

# PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT LIKE ELIJAH DID JAMES 5:16b-18

This morning we are in part 3 of our series: Praying in the Spirit.

James 5:16-18 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.<sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Our third challenge to prayer is Praying in the Spirit like Elijah did! Elijah was an incredible man, so much so that many Christians are inclined to look upon him as a kind of spiritual superhero.

- ✓ He was called, chosen and used by God.
- ✓ He lived a very full and fruitful life of ministry for God;
- ✓ When his ministry was ended, God personally sent a special Heavenly escort to take him home to heaven without his dying.
- ✓ About 800 years later, God sent Elijah back to earth to visit the Lord Jesus Christ on a mountain.
- ✓ In the future some interpretations of prophecy, see Elijah on earth for a short time just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.
- ✓ Elijah is often set apart from ordinary servants of the Lord. That is wrong. In the Book of James we read: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are" (5:17). He was, after all, a human being like the rest of us. He had emotions and problems; he experienced the same ups and downs in his life that all of us face. *The Amplified Bible* says, "Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have."

**WE NEED TO SEE LIKE ELIJAH DID, THAT PRAYER IS POWERFUL.** We need to pray at all times. There is so much that will never happen in your life and mine apart from fervent and focused prayer! What are some examples?

- ✓ In Genesis 24 Abraham's servant prayed, and Rebekah appeared.
- ✓ In Genesis 32 Jacob wrestled and prayed, and Esau's mind was turned from twenty years of revenge.
- ✓ In Exodus 17:8-16 Moses prayed, and Amalek was struck.
- ✓ In I Samuel 2 Hannah prayed, and Samuel was born.

- ✓ In II Kings 19: 14-37 Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed, and in twelve hours one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians were slain.
- ✓ In I Kings 18: 41-46 Elijah prayed, and there were three years of drought; he prayed again, and rain came.

PRAYER CHANGES THE WAY GOD ACTS. IN OTHER WORDS: GOD RESPONDS TO PRAYER!

Practicing Prayer in God's will has:

- brought forth water from a baked rock in a trackless desert (Moses),
- split the waters of the Jordan (Elijah, Elisha and Joshua),
- subdued the strength of fire (three Hebrews),
- it has bridled the rage of lions (Daniel),
- hushed the anarchy of mobs (Moses),
- extinguished the terrors of wars (Hezekiah on Sennacherib),
- calmed the raging storms (Christ),
- expelled the occupation of demons (Paul on girl of Philippi),
- burst the chains of death (Elijah, Peter, Paul & Christ ),
- unlocked the doors of prisons (Peter by the saints),
- expanded the borders of the Kingdom (Lord of harvest, laborers),
- cut short the ravages of disease (Peter for Dorcas),
- exposed fakes (Peter on Ananias & Saphira),
- saved cities from destruction (Jonah on Ninevah),
- held the Sun in the sky (Joshua at Gibeon),
- dried the skies of rain (Elijah on Ahab).

Prayer is

- an all sufficient supply of power,
- an endless vein of treasures to be mined,
- an overflowing spring that never runs dry,
- a glorious view of heaven that can never be obscured,
- a place of peace never invaded and
- a fountain of blessing never exhausted!

Those are but a small sampling of answered prayer just from the Bible. We who hold the wondrous record of God's faithfulness should have unlimited confidence in God's ability through our prayers.

**Now please turn to I Kings 18:36 and stand with me as we read one of the most powerful prayers in the Bible.**

Look with me at the scene:

- ✓ v. 20 The key moment had come for God vs. the false gods and the false prophets.
- ✓ v. 26 Baal's Frenzied Priests spent an entire day
- ✓ v. 36-37 Elijah speaks (not screams, not shouts, just speaks) 63 words, about 15 seconds to say vs. several hours screaming to the idol.
- ✓ v. 38 God answers with FIRE!

Dr. Alfred Edersheim<sup>1</sup> in his *Old Testament Bible History* gives the following account of this scene, based on authentic information: "Now commenced a scene which baffles description. Ancient writers have left us accounts of the great Baal-festivals, and they closely agree with the narrative of the Bible, only furnishing further details. First rose a comparatively moderate, though already wild, cry to Baal; followed by a dance around the altar, beginning with a swinging motion to and fro. The howl then became louder and louder, and the dance more frantic. They whirled round and round, ran wildly through each other's ranks, always keeping up a circular motion, the head low bent, so that their long, disheveled hair swept the ground.

