



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers  
In Prayer

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## PRAYING IN FAITH

The most important attitude you bring to prayer is the attitude of faith. Faith is the basis of your relationship to God, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (**Hebrews 11:6**). The only way that you can approach God is by believing that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. True prayer cannot take place without faith. Without faith, praying is an empty religious ritual that does not reach or move God and does not affect anything or anybody.

Jesus is your great Example and Teacher concerning prayer. He makes clear the necessity of faith for prayer, "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (**Matthew 21:22**). Jesus is confronting you with the truth that you must believe God if you are to pray to Him. Faith is indispensable to true prayer. It is that essential element that you must have and cultivate if you are to grow in your ability to seek Him and to receive from Him.

Does faith characterize your praying? When you pray, what is your attitude toward God? The most basic lesson of prayer is that you must have an attitude of faith toward God when you pray. You must believe that God hears and that God answers. There is no substitute for this truth. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him or to pray to Him. Yet, through faith, you can seek Him and experience Him in fresh and dynamic ways along with receiving from Him.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will examine what it means to pray in faith. Since faith is vital to prayer, it is crucial that you develop a biblical understanding of praying in faith. We will also examine unbelief in prayer and how to face and contend with this enemy of prayer. We will also look at persevering in faith even though the answer does not come right away. It is my hope and earnest plea that your faith will increase as you read and work through this issue. My prayer is that you will develop a tenacious faith that clings to God and His Word and that receives from Him.

### What Does It Mean To Pray In Faith?

The Bible reveals the necessity of praying in faith. Yet, what does this mean for you on a personal level? How does this apply to you on a daily basis? *When you pray in faith, you recognize God's authority and power to answer.* Praying in faith means that you believe that God possesses the authority and the power to answer you. It is the deep and abiding conviction that God can perform what I ask of Him.

When you pray, the focus should not be on you. It must be on God. Prayer is looking to God—His authority and power. Our eyes must be fixed on God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that you can ask or think (**Ephesians 3:20**). The attitude that God wants to

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

Email: [prayercloset\\_1998@yahoo.com](mailto:prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com)

OUR WEB PAGES: [www.prayerclosetministries.org](http://www.prayerclosetministries.org) - [www.kingdompraying.com](http://www.kingdompraying.com)

produce in you is summed up in **Psalm 123:2**, "Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD God, until He has mercy on us." He longs for you to look at His power and authority. He desires that you trust Him to hear and answer you through His glorious sovereignty.

Too many times believers lack faith in prayer because they are looking at their requests. Their gaze is fixed on the size or the impossibility of the requests. You will sink into doubt and despair if your focus is fastened on what you are seeking God about. You must turn your eyes of faith to the power and the authority of God. God has the power and authority to hear you and answer you regardless of your request. This is the place that God wants you to be at in your prayer life—fixing your gaze on Him, trusting His power and authority.

Praying in faith means daily adjusting your focus—looking to the power and authority of God. It is bringing yourself back time and time again to the truth that God has the power and authority to hear you and answer you. When you pray in faith, you are confident that God can hear and answer you regardless of what you are praying about.

*When you pray in faith, you ask of God without doubting.* When you come before God, you must not doubt in your heart concerning your request. You must not waver in believing that God will answer you. God does not want you to doubt, but to believe Him when you ask of Him. The Word of God declares in **James 1:6**, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driving and tossed by the wind." When you ask of God, He longs for you to trust Him with no doubting concerning His willingness or His power to answer.

How does God view the person who prays but doubts? He compares that person to the waves of the sea, which are driven and tossed by the wind. It describes a person who prays but wavers in faith because of feelings, circumstances, people, or inadequacies. When you pray and doubt God, God sees you as a wave of the sea—driven and tossed by doubt. Does that describe your prayer life? Are you like the waves of the sea—driven and tossed by doubt, fear, and unbelief even though you are praying?

The good news is that you serve a merciful, forgiving God. He will forgive you of your doubting. God wants to deliver you from being unstable in prayer. It is not His will for you to waver between faith and doubt. God longs to bring you to the place in your prayer life where you do not give room to doubt.

In my personal prayer life, I have struggled with doubt. My heart has felt the sting of the Spirit's conviction after I have pled with God and then doubted whether or not God would answer. As I prayed one day, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart with the question, "Why ask if you are going to doubt?" God has the power and the authority. He has promised to hear and answer. My heart was filled with remorse. I sought God's forgiveness and committed to seek Him in faith and with no doubting. I promised to enter His presence from that moment on with a holy seriousness. If I was going to ask, I was going to mean business with God. There are still battles with doubt. Yet, God has been teaching me to enter with a holy seriousness. He is ready and willing to hear and answer. The question is "Am I ready to ask and believe Him?"

Your loving Father desires to create a holy seriousness in you. He wants to remove the doubt that will plague your prayers. His heart beats for you to enter His presence in faith, asking of Him, ready to receive from Him. This is what praying in faith is all about—asking without giving room for doubt.

*When you pray in faith, you are committed to your prayer request.* Praying in faith means seeking God with persistence concerning your request. When you pray in faith, you don't give up. You may change your request under the Holy Spirit's direction. You may release it if it is contrary to the good and holy will of your loving Father. But, you don't quit. You don't stop praying because you don't see any answer or because you don't think you are getting anywhere. Let God be the judge of when and why you should change or release a request. Praying in faith simply does not abandon a request because of feelings or circumstances.

