The POWER of PREVAILING Prayer!

Prayer is a UNIQUE key to spiritual growth and success in life. Prayer is a special kind of contact with God. The world just doesn't know about the great power that can be unleashed by this source contact because it is cut off from God. Most people in the world have no more awareness of this true spiritual power than a lump of coal or a burned out light bulb.

William F. Dankenbring

When a true servant of God prays, it is like plugging in the extension cord connecting a lamp to its source of electrical energy and power and turning on the switch. Suddenly light floods the room, casting out the darkness and providing illumination everywhere in a startling, graphic manner.

What does the Bible teach us about this source of power? If you really wish to survive the coming days of hellish anguish and trauma that are coming upon the earth and leading up to Armageddon, then you will certainly need to be familiar with God's revelations on prayer. If you wish to be a strong Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ and an overcomer, then you need to know about the keys to dynamic and answered prayer!

Just what is prayer?

Jesus' Example

There are several Hebrew and Greek words used for "prayer." Let us take a brief look at each of them.

Jesus Christ set us an example in prayer. We read: "Afterwards he went up into the hills to pray" (Mark 6:46). We also read: "The next morning he was up long before daybreak and went out alone into the wilderness to pray" (Mark 1:35).

Prayer is between each one of us and God. It is usually a private matter, and it is therefore good to get off by oneself to spend time in prayer. It is good to go into a private room, close the door so you won't be disturbed and then pray.

The word translated "pray" in these verses is the Greek word proseuchomai which means to pray, worship, to open up and pour out your heart. It is used 78 times in the New Testament and is the most common word for prayer. It is the word used also in Matthew 6:5-9 where Jesus taught His disciples a model outline of
prayer, showing them what to pray for and how they should generally organize their prayers.

He instructed them: "Pray along these lines: 'Our Father in heaven, we honor your holy name. We ask that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give our food again today, as usual, and forgive us our sins, even as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don't bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen'" (Matt. 6:9-12).

The very same word is used in Matthew 14:23: "Then afterwards he went up into the hills to pray." Jesus Christ often spent hours at a time in prayer, meditation, and communion with God the Father. This was one very important reason He was such a strong dynamo of spiritual strength and power. He never let contact with God the Father slide!

Do you sometimes spend hours in prayer, communion and communication with God, talking over the things of your own life, your problems, needs for divine counsel, guidance, direction and wisdom? Do you pour out your heart before Him?

"Ask"

Another word sometimes translated "pray" in the New Testament simply means literally to "ask." It is the Greek word erotao and means to "ask," or "interrogate." When Jesus entered into Simon Peter's ship, He "prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land" (Luke 5:3). This means he simply asked him. It wasn't needful to make a moving, impassioned supplication to him, or a fervently phrased prayer -- but He simply requested or asked him to do it.

Even so, there are many times when God simply wants us to learn to ask Him for certain things. As a loving heavenly Father, He promises to hear us when we ask, simply ask. This word is used in John 14:16, 16:26 and 17:9, 15, and 20. Sometimes we simply need to ask in faith, believing, and that is all that is necessary, because God knows our needs even before we ask Him. Sometimes all He requires is the simple act of asking.

"Beseech " God

In Matthew 9:38 we read: "'The harvest is so great, and the workers are so few,' he told his disciples. 'So pray to the one in charge of the harvesting, and ask him to recruit more workers for his harvest fields.'" The word for prayer in this verse is deomai and means literally to "petition," "beseech." It is a much stronger word than "ask." This is a very intense word, and refers to intensive, earnest prayer -- crying out and literally begging or beseeching God to intervene and act. This is also the kind of prayer and praying we should do whenever trials or trouble come upon us, or when we really need a quick answer, or divine intervention on our behalf, to rescue us from potential threats or disaster or serious difficulty. This is also the kind of prayer we should do on behalf of
other people.

Using this word, Jesus tells us: "Keep a constant watch. And Pray that if possible you may arrive in my presence without having to experience these horrors" (Luke 21:36). Or, as the King James Version has it: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Jesus prayed this way when He prayed for Peter. He said: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have pleaded in prayer for you that your faith should not completely fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32).

This is the kind of prayer the New Testament Church of God prayed when they were being persecuted and threatened by the religious establishment of that day. We read in the book of Acts: "After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly preached God's message" (Acts 4:31). They besought God fervently, with all their heart -- and He heard their prayer!

We also read of Cornelius in the book of Acts. "In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer, Cornelius, a captain of an Italian regiment. He was a godly man, deeply reverent, as was his entire household. He gave generously to charity and was a man of prayer" (Acts 10:1-2).

"Pray Like Hell"

In the movie “Chariots of Fire,” which I watched the other night, one of the British track runners was discouraged and thought there was no way he could compete with the Americans in the Olympics. His trainer said the key was, “Pray like hell!”

Sometimes, I think, this is the key to any victory!

The perfect example in prayer, of course, was set by our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah. We read: "Yet while Christ was here on earth he pleaded with God, praying with tears and agony of soul to the only one who would save him from (premature) death. And God heard his prayers because of his strong desire to obey God at all time" (Heb. 5:7).

The King James Version renders this verse: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." The strongest, most intensive form of prayer is "supplication." This is the Greek word deesis. It refers to powerful entreaty and intense and fervent requests. Notice how it is used. "But the angel said, 'Don't be afraid, Zacharias! For I have come to tell you that God has heard your prayer, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son!' " (Luke 1:13). Elizabeth had been barren, unable to have a child. But Zacharias, her husband, did not give up. He prayed in
faith, continually, that God would intervene supernaturally and give them a son. He implored God and made earnest supplication. Supplication is imploring God's aid and spending much time in prayer, setting time aside every day to pray about the matter. Supplication means you stick with it -- you don't give up, ask just once, and then quit -- like so many faithless and unbelieving people do!

