

No Pointless Prayers

Air Dates: September 19-23, 2022

Day One

Do you ever think, “That is a pointless prayer. Nothing’s going to change in that situation, so why bother praying about it”? Well, if you’ve ever felt that way, I encourage you to believe that there are “No Pointless Prayers.”

I can certainly relate to that feeling of praying for something or someone and afterwards feeling like it’s not going to make any difference. But recently I was sent an article by Marcus Warner of Deeper Life Ministries entitled “No Pointless Prayers,” and I eagerly read it because the title resonated with me. Is it true there are no pointless prayers?

In his article, Marcus talks about a time recently when he thought of some friends—a couple—who are not yet believers and have not yet shown much inclination to learn about Christianity, and as he was reminded of them, he just said a quick prayer that they would come to saving faith. Immediately afterwards an inner voice said to him *That was a pointless prayer*. He recognized that this thought had come from the enemy, and later he wrote in his journal a message from God to him:

“I heard your prayers. They were not pointless. The incense comes before the throne of grace—a sweet smelling, wonderful aroma of love and worship in a world that is broken and malfunctioning. There are no pointless prayers.”

Marcus goes on to say, “This feels true to me. Granted, some praying is more effective than others, but it is better to pray badly than not to pray at all.”

Is there something or someone you’ve been praying for a long time and it feels pointless? Don’t give up. In Luke 18 Jesus gave us the parable of the persistent widow who kept on begging the judge to grant her request, which he finally did simply because she was so persistent. Jesus said the purpose of this parable was to show his disciples that they should always pray and not give up.

I want to encourage you to always pray and not give up praying for what is on your heart, even if it seems pointless to you. There are no pointless prayers.

Day Two

There are no pointless prayers! I began to meditate on this after reading an article by Marcus Warner, where he points out the story of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. They were childless and Elizabeth was long past child-bearing age. But Zechariah, who was a priest, had many times prayed for a son. No doubt it felt like a pointless prayer at this point in their lives, but as he was praying before the altar of incense, he encountered an angel who told him his prayers had been answered. And indeed in a short time Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist.

As Marcus writes, “Zechariah had offered many “pointless” prayers for his wife, Elizabeth. Realistically, she was never going to have a child—not now, not at her age. But it turns out, there are no throwaway prayers. God had heard them, and God was about to act.”

“How about you? Have you given up praying for someone or something because the prayers have begun to feel pointless? You never know,” as Marcus says, “An angel may already be on the way.”

Ephesians 6:18 says, “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.” So, prayer can take many different forms and we should pray about everything—on all occasions. What does this verse teach us about praying? First, it says,

- Pray in the Spirit

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? It simply means that we need the Holy Spirit to help us with our prayers. Romans 8:26 says, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” Praying in the Spirit does not refer to the words we are saying. Rather, it refers to how we are praying. Praying in the Spirit is praying according to the Spirit’s leading. It is praying for things the Spirit leads us to pray for and it is trusting the Spirit to pray for us.

When you feel like your prayers are pointless—or maybe you just don’t even know how to pray about a certain situation—just ask God’s Spirit to present your heart’s request to God. That is praying in the Spirit.

Day Three

Have you stopped praying because it feels like your prayers are pointless? The Bible teaches us to pray about everything, even if it seems pointless. Ephesians 6:18 says, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

What does it mean to pray

- On all occasions

This simply means it is appropriate to pray about every occasion in our lives. From the smallest incidents to the traumatic occurrences, pray on all occasions. My friend, Fran, first taught me this truth by the way she prayed.

I remember one specific time when she lost the diamond in her wedding ring. She immediately began to pray about it, and of course, she began a desperate search for her diamond. A couple of days later, she decided to search her car. Now, how likely would it be that a small diamond could be found in a car—even if indeed that was where it was? But she prayed that God would help her find that diamond, and you guessed it—tucked in one of the car seats there it was. Fran prayed on all occasions about everything, even when it seemed pointless, even when it’s not a life and death issue, even when it’s a small thing like a diamond.

And then, this verse says we are to pray

- With all kinds of prayers and requests

God invites us to petition him—to make our requests known to him. James said you have not because you ask not. Intercession is praying for others, and this is certainly one of the most important kinds of prayer we should pray. Corporate prayer is another form of prayer—praying with others. Urgent cries for help, insignificant requests for God’s favor, praying for the salvation of people who seem totally closed to the Gospel—there are many kinds of prayers and requests, and even if they seem pointless, we should pray for them because there are no pointless prayers.

Day Four

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 we read: “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” Prayer is simply conversation with God, and that should be an on-going conversation, where at any time in any day you are so connected with God that you keep the conversation going.

I was thinking of the ways we stay connected now with the people in our lives. Because of all the technological advances and gadgets that we have, we truly can keep a conversation going just about all the time, can’t we? Well, don’t you think we should stay connected with God throughout our entire day at least as much as we do with our loved ones and friends?

I have a long-time friend who is a successful lawyer, and she incorporates prayer all through her day. I asked her how she keeps this continual conversation with God in the midst of a busy day, and how that affects her life. Here is how she replied.

“I have many goals every day as I work—like providing valuable legal advice, articulately presenting a client’s position, clearly and accurately drafting necessary documents—but there is no more important goal that I have in my work with clients and with co-workers than to show the love of Jesus to them in every interaction. I try to pray before every call, every meeting, and even as I am walking through the halls of my office, that I will show Jesus’ love. I text my prayer partners before important calls and meetings to pray that I will show Jesus’ love to everyone. It changes everything about how I see people and how I treat them. It helps me focus on the most important thing—the love of Jesus. And no matter what the outcome is of the call/meeting/interaction, whether I performed well or whether I delivered the value that I wanted to deliver to our client, if I was able to share just a tiny bit of the love that Jesus has given me, then I consider it a success and not a failure because love never fails.”

I am one of her prayer partners and I love the way she brings a conversation of God into everything she does. She prays on all occasions with all kinds of prayers, and as we read in James, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16b). When you have been born from above and the righteousness of Jesus has been given to you, then you can claim this promise, that your prayers are powerful and effective, because you have the righteousness of Christ.

I strongly urge you to keep a conversation going with God all day long. His Spirit is totally with you and is attentive to your prayer, so pray! And remember, there are no pointless prayers!

Day Five

It is better to pray a bad prayer than not to pray at all, because there are no pointless prayers. But praying in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers—praying as Jesus taught us to pray in what we call the Lord’s Prayer—this is even more powerful praying.

So, even though it is better to pray a bad prayer than not to pray at all, it is better still to pray effectively. How do we make sure our prayers are as powerful and effective as they can be? Well, Jesus gave us a format for prayer, which we call *The Lord’s Prayer* but it really is *The Disciple’s Prayer*, and if you pray like Jesus taught you to, then I believe it will be more effective and powerful.

Years ago I realized that my prayer time was rather monotonous, repetitive and not very exciting. It was more of a duty than a privilege. So, I took *The Lord’s Prayer* as my guide and I began a prayer journal, where I organized my prayer time based on how Jesus taught us to pray. That absolutely revolutionized my prayer life. It gave structure and meaning to what had been rather generalized prayers, and I began to keep a record of answers to prayer. Now, many years later, I have pages and pages of answered prayer—many I would have forgotten had I not made a record.

And I began to pray Scripture into my life. That has truly transformed my prayer time and me. For example, I pray Romans 12:1-2 regularly, committing my body to him as a living sacrifice for that day, asking that I will not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of mind, and in that way I can prove God's will for my life for that day. I promise you, that is effective, powerful praying.