

**Confession is not a weakness—it's the womb of awakening.**

When believers get serious about holiness, heaven gets serious about **outpouring.**

## 8. What Happens After Confession?

You'll experience:

### 1. Restored Fellowship

The wall between you and God comes down.

### 2. Renewed Joy

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation..."

— *Psalms 51:12*

### 3. Fresh Boldness in Prayer

No more shame. You stand clean.

### 4. Sensitivity to the Spirit

Sin dulls your hearing. Confession sharpens it.

### 5. Power in Intercession

Now that the line is clear—you can pray for others effectively.

### Conclusion: Clear the Line—God is Listening

Confession isn't God trying to shame you—it's **God inviting you back into closeness.**

He doesn't ask you to grovel. He just asks you to come clean.

So don't let sin silence your prayer life. Don't let shame keep you from the throne.

Run to Him.

Open the channel.

Confess.

Because that is the prayer that pleases God.

## **8 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Praying in the Spirit: Beyond Flesh and Formula**

### **Introduction: The Engine of Effective Prayer**

Prayer can be many things—a whisper in the dark, a cry in the valley, or a shout on the mountaintop. But the prayer that pleases God is not simply vocalized—it is **spiritualized**.

It is possible to pray in public yet remain disconnected in the spirit. It is possible to recite long petitions while the heart is cold. It is even possible to use Scripture and sound theological phrases and yet have your prayer **powered by flesh rather than Spirit**.

This is why Paul says to “pray always *in the Spirit*,” and why Jude exhorts believers to build themselves up “*praying in the Holy Ghost*.” These verses don’t describe mystical experiences detached from truth, but rather **Spirit-enabled communion with God**—prayer that bypasses mere performance and enters into divine partnership.

In this eighth essay of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we’ll explore what it truly means to **pray in the Spirit**, how it differs from flesh-led or soulish prayer, and why it is the only kind of prayer that sustains power, purity, and perseverance.

### **1. Jude 1:20 – Praying in the Holy Ghost**

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost...”

— *Jude 1:20*

This verse gives us a critical instruction for spiritual strength: if you want to grow, stay grounded, and remain unshaken in your faith, you must pray *in the Holy Ghost*.

### **What does it mean to “pray in the Holy Ghost”?**

To pray in the Holy Ghost means to:

- **Be led by the Spirit** in what and how you pray
- **Pray in harmony** with the Spirit's desires and agenda
- **Rely on the Spirit's power**, not the strength of your emotions or vocabulary
- **Let the Spirit shape your posture**, tone, motives, and target

This kind of prayer is not about **volume**, **style**, or **eloquence**—it's about **alignment**. It means your prayers are empowered by the One who searches the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).

## 2. Ephesians 6:18 – Praying Always in the Spirit

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

— *Ephesians 6:18*

This verse is the final command in Paul's famous armor-of-God passage. After putting on the helmet, shield, and sword, the final instruction is: **pray in the Spirit—always**.

Why?

Because prayer is the **battlefield of the spirit**, and it cannot be waged in the flesh.

### Let's break it down:

- **“Praying always”** – not just occasionally, but consistently
- **“With all prayer and supplication”** – every kind of prayer (worship, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.)
- **“In the Spirit”** – not in routine or ritual, but in spiritual partnership
- **“Watching”** – spiritual alertness
- **“With perseverance”** – not giving up when it's hard
- **“For all saints”** – not selfish prayer, but communal intercession

Paul is saying that *real* spiritual warfare happens when we **pray in the Spirit—not when we just mouth words**.

### 3. Romans 8:26 – The Spirit Helps Our Infirmities

“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.”

— *Romans 8:26*

This verse is a lifeline for every believer who’s ever felt **stuck** in prayer—unsure what to say, how to say it, or whether God is even listening.

#### Key insights:

- **“Infirmities”** – Weaknesses. The Spirit doesn’t wait for us to be strong; He steps in when we’re weak.
- **“We know not what to pray”** – Our knowledge is limited, but the Spirit’s is not.
- **“The Spirit makes intercession”** – He doesn’t just assist prayer—**He joins it**, directing and empowering it.
- **“Groanings which cannot be uttered”** – The Spirit brings burdens to God in ways deeper than language.

This doesn’t mean mystical moans or emotional theatrics. It means that **when our mind fails, the Spirit still prays**.

