

WITH CHRIST IN THE
SCHOOL OF PRAYER



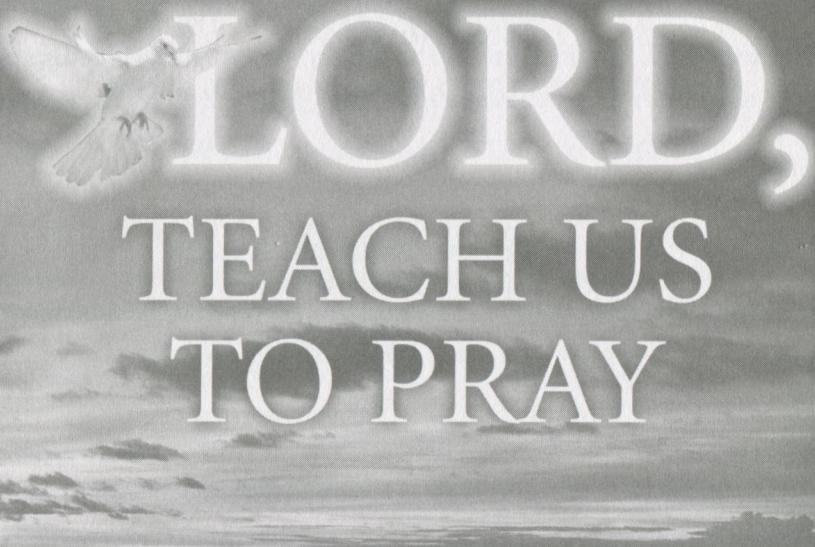
LORD,
TEACH US
TO PRAY

WARRIORS WHO TOUCHED
THE HEART OF GOD
THROUGH INTERCESSION

SERIES IV

MORRIS CERULLO

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Published by:

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Published by

Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, Inc. San Diego, CA.

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Printed in the United States of America.

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INTRODUCTION

Partner, you are now beginning the fourth study of the most exciting teaching series on prayer by Dr. Cerullo. This series is among the best teaching Dr. Cerullo has ever written in the history of this ministry.

This lesson will show you how other men of God prevailed in prayer. From their example, you will come to know how to have victory in your own prayer life—a prerequisite in today's end-time.

You will learn how to persevere in prayer like Jacob, how to turn around circumstances by commanding the natural elements to line up with the promises of the Father like Joshua, how to pray when you feel "surrounded on all sides"; as if you are in a "cave" as David was or how to pray according to God's everlasting promises.

We pray you will learn these most essential truths of how to prevail with God in prayer, how to become a "holy wrestler," through these most inspiring, powerful examples found in God's Word.

Editor

CHAPTER ONE

Jacob's Face-To-Face Encounter With God

Then Jacob prayed, O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper, I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.

Genesis 32:9-12 NIV

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, Let me go, for it is daybreak. But Jacob replied, I will not let you go unless you bless me. The man asked him, What is your name? Jacob, he answered. Then the man said, Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome. Jacob said, Please tell me your name.

Genesis 32:24-29 NIV

Jacob was one of God's holy wrestlers. His divine encounter with God is one of the greatest examples of persevering prayer recorded in the Bible. He wrestled with

God in prayer and prevailed!

Wrestling prayer is the ability to hold on, press on, and wait in faith until the answer is manifested. It is a taking hold of God Himself.

Through intense, fervent prayer Jacob took hold of God! He had a personal, divine encounter with God Almighty that transformed his life. *“He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there—the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is his name of renown”* (Hosea 12:4-5 NIV).

In this divine encounter, Jacob met God face-to-face! He later named the place where he met with God “Peniel” and said, *“... it is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared”* (Genesis 32:30 NIV).

Jacob was known as a supplanter and deceiver and had cheated Esau out of his birthright. But, in this face-to-face encounter with God, he was transformed into a mighty prince who prevailed with God!

In his hour of great desperation, Jacob cried unto God for deliverance. When he heard that his brother, Esau, was coming to meet him with four hundred men, he was greatly afraid and troubled. He was convinced that Esau was going to attack him. He divided the people who were with him, the flocks, and herds of camels into two groups; reasoning that if Esau came against one group, the other group would escape.

