

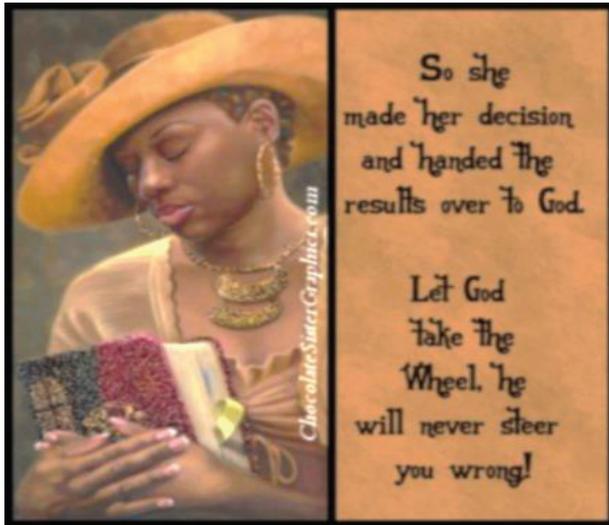
LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY!

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous (person) availeth much.”

~James 5:16

“**Lord help! How do I motivate eight gripers?**” Here they were, on a cold January morning, sitting around my dining room table—the favored ones, those who had been chosen to learn to pray. I thought they would be enthusiastic about the idea. Weren’t they all “spiritual life chairmen” of women’s circles at church? Instead, they sat there griping.

“I’m the spiritual life chairman of my circle,” one said, “but all the president lets me to do is close in prayer.”



Another remarked, “My president lets me pray for the food, and that’s it.” They went on and on. Evidently they didn’t know what I was talking about. That’s when I silently cried out to the Lord for help.

“You know,” I began, “I want to tell you something about your pastor’s wife. I never teach a Sunday School class, never lead neighborhood Bible study, never speak anywhere without calling on my two strong prayer partners. The three of us pray earnestly that God will enable me to speak.” Not you,” they said. “Not our pastor’s wife. You don’t have any needs.”

“Your pastor’s wife needs prayer,” I insisted, “she knows very well that she can fall flat on her face if there isn’t prayer support.” Over time and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I had at last convinced these eight women that their pastor’s wife depended 100 percent on prayer when she went out to minister for Christ.

Slowly, they began to pray: “Oh, Lord, show me.” “Lord, cleanse me.” “Lord, use me.” That was all they prayed that first time, but it was a beginning.

~Excerpts from Evelyn Christenson’s, *What Happens When Women Pray*, 1979 printing

Strictly from the Heart

Sometimes you need to just pour out your heart out to God. Stop griping and pray earnestly!

Lord—Today I want to express from my heart how much You mean to me. It amazes me how You Always Arrange Your time around mine. Never could I accuse You of being an absent God. Thank You for being actively involved in my life. You never, ever tell me You are too busy to talk with me. It boggles the mind. After all, You are the God who created the heavens and earth. You’re magnificent, yet You’re always there for me. Even when I babble about what’s bothering me, You never brush me off or tell me to “get to the point!” You are capable of handling my problems and those in China at the same time. I’m so comfortable around You. Your love carries me when I’m weak and beat-up. You are a colossal God. I can depend on You even when I know that I’ve wronged someone, including You. You’re so worthy of praise. How can I withhold it from You! I won’t, I can’t. You’re so special to me.

You’ve caused broken dreams to come to pass. Disappointments that I never thought I could recover from, You’ve found a way to ease my pain. Your ear is always open to hear my cry. How excellent are You, Oh God!

If only I would learn to seek Your first before I take on projects—things would be much easier. You’ve said You would lead and guide me and every time I’ve sought You, never once have You gone back on Your Word. What a God integrity You are!