### 4. The Difference Between Spirit-Filled and Flesh-Led Prayer

Not all prayer is Spirit-led. Some prayer is **flesh-led**, meaning it comes from our carnal instincts, pride, fear, or self-will.

#### Flesh-led prayer:

- Focuses on **personal gain**, not God’s glory (James 4:3)
- Seeks to **impress others** or appear spiritual (Matthew 6:5)
- Is rooted in **emotion** or **manipulation**
- Avoids God’s will when it contradicts personal desire
- Feels draining, repetitive, and heavy

### **Spirit-filled prayer:**

- Desires **God's will above our own** (Luke 22:42)
- Submits to the **leading of Scripture**
- Is empowered by **faith**, not feelings
- Bears fruit—peace, clarity, strength, and perseverance
- Flows with **boldness and humility**

### **Litmus Test:**

Ask yourself, *“Is this prayer led by the Word and Spirit, or by fear, flesh, and pride?”*

One brings you closer to God. The other keeps you **talking, but not transforming**.

### **5. Acts 4:31 – Boldness Through the Spirit**

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

— *Acts 4:31*

The early church didn't pray timid, safe prayers. They prayed in the Spirit—and the room shook.

### **What marked their prayer?**

- **Unity** – “They lifted up their voice with one accord” (Acts 4:24)
- **Scripture** – They quoted Psalm 2 back to God
- **Boldness** – They asked not for safety, but for power
- **Result** – God filled them afresh with the Spirit and boldness

Spirit-led prayer produces **boldness**, not fear.

It doesn't mean arrogance or loud shouting. It means **holy courage** rooted in conviction and presence.

## 6. Warning: Avoiding Soulful, Emotional, or Manipulative Prayer

There is a danger in prayer—not of underperforming, but of **overstepping**.

### Soulful Prayer:

This is prayer powered by the **soul (mind, will, emotions)** but not the **Spirit**.

- Emotional but not biblical
- Passionate but not pure
- Driven by human desire rather than divine will

### Emotionalism in Prayer:

Emotion is not wrong—Jesus wept, Paul wept, David danced. But when prayer becomes **all emotion and no truth**, it slips into **carnal sensationalism**.

Examples:

- Using prayer to release personal frustration without surrender
- Mistaking loudness for anointing
- Performing for others instead of communing with God

### Manipulative Prayer:

This is especially dangerous in public settings or intercession:

- Praying in a way that **indirectly controls people**
- Praying to **impress others** or sway decisions
- Using God's name to **justify a personal agenda**

### Jesus Warned Against This:

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing... to be seen of men...”

— *Matthew 6:5*

Spirit-led prayer is **God-focused, Word-aligned, and humble.**

Soulish prayer is **self-focused, emotion-driven,** and often rooted in pride.

## **7. How to Develop a Life of Spirit-Led Prayer**

So how do you cultivate a prayer life that is truly “in the Spirit”? Here’s how:

### **1. Stay Filled With the Spirit Daily**

“Be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)

Praying in the Spirit requires **walking in the Spirit.** Daily surrender is the soil where spiritual prayer grows.

### **2. Saturate Your Mind With Scripture**

The Holy Spirit always works **in harmony with the Word of God.** Prayers disconnected from Scripture will never be Spirit-led.

### **3. Start With Surrender**

Before you ask, *yield.* Say, “Holy Spirit, lead this time of prayer. Guide my thoughts. Align my heart. Correct my motives.”

### **4. Don’t Rush**

Spirit-led prayer often takes time. Wait. Listen. Linger in His presence. Let silence speak. Let tears flow if they come.

### **5. Trust the Spirit Over Your Emotions**

You may not always “feel” the Spirit. That doesn’t mean He’s absent. Spirit-led prayer is built on **faith**, not **feeling**.

## **8. The Fruit of Praying in the Spirit**

When you begin to pray in the Holy Ghost, everything shifts.

**You will experience:**

- **Deeper intimacy with God**
- **Sharper discernment**
- **Greater confidence in intercession**
- **Increased clarity about God’s will**
- **Freedom from prayer performance or anxiety**
- **A heart aligned with heaven, not with self**

**You’ll stop sounding like the Pharisee:**

“God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men...” (*Luke 18:11*)

**And start sounding like the publican:**

“God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (*Luke 18:13*)

Spirit-led prayer humbles you, sanctifies you, and **empowers you**.

## **9. When You Don’t Know What to Say: Let the Spirit Pray**

There will be days when the pain is too deep. When the mind is cloudy. When words fail.

