The only sort of prayer the Bible teaches about, is the sort that has powerful results.
UNLOCKING THE POWER OF PRAYER

by Berni Dymet

LIFE APPLICATION BOOKLET
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This booklet is a gift to you from Christianityworks. Our prayer is that you will truly be blessed as you receive God’s Word.
So many people believe in God and yet, they feel powerless in this world. So, they pray to Him for power. That seems to make sense, right? But what if instead of praying for power, He wants us to pray with power.

One of the most exciting things that I know about God – and I’m grinning ear-to-ear with joy as I think about this – is that He delights in empowering ‘little people’, common, ordinary, garden-variety people like you and me.

Some of us might imagine that the ones whom God empowers are the big names, or the big preachers, or the big leaders. I’m sure He does do that; at least, with some of them. But it’s the ‘little people’ in the pews, whom He also delights in empowering.

CHAPTER 1
Praying With Power
Now, that’s important because so often the little people feel as though God’s power is only for the ‘super Christians’ (whatever we think those people might look like). But actually, God’s power is for anyone and everyone who puts their trust in Jesus Christ, His Son.

The reason I know this, is because of one of the many letters written by the early Christian leader Paul, he wrote one particular letter to the ‘little people’ in the pews of a church in a place called Ephesus in Greece. That’s right, he wrote this letter to the whole Church; not just to the elders or to the preacher.

And in this letter, Paul tells these people in the pews in Ephesus, about how he prays for them. This is what he wrote:

_I keep asking the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, that He may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe._

_That power is like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him up from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the age to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to
be head over everything for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.
(Ephesians 1:17-23)

I love the way that Paul starts off. He’s such a great guy – so direct and so ‘in our faces’. His prayer is that the ‘little people’ in the pews in Ephesus – and the rest of us, who believe in Jesus – would get to know God better. He doesn’t pray here that we would sin less or that we would feel better about ourselves. Neither does he pray that God would use us more powerfully or that we would become mighty prayer warriors or ‘big’ people; or that we would be used by God to perform miracles … or anything else, for that matter.

No, he doesn’t pray any of those things. Instead, Paul wants us to know God better. All of us in the pews. That includes you and me.

He tells the good folk in Ephesus that he has been pleading with God that He would put His Spirit in them, so they would know Him better. Obviously, Paul knows that they need to know God better. But there’s another purpose behind this prayer. He also wants them to open up their eyes. In fact, he wants God to open their eyes, and ours as well. I can hear him shouting, “Wake up!” (As only Paul could). “Wake up! Open your eyes! Have a look at this!”

I pray also that the eyes of your heart might be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He’s called.
you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in
the saints, and His incomparably great power
for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18-19)

There are three things Paul aches for his
beloved friends in Ephesus to see with their
eyes opened by God:

1. The **certain hope** of the future they have in
   Christ.

2. The **riches of their inheritance** in Christ;
   and … wait for it …

3. The **incomparably great power** for us who
   believe.

Now, I’m definitely no great scholar of Greek,
the ancient language in which Paul originally
wrote. Like most people, I have to rely on the
linguistic work done by translators and scholars
so that I can read God’s Word in English. To
understand the full force of what Paul is saying
here, I rely on a great teacher and colleague of
mine, Dr Barry Chant.

Back when I was studying under him as a
student at Bible College, Barry said something
along these lines: “If I were to transliterate the
Greek words that Paul uses here to describe
the nature of the power that he wants us to
wake up to, it would go something like this –
‘incomparably great power’ would sound more
like ‘hyper ballistic, metaphonic, dynamic’ power.

Do you get the point?

Paul isn’t talking about some teensy weensy
little bit of power. He’s not even talking about
a moderate amount of power. He’s not even
talking about a lot of power. He’s saying, “I’m
praying for you, that you would get to know
your God better.” Then you would know – finally wake up to the fact – that the power He has ready and waiting for you is ‘hyperballistic, megathonic dynamic’ power.

And indeed, Paul is also letting us know that this power is for you and me. Because he goes on to explain in Ephesians 1:20 that it’s the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead. That same power is the power that God has for you, if you believe in Him.

Now, it’s kind of a contradiction, given that we access that power by bowing our lives down in complete submission to God through Jesus Christ. We humble ourselves at the foot of the cross and we cry out, “God, it’s not about me; it’s about You.”

