

connect360

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Prayer That Moves Heaven

POWER WITH PURPOSE

A STUDY OF PRAYER

Glynn Beaty
Ralph Emerson
Bob Defoor
Pam Gibbs



GC2
PRESS

Dallas, Texas

Prayer That Moves Heaven: Power With Purpose
Connect 360 Bible Study Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This Issue

Whether you're the teacher or a student—

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. Overview the study. Review the table of contents and read the study introduction. Try to see how each lesson relates to the overall study.
3. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. (You'll see that each writer has chosen a favorite translation for the lessons in this issue. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translation chosen for that unit, of course.)
4. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the writer's comments. The comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible.
5. Read the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application.
6. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and they can also be used in the class session itself.

If you're the teacher—

Do all the things just mentioned, of course. As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. Here are some suggestions to guide your lesson preparation:

- A. In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents on pages 7-8 and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date each lesson will be studied.
 - If all your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
 - Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.gc2press.org under the “Teacher Helps” menu.
 - Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- B. Get a copy of the *Teaching Guide*, a companion piece to this *Study Guide*. The *Teaching Guide* contains additional Bible comments plus two teaching plans. The teaching plans in the *Teaching Guide* are intended to provide practical, easy-to-use teaching suggestions that will work in your class.
- C. After you’ve studied the Bible passage, the lesson comments, and other material, use the teaching suggestions in the *Teaching Guide* to help you develop your plan for leading your class in studying each lesson.
- D. Premium Commentary is now available for \$20 at www.gc2press.org. This in-depth commentary is a great resource for teachers.
- E. Teaching resource items for use as handouts are available for \$10 at www.gc2press.org.
- F. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.
- G. You can receive the lesson preview each week by signing up for the Baptist Standard weekly newsletter at no cost. Sign up here. (www.baptiststandard.com/subscription/email).

Do you use a Kindle?

This Connect 360 *Bible Study Guide*, along with several other studies, is available in a Kindle edition. The easiest way to find these materials is to search for "GC2 Press" or "BaptistWay" on your Kindle or go to www.amazon.com/kindle and do a search for "GC2 Press" or "Baptistway." The Kindle edition can be studied not only on a Kindle but also on your smart-phone or tablet using the Kindle app available free from amazon.com/kindle.

Writers for this *Study Guide*

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Prayer That Moves Heaven

Power With Purpose

A Study of Prayer

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Introduction to GC2 Press

BWP **has now become GC2 Press®**. **GC2** is a movement of God's people to share Christ and show love. Our driving passion is to follow the Lord's call to fulfill the Great Commission "to share Christ" and the Great Commandment "to show love." The Great Commission and the Great Commandment form the two "GCs," or GC2.

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For more information, please go to our website at www.gc2press.org.



GC2
PRESS

Introducing

Prayer That Moves Heaven *Power With Purpose*

A STUDY OF PRAYER

The Importance of Prayer

Our study on prayer appropriately begins with the lesson entitled, “Battle Ready.” Prayer is not easy and necessitates that we put on the full armor of God. We suit up for spiritual warfare because our battle is not against one another. As we join the fight for the souls of people created and loved by God, we fill our minds with the things of God and His Word. We pray in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers. We earnestly lift each other up that we may be fearless and faithful to share about the mystery of God’s incredible love for us. We eagerly pray for unbelievers that they may have softened hearts to receive the gospel message and to embrace the love of Jesus. We serve as the ambassadors of Christ in the world so Jesus may advance His kingdom on earth and be glorified in all things. The victory is already won, but the battle for the eternal destiny of souls’ wages is on.

As you go into the world, be prayerful. Ask God to show you opportunities to share about the hope you have in Christ. Pray for those around you to be receptive to God’s call in their lives. Celebrate how God is moving in the world around you and give Him the glory for all He is doing. Our God is an awesome God!

Dr. Patrick Wilson

Prayer in Our Day

The highest and holiest activity we will ever be involved in is when we communicate with the Creator of the universe. But does prayer come naturally?

Unfortunately, it does not. We must learn the skills of bold, persistent, and effective prayer.

Praying in faith is the key that will open a multitude of the blessings God has for us. God knows what we need before we ask, but when we ask, it is our way of acknowledging our total dependence on Him.

There are many who think prayer is a way God has provided to make Him work for us. We have something we want done, something we find to be beyond our ability to handle with our own strength, so we rely on the promises of God. We come before Him and say, “You said you would do whatever I ask, and this is what I want You to do.” But that is to totally misunderstand the nature and purpose of prayer. No, prayer is God’s way of involving us in what He intends to do.

We should always pray with an open Bible and an open heart. The way to know with absolute certainty we are praying according to God’s will is to pray according to God’s Word. And that becomes a **Prayer That Moves Heaven**.

