

Going Deeper

WITH

A LIFE THAT MATTERS



Five Secrets of Powerful Prayer

BY RON HUTCHCRAFT

FIVE SECRETS OF POWERFUL PRAYER

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"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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

A transformer makes power accessible so it can make a difference where you need it to make a difference. In heaven, God's unlimited power is made available to you through prayer. Maybe today you are facing a situation or you have a need that desperately needs the touch of God's unlimited power. How do you get that unlimited power to meet your need, your hurt, your situation, or the miracle you need? The transformer of God is called prayer. By God's grace, this incredible transformer takes all the unlimited power of God and brings it down to what you're facing in your day and where you are right now. All over the world, Christians can pray at the same time. What an ultimate transformer!

Prayer is the focus found in 2 Chronicles 7:14. This piece of scripture has been for many Christians, in many generations, a blueprint showing the road from the little goldfish bowl of ordinary, business as usual, maintenance Christianity to the really powerful stuff that we're restless for in our hearts. Many are pursuing the more powerful relationship with God that some people have called revival. God is calling us back to our spiritual senses that were instinctive when we first came to Christ, when we didn't have to look for them or think a lot about them. When you first began a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, they were just there. As we walk with Christ, learn more about Him, and get busy with church activities, somehow it's easy to lose the first instincts we had as a new Christian. We need to go back to the beginning—back to our original love for Jesus.

God wants you to come home to a sense of royalty. Think back to when you first came to Christ. Maybe before that point you had never felt like you were worth much. When you realized that God's Son died on the cross for you, you said, "You know, I must be worth something because God's Son died for me!" You knew it then, but maybe you've lost that sense of royalty that you experienced when you first came to the cross of Jesus Christ. You were saved by grace, but God thought you were worth the life of His One and only Son. Come home to a sense of royalty, so you won't settle for mediocrity anymore.

God wants you to humble yourself and come home to a sense of surrender. Finally get out of the business of running your own life. To humble yourself means to take yourself out of the center of things and move God and others into the center. That's humbling yourself. Experience the wonderful relief of getting your hands off the steering wheel and letting God take total control of your life. What tremendous peace!

Once you return to your first love for Jesus by going back to a sense of royalty and surrender, you will then be ready to experience God's unlimited

power through prayer that is described in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Through prayer, broken things are healed and repaired, and failures are turned into new beginnings!

Your Declaration of Dependence

You can experience God's unlimited power through prayer once you have humbled yourself at His feet. The people who understand the greatest spiritual power in the universe are people who have first issued their declaration of dependence. They have said, "I understand that I don't make it happen. I can't make it happen." After you acknowledge that you can't control the situation, spiritual power begins because you realize He has the power to make changes in your life. Once you've declared your dependence on God, you must show it. Since you know it's all God, you will be praying often and praying fervently.

James 5:16 is a wonderful promise that says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." The King James Version of that same verse says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Praying out of humility and dependency is pictured by a woman in the Bible who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had been to every doctor, had spent all of her money, and there was no medical solution for her. This woman pushed her way through the crowd trying to get to Jesus muttering something like the following, "If I can just get to Jesus. Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me. If I could just get to Jesus. Please let me get to Jesus." Her focus was "If I can only get to Jesus," and finally when she gets to Him, she touches His robe and is immediately healed. Notice the desperation in her prayer, "If I could just get to Jesus!"

Real prayer should be intense and passionate. There's a difference between "Dear God" prayers and "Oh Lord" prayers. Most of our American praying is kind of this predictable or boring "Dear God" stuff. "Dear God, thank You for this day. Thank You for Your many blessings. Forgive my many sins. Help the world. Bless the missionaries, whoever they may be, and my dog." They're so general, so predictable, and so dispassionate. Then there's "Oh Lord" prayers. If you read the great prayers of the Bible, you'll see that they almost all start out "Oh Lord, Awesome God of heaven and earth." Remember that it is the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man that gets things done. That kind of prayer is what God wants to hear.

God wants you to jump out of the little goldfish bowl and into the big spiritual pond. With a surrendered heart, you are ready to come home to a sense of power that only the surrendered know and they access that power through prayer. When you first come to Christ, you're praying, you're instinctive, and you're trusting. It seems that somehow new Christians get their prayers answered big time, and part of that is because God is really encouraging them in their new faith. Somewhere along the way, as we get used to prayer, we lose the passion and it becomes routine. We don't fully experience God's unlimited power.