God is ready in our time of trouble to deliver us. He has promised,

“...Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psalm 50:15). *“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him,*

and honour him” (Psalm 91:15).

David knew from experience to call upon God in his time of trouble. Listen to his confidence in God’s power to deliver: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea”* (Psalm 46:1-2).

God is a very present help in our time of trouble! He is ever ready at all times to deliver us. The only condition He has placed upon this promise is that we must call upon Him!

David knew that regardless of the grave circumstances and dangers he faced that God would strengthen and deliver him. He said:

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Psalm 27:5-6

In your day of trouble, you do not ever need to be overcome by fear or worry. Knowing the Father has promised to deliver you, cry out to Him in faith; believing He will divinely intervene in your circumstances.

I. FATHER, YOU SAID!

In his day of trouble, Jacob’s eyes were focused upon God. He cried out to the covenant-making God of his father: “... *O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac*” (Genesis 32:9 NIV). When we pray, we need to remember that we are

in covenant with God who has said, “*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips*” (Psalm 89:34). We have a covenant with God that is sealed with the all-powerful blood of Jesus! When we go to Him, we can know beyond any doubt that He will do all that He has promised!

In his prayer, Jacob reminded God that he had left Laban and returned to Canaan in obedience to His command. He said, “... O *LORD, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper’*” (Genesis 32:9 NIV). He had returned at God’s direction, but was now faced with trouble and great distress.

Jacob humbled himself before God and acknowledged his own unworthiness of God’s goodness toward him. “*I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups*” (Genesis 32:10 NIV). When Jacob had left Canaan and crossed the Jordan River, he had nothing but his staff. Now, he was returning with his wives, children, and servants, as well as, great herds of camels and flocks of sheep. He knew that God had released His blessings upon him and was grateful.

After acknowledging God and His faithfulness, Jacob asked God to deliver him out of the hands of his brother Esau. Jacob was desperate before God. He knew that his only deliverance would be through God’s intervention in his circumstances. His request was specific and direct. He said, “*Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children*” (Genesis 32:11 NIV).

After asking for deliverance, Jacob pleaded his case before

God, not based upon any merits of his own, but by reminding God of the promises He had given him. With great fervency he said, *“But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted”* (Genesis 32:12 NIV).

When you face adverse circumstances and problems, come before God and remind Him of His promises. YOU SAID, “If I ask anything according to Your will that You hear me. And since I know that You hear me, I believe and receive the answer in faith and thank you for it now in the Name of Jesus!”

YOU SAID, *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble and that You will deliver me!”* (see Psalm 50:15).

When you face sickness or disease, come before Him and say, “Father, YOU SAID, ‘I am the Lord that healeth thee’; YOU SAID, ‘Jesus was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, and with His stripes I am healed!’” (see Isaiah 53:5).

When you face financial problems, come boldly before the Father and present His promises: YOU SAID, “that You will supply all my need, according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (see Philippians 4:19). YOU SAID, “Give and it will be given to me, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will men give unto my bosom” (see Luke 6:38). “By faith, I receive the financial miracle I need now and praise You for it in Jesus’ Name! ”

II. PRAY THE WORD!

Jacob did not wrestle with the promise of God. He wrestled with the Promiser. He continued to persevere by

faith until he took hold of God. When we really have a divine encounter with God whereby we take hold of Him in prayer, we can know that the promise will be fulfilled.

God's Word and His promises must be the basis and the inspiration for our prayers.

God's Word is alive! Jesus said, "... *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*" (John 6:63).

God's Word will never return unto Him void! "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*" (Isaiah 55:11).

Jesus said, "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*" (John 15:7).

The Word, God's promises, and prayer must be vitally linked together to produce results! Power in prayer depends upon the use of the Word of God. The more you feed on the Word; the deeper your prayer life becomes. Earnest prayer, if not nourished on God's Word, will be weak and ineffective.

God's Word and His promises are the fuel for our prayers. They are a strong source and foundation upon which we are able to hold onto as we persevere in faith; until we receive the answer we need from God. When God's Word remains in us and we are living according to the Word, then we will be able to ask whatever we will and it shall be done!