Prayer That Moves Heaven
Power With Purpose

A Study of Prayer

Lesson 1	Battle Ready	Ephesians 6:17-20
Lesson 2	Praying for Others	2 Thessalonians 3:1-5
Lesson 3	Devoted to Prayer	Acts 2:42-47
Lesson 4	When We Don’t Know What to Pray	Romans 8:26-27
Lesson 5	Faith That Does Not Quit	Luke 11:5-13
Lesson 6	Never Give Up	Luke 18:1-8
Lesson 7	Prayer That Moves Heaven	Ephesians 3:14-21
Lesson 8	Jesus Prays for Us	John 17:20-26
Lesson 9	The Miracle of Forgiveness	Mark 11:22-25

Lesson 10	Prayer and Fasting	Nehemiah 1:1-11
Lesson 11	Lord, Teach Us to Pray	Luke 11:1-4
Lesson 12	Prayer to Heal Our Land	Daniel 9:1-23
Lesson 13	Praying With Confidence	1 John 5:14-15

Additional Resources for Studying Prayer That Moves Heaven

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NOTES

¹ Listing a book does not imply full agreement by the writer or GC2 Press with all its comments.

lesson 1

Battle Ready

MAIN IDEA

Effective prayer is true, aggressive, warfare praying.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Are all my prayers effective?

STUDY AIM

To understand that praying in the Spirit is prayer that listens

QUICK READ

Your battles are fought and won on your face before the Lord in prayer.



Introduction

When I was a youth, I had a youth minister that showed me what prayer really was. When most people prayed during church, their prayers seemed remote and impersonal. Not so when the youth minister prayed. When she prayed, I knew she was talking with God, just as she would talk to me or any other person. I got the sense that she wasn't only talking to God, but she was talking with Him.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the apostle wanted us to be sure to pray confidently and continuously. Prayer equips us in our struggles against Satan and temptation. Prayer is also the way we support one another in life's daily struggles. Prayer is as much listening to God as it is expressing our concerns to Him.

Ephesians 6:17-20

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

The Armor of Prayer (6:17)

Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians to express his understanding of the Gospel. The focus is on God's power and the mystery of God reconciling Jews and Gentiles into one new person, giving us access to the Father through the Holy Spirit (2:14-18). He concluded the letter by reminding us we are in a struggle against evil. The apostle told us that we are to "put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (6:10). Paul then listed the armor of the common Roman soldier, connecting the

various pieces of armor with the spiritual attributes we need to stand strong in our struggles.

Having donned the armor, the soldier needs a helmet and sword. The Bible says we are to “take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (6:17).

Paul’s idea of the helmet of salvation is a reminder we are secure in our salvation. Earlier in Ephesians, Paul wrote “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (1:13-14). Our helmet is the reminder that we already have the promise of victory, the assurance and security of our position in Christ because we are saved.

The sword is often used to describe God’s Word. The Word is God’s truth, and the Word is Jesus (John 1:1; John 14:6a). Just as the sword is used to pierce the enemy’s armor, so is the Word of God—“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Jesus’ use of Scripture in His temptation in the wilderness is an example of how we can use the Sword of the Spirit to thwart Satan and his efforts to lead us into sin. Jesus told us that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit was to teach us and remind us of all that Jesus said (John 14:26). Another role of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). By taking the Spirit’s sword, we are being equipped with the power not to only defend against Satan but also go on the attack against him. With the promises of these verses, we should have the confidence we need to pray forcefully.

Praying in the Spirit (6:18)

My wife likes to remind me that I don’t always get messages right. Several times, I have gotten a text from a friend or family member, and thought it said one thing, when it really said something else. Communication is important, and getting the communication right is very important.

Keeping with the idea of a soldier dressed for battle, it is also essential for the soldier to keep in communication with headquarters. While the soldier is focused on his part of the battlefield, headquarters is looking at the overall picture of the battlefield. The command has to be able to get orders to the soldier quickly and accurately. That's what prayer does for us as we pray in the Spirit.

Praying in the Spirit is giving ourselves over to Him, to let the Spirit work in us and through us. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul wrote about the importance of living in the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, the apostle lets us know that, because we have the Holy Spirit, we can know God's will and what God has blessed us with. He concludes his idea with, "For Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). That's why it is so important to pray in the Spirit.

