

# LORD TEACH ME TO PRAY!

March 18, 2020

## **SESSION ONE: DOES PRAYING REALLY MATTER?**

Several times over the last few years we have seen major tragedies in our country. We are seeing a crisis right now in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. You often hear politicians or other leaders say “we are sending prayers their way.” Or “they are in our thoughts and prayers.”

But it has not been uncommon to hear other politicians or leaders say, “We need a lot more than thoughts and prayers.” To some extent I understand their point. We need to pray very hard, but we do need to work too. But it also appears to many that we need more than prayer is implying that prayer does not really matter.

This may be one of the top religious questions of all time, does prayer really \_\_\_\_\_ matter \_\_\_\_\_ ?

We are starting a multi week teaching series on prayer, and the first question we need to answer is this, does it really matter? Why pray if it does not matter, and if it does, we should spend much of our lives in prayer!

1. It \_\_\_\_\_ can \_\_\_\_\_ really matter! Yes friends, it can really, really matter. It really matters depends on two participants. The first of course is \_\_\_\_\_ God \_\_\_\_\_. And believe me God is willing! The second participant is \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_.

For prayer to be effective you must pray. But the first thing about you and our prayer’s effectiveness is you being the right kind of person.

We must be \_\_\_\_\_ righteous \_\_\_\_\_ people. James 5:16

Prayer is certainly tied in with healing. Effective prayer is tied in with our dealing with our issues and sins with others. But for our purpose, and the main focus of the verse, being the right kind of person is foundational.

Righteous literally mean holy, just or innocent. It is not being perfect, but being in a right relationship with God, and trying to stay close to Him.

This simply involves two things. The first is salvation. John 14:6

To have an effective prayer life, you need to have a real \_\_\_\_\_ relationship \_\_\_\_\_ with the one you are praying to!

### **For me only – Illus. me praying as a lost guy)**

The second thing is to be in a right fellowship with Christ as a disciple.

Psalm 66:18

John 15:7

### **For me only – Illus. lady pray 2 hours day for baby-never go to church, give, serve, live for Christ at all-silly)**

Do you have a \_\_\_\_\_ true \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with Christ? If you do, as a Christian are you truly trying to stay in a close \_\_\_\_\_ walk \_\_\_\_\_ with Him?

A second key to prayer mattering is our sincerity and seriousness about praying.

James 5:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_ fervently \_\_\_\_\_ means active and energetic. It could literally mean, “he prayed in prayer.” This sounds funny, but do you really pray when you pray? Are you sincere? Do you work to stay focused? Do you dedicate specific time to just praying?

### **For me only – Illus. Nicole praying in the dark “help me Jesus”. She sincere)**

James, who God used to write this book, was Jesus’ half-brother. His nickname was old camel knees because of the callouses on his knees from kneeling in prayer. He was serious about it! Are we?

2. If we will meet these basic criteria, our prayers can really, really matter!

v. 16 (power) – Our \_\_\_\_\_ English \_\_\_\_\_ word energy comes from this. It produces great working. This means real prayer has much force, and exceeding strength.

v. 17-18 – Elijah was one of the greatest Jewish prophets. He prayed and it did not rain for three and a half years. Then he prayed again and it rained!

The Bible say Elijah was a man just like us to show us this prayer power is available to you and me!

Elijah was simply right with God, and was very committed to prayer. You can be these two things too!

Let’s read James 5:16-18 again! Wow!

The late Jerry Falwell, may not have been the first to say this, but he is who I heard say it. “What can prayer do: Prayer can do anything God can do, and God can do everything!”

The famous English preacher Charles Haddon Surgeon reportedly said “Prayer pulls the rope on earth that rings the bell in heaven to God’s ears. Some here scarcely pull the rope, and some do it occasionally. But the few who change the world grasp the rope of prayer and pull boldly and continuously with all their might!”

What can prayer do? Prayer can do anything that God can do, and God can do everything!

I challenge all of us to become people of prayer! Give your life to Christ, and daily stay close to Him. And spend the rest of your life seriously committed to being a person of prayer: it really does matter!