



HOW TO PRAY

BY JOYCE MEYER

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Printed in the United States of America.

First Printing, 2017

ISBN 978-1-942854-30-2

Joyce Meyer Ministries
P.O. Box 655
Fenton, Missouri 63026
joycemeyer.org

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INTRODUCTION

Prayer is one of the most powerful forces on earth.

However, when it comes to prayer, I think there's a lot of confusion about *how*, *where* and *when* we should do it.

I struggled with many of these questions for years. If my behavior wasn't very good, I was convinced I couldn't pray because I didn't *deserve* God's help. Or if I *did* pray, then I was certain I must not have prayed long enough for it to really matter. I thought, *Did it count? Did God really hear me?*

The good news is, God never intended for prayer to be complicated! He wants prayer to be like breathing—something that feels easy and natural... something we can do anywhere, *anytime*.

After more than 40 years of ministry, I've discovered that even though people may struggle with *how* to pray, they really *want* to pray. They want to know that God hears them and that their prayers are making a difference in their lives and in the world around them.

Here's the wonderful thing: God *wants that too*. I've learned through experience just how much God loves us, cares about us, and longs to be a part of every single area of our lives. He loves to hear our prayers!

How about you? When you pray, do you ever have a vague feeling that something is missing? Do you struggle with doubt or fear, or simply lack confidence that God even hears you at all? *If so, these teachings are for you.*

This book is truly a “how-to” manual for learning to pray simple, enjoyable, *powerful* prayers. It contains principles that I believe will help you see God as a *Friend* Who delights in hearing from you and longs to help you.

Prayer isn't meant to be an “obligation” or something we *have* to do. It's a tremendous privilege—it's something we *get* to do! Just think, we have the ability to talk with *Almighty* God, Who is all-knowing and all-powerful, the One Who knows what's best for us in every situation. He delights in leading and guiding us into His perfect will for our lives.

As you read through this book, I really encourage you to take your time and digest the various teachings I share. Take some time to look up the various

scriptures and study them on your own. Try to put these principles into practice in your own life. If necessary, come back to this book over and over for refreshers or more encouragement.

I love Psalm 46:1. It says, *God is our refuge and strength [mighty and impenetrable], a very present and well-proved help in trouble.*

As Christians, we have such an amazing privilege to be able to go to God in prayer—to bring our needs and the needs of others before Him. And the Lord is always *ready, willing* and *able* to meet us where we're at and help us when we need it the most.

Wherever you are right now in your walk with God—whether you've been seeking the Lord in prayer all of your life or have just recently developed a relationship with Him—I believe *these teachings will greatly bless your life.*

- CHAPTER 1 -

IT'S REALLY THAT SIMPLE

Over the years, I've spoken to countless people who aren't satisfied with their prayer lives. They are longing for a deeper, richer, more dynamic relationship with God through prayer. Many times they wonder if God even hears them when they talk to Him.

Especially when our prayers seemingly go unanswered, we can begin to struggle with doubt and frustration—we can question whether we're praying the “right” way or long enough. **But prayer is really simple. It's just talking to God and listening as He talks to us.**

You and I can be sincere Christians, eager to please God in all we do, and still have honest questions about prayer. It's okay to have questions! Even though Jesus' disciples spent a lot of personal time with Him, they still felt the need to ask Him to teach them how to pray (see Luke 11:1).

Jesus helped the disciples, and I believe that when we ask Him, He will help us too. As a result, we will not only experience increased effectiveness, freedom and enjoyment in our prayer life, but also greater closeness in our relationship with Him.

Yes, there are different types of prayer and different ways to pray. We'll get to some of those things in the next chapter. However, my heart's desire is to first help you to "demystify" prayer so you can just relax and do it.

My goal for you is that you will no longer be intimidated by the idea of prayer, but that you will actually look forward to spending time doing something that is meant to come naturally...like breathing.

PRAYER IS A PERSONAL MATTER

Because God has created us as unique individuals, simply *knowing* about prayer is not enough. He made us to have an intimate and distinct relationship with Him. Therefore, He will teach us how to pray according to who He has made us to be.

Yes, there are principles of prayer that apply to everyone, but God will lead you and me according to who we are and the season of life we are in. For instance, the young mother with several small children

will not be able to devote the same amount of time to prayer as someone whose children are grown.

I can recall a season in my life when I listened to other people share their experiences in prayer and then attempted to imitate what they did. I remember attending a seminar once and listening to a woman speak about how she prayed every morning from five to nine a.m.

I got all excited and decided that I would go home and start doing the same thing. But because God didn't call me to do what He had called her to do, I got bored and sleepy trying to imitate her. That woman had God's grace—His supernatural ability—to pray those four hours each day, and I did not.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit helped me realize that God had a personalized plan just for me. I needed to learn what that plan was and follow it, not duplicate someone else's.

