

STUDY UNIT 1

James 5:16–18 / John 14:13–14 / John 15:16

GOD'S GREAT ASSERTIONS ABOUT YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Why would God encourage you to talk with Him and ask Him to do things for you and others? Because your Father in heaven has called you to join Him in His work to glorify His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The dimension of prayer is one of the most astonishing aspects of God's plan. He has chosen to glorify His name and character by allowing us to be actively involved. Remember what He has told those of us for whom He gave His life:

*"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you **that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.**"*
John 15:16

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**"*
Ephesians 2:10

Prayer is talking to our Father in heaven about living life for Him in this fallen world. Our prayer life with God involves life's greatest privilege, greatest wonders, greatest opportunities, and is our greatest weapon in the long war against God in which we serve as His soldiers, servants, and body.

Prayer is asking God to reverse the consequences of sin, its penalty, its power, and its presence in and through our life and the life of others for His glory. By asking for ourselves and others we will be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, **so that knowing and exalting the person, work, and love of Jesus Christ our Lord**, we may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

"I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."
Ephesians 3:14–19

Christ came to pay sin's penalty and replace an eternity in hell with an eternity in heaven for those who trust in Him alone. He asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with us and empower us to conquer sin and please God in all respects. And when our work on earth is done, we shall live in a new heavens and earth where sin is never present!

The teaching and examples we have of prayer in the New Testament all have this focus of Christ's love, the Spirit's power, the Father's glory, for all the saints. Let us begin our studies of

this great wonder of prayer by noting **the primary assertions God makes about our prayers to Him.**

1. **The fervent, effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much!**

“The fervent, effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

James 5:16

If we know Who we are talking to, what He wants, and is willing to do, and then boldly and confidently talk to Him about these things, we can expect Him to answer. When we pray “fervently and effectively” we are asking the Omnipotent Ruler of the universe to intervene in the world supernaturally to reverse the consequences of sin. What a privilege! What a wonder! The apostle Paul said:

*“We (Christians) **have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.... For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father.**”*

Ephesians 3:12–14

The following assertions clarify for us just what “effective” prayer is.

2. **Christians who are abiding in Christ can have powerful prayer lives.**

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.”

John 15:7–10

“Abiding in Christ” and “being filled with the Spirit” both describe our personal relationship with the Trinity when we are choosing to obey God’s Word, do what He says, and stay in dependence upon Him. We must yield to His will and maintain our dependence on Him to receive the promises He has made of giving us what we ask. Both abiding and being filled involve yielding our lives to God. This allows the indwelling Spirit to lead, teach, and enable us to do all that God asks of us (see Luke 4). Praying in the Spirit is to be led, taught, and enabled by the same Spirit to whom we are yielding our lives.

Christ used the relationship of a grape vine (referring to Himself) and a branch attached to a grape vine (referring to a Christian) to describe what an abiding relationship is.

*“Abide in Me, and I in you. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.** I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”*

John 15:4–5

3. Our knowledge of God’s Word, God’s will, and God’s name will determine the power of our intercessory prayers.

“If you abide in Me, AND My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
John 15:7

*“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **IF** we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”*
1 John 5:14–15

*“Whatever you ask **in My name**, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”*
John 14:13

To pray as God desires us to pray, we must fill our minds with His Word, so as to become aware of His will. To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray according to His will, and consistent with His character, nature, and purpose. Our Lord has given us authority to ask the Father for things and intercede for others in His name. We are invited to ask the Sovereign God of the universe for things in the name of His Son, things according to His will, things consistent with His Word. These things, we are told, He will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. What a stunning privilege.

4. If we ask God for wisdom (His view and opinion on a matter) He will give it, provided we believe God is able and willing to do so.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
James 1:5–8

These assertions from God regarding our prayers to Him are taught and illustrated in the many instructions and examples of prayer in Scripture that we will be considering in the following Study Units. May each one help you become a more confident and fruitful prayer warrior for the Lord. As you proceed through these Study Units, review **the following summary** of the Bible’s progressive revelation about prayer that we find in His Word to us:

Summary: My Prayer Life with God

We have a wonderful heavenly Father. He has a plan, devised before the foundation of the world, that is being worked out before us. We can only see a small part of this plan during our lives, but we know its course and its outcome as it is set out in God’s Word. We have the assurance that **we are part of this plan.**

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we would walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:10

“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”
John 15:16

The nature of my work for God **requires that I become a person of prayer**. This is communion with God of a profound nature and is an astonishing aspect of God’s plan. God could certainly execute His plan without using me, but He loves me and wants to share His life with me.

I have a foretaste of eternity here, as God’s child, to share His life and call upon Him with confidence. He is reversing the consequences of sin by His work in me and through me, to the glory of my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

UNIT 1 STUDY SESSION #1:

In preparation for the group study read and study the above material and then complete the following self-evaluation.

Evaluating My Prayer Life With God

1. Prayer is _____ the most important thing in my life.
_____ a very important part of my life.
_____ important in my life.
_____ a part of my life.
2. I keep track of my prayers and God's answers _____ I do _____ I have _____ I don't
3. My confidence that my prayers really make a difference is _____ strong _____ weak
4. If I am going to be confident, fervent, devoted, and constantly praying to God, I am going to need

Discussion Questions For Study Session #1

1. Have you ever kept a prayer journal? Do you have stories regarding that practice?
2. The first assertion of the study is the claim of James 5:16 that prayer can accomplish much—if it is “fervent and effectual.” So, let's assume that a prayer is “fervent and effectual.” What could such prayer accomplish?
3. To what degree is a person's maturity in Christ a factor in his or her prayer life?
4. Why doesn't God answer our prayers—ones that we know are requests for what is right and what He would want, even for what He has said He would do? This puzzled David (e.g. Psalm 6 and 13), and Job (13:24) and Paul (2 Cor 3:8). Why doesn't God always answer “good” prayers?
5. The last section of the study involves the warning in James 1 regarding praying to God for His wisdom about something without believing that God is able and willing to give as He has promised. Should verse seven's warning to such an individual apply to all his prayers?

Prayer Together

UNIT 1 STUDY SESSION #2:

In preparation for the second study session please consider doing the following project for the coming week.

Preparation For Session #2: Application Project

Our single project for this coming week is to set aside time to SEEK THE LORD IN PRAYER and to begin a PRAYER JOURNAL of your requests and God's answers.

We will be focusing on new aspects of prayer each week as we look at the many examples and instructions about our times and conversations with God. Continuing a PRAYER JOURNAL through these studies on prayer will be the foundational application each week and is encouraged. May we all be blessed by what happens!

You are encouraged to read the summary that ends this week's study (My Prayer Life With God) as you begin each of your prayer times this week. May it remind you of the important truths that God has revealed to us.

Your initial prayer journal can be quite simple, as shown here. It has proven effective for many.

Date	My Prayers	What Happened
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03/03/17	1. For the salvation of my son Johny	4/12/23 Guess what!!!
	2. I prayed for....	
	3. For....	3/5/17 Praise the Lord!
	4. For	

Discussion Questions

Our project this week was to set aside time to seek the Lord and pray, and to begin a prayer journal. If you were able to do this, can you share with us how this went?

Prayer Together