

## VICTORIOUS PRAYER LIFE

**Key Verse: James 4:1-10**

**Key Thought: Effective Prayer is always Victorious!**

Of all the things a believer can learn to do in this life, the most important thing is to *learn to pray*! One day, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him for some instruction. They did not ask Him how to heal the sick. They did not inquire about how to raise the dead. They were not interested in Jesus' secret for walking on the water, or in His recipe for multiplying the loaves and the fishes. When they came to Jesus, they asked for a very simple, elementary thing. Look at Luke 11:1. They said, "Lord, teach us to pray." These men knew that prayer was central to everything else in their relationship with God. They wanted to have a prayer life like the one they saw in Jesus!

In the same way, we need to learn how to pray! Everything in our personal walk with God, as well as our corporate walk as a church, hinges on our ability to speak prayers that are heard and answered. Oh, we do a lot of praying, but often our prayers do not prevail. We need to learn how to pray prayers that "avail much", prayers that prevail with God, prayers that are heard and answered. This passage has some important things to say about the matter of prayer. In fact, I see in these verses the Simple Steps to A Victorious Prayer Life, and I want to share them with you this morning because I believe we all want to know how to have an effective, powerful prayer life. I believe God wants us to have that kind of prayer life. I believe that kind of prayer life is available to everyone of God's children today.

## **I. AVOID FORSAKEN PRAYING**

These are the people who are going after life. They are trying to get everything they can by any means they can. They fight, scheme, plan, kill, work, war, and hate all to get the things they think they need. James tells them that they lack what they are after in life simply because they do not ask for them! How many times have we been guilty of the same thing? We operate within the realm of our own power, striving in our own energy to obtain the things we want and think we need, but we fail to get them because we do not take the time to ask God!

There is no problem in your life, this church, city, country, province, nation, or world that cannot be solved through the avenue of prayer! When God's people begin to call on His name in the right way, they become partakers of His power, peace, and His glory. It is prayer that links our lives with God's omnipotent power! We need to learn to utilize His power, and that can only be done through prayer!

Take the little boy who was trying with all his might to move a large stone. His muscles were straining, sweat covered his face and brow as he tried with all his strength to move that stone. His father sat nearby watching all this with mild amusement. After a while he said to his son, "Son, are you using all of your strength?" The little boy answered, "Yes, I'm using all the strength I have!" His father said, "No, you really aren't son. You haven't asked me to help!"

How many times is that true in our lives? We struggle and strain, we war and wrestle, but we cannot achieve what we want to. Could it be that we have failed at an obvious point? Could it be that we have failed to call on the Father and enlist His help in the situation? He wants to bless you. He wants to move in your life in power and glory, but often He doesn't because we do not ask! Did you know that prayerlessness is a sin! We are **commanded to pray** –

***“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”***

***1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

To fail to pray is to commit sin! Many need to repent their prayerlessness. There is no substitute for a strong prayer life! Your greatness and success in your public life and ministry are directly tied to your prayer closet!

There is so much to do here at Fountaingate! There are souls that need to be saved; wayward brothers and sisters that need to be reclaimed; work that needs to be done in our building; lives that need to be changed for the glory of God; and a community that needs to be reached for Jesus. Besides that, there is a great need for the manifest presence and power of God!

God sees the needs and He knows all that we need to do here, but He expects us to pray! Prayer unlocks the storehouse of His blessings and allows Him to move in our hearts and lives in a profound and powerful manner. God has so much that He wants to give us, but if we do not ask, we will never have it! Wouldn’t it be a shame to get to heaven and have the Lord show us all we could have been, all we could have had and all we could have seen if we had only asked Him for it? We must not neglect prayer!

## **II. AVOID FOOLISH PRAYING**

James tells them that there are times when they do pray, and they still don’t get what they ask for because they ask from a wrong motive. They are asking for things that promote and satisfy “*self*”. They are praying unacceptable prayers and God simply will not answer that kind of praying! We are kidding ourselves if we think God will underwrite our selfishness!

The kind of praying James is referring to is praying that does not even consider the glory of God, much less make it the priority. This kind of praying seeks what it wants without regard to what God wants. This kind of prayer is self-centered, selfish, and basically sinful; and it will not be heeded by the Lord. How often are we guilty of praying for frivolous things without any regard for God's will in the matter? What if God gave you everything you ever asked for? You would be in a mess today! This kind of praying gets no higher than the ceiling. The right kind of prayer always seeks the will of the Lord first and foremost!

Notice what James says in verse 4. He tells us that being the friend of the world violates our fellowship with God and hinders our prayer lives. He uses the terms "adulterers and adulteresses." He is using the metaphor of marriage. Imagine a man and a woman get married, they are in love and things go well for a while. After a time, the wife develops a roving eye. She finds her another man and begins to spend her time with him and to give him her love. Now, suppose while living this way she goes back to her husband and asks him for things like money, a car to drive, a place to live, etc. What do you think his response will be? Most men would give her a loud, "No!"

Well, when you and I were saved, we became the bride of Christ! We are to remain pure and unspotted from the world. Our love, our worship and our allegiance are to be to Jesus only. When we embrace the world and ignore the Lord, we can forget effective praying. Those two do not go together! When we commit spiritual adultery against God, it will mean that our prayers will go unanswered! You cannot be a friend of the world and walk a worldly path and expect God to keep on blessing your life! Sure, God loves you and He desires to meet your needs, BUT He expects you to walk with Him in a devoted love relationship. Anything else forfeits His power and His answers to your prayers.

*“The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked,  
but the prayer of the upright pleases him.”*

*Proverbs 15:8*

### **III. ADOPT FAITHFUL PRAYING**

We want to avoid those forsaken prayers and those foolish prayers. We want to learn to pray prayers that are heard in Heaven and answered in our lives. These next few verses share some powerful principles that teach us about the kind of prayer life we need to adopt.