This is what God wants for you too. He delights in our uniqueness and wants us to be free to express our differences as we pray. In addition to our corporate gatherings, He enjoys spending time with each of us individually, just as we enjoy individual time alone with our special friends.

PRAYER IS BASED ON RELATIONSHIP

I believe the key to effective prayer is approaching God as His friend. When we don't know God as a friend, we are reluctant to ask Him for anything because we don't feel we've "earned it" with good behavior. Or if we do ask, we lack the confidence that He hears us and wants to help.

Yes, it's important to approach God with reverence and respect for Who He is, but He doesn't want us to be afraid of Him or feel like He is unapproachable. When you and I see ourselves as close friends with God, we're more eager to spend time talking to Him and unafraid to ask for help when we need it.

You may be thinking that becoming friends with God seems like a difficult thing to do. But if you are a follower of Jesus, you are already His friend. In John 15:15, Jesus says He calls us His friends because He has shared with us everything He has heard from the Father.

Friendship is based on sharing—openly and honestly. We share with God through prayer. A good relationship with God is not built by simply running to Him every time we are desperate for help. It's based on mutual, regular times of sharing and fellowship.

In the natural we develop great friendships by inviting others to be involved in our everyday life, and it's the same with God. We develop a friendship with Him by sharing our life with Him throughout each day. This means recognizing and including Him in our thoughts and conversations as we go about our normal activities.

We can make a habit of talking with God as we're getting ready for our day, driving our car, shopping in the grocery store, walking the dog or cooking dinner. He really wants to be involved in every area of our lives! However, as is the case with any friendship, it's up to us whether we want to be a casual friend or a close, intimate friend.

The more time and energy you and I invest in developing an intimate friendship with God, the more powerful and exciting our communication, or prayer life, will be as a result.

PRAYER REQUIRES BOLDNESS

As our friendship with God deepens, our prayers will not only grow bolder but also become more effective on behalf of others.

In Luke chapter 11, as Jesus teaches his disciples about prayer, He shares an amazing story with them

to illustrate what our relationship with God should be like. Look at this:

Then He said to them, *“Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves [of bread]; for a friend of mine who is on a journey has just come to visit me, and I have nothing to serve him’; and from inside he answers, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’*

I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything just because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence and boldness he will get up and give him whatever he needs (Luke 11:5-8).

I love this—it says the man got what he asked for because of his “shameless persistence and insistence.” I believe this man was shamelessly persistent because he was asking a *friend* for something.

In the same way, you and I will only shamelessly persist in prayer when we feel that we are in a close relationship with God.

God wants us to be His close friends. In Hebrews 4:16, He invites us to come boldly before Him:

Therefore let us [with privilege] approach the throne of grace [that is, the throne of God's gracious favor] with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find [His amazing] grace to help in time of need [an appropriate blessing, coming just at the right moment].

The more we grow in our friendship with the Father, the bolder we become. For example, when Dave and I go out to dinner, we will boldly ask our waiter for anything we need during the meal. However, we would not ask him to give us a ride to work at six the next morning while our car is getting worked on. While we are friendly with our waiter, we are not such close friends with him that we feel the liberty to ask a favor of that nature.

Now, I do have close friends who love me, and I would boldly ask them for a ride to work—even very early in the morning. Why? Because I know they would gladly do it for me because they are a close friend. Similarly, friendship with God develops boldness to make requests in prayer—whether it's for us or on behalf of another.

PRAYER BLESSES OTHERS

The more intimately we know God, the more confident we become in our prayers on behalf of others.

When people come to us and share their needs, we may be able to help them a little, a lot or not at all.

But when we are friends with God, we know who can help and we can say, “I don’t have what you need, but I know who does. I’ll ask my Friend to help you!” We can actually ask God to do us a favor and help someone else—that’s one of the many benefits of being close to God.

I can remember being very sad about my father’s spiritual condition when he didn’t know Christ. I had been praying for his salvation for many years, and I still saw no change in his life. At one point I had actually come to a place where I thought it was useless to keep on praying.

Then God asked me to do a very difficult thing—move my parents close to us, buy them a home and care for them until they died. After we moved them near us, three more years went by, and I still did not see much change in my dad.

One morning as I was praying on my way to work, I reminded God that I had done what He had asked me by taking care of my parents. Now I was asking Him for something specific—to save my father and draw him into a relationship with Him.

A few weeks later, my dad called and asked Dave and me to come over and see him. At that time, he apologized for abusing me and accepted Jesus as the Lord of his life. Because I viewed God as my friend—because I had developed a personal relationship with Him—it gave me the boldness to ask for His help.