Through doing that, it’s really easy to develop what I call a ‘worm theology’. Psalm 22:6 says:

But I am a worm and not a human, scorned by others and despised by people.

God’s people know that, in the scheme of things, we’re not at the top of everything. God is. There is an enormous gulf between the pure heights reserved for God and the low, low, low state of affairs of sinful, imperfect humans. Recognising that fact should lead us to admit what is put simply in Psalm 22:6 – we are a ‘worm’, a bottom-feeder trying to survive in the dirt and grime of our existence.

But the amazing point about realising this ‘worm theology’, when it comes to our low estate, is that God wants to restore us back into His image! That’s what he wants to do in our lives. He wants to adopt us back into His family, to give us
**hope, riches and power.** Not so we can misuse and abuse those things as we used to do for our own selfish gain. No! Not for that, but so that we can be His children, His agents of peace on planet Earth, in this warring world.

And we’re restored back into His image, we can be His light to shine out His glory into this dark and lost world. As we start to live out that sort of life – the sorts of life He always intended for us to live – it truly does become all about Him. But at the same time, He fills us with His joy and a peace and a wonder through this laying down of our lives, which words simply cannot describe.

Do you believe in Jesus? Are you one of these weak sinners on your knees before God? If so, then those three things that Paul prayed for in Ephesians Chapter 1 are for you. The hope, the riches and the power are for you and me, here and now.

So if you do believe in Jesus, it’s time for you to stop praying for power. It’s time to stop asking God for power because His word clearly tells us that this incomparably great power – this hyperballistic, megathonic dynamic power – is already ours. It’s time to take the little bit of faith that we’ve got in our hearts and start praying with power, here and now.

Let’s give this a moment to sink in. What God wants us to do is let the Holy Spirit etch God’s Word onto our hearts.

Instead of praying for power, it’s time to start praying with power, the hyperballistic, megathonic dynamic power that God has already given us.
The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that God has already given you.

EXPLOR

I keep asking the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, that He may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him up from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the age to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:17-23)
QUESTION 1

Until you read this chapter – be honest – what was sin your heart and in your mind about God’s power for you?
QUESTION 2

Read Ephesians 1:17-23 again for yourself. What is God saying to you today about His power for you?

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QUESTION 3

How do you feel, when you relate the resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead to your own life; your own circumstances?
QUESTION 4

When you think about the challenges that you’re facing right now, do they look any different to you now, in the light of God’s Word?
Take the insurmountable obstacles that you’re facing in your life today, and start praying about them with the power that God has already given you.
Dear Father God,

Please be at work in me right now, opening the eyes of my heart. I want to have more and more light shining by Your Spirit on to the certain hope of the future with Jesus, and the riches of the heavenly inheritance He provides to me. You know I always stumble and struggle to do things in my own strength. I know I can’t get through life by relying on my own power. You are so generous to give Your incomparably great power to me. Keep reminding me to pray with that power I already have; the power that You demonstrated so amazingly when You raised my Lord and Savior, Jesus from the dead. In His name I pray.

Amen
CHAPTER 2
What Can I Ask For?

When you pray, what can you ask God for? Have you ever wondered that? I mean, can we ask for anything and everything, or are there limits to what He wants us to ask of Him?

As we saw in the last chapter, God gives his ‘incomparably great power’ to those who believe in His Son Jesus. That means that we don’t have to pray to God for power; we can go straight to our heavenly Father and pray with power.

Woohoo! That makes a huge difference to the way that we ask things of God.

Okay, that’s great in theory. But most of us still come back to that question – what can I ask God for? What are the limits, the boundaries, if any, to my prayer? After all, we want to get it right, don’t we? We don’t want to offend God, or presume too much.
So how does this all work in practice? On the one hand, He is the sovereign God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. That’s why Jesus taught us to pray like this:

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* (Matthew 6:10)

On the other hand, if I truly am God’s child, then shouldn’t I be able to ask Dad for whatever I please, as a child would ask of its father? I mean, that’s what kids seem to do with their parents.

