

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 fourth series of 8 teachings is about "The practice of prayer". The four topics are: "A disciple is motivated to pray", "A disciple is sensitive to the physical aspects of prayer", "A disciple persists in prayer" and "A disciple is convinced about the effects of prayer". Every topic will be in two parts. Today we will learn about "A DISCIPLE IS CONVINCED ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF PRAYER - PART 2". The Bible says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." There are many examples in the Bible of righteous men and women who have prayed and received marvellous answers to their prayers. We will consider such examples in six areas: In part 1 we have considered prayers that result in knowing God and that result in experiencing God's deliverance. In part 2 we will consider prayers that result in experiencing God's restoration, blessings and help as well as prayers that result in extending God's kingdom.

### **POINT 3. PRAYERS THAT RESULT IN EXPERIENCING GOD'S RESTORATION.**

#### **First. Prayer and the restoration of your relationship to God.**

In 2 Chronicles 33 we read about how the evil king Manasseh lost and found his position as king. King Manasseh was one of the wicked kings of Judah. He promoted idolatry. He built altars for the idols everywhere and even erected an idol inside the temple of the Lord. He sacrificed his sons in the fire to the idols. He practised sorcery, divination and witchcraft and consulted mediums and spiritists. He led his subjects astray so that they did more evil than the nations God had destroyed before. He paid no attention to God's warnings so that finally God judged him. He was captured, a hook was put in his nose, he was bound with shackles and had to walk through the desert to Babylon. There in Babylon, in his distress he prayed to the Lord and humbled himself greatly before the Lord (vs 12). The Lord was moved by his sincere prayer and brought him back to be king in Jerusalem. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God" (vs 13). Manasseh then destroyed the idolatry and led his people to serve the living God.

Conclusion. *Through prayer, a person, who has slipped into an evil life, can be restored to a righteous life.* With God, nobody is a hopeless case and nothing is impossible for God. Listener, if you have slipped into a life of wickedness, start to pray that God may deliver you and restore you to a righteous life.

#### **Second. Prayer and the restoration of your land.**

In 2 Chronicles 7 we read about God's people praying in times of drought and failure of the harvests. God says, "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (vs 13-14).

Conclusion. *Through prayer, God can heal the broken land.* Through prayer, God can send rain when there is drought, restore the crops that have suffered from pests and heal people who have been struck with severe sicknesses. Listener, if your land is broken, start praying for God's healing.

### **POINT 4. PRAYERS THAT RESULT IN RECEIVING GOD'S BLESSING.**

#### **First. Prayer for a child.**

In 1 Samuel 1 and 2 we read about a woman, Hannah, who could not bear children. Another woman continually mocked her that she had no children. Finally Hannah decided to ask God for a child. She prayed and said, "Lord Almighty, if you would look upon your servant's misery ... and give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life." (1:11). The priest in the temple thought that Hannah was drunk, because he only saw her lips moving. But Hannah said that she was praying in great anguish and grief and was only pouring out her soul to the Lord (1:15-16). In the course of time, Hannah gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, which means, "God heard" my prayer. And when Samuel had grown up, he became one of the greatest prophets of Israel as well as the last of the judges in Israel.

Conclusion. *Through prayer, God can bless his people with a child.* He can also bless them with children that later serve the Lord.

#### **Second. Prayer for a longer life.**

In 2 Kings 20 we read about king Hezekiah 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". 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 Hezekiah’s prayer even before the prophet Isaiah had left the palace. Isaiah went back to 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 fifteen years to your life.” God even gave Hezekiah a special sign that this would happen, in order to strengthen Hezekiah’s faith in God’s Word. God let the sunlight go ten steps backwards on a certain staircase!

*Conclusion. Through prayer, God can save the life and even lengthen the life of his people.*

Third. Prayer for the enlargement of spiritual territory and for freedom from suffering.

In 1 Chronicles 4:10 we read that Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” Then we read, “And God granted his request”. May Christians ask God for the enlargement of their territory? Jabez’ request for the enlargement of his territory is a part of possessing the Promised Land of Canaan by Israel. These promises of God have already been fulfilled to Israel, and Christians should therefore not pray this part of Jabez’ prayer.

However, the first part of Jabez’ prayer may have a *spiritual* application. Christians may pray that God would enlarge their spiritual ministry. For example, Christians may pray that God would add more people to his Church or that God would send out more labourers into his harvest. In Acts 2:47 we read that God added to their number daily those who were being saved. And in Matthew 9:35 – 10:4, Jesus called men to become his missionaries and they became a light for the Gentiles and began to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47).

Christians may certainly pray the second part of Jabez’ prayer. They may pray that God would keep them from harm and pain. If it is God’s will, he will do it. However, if it is not in accordance with his will, he will not give it, because he knows what is the very best for every Christian.

*Conclusion. Through prayer, God can enlarge the spiritual territory of his people. And through prayer, God can keep harm and pain away from his people.*

Fourth. Prayer for food and clothing.