As you and I progressively get to know the Lord and understand the precious friendship we can have with Him, it gives us the confidence to ask for His help with anything at any time.

PRAYER IS EXCITING AND POWERFUL

As I said earlier, prayer is simply talking with God and listening to Him. When we ask Him to teach us to pray, He will answer. He has made each of us unique and will teach us to pray in ways that express the person He's created us to be. Being God's friend is the key to an exciting and powerful prayer life!

As you develop your friendship with God by including Him in everything you do, you will grow bold and confident to make requests not only for yourself but also on behalf of others. The Holy Spirit is eager to help you develop an exciting and effective prayer life. *He stands ready to release God's power to bring change in you and the world around you.*

- CHAPTER 2 -

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER

Prayer is such a privilege. When we pray, we are cooperating with God and working with Him in the *spiritual* realm in order to make things happen in the *natural* realm. Prayer literally brings the power of heaven to earth!

There are many different types of prayer, and I won't dive into all of them in this chapter. However, I do want to touch on some of the more common forms of prayer and discuss how God wants to use them to transform our lives and the lives of those around us.

THE PRAYER OF PETITION

The prayer of petition is probably the most common type of prayer. It simply means going to God and asking for something. Look with me at Luke 11:9-10. It is such a wonderful passage of Scripture—one we will look at several times throughout this book. Jesus says:

So I say to you, ask and keep on asking, and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking, and you will find; knock and keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who keeps on asking [persistently], receives; and he who keeps on seeking [persistently], finds; and to him who keeps on knocking [persistently], the door will be opened.

We are so blessed to serve a God Who loves to hear our prayers, then answer them in His timing, in His wisdom, and in His way. So, what types of things should we ask for?

Well, first, we can ask for anything His Word tells us we can have. For instance, I always know that I can ask the Lord for things like His grace, mercy, strength, favor, and peace because these are things He promises us in His Word—it is *His will* for us to have these things.

In addition, we can pray for those things that the Holy Spirit places in our hearts. There are times when God will place a desire inside of us to ask Him for something specific or to pray for someone else at that very moment. And what the Lord puts in our hearts won't always make sense to our natural mind...

A few years ago, during my prayer time, I sensed the Holy Spirit prompting me to pray for something pretty big. At first, I thought, *I can't pray for that*. But I realized it was God Himself leading me to pray for this thing. So, out of obedience, I prayed:

“Lord, I believe this is You leading and guiding me, so I am going to ask. I pray that You'll allow me to help every single person on the face of this earth.”

In that moment, I believe God used my prayer to initiate something. Although my request seems almost impossible in *my* mind, I know that we serve the God of the impossible!

One of the great things about God is that you can pray about anything at any time. If you're not sure, just ask! You can always trust that He knows best—He'll never give you something that's not His will for you or not in His perfect timing.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

The prayer of intercession is simply praying for someone else. Many times, people don't know how to pray for themselves—or they may not pray at all if they aren't a Christian. Other times, a person can be in such difficult circumstances that they are unable to pray in that moment.

For instance, have you ever felt too sick or been in too much pain to pray? I know people who get tremendously painful migraine headaches. In those moments, they can really use someone to go to God and pray on their behalf.

Many times the Holy Spirit may lead us to pray for someone and we don't even know why until later on down the road. I've heard countless stories of people feeling compelled to pray for a friend or family member, only to find out later that the person was in danger or going through a trying time at that very moment. God always knows!

Ezekiel 22:30 is such a powerful scripture. Here, the Lord says, *I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for [the sake of] the land, that I would not destroy it, but I found no one [not even one].*

In this passage, God is saying, "I looked for someone who would pray for Israel, but I couldn't find anyone!"

God asks the same thing of us today. He is asking us to "stand in the gap" for family, friends, and even complete strangers. He asks us to go to Him in prayer on behalf of those who don't know Him.

Sometimes, God may put a particular person on your heart for an extended period of time. You may not even know why. I don't talk much about it, but the Lord has had me pray for a certain person in my life for the past 30 years. It's not anything I am trying to make happen on my own—it's something the Lord continues to bring to my heart. He gives me a tremendous *desire* to pray for this person.

God is so good, and we should never underestimate what He can do for us and other people through our prayers. When someone is in a desperate situation or simply needs God's help in a particular way, we have the tremendous privilege of making a connection with heaven. We can go to God on their behalf and *stand in the gap*.

THE POWER OF PRAISE

Praise is such a powerful form of prayer. When we praise, we are expressing our joy and gratitude for Who God is, everything He has done, and everything He will do.