On those days, don’t quit praying—**lean on the Spirit**.

You might simply say:

- “Lord, I don’t know what to pray.”
- “Holy Spirit, help me.”

- “I wait on You.”

The Spirit intercedes with **groanings**. He knows the mind of God. He brings your tears to the throne as incense. He makes **your weakness His canvas**.

### **10. Jesus and the Spirit: Perfect Partnership**

Even Jesus, filled without measure by the Spirit (John 3:34), prayed **in the Spirit**. Every miracle, every intercession, every moment in Gethsemane was **Spirit-fueled**.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...”

— *Luke 4:18*

He didn’t model prayer just for imitation—but for **empowerment**.

To pray in the Spirit is to pray like Jesus—not just what He prayed, but **how** He prayed.

### **Conclusion: Beyond Flesh and Formula**

If your prayer life has felt dry, routine, or performative—there is more. There is a deeper stream, a holy rhythm, a divine language of intimacy, alignment, and power. It’s not mystical. It’s not elite. It’s for every believer.

Praying in the Spirit is not about dramatic expressions—it’s about **divine partnership**.

Let go of flesh-led repetition.

Step beyond soulish striving.

Invite the Holy Ghost to take the lead.

Because that is the prayer...

**That pleases God.**

## **9 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Persistence in Prayer: When Heaven Seems Silent**

### **Introduction: Praying Through the Silence**

Every believer eventually arrives at this moment: the request has been made, the heart is sincere, the hands are lifted—and yet heaven seems silent. No thunderous reply, no immediate breakthrough, no clear answer.

This is the crucible where many walk away. They assume silence means denial. They grow weary. They give up.

But Scripture teaches something different: **persistent prayer pleases God**. Not because He is hard of hearing. Not because He's reluctant to bless. But because persistent prayer purifies the motive, strengthens the faith, and aligns the heart.

Jesus told a parable to this end: “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). He knew we'd be tempted to quit.

In this ninth installment of the *Prayer That Pleases God* series, we explore the mystery and majesty of **persistence in prayer**—why God sometimes delays, how great saints pressed through silence, and how faithful prayer isn't about repetition, but **relentless trust**.

## 1. Luke 18:1 – The Parable of the Persistent Widow

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint...”

— *Luke 18:1*

Jesus then tells of a widow who repeatedly begs an unjust judge for justice. Though the judge does not fear God or respect man, he eventually relents—not because of justice, but because of her **persistence**.

“Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her...” (v. 5)

Jesus ends with a divine contrast: if even an unrighteous judge gives in, **how much more will God, the righteous Judge, respond to His elect who cry to Him day and night?**

### Key lessons from the parable:

- **Persistence is not annoying to God**—it's a mark of **faith**.
- **God is not like the unjust judge**. He hears. He cares. He responds out of love.
- **Crying “day and night” is biblical**—it reflects desperation rooted in faith, not fear.

**"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"**

— *Luke 18:8*

Jesus links persistent prayer with **faith in the last days**. In a world of instant gratification, **long-suffering intercession is rare**—but it's what God is looking for.

## **2. Daniel 10:12–13 – Delayed Answers and Spiritual Resistance**

Daniel fasted and prayed for 21 days. No answer. No sign. No confirmation.

But then an angel arrived with stunning news:

“From the first day... thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.”

— *Daniel 10:12*

God heard on **day one**—but the answer was **delayed by spiritual warfare**.

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days...”

— *Daniel 10:13*

**This teaches us:**

- **Heaven hears immediately**, but earth may not see instantly.
- **Delays are not denials**—they may be divine preparation or spiritual resistance.
- **If Daniel had stopped on day 10**, he may never have seen the breakthrough.

**Persistent prayer is spiritual warfare.**

You're not just waiting on circumstances—you're fighting **unseen battles**.

Don't stop on day 2, or 7, or 20. **Hold the line.**

## **3. 1 Kings 18:43–44 – Elijah Praying for Rain Seven Times**

After defeating the prophets of Baal, Elijah declared, “There is a sound of abundance of rain” (1 Kings 18:41). But there was no rain yet.

So what did Elijah do?

He climbed Mount Carmel, bowed to the ground, and **prayed**. Then he told his servant, **“Go look.”** Nothing.