There are secrets to powerful praying. It's time to understand how prayer was

supposed to be and literally blow the lid off of your experience of the power of God as you begin to pray more often and more passionately than ever before.

Know Who You Are With

The first secret of powerful prayer is to know who you are with and who you're talking to. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." The ancient spiritual leader in Israel, Isaiah, had an opportunity to come to that throne of grace. Did you ever go through a period of time in your life when everything was changing? King Uzziah had been king for fifty-two years before he died. Then everything changed. Today, you probably could care less about King Uzziah. They cared then because anybody who was fifty-two or less didn't know any other ruler during some of the greatest days in the history of Israel.

In the year that everything changed, Isaiah saw the Lord. Isaiah 6:1-4 says, "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings...they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke." Isaiah goes into meltdown as he gets one glimpse of who he is with.

Everyone was all excited after the first landing on the moon—one little piece of rock around one little planet, in one little galaxy, in our one little solar system. It would take ten thousand more years to finish scanning the heavens one time, and they've already found a hundred billion galaxies. Do you know where you are when you pray? You have just entered the throne room from which a hundred billion galaxies are governed. Do you pray like that? Think about who you are with.

The first secret of powerful praying is to say, "I am with the awesome Creator, Ruler, Sustainer, and Controller of a hundred billion galaxies and I get to go into His throne room with my need." The first word of our prayers should probably be "Wow!" Maybe we ought to just stop and not say anything. Just think, "Wow! Look where I am. Look who I'm with!" God says "humble yourself and pray" because you are invited to be with Him. That ought to get you on fire. Pray with that passion. Remember who you're with. Spend some time praising Him and thinking about how massive, how sovereign, how huge, and how in control of everything He is. You'll never pray the same because you'll know who you are with. That's the first secret of powerful prayer.

Know What You're Asking

The second secret of powerful prayer is to know what you're asking. Notice that Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Bring your specific need whether big or small, your personal situation you're concerned about, into the throne room of God. Philippians

4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

You most likely have specific concerns or worries. You don't just have general worries such as, "I'm worried about life." You know what you're worried about and you could name it right now. God says your requests of Him should be as specific as your worries. When you sincerely bring those into the throne room, you go in with a worry and you can come out with peace.

An old scientific experiment is to place a two-by-four out on the ground on a sunny, cold winter day. The sun could be beating down on that board all day and the board won't even get warm. If you take a piece of glass and focus that sunlight long enough on the board, the wood will start to get hot, and maybe smoke a little bit. What's the difference? It is the same sun and the same board, but there is now focused power. God honors specific prayer requests. Not "Lord, bless the world" or "Help me with my problems," but coming to Him with specifics. Focus His power on one spot, one person, or one situation. Know what you're asking.

Matthew 20:30-34 says, "Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' Jesus stopped and called them. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. 'Lord,' they answered, 'we want our sight.' Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him."

Their first request was general, like our prayers a lot of times. Jesus asked them to be more specific, though He already knew their need. The purpose of prayer is not to inform a God who is omniscient and who knows everything. Jesus wants you to exercise specific faith. Picture as you're praying that Jesus is standing over you and tell Him what you want Him to do for you. In the story about the blind men, it is not until they made a specific request that they received their miracle.

Jesus is honored by specific requests and specific faith. Always remember, though, that the Lord may have a better and bigger plan than what you are asking from Him. Trust Him for your request, knowing that He will grant it unless He knows there is something that is a more loving thing to do.

Unload What You're Carrying

The third secret of powerful prayer is to unload what you're carrying. That is what you're invited to do in Psalm 55:22, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." It doesn't just say tell the Lord about your cares or burdens, but give them to Him.

Maybe you're having trouble with your vehicle and the breaks squeak or the

engine is making weird noises. You take it to the mechanic and tell him what the problem is. He says, "Ah, okay. Let me write all that down." Then you say, "Thank you. Thanks very much for listening" and drive off. What good does it do just to tell the mechanic about the problem? You have to leave it with him and trust him with the problem.

Sometimes when we pray, all we do is tell God about it and then we walk away still carrying it. That's not powerful praying. God already knew what was going on. His power is released when you leave what you're carrying with Him! The picture of really praying powerfully is to go into God's throne room all doubled over, carrying the person, situation, or need you care about on your back. You can barely stand up. You walk into the throne room all bent over, and after you give your burden to Him, you walk out standing tall because you left it there. 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

The next verse, 1 Peter 5:8, says, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." The devil gets hold of you when you hang onto your cares. It's a good way to play into his hands. God wants you to give your cares, worries, and problems to Him so that you will not be affected by the devil's schemes. So, unload what you're carrying!