Psalm 22:3 tells us that God is actually “enthroned” in the place where we offer Him praise. So, when we praise, we are inviting God's presence into our lives, and it literally changes the spiritual atmosphere.

I love Psalm 16:11. It says, *You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, in Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.*

When we invite God's presence into our lives, it brings joy, peace, and healing. Praise drives away doubt and unbelief and renews our faith and hope in all that God can do for us.

Have you ever walked into church feeling “blah,” but noticed a change as you began to praise and worship the Lord? It brings a release of our burdens. As we focus on God and magnify His goodness, we make Him bigger in our eyes. And the more time we spend looking at Him, the more it builds our faith and makes our problems look smaller.

Praise is actually one of the highest forms of spiritual warfare. Isaiah 61:3 instructs us to put on “a garment of praise” for a spirit of heaviness. What does this mean? When we feel down—when we're battling discouragement, depression, or simply having a rough day—it's time to take a few moments and praise God. As we do, it chases away the discouragement and invites God's joy and peace.

How do you do it? Most people are familiar with praising God in a church setting, but you can praise Him *anytime, anywhere*. I recommend listening and

singing along to good Christian praise and worship music that will help you to enter God's presence and keep your mind in a positive direction.

But even on your own—at home, at work in your office, or even in your car—you can choose to praise Him, saying things like, **“God, You are so good! Thank You for Your love, grace and mercy. I praise You for all the wonderful things You do!”**

And remember, there's no certain script you have to use. Be yourself and allow your praise to come from your genuine gratitude of who God is and what He has done for you.

WORSHIP

Worship is similar to praise; however, it is even more personal and intimate.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words defines *worship* as “the direct acknowledgment to God, of His nature, His attributes, ways and claims.” It says it can also mean “to serve” or “to kiss.”

Worship is something that begins in our hearts, then flows out through our words or through physical expressions like clapping, dancing, lifting up our hands, or playing an instrument. Worship represents

our love, gratitude and devotion and sometimes can't even be put into words. We can worship God just by being still and never even saying a thing!

Worship is an attitude that can permeate every area of our lives. For instance, we worship God when we give to others—we *literally serve and worship God by serving other people*. We can also worship God in so many other ways through our actions, attitudes and conversations.

Like praise, worship certainly isn't restricted to a church setting. Throughout the day, I often take a few moments to worship the Lord, saying things like:

“Oh, God, You are so good—there is no one like You. Thank You for helping me today. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for our sins. I love You so much.”

Worshipping God from a pure and sincere heart is one of the most powerful things we can do. In the next chapter, I will share more with you about worship and the tremendous impact it can have in your life.

THANKSGIVING

Psalm 100:4 says, *Enter His gates with a song of thanksgiving and His courts with praise....*

Thanksgiving is a form of praise of worship that helps us to fully realize how God is working in our lives. Genuine thanksgiving is both a response to who God is and what He has done.

When we choose to thank God for the good things in our lives, it strengthens our relationship with Him. It also fills us with joy and gives us a new perspective on life. Over the years, I have personally made a habit of thanking God for the little things that are so easy to take for granted. I'll say:

"Lord, thank you for a good night's sleep."

"God, thank you that my visit to the dentist didn't hurt as much as it might have."

"Thank you for keeping me encouraged during this particularly busy week."

First Thessalonians 5:18 says, *In every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful and continually give thanks to God; for this is the will of God for you....*

Now, this doesn't mean we are to be thankful *for* everything. We don't have to thank God that our car broke down or the dishwasher isn't working again. But this verse is saying that we should maintain a thankful attitude regardless of what is going on in our lives—whether it's good or bad.

This means if your car breaks down, you can choose an attitude of gratitude. You can say, “God, I thank You that You’re going to work all of this out. Thank You that I have a car to begin with and that You’ll help me get all of this repaired and straightened out.”

Each moment that we’re given is a precious gift from God. One of the best things we can do is be mindful of the good things God does for us throughout each day...*and tell Him* so (see Psalm 100:4).

JUST PRAY THE WORD

I don't feel like I can discuss the types of prayer without taking a few moments to highlight the importance of God's Word and the part it plays in our prayer lives.

First, the more time we spend reading and studying God's Word, the more we get to know God. Developing a close, intimate relationship with the Lord allows us to “hear His voice” more clearly when He

speaks to our hearts. It allows us to be sensitive to His Holy Spirit.

God also tells us to put Him in remembrance and pray His Word back to Him (see Isaiah 43:26). A great study assignment would be to look up all of the scriptures that instruct us to **speak**, **declare**, or **confess** God's Word over our lives and about our situations.

The word *confess* literally means to “say the same thing as.” So, when we confess God's Word in prayer, we are saying what *He* says—we are getting in agreement with God!