When I read through the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians for the first time, what I discover is a truly amazing list of things that I already am and things that I already have: in Christ. Paul tells us here that we already have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, as well as hope, as well as the riches of our inheritance in Christ, not to mention all this power that we’ve been talking about. (Ephesians 1:3-23)

But if God does want to bless me, is it okay or is it not okay for me to ask for blessing? Can I ask Him for a new house? Or should I stick to stuff that’s not about me but for other people? But then, I have needs too.

You see the dilemma in all of this don’t you. Sure God has given us power but we don’t want to abuse that power in prayer.

To tell you the truth, for a long time, I was confused about this whole ‘prayer’ thing. And I know that I’m not alone in this. So many people struggle with the huge question of: “What can I ask God for?” – and that’s why we’re going to take a look at that right now.

There are two schools of thought about this question – two extreme ends of the spectrum – if
you will, about what we can ask for in prayer. The first of these believes that God’s Word says we can ask for anything we want and it will be given to us.

After all, Jesus said:

*Whatever you ask for, in prayer with faith, you will receive.* (Matthew 21:22)

So … I have a shopping list: “I believe in a doubling of my salary. I believe for … well, I want to win the lotto and have $50 million. Ooh! I believe for three new cars, a house full of new furniture and a boat (definitely believing for that boat!). That’s what Jesus said I could do. Right?! So I’m going to pray for those things, in faith.”

Let’s call this first school of prayer, the ‘Name It and Claim It’ school.

The second school (at the complete opposite end of the spectrum) goes something like this: “The only thing that matters is God’s will. I really shouldn’t ask for anything for myself. I’m going to pray for everyone and everything else, but not for me. That would be wrong.”

After all, Jesus said:

*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?* (Matthew 16:24-26)

Let’s call this second school, the ‘Not for Me’ school of prayer.
So, which one’s right? Both appear to be supported by Scripture.

Well, let me take you to a third school of prayer. It’s called the ‘Jesus School of Prayer’.

That ‘whatever you ask for’ teaching from Jesus, recorded in Matthew 21:22, came in those final tense days and hours before His crucifixion. Jesus knew what was going to happen. He knew He was about to be arrested and then go through a series of sham trials, so that He could be nailed to a cross and then buried in a tomb. Of course, He also knew about His resurrection and His ascension.

He knew that even though the events of Pentecost may have seemed a million miles away, they really were just around the corner. Soon, Jesus would no longer physically be with his followers. Instead, soon His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, would be poured out in power on His disciples.

So given their criticality, many of the most important things which He had to say, He left until these final tense hours. And when it came to prayer, this is what He said:

Believe me that I am in my Father and the Father is in me. But if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do; in fact, [they] will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If, in my name, you ask me for anything, I will do it. (John 14: 11-14)

At this same time, Jesus also said:

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish and it will be done for
you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

(John 15:7-8)

And, again, a few chapters on:

On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. (John 16:23-24)

Three times in these last days and hours of His earthly life, Jesus makes the same promise to His disciples; that they can ask anything of God in Jesus's name and it will be done for them.

Three times he said it, so quite clearly, He must have thought it was incredibly important!

Jesus was giving His followers an outrageous licence to pray; they could ask for anything. Anything means ‘anything in His name’ – and it will be given to them.

In fact, He fully expected His followers to do greater works than the amazing things that He had done. That, my friend, stretches my faith.

But (yep, there’s a ‘but’) there is some fine print in these promises for those who would follow after Jesus. There are clear caveats. In fact, there are three clear caveats, or conditions on powerful prayer. Let’s take a closer look at those passages in John and pick them out:

• **Caveat 1:** “So that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (Or: “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit.”)

• **Caveat 2:** “If you abide in me and my words abide in you ...”
• **Caveat 3:** “Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask ...”

Do you see that these aren’t unlimited promises? These aren’t promises that we can possibly translate into supporting the idea of ‘me-centric’ prayer. They aren’t proof texts for the *Name It and Claim It* school of prayer. Far from it. They’re *Jesus-centric* not *me-centric*.

Their purpose is God’s glory; not mine or yours, but His.

Listen to the first condition: “So that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (Or: “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit.”) Do you see how the *anything that we can ask for* prayer has to be, first and foremost, for God’s glory?

The second condition is: “If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you can ask for anything.” Not only does it have to be for God’s glory, but the promises Jesus made are only for people who are close to Him. Those who have a deep relationship with Him, and He and His words abide in them. The people who have drawn close to Jesus in prayer, in word and in deed.