PRAYER...continued

Faithful Father, how much fairer can You be? Your Word says to seek You first, in the morning and evening. You're so generous with Your blessings. Your gentle voice wakes me every morning. I have sense enough to know that it is not the alarm clock. You give me bread to eat. You provide spiritual, physical, and financial growth in my life. When I ask, You provide guidance and even when I don't, Your grace sustains me, and You still lead me in the right direction. I would be out of my mind to not praise such a worthy God! I have a home, thanks to You. You've provided heat in the winter. You've broken habits and caused me to be joint heirs with You.

You've never been icy with me. Your warmth is so inviting. I never imagined that it could be this good between us. You have never isolated Yourself from me, which causes my journey to be so much easier. I've never had to jump through hoops to be with You. I'm joined with You forever, and that makes me feel so secure. Jesus, thank You for being my High Priest and going to the Father on my behalf. You're too good to me!

You have kept me. Your kindness goes beyond anything I can imagine. I never have to worry about You kicking me to the curb. You'll never give up on me because of Your love. Lessons learned in the past sometimes are still hindrances keeping me from my today, preventing me from getting to my tomorrow. How can I forget the messes I've gotten myself into? You've managed to get me out of them all, even though I know I'm still responsible for what I've done. You are right in the middle, telling me I can make it. You and I are a majority, what comfort.

I have someone on my side that is not afraid of anything, and that someone is You, Oh Lord. Before our relationship, I thought I knew what I could and couldn't live without. I've found out that the one thing necessary in my life is You. Nothing is too hard or difficult for You. I no longer have to be beat up. Nay, in all things I am a conqueror.

Overwhelmed—only when I neglect to focus on You! My opportunities to walk in Your blessings have increased. Your Word has caused my eyes to open and see Your goodness. You, Oh God, have peeled away doubt and fear. Nobody but You picked me up when I was so low I thought I could not make it. Bless the Name of the Lord—You are marvelous! You have become the problem solver in my life. I never question your commitment to me. Before I really came to know You, I was a quitter. Now, I've become a fighter, and thanks to You I win. You've caused critics to be quieted. You've restored relationships and things that mean so much to me. I must admit that there are times in my life where You are the only reason I can rise out of bed. You help me recover when the world says I'm going under. I am safe in Your arms. I am strengthened by Your presence. I am steady in my walk. I praise You for being my Strong Tower—I can run to You and find safety. Oh how I adore You!

You've set this thing up so that I can talk to You whenever I please, and I'm grateful for it. With Your help I've torn down strongholds, my skin has become thick—words that other people say don't hurt as much because of You. I'm no longer terrified of what the devil can do because You travel with me everywhere I go. With You on my side—what can man do to me?

Any praise I render to You is understated because of Your greatness. I don't understand all there is to You but this I know, You do love me, You do care for me, You do protect me, You do provide for me. You cause me to have the upper hand in every situation. Uncommon is Your love and I'm glad that You loved me first. Oh yeah, You volunteered to love me—nobody forced You or paid You, it was a voluntary act. You saw me in my sinful state and still chose me.

Only after I tried in vain, You filled that vacant spot that no other could fill. You told me from Your Word how valuable I am. My vision is no longer blurred; I know who I am thanks to You. You are Wonderful. You are marvelous. Thank You for washing me and making me clean. Thank You for taking my weaknesses and turning them into strengths. Thank You for working with me. Thank You for not abandoning me!

Nobody can cross me out by putting an X through my name because of You! When folks close one door, You open another. Your X-ray eyes can see my heart. You know me and yet You still love me—glory to Your Name forever! You are the Holy One! You are the One I yearn for. You are the yoke destroyer. You keep me from being an emotional YO-YO—up one day and down another. Uncertain about my future—NO! I can be steady because of You. How can I be so confident—because I'm Yours—I belong to You and You are well able to take care of what's Yours. I zip through life because of You. I don't walk through life like a Zombie with no hope. I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive because of You—thank You, Lord, You are miraculous and I love You!



~~Excerpts from Gloria P. Pruett's, *Lift Up Your Hands*