In Proverbs 30:8-9, Agur prays, “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you, ... or I may become poor and steal.” In several places in the Bible, God promises to bless his people with food and clothing, when they ask him for it. In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus says that his people should never worry about their life, what they would eat or drink, and they should never worry about their body and the clothes they would wear. Life, food and clothing are some of the greatest blessings God gives to his people! In 1 Thessalonians 6:6-8 Paul says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”

*Conclusion: Through prayer, God can provide his people with food and clothing.*

Listener, do you want to be blessed by God? Then pray and ask God to bless you. God can bless you with both physical, emotional, material as well as spiritual blessings.

## **POINT 5. PRAYERS THAT RESULT IN RECEIVING GOD’S HELP.**

First. Prayer and receiving God’s promised help.

In Jeremiah 33:3 God says, “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” God encourages his people to call to him when they need help. God promises to answer them not through words, but through deeds! These deeds are promised in Jeremiah chapters 30-33: God promises to answer his people with the following great deeds: God will break the yoke of foreign enslavement. He will draw them to himself with love, gather them and heal their wounds. He will lead them besides streams of water and on a level path where they will not stumble. He will watch over them like a shepherd, redeem them from the hands of those stronger than them and comfort and satisfy them with abundance. In short, God will give them rest! He will forgive them and remember their sins no more. He will write his teachings on their minds and hearts. They will become like a well-watered garden! He will inspire them to fear God for their own good and for the good of their children. God will forgive their sin and rebellion against him, cleanse them and heal them. He will rebuild them, restore their fortunes, let them enjoy peace and security and make them countless like the stars. These are *the great things* God will do. They are *the fulfilment of God’s covenant promises* to his people throughout the Old Testament. These promises are not unknown, because God has made these promises to them again and again. *The unsearchable and unknown things* are not *what* God promises to do, but *how* God will fulfil these covenant promises! What goes above the human mind to grasp is *how and when* God will do these great things to them.

*Conclusion: Through prayer, God will fulfil his promised help.*

Second. Prayer and receiving hidden knowledge from God.

In Daniel 2 we read about Daniel and understanding a message God gave to him through a dream. God can use dreams to speak to his people. Here God gave a message to the great king Nebuchadnezzar. The king knew that his astrologers first wanted to hear his dream before they interpreted it. But how could the king know if their interpretation would be correct? If the astrologers really were able to interpret dreams, then they must also be

able to tell what the king 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, the prophet Daniel, who lived as an exile in this country, prayed together with his friends to God. They asked God to reveal the mystery of the king's dream to them so that the lives of many innocent people might be spared. 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" (vs 47).

*Conclusion. Through prayer, God can give insight in things that are hidden to others.* Through prayer, he can explain visions and dreams. However, the insight that God gives will never conflict with anything written in the Bible!

## **POINT 6. PRAYERS THAT RESULT IN EXTENDING GOD'S KINGDOM.**

**First. Prayer and the assurance of God's sovereignty in all events.**

In Daniel 10 we read about Daniel trying to understand the future of God's people.

He had a partial fast, mourned and prayed to God for three weeks. Only after three weeks God's angel arrived. The angel said, "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future" (vs 13-14). Then the angel said, "Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come" (vs 20). It is obvious that a spiritual war is raging on earth between God's people and their enemies, who want to hinder the gospel from spreading. A spiritual war is also raging between God's angels and Satan's demons. Satan and all his demons try to take away God's Word wherever it is sown (Luke 8:12) and they try to blind the minds of people (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4) so that they will not believe in Christ.

During his first coming, Jesus Christ bound Satan and his demons through his death and resurrection (Matthew 12:28-30; John 12:31-32). Although Satan and his demons still do lots of harm, they cannot prevent the gospel from spreading to every nation and every city, town and village in the world (cf. Revelation 20:1-3).

*Conclusion: Through prayer, God can reveal that his forces are much stronger than Satan's forces.* Although God's people seem defenceless, they have God's angels on their side. Although the conflict on earth will be such as to cause doubt as to whether God's people could survive, the vision is intended to give Daniel unshakeable assurance that however desperate the situation might be, God is in complete control and the outcome is already determined!

**Second. Prayer and bearing much and lasting fruit.**

In John 15:16 Jesus said to his disciples, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." When Christians go out to preach the gospel and build up people to become spiritually mature believers, then God will also answer their prayers.

*Conclusion. Through prayer, God can make the preaching of the gospel and the building up of people very fruitful.*

**Third. Prayer and multiplying the number of disciples.**

In Acts 6 we read how the leaders of the church decided to devote themselves to prayer and the preaching and teaching of the Bible. As a result, we read how God multiplied the number of disciples greatly. Everyday new people believed in Christ and joined the church.

*Conclusion. Through prayer, God can multiply the number of followers of Christ.* Through prayer, God can add many more people to his Church.

Listener, do you want God to use you in extending his kingdom? Then pray in order to break the power of evil spirits. Pray in order to bear much fruit and lasting fruit. Pray in order that God may add new believers to his Church everywhere in the world.

## **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

**First.** Memorise James 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

**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".