I'll give you a practical example. Maybe your young son or daughter is having trouble sleeping at night because of nightmares or something else that is interrupting their rest. If so, you can look up what the Bible has to say about it.

Psalms 127:2 says that God *...gives [blessings] to His beloved even in his sleep*. In addition, Proverbs 3:24 says, *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet*.

You can use these verses when you pray. You can say, **“Lord, as we go to sleep for the night, I pray for Your supernatural peace and rest for my child. Your Word says that You give us blessings in our sleep**

and that when we lay down, we won't be afraid, but our sleep will be sweet. Thank You for watching over us tonight. Thank You so much for Your blessings and protection. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

There is power in praying God's Word. Isaiah 55:11 says that His Word *never* fails, but it *always* accomplishes what it has been sent to do!

As Christians, we have such an amazing privilege to be able to go to God in prayer—to bring our needs and the needs of others before Him. And the Lord is always *ready, willing* and *able* to meet us where we're at and help us when we need it the most.

Again, Psalm 46:1 says that *God is our refuge and strength [mighty and impenetrable], a very present and well-proved help in trouble.*

So, do you have a need? Do you know someone else who can use some "well-proved help" right now? If so, it's time to ask. God loves to hear your prayers, *and He delights in helping you with every single part of your life.*

- CHAPTER 3 -

WORSHIP WINS THE WAR

Many years ago, the Lord helped me to really begin to understand the true power of worship. In fact, the message I am about to share with you in this chapter is something I first taught more than 20 years ago.

I can still remember the particular day I shared this message. Afterward, one of my daughters approached me and said, “Mom, I think that may be the best message I’ve ever heard you teach.”

I don’t think it had so much to do with me as it did God’s desire to teach His people about the power of worshipping Him. It is a major aspect of prayer that many aren’t familiar with or simply don’t practice on a regular basis.

Every single one of us reaches places in our lives when we find ourselves in a “battle.” And when those times come, the Lord has a plan for our success. *And it all begins with worship...*

GOD'S BATTLE PLAN

There are times in our lives when we feel like we are up against what seems to be an insurmountable enemy. Things appear to be hopeless, and we are in a fight we think we can't possibly win.

During times like these, we need to remember one very important thing: **The battle belongs to the Lord.**

You see, you and I are involved in a spiritual war in the unseen realm. God's Word makes it clear that we will have times of trouble (see John 16:33). But the Bible also makes it clear that no matter what we may be facing, God has a plan. His plan for us is to be victorious—**even when our problems feel overwhelming.**

You may be struggling with fear, a bad habit, relationship issues, or even a life-threatening disease. Whatever it is, when you give your battle to the Lord, you are in a position for victory.

I can say that 2 Chronicles chapter 20 is one of my favorite passages of Scripture in the Bible. It's a chapter I've taught about on numerous occasions, and I believe it is the perfect blueprint for how to respond when trouble strikes.

At the beginning of this chapter, we find King Jehoshaphat of Judah and his entire army surrounded by their enemies, trapped and outnumbered.

Verse 2 says, *Then it was reported to Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude has come against you from beyond the [Dead] Sea, out of Aram (Syria); and behold, they are in Hazazon-tama..."* (2 Chronicles 20:2).

Suddenly, without hardly any warning, Judah's army was faced with an impossible situation and seemingly no solution. Sound familiar? *But it's how Jehoshaphat responded that was truly amazing...*

RUN STRAIGHT TO GOD

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, received the news that a vast army of Moabites and Ammonites was coming to attack. So, how did he respond?

Initially he was afraid, but he didn't allow fear to paralyze him. Second Chronicles 20:3 says, *Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set himself [determinedly, as his vital need] to seek the Lord; and he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*

Like most of us, Jehoshaphat initially felt fear, but he pushed past fear and determined to seek the Lord

for comfort and guidance. He knew that only God could give him a plan that was sure to succeed.

I encourage you to read verses six and seven. You will notice that Jehoshaphat begins his prayer by declaring who God is, acknowledging how great He is, and even reviewing the mighty things He has done for His people. Then Jehoshaphat expressed his confidence in the Lord to handle the problem.

I can recall a time years ago when I received a bad report and needed a word from the Lord. I had gone to the doctor for a regular checkup, and they found a small lump in my breast. When they tested it and discovered it was a very fast growing type of cancer, I was suddenly faced with not only the prospect of surgery, but also a battle with overwhelming fear.

I can still remember walking down the hall in my house and fear hitting me so hard I felt like I was going to fall down. It was so strong that I had a hard time sleeping at night. I was desperate—in a fight for my life—and I knew that I needed encouragement from God.

