

MORE
Key Truths
for Women

Essentials for spiritual growth

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*More Key Truths for Women:
Essentials for Spiritual Growth*

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to
Valerie Wilson.

I am especially grateful for her
helpful and wise suggestions.

I appreciate her for seeing me
through eyes of faith
and for giving me good advice
and direction.

I would also like to dedicate this book
to my sister,
Mary Elizabeth Jones.

Preface

WHY DOES God's Word teach us so many truths about how to live the Christian life? Is it purely for information? Or is it so we can say, "Aren't these truths wonderful?" Even though we benefit from the information, and even though these truths are wonderful, there is more. *God gave us these truths so that we may live an abundant Christian life—a life of victory.* He wants us to experience the reality of these truths in our own personal lives. What is the result of living the abundant Christian life? We experience the wonderful peace of God, a peace that passes all human understanding.

In this book are six truths that I believe can change an ordinary Christian into an extraordinary Christian. I like to call each topic a "key word" that helps believers reach spiritual maturity. Each lesson begins with a section called "Unlocking God's Truth about . . .," which briefly explains the lesson's topic. Then each lesson ends with a section called "Locking God's Truths into Our Hearts," which is intended to seal into your heart and life the practical truths about that topic. The topics are prayer, self-image, selfishness, temptation, time, and worry.

During the study of these subjects, I have prayed, wept, and been deeply challenged to a greater spiritual height. I encourage you to meditate on these life-changing truths and let them sink deep into your heart and mind. I pray that God will use the Biblical truths in this book to transform your life so that you will never be the same again.

LESSON 1

The World's Greatest Untapped Resource

Key Word: Prayer

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and [show] thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3).

AN UNGODLY, outspoken woman once said, “Prayer is a fool talking to himself, and what amazes me is that they meet in groups and do this together.” This statement outrages Christians, yet how often do we abuse the privilege of prayer by lacking sincerity or by using meaningless clichés while our minds wander to other matters.

God, on the other hand, looks forward to our prayer times. He wants us to communicate with Him in “asking and receiving.” He is eager to answer our prayers. And for us, praying about everything everyday dissolves worries and gives peace. So for Christians, communicating with God in prayer should be as natural (and almost as frequent) as breathing.

Many Christians want a great prayer life, but few are willing to pay the price it takes. My prayer is that this lesson will help you revitalize your prayer life and that you will experience the joy of asking and receiving from God.

Unlocking God's Truth about Prayer

If someone offered you a million dollars to never pray again, would you take it? Not if you're a praying Christian! Here are some compelling truths about prayer that should cause us to *want* to increase our prayer life.

First, all believers may "call upon," or pray to, God. A search of all the times God said, "Call upon Me" indicates that the only requirement for calling upon Him is that the "caller" belong to God—whether it was the nation Israel, the psalmist, an Old Testament prophet, or a New Testament believer. God made no other qualifiers. If we belong to God, we do not need to be wealthy, or be of a certain race, or have a high intellect for God to hear and answer our prayers.

Second, God desires for us to pray. Our society teaches us to get what we want by working, planning, scheming, or having good luck. But God's Word teaches differently.

1. According to James 4:2 (especially the last phrase), what means do we Christians have for getting what we need?

Much of our struggle in the Christian walk isn't because we prayed and God answered wait or no; it isn't because of *unanswered* prayer. It's because of *unoffered* prayer. We try to meet our needs with our own wisdom, strength, and resources. God invites us to take our concerns to Him instead. But He doesn't just *want* us to pray; He *requires* that we pray, as seen in passages such as the following.

- ⇨ “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- ⇨ “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Timothy 2:8).
- ⇨ “Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Hebrews 13:18).
- ⇨ “Pray one for another” (James 5:16).

In addition, God wants us to be characterized as “praying” women, as we see in the following verses (*italics added*).

- ⇨ “*Praying always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:18).
- ⇨ “*Praying* also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” (Colossians 4:3).
- ⇨ “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Ghost*” (Jude 20).

God desires to hear and answer our prayers, and prayerlessness is sin.

Third, God answers prayer in different ways. Let's look at four kinds of answered prayer. Each one starts with D.