Pray With Each Other

The fourth secret of powerful prayer is to pray with each other. The preposition is very powerful here. Don't just pray for each other, but *with* each other. Matthew 18:19-20 says, "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Jesus says that He wants us to come together and agree with each other.

What should you do in a group of three or four people praying or when you're in a big prayer meeting where a lot of people are praying? When somebody else is praying, you shouldn't just sit and listen. You're not supposed to be passive in the prayer process. When somebody else is praying, you need to be agreeing with them. You are in the throne room with them, standing next to them, backing them up. Picture yourself standing next to them in the throne room of God saying, "Yes, God. I want that too. Yes, God, I'm believing that too. That's exactly what needs to happen. Lord, do it. I'm trusting You." There's power in agreeing with others in prayer. Pray with each other.

Many parents would agree that when all their kids agree together on something, it is much more effective than when only one of them wants it. God desires for His kids to come together asking for something and believing Him for it. Jesus says when you agree on earth about something, it will be done for you by your Father in heaven. There is power in praying together.

Isn't it amazing how hard it is for us to pray with each other? Sometimes it

seems awkward, maybe because we're afraid of sounding too spiritual or religious. We often talk to people for an hour on the phone about something that's going on in their life. Do you ever say, "Well, can I pray with you about it?" How often do you as a married couple pray together? How often do you pray with your children? It should be an everyday occurrence as situations come up. There's tremendous power in praying together with others.

For example, it can be very difficult to search for a new church pastor. Two pastoral search committees in two separate churches could be completely different. One committee could be full of good wisdom, analysis, questions, and business skills with prayer at the beginning of each meeting, and the other committee didn't do anything for the first three months except pray? There would be a totally different result.

God's people sometimes underestimate the power of praying together. Committees, churches, friends, parents, children, and married couples need to pray with each other. Your Father in heaven takes special notice when His kids come together.

Expect the Supernatural

The last secret of powerful prayer is to expect the supernatural. Psalm 5:3 says, "In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." After you get off your knees, you should expect something to happen. That's really how you ought to be if you've really understood who you were with, knew what you were asking, and unloaded what you were carrying. If you've exercised these secrets of powerful prayer, you're supposed to get off your knees expecting things to happen in heaven, in hell, and on earth because you prayed. Expect the supernatural.

In Jeremiah 33:3, God says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." If you go back to verse two it says, "This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is his name." In other words, know who you're with! Before He says "Call to me," He lets you know who He is. He is the One who made the earth and is all-powerful.

Do you ask Him for God-sized stuff? When is the last time you have asked and trusted God for something only God could do? No human force could help; there was no contribution any human being could make, only God could do it. How often do you pray for things only God can do? That's when the power starts to come into your life.

Ask God for something only He can do. Learn to ask God to blow the lid off of anything you could imagine. Remember the promise in Ephesians 3:20, He "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." If you know who you're with, pray God-sized prayers and expect the supernatural. God may very well want to blow the lid off. God can accomplish more in one hour than men can accomplish in fifty years. It's never too late for Him to come through, nor is anything too big for

Him to conquer. The words hopeless and impossible are just not in the vocabulary of God.

God is calling you to a new level of experiencing and unleashing His power, and of tasting His love as you've never done before. Make prayer your first resort instead of your last. Prayer should be a lifestyle, not just a binge for a few minutes in the morning. Maybe you're not always bowing your head and closing your eyes, but make a conscious effort to enter His throne room often throughout the day.

Prayer is an incredible transformer that takes the unlimited power of God and brings it down to what you're facing and where you are today. When you pray, know who you're with, know what you're asking, unload what you're carrying, pray with each other, and expect the supernatural.

God is calling you to a new level of experiencing and unleashing His power. Decide to make prayer your first resort instead of your last. Experience today God's unlimited power where prayers are answered and failures are turned into new beginnings!

About Ron Hutchcraft

Ron Hutchcraft is committed to communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost in their language and to motivating and equipping believers to communicate Christ to the lost in their world. In all he does, he seeks to reach the lost and the young with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

As President of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, Ron and his team specialize in developing authentic, relevant, and creative tools to reach people with the message of Jesus. A veteran of over 48 years of youth and family work, Ron has presented the Gospel across North America and around the world. Mr. Hutchcraft is also involved in work with Native Americans, and is founder of the On Eagles' Wings® Native leadership program.

For more information about Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, visit www.Hutchcraft.com.

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