One night, as I was lying awake in my bed at about three o'clock in the morning, God spoke to me deep inside my heart and said, "Joyce, you can trust Me."

As a result of this one word from the Lord, I was delivered from overwhelming fear. Although I was apprehensive as I waited for test results, I knew I was in God's hands, and that whatever happened, He would take care of me.

When trouble comes, and we know we are facing an attack of the enemy, our first response should be to go to God in prayer and seek guidance and comfort from Him. We need to resist trying to reason or figure things out in our mind or running to people for the answer.

Yes, God may direct us to a person for advice, but we should always go to Him first to show that we honor and trust Him. When we hear from God, faith fills our heart and drives away fear like nothing else will.

“MY EYES ARE ON YOU”

I love what Jehoshaphat did next. In 2 Chronicles 20:12 he prays, *“O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless against this great multitude which is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You.”*

Wow! There are three very important things Jehoshaphat did in this verse. **First**, he admitted that he had no might to stand against his enemies.

Second, he admitted that he did not know what to do. And **third**, he said that their eyes were on God. These three things put Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah in a position for a miracle.

In a similar way, we need to realize that we are totally dependent on God to solve our problem—we can't do it on our own!

In John 15:5 Jesus said, *...Apart from me you can do nothing* (NIV). This is a scripture God showed me early in my walk with Him. I was a very independent person, and it took me a while to realize how totally dependent on God we really are.

Sometimes we face situations, like cancer, that we know we can do nothing about. Other times we face things that we think we “can handle.” But the truth is, we are dependent upon God for grace to succeed in every situation.

So, to follow Jehoshaphat's example, we need to first set ourselves to seek God and hear from Him concerning the situation we are facing. We can begin by talking to God about His character and faithfulness, thanking Him and praising Him for who He is.

Then we can acknowledge our total dependence upon Him. We can pray like King Jehoshaphat did,

admitting we don't know what to do, but we are looking to God and waiting for His plan and His strength to do what we need to do.

TAKE YOUR POSITION

When trouble comes, the next thing to do is take your position—the *position of praise*.

In 2 Chronicles 20:17, the Lord spoke to Jehoshaphat and said, *'You need not fight in this battle; take your positions, stand and witness the salvation of the Lord who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem....'*

Then, in verse 18, it says, *Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshipping Him.*

Like Jehoshaphat, when we are faced with insurmountable enemies, we need to get in position and worship God. In other words, whether we bow on our knees like Jehoshaphat or stand with our hands lifted, our battle position is one of praise and worship.

Often, when the Israelites went to battle, they sent Judah first. The meaning of the name Judah is “praise.” Sending Judah first symbolizes praise leading the way.

In 2 Chronicles 20:21, we read that King Jehoshaphat instructed singers to go out in front of the army praising God and giving Him thanks. Singing and giving thanks may not feel like the thing to do when we are in trouble, but it is exactly what we need to do!

Years ago, I was struggling with severe headaches, and the doctor put me on medication. The medicine made me feel sick to my stomach and caused a loud roaring noise in my head. I felt like I was going crazy. One night, when everyone was asleep, I felt so sick that I went into the bathroom and sat with my head resting on the toilet seat.

Just then, deep in my heart, I heard a song coming up and the Holy Spirit saying, “Sing.” At that moment, I felt a lot more like throwing up or giving up than singing. But I chose to obey God, and I started feeling better. My praise and worship was the greatest prayer I could have ever prayed.

When Jehoshaphat saw a “vast” army coming against him, he probably felt about the same way I did on the bathroom floor that night. But he looked to God and obeyed Him. As a result, the victory was won.

It’s easy to praise and worship God *after* we are delivered from a problem—when the headache is gone or your enemies are defeated. But going the

extra mile and worshipping before the battle is actually won, really gets God's attention.

EXPECT GOD TO DO SOMETHING GREAT

The Lord wants us to expect Him to do great things for us. He wants us to pray and then watch with an attitude of faith to see how He will come through on our behalf.

As Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah followed God's battle plan, the Lord delivered them from their enemies. How did they defeat their enemies? When Jehoshaphat appointed singers to sing and praise at the head of Judah's army, the Lord defeated their enemies by confusing them so much that they killed each other! (See 2 Chronicles 20:22.)

When you are faced with a battle and you don't know what to do, I encourage you to follow the battle plan God gave Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah.

First, go to God in prayer and seek Him for encouragement and guidance. Next, acknowledge your dependence upon Him to help you. Third, *take your position*—worshipping God and giving Him thanks. Finally, watch and expect God to move on your behalf.

Remember, the battle belongs to the Lord! As you seek and worship Him, you will not only be in a position to win your battles, but also to enjoy your walk with Him and your everyday life more than ever.

