

The Book of Acts

Lesson 13

Act 4:23-30 - Prayer

Acts 4:23-30: ²³ *On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

There is no power in the activity of prayer or in the number who are praying. The power of answered prayer is reserved for the One who alone can answer prayer, according to His will and His decision, in His response to your request. We can sin when we transfer what God alone can do to trust in our activities, even good acts, such as praying. There is no power in extended times of pray, in perfectly framed words, or repeated prayers. We pray not because we believe that it as a powerful resource in itself, but rather because it is the God ordained means to receive from God. There is no such thing as weak and strong prayers. Genuine praying is genuinely praying.

What affects the believer’s prayer is one’s inner heart attitudes. Before you speak, are you resting on the truth that you believe God wants for you what you are asking? Is He capable and willing to give what you ask. Are your motives right, or are you asking from selfishness, your own comfortableness.

James 1:6 *“when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, and (James 4:2) You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

Matthew 6:5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.” Motives are essential.

James only gives the reasons how we affect the answers to prayer. What are the two reasons? Can you think of other passages that tell us what we do affects our answers?

What is the meaning of James 5:16 “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” Again the power of prayer is found in what happens before words are said. Who is righteous?

Romans 3:20, *“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law--- rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”* Romans 3:22, *“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”*

Do you agree with this statement? ... *Prayer is the secret to the power of God.* Why?

In the text of Acts 4, how could they raise their voices together but say one prayer?

How does this prayer (Acts 4:24) address God? How did Jesus teach us to address God? How do you explain?

Can you see God's two actions in the past? How do they affect the prayer?

What passage is quoted in the prayer? Why?

What are the requests of the prayer? Do they surprise you? Why or why not?

Can you divide the prayer into the ACTS model of praying?

Acts 4:23-31 tells us that as they prayed together, in one mind (purpose), the Spirit of God moved upon them and filled each one individually and the whole congregation corporately, with His presence and power. God honored the prayers of His people when they came together as one.

Acts 4:32 records that the experience of the primitive Church happened to the full number. The experience was one of grace, a gift of the Holy Spirit to each one. That attests to the true conversion of each one in this church. Has there ever been a local church so pure? How much strength is lost in local churches when a good portion of the congregation have only professions of faith?