If I may be so bold, I need your earnest, bold, fervent and heart-rending prayers, too, so that I may be able to serve God as He directs, and be used by Him, with increasing power, love, wisdom and faith.

Pray All the Time

Paul exhorted Timothy with guidelines of supplication we all should heed and obey. He wrote: "Here are my directions: Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them. Pray in this way for kings and all others who are in authority over us, or are in places of high responsibility, so that we can live in peace and quietness, spending our time in godly living and thinking much about the Lord. This is good and pleases God our Savior, for he longs for all to be saved . . . " (I Tim.2:1-4).

We are given powerful instruction in prayer and supplication by the apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians. Let us read his message carefully. Paul wrote: "Pray all the time. Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit's wishes. Plead with him, reminding him of your needs, and keep praying earnestly for all Christians everywhere. Pray for me, too, and ask God to give me the right words as I boldly tell others about the Lord, and as I explain to them that his salvation is for the Gentiles too. I am in chains now for preaching this message from God. But pray that I will keep on speaking out boldly for him even here in prison, as I should" (Eph. 6:18-20).

The Amplified Bible renders that verse very powerfully: "Pray at all times -- on every occasion, in every season -- in the Spirit, with all (manner of) prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people). And also for me, that (freedom of) utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth to proclaim boldly the mystery of the good news (of the Gospel) for which I am an ambassador in a coupling chain (in prison); pray that I may declare it boldly and courageously as I ought to do."

Pray Boldly and Earnestly

Turn to one of the most powerful, dynamic and incredible scriptures on the subject in the Bible, in the book of James. The apostle James tells us with apostolic authority: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray (speak up, pour out your heart) one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer (supplication) of a righteous man availeth MUCH" (Jas. 5:16).

The Living Bible translates this: "Admit your faults to one another and pray for
each other so that you may be healed. *The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results.*"

*The Amplified Bible* has it: "Confess to one another therefore your faults -- your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins; and pray (also) for one another, that you may be healed and restored -- to a spiritual tone of mind and heart. *The earnest (heart-felt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous POWER available -- dynamic in its working.*"

James continues: "Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have -- with feelings, affections and constitution as ourselves; and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months. And (then) he prayed again and the heavens supplied rain and the land produced its crops (as usual)" (Jas. 5:17-18).

What is God telling us in these verses? He is assuring us that, in other words, we don't have to be some kind of spiritual giant, for God to answer our prayers. We often tend to think of Elijah as some spiritual giant, but James here tells us that the famous prophet of old was just like us, completely human as we are. He had all the same impulses, drives, emotions, feelings, and even became discouraged and depressed at times. Yet when he prayed, the dead were raised, and miracles occurred! When he prayed, dramatic results took place! He himself had no power or strength at all. But when he prayed, *God heard his prayers -- and intervened!*

May God help us all to heed, to learn the lesson, and to obey, to draw close to God in fervent, continual, daily, earnest, powerful prayer, so that we might do the will of God and work the works of God, and serve Him with total dedication and with all our being and mind and heart and soul and strength!

**The Spirit of Prayer**

In our day and age many think prayer is not all that important -- at least prayer on your knees before God. They think all they need to do is maintain an attitude of prayer throughout the day. And they will get by. No wonder their prayers are so ineffectual -- worthless -- useless -- powerless -- vapid -- insipid -- inane -- mere powder-puffs of spiritual vanity!

God's Word says we should be "instant in prayer" (Rom.12:12), and that we should "pray always" (Eph. 6:18). But this does not mean we should just have an "attitude of prayer." This is talking about CONSTANT PRAYER -- repeated and consistent and persevering prayer!

What about your prayers? Have you discovered the secret of powerful praying? Are you developing the HABIT of resourceful, energetic, ALIVE praying?

The example in the Bible of all God's Spirit-led servants was of praying with
intensity, with fervor, with dynamic energy, and spiritual strength, and gripping emotion, with surcharged feeling and commitment. Have you begun to pray in this way, consistently, repeatedly, often? This kind of prayer leads to supernatural power and spiritual deliverance! It unlocks the doors of heaven, and opens heaven's gates of blessing, encouragement, and prosperity. It makes things happen!

Developing the right habits of prayer is not easy. In the Scriptures, we read that the men of God prayed on their knees, with arms outstretched towards God. They also generally set us an example of praying THREE TIMES A DAY, AS A CUSTOM, OR HABIT, ON THEIR KNEES, even when their lives were threatened!

David said, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice" (Psa. 55:17).

Daniel, who was greatly beloved of God, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God" (Dan. 6:10).

When you pray in a private place, lift up your voice -- don't hold back in timidity or embarrassment. Pray before God three times a day. It is amazing how soon your self will go, as you pray with emotion, with fervor, with feeling. Put your heart in your prayers!

Daniel, a man beloved in God's sight, prayed three times on his knees every day, despite the danger and peril of losing his life. Even though the Persian king had made a law that no man should petition or pray for 30 days, except to the king, Daniel remained faithful to God.

"But though Daniel knew about it, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs bedroom, with its windows open toward Jerusalem, and PRAYED THREE TIMES A DAY, just as he always had, giving thanks to his God" (Dan.6:10).