He did this **seven times**. Still nothing—until the seventh time, when the servant saw a small cloud the size of a man's hand

**What does this show us?**

- **Even prophets must persist.**
- God may promise the rain, but **we must press through until it comes.**
- **The cloud didn't appear on the first prayer, but on the seventh.**

**Imagine if Elijah had stopped at six.**

Many of us do—we quit just before the breakthrough. Elijah teaches us that **God's timing often involves spiritual persistence.**

#### **4. Galatians 6:9 & Luke 18:1 – Don't Faint**

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

— *Galatians 6:9*

“...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

— *Luke 18:1*

These two verses use the same phrase: **“faint not.”** What does it mean?

To **faint** is to give up when it feels like nothing is working. It's spiritual fatigue that says, “I guess this is pointless.”

But Paul and Jesus both say: **Don't faint. Keep sowing. Keep praying. The harvest is coming.**

**Persistence is the bridge between the promise and the payoff.**

- Fainting ends the process too soon.
- Faith **finishes** the prayer even when feelings disappear.

You don't need to be loud. You don't need to be eloquent. You just need to be **faithful**.

## 5. Vain Repetition vs. Holy Persistence

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

— *Matthew 6:7*

Jesus warns against **vain repetition**—but He **never condemns holy persistence**.

So what’s the difference?

Vain Repetition	Holy Persistence
Mechanical, mindless reciting	Faith-filled, Spirit-led pressing
Seeks to manipulate God	Seeks to align with God
Rooted in superstition or tradition	Rooted in love and trust
Relies on quantity of words	Rests in consistency and surrender
Prideful performance	Humble perseverance

The widow in Luke 18 prayed persistently—not because she thought **more words meant more power**, but because she had **no other hope**.

That’s the heart of holy persistence—“**Lord, I have nowhere else to go but You.**”

## 6. Why Does God Delay Answers?

If God hears us the first time, why not answer right away?

Here are five reasons Scripture gives for divine delay:

### 1. To Test Our Faith

“The trying of your faith worketh patience...”

— *James 1:3*

Faith isn’t proven when God answers fast. It’s proven when He doesn’t—yet you pray on.

## 2. To Align Our Hearts with His Will

The more you pray, the more your desires are shaped. Persistence often purifies motive.

## 3. To Deepen Dependence

When answers come slowly, we learn to lean—not just for a solution, but for **God Himself**.

## 4. To Cultivate Spiritual Maturity

God delays not to deny, but to develop. Waiting makes us wiser, softer, and stronger.

## 5. To Battle Unseen Forces

As in Daniel 10, some answers are **spiritually resisted**. Persistence keeps the pressure on.

## 7. Real-Life Examples of Persistent Prayer

### Hannah – 1 Samuel 1

Year after year, Hannah went to the temple, childless and ridiculed. She wept, fasted, and prayed.

Her persistence birthed **Samuel**—a prophet who would change Israel’s history.

### The Syrophenician Woman – Matthew 15

Jesus initially ignored her request. Then He said, “It’s not right to take the children’s bread and give it to dogs.”

But she persisted:

“Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs...”

— *Matthew 15:27*

Jesus marveled at her **faith**—and her daughter was healed.

## **George Müller – Prayer for Salvation**

Müller, the great evangelist, prayed for five men to be saved. The first came after 18 months. Others took years. One took over 40 years. The last came to Christ after Müller's death.

He never stopped praying.

## **8. How to Cultivate Persistence in Prayer**

### **1. Set a Time and Keep It**

Discipline creates persistence. Prayer doesn't happen by accident.

### **2. Record God's Promises and Past Answers**

Write down what God has done. Remembering strengthens faith to keep asking.

### **3. Pray Scripture Back to God**

Use God's own Word as fuel. Claim His promises—not in entitlement, but in trust.

### **4. Fast When Necessary**

Fasting sharpens focus and adds weight to our intercession (see Daniel 9, Acts 13).

### **5. Surround Yourself with Prayer Warriors**

The early church prayed together. Community strengthens endurance.

## **9. What Happens When You Don't Give Up?**

Persistent prayer produces:

- **Breakthrough** – Like Elijah's cloud
- **Revelation** – Like Daniel's angelic message

- **Character** – Like Hannah’s transformation
- **Authority** – Like the early church’s boldness
- **Intimacy** – Like David’s lifelong communion

God rewards not just the request—but the **relentless relationship**.

“He is a rewarder of them that **diligently seek him.**”

— *Hebrews 11:6*

## 10. When You’ve Waited Too Long

What if it’s been years? What if you’ve buried hope?