A) **Be Sensitive** – verse 5 basically says, “The Spirit of God in your heart has strong desires and He is very jealous for the glory of God.” James is telling us that we need to be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit of God in our prayer lives. The Spirit only desires that which brings glory to God. He wants God to get every bit of the honor and the glory.

If we will learn to hear the voice of the Spirit, He will teach us to pray for those things which honor God. He knows the mind of God. He will share the mind of God with us and teach us to pray proper prayers.

*“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.<sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”*

*Romans 8:26-27*

Learn to hear the voice of the Spirit of God and watch Him revolutionize your prayer life.

B) **Be Submissive** – Verse 6: One of the things the Spirit of God will do in our lives is make us more submissive to the Father. Did you know that prayer is not about getting what you want from God? Prayer is about God working in us to line our will up with His.

When we get to the place where we want nothing but what God wants; when His will becomes our will; when we are willing to surrender all our plans, goals, wants and wishes, then we are ready to see God move in answer to our prayers!

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, notice what He told them first, ***“He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.”**”*

***Luke 11:2***

The first Adam missed this in the Garden of Eden. He said, “Not Thy will, but mine be done!” and he got into trouble. In fact, he caused so much trouble that we are still paying the price today. Our objective in prayer is not to bend God’s will to ours, it is to forsake our will and embrace His will totally! When we come to the place where we are willing to come into His presence humbly and broken, God will answer our prayers. If we feel like we can strut into the throne room of grace and call the shots, telling God what He is going to do, then our prayer lives will amount to nothing. God is looking for a broken, humble people that He can pour out His blessings upon.

C) **Be Steadfast** – James tells us next that part of achieving a victorious prayer life is learning to stand against the devil. Did you know that prayer is warfare? That’s why most of our prayers are not answered. We see prayer as an opportunity to share our wish list with the Lord in the hopes that He will give us the things *WE* desire. In fact, God has chosen to work through His people’s prayers.

Ephesians 6:10-20, a familiar passage where Paul talks about the armor of God, take notice to verse 17, where we are told to *pray*. If I understand this correctly, we put on the *whole armor of God*. We get ready for the battle, and then we go to war when we bow to pray! Have you every thought about it like that? Prayer is war!

It is not a time for dismissive, meaningless nonsense! It is a time to draw the sword of the Spirit and go to war with the enemy. That is why we must learn to be sensitive to the Spirit and submit to the Father before we take on the enemy. Only then will we be strong enough to stand!

The devil also knows this and that is why he fights our prayer lives so strongly. He doesn't care about you going to church. He doesn't care about the things we do here at church. He doesn't care if I preach. He doesn't care what we do if he can keep us from doing the most important thing of all: praying!

If you make up your mind today that you are going to be a prayer warrior, you had better look out! The devil will fight you tooth and nail. He will stir up the flesh, and the flesh hates prayer as much as the devil does! He will give you limitless reasons why you shouldn't bother with prayer. He doesn't care what you do if you don't get involved in serious, agonizing prayer. For he knows that the power of God is manifested through the prayers of the saints! BUT, if we can resist his temptations to avoid prayers and if we can learn to view prayer as warfare, then you can see victory of the devil! If you want to put the devil on the run, develop your prayer life and he will have a hard time around you!

D) **Be Separated** – No man can come to God with dirty hands, a divided heart, and a double mind. No man can come to God with open sin in his life,

*“If I had cherished sin in my heart,  
the Lord would not have listened.”*

*Psalms 66:18*

No man can come to God if his heart is divided between the world and the Lord,

***“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”***

***Matthew 6:24***

No man can come to God if he is trying to face two ways at the same time,

***“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”***

***2 Chronicles 7:14***

Victory in our prayer lives demands that we come clean before the Lord and repent of our sins. It demands that we turn loose of the world and set our hearts and minds upon Him. God cannot and will not bless the prayer life of a person who wants the best of both the world and God’s kingdom. It is either or, but not both!

E) **Be Sincere** – The whole point of these last two verses (v 9-10) is that we need to take this matter of prayer seriously! In all honesty, much of our prayer is done in a hurry. Many cannot even remember what they talked to God about this morning if they prayed at all. When we get serious about prayer, there will be a broken heart over the lost, and tear dimmed eyes seeking the presence and power of God. We need to return to brokenness before the Lord! We need to return to fervent prayers that ring the prayer bells of glory. We need to pray like Hezekiah or Elijah! Honestly, when was the last time you wept over sinners?



When was the last time you fasted and prayed to know the mind of God?  
When was the last time sleep evaded you and a spirit of prayer took you  
onto the battlefield for others?

When was the last time you, like Jacob, got ahold of God for something  
as refused to let go until He answered? There's something about those  
prayers that really mean business! God knows our hearts and our  
motives. If we would have effective prayer lives, then we need to get  
serious about prayer and make it our top priority!

In closing, I want to ask, how's your prayer life? If it isn't all it should  
be, *the altar* is the place to be. Here, you can confess your sins and seek  
God for a renewed burden to pray. Maybe you want to bring your lost  
family right down here and weep for them before the Lord. Maybe you  
want to come and pray for the ministry of this church. Pray that God  
will take Fountaingate and do great things for His glory. Maybe you  
want to come and prayer for your brothers and sisters in Christ who are  
struggling today. Maybe you want to come and claim victory over the  
devil. Maybe you are out of God's will and need to get right with Him.  
Maybe you are not saved and would like to be. I don't know what you  
need, but this altar is the place to bring all your needs to HIM.

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Place: FCA

Time: 10:30am

Date: December 31, 2023

After Service: O Come To The Altar