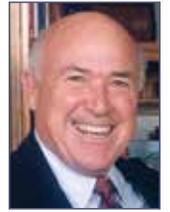


PRAYING IN FAITH: KING DAVID

SIMPLY TEACHING THE WORD SIMPLY—PASTOR CHUCK SMITH



This article was edited by permission from the book *Faith* by the late Pastor Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Chapel.

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

JAMES 5:16b

So many times, we pray, and yet our prayers are ineffective. Why? Perhaps we stop too soon. We may pray for five minutes, and because we don't get immediate results, we quit. But Jesus told His disciples: ***tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*** (Luke 24:49b), to wait upon the Holy Spirit. Also, Paul exhorted, ***Pray without ceasing*** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We shouldn't stop praying until God moves.

Also, a fervent prayer is one prompted by the Holy Spirit—when in prayer our soul cries out to God. It's more than a casual *We thank You, Jesus, please ... and if not, give us grace to bear it*. There's something about being desperate in prayer that makes us effective. I fear that we offer too many sleepy prayers. We don't feel deeply stirred, so our prayers never rise above a yawn. We see three keys to prayer in the life of King David:

Come to Jesus

We may have so many psalms because David had so many problems. One of my favorites is Psalm 61.

From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. PSALM 61:2

David teaches us that we can call out to God at any time and from any place because—no matter where we are—we're near to God. No matter how far you may have wandered from God, it only takes one step to get back to Him.

Perhaps you feel overwhelmed today. You don't know where to turn. Come to the Rock that is higher than you: Jesus Christ will deliver and strengthen you. He will lead you

to a place of victory. Then you will be able to say with David, ***He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock ... many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD*** (Psalm 40:2-3b). That's what God wants to do for you.

Don't Box God in

When we pray by the Spirit, we don't insist that God answer our prayers the same way each time. David understood this. When he was fighting against the Philistines, God's Spirit led him to victory in different ways. Once, the Lord told him to wait

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beside some mulberry trees and then go to battle, allowing the Lord to smite them first (1 Chronicles 14:13-15).

When God works in a certain way, we might assume we have God's methods down pat, so we don't bother to pray for His direction. David had enough wisdom to know that, although he would face the same enemy, he needed to inquire of the Lord again. Shall we go out against them again? he asks at a later time. God answers, in essence, No, not this time around. I've got a different plan.

God is not confined to one method. We should never follow patterns simply because they worked in the past. Continue to seek God through prayer, realizing that He may want to lead you in a totally new way.

Don't Be in a Hurry

David didn't always listen to or ask for the counsel of God. When King Saul chased him around Israel, seeking to take his life, David reached a point of despair where he said, ***There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines*** (1 Samuel 27:1b). What a false conclusion! In reality, there is nothing better for you than to submit yourself totally to the will of God in prayer. David allowed his fear to weaken his faith.

The word "speedily" gives us insight into David's mindset. The enemy often pressures us to take the quick way: "Hurry. Don't think. Don't ponder the consequences." How many times has this tactic landed you in trouble? Instead of being hurried and living with regret, commit the issue to God in Spirit-soaked prayer and wait on His answer.

Trust in His Will

An Old Testament prophet named Hanani gave me an insight into God that revolutionized my own prayer life: ***For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him*** (2 Chronicles 16:9a).

God wants to do a work. He is simply searching for people who are in harmony with His will. We mistakenly try to direct the flow of the Spirit. We build the channels and then say, "Okay, Lord, now flow through this channel." It would be far wiser to find out where the Spirit is flowing and get in that flow. God is looking for people who are in harmony with His purposes. Then He channels His resources through them, and their lives become rich and blessed.

We can never go wrong by putting our whole trust in the Lord, who always answers our prayers according to His gracious, loving nature. So let us continue to pray fervently in faith, wholeheartedly trusting God—and then leave the outcome to Him. 🙌