- CHAPTER 4 -

SECRETS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

When it comes to prayer, it's so easy to allow doubts to creep in. We can begin to think, *Maybe I didn't say the right thing or pray long enough...or maybe my words weren't eloquent enough.*

We have to remember that God loves to hear our prayers! He's not looking for ways to disqualify us or reject our prayers. He wants us to come to Him with boldness and confidence—asking for what we need, then *believing* He hears us and wants to help.

When you pray, do you ever struggle with doubt or fear, or simply lack confidence that God even hears you at all? If so, I want to share some things with you from God's Word that I believe will really make a difference in your prayer life.

GO TO GOD IN FAITH

It's so important for us to have faith in God when we pray. In fact, Hebrews 11:6 tells us, *...Without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him....*

While *what* we pray is important, our faith is the vital component that really gets God's attention. 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.

Spending time in God's Word will strengthen your faith. I encourage you to look up all of the scriptures you can about God's love and faithfulness. Meditate on them and let them really soak in and get deep down inside of you. Let's look at just a few...

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *'For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for peace and well-being and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope.'*

Psalms 34:4 says, *I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears* (NLT).

Matthew 7:7-11 says: *“Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking and you will find; knock and keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking, it will be opened.*

“Or what man is there among you who, of you, if his son asks for bread, will [instead] give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will [instead] give him a snake?

“If you then, evil (sinful by nature) as you are, know how to give good and advantageous gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven [perfect as He is] give what is good and advantageous to those who keep on asking Him.”

An important part of prayer is knowing that God loves you, He hears you, He cares about you, and He desperately wants to be involved in every part of your life.

Let's look at the latter half of Hebrews 11:6. It says, ... *For whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him.*

Wow! The Bible says God will reward us for our faith and for taking the time to seek Him and pray.

When you start to have doubts about God's willingness to help, I encourage you to go back to His Word. Let it strengthen your faith and encourage you to never give up. Because when you continue to pray—when you *keep believing and keep seeking*—God will reward you...and *you'll see amazing results*.

YOU HAVE TO ASK

This may sound funny, but one of the greatest reasons our prayers go unanswered is because we don't actually pray!

James 4:2 shares maybe the most important principle we can learn about prayer. It says, *...You do not have, because you do not ask [it of God].*

I'll admit, there are times when I'll deal with a difficult situation all day long—whether it's a headache, a disagreement with someone, or maybe a work-related issue I'm trying to figure out—and never get around to asking for God's help.

I'll talk about it, tell a friend about it, and even *complain* about it—but I won't **pray** about it!

I say this often: God should be our first line of defense—not our last resort! What I mean is that we often try everything else *first*, then when all hope

seems lost, we finally throw up a quick prayer to God for help.

Like I mentioned before, God wants prayer to be like breathing—He desires for us to come to Him immediately for help with anything and everything, regardless of how big or small it is.

Do you know that you can ask God to help you fix your hair in the morning? You can ask for His help changing the oil in your car or painting the house. If you lose something, you can even ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember where you placed it.

You may think, *I'm not going to bother God with that!* But He wants you to. The Bible says one of the names for the Holy Spirit is “The Helper” (see John 16:7). He wants to help you with *every little detail* of your life.

The truth is, the Holy Spirit is concerned about everything that concerns you—whether it’s a “serious” matter like a relationship issue...or something as simple as fixing your hair in the morning.

“Help me!” has become one of my favorite prayers to pray. And the more we acknowledge the Holy Spirit and ask for help, the more we’ll discover His presence and ability in everything we do.

I encourage you to make a point of including God in everything. As you're walking into a meeting at work, maybe it's something as simple as saying a quick prayer under your breath—"God, I need You so much. Please give me wisdom to know what to say." Or maybe it's a prayer of thanks after a successful day: "Lord, thank You for working everything out today. I know I couldn't have done it without You."

I've reached a point in my life where I absolutely refuse to go without His help—I need Him in everything! I also find the more I pray, the more peace and joy I have in everything I do.

So, do you have a need? Just ask! Remember, God always wants to hear from you—anytime, anywhere, and about *anything*.

LESSONS FROM JAMES 5:16

James 5:16 says, ...*The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a righteous man (believer) can accomplish much [when put into action and made effective by God—it is dynamic and can have tremendous power].*

This verse provides us with so much great instruction on how to pray effectively. But right now, I want to discuss two things in particular from this scripture...

First, we learn that one of the keys to successful prayer is to *continue* to pray until we experience God's power working in our lives and in our situation. Remember, Jesus tells us to, "Ask and keep on asking" (see Luke 11:9).

