

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer.

The third series of 6 teachings is about "The prayers of people in the Bible". We will learn from the prayers of different kind of followers of the Living God and the topics are: "Prayers in the Psalms", "Prayers of the prophets in the Bible" and "Prayers of the statesmen in the Bible". Every topic will be in two parts. Today we will learn about "A DISCIPLE USES THE PRAYERS OF THE STATESMEN IN THE BIBLE - PART 2". Throughout the history of the world there have been political leaders in countries that have been Christians! In their responsibility as leaders of people, they often prayed to God for wisdom, strength and courage to do their task. They pleaded with God for the lives of people. They struggled in their prayers for these people that they may trust and obey God. They prayed that justice might prevail in their countries. In part 2 we will learn from the prayers of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Daniel and Nehemiah.

POINT 5. PRAYER OF KING JEHOSEPHAT

Jehoshaphat lived 2850 years ago and he was king of Judah.

Pray for God's intervention instead of making war.

In 2 Chronicles 20 we read that the armies of the Moabites and Ammonites came to make war against Judah. Jehoshaphat was alarmed and decided to ask God for help. He proclaimed a national fast and people from all over Judah came to Jerusalem to seek help from the Lord. King Jehoshaphat prayed and said, "Lord, ... you rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. ... We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (verse 6,12). God answered the king's prayer and said, "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. ... You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you" (verse 15,17). The next day the army went out to take their positions against the armies of Moab and Ammon. People walked ahead of the army, singing and praising the Lord. As they were singing and praising the Lord, *the Lord* set ambushes against the armies of Moab and Ammon, and the armies of Moab and Ammon destroyed one another. The two vast armies had killed one another and not one enemy soldier escaped! Then "the fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how *the Lord* had fought against the enemies of Israel" (verse 29).

Application. War is always devastating to both countries that fight each other. A country leader could pray instead of making war. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He can intervene and can change the situation in favour of the praying leader without war!

POINT 6. PRAYERS OF KING HEZEKIAH

Hezekiah lived 2700 years ago. He was another king of Judah.

First. Pray for God's intervention instead of making war.

In 2 Kings 19 we read that the Assyrians were the strongest nation at this time in history. They were extending their territory by war and also came to Jerusalem. The king of Assyria, Sennacherib, sent a letter to Hezekiah telling him how the Assyrians have completely destroyed other nations and threw their gods into the fire. He boasted that no god could stop him and warned Judah to capitulate. King Hezekiah went to the temple and spread this letter before the Lord. He prayed and said, "Lord, ... you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. ... See and listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. ... Deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone are God" (verse 15-19). God send an answer through the prophet Isaiah. God said that he had heard Hezekiah's prayer and knew that Sennacherib had spoken in pride against God and had insulted God. He promised that Sennacherib would not fight against Jerusalem, but that God would force him to return to his country. God said, "I will defend this city and save it for my sake." (verse 34). That very night, God sent his angel and this one angel killed 185 000 soldiers within the Assyrian army! Sennacherib immediately returned home and soon afterwards his own sons murdered him in his own country.

Application. Leaders of countries and empires, beware! If you fight against a nation who prays to the living God, then the living God will fight against you! Not earthly rulers, but the living God rules in the universe and on earth!

Second. Pray for your personal needs.

In 2 Kings 20 we read that king Hezekiah was dying. The prophet Isaiah came to him and said, “This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover”. King Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed, “Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” God answered king Hezekiah’s prayer, even *before* the prophet Isaiah had left the palace. Isaiah went back to king Hezekiah and gave the Lord’s answer to his prayer, “I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you ...and add 15 years to your life.” God even gave him a special sign that this would happen, in order to strengthen his faith in God’s Word. God let the sunlight go ten steps backwards on a certain staircase!

Application. Leaders of countries may also pray to God for their personal needs. God is not only concerned with countries, but with individuals, including the leaders of countries. The life of every leader is in God’s hands and he can shorten or lengthen a leader’s life!

POINT 7. PRAYER OF KING MANASSEH

Manasseh lived 2650 years ago. He was one of the wicked kings of Judah.

Pray and humble yourself before the Living God.

In 2 Chronicles 33 we read that king Manasseh did only what was evil in the eyes of God. He followed the detestable practices of Israel’s neighbouring nations. He made idols and built altars for the idols and even put them inside the temple of the living God. He worshipped the fertility gods, called Baals, as well as the starry host. He even sacrificed his own sons in the fire to the idols. He practised sorcery and witchcraft and consulted the mediums and spiritists. This king Manasseh led all the people of his country astray, so that they did more evil than the wicked nations that God had destroyed before the Israelites. God spoke to king Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. Finally, God brought disaster against them. The Assyrian army attacked them. They took king Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. Only then, in his distress, king Manasseh prayed to God. He humbled himself before God and God listened to his prayer. God brought him back to Jerusalem to be king. Then king Manasseh knew that the Lord is God. He changed his personal life and he reformed his country. He destroyed the idolatry, which he had promoted before. And he led his people to serve the living God of the Bible.

