

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, August 24 - Read Matthew 17:20 D.L. Moody once said, "God is not bothered by our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." Prayer should be like breathing for the Christian. No day can be boring when God is in it, and God is in all our seemingly insignificant moments in life. (see Psalm 37:23) Prayer enables us to not simply be victims of this world, but to instead be victors. We can move heaven and earth with our prayers, because prayer moves the hand of God on our behalf. E.M. Bounds has said, "The gospel of Christ does not move by popular waves, it has no self-propagating power. It moves as the people who carry it move." The people who carry the gospel move through constant prayer and dependence on God. Over the next few days, I want to share some of the most powerful lessons I've ever learned about prayer. Five prayers that I believe will super charge your prayer time. *First, let's talk about "Mountain Moving" prayers.* Our prayers should not be limited to minuscule, unimportant matters. It's been said: "If God answered all your prayers this week, would it just change you, or would it change the world around you?" Because our God is a big God, we should concern ourselves with the bigger picture. We serve a God who has said, "Listen! The LORD's arm is not too short to save, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call." (Isaiah 59:1) Jesus taught saying, "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." (Matthew 17:20) We serve a God who is able to do the impossible! What is impossible for us is possible with God. God does impossible things on a regular basis. When is the last time you prayed for something that seems impossible? We should regularly pray prayers that are so audacious that only God could accomplish them.

Pause and pray: Think of something impossible you need God to do in your life, or in the life of someone close to you, and begin to pray and ask God to do big things.

Tuesday, August 25 - Read Luke 18:1-8, Daniel 9:23 Pastor Mark Batterson has written about how we need to stop praying ASAP (as soon as possible) prayers, and instead start praying ALAIT (as long as it takes) prayers. Past generations of Christians used to call this "praying through," meaning to keep praying until you get an answer. This is biblical. There's nothing wrong with asking God to help ASAP (David prayed this way all the time in the Psalms). There is a clear precedent from Scripture that God not only works through our prayers, but He is also works on us as we pray - and this often means it takes time, patience and persistence to see the answer come through. The book of Daniel contains a powerful illustration of Daniel praying and fasting for 3 weeks, until an answer is given. The angel of the Lord tells him that as soon as Daniel started to pray, the answer had been given from heaven, but there was a war in the heavenlies that caused it to take longer to arrive. We often have no clue how much God is at work through our prayers! Jesus taught us to pray as long as it takes. In Luke 18, Jesus tells his disciples a story "To show them that they should always pray and not give up." He goes on to explain the power of persistent prayer. God want us to always pray, and not give up! Is there a prayer you've been praying, that you've recently given up hope on? Keep on praying! Jesus wants you to. He wouldn't have given us this story if he didn't. We often want instant results from God, but God also wants to teach us patience and endurance. Patience and endurance mature and deepen our faith in important ways. Some things must be prayed about over a period of years. Never lose faith that God can and will move on your behalf.

Pause and pray: Think of a prayer you gave up on long ago, and begin to pray for it again.

Wednesday, August 26 - Read Daniel 3:16-18 One of the powerful stories from the Bible tells us about Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego being thrown into the fiery furnace for not bowing down to King Nebuchadnezzar's idol. They miraculously survived, but nearly as surprising is what these men of faith taught us before they were thrown in, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18) This kind of thinking and praying can super-charge your prayer time! I know my God is able to do the impossible, but even if he doesn't, I will serve him and follow Him only! This kind of praying offers supreme submission and faith in God, and he is greatly honored by this kind of praying. A similar way to pray this is like my older brother Jon prayed as he dealt with a serious illness in his twenties - "either way I win." He was praying for God to heal him, but he knew that eventually he would be fully restored and given a glorified body in heaven someday. All of us who trust in Christ can say the same. We will see God's goodness in our lives in many ways on this earth, but ultimately and in all areas in eternity. We need an eternal perspective about all of this.

Pause and pray: Ask God to give you the kind of "Even if" faith that trusts Him even when you don't see a clear answer, or understand quite how He is working.

Thursday, August 27 – Read Romans 12:14 The Apostle Paul was badly persecuted throughout his ministry. He had people who would follow him around to try to stir up dissension, harm him, and try to shut him down from preaching about Jesus. So it might shock you that it was Paul who told us, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (Romans 12:14) This can super-charge your prayer life: Forgiving those who've sinned against you, hurt you, spoken badly of you, and instead choose to pray God's blessings and mercy over them! Not only will God's presence flood your heart you as you do this, but these kinds of prayers of blessing honor God greatly. Even when it comes to your greatest enemy, or someone who has hurt you more deeply than you can imagine – forgive as often as you need to, and pray for God's blessing and mercy on them and the situation. Somehow God will use this submission to Him to heal your own heart in ways you never dreamed possible.

Pause and pray: Who do you need to forgive from your past? Pray for God's blessing on them, even when it's hard.

Friday, August 28 – Read 1 John 5:14-15 The Bible tells us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15) We pray according to God's will, by praying God's Word. If we want our prayers to be powerful, we need to learn to pray the promises in God's word back to Him. There are more than 3,000 promises from God in the Bible. How many do you know? D.L. Moody said, "When I pray, I talk to God, but when I read the Bible, God is talking to me; and it is really more important that God should speak to me than that I should speak to Him. I believe we should know better how to pray if we knew our Bibles better." Interestingly, when you read the Biblical prayers that the first followers of Jesus wrote out in Scripture, they are so much different than what many of us pray today. They have such a different perspective. They are concerned with very different things than what we so often worry about. Listen to one of Paul's prayers for the Colossians, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father.." (Colossians 1:9-12) Doesn't this seem different than the type of prayers we often pray? I wonder that we should start to pray more of the Scripture, and by doing so, our prayers would be far more powerful.

Pause and pray: Think about a promise from the Bible, and begin to pray that over a situation or need in your life.

Adapted from: <http://thinke.org>