

## Avails Much: When Prayer Moves God

Dr. John Carmichael

[Jas 5:16-18 NASB95] 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

[2Sa 24:25 NASB95] 25 David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

- God in sovereignty will be moved when we pray!
- **2 Samuel 24**
  - **David acknowledges his need of God.** [2Sa 24:10 NASB95] 10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."
  - **David trusts in the mercy of God.** [2Sa 24:14 NASB95] 14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."
  - **David loves, intercedes for people.** [2Sa 24:17 NASB95] 17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."
  - **David gives an offering to God.** [2Sa 24:24 NASB95] 24 However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy [it] from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.
  - **David prays to God.** [2Sa 24:25 NASB95] 25 David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

When does God move as a response to prayer?

There are five things in this passage that tell us when God is moved as a response to prayer.

- I. **God is moved by prayer when we understand/acknowledge our need of Him.**
  - a. David confessed: "I have sinned greatly... take away the iniquity of Your servant" (2 Sam. 24:10).
  - b. [1Pe 5:6 NASB95] 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,
  - c. [2Ch 7:14 NASB95] 14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
  - d. The people who pray are often those who understand that without God's help they are not going to make it.
  - e. Prayer begins with brokenness. Until we know we need God, we will not pray.
- II. **God is moved by prayer when we trust in His mercy/love for us.**
  - a. David chose God's mercy over man's punishment (2 Sam. 24:14).

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- b. [Heb 4:16 NASB95] 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- c. The people who pray those who know that God loves them and will show them mercy.
- d. Approach prayer with confidence that God delights to forgive and restore.

### III. God is moved by prayer when we love other people.

- a. David interceded: "These sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand be against me" (2 Sam. 24:17).
- b. [Gal 5:6 NASB95] 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.
- c. [1Ti 2:1 NASB95] 1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties [and] prayers, petitions [and] thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,
- d. People need us to pray for them. True prayer looks beyond self. Intercession flows from love.

### IV. God is moved by prayer when we are willing givers.

- a. David: "I will not offer... which cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24).
- b. [2Co 9:6-8 NASB95] 6 Now this [I say,] he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one [must do] just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;
- c. [Jas 4:3 NASB95] 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend [it] on your pleasures.
- d. Many times giving is connected to answers to prayer. Giving and prayer go hand-in-hand. Our offering reveals our heart.

### V. God is moved by prayer when we pray...actually pray.

- a. David built an altar and prayed (2 Sam. 24:25).
  - b. [Mat 21:22 NASB95] 22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
  - c. God answers prayers that are actually prayed.
  - d. The greatest reason prayers aren't answered is because they aren't prayed.
- God is moved by the prayers of those who humble themselves, trust His mercy, love others, give sacrificially, and actually pray.
  - God is ready to move when you pray.
    - Set a time/rhythm.
    - Show up.
  - Set a rhythm of prayer. Show up. Watch God move.