Application. When a leader of a country has lived a wicked life, God will punish him! However, if this leader turns to the living God, humbles himself and confesses his sins to God, then God can restore him to a righteous life. *With God, nobody is a hopeless case! With God nothing is impossible!* Listener, if you have slipped into a life of wickedness, begin to pray that God may deliver you and restore you to a righteous life.

POINT 8. PRAYERS OF GOVERNOR DANIEL

Daniel lived 2600 years ago. He was a member of the royal family or nobility of Judah, who had been taken prisoner by the mighty Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. After his education Daniel became one of Nebuchadnezzar’s wise men.

First. Pray that God will reveal his messages to the rulers in your country.

In Daniel 2 we read that God gave a message to the great king Nebuchadnezzar through a dream. The king knew that his astrologers were pretending knowledge about the future and that they first wanted to hear the king’s dream before they interpreted it. But how could anyone tell whether the astrologers’ interpretation would be correct? If astrologers really were able to interpret dreams, then they must also be able to tell what he had dreamed. So the smart king demanded that his astrologers tell him his dream as well as the interpretation! Not one astrologer, magician, enchanter or wise man was able to do this. The king then decided to put all these charlatans to death. However, Daniel wanted to save innocent lives and so he and his three friends prayed to the living God of the Bible. They asked God to reveal the mystery of the king’s dream to them. During the night, God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel. After Daniel had told the dream and its interpretation to the king, king Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and said, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries” (verse 47).

Application. Through prayer, God can reveal his messages to people. Through prayer, God can open the spiritual minds of his people, so that they may understand what he is saying to them.

Second. Pray every day to God.

Later, Daniel was appointed as one of the three mightiest governors in the Babylonian empire. In Daniel 6:10 we read that three times a day, Daniel went home to his upstairs room, got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had always done. Daniel was one of the most powerful men in the Babylonian empire and yet he knew that he could only be a good ruler, if he prayed to the living God!

Application. The Bible says that wisdom and insight only come from God. Leaders of countries need such wisdom and insight in order to rule their people well. Listener, if you are a leader in your country, follow Daniel's example and pray every day to the living God, who revealed himself through the prophets in the Bible and in Jesus Christ.

Third. Pray after you read your Bible.

In Daniel 9 we read that Daniel had read in the Bible that God would punish the sins of Israel for 70 years. Daniel was deeply moved by the truth of the Bible and he began to confess the sins of his own people, Israel. He said, "We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings... O God, because of your great mercy, forgive!"

Application. Reading the Bible will help every leader of countries and nations to discover the truths of God. Reading the Bible will also teach the leaders how to pray to God. Listener, if you are a leader in your country, read the Bible every day and pray to the God of the Bible every day.

POINT 9. PRAYERS OF GOVERNOR NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah lived 2445 years ago. He was one of the exiled Jews who lived in the Medo-Persian empire.

First. Pray before you begin any negotiations.

In Nehemiah 1 we read that Nehemiah heard about the distress of his people in Judah and that the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down. Then Nehemiah *confessed* the sins of his people, their unfaithfulness and disobedience to God. He also *reminded* God of his promise to restore his people if they returned to God with all their heart. Nehemiah *asked* that God would grant him favour in the eyes of the mighty king Artaxerxes of the Medo-Persian empire. When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted, Nehemiah first prayed a quick prayer to God for help and then put his request before the king. The king granted Nehemiah his request and even helped him to execute it.

Application. Leaders of countries know that negotiations with other leaders are very important. Like Nehemiah, leaders could first pray to God before they begin their negotiations. God is sovereign and can grant success in negotiations.

Second. Pray when you are ridiculed and falsely accused.

In Nehemiah 4, Nehemiah prayed an imprecatory prayer, calling a curse down on his enemies. His enemies ridiculed the Jews and publicly made fun of their work of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. They said, "Even if a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" And so Nehemiah prayed to God and said, "O God, we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders." So the Jews build the wall with all their heart. Soon after, their enemies plotted to attack Jerusalem and to stir up trouble, because they did not want the Jews to succeed. But Nehemiah and the Jews prayed again to God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. Later their enemies again schemed to harm Nehemiah's project. They wrote a letter and accused Nehemiah of wanting to become the king of Judah. Nehemiah's response to these false accusations was to pray to God, asking God to strengthen his hands (Nehemiah 6:3-9).

Application. Like governor Nehemiah, leaders often face opposition from jealous enemies. In such times of opposition, ridicule and false accusations, a leader should not retaliate with threats or counter accusations, but rather pray to the living God. God always knows what is the real truth in every situation and he is able to vindicate those who trust in him.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. If you are a leader in your country, in a factory, in a business or in the church, then what do you pray for your people?

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www. Etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".