"Ordinarily the madness now became infectious, and the onlookers joined in the frenzied dance. But Elijah knew how to prevent this. It was noon—and for hours they had kept up their wild rites. With cutting taunts and bitter irony Elijah now reminded them that, since Baal was Elohim, the fault must lie with them. He might be otherwise engaged, and they must cry louder.

"Stung to madness, they became more frantic than before, and what we know as the second and third acts in these feasts ensued. The wild howl passed into piercing demoniacal yells. In their madness the priests bit their arms and cut themselves with the two-edged swords which they carried and with lances. As blood began to flow, the frenzy reached its highest pitch, when first one, then others, commenced to "prophesy," moaned and groaned, then burst into rhapsodic cries, accusing themselves, or speaking to Baal, or uttering incoherent broken sentences. All the while they beat themselves with heavy scourges, loaded or armed with sharp points, and cut themselves with swords and lances—sometimes even mutilated themselves, since the blood of the priests was supposed to be specially propitiatory with Baal" (Vol. VI, pp. 17,18).

The frenzy of Baal's prophets reached its height at noon. In the excitement generated by the rhythm and speed of the priests' action, it would not have taken a great deal for the people watching them to have been swept off their feet emotionally and to have joined in the wild orgy. But Elijah was ready for this very thing. He very effectively used the weapon of sarcasm to expose the intentions of these evil men and at the same time to insure emotional stability among the observers.

We read in Psalm 2:4 that God will laugh and hold in derision the plots of those who rebel against His government. Something like this happened when Elijah spoke as he did. God was using a human instrument and a human life but with supernatural power behind it. These men were fools, and God was answering them according to their folly.

1 Kings 18:36-37 And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, (63 words, about 15 seconds to say vs. several hours screaming to the idol)

- ✓ HIS GOD WAS CHANGELESS: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
- ✓ HIS GOD WAS AWESOME: let it be known this day that You are God in Israel
- ✓ HIS GOD WAS WORTH SERVING: and I am Your servant,

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from *Elijah* by Theodore Epp, a booklet.

- ✓ HIS GOD WAS WORTH OBEYING: and that I have done all these things at Your word. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

Prayer is based on our character. What does God think of when you come through on His caller ID screen?

- ✓ Do you demonstrate to Him that you believe He is AWESOME?
- ✓ Do you demonstrate to Him that you believe He is WORTH SERVING?
- ✓ Do you demonstrate to Him that you believe He is WORTH OBEYING?

So that is the content of Elijah's prayer. Is there anymore we can learn? Yes, if we scan the rest of the chapter there are 6 elements that make a powerful prayer life. Why don't you sketch these in your copy of God's Word?

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS TRUSTING GOD'S WORD: (18:41) "Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

- ✓ 1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, **before whom I stand**, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."
- ✓ 1 Kings 18:15 Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, **before whom I stand**, I will surely present myself to him today."
- ✓ 1 Kings 18:24 "Then you call on the name of your gods, and **I will call on the name of the Lord**; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

He sure was confident, wasn't he? Elijah prayed in faith, for God told him He would send the rain (1 Kings 18:1).

"Prayer," said Robert Law, "is not getting man's will done in heaven. It's getting God's will done on earth."

You cannot separate the Word of God and prayer, for in His Word He gives us the promises that we claim when we pray.

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS SEPARATING FROM THE CROWD: (18:42a) "And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel"

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS HUMBLING BEFORE GOD: (18:42b) "then he bowed down on the ground"

- ✓ Exodus 3:5-6 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.
- ✓ James 4:6-8 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- ✓ 1 Peter 5:6-7 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,<sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
- ✓ Revelation 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS SEEKING EARNESTLY: (18:42c) "and put his face between his knees"

- ✓ Deuteronomy 4:29 "But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
- ✓ 2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."
- ✓ Isaiah 64:7 And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.
- ✓ James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS WATCHING FOR GOD'S ANSWER: (18:43) "

"and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

- ✓ Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.<sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.<sup>9</sup> "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?<sup>10</sup> "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?<sup>11</sup> "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 things to those who ask Him!
- ✓ Luke 11:5-13 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;<sup>6</sup> 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';<sup>7</sup> "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?<sup>8</sup> "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. <sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.<sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.<sup>11</sup> "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?<sup>12</sup> "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?<sup>13</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
- ✓ Luke 18:1-8 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,<sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.<sup>3</sup> "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'<sup>4</sup> "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,<sup>5</sup> 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'<sup>6</sup>

Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.<sup>7</sup> "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?<sup>8</sup> "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

ELIJAH'S PRAYER LIFE PORTRAYS SEEING GOD'S ANSWER: (18:44-46) "Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" <sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.<sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

- **We should all be encouraged by Elijah.** James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. NKJV Why? Because God says he had a nature like ours. "subject to like passions" homiopathes lit. of the same experience! God sent rain to drought-stricken Judah in response to Elijah's prayers (1 Kings 18:16-46). But within less than a day Elijah despaired of life and asked the Lord to take him home. Unmoved by fear even before the 450 frenzied, false prophets, he is smitten by the threats of one brazen Jezebel (19:1-4). From the exhilaration of victory he plunged so soon into deep depression. God picks normal people and pours His grace on them. Satan wants our sins and failures to convince us to give up. But one look at the people of the Bible should defeat that temptation. The work of God is performed by weak individuals like us, surrendered to the God whose power is perfected in man's weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). God has always had only weak and sinful humans to work with. Listen to the team God has used to win the championships:
  1. As soon as God delivered Noah and his family through the Flood, Noah became drunk and acted indecently.
  2. Abraham, the father of the faithful, doubted God, lied about his wife, and committed adultery with her maid.
  3. Isaac told a similar lie about his wife when he thought his life was in danger.
  4. Jacob took advantage of his brother Esau's weakness and extorted the birthright from him.
  5. Moses was a murderer, and in pride he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had instructed.
  6. His brother, Aaron, the first high priest, led Israel in erecting and worshiping the golden calf at the very time Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God.
  7. Joshua disobeyed the Lord by making a treaty with the Gibeonites instead of destroying them.
  8. Gideon had little confidence in himself and even less in God's plan and power.
  9. Samson was repeatedly beguiled by Delilah because of his great lust for her.
  10. David committed adultery and murder, was an almost total failure as a father, and was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a man of blood.

11. Elijah stood fearlessly before 450 false prophets but cowered before one woman, Jezebel.
12. Ezekiel was brash, crusty, and quick to speak his mind.
13. Jonah defied God's call to preach to the Ninevites and resented His grace when they were converted through his preaching.

Apart from the brief ministry of His own Son, the history of God's work on earth is the history of His using the unqualified. Even the twelve disciples who became apostles were no exception. From the human standpoint they had few characteristics or abilities that qualified them for leadership and service. Yet God used those men, just as He did Noah, Abraham, and the others, in marvelous ways to do His work.<sup>2</sup>

Elijah was a man passionate and focused prayer. Remember others:

- Jacob dislocated his body to straighten his soul in Genesis 32:22-32.
- Hannah was so overcome in prayer Eli diagnosed her as impaired I Samuel 1:14-15.
- Ezra mortified his body, tore his clothing and fell on his face before God in Ezra 9:5-6.
- Nehemiah wept as he cried out to God and was heard Nehemiah 1:4.
- Paul was willing to commit spiritual suicide for Israel in Romans 9:3 that they might be saved, that is passion.
- Epaphras was willing to agonize in wrestling prayers Col. 4:12.

Six Prayer Lessons from the Life of Elijah

1. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE TRUSTING THE GOD HE COULD NOT SEE** 1 Kings 17:2-7 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,<sup>3</sup> "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.<sup>4</sup> "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."<sup>5</sup> So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.<sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.<sup>7</sup> And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. NKJV
2. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE PRAYING TO THE GOD WHO HEARS AND RESPONDS.** 1 Kings 18:36-37 And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.<sup>37</sup> "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." NKJV
3. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE OBEYING THE GOD WHO DOES ALL THINGS WELL.** Mark 7:37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." NKJV 1 Peter 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. NKJV

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<sup>2</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 10*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

4. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE LEANING ON THE ONE WHO NEVER FAILS. 1**  
Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. NKJV  
Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. NKJV
5. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE FORSAKING THE WORLD WE MUST NOT LOVE.**  
Hebrews 13:13-14 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. NKJV
6. **WE LIKE ELIJAH MUST BE LIVING LIKE GOD'S SERVANTS ON THE EARTH**  
James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. NKJV



## HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

**DON'T LET YOUR SCHEDULE HOLD YOU BACK.** He doesn't teach us about the times of prayer – because we are to pray at all times. In the Bible, people prayed at all different times:

- ✓ Early morning (Mk. 1:35)
- ✓ midnight (Acts 16:25)
- ✓ Morning (I Chron. 23:30)
- ✓ day and night (Lk. 2:37; 18:7)
- ✓ Three times a day (Dan. 6:10)
- ✓ today (Ps. 95:6, 8)
- ✓ Evening (1 Kgs. 18:36)
- ✓ often (Lk. 5:33)
- ✓ Before meals (Matt 14:19)
- ✓ in youth (Jer. 3:4)
- ✓ After meals (Deut. 8:10)
- ✓ in trouble (2 Kgs. 19:3-4)
- ✓ Ninth hour (Acts 3:1)
- ✓ daily (Ps. 86:3)
- ✓ Bedtime (Ps. 4:4)
- ✓ always (Lk. 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17)

**DON'T LET YOUR TROUBLES HOLD YOU BACK.** He doesn't teach us about the circumstances of prayer – because any circumstance will do. In the Bible, people prayed in all kinds of circumstances:

- ✓ **FASTING** Deuteronomy 9:18 “And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Applying dust to head (Josh. 7:6)
- ✓ **RENDING GARMENTS** 1 Kings 21:27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.
- ✓ **SIGHING** Ezra 9:4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.
- ✓ **SITTING IN ASHES** Job 1:20-21 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: “Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.”
- ✓ **SHAVING HEAD** Job 2:8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.
- ✓ **GROANING AND CRYING** Psalm 6:4-6 Return, O Lord, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! 6 I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.
- ✓ **BROKEN HEART** Psalm 34:18 The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

- ✓ **WEARING SACKCLOTH** Psalm 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.
- ✓ **POURING OUT ONE'S HEART** Psalm 62:8 Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah
- ✓ **SMITING BREAST** Luke 18:13 "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'
- ✓ **AGONY** Luke 22:44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- ✓ **MAKING AN OATH** Acts 18:18 So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.
- ✓ **LOUD CRYING** Hebrews 5:7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

## **WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED AND MADE A BLESSING**

We are priests to Jesus and Jesus is our high priest.

- ✓ Hebrews 8:1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- ✓ 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- ✓ Revelation 1:6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

As Christ's priests we have a six part ministry as we offer:

- ✓ **OUR LIFE AS A SACRIFICE** Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
- ✓ **OUR DEVOTION AS A BURNT OFFERING** Mark 12:33 "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."
- ✓ **OUR SERVICE AS A DRINK OFFERING** 2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
- ✓ **OUR DEEDS AS A SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES** 1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.; Hebrews 13:16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
- ✓ **OUR PRAYERS AS AN INCENSE OFFERING.** Revelation 8:3-4 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense,

that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.<sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

- ✓ **OUR WORSHIP AS A PRAISE OFFERING** Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

So as we follow Christ's example and obey His words we become praying priests. We pray. We pray for others; we give thanks for others; in the quiet chamber we can embrace the whole world (I Tim. 2:1-2); and in heaven the Holy Spirit is promised to intercede for us with inexpressible groans. This imparts to our prayers the Divine energy of God's will (Rom. 8: 26-27.)

## **SO WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? FOLLOW CHRIST'S PERFECT EXAMPLE!**

The posture, place, time or circumstance is not the issue of prayer. Prayer is to be a total way of life – an open communication with God which goes on all the time. And if prayer is a way of life, then we need to understand how to pray. This is precisely why Jesus teaches us this model prayer.

He puts it succinctly in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing. (KJV)"

## **WHERE DO WE START?**

In front of an open Bible. A modern spiritual Goliath was George Mueller. His life may be distilled down to these words he wrote in a diary:

*It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, the benefit of which I have not lost for more than 14 years. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, or how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished... Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as a habitual thing, to give myself to prayer in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to the meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd and instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, while meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord.<sup>3</sup>*

- ✓ **DON'T LET YOUR SCHEDULE HOLD YOU BACK.**
- ✓ **DON'T LET YOUR TROUBLES HOLD YOU BACK.**

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<sup>3</sup> Scroggie, *Method in Prayer*, pp.17-18.

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