If we pray three times a day, consistently, on our knees, this will help us to "fill up" with God's Spirit -- to keep spiritually rejuvenated, refurbished, super-charged. Three times a day should not be that difficult, if we set our minds and heart to it! Is eternal life worth it? Three times a day to keep strong and healthy spiritually and to maintain real spiritual POWER and IMPACT in our lives!

David said: "But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [precede] thee" (Psa. 88:13). He said: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psa. 141:2). Prayers of the saints are a sweet smelling sacrifice to God. We should pray during the best parts of the day and commune with our Father and Christ at the times the ancient Hebrews offered their sacrifices, every morning, and evening.

And as the "meal offerings" given to God were of unleavened fine flour, mixed with oil, so our prayers should be humble, not puffed up or vain, and made in fine detail,
not coarse and crude crumbs, mixed with the oil of God's Spirit, offered with thanksgiving and praise to our heavenly Father.

**The Apostles' Example**

The example of the apostles in the book of Acts confirms that Christians should *pray three times* a day. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1). The ninth hour was about three in the afternoon, since the daylight hours began to be counted from sunrise. Cornelius, who was "a devout man, and one that feared God" and prayed always, "saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him" (Acts 10:3). He also was praying about the ninth hour, or 3:00 PM in the afternoon (probably from 3-4 PM; see also Acts 10:30).

Was it the custom of the apostle Peter to pray at noon? In the same chapter we read, "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour . . . " (Acts 10:9). Yes he did! The "sixth hour" was noon-time! No one can deny how powerfully God used Peter in His service. Even his shadow passing over the sick made them well (Acts 5:12-16).

And in regard to morning prayer, we find that the apostles and believers were assembled together, “all with one accord in one place,” on the day of Pentecost, no doubt in prayer and praising God, when the Spirit of God first came upon the Church. What time of day was this? It was “but the *third hour* of the day” (Acts 2:15). This was about nine o'clock in the morning!

The point is, of course, not that God expects us to pray at precisely 9:00 AM, 12:00 noon, and 3:00 PM – not at all. But we should try to pray three times on our knees every day, morning, noon and at evening – giving God the best part of the day. This is the spiritual principle involved. If we do this, how much more will God in mercy shower down His Spirit upon us and fill us with the Spirit of faith, love and humbleness? How much more will God use us in doing His work, and fill us with spiritual strength and power? Let us follow the example of the early New Testament Church in this regard, and we, too, can be literally "all filled with the Holy Spirit" and speak the "word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

**"Watch Unto Prayer"**

God wants us to be alert, vigilant and “watch unto prayer” (I Pet. 4:7). “Watch,” in this verse, means “be sober, discreet, abstain from wine.” Paul wrote: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). Here the word “watch” means “to keep awake, be vigilant.” It is the same word Jesus used when He commanded us: “Watch ye therefore” (Mark 13:35-37), and when He told His disciples after they had fallen asleep as He prayed at Gethsemane: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh weak” (Mark 14:38).
But in Luke 21:36, where Jesus tells us to "watch ye therefore, and pray always," the word for WATCH in Greek means, literally, "to be sleepless, i.e., keep awake."

How much do you pray? Are you alert, sleepless in prayer? Or do you tend to fall asleep while praying, as the disciples apparently did? When you pray, are you sometimes drowsy, sleepy and half awake? And when you pray at night, assuming that you do, do you wait until you are ready to fall into bed with fatigue? This is not the kind of prayer that is pleasing to God, brethren and friends, so let's begin to improve our prayer habits, following the custom and practice of God's servants of old, the apostles and the prophets!

And David set us an example, let us say with him, "but I give myself unto prayer" (Psa. 109:4).

You older women, why don't you follow the example of the aged Anna, who was a widow for 84 years following her husband's death, who "served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Luke 2:37)?

How often do we "pour out our hearts" to God in prayer? David wrote: "Trust in him at all times; ye people, POUR OUT YOUR HEART before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah (So be it! Amen!)" (Psa. 62:8).

Next, David reminds us: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity" (v. 9). Therefore, the point is, it is useless to place one's trust in man. Human beings are less than nothing, a broken reed to lean upon, a smashed cistern incapable of holding water. But all our trust and faith should be in the Eternal living God! He is the One who answers prayer and is a place of refuge for His people.

David continued, in this Psalm: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (v.11). Only God has the power to deliver us from our enemies, from temptation's grip and from the crushing tentacles of sin. It is to God, therefore, that we should offer up our prayers as sweet incense before Him, three times on our knees, besides a multitude of times as we go about our daily business.

**A Man of Faith and Prayer**

George Mueller of the last century was known as the "apostle of faith." He was led by God to build a tremendous orphanage work in the nineteenth century, based on nothing but answered prayer. God used him mightily, and therefore it is fitting that we look into his *Autobiography* to see what he has to say on this subject. The lessons of faith and prayer he learned are very instructive for us today.

What was George Mueller's attitude when he began the orphan work? Was he presumptuous, confident, sure of himself? Did he begin the work, just assuming that God would be with him? Not at all. He relates in his *Autobiography*, "On this point, however,
I had no anxiety; for I considered that, as long as I really sought to serve the Lord, that is, as long as I sought 'the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' my temporal supplies would be added to me. The Lord most mercifully enabled me to take the promises of His Word, and rest upon them, and such as Matthew 7:7,8, John 14:13,14, Matthew 6:25-34, were the stay of my soul concerning this point" (p. 37).

