

Theodore Epp:**1 Kings 18:30-39**

By having water poured over the sacrifice as often as he did, Elijah prevented any human counterfeiting or trickery. Then he began to pray.

This short prayer has only 63 English words (even fewer in Hebrew), and it takes about 20 seconds to speak them. But the prophets of Baal had prayed to their idol for several hours and had received no answer at all. Elijah prayed for 20 seconds, and God answered by fire.

Elijah's prayer differed in character and sincerity from that of the prophets of Baal. James described it when he said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Even some Christians seem to misunderstand what this verse means. They shout in prayer as though God were deaf. They put on a demonstration as though they had to attract God's attention. Earnestness in prayer does not involve physical gestures but a condition of the heart and will with regard to the purposes of God.

Perhaps here we may learn to examine our own prayers. Since Elijah's prayer was motivated by his desire to see God honored, God answered His servant. In writing concerning prayer James said, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (4:3). Right motives are essential if our prayers are to be answered.

"For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).