What is the secret to praying powerfully?

**Experience praying according to what God initiates**

**Monday**

Read Matthew 15:29-39

* *Read these scriptures carefully and list all the events and things Jesus initiated without anyone else’s help or suggestion. Stop trying to impose your will on God through your prayers. Ask Him what His plan is so that you can join Him in His efforts.*

**Tuesday**

Read Matthew 16:5-12, Hebrews 11:6

* *Religion teaches us we can earn God’s favor and our world teaches us we can be self-made successes. Both are wrong. Faith in God’s initiative in our lives is all that matters. Journalize what areas of your life you need to let God take control over and spend some time talking to Him about this today.*

**Wednesday**

Read Matthew 16:13-20, Hebrews 12:2

* *Jesus starts everything. What fire has He lit in your heart that is starting to burn? What passion do you have that you know He has initiated? Spend time in God’s presence today receiving more fuel for your fire.*

**Thursday**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1, Colossians 1:9, Acts 22:14, Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 30:18, John 5:17

* *You’ve got to be confident of three things in order to follow God’s initiative: He wants you to know His will, He loves you and only wants good for you, and He is always powerfully active.*

**Friday**

Read Proverbs 8:34, Micah 7:7, 1 John 5:14-15

* *If God initiates everything then we must position ourselves to wait, watch and listen to know His will and sync our prayers with His direction.*

The secret to praying powerfully

Am I praying for the right things?

Am I praying the right way?

I’m not sure that God is going to answer my prayers.

Is this even what God’s wants me to pray for?

Maybe this suffering is good for me so maybe I shouldn’t even pray for relief.

I am tired of praying in the dark.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Matthew 15:29 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. 30 Great crowds came to him,

John 12:32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. 31 The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

33 His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?”

34 “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

35 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. 36 Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. 37 They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 38 The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

Matthew 16 New International Version (NIV)

The Demand for a Sign

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ 3 and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

Psalms 31:15 My times are in your hands;

Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

5 When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. 6 “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

7 They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.”

8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 9 Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 11 How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Religion teaches God is standing still waiting for us to pray for our need and if we pray hard enough, we’ll get what we need or want.

Our world teaches us that nothing is going to happen unless we make it happen. People are self-made successes.

Jesus said, be careful with this teaching.

You of little faith - what is faith? Faith believes God has a plan, he is executing that plan, He wants me to be involve in the plan and together we will see God’s plan fulfilled.

God initiates everything!!!

Hebrews 11:6 New International Version (NIV)

**6**And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Our prayers don’t move the hand of God, God’s hand moves our prayers.

God isn’t supposed to get onto our bandwagon, we are supposed to get onto His bandwagon.

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will** build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 **I will give** you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20**Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Matthew 16:19 Amplified Bible (AMP)

19 I will give you the keys (authority) of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind [forbid, declare to be improper and unlawful] on earth will have [already] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [permit, declare lawful] on earth will have [already] been loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:19 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven.”

Who initiated creation?

Who implemented a plan for the salvation of mankind?

Who told Noah to build an Ark?

Who told Abram to go to Canaan?

Who exalted Joseph to second in command over Egypt?

Who initiated the rescue of 2 million Jews from Israel?

Who chose Joshua to conquer Canaan?

Who picked Saul to be King over Israel? David?

Who initiated the destruction of Jerusalem?

Who revealed Himself to Daniel?

Who initiated the return of the Jews from exile back to Jerusalem led by Nehemiah and Ezra?

Who sent His Son to earth to live, instruct, suffer, die, be raised and then exalted?

Who chose the 12 disciples?

Who send the Holy Spirit in power on the day of Pentecost?

Who established His church and sent out missionaries?

Who will decide when to return?

Hebrews 12:2 NKJV looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith,

Hebrews 12:2 NIVfixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Look at your own life…hasn’t God initiated everything good to date?

* Warnings
* Successes
* Loving discipline
* Guidance and direction
* Marriage, kids
* Healing
* Desire for God’s word
* Calling and purpose

Our prayer life has to reflect this spiritual reality.

Many people kick back and think they don’t have to really do anything if God is doing everything but this isn’t true.

Matthew 16:19 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven (divine authority), and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven.”

Consequently, our position in prayer needs to be one of waiting, watching and listening to what God is doing.

But first we must believe a few things about God.

1. He wants you to know His will

I Corinthians 12:1 And concerning the spiritual things, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant;

Colossians 1:9 New International Version (NIV)

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

Acts 22:14 New International Version (NIV)

**14**“Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

2. God loves and wants only good for you

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Isaiah 30:18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

3. God is always powerfully active

John 5:17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."

So with this confidence we watch, wait and listen to understand God’s will and pray accordingly.

Proverbs 8:34 Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.

Micah 7:7 Amplified Bible (AMP)

But as for me, I will look expectantly for the Lord and with confidence in Him I will keep watch;

I will wait [with confident expectation] for the God of my salvation.

My God will hear me.

Next week:

1 John 5:14-15 New International Version (NIV)

**14**This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. **15**And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.