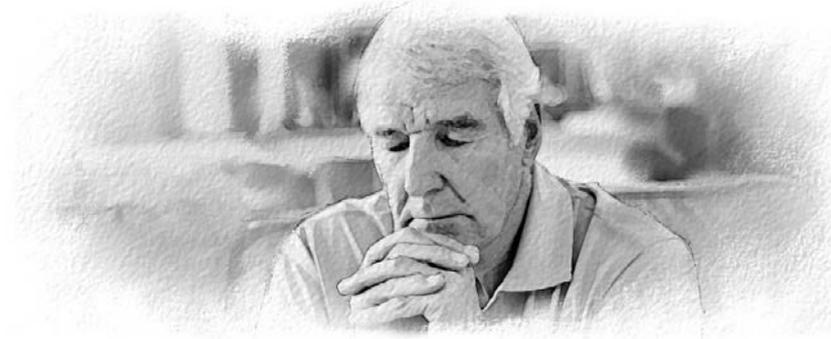


# Prayer Power: Asking God to Help People



## SABBATH—JULY 18

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Revelation 12:7–9; Luke 3:21; Ephesians 1:15–21; Daniel 10:10–14; 1 Samuel 12:22–24.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “So always tell each other the wrong things you have done. Then pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. Anyone who lives the way God wants can pray, and great [wonderful] things will happen” (James 5:16, ERV).



**We must ask God to save people.**

**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MEMBERS** feel their need for prayer. “After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak God’s message without fear” (Acts 4:31, ERV). Look at what happens. First, Jesus’ followers pray. They are filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they share the Good News about Jesus without any fear.

Here we see a connection between prayer, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and sharing Bible truth. “Jesus’ followers do not ask God to bless them alone. They feel the need to pray for people. Jesus’ followers know that they must share the Good News everywhere on earth. So, they ask God for the power that Jesus promises them.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 37, adapted.

We also must ask God to save people. Then God will work in our hearts. He will bring us close to Him. He will give us wisdom to know how to bring people into His kingdom (James 1:5). God will work in their lives in a powerful way. We may not always see how God works or understand it. But God is working in their lives (1 John 5:14–17).

## THE BIG WAR BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL (Revelation 12:7–9)

**Compare Revelation 12:7–9; Ephesians 6:12; and 2 Corinthians 10:4. These verses show us we are in a war between good and evil. How do you think prayer helps us win this fight against evil?**

The Bible tells us about a war that we cannot always see. It is a worldwide war between good and evil. It is a war between light and darkness, or Jesus and Satan. In this war, God respects our free choice. He never will force anyone to do anything. In this war, God sends His Holy Spirit to help men and women understand Bible truth (John 16:7, 8). Angels from heaven fight in this war between good and evil. They help people choose everlasting life (Hebrews 1:14). God also plans for special things to happen in our lives to lead us to Him.

What God will **not** do is force someone to choose Him. That goes against God’s kingdom and His love. Love is the foundation for God’s government. That is why prayer is so important. God is doing everything He can to save people before we pray. But when we pray, our prayers cause God to pour out His love and power on other people. God respects our freedom to pray for other people. He can do more to help them than when we do not pray.

Read this carefully: “There are things that God will give us only when we ask Him. He will not give us these things if we do not ask Him. So, we must ask for them in prayer. This is part of God’s plan for us.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 525, adapted. Our prayers change lives in the worldwide war between good and evil. So, that is why we must pray for people who do not know Jesus. Our prayers will cause God to bless their lives. Then He will work even harder to save them.

We need to always remember something important about our prayers for people. Yes, we do not fully understand how God works in other people’s lives when we pray. But we need to continue praying for them and for ourselves anyway.