Friend—God sees. He remembers. He collects every tear (Psalm 56:8). He has not forgotten.

And even when the answer doesn’t come the way you expected, **your persistence is not wasted.**

“Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

— *1 Corinthians 15:58*

Keep pressing. Keep knocking. Keep crying out.

Not because He’s far—but because He’s close, and your faith **moves His heart.**

## Conclusion: Pleasing Prayer That Perseveres

Persistence in prayer is not about **earning** God’s attention. It’s about demonstrating that **you believe** He’s the only answer worth waiting for.

So keep praying:

- When the sky is silent...
- When the heart is tired...
- When the answer is delayed...

- When the rain cloud hasn't formed...
- When the breakthrough feels like a myth...

Because persistence is the evidence that you **trust God more than your timeline**.

And that is the prayer...

**That pleases God.**

## **10 of 10: Prayer That Pleases God – Praying with Power: Results That Glorify God**

### **Introduction: When Prayer Shakes Heaven and Earth**

Throughout Scripture, there are moments when the heavens open, the earth trembles, fire falls, rain returns, chains break, and lives are changed—all in response to one thing: **powerful prayer**.

These are not coincidences. They are consequences.

The final lesson in our *Prayer That Pleases God* series brings us to the pinnacle: **praying with power**—not the power of eloquence, emotion, or public spectacle, but the power that **moves heaven, transforms lives, and brings glory to God alone**.

Powerful prayer is not reserved for prophets and apostles—it is the rightful inheritance of every believer who walks in faith, purity, and alignment with the will of God.

Let's explore what it truly means to pray with power, how Scripture defines it, and what kind of fruit it produces in the life of a praying man or woman.

### **1. James 5:16 – The Effectual Fervent Prayer**

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

— *James 5:16*

This verse is a roadmap to powerful prayer. Each word matters:

## **Effectual**

This means **effective**, working, active. Power in prayer doesn't come from formality but from functionality—it **does something**.

## **Fervent**

This word implies heat, passion, intensity. Not emotionalism for show, but **sincere urgency born from faith**. Fervency fuels the fire of faith.

## **Prayer**

This isn't casual conversation or vague musings. It's **intentional communication with heaven**—specific, reverent, and bold.

## **Of a righteous man**

This is the foundation. Power in prayer is not earned through volume or vocabulary—but through **purity and relationship with God**. The one who walks close with God can pray with boldness before His throne.

## **Availeth much**

This means it **produces results**. Not “maybe.” Not “once in a while.” Powerful prayer **works**, because it's **rooted in God's will, offered in faith, and lived out in obedience**.

## **2. Elijah – A Pattern of Powerful Prayer**

Immediately after James 5:16, the apostle points to Elijah:

“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain...”

— *James 5:17*

## **Why Elijah?**

Because he wasn't a demigod. He was **just like us**—flawed, emotional, vulnerable. Yet his prayers shut up the heavens for three and a half years and brought down fire on Mount Carmel.

What made his prayers powerful?

### **A. Alignment with God's Word**

Elijah didn't just pray what he wanted—he prayed what **God had already said**. In Deuteronomy 11:16–17, God warned Israel that idolatry would lead to drought.

Elijah stood on that promise and **prayed in agreement** with God's judgment and mercy.

### **B. Earnestness**

He prayed **fervently**. Not casually. Not once. Not just when it was convenient. He prayed until the heavens responded.

### **C. Boldness before the ungodly**

Elijah didn't just pray in private. He called down fire in public, before prophets of Baal, proving that **his God answers by fire**.

### **D. Humility and humanity**

Despite miracles, Elijah ran from Jezebel, fell into despair, and needed reassurance. He's proof that **prayer power comes from God, not the man**.

## **3. Results That Point to God – Not Self (John 14:13)**

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

— *John 14:13*

Powerful prayer is not about **elevating the one who prays**. It's about **exalting the One who answers**.

Jesus makes clear that answered prayer is **not for our prestige, but for the Father's glory**.

### Two tests of powerful prayer:

- **Did it happen?** (Was there a result?)
- **Who got the glory?** (Was Jesus lifted high?)

If prayer produces results **but magnifies man**, it has missed the mark.

“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory...”

— *Matthew 6:13*

All power in prayer begins and ends with **God’s glory**.