It is the will of God for you to persevere in prayer. The Word of God declares in **Luke 18:1**, "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." This is not only a

revelation of the Father's will, it is also an encouragement from your Father. I have turned to this verse on many, many occasions. Sometimes I have wanted to give up praying for someone or some request. Sometimes I had grown weary of praying. Sometimes I just didn't feel that I had the heart to keep praying. When I turned to this verse, the Holy Spirit would always seem to magnify that last phrase, "AND NOT LOSE HEART." It is not your Father's will for you to quit praying. The heart of your Father is stirred when you don't give up—when you don't quit. When you don't lose heart, it touches His heart.

Prayer is not for the faint of heart! It is for those who will not give up—who will not quit. God's richest answers and mightiest works are for those who will not abandon seeking Him. The Holy Spirit moved me to write in the margin next to **Luke 18:1** the following reference—**Galatians 6:9**, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do NOT LOSE HEART." If you do not lose heart, you will reap a harvest of answers. God will honor the heart that will not give up, that will not quit. He will hear and He will answer if you do not give up. Praying in faith means commitment to your request.

*When you pray in faith, you hold God to His Word.* God has filled His Word with precious and powerful promises. His Word is packed with principles and truths about Him and His ways. Praying in faith uses these promises, principles, and truths to plead with God. It is entering His presence asking Him to be faithful to His Word.

God loves His Word. He will be faithful to His Word. He will not fail to do what He has promised. This is why holding God to His Word is crucial. When you present God's Word to Him and call on Him to be faithful to that Word, it moves and touches His heart. He will respond. He has promised to respond, "For I am watching over My word to perform it" (**Jeremiah 1:12**, NASB).

Holding God to His Word is zeroing in on the faithfulness of God. The Word of God reveals that God is faithful; He always does what He says. He will not be untrue concerning anything that He has promised. God cannot deny Himself; He must be faithful. Listen to the testimony of His Word:

"Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven; Your faithfulness endures to all generations" (**Psalm 119:89-90**).

"Great is Your faithfulness" (**Lamentations 3:23**).

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (**2 Corinthians 1:20**).

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some count slackness" (**2 Peter 3:9**).

Holding God to His Word means asking God to be faithful to what He has declared in His Word. It is pleading with God to respond because of His great faithfulness.

A biblical example of holding God to His Word is found in **Nehemiah 1**. In this chapter, Nehemiah is praying about the restoration of Jerusalem. He says to God, "Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens; yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for my name'" (**Nehemiah 1:9**).

In **Leviticus 26:33**, God had promised to judge and scatter the people of Israel if they were disobedient to Him. Nehemiah confesses their disobedience and declares that God has been faithful to that promise (**Nehemiah 1:6-8**). Yet, He then reminds God of His promise in **Deuteronomy 30:1-4**. In these verses, God promises to restore Israel if they will return to Him in faith and repentance. Nehemiah declares their willingness to return to the Lord. He calls on God to be faithful to His promise. He asks Him to do what He has promised. His words in **Nehemiah 1:9** are based on the truth of **Deuteronomy 30:1-4**. This is holding God to His Word. It is reminding God of His Word and pleading with Him to act. It is a characteristic of praying in faith.

*When you pray in faith, you depend on the goodness of God.* Faith lays hold of God's goodness. Faith relies on the fact that God is good and that He longs to bless and provide for His

people. The Bible describes God's goodness in this way, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

When you pray in faith, you believe that God is good and that He desires to answer you. Faith does not view God as stingy or reluctant. Faith sees God as a loving Father who controls all things and is willing to pour out abundant blessings on His people when they seek Him. It is your Father's desire to bless you. He longs to bless you more than you desire to be blessed. Faith clings to this and is motivated by it.

God desires to reveal His goodness to you. God created you in order to show you what a great and awesome God He is. He wants to display to you His unique and glorious character. He yearns to show you the depth and richness of His goodness, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him?" (Matthew 7:11). Your Father wants to pour out on You abundant blessing. He loves you and wants to shower You with His goodness. Yet, listen to that last phrase, "to those who ask Him." The blessings of Your good Father come only to the ones who ask of Him. Your Father is good and wants to bless. He is waiting for you to lay hold of His goodness and seek Him with a believing heart. Praying in faith depends on God's goodness and is motivated by it.

## The Wretched Sin Of Unbelief

Unbelief is the wretched sin that hinders a believer from receiving from God. The Word of God declares the one who doubts should not expect anything from God, "For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:7-8).

God will not bless unbelief. Unbelief is an insult to Him. It is an assault on His goodness, His grace, His power, His kindness, and His holy purpose. In no uncertain terms, He has made it clear that unbelief cuts you off from His blessing. Listen to the testimony of the Word of God:

"Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58).

"Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness . . . so I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest'" (Hebrews 3:8, 11).

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief, for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. However this kind does not go out except prayer and fasting'" (Matthew 17:19-21).

The Word of God is clear: unbelief is a wretched sin that dishonors God and keeps you from receiving from God.

In the kingdom of God, you get what you believe. In the kingdom of God, no one earns or merits anything. Yet, you can ask and receive by faith due to the grace of God. The believing is the receiving. Without believing there can be no receiving from God. This is the fixed, unchanging law of God concerning prayer.

There are some basic causes of unbelief in the believer's life. They are:

- *Fearing that you are not worthy.* Many believers doubt because they do not feel worthy to receive anything from God. Their prayers are plagued with doubt because they do not feel as if God should do anything for them. The truth is no one is worthy to ask and receive of God. There is not a believer who earns or merits anything from God. You have been made worthy by the blood and righteousness of Christ. You are clothed in Christ's righteousness and cleansed by His blood. This provides you with access and boldness (Ephesians 2:18, 3:12).
- *Fearing that God does not want to give.* Some believers struggle with unbelief because they are afraid that God doesn't want to give to them. They do not feel as if God will hear and answer them. Yet, this goes against the testimony of Scripture. The Bible reveals that God is good, willing and ready to bless His children abundantly.