That third condition makes clear that these promises are only for people who will actually ask. In fact, this third condition is more of a challenge, isn’t it? A challenge that stretches our faith. Stretches it to trust that we *can* ask God, and that we *should* ask Him. But only for those things that bring Him glory. Only for those things that take His kingdom forward. Only for those things that see His will done.

When we take these three caveats into account, we can see how what Jesus said in this final weeks, fits perfectly with the Lord’s Prayer:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on this earth. (Matthew 6:9-10)

Do you see how all of Jesus’ teaching on prayer comes together as one? The power in prayer is in us laying down our will for Him. The power in prayer is when we say, “Father, you know something? I actually don’t want anything that you don’t want. Yes, I need some things and yes I want some things, but only if you want them for me first.”

My friend, there is such great power in the sort of prayer that is offered when we lay down our pride and our will, as well as our shopping list, and we do that all for Him. The sort of prayer that comes from a heart that wants to receive what God wants us to receive – and to see done in this world, what God wants to have done.

When we pray, “God, let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done; let Your name be hallowed across the earth” – and that’s what we truly want – there is such enormous power in that kind of prayer.

EXPLORE

Believe me that I am in my Father and the Father is in me. But if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do; in fact, [they] will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If, in my name, you ask me for anything, I
will do it. (John 14:11-14)

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. (John 15:7-8)

On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. (John 16:23-24)
GOING DEEPER...

QUESTION 1

What do the three passages from John 14-16 tell you about how you should be praying?
QUESTION 2

Just think through those three caveats on powerful prayer in relation to the things that you’ve been praying for. Does your prayer fit inside those boundaries?
If you have believed it was wrong to ask God for things, how will Jesus’s words in John 14-16 impact your prayers?
QUESTION 4

If you believed it was right to ask God for anything, did you want God’s will to be done – or your own?
QUESTION 5

Consider again the John 14-16 passages. What will it look like in your life if you start praying with the ‘outrageous licence’ Jesus gives His followers?
Dear God.

Thank You for Jesus and the powerful revelation that He gives me about how I can come to You with my requests. I praise You for Him and the wonderful, outrageous licence for prayer He has explained. It’s so amazing to know that I can come to You and ask You for anything, but keep my heart motivated by Your desires, not mine. Keep fuelling me with Your Holy Spirit, so that I can desire for Your will be done and Your kingdom to be served by whatever it is that I ask of You in prayer. In Jesus’ mighty name I pray.

Amen.
Praying with power and being able to ask God for anything are two incredible gifts to anyone who believes in Jesus. But as we’ve seen, there are some clear caveats on powerful prayer. Apart from how we ask, what we can ask for and why we’re asking for it, there are other parts of prayer that we often wrestle with.

For example, what about when we go to God in prayer to ask for something really, really good, something that we really, really need but … well … He doesn’t give us an answer straight away.

Sometimes, He can take a week, a month, a year … even a lifetime to answer. Why? Why? Why?

What you and I would really like is if God was entirely predictable. We would like Him to see things our way and then use His power to do our bidding. Okay, that may seem a bit harsh but, by and large, it’s true, isn’t it? Our natural inclination
is to figure out what we need and then go and ask God for it.

And we expect Him to deliver on our terms, and in the timeframe that we have in mind, right? But it doesn’t always work that way does it, for …

“... my thoughts are not your thoughts,” says God. “Neither are my ways are your ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

(Isaiah 55:8–9)

I would love to tell you that after year, decades of praying, I have God all figured out; that I know that if I ask Him this way or that way, or that if I push this button at this particular time, that’s how I get the answers that I’ve been looking for.

I’d love to tell you that … but I can’t.

Fortunately, Jesus talked about these things in some rather odd parables. Parables that led me to realise that we simply can’t talk about experiencing the power of prayer unless we learn to expect the unexpected.

So, let’s have a look at a couple of those parables.

The first one is about an unjust judge – strange, eh?! For many years, I found this parable really challenging, because in it, Jesus seems to be suggesting that God is a bit like an unjust judge. Really?!