**Why do you think God works more for people when we pray for them than when we do not pray? Maybe we do not fully understand how our prayers for other people work. But the Bible tells us to continue to pray for them anyway. Why should we do what the Bible says?**



**“There are things that God will give us only when we ask Him.”**

## JESUS PRAYS FOR US (Luke 3:21)

**Read Luke 3:21; Luke 5:16; and Luke 9:18. What do these verses tell you about the connection between Jesus' prayer life and His success in His work for God?**



**Jesus understands that prayer is a mighty weapon.**

Jesus communicates with His Father in heaven His whole life. Look at Jesus' baptism. At that time, Jesus prays for God's power to help Him do God's work. The Holy Spirit helps Jesus. Jesus understands that prayer is a mighty weapon. Jesus prays when He feeds 5,000 men. Jesus prays when He heals the man with the bad rash on his skin. Jesus prays when He frees the man filled with thousands of demons. Jesus prays because He knows that prayer will help Him win the fight against evil. Prayer is part of God's plan for His power to help us in our weakness. Prayer is God's way of bringing us up to God. God alone can touch the hearts of the people that we pray for.

**Read Luke 22:31–34. What does Jesus say to Peter in Luke 22:31–34 to encourage him? How do these words help Peter when he fails soon after? Now read Hebrews 7:25. How does Jesus encourage us when we fail or want to do what is wrong?**

People who win souls to Jesus are men and women who pray. Jesus prays for Peter by name. Jesus tells Peter that during the hardest time in Peter's life, Jesus will be praying for him. Satan understands very well God's plans for Peter and the good work that Peter can do for God. So, Satan plans to do everything possible to destroy Peter's chance to help the Christian church grow. During this whole time, Jesus prays for Peter. God answers Jesus' prayers. Jesus prays for us too. Isn't that exciting? Jesus invites us to join Him in His work of praying for people. He wants us to pray for them by name in front of His throne.

So, we should never stop praying for people. Then we show that we depend fully on God to save the ones we pray for.

**Are you praying for anyone now? Why is it so important to never give up, even if you feel there is no hope?**

**PAUL'S PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE (Ephesians 1:15–21)**

We pray for people because the Bible tells us to. That is why Paul prays. Paul prays for new believers in the churches that he starts. Paul believes that something powerful happens when he prays. But it will not happen if he does not pray. Paul often is separated from the people he loves. But he knows that he can be with them in his heart if he prays for them.

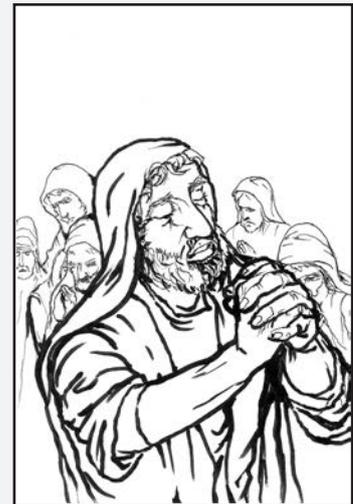
**Read Ephesians 1:15–21. On the line below, list the different things that Paul asks God to give the Ephesian church members. What does Paul ask God to give to them?**

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Paul asks God to give the Ephesian Christians wisdom and spiritual eyesight. Paul wants God to fill their minds with divine truth. Paul also wants God to fill their hearts with the hope of everlasting life. Paul prays that the Ephesians will see God's mighty power at work in their lives. God is so powerful and mighty that He woke up Jesus from the dead. This act also is known as the Resurrection. The Resurrection is the foundation of our hope for everlasting life in Jesus. Paul ends his prayer by telling the Ephesians about all the riches that they have in Jesus. How do you think Paul's words made the Ephesians feel? They must have felt encouraged. They knew Paul prayed for them. They also knew what he prayed about.

**Read Philippians 1:3–11. Look at the way Paul says things. Let us say you are a Philippian church member. And you get a letter from Paul. In his letter, he tells you that he prays for you. He also tells you what he prays about. How will that make you feel, and why? What Bible promises do you find in Paul's words? What warnings do you also find there?**

Paul's words in Philippians 1:3–11 are some of the most encouraging words in the whole Bible. These verses are filled with promises. They also ask us to let God fill our hearts with His love, knowledge, and spiritual understanding. These things come only from our knowing Jesus. Then we can become everything that God wants us to be.



**Paul asks God to give the Ephesian Christians wisdom and spiritual eyesight.**

## THE POWERS OF GOOD AND EVIL AT WORK (Daniel 10:10–14)

Our prayers for people are a mighty weapon in the world-wide war between good and evil. We call this war the great controversy. Daniel 10 shows us one of the best examples of how this war is fought.