The Lord wants us to come to Him boldly and with *persistence*. This doesn't mean we ask disrespectfully—it means we ask reverently but *confidently*.

Satan wants us to throw in the towel and believe our prayers aren't working—he wants to convince us that things will never change. However, God asks us to believe that *all* things are possible. He desires for us to raise our expectations and believe Him to do big things in our lives.

You may think, *Joyce, I don't want to get my hopes up. I've dealt with this situation a long time.* I used to think this way for years. I would say, "I'm not going to expect anything good to happen so I won't be disappointed when it doesn't."

That's the *opposite* of what God wants us to do! He desires for us to ask, believe big, and keep on asking! He delights in answering our prayers—not because we have somehow earned or deserve it, but because He loves us so much.

This leads me to my next point. James 5:16 says, *...The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a **righteous** man (believer) can accomplish much....*

“Righteous” doesn’t mean we have to do everything right before God hears our prayers. We are right with God because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Therefore, we always have the right to come to God with our requests, even when we haven’t done everything right.

I often use this example to demonstrate what I’m talking about. Years ago, when my youngest son Daniel was still in grade school, there was a time when he was having some trouble with a neighborhood bully. I’ll never forget one day in particular when Daniel was out playing and we suddenly heard him scream, “Help!”

Immediately, my husband Dave jumped up, ran through the house, and nearly pulled the front door off the hinges in order to get outside to help protect Daniel from the bully.

Now, when we heard Daniel scream, Dave and I didn’t first take time to go see if he had successfully completed all of his chores. We didn’t discuss his recent behavior and carefully determine if he deserved to receive our help. As parents, we don’t

help our children because they do everything right—we *help them because we love them*.

And God is the same way. When you have a need—when you're in trouble and cry out for God's help—He's just like my husband who jumped up and ran to help Daniel. He *loves* you, and because of everything Jesus has done, He sees you as righteous even while you are still changing and improving.

So, what are your needs today? Are you asking God for help? *Do you believe He can do it?* Wherever you are in life, I encourage you to stretch your faith and begin believing God for more than ever before. Make a decision to raise your expectations, trusting that He loves you and has your best in mind.

Because the Bible says when you choose to place your trust in Him, *you will never be disappointed* (see Isaiah 49:23).

- SALVATION -

**SALVATION:
A LIFE OF TRUE
PEACE BEGINS
RIGHT HERE**

The first step toward enjoying true peace is to fully turn your life over to God. It's the foundational element on which you can build everything else. The moment you realize your deep need for God, you begin an amazing journey into His plan for your life.

Romans 3:23 (NIV) says it this way: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Knowing Jesus is simply acknowledging your **need** for Him, **believing** what He did for you and **accepting** His amazing gift. It recognizes that you can't live this life on your own—that you've sinned and are in need of a Savior. And the good news about knowing Jesus, about being saved, is the beautiful exchange that happens in that moment.

You give Him all the bad and sinful things you've done, and in return, God gives you everything He has for you. Whether you know it or not yet, His plan for your life is amazing, and this is the first step on that journey.

IF YOU'RE READY

to start your own, personal journey with Jesus or perhaps want to get to know Him in a deeper way, visit:

joycemeyer.org/salvation

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce Meyer is one of the world's leading practical Bible teachers. A **#1 *New York Times* bestselling author**, her books have helped millions of people find hope and restoration through Jesus Christ. Through *Joyce Meyer Ministries*, she teaches on a number of topics with a particular focus on the mind, mouth, moods and attitudes. Her candid communication style allows her to share openly and practically about her experiences so others can apply what she has learned to their lives.

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Joyce Meyer Ministries is called to share the Gospel and extend the love of Christ. Through media we teach people how to apply biblical truth to every aspect of their lives and encourage God's people to serve the world around them.

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GOD LOVES TO HEAR YOUR PRAYERS!

God never intended for prayer to be complicated. He wants prayer to be like breathing—something that feels easy and natural; something we can do *anytime, anywhere*. He desires for us to come to Him with boldness and confidence—asking for what we need, then *believing* He hears us and wants to help.

In this book, you'll learn how to:

- Develop a deep, personal relationship with God
- Incorporate prayer into everything you do
- Pray with boldness and expectation
- Go to God with the needs of others
- Ask with faith and “keep on asking” (Matthew 7)

Prayer was never meant to be an “obligation” or something we have to do. It’s a tremendous privilege—it’s something we get to do! **So, what do you need help with today?** Whatever it is, you have a heavenly Father Who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and Who delights in hearing your prayers. *And He’s just waiting for you to ask.*

...The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

—James 5:16

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(800) 727-9673

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ISBN 978-1-942854-30-2



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BKL205/010617