Andrew Murray taught concerning prayer and the Word of God, "Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but with steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life."

David in his time of trouble reminded God of His promise to

him and acknowledged it was the foundation upon which He built his hope. *"Remember [fervently] the word and promise to Your servant, in which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction, that Your word has revived me and given me life"* (Psalm 119:49-50 AMP).

God has bound Himself to His Word. Not one promise has ever failed! *"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God"* (2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV). God will never violate His promises to you. It is not irreverent to bring God's Word before Him and put a claim on His promises.

Moses reminded God of His promises in his prayer for forgiveness of the children of Israel when they rebelled against Him at Kadesh Barnea.

And now, I pray You, let the power of my Lord be great, as You have promised, saying, The Lord is longsuffering and slow to anger, and abundant in mercy and lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I pray You, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your mercy and lovingkindness, just as You have forgiven [them] from Egypt until now.

Numbers 14:17-19, AMP

God did not reprove Moses for pleading His promise. He answered Moses, *"... I have pardoned according to your word"* (Numbers 14:20 AMP).

When you pray, come boldly before the Father reminding Him of His promises and take hold of them by faith.

Remember the prophecy:

God is going to bring us into a new dimension of authority in our prayers where our words, spoken with authority and invested in the promises of God, will enable us to confront every stronghold of the enemy!

Not only does God's Word and His promises fuel our prayers, they also become powerful weapons in waging spiritual warfare. Use the Word to rebuke and bind Satan. Dare to claim His promises for setting free those who are in bondage to Satan and in tearing down his strongholds.

III. JACOB PREVAILED IN PRAYER!

After Jacob prayed, he sent gifts to Esau thinking they would pacify him. Then, he took his wives, maidservants, and sons across the ford of the Jabbock where they would be safe. After they were settled, he returned to camp alone.

It was a night of destiny for Jacob. The future of his family and all that belonged to him was at stake. To him it was a matter of life and death.

In the dark stillness of the night, he began to wrestle with the Angel of the Lord. It was hand-to-hand combat. We do not know how long he wrestled, but we know he wrestled all night until daybreak.

We are told by the prophet Hosea how Jacob wrestled:

... he had power over the Angel [of the Lord] and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor. He met Him in Bethel, and there [God] spoke with Him [and through him] with us—Even the Lord the God of hosts, the name of Him [Who spake with Jacob] is the Lord.

Hosea 12:4-5 AMP

Jacob wept. He wrestled. He made supplication. He cried

out to God. He refused to give up or become discouraged.

At daybreak, when the angel saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, so that it was out of joint as he wrestled. Then the Angel told Jacob, “... *Let me go, for it is daybreak....*” (Genesis 32:26 NIV).

Jacob had an encounter where He took hold of God! He wrestled with such determination and power that the angel asked Jacob to let him go! Jacob prevailed! He refused to let go saying, “... *I will not let you go unless you bless me*” (Genesis 32:26 NIV).

Because he prevailed with God, the Angel of the Lord declared a blessing on Jacob and changed his name, meaning supplanter, to “Israel.” He said, “... *Your name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Israel [contender with God]; for you have contended and have power with God and with men and have prevailed*” (Genesis 32:28 AMP).

IV. YOU CAN PREVAIL WITH GOD!

As we wrestle with God through prevailing prayer, we have power with God and with men! We do not wrestle in our own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. “*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*” (Romans 8:26).

Jacob’s encounter with God is an example of the type of prevailing prayer we must have today. It is prayer that overcomes all opposition, delays, and seemingly impossible circumstances.

- Abraham wrestled and prevailed on behalf of Lot (see Genesis 18:22-33).
- Moses wrestled and prevailed for Israel’s victory over

Amalek (see Exodus 17:8-15).

- Isaiah and Hezekiah prevailed for Israel's deliverance from Sennacherib (see 2 Chronicles 32:20).
- Epaphras wrestled and prevailed in prayer for the Church at Colosse. Paul said, *"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured"* (Colossians 4:12 NIV).

Prevailing prayer is God's chosen way to bring down heaven's power and resources to earth. Charles Spurgeon said, "He who knows how to overcome with God in prayer has heaven and earth at his disposal."

