

The Secrets to Answered Prayer

When you pray, do you have a vague feeling that something is lacking—that there isn't any power in your prayers? Do you struggle with doubt or fear, or simply lack confidence that God hears you at all?

I used to have feelings like this and would think, "Maybe I didn't say the right thing, or pray long enough or my words weren't eloquent enough." It was so frustrating because I didn't want to waste time, wondering if it was doing any good. After I pray, I want to know that God is working and my prayers make a difference.

It's easy to complicate our relationship with God and think we have to do certain things a certain way for them to be effective. But I've discovered that powerful, life-changing, dynamic prayer is amazingly simple.

To start, it's vitally important for us to have faith in God when we pray. Hebrews 11:6 (AMPC) says, "But without faith it is impossible to please *and* be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out]."

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

Ask yourself, "Do I believe God hears me, that He cares about me and wants to be involved in every area of my life?" If we don't really believe God loves us and wants to help us, we will struggle to have faith in Him. That's why knowing and experiencing the love of God is critical to developing a powerful prayer life.

It's also important that we approach God with sincere hearts. James 5:16b says, "The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]." A sincere heart is focused on God, trusting that He hears you and will answer. It doesn't mean you have to cry or yell to pray with sincerity; it's all about the attitude of your heart toward God.

Another important element of prayer is in the asking. It's exciting to get the revelation that God loves us, cares for us, and wants to help us. But we have a part to do in getting the things God has for us—because we have to actually make the requests for what we need. James 4:2c says, "You do not have, because you do not ask."

Now, it's important to understand that we have to ask for God's will to be done, not just for the things we think we want or should have apart from Him. James 4:1b tells us that striving to get what we want based on our carnal or fleshly desires leads to "strife (discord and feuds) ... conflicts (quarrels and fightings)." This causes us to be jealous, covet what others have and become angry when we can't "obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that [we] are seeking" (James 4:2b).

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

These verses show us what causes problems in people's lives. We think we're unhappy because we don't have all the stuff we want. But the reality is only God can give us what we're longing for in our hearts. He alone is the source of righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17). And we will never enjoy life until we learn to abide in Him and trust Him to do what's best for us.

If you're not sure whether you're asking for God's will in

your life (and we all go through times like this), you need to take time to just abide in Christ. In John 15:7, Jesus says, "If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."

To "abide" means to live, dwell and remain; it's not just spending time with God on Sunday morning and then going through your week doing what you want apart from Him. God wants to do life with us Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday too! As we spend time studying His Word, meditating on the Word, communicating with Him through prayer and asking Him to fulfill His plans for us, we will know His will in our hearts.

It's an amazing privilege to be able to talk to God. I want to encourage you to come to Him with humility and ask Him for the desires that are in your heart. Tell Him, "Lord, I don't want anything You don't want me to have. So, if this is not Your will, don't give it to me. I'm trusting You and want You to be in control of my life." Pray about everything that's on your heart, and keep it simple. Remember, prayer is simply talking to God, and you can pray anytime, anywhere, all day long ... and He will answer.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!