MIGHTY PREVAILING PRAYER

Wesley L. Duewel
The Importance of Prevailing Prayer

THE ROLE OF PREVAILING PRAYER

**GOD INTENDS YOUR** praying to secure divine answers. Prayer is not just God's diversion to keep from being lonely. He delights in your fellowship. He always draws nearer when you pray. Also, prevailing prayer is one of the most important ministries in God's kingdom plans.

Prevailing prayer is not simply a spiritual exercise to help you grow in grace. Certainly nothing is more beneficial to growth in grace than growth in the life of prayer. The more you prevail, the more you will learn the secrets of God's grace and the powers of His kingdom. The more you intercede, the more intimate will be your walk with Christ and the stronger you will become by the Spirit's power.

Prevailing prayer is God's ordained means for extending His kingdom, for defeating Satan and his empire of darkness and evil, and for fulfilling God's eternal plan and bringing into effect His good will on earth. It is God's means of covering the earth with His blessings. Prevailing prayer is God's priority strategy for our age and dispensation. The history of the church can never be fully written until Christ in eternity reveals the mighty hidden prayer involvement of all His praying people. What a joy that revelation will bring to Christ’s prayer partners!

God the Son is seated at the right hand of the Father
on His eternal throne and is today sovereignly ruling and extending His kingdom. Christ does not live primarily to judge, demonstrate divine power, speak sovereign fiats, or issue authoritative decrees. His special divine vocation and strategic role today is to intercede (Heb. 7:25).

The Holy Spirit is so integral to the divine plan for this age that He ceaselessly joins God the Son in His holy intercession. He also is responsible for involving you and enabling you to be a partner in God's strategy of intercession. He longs for you to rise above your weakness and become mighty in God for prayer. He is so concerned that you become effective as the intercessory partner of Christ that He intercedes for you with divine groanings too deep for human words (Rom. 8:26). You do not hear Him, but He is ceaselessly groaning for you and with you.

Prevailing prayer is the most divine ministry you will ever have. Nothing is more Christlike or involves more cooperation with Christ. No form of Christian service is both so universally open to all and so high in Christ's priority for all Christians as prevailing prayer. It is Christ's desire, Christ's call, and Christ's command. Lord, teach us to prevail!

**THE OBJECTS OF PREVAILING PRAYER**

Prevailing prayer can be intensely personal. You have every right to prevail for your personal desires and needs. Undoubtedly God plans that most of your prevailing be on behalf of others and for the extension of His kingdom. Yet He expects and welcomes your praying for personal and family needs and situations
related to you personally. Scripture is very clear on this point.

Blind Bartimaeus prevailed in prayer for the restoration of his eyesight (Mark 10:46-52). The woman embarrassed and plagued by twelve years of hemorrhaging prevailed for her healing (Luke 8:43). The Greek woman from Syrian Phoenicia prevailed, and Jesus cast out the demon from her daughter (Mark 7:26). Jacob prevailed with God for the protection of his family (Gen. 32:9-13, 22-30).

More commonly, you prevail in prayer on behalf of others. Abraham prevailed for Lot (Gen. 18:22-33). Moses prevailed for Israel's victory over Amalek (Exod. 17:8-15). Elijah prevailed when he asked for fire to fall from heaven so that Israel would be saved from backsliding (1 Kings 18). Isaiah and Hezekiah prevailed for Israel's deliverance from Sennacherib (2 Chron. 32:20). Epaphras prevailed for the church at Colosse (Col. 4:12-13).

We must prevail in prayer for situations where God's will is being thwarted and where Satan is delaying and blocking Christ's cause. We must prevail for lives so ensnared and blinded by sin that they are unable or unwilling to pray for themselves. We must prevail for revival in the church, for spiritual and numerical growth of the church, and for the worldwide advance of the gospel.

There are physical, financial, and spiritual needs that call for prevailing prayer. Homes are being torn apart by Satan, lives are being destroyed, and churches need God's special answers. We must prevail for ministries of the church and Christian organizations. We must prevail
for moral and spiritual needs of our nation.

The scope of prevailing prayer is as broad as Christ's church and as extensive as God's world. There is nothing within God's will that is outside the purview of prevailing prayer. Prevailing prayer is intercession intensified-intercession until the answer IS received.

**THE TIME SPAN IN PREVAILING PRAYER**

In certain wonderful times prayer prevails in an instant. Moses' prayer for the healing of Miriam from leprosy was very brief. “O God, please heal her!” (Num. 12:13). But Moses had been walking close to God in a face-to-face relationship. He did not need to prepare his heart to obtain God's favor and ear. The situation was comparatively uncomplicated in that the wills and attitudes of other people were not involved, and Aaron and Miriam were already repentant. So Moses received an almost instant answer from God.

Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel was exceedingly brief-scarcely half a minute in length. "Then the fire of the Lord fell" (1 Kings 18:38). Probably Elijah had not even reached the amen of his prayer. I am sure he would have prayed longer if God had not answered so instantly. But what a dramatic and nation-changing answer: "When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord-He is God! The Lord-He is God!'’ (v. 39).