God is calling forth intercessors in every nation to wrestle and prevail in prayer on behalf of souls who are blinded by sin and bound by Satan.

He is calling intercessors that will prevail in prayer for a great end-time outpouring of God's Spirit and for open doors in countries now closed to the Gospel!

In your own life, there may be physical, financial, or other major needs that can only be changed through mighty, wrestling, and prevailing prayer.

Just as Jacob had a divine encounter where he took hold of God, you can prevail with God in prayer and take hold of the answers you need.

Like Jacob, refuse to let go!

Refuse to stop praying and believing!

Continue to wrestle in prayer until you touch God and He touches you and releases His power to meet the need.

CHAPTER TWO

Joshua's Prayer That Commanded Nature

Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. And Joshua said, Ah, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of Jordan! O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?

Joshua 7:6-9 NIV

Joshua was a mighty spiritual warrior who learned at Moses' side how to prevail with God in prayer. He witnessed the power of Moses' intercession that saved the children of Israel from destruction and it no doubt, left an indelible impression on his life.

When Moses went up to Mt. Sinai to meet with God, Joshua was at his side. *"Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you...."* (Exodus 24:13-14 NIV). Notice he said, "Wait here for us."

Joshua saw firsthand the intimacy Moses had with God, the depth of his intercession, the glory of God radiating from

his countenance, and it created a hunger for God's Presence. When Moses went into the tent of meeting, the Shekinah glory of God would come down and stay at the entrance while the Lord spoke to Moses.

When the people saw the glory of the Lord at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped at the entrance of their tents. "*The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend...*" (Exodus 33:11 NIV).

When God finished speaking to Moses, Moses would return to the camp. But Joshua stayed in tent where God's Shekinah glory had rested. "... *Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aid Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent*" (Exodus 33:11 NIV). A fire was kindled in Joshua's heart for God's Presence that could not be quenched.

After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and appointed him as Moses' successor to lead Israel into the Promised Land. He rolled back the Jordan River and the children of Israel walked across on dry land. In their first battle at Jericho, God supernaturally intervened, destroyed the walls of Jericho, and delivered the entire city into their hands.

However, following Israel's great victory at Jericho, we see them defeated and fearful following the battle at Ai. When Joshua saw they had been defeated, he fell face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord and stayed there until that evening. The elders of Israel did the same and sprinkled dust on their heads. As they did this, they were expressing their sorrow and their sincerity. Falling to the earth was an expression of deep reverence in their approach to God.

I. SIN BLOCKS OUR PRAYERS!

Joshua was deeply troubled. He tore his clothes and began to cry out to God. But notice that he began his prayer by accusing God of failing them and of delivering them into the hands of their enemies. He said,

"... why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? " (Joshua 7:7 NIV).

Joshua's eyes were upon their circumstances - their defeat instead of remembering God's promises. As they prepared to cross the Jordan, God had promised Joshua:

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses... There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Joshua 1:3, 5

In great despair, Joshua poured out his anguish and pled his case based upon the honor of God's Name.

O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?

Joshua 7:8-9 NIV

God's honor was at stake! In essence, Joshua was saying that when the surrounding nations heard about their defeat that they would come and wipe them out. And it would be a reproach upon His Name.

God told Joshua, "... Get up! Why do you lie thus upon

your face?" (Joshua 7:10 AMP). God made it clear that the reason they had been defeated was because there was sin in the camp. Achan had taken some of the spoils of war from Jericho and had kept it for himself. God said that as long as this sin remained, they would not be able to stand before their enemies.

One of the major hindrances to prayer is unconfessed sin. As long as we allow sin to remain in our lives, God will not hear our prayers. (In another lesson, I will share more about this and seven major hindrances to prayer.)

It wasn't until the children of Israel dealt with the sin in their midst that God heard their prayers and delivered the city of Ai into their hands.

We must realize that as long as we allow sin to remain in our lives, our relationship, our prayers, and communion with the Father is hindered. David said, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*" (Psalm 66:18).

Could it be that one of the reasons the Church is so powerless is because we have allowed sin to remain in the camp?

There are many people today living with unanswered prayer because they have failed to confess and get rid of the sin in their lives.

