

The Prayer of Faith: Five Principles

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF GROWING IN FAITH

- A. Jesus taught on the importance of faith as a foundational principle in the kingdom of God. We will experience more of His kingdom activity and Jesus' provision for us, and will enjoy our relationship with Him more as we believe for more. God releases more blessing according to our faith.

¹³*Jesus said to the centurion, "...as you have believed, so let it be done for you." (Mt. 8:13)*

²⁹*Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." (Mt. 9:29)*

⁴⁸*He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well..." (Lk. 8:48)*

²⁰*He said to them, "...if you have faith...nothing will be impossible to you." (Mt. 17:20)*

²¹*Jesus said to them, "...if you have faith and do not doubt...even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen." (Mt. 21:21)*

²³*Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." (Mk. 9:23)*

- B. The prayer of faith includes prayer with confidence—in the *authority of Jesus* over sickness and the works of darkness, in the *blood of Jesus* to qualify weak people to be vessels to release His power, and in *His desire* to bless His people.

¹⁵*And the prayer of faith will save [heal] the sick, and the Lord will raise him up... (Jas. 5:15)*

- C. Some believe for very little and therefore experience so little of God's blessing. If we believe for a lot and only get part of it, we will still experience much more than when we believe for little.
- D. We must intentionally cultivate growing in faith by hearing and speaking God's word (Rom. 10:17).

¹⁷*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)*

II. RECEIVING OUR PRAYER REQUESTS: TWO WAYS (MK. 11:24)

- A. Jesus described how faith operates. He indicated that we receive our prayers in two ways. First, we "receive" them in the spirit realm (v. 24b), and then we "have" them in the natural (v. 24c) when we see them with our eyes. We need to be aware of the distinction between the spiritual and the natural realms to understand how prayer works.

²³*"...whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*

²⁴*"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural]." (Mk. 11:23-24)*

- B. Faith is the substance and evidence that goes beyond what we see or feel with our natural senses. Faith is the substance, or title deed, of what we already possess in the spirit. Faith is not physical evidence, but it is evidence given by the Spirit.

¹*Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...*

³*...the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (Heb. 11:1-3)*

- C. The spiritual realm is invisible, and yet it is more powerful than the natural realm (Heb. 11:3).

III. FIVE PRINCIPLES IN PRAYING IN FAITH

- A. I identify five principles, or “steps,” related to having a biblical perspective for praying with faith. There is no place in Scripture that provides a one-two-three formula of how to pray. I present these five steps as a biblical framework to help us understand how faith and perseverance relate to prayer.
- B. We want to avoid two extremes—on the one hand, mere humanistic positive thinking that has faith in human ability instead of God, and on the other hand, unbelief that ignores cultivating faith.
- C. **Step One:** Verbalize our requests to the Father. A foundational principle of the kingdom is that God releases more blessing if we ask for it. This means verbalizing our prayers, not just thinking them.

⁶*...in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...*
(Phil. 4:6)

1. Many times people *think* about a prayer request without actually *praying* for it.

²*Yet you do not have because you do not ask.* (Jas. 4:2)

2. God knows all our needs (Mt. 6:32), but requires that we ask Him for them—asking causes us to connect with His heart and to recognize specific blessings from God as His answer to our prayers. Asking causes us to know that what we say moves His heart and matters to Him.

- D. **Step Two:** Receive your requests in the spirit realm. When Scripture states that God *hears* our prayers, it means that He *approves* of our requests. When we pray according to God’s will, we know that He approves of the request, so we are to *receive it in the spirit realm* with confidence.

¹⁴*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* (1 Jn. 5:14)

1. The Father has already given us every spiritual blessing that exists in the heavenly realm (Eph. 1:3). These spiritual blessings include the indwelling Spirit; the right to use Jesus’s authority; the promise of God’s provision, protection, and direction to do His will; and more.

³*Blessed be the God and Father...who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.* (Eph. 1:3)

2. We often pray for things that are not specifically promised in the Scripture, but that are not in opposition to the Word of God either. For example, a person may pray that it will not rain on his wedding day or that he will be accepted as a student at a prestigious university or that he will make the football team or be accepted on a worship team or get the job he applied for.

3. The Spirit may indicate or confirm a promise to our heart that He will grant a request. Some circumstantial blessings are subjective rather than directly promised in the Word, so we must be careful not to be presumptuous and then become angry if the answer does not come.

- E. **Step Three:** Engage in faith that you have received what you asked for. Jesus spoke of the necessity of continually believing that we have received the “title deed” (in the spirit realm) to our prayer requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm. The Devil’s plan is to overwhelm us with guilt, shame, fear, distraction, or unbelief, etc. so that we do not persistently engage in faith.