### 4. Power Rooted in Purity, Persistence, and Purpose

If you want to pray with power, consider the three foundational roots:

#### A. Purity

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

— *Psalms 66:18*

Holiness and power go hand in hand. You cannot walk in willful sin and expect divine power to flow through your prayers.

#### B. Persistence

“Ask... seek... knock...” (Matthew 7:7)

These are ongoing verbs. Persistent prayer **wears down resistance**, not in heaven, but in **us**. It stretches our faith and reveals our hunger.

#### C. Purpose

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

— *James 4:3*

Prayers for **personal comfort** or **self-glory** go nowhere. But prayers that align with **God's kingdom, God's will, and God's name** bring power with purpose.

## 5. What Does Powerful Prayer Look Like?

### 1. It is Scripture-Saturated

Powerful prayers **quote God's Word**, standing on His promises with reverent boldness.

### 2. It is Spirit-Led

“Praying always... in the Spirit.”

— *Ephesians 6:18*

The Spirit knows the will of God and intercedes through us (Romans 8:26). Prayers aligned with the Spirit are always effective.

### 3. It is Broken and Bold

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit...”

— *Psalms 51:17*

True power comes not from confidence in self, but from **broken dependence** on God. And from that humility comes **boldness**—because when your conscience is clean, you stand strong in the throne room.

### 4. It Produces Change

Powerful prayer doesn't just make you feel better—it **brings heaven to earth**. Things shift. Mountains move. Souls awaken. Hearts soften. Miracles manifest. Not because of **you**, but because of **God in you**.

## 6. Fruits of Powerful Prayer

## A. Miracles

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”

— *Mark 16:20*

God still heals. He still delivers. He still opens doors no man can shut. Prayer is the **pipeline of power**.

## B. Transformation

Not all power is in public miracles. Some of the most powerful prayers result in **private transformation**:

- Addiction broken
- Bitterness healed
- Marriage restored
- A cold heart set ablaze
- An apathetic soul awakened

## C. Revival

Every revival in history began with **powerful, private, persistent prayer**.

- The Welsh Revival
- The First and Second Great Awakenings
- The Azusa Street Revival

All had one thing in common: **people on their knees**.

## D. Boldness in Witness

“And when they had prayed... they spake the word of God with boldness.”

— *Acts 4:31*

Prayer fuels witness. It opens mouths and softens hearts.

## 7. Examples from Scripture: Prayer That Brought Power

### Moses (Exodus 32:11–14)

Stood in the gap and God relented from destroying Israel.

### Joshua (Joshua 10:12–14)

Spoke to the sun in faith—and it stood still.

### Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:15–37)

Prayed as Assyria surrounded him—and God sent an angel that wiped out 185,000 soldiers.

### Peter (Acts 9:40)

Prayed over Tabitha—and she came back to life.

These weren't superheroes. They were saints who knew their **God was greater** than their weakness.

## 8. Jesus: The Source and Example of Power in Prayer

Even Jesus, the Son of God, often withdrew to pray. His power flowed not from His deity alone, but from His **connection with the Father**.

“He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

— *Luke 6:12*

Before miracles, He prayed. Before the cross, He prayed. Before decisions, He prayed.

And now—He lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).

### His prayers were marked by:

- **Submission** – “Not my will, but thine be done.”

- **Authority** – “Lazarus, come forth.”
- **Intimacy** – “I thank thee, Father...”
- **Persistence** – In Gethsemane, He prayed three times.

And His prayers were always answered.

Why?

Because He was **sinless, Spirit-filled, and surrendered.**

We may not be sinless, but we can walk in **forgiveness, filling, and faith**—and the same power will rest on us.

## **9. Barriers to Praying with Power**

### **1. Unconfessed Sin**

“The Lord’s hand is not shortened... but your iniquities have separated...”

— *Isaiah 59:1-2*

### **2. Unforgiveness**

“When ye stand praying, forgive...”

— *Mark 11:25*

Bitterness blocks breakthrough.

### **3. Doubt and Double-Mindedness**

“Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

— *James 1:7*

Faith fuels power. Doubt disables it.

### **4. Wrong Motives**

“Ye ask amiss...”

— *James 4:3*

God won't empower selfish agendas.

## **10. How to Begin Praying with Power**

### **1. Get Right with God**

Confess sin. Forgive others. Ask for a clean heart.

### **2. Get in the Word**

Pray Scripture. Align your requests with what God already said.