- ⇨ A *definite* answer to prayer is the norm for God's plan. If you are not receiving answers to your prayers, you may not know how to pray, or hindrances, such as unconfessed sin, may be blocking your prayers to God.
- ⇨ At times an answer is *delayed* to help us develop an appreciation for that answer. Don't you really appreciate something if you've had to wait for it for a long time (e.g., a spouse, a baby, a promotion, a great relationship with someone with whom you've struggled, a solid financial position, the salvation of a loved one)? Proverbs 13:19 observes, “The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.” Delayed answers to prayer also teach us persistence.
- ⇨ Most of us have experienced *a different* answer to prayer.

You may have prayed for something, but God answered it differently, and you knew that the way He answered was a thousand times better than the way you had prayed.

⇒ At times our requests are *denied*. Instead of taking all of our burdens from us, God gives us strength, wisdom, and the ability to cope through those burdens. Sometimes God calms the storms of life; at other times He calms His children and guides them through the storms.

Fourth, prayer has several dimensions.

2. Read 1 Timothy 2:1.

(a) What four dimensions of prayer are listed in this verse?
Write a definition next to each one.

(b) For whom should they be used?

Fifth, prayer is relational. We should pray because God chooses to answer our prayers. He is not sitting in Heaven thinking how He can make life more miserable for us.

We should pray because prayer helps us know God. The more we love and know someone, the easier it is to talk to that person, and the more we have to talk about. The same is true with God.

Sixth, prayer has a requirement.

3. Read Hebrews 11:6.
 - (a) According to the first part of this verse, what is required to please God as we approach Him in prayer?

 - (b) According to the last part of this verse, what are two facts we must believe about God when we come to Him in prayer?

Faith believes that God rewards the prayers of those who diligently seek Him. The horrible sin of unbelief limits God's willingness to answer our prayers. God requires faith in Him, believing He is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

4. What command did God give us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17?

Seventh, we need prayer for victory. God wants every Christian to pray all of the time about everybody and everything. Our hearts and thoughts should continually turn to prayer for all we need and in each situation. One of the circumstances we face is warfare. As long as we live in this world, we are involved in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:11, 12).

5. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4.
 - (a) What does this verse imply about the only weapons that will prevail in this battle?

(b) How are we to use them?

(c) Read verse 5 to identify the “strong holds” of verse 4.

Ephesians 6:13–17 identifies our spiritual armor: girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, footwear with the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, or the Word of God. Thus armed, we are to “[pray] always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and [watch] thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (v. 18).

6. Read Matthew 26:41. According to this verse, what is a good reason for prayer?

Are you tired of fighting life’s battles in the energy of the flesh, or your own strength? Are you frustrated with battling temptation on your own? Try fighting life’s battles and temptations with spiritual weapons, relying on God for the victory.

Eighth, praying is Christlike.

7. (a) Can you think of some times that Jesus prayed? Name one or two.

- (b) According to Hebrews 7:25, what is Christ doing for us now?

We have a Savior Who not only died on the cross for our sins, but Who also rose from the dead and is now in Heaven praying for us!

So Why Not Ask?

8. Briefly describe a prayer that you prayed and how God answered it.

Some people know nothing of the kind of prayer that asks God for everything. They are discouraged from asking God for concrete requests. They think, instead, that prayer can make them stronger so that they can get more stuff for themselves or that it helps them resign themselves to accomplish certain goals. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

9. Identify the common prayer ingredient in the following verses: Matthew 7:7, 8, 11; John 14:14; 16:24.

Have you ever gone window-shopping with a friend? When we women window-shop, we usually enter a store with no intention to buy. We are just looking. We may not even have money to buy anything at the time, but we look at the price, note

the new styles, and the like. God does not want us to window-shop or “just look” when we go to Him in prayer. He invites us to ask for definite things when we pray to Him.

Matthew 6:9–13 contains a passage we often call the Lord’s Prayer. Actually it is a model prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. It teaches us how to pray. Notice that this prayer is full of requests for things.

10. List six requests mentioned in Matthew 6:9–13.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

From this model prayer we see that God wants us to *ask Him for things we need*. We miss many blessings that God desires to give us because we do not ask.

The Bible abounds with examples of people who asked and received answers to their prayers.