But let’s have a closer look at it:
Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said: ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay long in helping them? I tell you, He will quickly grant justice to them and yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on this earth?” (Luke 18:2–8)

Jesus told this parable because He knows that sometimes, God doesn’t answer immediately, so we need to learn to pray and not lose heart. Losing heart is exactly what happens when we discover that God doesn’t dance to our merry tune on a couple of minutes’ notice.

Of course, all too often that’s exactly what we expect Him to do, because, we only see things from our limited, narrow perspective. We see things in part from where we sit. But He sees the whole picture from where He sits.

Did you notice how Jesus focuses in this parable, on a widow, a woman who is among the most disadvantaged of all people in that society? She’s obviously having problems with someone. We don’t know what the problem is, but we
do know that, simply put, something unjust is happening to her; to this woman who already is disadvantaged.

She truly is at the bottom of the heap in the social and economic structures of the time. She’s suffering an injustice so she goes and does what she should do. She throws herself on the system of justice. She goes to the judge … but he refuses her justice.

Now most of us, we’d go home at this point, with our shoulders slumped, tears rolling down our faces and sobbing, “It’s not fair.” The judge’s refusal to deal with the injustice would cause us to lose heart, but not this plucky widow. There was a lot more to her than that. She went back again and again and again and again and eventually, this unjust judge gives her justice – not because he was a good guy, but because she persisted.

Doesn’t God sometimes feel like an unjust God? When we have a deep need, or we’re aching, or we need Him to come through on something, what we feel like doing is shaking our fists at Him and crying out, “This is not fair! Why are you delaying?!”

That’s how it feels, doesn’t it?

Sure, that’s exactly how it feels! And that’s why I believe Jesus chose to give us this particular parable. When Jesus goes on to explain about what the powerless, lonely widow does, basically He’s saying that if the unjust judge grants the widow justice because of her persistence, how much more will our righteous, holy and loving Father in heaven grant justice to us!

*And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay*
long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth.

(Luke 18:7-8)

Do you think God will delay for long? That’s the question Jesus is asking. In other words, what we have here is a call of faith from Jesus. Faith in who God is and faith in what God will do.

You see, we’d rather have God respond immediately to our need but He is so much wiser than that, and He’ll use opportunities to stretch and to grow our faith at the same time. To make us think about whom or what we’re putting our faith in. Are we putting our faith in the things we can see with our own eyes; in the things we’re going through; in the pain and the injustice – or in God?

As Jesus wondered at the end of the parable, when the ‘Son of Man’ (one of the important titles applied to Jesus) comes back into our world, “will He find faith on this earth”?

Will you or I display the sort of persistent faith today that Jesus is pointing to in His example of the vulnerable widow? Good question. What’s your answer?

The next parable speaks on this same topic. It’s about a friend at midnight and, yes, it’s another weird one.

And Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine has just arrived and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Don’t bother me. The doors have already been locked and my children are in bed with me. I can’t get up and give you anything.’
I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he’s a friend, at least because of his persistence, he will get up and give him whatever he needs.” (Luke 11:5-8)

Do you see? This parable is saying exactly the same thing as that widow parable. I also want us to notice that this ‘friend’ parable in Luke 11 comes straight after Luke’s telling of the Lord’s Prayer. As in, the very next verse. So, this parable is Jesus teaching us about a prayer of faith and a prayer of persistence.

Sometimes, it does feel as if we might be inconveniencing God with our requests. As if that were even possible but, you know, that’s how it feels from where we sit. Then, we can start feeling like God couldn’t even be bothered helping us because, “Well, it’s just too much hard work.” Ever felt like that in prayer?

Did you notice how this parable is again not told from our perspective? Jesus is presenting us with a perspective on how God relates to us and his punch line is: “Because of his persistence, the man will get up and give him whatever he needs.” (Luke 11:8)

So again Jesus is explaining that this is the way that God responds to those who are persistent in prayer and faithful to Him. Why does God do things this way? Because persistence is about trusting in the faithfulness of our Father in heaven, no matter what we can see or what we’re going through. No matter how big and ugly and hairy the monster is in front of us. It’s about putting our faith in the great, unseen reality that is God, not in the things that we can see.
When the world is screaming out at us, “Your God has abandoned you,” we just stand in that place and say, “No, actually I’m going to go to my God and I’m going to believe what Jesus said to me in these parables and I’m just going to keep asking Him. I need this justice; I need this thing; I need God to help me.”