### **3. Get Filled with the Spirit**

Surrender fully. Ask for fresh filling daily (Ephesians 5:18).

### **4. Get Bold in Faith**

Step out. Ask big. Trust God. Believe without wavering.

### **5. Get Expectant**

Expect results—not because you're great, but because **God is faithful**.

## **Conclusion: When Heaven Bends Low**

Powerful prayer is not a display of our strength—it's a declaration of God's.

It's the cry of a righteous heart in full surrender.

It's the bold request rooted in childlike trust.

It's the private whisper that moves the hand of Almighty God.

So rise up, believer.

Purify your heart.

Fill your mouth with the Word.

Press into the throne room.

Ask for rain.

Call for fire.

Pray for nations.

Declare His promises.

Because when you pray with power...

**God is glorified. The earth is shaken. And the heavens respond.**

And that is the prayer...

**That pleases God.**

### **Conclusion: Prayer That Pleases God – From Routine to Relationship, From Words to Fire**

We have walked through the quiet places of personal devotion...

We have stood in Gethsemane with trembling surrender...

We have climbed the mountain with Elijah, waited in faith like Daniel, and interceded like Moses for a rebellious people.

We have seen prayer not as a formula, but as **fellowship**.

Not as a ritual, but as a **relationship**.

Not as manipulation, but as **submission** to the God whose will is perfect, whose timing is flawless, and whose power is unmatched.

And through it all, we've discovered that the kind of prayer that **pleases God** is not always the kind that **pleases flesh**.

### **Not All Prayers Are Equal**

The Bible never teaches that every prayer is effective.

Some prayers are hindered by unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18).

Some are blocked by pride and unbelief (James 4:3; 1 Peter 3:7).

Some are nothing more than noise—vain repetition, soulless emotion, religious formality.

But there is a kind of prayer that gets God's attention.

There is a kind of prayer that brings angels to battle, that shifts nations, that silences demons, that opens prison doors and raises the spiritually dead.

It is **effectual, fervent, faith-filled, Spirit-led, Scripture-aligned, Christ-glorifying prayer.**

It is the prayer that **pleases God.**

### **The Pattern of Powerful Prayer**

We've seen that powerful prayer includes:

- **Worship** – “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”
- **Surrender** – “Thy will be done...”
- **Petition** – “Give us this day our daily bread.”
- **Confession** – “Forgive us our debts...”
- **Intercession** – “Lead us not into temptation...”
- **Thanksgiving** – “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known...”
- **Persistence** – “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.”
- **Faith** – “Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.”
- **Spirit-led boldness** – “Praying always in the Spirit...”
- **Results that glorify God** – “That the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

This is not a list to memorize. It's a **lifestyle to live.**

### **God Is Still Looking for Prayer Warriors**

The eyes of the Lord still run to and fro through the earth, looking for someone to **stand in the gap** (Ezekiel 22:30).

He still seeks **true worshippers** who will pray in **spirit and truth** (John 4:24).

He still responds to the cries of the humble, the intercession of the broken, the persistence of the faithful, and the boldness of the righteous.

The throne of grace is still open.

But the question remains:

**Will you go deeper?**

### **From Learning to Living**

Now that you've studied what pleases God in prayer, it's time to live it.

Don't just read about the persistent widow—**become her**.

Don't just admire Elijah's fervency—**emulate it**.

Don't just agree with Paul's prayers—**pray them**.

Don't just marvel at Jesus' model—**walk in it**.

Let your home become a house of prayer.

Let your family become an altar of fire.

Let your words pierce the heavens and shake the gates of hell.

The greatest sermons are not preached—they're **prayed**.

The greatest moves of God are not strategized—they're **birthed in intercession**.

The greatest victories are not won by might or by power—but **by My Spirit, saith the Lord** (Zechariah 4:6).

### **A Final Plea from the Prayer Closet**

Don't settle for powerless religion.

Don't let prayer be your last resort—let it be your first response.

Don't wait for revival to fall—**kneel until it rises**.

Because prayer that pleases God is not optional—it's **essential**.

It's not for the elite—it's for the **elect**.

It's not about getting our way—it's about getting **His will done on earth as it is in heaven**.

If you've learned anything from this series, let it be this:

 **God still hears.**

 **God still answers.**

 **And God still moves—through the prayers of His people.**

So, close the door.

Fall on your face.

Lift up your voice.

**And pray with power—because it pleases your Father.**