Let's understand this chapter better by looking at Jeremiah's words. Do you remember how Jeremiah says that the Jews will be slaves to the Babylonians for 70 years? At the end of Daniel's life, this time of Jewish slavery is about to end. But Daniel is worried. He sees little proof that Jeremiah's words will happen. The Jews are not free.

Then the Medes and the Persians beat the Babylonians in war. But the Jews continue to be slaves. So, Daniel prays for three weeks. During that time, he eats only plain food. Daniel prays with all his heart for his people. At the end of three weeks, an angel comes to Daniel.



**Michael is another name the Bible uses to show us Jesus as the leader of all the angels who fight against Satan.**

**Read Daniel 10:10–14. As these verses show us, when does God hear Daniel's prayers? What stops God from answering Daniel's prayers right away?**

Daniel 10:10–14 is exciting. Let us try to understand it more fully. We must first know who the people are in these verses. Who is the prince of the kingdom of Persia? It is not Cyrus. Cyrus is the king of Persia. So, "the prince of Persia" (Daniel 10:13, ERV) must be Satan. Jesus names Satan "the prince of this world [earth]" (John 12:31, NIV) or "the leader of this world" (John 14:30, NIV). Paul names Satan "the leader of the power of darkness" (Ephesians 2:2, NIV). So, if the Prince of Persia is Satan, who is Michael? The name "Michael" is written five times in the Bible (Revelation 12:7; Jude 9; Daniel 10:13, 21; and Daniel 12:1). The name Michael means "Who is like God?" The Bible uses the name Michael to show us Jesus. Michael is the leader of all the angels who fight against Satan. Jesus is everlasting. He always has been alive. He has all power. He is God's Son. One of Jesus' jobs as the Leader of all the angels is to beat Satan. Jesus will destroy Satan in the future.

Daniel 10 shows us the war between good and evil. As Daniel prays, Michael comes from heaven. Michael, as we saw, is Jesus. Michael fights back the armies of hell. Maybe we cannot see what Jesus does. But Jesus hears all our prayers. He is hard at work answering our prayers too.

## WHAT SHOULD WE ASK FOR WHEN WE PRAY FOR PEOPLE? (1 Samuel 12:22–24)

In the Bible, we see that people who pray ask God to help them do certain things. Prayer is not just some deep wish or feeling. No, prayer is asking God for exactly what we need and what other people need. Jesus prays for His followers. Paul prays for the Ephesian, Philippian, and Colossian Christians. Paul also prays for his young helpers, Timothy, Titus, and John Mark.

**Read 1 Samuel 12:22–24 and Job 16:21. What is the same about these verses? What do they tell us about praying for people?**

Both Samuel and Job talk about our need for praying with all our hearts. Samuel's words are strong. He cries out, " 'If I stopped praying for you, I would be sinning against the LORD' " (1 Samuel 12:23, ERV). Job tells us what a friend does: " 'He speaks to God for me, like [the same as] someone presenting [asking] an argument [a favor; blessing] for a friend' " (Job 16:21, ERV).

**Read 1 John 5:14–16. What happens when we pray for people?**

When we pray for people, God pours His blessing on them. He pours water from the river of life on us. This water flows from heaven's throne. It flows from God to us and from us to the people we pray for. This water is a word picture for God's blessings. Satan's whole army is afraid when they hear us pray with our whole hearts for God's blessings. Ellen G. White talks about the power of prayer: "Satan cannot stand it when we pray to his powerful enemy, Jesus. Satan is afraid of Jesus' power. Satan shakes with fear at Jesus' strength and royal glory. When we pray, Satan's whole army shakes with fear."—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 346, adapted.

**Read Matthew 18:18, 19. What do these verses teach us about the power of our words when we pray? How do these verses encourage us to pray with other people for the ones who do not know the Lord?**



**When we pray for people, God pours His blessing on them. He pours water from the river of life on us. This water flows from heaven's throne. This water is a word picture for God's blessings.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Privilege of Prayer,” pages 93–104, in *Steps to Christ*; “Work for Church Members,” pages 19–24, in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 7.