We serve a God who hears and answers prayer! He is our Father who loves to release His blessings upon His children. He does not desire to withhold Himself from us, but is looking for opportunities to answer our prayers and meet our needs. "*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

When we pray, we need to ask the Father to reveal anything that is wrong in our lives or that is displeasing to Him. And once He reveals it, we must confess it and get rid of it.

Joshua was quick to deal with Achan and his sin and God once again fought for them against their enemies. As Joshua and his armies faced the Amorites, God told him, "... *Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you*" (Joshua 10:8 NIV).

Joshua and his armies marched all night and took the Amorites by surprise. The Lord brought confusion upon their enemies and gave them a great victory at Gibeon. As the enemy fled from Joshua and the armies of Israel, the Lord cast down great hailstones from the sky. More Amorites died from the hailstones than from the swords of the Israelites.

II. THE SUN AND MOON STOOD STILL AT JOSHUAS COMMAND!

During this battle, Joshua prayed one of the greatest prayers ever prayed. He prayed a prayer that demonstrates the unlimited power of God.

His prayer broke through all natural limitations!

As the multitude of soldiers stood by, Joshua prayed: "*O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon*" (Joshua 10:12 NIV).

Joshua's prayer was not a petition; it was not a plea for help; it was not a weak, timid prayer; it was a prayer command of faith.

Joshua knew the power of Almighty God. He had been at

Moses' side and witnessed His awesome power demonstrated on behalf of Israel. Knowing God had delivered their enemies into their hands, he removed every limitation off God and commanded the sun and moon to stand still!

The prayer Joshua prayed was not a long, drawn out prayer. Joshua lived in fellowship with God and it wasn't necessary for him to pray a long prayer. His request was in accordance with God's plan to give them victory over their enemies. Joshua and the armies of Israel needed more time to pursue and defeat the Amorites. Knowing that God was fighting for them and that God's power is unlimited, Joshua spoke the prayer command of faith.

God heard Joshua's prayer and the sun and moon stood still! God caused the sun to stop in the middle of the sky and delay going down for about a full day until Israel avenged itself on its enemies!

What an awesome witness of the all-powerful, unlimited God of Israel!

That day stands as a living memorial to the one true and living God who answers prayer. *"There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a man. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!"* (Joshua 10:14 NIV).

God has not changed! He will still change the course of nature; command the heavens to open and the rain to fall; stop raging storms; release provision in time of famine; restore life to the dead; create new limbs; open blind eyes; unstopp deaf ears; heal all manner of sickness and disease; deliver those bound by alcohol or drugs; in answer to the prayer of faith.

To enter this new dimension of strategic level of warfare prayer, you must remove every natural limitation you have

placed upon God's ability to answer your prayers.

Start believing and asking big things from God. We serve a God who "*is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*" (Ephesians 3:20). Whatever your need, don't limit God! By faith, take hold of the impossible as Joshua did!

CHAPTER THREE

David's Prayer in the Cave

I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me. Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Psalm 142:1-7 NIV

David was known as a man after God's heart. He was a mighty warrior and King, but above all else he was a man whose heart beat passionately after God. Listen to his heart's cry, "*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*" (Psalm 42:1-2).

What a spiritual treasure we have in the Psalms and prayers that David wrote that are recorded in the Word. They have been a source of strength and encouragement for untold millions throughout the ages.

On the lonely hillsides of Bethlehem, David sang and worshipped God. As he watched over the sheep, he would take out his kinnor and begin to sing songs directed to the heart of God. As his heart overflowed with love and joy, songs

of praise and joy would erupt from his lips and resound throughout the Bethlehem hillsides.

David was a man of prayer. His life was a life of prayer and praise. He had a bold confidence that God would hear and answer his prayers. He said, *“I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live”* (Psalm 116:1-2).

He knew that whenever he called upon God, He would deliver him. David said, *“As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me”* (Psalm 55:16).

Is this your confession of faith and trust in God and His faithfulness to hear and answer your prayers?

Regardless of the turmoil and perplexity in the world, the desperate circumstances you face or the trials you go through can you say, “As for me, I will call upon the Lord! I don’t know about anyone else, but as **for me**, I will cry out to God and **I know** He will hear and answer me! ”

David said, *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice”* (Psalm 55:17).