Mr. Mueller searched his heart repeatedly and carefully, to be certain that he had no false or deceitful motives in beginning the orphan work. He searched every cranny and nook of his mind and heart to be sure it wasn't a matter of personal pride, vanity or selfish desire that motivated him. He wrote:

"I had before this been repeatedly tried, whether I might not, after all, against the Lord's mind, have engaged in the work. This circumstance now led me to lie low before my God in prayer the whole of the evening, February 3rd, and to examine my heart once more as to all the motives concerning it; and being able, as formerly, to say, that His glory was my chief aim, i.e., that it might be seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in the living God, and that my second aim was the spiritual welfare of Orphan children, and the third their bodily welfare; and still continuing in prayer, I was at last brought to this state, that I could say from my heart, that I should rejoice in God being glorified in this matter, though it were by bringing the whole to nothing. But as still, after all, it seemed to me more tending to the glory of God, to establish and prosper the Orphan House, I could then ask Him heartily to send applications. I enjoyed now a peaceful state of heart concerning the subject, and was also more assured than ever that God would establish it" (p. 89).

Even after the work began, sometimes Mr. Mueller thought that perhaps God would decrease it because of his own lack of faithfulness and unworthiness. He confessed: "I have sometimes thought, whether it might not be His will, on account of my want of faithfulness, in His work, to decrease the field; but now I see, that notwithstanding my unworthiness, His allowing us to pray so frequently was only that the deliverance might be felt so much the more when it came" (p. 91).

A Man of Humility and Faith

Even though George Mueller felt totally undeserving and unworthy of being used in such a profound manner, he rejoiced in the Word of God and God's leading in his work. He exclaimed: "It is a wonderful thing that such a worthless, faithless servant as I am, should have power with God. Take courage from this for yourselves, brethren. Surely, if such a one as I am, so little conformed to the mind of Jesus, has his prayers answered, may not you also, at last, have your requests granted to you?" (p. 93).

Mueller knew that the main reason so many prayers of so many people go unanswered is simply lack of faith, or belief. He declared: "The thing after which we have especially to seek in prayer is, that we believe that we receive, according to Mark 11:24, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' But this I often find lacking in my prayers. When, however, I have been enabled to believe that I receive, the Lord has dealt with me according to my faith" (ibid.).
Mr. Mueller was very concerned in beginning the orphan work that God was with him. He didn't want to start out on his own, as it were, and then fail miserably. He wanted to be sure that God was with him, so he examined the matter repeatedly, carefully and urgently in continual prayer, Bible study and meditation over the Scriptures. And when he began, he had the assurance from God's Word and its promises that God was with him. "How evident is the hand of God in all these matters!" he wrote. "How important to leave our concerns, great and small, with Him; for He arranges all things well! If our work be His work, we shall prosper in it" (p. 92).

The humility of Mr. George Mueller was one of his most remarkable characteristics. He did not consider himself as anyone great or noble, or as a great man of God, or a mighty man of spiritual valor. Not at all! He had a very humble spirit and attitude, similar to that of Moses (Numbers 12:3). Continually he declared: "O Lord, have mercy upon Thy poor unworthy servant!" (p. 99). He didn't trust in his own ability at all. He cried out: "Lord, thy servant is a poor man; but he has trusted in Thee, and made his boast in Thee before the sons of men; therefore let him not be confounded! Let it not be said, all this is enthusiasm, and therefore it will come to nought" (p. 97).

He deeply felt his own utter unworthiness. When he came before the throne of grace in prayer, it was in the worthiness of Jesus Christ. He approached the Throne of God through the blood of the Lamb of God and in the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, not standing in his own righteousness.

Through the practice of walking in faith, Mr. Mueller's own faith grew. He reached the point he could say: "The children I have years ago cast upon the Lord. The whole work is His, and it becomes me to be without carefulness. In whatever points I am lacking, in this point I am able, by the grace Of God, to roll the burden upon my Heavenly Father" (p. 124).

**How Faith Is Developed**

When asked in a letter: "Could you tell me how faith is developed?" Mueller replied: "Faith is developed (or increased) by clinging to the Word of God, looking for its fulfillment in the time of need, expecting the answer to prayer, and doing this in spite of all contrary appearances" (*Autobiography*, p. 674).

When trials and troubles came up in the orphan work, and the income upon which they depended fell off, what did he do? He relates:

"I gave myself to prayer. God, whom I have now been enabled to make my refuge, and my only refuge, for more than twenty years [this section was written in the mid-nineteenth century], I have besought day by day. And when now day by day I still have received only small sums, and sometimes nothing or scarcely anything at all, the only effect that it has had upon me has been, to pray the more earnestly. My confidence in God is not at all shaken. I have never had a thought that He would not help me; nor have I even once been allowed to look upon these seven weeks in any other
way than that the Lord, for the trial of my faith, has ordered it thus that only so little should come in. I am sure that, when He has tried me sufficiently, there will come in again larger sums" (ibid., p. 364).

God answered George Mueller's patient, expecting prayers, again and again, for over sixty years. And each time, when the answers would come, Mr. Mueller's heart was encouraged. He wrote: "The joy which such answers to prayer afford cannot be described. My soul does magnify the Lord for His goodness. When help comes, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for His deliverance! Dear Christian reader, if you have never walked in this path of obedience before, do so now, and you will then know experimentally the sweetness of the joy which results from it" (p. 367).