Talking With and Listening to God

When we pray with an openness to God, He will speak to us. This may not happen every time we pray, but it is possible to hear the voice of God as we pray. Usually, God's voice comes in the form of a thought that stops us in our tracks and forces us to rethink our prayer and our life. God has spoken to me several times while I was praying. These were times when I was asking God for a particular thing, and He spoke to me. He did this the day I accepted Christ as my Savior. He spoke to me on the day I learned my dad had died. I told God I felt completely alone in my grief. God reminded me that it was normal to feel the way I did. He then told me that I was not alone—He was with me. He reminded me of Matthew 28:20b: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." God's voice usually comes in the form of a thought, a thought that causes us to pause in our prayer and reconsider everything in a new way. Prayer is a conversation with the Father who loved us enough to have sent His Son to die for us and to give us eternal life.

And our prayers should be in all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and petitions. Prayer is not limited to mealtimes or to worship services. It is not limited to the beginning or the ending of the day. We can pray at any time. And we are not limited in how we can pray. Sometimes, our prayers may be intense and long, while other times our prayers may be joyful and light. We

can seek God's direction, His intervention, His assurance. We can ask and expect to receive. Prayer is simply talking with God and listening to Him.

As we pray in the Spirit, we remain alert and pray for others. Going back to the beginning of Ephesians 6, Paul wants us to remember ("With this in mind," 6:18) that each believer is in battle against Satan. Just as a soldier must always be on the alert for the enemy's approach, so we must also be alert to temptation. And we need to be aware we are not alone in the struggle. Though the circumstances of our spiritual warfare may differ, we all face the same enemy. We need each other, and we need to remember each other. Intercession is a vital part of our prayer life.

Pray Specifically (6:19-20)

When gift giving times come around, I almost always draw a blank when my wife or children ask me what I want for my birthday, Father's Day, or Christmas. It's not that I don't want things. I just don't know at that time what I want. My younger daughter, though, never seems to have that problem. She's got a list, complete with links to websites where we can order the items on her list. It shouldn't be a surprise which of us is easier to shop for.

I think most of us are more like my daughter when it comes to praying. We almost always know what we want to ask God about. In that way, we're similar to Paul as he neared the conclusion of his letter. The mention of praying for others reminded him that he, too, needs prayer.

Paul was in prison as he wrote this letter. We might expect his prayer to be delivered from his chains and set free to visit the various churches he had founded and to have opportunities to plant new churches.

Paul looked beyond the circumstances of his current place and instead asked for prayer to be effective while in prison. He wanted God to give him the words to speak in order to further the gospel message while in prison. He wanted to be fearless in his ministry while a prisoner.

Ambassador

The role of an ambassador is to represent his nation and his government at the court of a foreign country. Ambassadors would be afforded certain courtesies and be treated with respect. In modern times, ambassadors are exempt from the laws of the nation in which they reside. Whether this was true in Paul's time, it was certainly true that an ambassador would be expected to be able to move about freely as he represented his kingdom or province in the center of the Roman Empire.

Paul pointedly referred to himself as "an ambassador in chains." The apostle recognized that, even as a prisoner, he represented the kingdom of God. As an ambassador for God, Paul knew his place was to speak God's truth to those who imprisoned him. Paul looked beyond the circumstances of his surrounding and looked to the reason God sent him to Rome.

The apostle recognized that he needed others to pray for him. His request was direct and bold. This is a reflection of Paul's surrender to the Spirit and of his confidence that God would hear and answer the prayers of His children.

Implications and Actions

When in battle, it is vital that communication between the soldiers and their commander be clear and direct. Military history is filled with mangled orders resulting in defeat. If this is true in our world, it is particularly true in the spiritual warfare we deal with on a daily basis. In our prayer life, we need to have confidence and boldness. We can be bold in our prayers for the following reasons:

God empowers us to pray effectively and with power through the Holy Spirit. God inspired Paul to write to the Ephesians and to us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Effective, powerful prayer relies on the Spirit to guide us. Praying in the Spirit is a prayer of submission and a prayer of confidence that God not only hears our prayers, but He answers our prayers. Prayer is a discipline that allows us to hear God's voice and draw closer to Him.

God gives us access to Him through Christ. We can be bold in our prayers because we have access to God through the sacrifice and ministry of Jesus. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we can approach the throne of grace with confidence because Jesus is our high priest (Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 10:19-22).

Praying in faith is focused on God, not our circumstances. In James 5:13-16, we are told to pray regardless of circumstances. Whether we're troubled or happy, sick or in need of repentance, the call is to pray. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us not to worry about anything, but to pray about everything. Jesus tells us that if we ask anything in His name, it will be given to us (John 14:12-14; Matthew 18:19-20). We can ask God for what we need with confidence, believing He will do as we ask.

Faith tells us we have access to the greatest power and resource available in the universe—we have access to God through prayer. Let's commit to never be afraid to talk with God about the things He places on our hearts.

Questions

1. Paul refers to our salvation as a helmet in his metaphor. Do you feel secure in your salvation?
2. Since the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, what Bible verses can you commit to memory to help you be bolder in your prayer life?