But remember, Elijah had been praying for three years as he hid from wicked Ahab and Jezebel. He had been carrying an intercessory prayer burden constantly and had had no other public form of ministry. He had announced to Ahab three years before that he himself
stood in God's royal presence as one of His attending ministers of state (1 Kings 17:1). You can be sure Elijah was interceding day and night.

Sometimes what seems like a simple, instant answer to prayer is but the crowning climax of days, months, or even years of faithful intercession. When did Elijah prevail? On Mount Carmel, or at the Kerith ravine while the ravens fed him, or at Zarephath while hiding with the widow and her son? The answer is that it was all part of his prevailing in prayer. The answer proved that Elijah prevailed. But all the time while he was prevailing, God was with him supplying his needs and protecting him. Prevailing prayer always involves a price, and Elijah paid that price for at least three years.

Look again at Elijah. Immediately after the fire fell from heaven, Elijah went alone to the top of Mount Carmel and prevailed for rain. Again and again he prayed and expected the answer and then asked his servant to go and look out toward the sea. But only the seventh time did God's cloud appear at first, only the size of a man's hand (1 Kings 18:44). Instant prevailing one hour does not guarantee instant prevailing in the next situation.

There is often great mystery concerning the time span required in prevailing prayer. The secret of prevailing prayer is simply to pray until the answer comes. The length of time is ultimately immaterial. It is God's answer that counts. The length of time required may often seem perplexing and may prove a test of your faith. We will consider this matter more carefully later.
Prevailing prayer may be repeatedly necessary in some situations before final achievement of God's will is secured. Thus, when Joshua was struggling against Amelek, as long as Moses interceded with uplifted hands "to the throne of the LORD," Joshua was winning. But when Moses lowered his hands, Joshua began to be defeated. By the help of Aaron and Hur, his hands were held up continuously till sundown and complete victory was won (Exod. 17:11-16).

Similarly, Epaphras prevailed in prayer day after day for the church in Colosse (Col. 4:12-13). Paul also prevailed continuously for the Jews, even though he was primarily an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 9:1-3).

**THE LEVELS OF PREVAILING PRAYER**

In order to prevail, the intercessor must often increase the intensity of his or her praying from one level to another. I suggest seven such levels. The first three are listed by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:7). To these I add four more levels from Scripture.

**Level 1: Ask:** Matthew 7:7

**Level 2: Seek:** The asking becomes longer and more intense.

**Level 3: Knock:** Interceding becomes even more urgent and insistent.

**Level 4: Fast:** To the previous crescendo of intensity and urgency of intercession, fasting is added.

**Level 5: Prayer burden:** The burden may be intense and brief or perhaps extend over a longer time.
Level 6: **Wrestling in prayer:** Very intense praying.

Level 7: **Prayer warfare:** Prayer battle, extending over a prolonged period.

Perhaps we should call these levels seven aspects or forms of prevailing prayer. Instead of giving up, we move into ever more determined intercession until we prevail. These levels of prayer intensity are not totally separate from each other. During prevailing in prayer, one level may merge into another almost without the intercessor's awareness of it.

A special prayer burden given by the Holy Spirit cannot be borne for a long period of time in its most intense form. It is too exhausting physically. Similarly, prayer burden in its very intense form may become almost synonymous with wrestling in prayer.

Prayer warfare may include all the preceding levels. In fact, prayer warfare is usually over a prolonged period of time and may involve alternating from one level to another as the Spirit guides.

The important thing is not to keep analyzing your prayer to see what level of intercession is yours at a particular time. Rather, be aware that the Spirit may guide you into one or all of these levels as He wills. Be available and ready to pray as He guides and empowers. In the holy partnership of intercession with Christ and the Holy Spirit, the prayer warrior is seeking to intercede constantly according to the mind of the Spirit. All this discussion will become increasingly clear and spiritually blessed as you advance in Christ's school of prayer.

Always remember that you never merit prayer's
answers. You do not earn God's response by anything you do. You do not get answers because of physical exertion, praying in a loud voice, or working up some kind of emotional experience. In fact, the most intense prayer of all may at times be the most silent. On the other hand, when your heart cries out to God, you may well, like Jesus, have moments of "loud cries and tears" (Heb. 5:7). Many of God's prayer warriors over the centuries have at times experienced such prayer intensity.

Intensified prevailing prayer is God's ordained law and method for implementing His redemptive plan in this age till Jesus returns. It is the highest, holiest, and mightiest effort of which a child of God is capable. It is God's chosen way to bring heaven's power, heaven's resources, and heaven's angels into action on earth. Spurgeon says, "He who knows how to overcome with God in prayer has heaven and earth at his disposal." Intensified prayer is clothed with the might of God Himself.

**LEVELS OF UNITING IN PRAYER**

Uniting in prayer is often essential in securing prayer answers. God always honors unity in prayer. When several are praying for the same need, God may choose one of the group to bear a special prayer burden or exercise special faith. This can strengthen and help all the group in their praying.

I point out five levels of uniting in prayer:

**Level 1:** Prayer partners

**Level 2:** Prayer groups
Level 3: Simultaneous prayer groups

Level 4: Calls to prayer issued by responsible and influential leaders to many people and groups

Level 5: Widespread movements of prayer

During widespread movements of prayer all five levels may be existing simultaneously as guided and motivated by the Holy Spirit. Uniting in prayer will be discussed more fully in later chapters.