²⁴*“Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural].”* (Mark 11:24)

F. **Step Four:** Ask with persistence (Lk. 11:8), or remind God of His Word (Isa. 62:6). We are to remind the Lord consistently of what He has given us in the spirit realm. We thank Him for what we have received in the spirit as we ask Him to release it in a greater measure in the natural realm.

⁶“...you who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; ⁷and give Him no rest until He establishes [what He promised]...” (Isa. 62:6-7, NASB).

1. In prayer, put the Lord in remembrance of His Word and what He has already given us in the spirit realm in Christ— of what He has promised to give us related to our circumstances.

²⁶***Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case... (Isa. 43:26)***

2. Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about conversing and connecting with Him relationally. We believe God has approved of our prayer and released it to us in the spirit realm; therefore, we never stop reminding Him of it and thanking Him for it. As we remind God of His promises with thanksgiving, we position ourselves to receive them in the natural.

3. Jesus emphasized the value of perseverance and persistence in asking Him to release His blessings (Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:5-10; 18:1, 7). The verb He used is in the present continuous tense, meaning that we are to ask and keep on asking. Luke 11:5-10 records a parable Jesus taught to show the Father’s willingness to answer prayer and the value of continually asking.

⁸***“I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. ⁹I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Lk. 11:8-9)***

4. The idea is for us to ask that the request be manifest in the natural realm. We ask for the release in the natural of the things that we already have in the spirit. We do not ask God to give us the spiritual blessings that He has already given to us in the spirit realm (Eph. 1:3); rather, we ask Him to release them to us in a greater measure in the natural realm.

5. As we persevere in prayer, our requests move from the spiritual realm to the natural realm.

6. Paul called us to pray *with all perseverance*. Therefore, we should never stop asking, reminding, and thanking God until we see the answers to our requests with our eyes. When we ask casually, with little focus or effort, it shows that we do not value what we are praying for. When we prize something, we will search for it with all our heart (Jer. 29:13).

¹⁸***...praying always...being watchful to this end with all perseverance...for all the saints. (Eph. 6:18)***

7. Biblical promises are like a “title deed” to what we already possess in the spirit.

8. We do not *earn* answers to prayers by our persistence or obedience.

G. **Step Five:** Receive your requests in the natural realm. Prayers that are in God’s will are always answered in God’s timing and in God’s way, so do not give up too quickly or become discouraged if the answer to your prayer is delayed.

H. We can trust His leadership in the timing and method in which He answers our prayers.

- I. **The value of 90-second prayers:** Short prayers are effective. Even 90-second prayers matter and can connect our heart with God and release the answer to us. Do not put off praying until you have an hour to pray. Even while rushing to an appointment, waiting at a red light, or standing in line at a store, we can offer 90-second prayers that will make a difference in our life and the lives of others.
- J. **The value of “unanointed” prayers:** Some assume that if they do not feel anything when praying, then God does not feel anything either. They conclude that such prayers are ineffective. The good news is that though we offer our prayers in weakness, they ascend to God in power because of the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus and because they are in agreement with God’s heart.
- K. David was zealous to experience *all* the benefits of God’s grace available to him (Ps. 103:1-5). The fullness of our covenant blessings will come in the age to come. However, we must not draw back from seeing the partial blessing in this age as a down payment of more to come.

²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: ³who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from destruction... (Ps. 103:2-4)

- L. We do not always know the “measure” of covenant blessing that we will receive in this age, so I encourage people to seek for a “double portion” of whatever they are currently being blessed with.
- M. Abraham believed God’s promise for 25 years, even when it was impossible in the natural (Rom. 4). Abraham received the promise of an heir when he was 75 years old and Sarah was 65 years old (Gen. 12:4, 7). The promise was fulfilled when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:17). Abraham did not consider his aged body as something that could nullify God’s promise to him.
¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he [Abraham] did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. (Rom. 4:19-21)
- N. Sometimes we may need to believe for decades for a promise that will require God’s miracle power.

IV. GROWING IN FAITH

- A. Joy, or enjoying God, comes by believing in the Word. We can get to heaven without learning to walk in mature faith, but we will not enjoy our relationship with Jesus in fullness, as He intended.
¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13)
- B. We grow in faith by learning *who we are in Christ* and *what is available to us in Christ*. The most common lies of the enemy are that we are guilty and disqualified, that our small efforts do not make a difference, and that our difficult circumstances will not turn out for our good.
- C. We must confess the word over our heart and circumstances and against the works of the enemy. Our thoughts, words, and emotions are deeply interconnected. What we think and say greatly affects our emotional condition. We do not have to bow to emotions that dictate the lives of so many.

V. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (E. G., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?