



# Perfecting Prayer

## Praying Through

Are we There Yet?

*"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12*

### A. Checking for Signs of Victory

Some spiritual battles are **LONG** — much longer than we ever anticipated. The first thing to understand in a long term spiritual battle is **WHY** it is long term!

- The devil (your enemy) wants you to give up and lose!
- If you WIN, he loses ground.
- You are in a battle for the kingdom!

#### 1. Taking the kingdom by force! *Matt 11:12; Luke 16:16*

- The phrase "suffereth violence" is from the Greek word "biazo" and means "to force, to crowd oneself into, to be seized, press and suffer violence."
- During the time of John the Baptist the people were "pressing in" to the kingdom of Heaven--overcoming any obstacle or opposition posed by laws, traditions, unbelief, or any power Satan threw at them, in order to receive the message that John preached.
- We must likewise be willing to 'press in' with **PRAYER** and **PRAY THROUGH** until we see the manifestation of answered prayer.

*Exodus 14:13 Pharaoh behind the Red Sea in front!*

### B. When You're Stuck at a Stop Light: Unanswered Prayer

There are three main reasons for unanswered prayer:

1. **God — His timing and His sovereignty**
  - a. *Eccl 3:1* Times and seasons
  - b. *1 Samuel 1-2:11* Hannah's prayer
  - c. *Gal 4:4* The sovereignty of God
2. **Satan — his blocking and demonic influence**
  - a. *John 10:10* Satan is out to steal our blessings
  - b. *Luke 4:5-7* Satan's authority in the worldly realm  
*See Daniel 10*
  - c. *Luke 10:19* The good news is that our authority through the name of Jesus is greater than the power of Satan.
3. **Ourselves — we can hinder our own prayers**  
This is the area where we have the most control to turn our STOP light into a green light.
  - a. Unforgiveness *Mark 11:25*
  - b. Sin *Psalm 66:18*
  - c. Wrong Motives *James 4:2-3*
  - d. Not knowing God's heart before asking *1 John 5:14-15*
  - e. Broken relationships-lack of respect *1 Peter 3:7*
  - f. Being double-minded *James 1:8*

**Stuck at a "spiritual stop light?"** Is it God and His timing?

Is it Satan? Is it something on your end? Take some time to pray specifically about discerning the hold up. No matter what is going on or how long it takes, **KEEP ON PRAYING**. Do not give up.  
Prayer makes a difference and God answers prayer!

Ready for  
Answered Prayer?

**Dangerous Prayer:** The kind that when answered makes you sorry you ever asked!

1. The Israelites prayed a dangerous prayer and God answered them. *Exo 2:24*
2. God's answer caused them to later wish they had never prayed and God had never answered. *Exo 16:3*

### Price of Answered Prayer

1. Like the Israelites, we don't know what our 'dangerous prayer' is going to require.
2. He may part a couple of seas to get us going but there is a good chance there will be a desert ahead.

### What to Expect

1. Don't be surprised by the heat. *James 1:2-4*
2. Often things get worse before they get better as freedom often takes longer than expected. *Daniel 10*
3. Faith is tested to the breaking point so that it is proven unshakable and unbreakable. *Heb 11:6; Gen 22:12; Heb 11:17*
4. You may wonder if the pain you are enduring is worth it. *(It is)* At some point in time, this is how we'll see it:

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*  
*2 Corinthians 4:17-18*