Simple Confidence of Faith

Although George Mueller's life was a living example of the power of faith and prayer, was he some special, unique individual in this respect, with a special gift of faith? He himself remarked in answer to this question:

"I desire that all the children of God, who may read these details, may thereby be led to increased and more simple confidence in God for everything which they may need under any circumstances, and that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray, particularly as regards the conversion of their friends and relatives, their own progress in grace and knowledge, the state of the saints whom they may know personally, the state of the Church of God at large, and the success of the preaching of the gospel. Especially I affectionately warn them against being led away by the device of Satan, to think that these things are peculiar to me, and cannot be enjoyed by all the children of God; for though, as has been stated before, every believer is not called upon to establish Orphan Houses, Charity Schools, etc., and trust in the Lord for means, yet all believers are called upon, in the simple confidence of faith, to cast all their burdens upon Him, to trust in Him for everything, and not only to make everything a subject of prayer, but to expect answers to their petitions which they have asked according to His will, and in the name of the Lord Jesus" (p.172-173).

Mr. Mueller added: "From my inmost soul I do ascribe it to God alone that He has enabled me to trust in Him, and that He has not suffered my confidence in Him to fail. But I thought it needful to make these remarks, lest any one should think that my depending upon God was a particular gift given to me, which other saints have no right to look for; or lest it should be thought that this my depending upon Him had only to do with the obtaining of money by prayer and faith. By the grace of God I desire that my faith in God should extend towards EVERY thing, the smallest of my own temporal and spiritual concerns" (p. 174).

The "Food of Faith"

Even little things Mueller took to God in prayer. He said:
"When I lose such a thing as a key, I ask the Lord to direct me to it, and I look for an answer to my prayer; when a person with whom I have made an appointment does not come at the fixed time, and I begin to be inconvenienced by it, I ask the Lord to be pleased to hasten him to me, and I look for an answer; when I do not understand a passage of the Word of God, I lift up my heart to the Lord, that He would be pleased, by His Holy Spirit, to instruct me, and I expect to be taught, though I do not fix the time when, and the manner how, it should be; when I am going to minister in the Word, I seek help from the Lord, and while I, in the consciousness of natural inability as well as utter unworthiness, begin this His service, I am not cast down, but of good cheer, because I look for His assistance, and believer that He, for His dear Son's sake, will help me. Oh! I beseech you, do not think me an extraordinary believer, having privileges above other of God's dear children, which they cannot have; nor look on my way of acting as something that should not do for other believers. Make but trial! Do but stand still in the hour of trial, and you will see the help of God, if you trust in Him. But there is so often a forsaking the ways of the Lord in the hour of trial, and thus the food of faith, the means whereby our faith may be increased, is lost" (pp. 114-175).

Regarding the trials and troubles that come upon us as Christians, Mr. Mueller wrote: "If we, indeed, desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from Opportunities where our faith may be tried, and, therefore, through the trial, be strengthened. In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone. Through our natural alienation from God we shrink from Him, and from eternal realities. This cleaves to us, more or less, even after our regeneration (or, conversion). Hence it is, that more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone, -- from depending upon Him alone, -- from looking to Him alone; -- and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be, if we with our faith to be strengthened. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith with reference to my body, my family, my service for the Lord, my business, etc., the more shall I have opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance; and every fresh instance, in which He helps and delivers me, will tend towards the increase of my faith. On this account, therefore, the believer should not shrink from situations, positions, circumstances, in which his faith may be tried; but should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities where he may see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf, to help and deliver him, and whereby he may thus have his faith strengthened."

Finally, on this point, Mr. Mueller declared:

"The last important point for the strengthening of our faith is, that we let God work for us, when the hour of the trial of our faith comes, and do not work a deliverance of our own. Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried. Yea, however weak our faith may be, God will try it; only with this restriction, that as in every way He leads on gently, gradually, patiently, so also with reference to the trial of our faith. At first our faith will be tried very little in comparison with what it may be afterwards; for God never lays more upon us than He is willing to enable us to bear. Now when the trial of faith comes, we are naturally inclined to distrust God, and to trust rather in ourselves, or in our friends, or in circumstances. We will rather work a deliverance of our own somehow or other, than simply look to God and wait for His help. But if we do not patiently wait
for God's help, if we work a deliverance of our own, then at the next trial of our faith it will be thus again, we shall be again inclined to deliver ourselves; and thus, with every fresh instance of that kind, our faith will decrease; whilst, on the contrary, were we to stand still, in order to see the salvation of God, to see His hand stretched out on our behalf, trusting in Him alone, then our faith would be increased, and, with every fresh case in which the hand of God is stretched out on our behalf in the hour of the trial of our faith, our faith would be increased yet more. Would the believer, therefore, have his faith strengthened, he must, especially, give time to God, who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him" (pp. 175-177).

The worse the trial, the more secret delight George Mueller had in it. He said:

"Nay, I had a secret satisfaction in the greatness of the difficulties which were in the way. So far from being cast down on account of them, they delighted my soul; for I only desired to do the will of the Lord in this matter. In honesty of heart I had examined the matter, as standing before God. I wished only to know His will, that I might do it. . . . When I therefore saw the difficulties, they did not cast me down, but cheered me; for as it was the will of God, according to my judgment, that I should go, I was sure He would remove the obstacles out of the way; and therefore the greater the obstacles, the more abundantly plain the proof, that I had come to a right judgment, if they were removed by prayer; but if after all I had been mistaken, which I could not think I had been, then the sooner I was undeceived the better" (p. 195).