God hears every prayer we pray. When we pray, our words are not just floating into the air and disappearing. Our Father hears our voice! His ears are attentive to our cries!

David cried out to God concerning his enemies who had lied and spoken deceitfully against him and then he said, *“...but I give myself unto prayer”* (Psalm 109:4). Throughout his lifetime he devoted himself to prayer: before going to battle against his enemies; in times of trouble; in times of great turmoil; in times of great victory.

I. ARE YOU IN A CAVE?

When David was running from Saul and the armies of Israel, his faith and trust in God was not shaken. His faith was focused upon God's power and faithfulness to hear and answer his prayers. Although there were times when he was fearful, weary, and discouraged by his outward circumstances, David did not waver or doubt. His heart was firmly fixed and confident in God.

Although he fled to a cave for refuge, his real refuge was in God. David was alone; forsaken by friends. Saul was in hot pursuit and wanted to kill him.

There is no cave so dark or deep, but that you can lift your voice in prayer and know that God will hear and answer your prayers!

There in the cave, David began to pray.

He cried out to God. He poured out his soul and told God about the trouble he faced. David said, *"I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way..."* (Psalm 142:2-3 NIV).

Have you ever reached a place where you felt like you were in a cave like David? You may be at that point right now. God wants you to know that He is with you in the "cave" just as He was in the cave with David. He knows what has happened to bring you to a place of desperation and He knows what He has planned to deliver you.

There in that dark, cold cave, David told the Father all about his troubles and said, *"Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life"* (Psalm 142:4 NIV).

God knows everything about you. The very hairs of your

head are numbered. You are precious in His sight. He is your Father who knows your need even before you come to Him in prayer. Don't be afraid to pour out your heart to God. He knows the depths of what you are going through.

David's spirit was overwhelmed. The reason we reach a point where we feel overwhelmed by our problems and circumstances is because we are looking to the natural realm for our help.

Our Heavenly Father wants us to run to Him in times of great desperation and find refuge and strength in His arms to meet our every need.

David saw there was no natural answer to the circumstances he faced and said, "I cry to you, O LORD; I say, '*You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living*'" (Psalm 142:5 NIV). David had reached one of the lowest points in his life. Saul and the armies of Israel seeking to take his life were too strong for him. His friends abandoned him. He had looked around for someone to come to his aid, but found no one. He had been cast off; rejected by men.

But, David was not depending upon men to save him out of his troubles. He had already made God his refuge. He told God, "You are my refuge and my portion!"

Whatever needs you may have; no matter how desperate your circumstances; as you come before God in prayer, make Him your refuge.

Run to Him!

Pour out your trouble and hide yourself in Him knowing and trusting He knows what you are going through and that He will sustain, strengthen, and deliver you!

II. MAKE GOD YOUR REFUGE

There in that cave, David had run to the Lord, his refuge, in prayer. He told the Father:

Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Psalm 142:6-7 NIV

David's focus was not set on the strength of his enemies. He knew he was outnumbered and that they were too strong for him. As he prayed, his spiritual focus was set on God's deliverance and goodness to him.

David had faith and confidence in God that He would hear and answer his prayer. He said, "*As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me*" (Psalm 55:16).

There are many times we face problems and desperate circumstances and instead of crying out to God in prayer, we try to work things out in the natural. We get our eyes focused upon our desperate circumstances; our physical problems; the negative report of the doctor; the overdue bills; problems with rebellious children; the marriage that is falling apart.

If you are to live in the powerful dimension of prayer Christ taught, you must learn to set your spiritual focus on God and His faithfulness to hear and answer prayer; **not** on your circumstances or problems.

David said, "*Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name.* (Psalm 142:7 NIV). One of the major purposes of our prayers for God's deliverance from our circumstances is that we will be able to praise God and that He will be

glorified. Even as we cry out to Him we need to offer up sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving in faith, believing He has heard us.

III. CAST YOUR BURDENS UPON THE LORD!

David knew that regardless of the circumstances he faced, whether he was on the battlefield fighting, in a cave running for his life, or surrounded by the enemy, God was with him.

