

General Topics :: the power of prayer- Do we have it today?

the power of prayer- Do we have it today? - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/7/13 16:11

I have thought about this for a while. THE power of prayer. How powerful is it really and how do we know when prayer has been answered vs. the answer being something that was going to happen anyway?

I have wondered, if one went into a typical church and asked people to either stand up and give testimony or answered prayer or write it down on paper would we see quality prayer answered leaving no doubt God is there? Would we see many answered prayers in general?

I have thought about this in relation to some discussions with non theists and I thought, if Christians pray and know they are receiving answers to pray we wouldn't have to argue with nontheists. The proof is there, we can simply testify to it and if they choose not to believe then that is between them and God.

Comments?

Re: the power of prayer- Do we have it today? - posted by TracyInMD (), on: 2011/7/14 19:55

Hi.

You asked: "How powerful is it really?"

I don't hear people say what I'm about to say. I believe that Scripture shows us that we are to live in the realm of ANSWERED prayer. Not merely saying prayers with no affirmative answer. I base that on the things Jesus said. Essentially, if you ask, you will receive. (See scriptures down below this post.) It's like Jesus spoke a STANDARD that we should reach for. I believe God INTENDS us to live this way.

But the reality of things is that very few people live this way. I was one of those who prayed b/c I was supposed to pray, but I did not live those scriptures shown below. Therefore, prayer was frustrating. But I confessed my frustration over such prayers and then somehow God put me toward seeking the answer and I started praying God's will--things like "God, I want no longer to be conformed to the pattern of this world. Please transform me by the renewing of my mind." Rom 12:2...Rom 8:29...and so on. Now I wasn't just mouthing these prayers, I fervently MEANT THEM. The effectual FERVENT prayer of a righteous man avails much. Immediately God started answering that prayer. It was then that I saw the kind of prayers that God will answer.

Unfortunately, until that point, I was only following the pattern of men and not scripture. But after that point, I can say that God answers MOST of my prayers affirmatively. I seek to pray according to the Spirit's leading into all truth. I let the Spirit guide me into the word and God will show me His will and I pray it and it happens.

"... and how do we know when prayer has been answered vs. the answer being something that was going to happen anyway?"

This is a GOOD question. There've been many times when I prayed something and it appeared as if all elements had been in place already for that thing to happen anyway. (Even if I had not been aware of those elements.) To me it is like God PUSHED me into the path of His will. YES it was already going to happen, but He wanted me to partake of it, so He caused me to partake in the way of prayer. I try to remember that I serve an eternal God.

You said:

"I thought, if Christians pray and know they are receiving answers to pray we wouldn't have to argue with nontheists. The proof is there, we can simply testify to it"

YES. Absolutely. I believe that IS THE WAY GOD WANTS US TO BE. We should be living in the realm of ANSWERED prayer. That way I KNOW God is with me. Answered prayer is POWERFUL, unanswered prayer is weak. What testimony is it that God doesn't seem to answer the prayers of His people?

Study the scriptures (this list may not be all). They speak of answered/powerful prayer. Here are some below.

Matthew 18:18-19

18"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 21:21-22

21And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. 22"And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

John 14:12-14

11"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13" Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15" If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 15:7-8

7"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

John 15:16

"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.

1 John 5:14-15

14This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And 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 3:22

22and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/7/14 21:01

TracyinMD

Good words!! The theme that came to me in reading them is being honest with yourself so you can be honest with God. I think in my life I haven't been totally honest with myself and then that translates in dishonesty to God and then questions arise.

Not long after I became a believer Romans 12:2 was a passage that I held in my heart. I actually saw it printed boldly on a shirt in a magazine and it just stuck in my head. I translated that to my heart and my life did change.

I have struggled in this area of prayer and I think most Christians do and the lack of response to this post testifies to that. Not saying this is wrong, just a reflection to behold.

Honesty with self will translate to honesty with God. Then God moves in your life and faith begins to grow in the heart. This is what I am reading in your post and I will take that!!!

Thank you!!!!

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/7/15 21:22

I have wondered, is honesty with self and honesty with God the best thing a believer can do when in prayer? Is this the key to the prayer closet which brings repentance and power?

