

Week 8 Day 2 | *Promises in the Bible: Prayer*

Ever pray and then wonder if it were going to do any good? Ever knelt down and bowed your head, but felt disconnected, as if your prayers were just drifting off into the ether? Ever had prayers go without an answer of any kind?

This is an interesting dynamic, really. Most of the time, we have no trouble accepting that the Bible is true—that it's God-breathed, that it's the Word of Life. Then we turn around and question what the Bible says about prayer. We might not see it that way, yet that's what happens when we doubt the strength or usefulness of our prayer life.

The Book of James should encourage you as it proves the power of prayer:

*"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
—5:16b (NIV)*

"Effective" is translated from the Greek word *energeō*, from which our English word "energy" is derived. I love that! *The Message* paraphrases it like this: "The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with."

God's Word to us promises that there is authority in our prayers. They get things moving. They get results. Our prayer is the fuse and He is the dynamite.

Still not convinced? Consider where this portion of the verse appears. It's sandwiched between a calling to be spiritually healed—" . . . pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed"—and the reminder of Elijah's prayer for an act in the physical realm: " . . . Elijah, for instance, human just like us, prayed hard that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't . . ."

Physical. Emotional. Spiritual. There is nothing off-limits for the power of prayer.

Make no mistake. Our prayers are powerful not because of anything we do or who we are. Remember, we're just the fuse. It's because of who He is and what He can do. Therefore, we can approach Him with an honest, upright, and believing heart. Then God is eager to respond, doing what only He can.

That's why James also reminds us to quit questioning what prayer can do:

"But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do."—1:6–8 (NIV)

No mincing words there. We need to drop the doubting of what we're doing when we kneel before the God of all creation. Quit questioning the effectiveness of presenting our requests to Him. Earnestly seek His will for your life, His wisdom for your mind, and His love to fill your heart. He delights in answering you. He is all about His glory. You can fully trust Him with your prayers, as you also trust the truth of His

character, purposes, and promises.

Fitness is a struggle for so many people. Whether it's finding the time, desire, energy, discipline, balance, whatever the case, fitness can be a stumbling block. Our response may be to pray for help, but in our heart of hearts, we don't expect it to come. We don't expect an answer. We don't believe there is dynamite on the other end of the fuse.

Worse yet, we dump water on the fuse after it has been lit. We don't really want an answer to our prayer because it might mean giving up _____. Or we fail to listen for an answer. We don't consider the words of a loved one or examine Scripture with a truly open mind. Instead, we go about our days, too busy or unwilling to listen. Or maybe we ignore the answer we are given. We push aside that little nudge in our hearts and fail to follow through in obedience. We are double-minded. Unstable.

Before we know it, we are letting our struggle define us. That's why our prayers need to be offered with a clean heart—with pure motives, earnestly. God knows us better than we know ourselves and He can discern our intent. Yet, out of our vulnerability, we can approach Him void of pretention, full of confidence.

Prayer is one of our greatest tools for good and most effective weapons against the enemy. We should wield it with great confidence.

It knows no limits. Prayer is bound by nothing. God has the power to change anything and we have the privilege to approach Him about everything. We would be wise to do so, and to do so with confidence.

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us access to You through prayer and for the delight You take in listening. Will You forgive me when I go through the motions with my prayer life? Give me a pure heart, Father, to believe and not doubt. Lord, I want to trust not only that You hear me but that You'll help me. I want to trust in your greater purposes for the countless things I do not know, see, or understand. Amen.

Meditation

My prayers are effective and powerful because God hears and answers.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Today you are going to meditate for three to five minutes on Philippians 4:6–7, which says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." As you meditate on these promises, pray for the faith to believe them.

Remember that when we pray, God is listening and He is more than able to help. Then, when He does, we have to be ready to act on His provision.