

LESSON #2

“YOUR PRAYERS HAVE POWER:
GOD’S PROMISE BY WAY OF ELIJAH”

GOD’S PROMISE:

The fervent prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much and has wonderful results.

James 5:16 (NTV)

MY PROMISE

I will make prayer my priority and passion.

Story – Elijah - 1 Kings 18:30-46

Reading: Matthew 6:5-15

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the Street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. “This, then, I show you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

INTRODUCTION

There are many times that we try to understand the value of prayer. If we are honest, speaking alone orally or in silence to someone who we do not see and do not know if He is listening or cannot be, is at least discouraging or illogical. However, it was this method that Jesus chose so that you and I can communicate with Him. When we say “prayer”, we are declaring something that is much more than a mere conversation between two people (even though it is). Prayer has something beautiful and profound that should never be ignored or forgotten. Prayer is well directed, it is powerful and effective.

Elijah’s story as he faced Baal’s priests is one that shows an effective, fervent, and strong prayer. He prayed and fire fell. Impressive! (verse 38). What about for our daily lives? Would there be something that can help us to live lives of effective and genuine prayer?

THE ELEMENTS OF A GENUINE AND EFFECTIVE PRAYER:

1. – GOD IS WHO IS IMPORTANT - Matthew 5:5-6

The first thing that Jesus notices, when it comes to prayer is the fact that many think that prayer is “words that have to be said” or “to say words so that others can see and hear us.” Both reasons are incorrect. A true prayer is when you “go to a secret place with God.” What does it mean to “get in a

secret place with God”?

1. - Secret – When Jesus says “do it in secret” He is not only saying to have a time alone with God (at home, at work, on the lawn, in the park). That is your personal devotional time. He is also speaking of an “attitude.” I can be in the middle of a multitude and be “in a secret place” with God. That means that my focus at that moment is dedicated only to God. That attitude will create that instead of being religious; I become a person that is constantly connected to God in prayer.

2. God is there – When Jesus says, “your Father...will reward you” means that His strength, power, presence, and favor will be with you at all time. That is the results of having applied the principle of “secret” to your prayer life.

2. – IT IS MORE THAN WORDS; IT IS THE INTENTION AND DESIRE OF THE HEART -Matthew 5:7-8

Jesus knows truly how many words have the intention of calling His attention. Also, the shortest “prayers” are found saturated with genuine intention before Him. All the people who said “help me”, “have mercy on me,” “save me”, “forgive me”, etc., were not disappointed. God heard them and acted in their favor.

More than being an obligation to say something “pleasing” to God, prayer is a fervent desire to know that He is on our side. He hears a prayer from a sincere, contrite, and humble heart. Words are secondary.

3. WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO SAY, ALWAYS SAY IT WITH A SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS - Matthew
14-15

In verses 9-13 we find the known Lord's Prayer. This model of prayer is not meant to be converted into our "vain repetitions." Jesus' intention was to teach us the necessary elements of a genuine prayer. For example:

We should always give God the honor;

Ask that His kingdom come;

Ask that His will be done;

Humbly ask that He feed us daily;

Ask that He help us to be forgivers just like He is infinitely a forgiver;

Beg Him to free us from all temptation and to keep us from evil.

If we do these things, then the related details to each of those elements, God will be in charge of supplying.

HOWEVER, the most important element is the spirit with which we make these declarations in prayer. We are at peace with everyone, according to the dictation of our conscience. Do we have accounts that have not been closed? Do we live under condemnation? Are we looking to do evil to someone else? All of these things show a spirit bound to attitudes that dishonor the heart of God to whom we are praying.

The secret of prayer is not the words, the posture, or the place. The secret is forgiveness. At the moment that we decide to free other people, or difficult circumstances, or ourselves, then God who sees in secret will begin to act in public.

Only a forgiving spirit can discover the beauty and power that is prayer with a forgiving spirit.