



## Sermon Notes: Perfecting Prayer Lesson 1-a Introduction and What is Fervent Prayer

### The Real Power of Prayer

James 5:16b

*"The effective, fervent prayer  
of a righteous man avails much."*

"Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven, but getting God's will done on earth. It is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of God's willingness."

Richard C. Trench

**A. What are You Expecting?** When a woman is pregnant it is said that she is "expecting." What is she expecting? Not a dog or a field of poppies or a bag of stones. She doesn't have to worry about what will be birthed in nine months. She is expecting a baby.

#### **What are you expecting from God?**

Psa 138:8; Psa 46:1; Psa 118:6; Isa 54:14-15

- **Psa 138:8** The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.
- **Psa 46:1** God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
- **Psa 118:6** The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?
- **Isa 54:14** In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you. **:15** Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but* not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.

#### **B. Go To God In Prayer James 5:13-18**

In every circumstance of life we should go to God in prayer. In this short concluding passage to the book of James—the word 'prayer' appears 7 times and forms the basis for 'perfecting prayer.'

- Jam 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? (1) Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.
- Jam 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them (2) pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
- Jam 5:15 And the (3) prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.
- Jam 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and (4) pray for one another, that you may be healed. The (5) effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
- Jam 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he (6) prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.
- Jam 5:18 And he (7) prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

#### (1) **Prayer during suffering!**

Let him pray (*proseuchestho*). Present middle imperative, "let him keep on praying"

#### (2) **Elders pray over sick!**

This is a Jewish maxim. Rabbi Simeon, said: "What should a man do who goes to visit the sick? Ans. He who studies to restore the health of the body, should first lay the foundation in the health of the soul. The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the word of God and prayer.

#### (3) **Prayer of faith**

the means of a sick man's recovery

#### (4) **Prayer for one another**

Present middle imperative. Keep this up! Confession and prayer—the key to recovery

#### (5) **Effective prayer**

See rest of study.

#### (6) **Pray earnestly**

"He prayed with prayer" - a Hebraism, to denote that he prayed earnestly

#### (7) **Keep on praying**

though it is not expressly said there that he prayed. Perhaps it might be fairly gathered from the narrative that he did pray, or at least that would be the presumption, for he put himself into a natural attitude of prayer. "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,"

### C. What is 'Fervent Effective' Prayer? James 5:16b

The words "fervent effective" in this verse are translated by a single Greek word: Energoumene. It has the meaning of 'energetic' or 'power.' However, this is the kind of 'energy' that does not give up, is consistent (daily), without ceasing, inspired by the Holy Spirit. **Here are three things that are essential to fervent effective prayer:**

#### 1. Find God's will—then pray in agreement with Him.

- Sometimes we have already decided OUR will in a matter and we are trying to get God into agreement with us. Or we assume what God would want to do in a situation. The scripture gives us this hope and comfort "...If we ask anything according to His will..." *1 John 5:14*.

**1Jo 5:14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

**Adam Clark:** ...if we ask any thing according to his will, that is, which he has promised in his word. His word is a revelation of his will, in the things which concern the salvation of man. All that God has promised we are justified in expecting; and what he has promised, and we expect, we should pray for.

#### 2. Desperate prayers are effective prayers.

- The scripture is full of other examples of such desperate prayers such as Hannah (*1 Sam 1:8-20*), Job and Elijah.
- It is in desperation that God sees how serious we are about what we are asking.
- You can't just produce desperation. Some prayers grow more desperate over time and these are usually the ones that meet with the success that Hannah had. The desperate prayer pays a great price but produces a great fruit.

#### 3. The effective prayer is enduring.

- The effective prayer does not give up when there seems to be zero results but continues to pray and believe for an answer no matter how much time it takes. Jesus told a parable specifically designed to encourage people to keep on asking until the results come in. It's called "The Parable of the Persistent Widow" in *Lk 18:1-8*

A parable of contrast—not comparison! The judge was not like God—but in contrast to God.

**CLARK** The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much - The words δεδεικται ενεργουμενη signify energetic supplication, or such a prayer as is suggested to the soul and wrought in it by a Divine energy. When God designs to do some particular work in his Church he pours out on his followers the spirit of grace and supplication; and this he does sometimes when he is about to do some especial work for an individual. When such a power of prayer is granted, faith should be immediately called into exercise, that the blessing may be given: the spirit of prayer is the proof that the power of God is present to heal. (E-Sword)

"Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God." Think of **Hannah** was barren and she was desperate to have a child. The scripture describes her as having bitterness of soul and of weeping in anguish. Her situation had been going on for years until she was so serious about her request that she made a very difficult vow to the Lord. She vowed that if God would give her a male child she would give him back to the Lord. The child would be put in God's service for full time ministry for his entire life. The answer to Hannah's prayer ended up being Samuel, one of the greatest prophetic voices in the Old Testament and the man who anointed Israel's first kings.

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