The Universal Remedy

What was George Mueller's remedy in every need and difficulty? "Prayer and faith, the universal remedies against every want and every difficulty; and the nourishment of prayer and faith, God's holy Word, helped me over all the difficulties. -- I never remember, in all my Christian course, a period now [in March, 1895] of sixty-nine years and four months, that I ever SINCERELY and PATIENTLY sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, but I have been ALWAYS directed rightly. But if honesty of heart and uprightness before God were lacking, or if I did not patiently wait upon God for instruction, or if I preferred the counsel of my fellow men to the declarations of the Word of the living God, I made great mistakes" (p. 196).

At one point during the orphan work the income fell off sharply. But the heavy expenses still had to be paid. Mr. Mueller wrote of this trial of faith: "In the beginning of June, I began to give myself to prayer. Faith saw all the difficulties already removed. Faith could give thanks, while the difficulties yet remained. Faith could triumph, though there seemed the death blow coming, since there not only was no money coming in, but the considerable sums, lately in hand, were rapidly diminishing. Thus forty days passed, whilst day after day we had been waiting unitedly upon the Lord, but the obstacles were greater than ever; yet my confidence in the Lord, that He would remove the difficulties in His own time, was greater than ever also" (P. 196).

On July 12th, he remarked to a sister in the faith: "Well, my soul is at peace. The Lord's time is not yet come, but, when it is come, He will blow away all these obstacles,
as chaff is blown away before the wind."

It was only a quarter of an hour later when a paper was put into his hands giving him authority over the equivalent of $70,000 in today's money!

Patient waiting was one of the keys that George Mueller learned and practiced. He declared: "The Lord may see it needful, for the trial of our faith, to seem for a season not to regard our supplications; yet, if we patiently and believingly continue to wait upon Him, it will be manifest in His own time, and way, that we did not call upon Him in vain" (p.223).

Mr. Mueller continued: "We may have to wait upon the Lord, yea, even a long time; but at last He helps. It may seem as if the Lord had forgotten us, by allowing us to be poor, and very poor, and that week after week; but at last He helps abundantly, and shows that only for the trial of our faith, both for our own benefit and the benefit of those who might hear of His dealings with us, has He allowed us to call so long upon Him" (p. 229).

When economic depression struck the land, and many people were out of work, it seemed as if contributions for the Work of God would also fall off. Unbelievers were sure the work would have to cease. But George Mueller did not lose faith. He wrote: "The greater the difficulties, the easier for faith. As long as there remain certain natural prospects, faith does not get on even as easily (if I may say so) as when all natural prospects fail. It is true that during the time of the dearth our expenses were considerably greater than usual; it is also true that many persons, who otherwise might have given, were unable to do so, or had their surplus directed into other channels . . . but the gold and silver are the Lord's. To Him we made our prayer. In Him we put our trust. And He did not forsake us. For we went as easily through that winter as through any winter since the work had been in existence. Nor could it be otherwise; for God had at this very time a special opportunity of showing the blessedness of trusting in Him" (p. 232).

Why did George Mueller carry on a huge orphan work, sustaining over 2,000 orphans, besides all the needed helpers, nurses, assistants, a large work in publishing the gospel and distributing Bibles and aiding other servants of God, without ever asking a single individual for a dime (or a tuppence)?

Why on earth do such a thing?

His answer was: "That it may be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him, and that children of God may be led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances, therefore I am led to this further enlargement" (pp. 292-293).

Day by day Mr. Mueller trusted in God. Week after week, and month by month, he continued pouring out his needs and the needs of the Orphan Work and the related objectives of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. He wrote in his Autobiography:
"I have not been allowed to have a shadow of doubt as to whether God can or will give me the means; but day by day, in the full assurance of faith, I renew my requests before God; and generally day by day the amount of the Building Fund (for additional orphan houses) is to a greater or less degree increased. I then give thanks, and ask for more; and as the days come I look out for answers to my prayers" (p. 297).

In his Autobiography Mr. Mueller dwelt minutely upon the trials and tests and difficulties in his path. He then shows, time after time, how God intervened for him, and sent the funds just as they were needed! He discovered: "In truly knowing the Lord, in really relying upon Him and upon Him alone, there is no need of giving hints directly or indirectly, whereby individuals may be induced further to help" (p. 301). Notice how COMPLETELY he put his trust in GOD -- and not in men!

But why did George Mueller receive such amazing answers to his prayers? How can you and I learn also to pray so effectually and achieve such mighty results in our own prayers?

**How To Pray Effectually**

In answer to this question, Mr. Mueller writes from his depth of experience:

"But in order to have your prayers answered, you need to make your requests unto God on the ground of the merits and worthiness of the Lord Jesus. You must not depend upon your own worthiness and merits, but solely on the Lord Jesus, as the ground of acceptance before God, for your person, for your prayers, for your labours, and for everything else. Do you really believe in Jesus? Do you verily depend upon Him alone for the salvation of your soul? See to it well, that not the least degree of your own righteousness is presented unto God as a ground of acceptance. But then, if you believe in the Lord Jesus, it is further necessary, in order that your prayers may be answered, that the things which you ask of God should be of such a kind, that God can give them to you, because they are for His honour and your real good. If the obtaining of your requests were not for your real good, or were not tending to the honour of God, you might pray for a long time, without obtaining what you desire. The glory of God should be always before the children of God, in what they desire at His hands; and their own spiritual profit, being so intimately connected with the honour of God, should never be lost sight of, in their petitions."

But even if we do believe in Jesus Christ and have a proper, right motivation for our prayer to God, there is still more that is required in effectual prayer.