11. In the following verses, what did people *ask for*, and what did they *receive*?

Reference	Request	Answer
Matthew 14:28, 29		
Matthew 14:30, 31		
Matthew 15:22, 28		
Mark 10:46, 47, 51, 52		
Luke 18:13, 14		
Luke 23:42, 43		

Don't window shop the promises of God when you pray. Ask God for something and expect an answer!

How to Pray

12. What is a key to receiving answered prayer, according to John 15:7?

As we grow in our relationship with God, we will see more and more answers to prayer. We should constantly be improving our walk with God; *we should seek to know Him so well that our requests will be nothing more and nothing less than what He wants for us.*

One of the actions God requires us to take is to turn to Him instead of to our own wisdom and strength. So in Matthew 7:7 He invited us to "ask, . . . seek, and . . . knock." Let's divide Matthew 7:7 into three parts.

Ask

13. In your own words, what does Matthew 7:7 say will be the result of our asking?

When you ask someone for something, you are making known your needs or desires. Even though God knows our every thought, He still wants us to ask Him for what we or others need. Although there is no limit to His goodness, God still desires for us to ask so that we will receive an answer to our prayers.

Seek. The middle part of verse 7 tells us to "seek" to find.

14. (a) What is the difference between the way you seek for something valuable and the way you seek for something that you care little about?

(b) Which way should you seek God in prayer?

Knock

15. What picture of persistence in prayer is found in the last phrase of Matthew 7:7?

We knock on closed doors, not on open ones. We stop knocking when the door opens or when we have the assurance of an answer. The verb in this verse indicates a continuous action, which means to “keep on knocking.” When we pray, we are to keep on praying until the door opens.

Matthew 7:7 makes the point that when we ask, we expect to receive; and when we seek, we expect to find. When we knock on a door, we expect it to be opened; likewise, when we pray, we expect an answer. When we fail to ask, we forfeit blessings that God desires to give us.

16. Read Hebrews 4:16.

(a) When we go to God in prayer, how does He want us to approach Him?

(b) Why are we to approach Him in this manner?

Key Actions

May God help each of us decide to renew and revive our prayer life! Here are some key actions for praying effectively.

Confess Our Sin

17. Read Psalm 66:18. What should our hearts be like when we go to God in prayer?

God requires us to come to Him with our sins confessed and our attitude humble and open to Him.

Trust God's Goodness

18. Read Matthew 7:9–11. What illustration did Christ use to show us how the Heavenly Father provides what we ask for in prayer?

If you love your child, when he or she asks for bread, do you give that child a stone? Of course not! You would not betray the confidence that your child has in you! So Matthew 7:9–11 reminds us that if we treat our earthly children like this, God will do much more for His spiritual children. God does not trick or deceive His children but gives them what is good for them.

Know God's Word and Pray It Back to Him

As we approach God in prayer, we need to learn how to claim His promises.

19. What truths in 1 John 5:14 and 15 would be good to claim when you pray?

Locking God's Truth into Our Hearts

Having a head knowledge about prayer is not enough. You must have a heart knowledge and must practice what you have learned.

- 🔑 *Evaluate your life.* Are you living where God answers prayer? Do you have unconfessed sin in your life?
- 🔑 *Set a time each day for prayer.* This "appointment," whether six minutes or sixteen or sixty, will help you be consistent in daily prayer.
- 🔑 *Choose a specific place to pray.* Jesus said in Matthew 6:6, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father." A "prayer closet" is a place to shut out the world and talk to God alone.
- 🔑 *As you read the Bible, look for prayer promises to claim.* Write down the ones that are a particular blessing to you. Claiming these promises as you pray will increase your faith and will make your prayer more effective. Pray God's words back to Him in praise and worship or when making requests or when interceding for others.
- 🔑 *Make a prayer list to help keep yourself focused on the concerns of your heart.* Revise your list often; keep it up-to-date.

🔑 *Get a prayer partner.* Although the context of Matthew 18 is church discipline, verse 19 implies that it is effective to pray with someone else: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." There is power in praying with someone on a consistent basis.

🔑 *Pray often.* You can never pray too much. William Carey was once reproached for spending so much time in prayer that he neglected his business. He replied that prayer was much more important in his life than laying up treasures on earth. "Prayer is my real business!" he said. "Cobbling shoes is a sideline: it just helps me pay expenses." The Lord honored Carey's vigorous faith, for he became a renowned missionary and was mightily used by God in India, Burma, and the East Indies.