Re: , on: 2011/7/15 23:08

Definitely agree, Brother DEADnot.

You said it very well yourself here -

"Honesty with self will translate to honesty with God. Then God moves in your life and faith begins to grow in the heart."

Just rephrasing your other sentence -

"This Is the key to the prayer closet which brings repentance and power."

Definitely agree.
Blessings to you!

Re: the power of prayer- Do we have it today? - posted by TracyInMD (), on: 2011/7/16 11:52

Hi DEADn.

You said: "The theme that came to me in reading them is being honest with yourself so you can be honest with God..."

That is so interesting! When I first started having prayers answered THAT SAME THEME was with me. I realized that there wasn't a whole lot of integrity to following some formula for prayer and that was what I was doing. I was doing what I HAD to do, rather than really relating to a Living God.

I still find that HONESTY is a very very key element. Most often when I have trouble in prayer now, I discover that I just didn't WANT to talk to God about some things. I know why too. In my case it is that I'm not okay with any answer...I want MY answer. But I don't have the nerve to just insist on certain things, so I have these 'pockets of silence'. I just ignore certain things, but over time, it's the elephant that's in the room.

It's a very practical exercise to get a sheet of paper and inventory things in your life...list people, roles, situations you are in and ask yourself if you have prayed about certain things. One time I discovered a situation I had NEVER prayed for and the situation had been going on for 6.5 years! What a discovery. When I started seeking God on this matter (by 'seeking' I mean 'inquiring/asking') He told me things I HAD NEVER EVER thought of. Then after that, I started praying according to God's will and it was so powerful. By 'powerful' I mean something clearly not of me and in which I had no fleshly gain. It was the kingdom of God which was increased in my heart. Wickedness was pushed aside.

Tracy

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2011/7/16 13:39

I agree with Tracy that Christians should be living in the reality of their prayers being answered, but due to the low priority that prayer is given in the Church, this is not happening. So we have to ask the question: Why is it not happening? Part of the problem is with the church leaders themselves. Many are so caught up with building programs and meetings that their prayer lives are lacking, and they are not encouraging the people to pray.

Prayer was a top priority in the ministry of Jesus, and He said that "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves." (Matt:21:13).

The question of honesty has been brought up, and the Word of God instructs us that if we are to see a move of God take place then we are to first humble ourselves and pray seeking the face of God and turning from our wicked ways. We can't have confidence that God is answering our prayers if there are sins in our own lives that are not being dealt with.

h.

I believe that God wants to answer our prayers even more than we want Him to. Thank you Tracy for the scriptures that you listed and there are many more.

Mike

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2011/7/16 18:57

TracyinMD,

Your first reply was tremendously powerful. This is the reason why so many of our prayers/prayer meetings are meaning less; because we do not pray according to God's Word nor according to His will. I think that effective prayer is beneficial to build our faith, whereas ineffective prayer is harmful and causes us to doubt.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/7/16 21:29

Something else comes to mind on this topic and where it is headed. When it comes to being honest with yourself and then with God- there is a segment of people out there who have said that they were 'honest' and prayed to God but said their prayers were not answered and therefore no power of God exists. Do you suppose it is because their expectations were somewhere else? Or maybe they lied to themselves thinking they were honest when in reality they were not? What causes those who say they prayed to God but no answer came so they became atheistic- where does that come from?

I ask this not to play devil's advocate but for a balanced perspective. I feel as if I am in a personal crisis of faith, believing God exists but the power and Voice of God is something that seems unrelatable to me at this time. Distinguishing it from the other voices around me and know when God speaks to me vs wondering if He spoke to me is my dilemma.

I am on a road of trying to break down some rather thick walls in my life dealing with 'religious' people from the past so as I search my heart for what those walls I want to replace some of them with answers because I don't think they will come down in just repentance- they need some kind of answer. I know the bible says God will do these things- it is the power of God to do these things. Yet- is honesty the sole open door to freedom of these things?

Re: - posted by TracyInMD (), on: 2011/7/17 7:13

DEADn, not knowing your situation, yet I'd say you are not necessarily in a bad place at all in your crisis of faith. I think these days are terribly deceptive. Jesus SAID this would be the case and warned them/us: "See to it that no one mislead s you." Matthew 24:4. I believe those days are here. Every place you go gives a different version of "God" and different ways to serve that God. It's almost as if it is fulfilled from scripture "There he is...he is in HERE!" Seems as if there are many voices saying conflicting things.