David learned how to release his faith and trust and know that God would not fail him. He said, *“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved”* (Psalm 55:22).

In the darkest hour of your life, your faith and confidence must be firmly fixed that God will sustain you. He will not allow you to be moved by your circumstances! He will be to you everything that you need!

You will be able to draw your strength and courage from Him. Like David, through God's strength flowing through you, you will be able to look Satan, every trial, adversity, sickness, pain, heartache, and even death in the face and not be moved.

David said that God will never allow the righteous to be shaken or moved from His hand. God intends those who trust in Him to be immovable! But, He requires us to first cast; to throw our burden upon Him in faith believing he will make us victorious.

You have a choice: To carry your burdens around and try to deal with them in the natural realm or to activate your faith by taking them to God in prayer and throwing them upon Him.

He is just waiting for you to stop trying to carry them yourself and to allow Him to carry them for you.

The moment you pray, casting your problems and burdens upon God in complete faith and trust in Him to meet your needs, His power is activated in your life to make you victorious and to deliver you.

It is time to come out of your cave!

CHAPTER FOUR

David's Prayer for God's Everlasting Blessing

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God. And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, The LORD Almighty is God over Israel! And the house of your servant David will be established before you. O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, I will build a house for you. So your servant

has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.

1 Samuel 7:18-29 NIV

God blessed and prospered David. He fought for the children of Israel and gave them rest from all their enemies. When David had built his palace and was at rest from his enemies, the greatest desire of his heart was to build God a Temple.

God saw David's desire and sent the prophet Nathan to David with a message. God told David that instead of building a house for Him, He was going to establish a house for David.

I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

1 Samuel 7:12-13 16 NIV

When David heard this prophecy, he went into the Tabernacle and sat down before the Ark of the Covenant where God's Presence dwelt. No doubt he was overwhelmed by the prophetic promise God had given him through Nathan. But notice that not only did he receive the prophetic promise with great joy; it gave him courage to pray this prayer. David said, "*O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer*" (2 Samuel 7:27 NIV).

Overwhelmed with the goodness and blessing that he had already received at God's hand, David cried out, "... *Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?*" (2 Samuel 7:18 NIV). David realized it was not by his own strength or merit that he had been exalted above his enemies and established King over Israel. He knew it was because of God's loving-kindness and favor.

As David sat there in the Presence of the Lord and thought upon the greatness of God's promise to him, words failed him. He said, "*What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD*" (2 Samuel 7:20 NIV). He acknowledged that it was for the sake of God's Word and according to His will that God had poured out His blessing upon him and given him this prophetic promise.

David's heart overflowed at the thought of God's greatness and majesty. He said, "*How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears*" (2 Samuel 7:22 NIV).

When we come into the Presence of God, one of our greatest priorities should be to acknowledge Him for Who He is and exalt His Name. There is no God but Jehovah! He is the Almighty God who has revealed Himself throughout the ages to His people through His supernatural signs and wonders.

When we call upon Him, we know there is no greater power! The more we have a revelation of His power and glory, the more we will be able to take hold of His supernatural provision for our lives.

David acknowledged God's greatness in redeeming Israel out of Egypt and establishing them as His chosen people. He said, "*You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God*" (2

Samuel 7:24 NIV).

Today, God has called out another people. He has redeemed us out of Satan's bondage and made us His own children. He has raised us up and brought us into relationship with Him whereby we are a royal priesthood and a holy nation, "*Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*" (1 Peter 2:10).

We are His people and He is our God!

I. “DO AS YOU PROMISED!”

David brought God's promise before Him. He said, "*And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever....*" (2 Samuel 7:25-26 NIV).

David took possession of God's promise. He said, "*Do as you promised!*" He knew the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promises and through prayer took hold of the promise in faith. He said, "*O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy.*" (2 Samuel 7:28 NIV).

As we pray, we must remember that every word God has spoken is true and will come to pass just as He promised. "*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever....*" (1 Peter 1:25). Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" (Matthew 24:35).

God's Word cannot fail!

Knowing that God is faithful to fulfill His Word, we must do as David did to take hold of His promises to us. To receive the answers to our prayers we must, in faith, bring the promises of God before Him and say, "Do as you promised!"

