



# The Good News

March 15th, 2020

Volume 20, Issue 11

## *The Benefits of Prayer*

By Michael McCleary

**A**ny Christian will tell you that prayer is one of the most important blessings that God has made available to us. In **Heb. 10:19-21** we read “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...*”. By Christ’s sacrifice, He made the way available for forgiveness of sins, and, in so doing, made the way available for us to enter into “the Most Holy” and commune with God directly, with Christ making “intercession” for us as we pray. Indeed, prayer is one of the most important blessings to come from our joining in the fellowship of the Father by way of obedience to His word. Considering that prayer is such a blessing, it is also important to consider several points in relation to prayer that we must always keep in mind:

**Only the prayer of the righteous “availeth much” – Jas. 5:16-18.** James calls upon the example of Elijah who prayed to God that it would not rain, and it did not rain for many years. As soon as Elijah prayed for the rain to return, the rain returned. This was no “magic” or “power” of Elijah’s own. Indeed, he was given the ability to do many wondrous signs as a prophet of God, but the withholding of the rain, and its return, is not accredited to Elijah, but to God. It was, however, Elijah’s state of righteousness that caused God to answer his prayer. James appeals to this example as the ultimate example of how powerful prayer can be when coming from a righteous individual. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find that God answers the prayers of the wicked, only the righteous.

There are many benefits to a righteous person’s prayer:

**1) There can be physical benefits** – As in the case mentioned in **Jas. 5:16-18** with Elijah, there was a direct physical answer to Elijah’s prayer. In **Acts 12**, we read that Peter is in prison awaiting execution by Herod, and the brethren are gathered together praying, it would seem, for Peter. We find

that God sent an angel to guide Peter out of the prison to keep him from the fate that Herod had planned. Obviously, God does not always answer prayers with a “yes”. But in these occasions, the physical benefits of God answering prayers is clearly seen when it falls according to His will.

- 2) There are emotional (or mental) benefits** – In **Phil. 4:6-7**, Paul writes that we are to make our requests known to God, “*...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” Whether God answers “Yes”, “No”, or “Maybe later”, there is amazing peace of mind and spirit in knowing that our cares and concerns have been made known to God and that, one way or another, our prayers will be answered.
- 3) There are spiritual benefits** – In **I John 1:9**, we are told that there is an avenue made available to Christians to receive forgiveness of sins committed by confessing those sins (in prayer) and that God is “*...faithful and just to forgive us...*”. The spiritual benefits are clearly seen as Christians come in godly sorrow and penitent hearts to seek forgiveness of sins through prayer.

The value of prayer can never be underestimated. However, it is vital that we maintain a healthy “prayer-life”. We are told to “*...pray without ceasing...*” on numerous occasions. It should be a way of daily life for us to routinely and humbly speak to God in prayer. Let us always strive to pray on a daily basis, understanding the blessing, and the benefits, of prayers from a righteous individual.