When we pray for people, we show God that we depend on Him. God honors our faith in Him. He uses all the power in heaven to change human lives. When our prayers come to God’s throne, God orders His angels to help us. “Angels wait around God’s throne. They wait to obey Jesus’ commands right away. Jesus sends them in answer to every prayer that we offer to Him in living faith.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 377, adapted.

We are told that not one prayer we pray is lost. God does not forget any of our prayers. God collects all our prayers in heaven. They will be answered at the time and place that God knows best. “The prayer of faith is not ever lost. So, we must not expect God to answer every prayer for what we want in the exact way that we want it answered. That is wrong.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 231, adapted.

These words give us a lot of encouragement as we pray for people who do not know Jesus. These people may include our husbands, wives, sons, daughters, family members, friends, and coworkers. Not one prayer of faith is ever lost. We may not always see answers to our prayers right away. But God moves on their hearts in ways that we will know only when we are in heaven.



“Angels wait around God’s throne. They wait to obey Jesus’ commands right away. Jesus sends them in answer to every prayer that we offer to Him in living faith.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:2, 3; and 2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2. While Paul is a prisoner, what hope does he have because of the Philippians’ prayers? What does Paul ask the Colossians and Thessalonians to pray for? What do these prayers show us about winning souls for Jesus?
- ② Think about the great controversy, or the worldwide war between good and evil. It is the story behind all that happens here on earth! How does your knowledge of this war help you understand why prayer is so important?
- ③ What are some of the things that stop God from answering our prayers? What excuses do you make to get out of praying for the people who need your prayers?

The Polish army decided to replace their old jet planes with new ones. This decision made many new jobs for people. So I quit my job as a mechanic for a new job in the army.

I chose to work as an air traffic controller. I took classes for six months. But when I graduated, a doctor said that my eyesight was not good enough.

I was filled with sadness. I prayed, "Why, God?"

I ended up doing different jobs for the army. I had a lot of free time. So, I spent hours reading the Bible. A strong wish to know God grew in my heart.

At home, my wife, Aneta, joined me in reading the Bible. As we read, we saw that many verses did not agree with what we learned in our church. We read that the dead sleep in the ground. They do not go to heaven or hell after they die. We learned that the seventh day is the Sabbath.

One Saturday, Aneta and I visited an Adventist church. We decided to walk out right away if we heard anything that did not agree with the Bible. We stayed and never left.

A pastor gave us Bible studies. I was sure that soon I would need to leave the army because of the Sabbath. I did not think I could keep the Sabbath and serve in the army at the same time. But no Sabbath trouble ever came. It was easy to trade Sabbath work duties with other soldiers.

After many years, I got a chance for a better job in the army. I boldly told my new commander about my faith and how I had always kept the Sabbath.

The commander was surprised. "Why didn't you tell me you were asking your friends to let you have your Sabbaths off?" he asked. "As long as I am in charge, you will be free every Saturday."

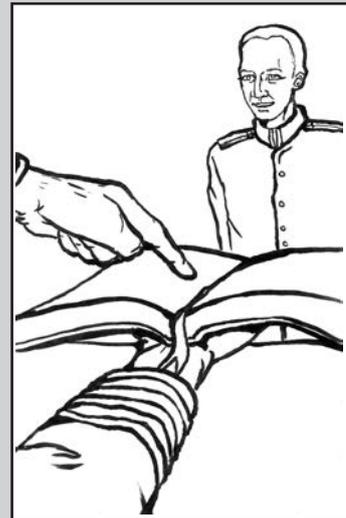
Many people in the army heard about my faith. Soldiers came to me with spiritual questions. But I did not really know what a change my faith had made in people's lives until I got ready to retire. I had worked for 29 years in the Polish army.

A commander asked me to come to his office for a private talk. He said, "I've started to read the Bible. I have some questions for you."

Now I understand why God did not let me get the job as an air traffic controller. If I had taken it, I would not have read the Bible. I would not have needed to ask friends to take my duties on Sabbath. I would not have been able to share my faith with so many soldiers.

Not everything happens in life the way we want or plan. But God's plans are best.

## LOYAL SOLDIER IN POLAND



**A commander asked me to come to his office for a private talk. He said, "I've started to read the Bible. I have some questions for you."**

