

5 Ways to Get the Prayer Answers You Need

For many, prayer is one of the most illusive of Christian disciplines.

And the idea of praying effectively almost seems unattainable as many Christians fall into one of the following prayer traps:

- Praying a to-do list to God
- Praying mystical prayers
- Praying rote prayers

And yet the Scriptures say that you can pray effective prayers! “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” (James 5:16, MEV).

There is a way we can approach our prayer time that takes us beyond a “to-do list” prayer—prayers that start with item #1 on our prayer list, continues down the list until we’re done and then “Amen”. “To-do list” prayers never leave room for exalting God, never leave room for God to share *His* heart.

Effective prayer leaves no room for mystical or rote prayers, approaching prayer as this magical formula or this “spiritual zone” that we somehow enter that gives us supernatural power. Prayer isn’t like that.

Christianity has no “spiritual zones” to be entered. Christianity is a lifestyle to be lived and upon salvation we receive the Holy Spirit who abides in us, giving us *His* power to do all things. There is nothing mystical about it at all. We’re an empty vessel that has been filled and enabled to be used for a mighty task.

It’s as simple as that!

Prayer is a conversation—a conversation that builds relationship. And when we approach prayer from that perspective, we've already begun to shift our understanding of prayer from a "Santa's Wish List" style of praying, or a mystical magic formula, to effective Biblical praying that avails much.

This relationship we daily build through quality time in prayer is what builds our faith to believe Jesus' words that if we ask anything in His name, He will do it that the Father will be glorified. As we daily share our heart with Him and allow Him to daily share His heart with us, we build an understanding of what His will is and what His desire is, and we're able to pray according to His will and desire.

Through that relationship, our heart begins to break for the things that break His heart. Our heart rejoices over the things that cause Him to rejoice.

Here are five ways we can begin to pray effective prayers:

1. Start small. Don't start the first day with a goal to pray for an hour. Many people believe that praying one hour a day is biblical because Jesus questioned why His disciples couldn't watch and pray with Him for one hour.

There is nothing biblical about praying for one hour, just as it is not somehow a disappointment to God if you only pray for 15 minutes. There are some who can accomplish more through a ten minute prayer than those who drone on and on for a solid hour.

Start small by setting a five minute goal and then slowly increase your prayer time in small increments.

2. Keep a prayer list. Keep a list of needs you have and people you are praying for. While prayer time shouldn't just be an opportunity for us to shoot God a "to-do list", He does want us to take the time to share our needs with Him. James

says that we have not because we ask not.

Ask Him for what you need. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Having a prayer list is a great way to organize those prayer needs we have and track others' needs we've promised to pray for.

3. Take time to listen. One of the things many Christians fail to do in their prayer time is pause and listen for God's voice. Yes, He speaks through His Word, but He also speaks through prayer.

So many times we launch into prayer with "Dear God" and don't stop speaking until "Amen", leaving God with no opportunity to speak at all. And chances are He had something to share.

"My sheep hear My voice" is only true if we take time to listen. Begin by taking small blocks of time to sit in silence and listen for God's voice.

4. Pray Scripture. Praying scripture is a powerful tool that not only helps us pray the promises of God, but also helps to center our heart and mind on God's Word.

Praying prayers such as, "God, Your Word says that no weapon formed against me shall prosper and every tongue which rises against me in judgement I shall condemn. You said that this is my heritage from You and that my righteousness comes from You. Now I pray that the weapon the enemy has formed against me will not prosper! Not only that, may that weapon be for his destruction!"

As we pray scripture, we begin to gain a greater understanding of what the Bible says. In a sense, it's a form of meditating on God's Word, something we will examine in a few weeks.

5. Write down your prayers. Writing prayers to God is a very intimate form of praying. Because writing is a much slower

form of communication that speaking, we tend to be more thoughtful about what we pray. For many, it also enables them to share more deeply and intimately than they would by simply speaking their prayers.

Using a prayer journal in which you daily write out your prayers can be a very effective form of relationship-building in prayer.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray what we call the Lord's Prayer. I actually believe that this is a misnomer, because it's not really the Lord's prayer, it is the disciple's prayer—it is our prayer.

He never meant it to be an actual prayer to be prayed, but a formula to follow. It is the formula I choose to follow in my own daily prayer life.

I share about that in the journal/workbook I created called *Pray Through the Lord's Prayer*. It uses some of these tips I shared with you today, and I have found it to be very effective in my own prayer life.

By implementing these five tips, you will quickly see that prayer is not an illusive discipline. It can be far more than sending him a to-do list, and it has nothing to do with being mystical or praying rote prayers.

As you daily spend time with God sharing your heart and listening to His heart, you will see your relationship with Him grow and deepen each day.

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