We turn God's promises into prayers and then they are turned into a demonstration of God's supernatural power on our behalf!

David concluded his prayer by asking God to release His blessing upon his house; upon his seed and that they would walk forever before God according to the word He had spoken. He said, "*Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever*" (2 Samuel 7:29 NIV).

David knew that once God had spoken and pronounced His blessing that nothing could hinder or prevent the blessing from coming.

II. NO MORE DOUBT OR QUESTIONING!

David's prayer is an example for us to follow in standing in faith upon God's Word and His promises. God has bound Himself to us by His Word by two undeniable proofs: His oath and His immutable counsel.

When God made a promise to Abraham, He sealed it with His oath. "*For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee*" (Hebrews 6:13-14).

Because He could swear by no greater, God swore by himself.

He staked down His own being!

No greater security could ever be given or desired.

In swearing by Himself, it was as if God was saying, "I will cease to be God, if I do not fulfill this!"

Since God cannot lie, prove false, or deceive us, His Word is infallible. Whatever He speaks will come to pass.

God did not just give you His promises and then leave you on your own to try to produce enough faith to lay hold of them. He hasn't planned for your faith to waver or fluctuate according to the circumstances you face or according to your emotions. The Apostle Paul said, "*Accordingly God also, in His desire to show more convincingly and beyond doubt to those who were to inherit the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose and plan, intervened (mediated) with an oath*" (Hebrews 6:17 AMP).

As heirs of promise, God has given us His divine oath as an undeniable proof that forever settles it in our minds.

It wasn't necessary for God to give us His oath. But, He did! There is no reason you should ever become anxious or worried concerning promises God has given you. You have His oath as your guarantee!

Not only has God given you His oath, He has given you a second undeniable proof: His immutable counsel.

Look at Hebrews 6:17-18 in the King James Version: "*Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie....*"

The word "immutable" means unchangeable.

When God makes a promise, He does not change His mind. Man may forfeit His promise through his unbelief or through disobedience and failing to fulfill the conditions God has set forth, but God **never changes**. He is "... *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*" (Hebrews 13:8). God said,

“For I am the LORD, I change not....” (Malachi 3:6).

The “immutability of His counsel” refers to God’s eternal purpose and plan. These eternal purposes have been agreed upon in counsel and are settled between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Within the “counsels” of God are His desire, will, and purposes for our lives. Eternal life, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance, the assurance of His Presence, unlimited blessings, power and authority, prosperity, help in time of need, peace, heaven, and all His promises are founded upon the:

Immutable!

Unchangeable!

Eternal counsels of God!

They are a declared revelation of His eternal counsels that come forth from His heart.

Just as God never changes, neither does His purpose or His desire toward His people ever change. His Word and His promises never change. They are forever settled in the heavens!

David declared, *“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations....”* (Psalm 119:89-90).

Isaiah said, *“... The word of our God shall stand for ever”* (Isaiah 40:8).

III. SET YOUR SPIRITUAL FOCUS IN PRAYER

These two divine proofs, God’s oath and His immutable, unchangeable counsel, give you divine assurance that will

enable you to stake your claim and take possession of God's promises, regardless of what trials or circumstances you may face.

What are the promises God has given you that you have been holding onto, waiting for God to fulfill?

What are the promises you are claiming from the Word of God?

What are the prophecies that have been spoken over your life, family, or ministry?

The key to taking possession of these promises and prophecies is knowing where to focus your faith in prayer.

God has given you His oath and His infallible Word that never changes!

His promises are founded upon His immutable, unchangeable counsel!

God has an unfailing record upon which you can stake your own life!

As you pray, focus your faith upon God's divine faithfulness and His awesome power. Don't look at your circumstances. Look beyond the promise to the faithful God who has given you exceedingly great and precious promises!

It doesn't matter how impossible it may seem or how long you may have waited to receive the fulfillment of God's promise to you. As you pray, focus your faith knowing He is able and will change the very course of nature, if necessary, to fulfill His promises to you.

God is faithful to all that He has promised! Because He is faithful when you pray, you can know beyond all doubt you will receive what He has promised you!

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ISBN 1-931887-94-2

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