You said:

"...there is a segment of people out there who have said that they were 'honest' and prayed to God but said their prayers were not answered and therefore no power of God exists. Do you suppose it is because their expectations were somewhere else?"

ABSOLUTELY. If someone is not of God, if they have not repented, Jesus described them as slaves to sin. Whether saved/unsaved, James said "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." Unanswered prayer is a sign. Those who know God should question their motive...most often I discovered my own SELFISH motives and unanswered prayer was a GIFT for me to get on the right track. But for someone who does not know God and understand His lovingkindness, they might think of God as 'mean' if prayer was unanswered. They might accuse God of various things. (Psalm 18:25-26) They do not have the right interpretation of things.

In fact they may become more atheistic, saying "no power of God exists" and God will let them keep on thinking that. They didn't want God in the first place, and God just let them be. I'm describing a hypothetical situation. If someone TRULY wanted to come near to God, if they were TRULY seeking God (in God's estimation not ours), I believe if they seek, they will find. This is one reality... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5). I don't find any pattern in scripture for unbelievers/unrighteous people getting prayers answered. If I'm not mistaken, it requires someo

ne who knows God to pray and receive answers. BUT we must be doing things God's way.

I try to follow the trail of ANSWERED prayer. By 'answered prayer', I don't mean that I asked some general thing like "give me a sign"...or "should I join the choir?" and then coincidentally someone comes up with a roster to join the choir. If you follow the pattern set forth in SCRIPTURE, your whole life will likely change.

You also said:

"I want to replace some of them with answers because I don't think they will come down in just repentance- they need some kind of answer."

I will say that I've noticed in myself that when God shows me a sin and I turn, suddenly it's like I understood a WHOLE lot more. Now that's just personal testimony and not worth much. BUT I found out that scripture speaks on this as well. Again Rom 12:2, you 'prove' what the good will of God is by being renewed in your mind. I was idolatrous, for example, loving the work of my hands. Once the Spirit showed me this and I repented, I SAW SO MUCH MORE. It's like described in matt 7..take out the plank and you will SEE CLEARLY to take out the speck in another's. You could see some before, but after, you seem to see clearly.

I do not know your situation, but I'm just speaking of this Spiritual phenomena of becoming sanctified and seeing more after turning from sin.

It seems as if the definitions of things are all skewed in this deceptive day. "Prayer" means this, "power" means this, "worship" means this, and so on. But the truth is that what religion we are seeing seems devoid of power and devoid of the Spirit. I'd expect someone to have a LOT of nagging questions in this day.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/7/24 19:36

A rather interesting thing happened in church this morning of which I am still making sense out of it. My wife and I begun going back to church and this week makes 3 weeks so far. The service this morning didn't have a sermon as was planned. Instead there was about 15-20 minutes of singing. There was a song that spoke about remember the hand of God and we will remember the work of God. It caused the pastor to bring forward an elderly lady to speak of a testimony. Well, this testimony was something that happened 40 years ago when she was in labor. Said she used to hate Christians, mock them, have a cig in her mouth and cuss like a sailor. When she was in the hospital room she saw the word 'I LOVE YOU' in the ceiling and asked if anyone else saw them. No was the answers. She said these words changed her life and she became a believer in Jesus. There were a few more testimonies as well. and it took up the rest of the service.

I have been asking this question about testimonies in the church and does anyone have the power of God working in their lives. This day seemed to provide what I would call maybe a partial answer to that question. I say partial because this lady's testimony was something that happened 40 years ago. The other people had testimonies that were very broad- nothing real specific to grasp and appreciate, at least in my opinion.

Now, I am asking God for something more specific and more current. I don't think that is too much to ask. Or am I being too greedy?

Re: , on: 2011/7/24 20:10

Prayer/intercession has become an absolute priority for us in the last few days. (Nothing like a heart attack to jump start your sleepy prayer life.)

And Jesus has met with us. I cannot describe his wonderful presence and help in the last few days. All of grace and not of ourselves.