

One of the most important ways you can love people is through your prayers! Most people today—both Christian and pre-Christian—are way more open to receiving prayer than receiving our words about the Gospel.

So I'd like to help us learn how to pray with greater confidence.

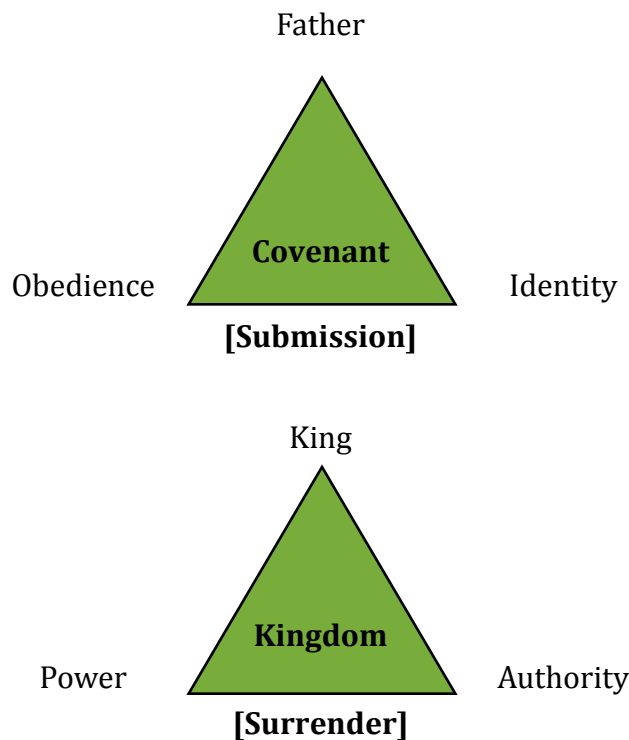
The Apostle Paul prayed with such humble confidence. He prayed with amazing power. But his life was not about himself. The secret of his humble confidence is summarized in:

II Corinthians 12:7-10 . . .

"I have received wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Here's the key to humble confidence. Paul says, "When I am weak I am strong." How we live in God's strength through our weakness?

Most of us have seen the Covenant/Kingdom Triangles, which give us a picture of what Paul is saying . . .



God is our Heavenly Father, and we are His children (first triangle—Covenant)! Rather than striving to obey God, we accept our identity as His children and do what good, beloved children do—we obey our Father.

And our Father is also the King of the Universe (second triangle--Kingdom)! As God's children we are also given his authority, and through that authority power is released in us and through us.

My temptation is this . . . if I don't see the power of God flowing, maybe I can push him a little bit. Twist His arm! Instead, the secret to a life of humble confidence is **submission and surrender to the Father!** That's how the power of God is made perfect in my weakness.

There is only one pathway to access God's power, and it's the opposite of what we think. For example, what did Jesus do? He lived a life of submission and surrender. Jesus didn't have a method, he had a relationship. He listened for his Father's direction, then surrendered to His will. "Not my will, but Thy will be done."

God's power is made perfect in my weakness, as I learn to surrender to God's agenda more than my agenda. So the question I ask is not, what do others want me to do? Instead, the question is, what does God want me to do?

A physics formula for electrical power is this . . . $P = V/R$, where Power = Voltage divided by Resistance. God's "voltage" (i.e., presence, heavenly power), is always there. The key for me is allowing His power to flow through me, by reducing my resistance.

The Presence of God is always there and available to us! So, as I pray for others, the key questions are, "Lord, what are you doing? What are you saying?" Then, "How do I surrender to that?"

Praying for others is not about praying loud enough or long enough. Praying for others is about surrendering to what God wants to do.

I want to help you gain confidence and competence in praying for others. First, so you can do it in community—like in your huddle, your cluster or in our celebrations. But even more importantly, so you can pray more confidently with others in your home, your workplace and in other public spaces.

Here's some key steps to consider when you are praying for others . . .

- May I pray for you?
If they say yes, then ask . . .
- How can I pray for you?
Let them share briefly what they need.
Then let them know that you are going to take a moment with them to . . .

- Listen to the Lord in silence
Keep your eyes open, so you can perceive any response.
Listen for a “word” a verse from the Bible, a picture from God.

After a brief time of listening . . .

- Ask them what they are sensing
They may sense nothing, but they may already sense “peace” or more clarity about their concern.
If you or any others sense something, share that as well. Resist the temptation to “preach” a long message or give them advice. Keep your comments brief and to the point. And remember that “prophetic” words are always to encourage and build up the person, not “beat them up.” ☺

- Pray
Pray into the things that they and you sensed in your listening time.
You can start with a simple phrase, like “Come Lord Jesus” or “Thy Kingdom Come”

In a church setting, you may want to ask if they are ok if you place your hand on them—shoulder or back of arm. In public space, encourage them to keep their eyes open and you keep yours open, and it’s better not to lay your hands on them.

After praying for awhile,

- Ask if they sense anything different.
What would be a tangible sign of something different?
- Leave the person with a word of affirmation, blessing

Rich asked, “How do you know if you should pray for someone?” Great question!

For me, it typically starts with just engaging in a conversation with someone. When he/she shares a need, I ask if I can pray with them, and if I feel their receptivity, I will ask if I can pray with them “right now.”

God will lead you. Be bold! Step out in faith and see God do amazing things through you!