Look at how Jesus finishes off this piece of powerful teaching:

So I say to you, ‘Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you’ll find. Knock and the door will be opened.’ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you, if your child asks for a fish, will give them a snake instead of a fish? Or if a child asks for an egg, you’ll give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give His spirit to those who ask? (Luke 11:9-13)

Do you see?

Jesus wants us to know that faith and persistence are what pay off in prayer. Being able to do that can sound tough, but God hasn’t left us to do it on our own. As we’ve seen, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we already have the ‘incomparably great power’ of God as the fuel for our prayers.

Isn’t that fantastic?!

So we can go to God with our requests for anything, knowing that He hears us and that answers us when we put His kingdom first.
Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said: “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay long in helping them? I tell you, He will quickly grant justice to them and yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on this earth?” (Luke 18:2-8)

And Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine has just arrived and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Don’t bother me. The doors already been locked and my children are in bed with me. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he’s a friend, at least because of his persistence, he will get up and give him whatever he needs.” (Luke 11:5-8)
So I say to you, ‘Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you’ll find. Knock and the door will be opened.’ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you, if your child asks for a fish, will give them a snake instead of a fish? Or if a child asks for an egg, you’ll give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give His spirit to those who ask?

(Luke 11:9-13)
GOING DEEPER...

QUESTION 1

Think of times in your life when God’s taken a long time to reply to your prayer, or He didn’t seem to have answered at all. How did you feel about God at those times?
QUESTION 2

What do these two parables teach you about the things that you’re praying for right at the moment?
QUESTION 3

Jesus makes incredible promises about God hearing our prayers in Luke 11:9-13. Who does this alter your impression of God and your understanding of your prayer life?
QUESTION 4

Think about the unjust judge and the friend at midnight. What is God saying to you through those two characters?
QUESTION 5

Start making a conscious effort to pray with persistence and faith about the most difficult things in your life. Notice how God works in you through this sort of prayer, and how He deals with the things that you’re praying about.
PRAY

Father God

Ruler of all and rightful judge of everyone, I am completely blown away by how much You do for me, and how You respond to my prayers. I ask that You prepare my heart and mind to expect the unexpected, when I humbly come to You with my requests, my concerns and my praise. Like the widow and friend in the parables that Jesus told, empower me with an attitude of persistence and faith whenever I pray to You. Thank You that You care about justice more than I do. Thank you for allowing Jesus to suffer such incredibly injustice for me. And thank you that you want to grow my faith, through the way that I pray over my circumstances. Teach me dear Lord all that you want me to learn. In Jesus’ name I pray.

Amen.
Here at Christianityworks our passion is seeing countless lives transformed one by one, as we share the good news of Jesus through the media around the globe.

It’s something that we’ve been doing since 1957. Of course back then we were known as Back to the Bible, changing our name to Christianityworks in 2001.

Today, the radio and television broadcasts that we produce with the support of friends like you, reach a weekly audience that we conservatively estimate to be over 20 million people in 160 countries.

We believe that as we make innovative use of mass media – radio, television, digital + online and print – God works mightily by His Spirit and His Word, transforming lives.

In fact, it’s not something that we just believe, it’s something that we know.

We receive so many testimonies each month from around the globe, of lives that have been saved, touched and transformed as God works through the ministry of Christianityworks.

Thank you for remembering that Christianityworks is a faith based ministry. We rely on the support of friends like you to reach the lost with the saving love of Jesus.

Your secure, online gift today, will make a powerful difference in the lives of so many.

To give, just visit: christianityworks.com/donate.

Thank you with all my heart.

Your friend in Jesus,

Berni Dymet
The only sort of prayer the Bible teaches about, is the sort that has powerful results.

So often, we see things happening in people’s lives and we feel so helpless.

"The problem’s so big, so daunting ... I can’t possibly make a difference. I guess if all else fails I could always pray."

But that’s not what God’s Word teaches at all. When we pray in secret – though we might just be a single voice amidst a sea of complacency – that prayer rises up to God. Prayer is our opportunity to join hands with God to bring His healing power to bear – across the globe, or in a single life.

There’s unlimited power in prayer – because we pray to an unlimited God!