**Continue in Prayer**

Mr. Mueller continues: "It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must patiently, believably continue in prayer, until we obtain an answer; and further, we have not only to continue in prayer unto the end, but we have also to believe that God does hear us, and will answer our prayers. Most frequently we fail in not continuing in prayer until the blessing is obtained
and *in not expecting* the blessing. As assuredly as in any individual these various points are found united, so assuredly answers will be granted to his requests" (pp. 320-321).

Anyone who studies the life of George Mueller will find out that here was a praying man who really believed God. On June 12th, 1838, his beloved wife was taken ill. She continued suffering most severely from nine until after midnight. During this time, Mr. Mueller tells us: "The whole of the night I was in prayer, as far as my strength allowed me. I cried at last for MERCY, and God heard me." For two weeks her two medical attendants came two or three times daily to check on her progress. But God raised her up off what could well have been her death bed, and gave her to Mr. Mueller for another 31 years and six months, to be at his side, helping him in the Work more than ever.

Some of the greatest trials to God's Work in those days were from August 1838 to April 1849, when there was very rarely any considerable amount of money at his disposal. During that time God seemed to provide each day's bread on a nearly "daily" basis. Similar times of great trial came in the 1870s and 1880s. At that time he was presiding over a great work, supporting 2,100 persons daily at the table, assisting 189 missionaries, 100 schools, with 9,000 scholars in them completely supported by his work, besides printing and distributing 4 million tracts and tens of thousands of Bibles annually.

During these times of crisis, when the funds seemed about to dry up, he said to himself: "God, who has raised up this work through me, God who has led me generally year after year to enlarge it, God, who has supported this work now for more than forty years, will still help, and will not suffer me to be confounded, because I rely upon Him. I commit the whole work to Him, and He will provide me with what I need, in the future also, though I know not whence the means are to come" (p. 488).

At this time, Mr. Mueller wrote, "While the income for the funds of the Institution was so exceedingly small, my soul was, THROUGHOUT, without the least wavering, stayed upon God, believing that He, who had through me begun the Institution, enlarged it almost year after year, and upheld it for forty years in answer to prayer by faith, would do this still, and not suffer me to be confounded! I believed that He would help still, and supply the means; but I was willing, and THOROUGHLY in heart prepared, if necessary, to pass again through the same seasons of trials, through which I had passed from August, 1838, to April, 1848. The Lord be magnified for His kind help!" (p. 490).

**The Years of Sore Trial**

In commenting upon the years of sore trial, Mr. Mueller shared the observation: "The *appearance* during those years of trial was many times, as *if* God has forsaken us, and *as if* He would never care any more about this Institution; but this was only the *appearance*, for He was as mindful of it as ever. It was only in order that our *faith* might be yet further *strengthened* that these trials were permitted; that by meekly enduring the affliction we might glorify God; and that tens of thousands of persons, by reading about all these things, might be benefited" (p. 663).
Toward the end of Mr. Mueller's ministry, a newspaper article entitled "Seventy-one Years of Prayer" discussed his life's work. Upon reading it, a poor widow was greatly moved, and such a spirit of prayer arose in her that she felt she, too, had to ask God for something -- something almost "impossible" to make the answer more significant. At the time she had been trying to find a knitting machine, but the task had seemed hopeless. So she decided to ask God for one and also to choose for her what kind would be best. The following Friday her prayer was granted, and she obtained just the knitting machine that she wanted.

In summation of the lessons learned from the life and work of George Mueller, a servant of God during the nineteenth century, I would like to share with you these sobering and meaningful thoughts of George Mueller, the "apostle of faith." He declared:

"We cannot limit the extent to which God may use us as in communicating blessing, both temporal and spiritual, if we are willing to yield ourselves as instruments to the living God, and are content to be only instruments, and to give Him all the glory" (p. 217).

How much can God use us, today? As Mr. Mueller said, we cannot and should not limit God. The extent to which God may use us, each one of us, depends on how much we are willing to yield ourselves to Him. Are we happy and content to be only an instrument in the hands of God, and to give Him ALL the glory?

The Word of God Is the KEY to Prayer

Why do so many prayers lack power and punch? Why do people seem to "run out of things to pray about" after they have been on their knees for a few minutes? The answer is partly that they do not really know how to pray. They may think all they need to do is fall on their knees and begin speaking to God. So they mumble a few things, and first thing you know their mind begins to wander and they begin to daydream. Heart-felt, intercessory prayer is very difficult to achieve under such circumstances.

True, heart-felt prayer, intercessory prayer, prevailing prayer, requires HARD WORK -- LABOR. It requires effort, and even sometimes "sweat." At one point in His life, when Jesus Christ was praying, the apostle Luke tells us, "And being in an agony he prayed MORE EARNESTLY: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke22:44).

Are we willing to LABOR in prayer? As Paul wrote of one of his fellow co-workers in his day: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

But even fervent, agonizing prayer is useless if we are knowingly disobedient to God, and transgressing His commandments. As the prophet Isaiah declared: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it
cannot hear: *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your SINS have hid his face from you, that he will not listen*" (Isa.59:1-2).

God says in His Word, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness" (Prov.15:8-9).

In verse 29 of this chapter, Solomon wrote, "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." And what is righteousness? Who are the "righteous"? God says: "ALL thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa.119:172). In other words, God's eyes and ears are open to see and listen to the prayers of His obedient, loving servants who keep His commandments, His statutes, and His laws -- those who actively have Christ living within them (Gal.2:20).

But God will not hear the prayers of those who disobey laws and break His commandments -- who transgress His law -- especially if they KNOWINGLY and deliberately do so! Solomon declares, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the LAW, even his prayer shall be an ABOMINATION" (Prov.28:9).

Remember that scripture in James, about the earnest, fervent prayers that bring about great results, and mighty power and impact? Notice it again: "The effectual, fervent prayer OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN availeth much"! (James 5:16). If we want to have our prayers answered, then, we must strive to obey and please God in our daily lives, with our thoughts, words, activities, and desires. The apostle James put it this way: "Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:2-3).

The apostle John put it another way. He wrote: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22).

**Three Vital Elements of Prayer**

A little known key to powerful and meaningful prayer is found in understanding the sacrifices offered by ancient Israel. We read in Numbers 15: "Each sacrifice -- whether an ordinary one, or a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or a free-will offering, or a special sacrifice at any of the annual festivals -- must be accompanied by a grain offering. If a lamb is being sacrificed, use three quarts of fine flour mixed with three pints of oil, accompanied by three pints of wine for a drink offering . . . This will be a sacrifice that is a pleasing fragrance to the Lord" (Num. 15:4-7).

Notice that there are three threes involved in this offering. There is grain, oil, and wine -- three commodities -- and three units of each (three quarts of grain, three pints of oil, and three pints of wine). The number three is "God's signature," His number -- and the number of "decision," or judgment. Peter denied Christ three times before the rooster
crowed (Luke 22:34); Jesus asked him three times if he loved Him (John 21:15-17); Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be removed from his flesh (II Cor.12:7-9).

What do these three elements required in a "grain offering" represent? The fine flour represents the WORD OF GOD, which is perfect, pure. Jesus Himself is the "bread of life." (see John 6:48, 51, 58, 63). He is also the "Word of God" (John 1:1-3, 14). The "fine flour," then, represents the Word of God which we are to study, pore over prayerfully, and read carefully.

The next portion of the grain offering is the "oil," which represents the Spirit of God. Oil is a symbol of God's Spirit (Exo. 37:29; Matt. 25:3-8, James 5:14, 1 John 2:20, 27, John 16:13). God's Spirit teaches us all things (1 John 2:27, John 16:13, 14:26). It even teaches us how to pray and inspires us what to pray for! As Paul wrote: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27).

Third is the wine. Wine is a symbol of rejoicing and thanksgiving (Judges 9:13). Our prayers are to be accompanied with praise to God and thanksgiving. Paul wrote: "Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

Thus the ancient sacrifice of the grain offering was a symbol of PRAYER. Today God command us, "Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruits of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15).

When we put together these three elements -- Word of God, the Spirit of God, and praise and thanksgiving -- in our prayers, then we have a "sacrifice that is pleasing fragrance to the Lord" (Num. 15:7, 10). These are "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8; see also Rev. 8:3-4).

One of the major reasons so many people don't pray nearly as much as they ought to be doing is simply this: They don't incorporate the Bible into their prayer life! They don't spread out the Bible before them, when they drop to their knees to pray and pray over the Word of God, applying its richness and depth to their own lives, problems, trials, family, job, circumstances, opportunities, questions, decisions, persecution, situations, friends, relatives, employers, the Work of God and the needs of saints specifically.

So often, as the apostle James said, we don't receive what we pray for because we don't know what to ask (James 4:2-3) or how to ask, or we have for the wrong things, with selfish motives. Sometimes we don't pray about something because we don't really know the will of God (Eph. 5:17). And we don't know the will of God because we don't study His Word enough, or pore over it as we pray, because the will of God is often revealed in the Scriptures!
Our prayers should be combined with, first of all, the searching of the Scriptures, and praying over the Word of God (the Psalms is one of the best places to begin, and then turn to different passages from there, as you are led of God's Spirit in prayer). Secondly, our prayers should be according to the Spirit of God, which inspires us, which God gives to those who OBEY Him (Acts 5:32). We should pray as God's Spirit leads us, making our requests and needs known to God in heaven, beseeching and imploring Him as His Spirit guides us. Thirdly, we should add the elements of praising and blessing God, praising His Holy name, thanking Him for all He has done and has promised to do, on our behalf -- even thanking Him for the answers to our prayer, and for all His bountiful blessings and mercy and goodness -- "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Eph. 5:20).

If you will learn to pray this way, your prayers will grow in richness and meaning. They will grow in power and impact. They will become prevailing, energetic, moving, passionate prayers that are prayed according to God's will. And they will achieve marvelous results!

If you pray this way, you will find it very easy to pray for an hour or more a day. As you develop the HABIT of prayer, and begin to pray on your knees three times a day, you will find your prayer life expanding in impact and in spiritual power. You will become more pleasing to God, and your prayers will be more pleasing to Him.

There is much to pray about. Isn't it about time that we fall on our knees, before our Maker, Sustainer, Provider, and Protector, our Creator, Ruler, and the Great and Magnificent God whom we worship, and pray to Him as we ought?

"And . . . they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings . . . And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:24-31).

Servants of the Living God, it is high time that we re-double our efforts in prayer to God! Let's do it! Let's lift up holy hands to God in the heavens, and pray as never before!!! Let’s pave the road to heaven with our earnest prayers. Let’s “pray like hell” and “put our hearts into our prayers.”

Let’s pray like everything depended on prayer, because it does. And let’s serve God as if everything depended on our efforts and works. And let’s relax – and trust God, and leave everything in His hands – in complete rest and faith. He will intervene and save us according to His great power!